



The Global Support Initiative to Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA-GSI)

Title of Workshop:
Knowledge sharing and capacity building on
Indigenous and community-conserved territories and
areas (ICCAs)
Level: Regional Workshop for Western Africa
Place: Saint Louis, SENEGAL
Date: 14 – 19 October 2016



Background:

The Global Support Initiative for Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA-GSI) organized a workshop to foster recognition and support for ICCAs in West Africa. The region hosts a myriad of territories and areas that are governed by indigenous peoples (IPs) and local communities. These ICCAs have existed for over hundreds of years, have a multitude of local names and cover a range of landscapes from mountains to coastal areas, and the pastures and agricultural lands that lie between them. However, due to the imposition of inappropriate conservation policies and destructive development models used in top-down governance types, the ICCAs are continuously threatened.

As such, the workshop was aimed at strengthening the capacities of local institutions in governance and natural resource management at the land level, the fair negotiation of decisions with all stakeholders, and better use of knowledge, wisdom and traditional practices.

Workshop Participation and Activities:

The 5-day workshop focused on examining the challenges and opportunities of ICCAs in five countries: **Benin, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Morocco** and **Senegal**. It began with an official symbolic ceremony administered by local administrative authorities and covered by a television network (2STV). Approximately 36 multi-level stakeholders actively engaged in knowledge-exchange and capacity building sessions, including site visits to two ICCAs. The participants included representatives of IPs and local communities who govern and manage ICCAs, government agencies responsible for governance and natural resource management, civil society organizations (CSOs) and academia. Representatives of



Workshop participants gather by a sacred tree in the Gnit ICCA. Photo Credit: SGP Senegal

ICCA-GSI partnership such as ICCA Consortium, IUCN Morocco and SGP National Coordinators from the 5 countries actively engaged with all participants.



ICCA leader, left photo, explains the challenges in biodiversity and ecosystem functionality in their ICCAs brought on by the typha proliferation in the Diama dam (right photo). Photo Credit: SGP Senegal

The **discussion points** included the following: (i.) Main types and characteristics of ICCAs in West Africa and the community institutions that govern and manage them; (ii.) Threats encountered by the communities who manage and govern their own ICCAs; (iii.) Identification and analysis of appropriate responses to address the challenges faced by ICCAs at different levels; (iv.) Measures for strengthening advocacy for legal and policy support in ICCA recognition, land tenure rights and security initiatives as well as the acceleration of indigenous peoples' and local communities' actions that conserve biodiversity and safeguard ecosystems; (v.) Effective conservation measures in relation to national commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), specifically on Aichi Targets 11, 14 and 18; (vi.) ICCA-GSI partner roles in providing strategic technical advice and supporting national validation/endorsement processes; and in submitting case studies that capture traditional knowledge that protect and conserve biodiversity to the UNEP-WCMC global registry; (vii.) Different forms of ICCA networks and coalitions that can provide strengthened mutual counseling in promoting recognition and support to ICCAs (e.g. ICCA Federations, Working Groups); (viii.) Importance of community-based M&E on their ICCAs, with focus on the values of self-analysis and quality and vitality of governance; (ix.) Different channels to strengthen communication on ICCA such as exchange visits, radio programs, social media, story photos and videos produced by ICCA communities themselves.

Subsequently, the participants were split into 2 groups to visit two different ICCAs for a hands-on learning experience, as well as a post-site visit information-exchange between the 2 groups. One group visited the *Diar Marigot*, one of the most fish-abundant marigots in the entire Saint-Louis region and livelihood source of fishing communities. The other group explored the *Doune Kougue* Island, one of the four enclaves of the *Gnit* ICCA located the east of Lake Guiers. This enclave is known for local transhumance and a place of safety for breeders and peasants with no threat from cattle theft. However, both ICCAs are plagued by typha



Fishing community of the Gnit ICCA
Photo Credit: SGP Senegal

proliferation in the Diama dam¹, which now occupies a 130-kilometre stretch of the river, blocking irrigation channels, reducing access to the river for livestock farmers and fishermen and colonizing fragile ecosystems. To this end, the communities in both ICCAs wish to protect and increase the efficiency of their ecosystems by being formally-recognized by the government. The Doune Kougue communities have received the formal recognition from the municipal authority and are in the process of developing sustainable fishing and agricultural measures to restore their ecosystems, and thus, increase its functionality and conserve biodiversity. The Gnit communities are still waiting for their lands to be recognized as a heritage site.



President of the KABEKA Sénégal NGO receives the catalytic grant from SGP to support the launch of the ICCA-GSI project in Senegal. Photo Credit: SGP

Workshop Outcomes:

The effective collaboration among the multi-level participants resulted to a deeper understanding on the range of ICCA types and the correlating constraints and strengths in each of the participating countries. As such, the workshop was concluded with the preparation of action plans for each country, capturing the priorities, strategies, activities and the roles and responsibilities of all partners engaged. The functions of the ICCA-GSI partners were also discussed along with the modalities for registering ICCAs in the global registry of United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP WCMC).

The [ICCA-GSI](#) is a multi-partnership initiative that is delivered by the UNDP-implemented Small Grants Programme ([SGP](#)) and funded by the Government of Germany, through its Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety ([BMUB](#)). Key partners include the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre ([UNEP WCMC](#)), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Global Programme on Protected Areas ([IUCN GPAP](#)), the [ICCA Consortium](#) and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity ([CBD](#)).



¹ an anti-salt dam built 30 kilometers from the mouth of the Senegal River to prevent saltwater from the Atlantic Ocean from entering the river