

The Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)

ASSESSMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE FIFTH IPAF CYCLE

Summary



Investing in rural people

The Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)

ASSESSMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE FIFTH IPAF CYCLE¹

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Front cover image © **Florence Goupil/FIMI, Peru, Improvement of productive technical capacities of young Awajún and Wampis people for food security, water monitoring and generation of community enterprises in specialized services and ethno-tourism**

¹ In 2021, IFAD commissioned an independent assessment of the 2018 IPAF cycle to review and analyse the performance of partners in implementing the Facility and the results achieved in the execution of the small IPAF-funded projects. The present document represents a summary of the main report which was prepared by Ms Valeria Galletti, independent consultant, under the supervision of Ms Antonella Cordone and Ms Ilaria Firmian, senior technical specialists, Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division, Strategy and Knowledge Department and with the support of Ms Karla Sofía Pita Vidal and Ms Margherita Loddoni from the IPAF Secretariat.

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The IPAF

Established at IFAD in 2006, the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) aims to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' communities and their organizations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean by financing small projects which foster their self-driven development in the framework of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The Facility has become an integral part of *IFAD's Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2009)*.

The IPAF is demand-driven and implemented through a competitive process with the launch of a call for proposals. Through small grants ranging from US\$20,000 to US\$50,000 and lasting up to two years, the Facility supports the initiatives designed and implemented by Indigenous Peoples' communities and their organizations that build on their culture, identity, knowledge and natural resources.

Since 2007, as a result of five calls for proposals that generated more than 4,200 proposals from 90 countries, the IPAF has supported 159 projects in more than 45 countries for a total of about US\$5.1 million financed by IFAD, the Christensen Fund, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Packard Foundation), the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Tamalpais Trust (Tamalpais), the World Bank and the Governments of Canada, Finland, Italy and Norway. The ongoing sixth IPAF cycle, started in 2022, is being supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (US\$3.1 million) and the Packard Foundation (US\$200,000).

Objectives and components

The objectives of the IPAF are to:

- Empower Indigenous Peoples to design and implement their self-driven development initiatives
- Enhance the capacity of regional Indigenous Peoples' organizations as regional hubs
- Improve Indigenous Peoples' access to relevant knowledge.

Governance and implementation arrangements

The Facility is based on a competitive process governed by the full participation of Indigenous Peoples. In particular, the IPAF is directed both operationally and strategically by the IPAF Board, composed mostly of indigenous members.

At the global level, the IPAF is managed by IFAD through the IPAF Secretariat. IFAD is responsible for the overall coordination, financial management and direct supervision of the Facility.

Since 2010, the IPAF has been co-managed and coordinated by three regional Indigenous Peoples' organizations (RIPOs). Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas (FIMI), Samburu Women Trust (SWT) and Tebtebba Foundation (Tebtebba) were the implementers of the 2018 cycle in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific, respectively.

A special context

The 2018 cycle of the IPAF was implemented in a special context with the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, numerous reports attested to a disproportionate negative impact on Indigenous Peoples globally, intensifying underlying structural inequalities, increasing hardships for Indigenous Peoples regarding their access to food and water, and disrupting their traditional economies. The pandemic has also affected the implementation of this IPAF cycle in many ways. Despite these issues, being based on community governance and self-identified priorities, IPAF projects were instrumental in helping communities address the pandemic and reduce its adverse impacts. This was achieved through community solidarity, awareness-raising, advocacy actions, and the promotion of indigenous governance and indigenous food systems, which are anchored in sustainable livelihood practices. RIPOs were also strongly motivated and effective in reorganizing their activities, innovating their system of communication with subgrantees, finding innovative solutions to conduct monitoring missions, and launching new initiatives in support of their partners.



The 2018 call for proposal

The IPAF call for proposal was launched by IFAD on 20 April 2018 with a focus on indigenous youth. The following thematic areas were further prioritized: (i) food security and nutrition; (ii) access to markets; (iii) access and rights to land, territories and resources; and (iv) climate change mitigation and adaptation.

IFAD financed the 2018 cycle of the Facility with a total contribution of US\$2 million and mobilized an additional US\$100,000 from the Packard Foundation. FIMI, Tebtebba and SWT, as well as IPAF subgrantees, were expected to provide cofinancing. Additional financing by the Christensen Fund and Tamalpais was also mobilized and contracted bilaterally between RIPOs and the donors.

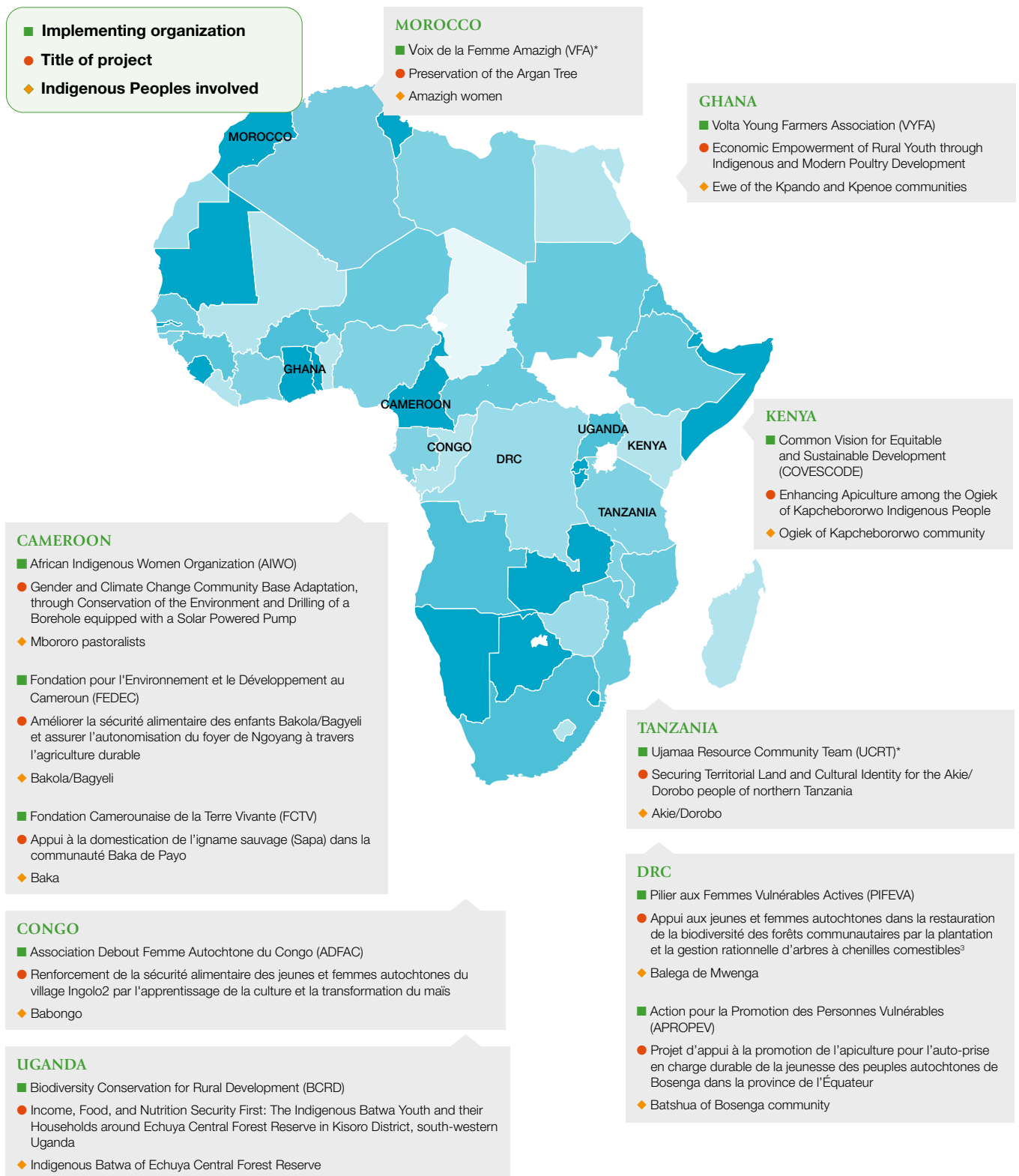
Overall, 701 applications were received from 74 countries, showing an increase of 30 per cent compared to the previous cycle. This might be attributable to the improved visibility of the IPAF at all levels and its successes in terms of the implementation of small projects on the ground.

Following the IPAF review process, 35 projects in 29 countries were selected with the participation of 47 different Indigenous Peoples. Projects reached over 10,600 direct beneficiaries of whom more than 60 per cent were women and approximately 52 per cent youth.



Table 1. IPAF 2018 selected projects²

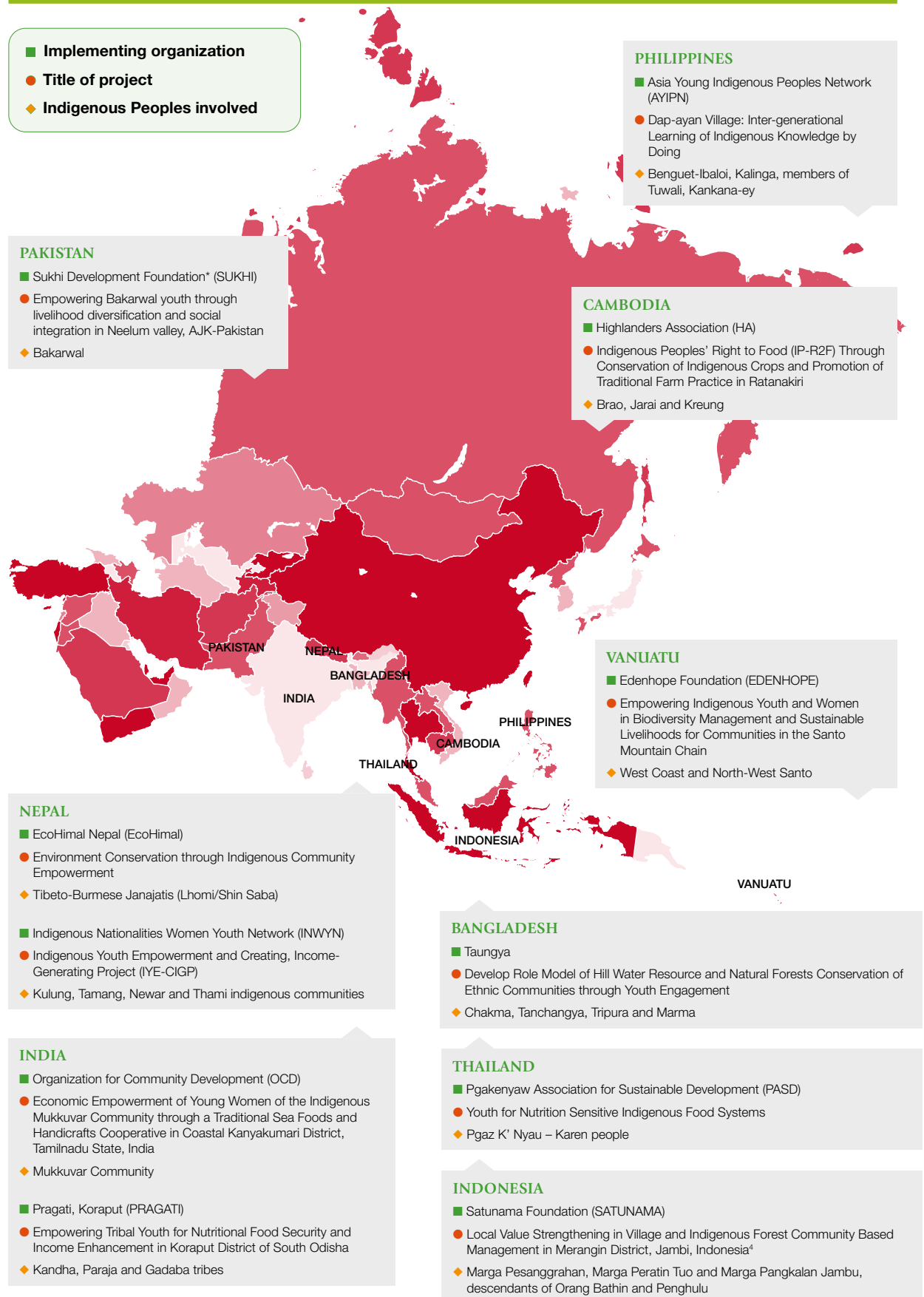
AFRICA



* Also financed under past IPAF cycles.

- The IPAF approved three additional projects as follows: "Projet d'apiculture en faveur des jeunes autochtones du groupement de Bokenda I (PAJAB)" implemented by Vision des Femmes pour le Développement Endogène (VIFEDE), DRC; "Loving Islands Farmer Enterprise (L.I.F.E.)" implemented by Loving Islands, Fiji; "Construcción del Centro de Acopio para la provisión y comercialización semilla de papa certificada/seleccionada de los pueblos Indígenas del cantón Guamote-Ecuador" implemented by Asociación de Desarrollo Comunitario el INCA (El INCA), Ecuador. However, they were prematurely terminated.
- The project was financed with funding from the Packard Foundation.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



* Also financed under past IPAF cycles.

4 The project was financed with funding from the Packard Foundation.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



* Also financed under past IPAF cycles.

Main activities supported by the IPAF-financed projects

The IPAF supported a wide range of activities based on Indigenous Peoples' self-identified priorities and needs.

Almost all projects financed **training and capacity-building**, with over 6,500 people trained. Of these, 64 per cent were women and 55 per cent youth. The main topics covered by training included natural resources management, followed by business, entrepreneurship and income-generating activities, and production and agricultural techniques. The **mobilization of communities** was another essential element of the projects supporting the organization of meetings, workshops, events, fairs and/or gatherings among Indigenous Peoples or/and with governments or authorities. More than 1,100 events were held.

Income-generating activities were supported by 21 projects through the establishment of cooperative societies, production or income-generating groups, collective marketing, the support to viable on-farm and off-farm enterprises, and organic certification. A key aspect of these activities is their focus on valuing Indigenous Peoples' traditional assets with the revitalization of a wide range of indigenous seeds and local species.

As a result of the projects' focus on increasing **marketing and production**, several activities involved the creation and valorization of physical assets, infrastructure, equipment and inputs. Over 3.2 tons of seeds, 2,085 animals and 7,000 agricultural tools were distributed.

The IPAF further financed the **construction, installation or improvement of facilities and infrastructure**, including 380 improved cooking stoves, 13 water infrastructures, 9 seed banks, 8 tourist traditional huts, 6 solar energy infrastructures and 4 storage, processing and transformation units.

Given the focus of projects on the **access to and management of natural resources**, many activities also related to the collective planning of land, territories and resources, awareness-raising, policy and advocacy, and the establishment of mechanisms to monitor land and address legal issues associated with it, including land titling and land mapping. Over 32,400 hectares of indigenous territories and lands were demarcated, titled, registered or protected. Actions focusing on the protection of the environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation also received attention.

Communication and knowledge management activities were also supported, enabling the production of a wide range of material valuing indigenous knowledge, culture and traditions. These include 126 communication and information products.

Main results achieved in the implementation of IPAF-funded projects

For the purpose of facilitating the analysis and the reading, results are reported by project area of support. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that project approaches are broader and inclusive, multisectoral and integrated. In fact, projects were guided by a holistic vision in which approaches encompass, combine and connect various issues and dimensions.

Food security and nutrition

Several IPAF-funded projects enabled communities to improve their food security and nutrition and strengthen indigenous food systems, by promoting sustainable food production and traditional agricultural systems and techniques, and by reviving indigenous knowledge, recipes and traditions.

- **AMC, Argentina.** The Mapuche Cayún community was supported to build 22 greenhouses and 21 poultry houses. The community also received training on production, organic farming and sanitary measures. Eleven workshops on the importance

of diet diversification, traditional cuisine and medicinal herbs were conducted and a recipe book produced. Thanks to project activities, poultry and vegetable production increased by 50 per cent, and the surplus generated was sold to the market, resulting in an increase in the monthly income of beneficiaries from US\$160 to US\$220.

- **CERDET, Bolivia.** The project addressed the negative effects of El Niño and la Niña, which had caused considerable economic losses for Guaraní small producers in the municipality of Yacuiba due to drought and frost. It focused on improving their agricultural practices by reviving traditional knowledge and introducing participatory learning practices such as farmers' field schools. It covered a wide range of activities, such as training in traditional production techniques and organic farming. As a result, 57 households were able to set up 55 agroecological and 3 communal gardens with irrigation systems.
- **HA, Cambodia.** The project supported the development of four collective farms and seven seeds banks among the Brao, Jarai and Kreung communities in Ratanakiri. Research on traditional seeds and crops was also conducted and presented to public institutions and authorities.
- **FCTV, Cameroon.** The project improved the food security of the Baka community by enhancing the value of the traditional "Sapa" yam. In particular,



© AIWO-CAN, Cameroon
Gender and Climate Change Community Base Adaptation, through Conservation of the Environment and Drilling of a Borehole Equipped with a Solar Powered Pump

the relocation of the Baka from the forests had caused them to progressively lose their livelihoods, including the culture of traditional yam consumption. Thanks to the IPAF, 27 yam fields with 2,574 seedlings from 2 greenhouses were set up. Two scientific studies were conducted on the organoleptic characteristics of wild yams and their physicochemical, functional and antioxidant properties. The use of Baka traditional knowledge for the harvesting and cooking of Sapa was a key aspect in the success of the project. The project's success was aired on a local TV station in Cameroon.⁵

- **FEDEC, Cameroon.** The project contributed to strengthen the Ngoyang school hostel, accommodating young Bakola in a community affected by low levels of education. An agroforestry plantation was built to improve the quality of the Bakola diet and provide a source of income for financing the hostel activities. The plantation covers 10 hectares and includes plots for local food crops that are part of the culinary traditions of Bakola. The project also contributed to the construction of a storage warehouse and provided equipment for the hostel. As a result, over 1 ton of cassava was produced and partly sold for US\$182.
- **ASODAPI, Colombia.** The project focused on the preservation and promotion of potato varieties with great potential to improve both marketing and the food security and nutrition of Pastos indigenous communities in the territory of Gran Cumbal. It conducted research and identified over 36 varieties of native potato and selected 5 varieties with great production potential. The project also established seed banks and promoted traditional techniques for organic potato production ("shagra"), sowing, cultivation, harvesting and storage in experimental units covering a territory of 15 hectares.

5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZGMTXT91Cw&ab_channel=NoozeTV

- **ADFAC, Congo.** The project mobilized young women in the Ingolo2 village around the production and transformation of maize to improve both community nutrition and revenues. Activities conducted, such as training on nutrition, production and cooperative development, enabled indigenous women to cultivate 5 hectares of land to produce new crops, diversify their diet and balance meals for better nutritional outcomes. Women also built a small shop and bought a multigrain grinder for maize stocking and transformation. They also organized a fair to promote their products and were able to sign two contracts for the sale of 100 tons of maize for a total value of US\$158.
- **PRAGATI, India.** The project made agriculture more remunerative for 1,000 tribal youth in the Koraput district by improving climate-resilient agriculture practices and promoting the revival of traditional food crops. Training activities were conducted (e.g. on millet intensification, organic farming, indigenous seed conservation), agricultural inputs were distributed, and two seeds banks established. Youth were further structured into 44 producer groups and a farmer producer company. Over 323 hectares of land were planted with rice, millets and tubers, with a positive impact in terms of food availability for communities. This proved particularly important during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **SATOC, Paraguay.** Thanks to the IPAF, the Tob Qom community of Villa del Rosario improved their livelihoods and food security by enhancing the production of seed varieties and vegetables that are key for food consumption, such as mandioca, batata, *cumandà*, *manduvi*, as well as medicinal plants such as *guavirà*, *Ka'a*, *Pyno Guasu Ka'aguy*. The cultivation of forage species and semi-permanent grains (e.g. pigeon peas) resistant to drought and suitable for human and animal feeding was also promoted.
- **RASA Joven, Peru.** Young Awajun and Wampis in the district of Santa Maria de Nieva were supported by the IPAF to develop activities in sustainable agriculture, fisheries, arts and tourism in order to increase their income and improve food and nutrition security. The project provided them with training that resulted in the creation of a fish farm with 1,000 fingerlings and a vegetable garden of 2 hectares. In addition, an association of artisans was formed, and a touristic package was developed consisting of a full-day tour at the community of Tutumberos Pakisha.
- **PASD, Thailand.** The project supported Karen indigenous food systems, conducting a mapping of nutrient-rich and climate-resilient indigenous food crops and identifying 107 crops from rotational farms. Consumption patterns were identified, as well as traditional crops to be further analysed for their nutritional content. Dietary diversity surveys, nutrition classes and awareness-raising meetings were conducted to promote the consumption of indigenous food. Thanks to the promoted activities, communities increased their awareness of the value of indigenous food, and 60 per cent of targeted people are now consuming indigenous food produced in their villages.
- **BCRD, Uganda.** The IPAF engaged 300 Echuya Batwa youth and their families in Kisoro district in on-farm and off-farm enterprises. It provided a wide range of training and distributed agricultural



© Pgakenyaw Association for Sustainable Development, Thailand
Youth for Nutrition Sensitive Indigenous Food Systems

inputs and animals. This support proved to be key for food security, particularly when COVID-19-related restrictions and lockdown came into force. Indigenous people were also able to form three groups: a music group (the African Fire Band Youth Music); an ecotourism group (the Kanaba Batwa Women Ecotourism Group from Gitebe and Kanaba); and a beekeepers' foundation (the Batwa Beekeepers Foundation for Development).

Land, territories and resources

Land is the basis of Indigenous Peoples' existential, social and cultural identity. It provides sustenance for families and is connected to spiritual beliefs and **traditional knowledge**. This explains why IPAF-supported initiatives addressed challenges related to the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights of access to ancestral lands and to improvements in land and natural resources management.

- **Adi Budi, Chile.** The project supported the Mari Epu Lof Adi Budi school, a space for capacity-building and knowledge preservation and exchange between generations aiming to foster youth Mapuche-Lafkenche leadership in the administration and management of their territories based on their ancestral culture. Through workshops and conversation cycles, the project contributed to reconstructing the social fabric and the ancestral culture of the communities by supporting dialogue (*nütram*) among generations.
- **PIFEVA, DRC.** The project was a response to the massive deforestation in the Mwenga territory in South Kivu. It supported the organization of three reforestation campaigns and the creation of seven native tree nurseries hosting edible caterpillars, which are key for Indigenous Peoples' diet and can constitute a source of income. As a result, 470 hectares were re-forested in seven community forests, and seven forest monitoring committees were set up.
- **ACDESA, El Salvador.** The project strengthened water resources management by indigenous communities of Tajcülüljan, Pushtan and Sisimitepep in the basin of Rio Grande de Sonsonate through soil conservation and water infiltration works in over 6,600 linear metres of land and the construction of live fences with local edible products and medical herbs. Over 3,300 trees were also planted with 24 native species. As a result of project activities and better production, the intake of proteins increased by 20 per cent in the target population. The surplus generated was sold in the local markets, resulting in a significant increase in the monthly income of participating families from US\$72-100 to US\$144-190.



© Lissette Lemus/FIMI, El Salvador
Strengthening integrated water resources management in the middle basin of Sensunapán River in the indigenous communities of Tajcülüljan, Pushtan and Sisimitepep

- **UVOC, Guatemala.** The project improved the livelihoods of Q'eqch'is and Pocomch'is Mayas in the department of Verapaz by promoting initiatives focusing on the recovery and promotion of ancestral knowledge. The project enabled the target population to develop community and municipal development protocols and to set up demonstration plots, nurseries and community gardens by recovering over 58 varieties of local and traditional seeds as well as medicinal herbs. This had a great impact in terms of food availability and nutrition security during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **SCPD, Guyana.** The project better integrated Wapichan youth in South Rupununi in the management and protection of natural resources based on traditional management systems. In particular, it supported youth to learn how to conduct interviews, collect

traditional stories and develop videos on Wapichan traditional knowledge and cultural heritage. This initiative resulted in the production of 11 videos and the development of traditional stories that will be presented to the government during the Wapichan Land Talks, among others.

- **SATUNAMA Foundation, Indonesia.** The project focused on increasing the welfare of the descendants of Bathin and Penghulu people in Jambi province, affected by weak forest management, forest encroachment and illegal gold-mining. It enabled communities to develop four forest management plans based on local wisdom and four village regulations on forest protection that adhere to customary law. In addition, the project successfully encouraged the community to conduct advocacy at the level of the district government to increase the budget available for forest management. As a result, since 2021, each village has been receiving US\$1,000 for forest management activities.
- **EDUCE, Mexico.** The project supported Maya people represented in the State of Quintana Roo to promote indigenous identity through the preservation of native seeds traditionally sown in milpas. With a focus on the participation of youth, the project conducted a diagnostic of native seeds, set up three milpa demonstration plots and installed three drip-irrigation systems.
- **AYIPN, Philippines.** The project focused on the intergenerational transfer of knowledge from Igorot elders to youth in Bengao, Baguio City. It supported the creation of a model traditional Dap-ayan model (a socio-economic and political space for discourse, decision making and community rituals) to serve as a centre for intergenerational learning on indigenous knowledge, especially for youth coming from urban areas and from different youth organizations in the Cordillera region.
- **UCRT, Tanzania.** UCRT supported Akie hunter-gathers in northern Tanzania who had been losing ancestral land. In particular, the project was successful in securing 21,700 hectares of land by obtaining communal and individual Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy and by placing 12 land-use signboards and 144 demarcation pipes. The Akie leadership was also reinforced through the establishment of natural resources committees. The empowerment of Akie people also enabled the community to become the primary beneficiary of compensation for a pipeline passing through their land. The community is now a key stakeholder in negotiations, and Akie youth will have opportunities for employment when the pipeline works commence.



© Sandra Sebastián/FIMI, Guatemala
Towards the creation of indigenous, ecological, cosmogonic and human communities for healing of life and Mother Earth in Q'eqchí and Pocomchí Territories, North Region of Guatemala

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

The consequences of climate change have a severe effect on Indigenous Peoples, owing to their dependence upon, and close relationship with, the environment for their livelihood and to sustain their identity. IPAF-financed projects addressed critical climate change issues, based on Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge and practices.

- **Taungya, Bangladesh.** IPAF supported young Chakma, Pangkhua and Tanchangya people to improve community-led water and natural forest resource conservation and management. In particular, the project mapped water resources and developed water resource management and eco-resort development plans for three Village Common



© EcoHimal, Nepal
**Environment Conservation through Indigenous
 Community Empowerment**

Forest sites. Executive committees were revived for the forest sites, and two of them applied to the Circle Chief (traditional governing body) for the recognition and demarcation of their respective forest areas.

- **AIWO, Cameroon.** The project helped the Didango community in the Adamawa region to address the effects of climate change, particularly those suffered by women. Due to the drying out of streams, women were trekking long distances in search of water and wood, drawing poor-quality water manually from wells. Burned wood used for energy further exposed them to smoke and related respiratory diseases. With project support, 300 energy-efficient clay stoves and 250 fireless energy-efficient cooking bags were built that yielded inestimable benefits to women, including a reduction in the time to

fetch wood, and the quantity of wood to be used to prepare food. In addition, the project supported the drilling of a borehole equipped with a solar-powered pump with a reservoir of 6,000 cubic litres of potable water. This greatly reduced the prevalent rate of waterborne diseases in the community.

- **EcoHimal, Nepal.** The project supported Indigenous People in Chepuwa and Rukum villages to adapt to climate change by promoting environmental awareness and distributing 151 fully metallic improved cooking stoves to 125 households. It also included training and awareness-raising on fuelwood consumption, forest conservation, indoor air pollution, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The project fielded impressive results: firewood consumption decreased by 51 per cent, and both villages were declared “Villages with Smoke-free Kitchen” by the rural municipality. Moreover, registered respiratory cases in the community decreased by more than 30 per cent.

Income-generating activities and access to markets

The IPAF supported Indigenous Peoples’ livelihoods by strengthening their income sources and improving their socio-economic well-being. A special focus of the projects was on improving access to markets for agricultural, fisheries, livestock and non-farm products, and the formation of cooperatives and self-help groups.

- **APROPEV, DRC.** The project contributed to reduce poverty in the indigenous community of the Bosenga village through the production of honey. Community members were mobilized, grouped in five cooperative associations and trained in beekeeping, honey-harvesting, hygiene and marketing techniques. Over a hectare of forest was demarcated for the purpose of beekeeping, and 50 hives were installed. The production and instalment of 125 catch boxes, coupled with appropriate beekeeping equipment, enabled beneficiaries to maximize their yields. As a result, 220 litres of honey were collected, transforming the village into a site for the production of food with high nutritional value and enabling community members to increase their revenues by 40 per cent.



© SWT, Kenya
**Inception workshop to the fifth IPAF cycle in Africa
 in 2019**

- **VYFA, Ghana.** The project improved the economic situation of rural youth in the communities of Kpando

and Kpenoe by setting up the Community Poultry Innovation Centre, a training facility to support youth in the management of poultry businesses. Through the Centre, over 200 youth were trained in feed formulation, production, disease management, marketing and communication. Through better husbandry, management and feeding practices, egg production increased by more than 40 per cent. The youth were able to sell fresh eggs in the local market and to generate US\$102 per month each, compared to US\$63 before the project. In addition, the members of their households increased egg consumption, thus improving their nutrition. Some of the youth were able to get employment in other poultry farms because of the skills they had gained from the Community Poultry Innovation Centre.



© Voice of the Amazigh Women, Morocco
Preservation of the Argan Tree

- **OCD, India.** The project supported 400 young women from the Mukkuvar communities in 10 coastal villages in the south of India to achieve economic self-sufficiency. It conducted awareness-raising and training activities on traditional sea-based food and handicrafts, in order to form 40 Young Women Income Generation Groups, and to create a revolving fund to provide women with capital investment. As a result, 40 small business were initiated, focusing on fish-based food production and marine handicrafts. A cooperative society was also established and registered. At the conclusion of the project, Mukkuvar women were able to generate an average income of US\$38 per month.
- **COVESCOCODE, Kenya.** Thanks to the activities promoted by the project (e.g. training in apiculture and modern honey production techniques; the purchase of 100 Langstroth beehives and a honey extractor; the set-up of six apiaries), Ogiek peoples in Elgeyo Marakwet county are now able to process honey more cleanly and hygienically. They increased honey production by 50 per cent and are now selling an average of 5 litres of honey per month at an approximate cost of US\$50.
- **VFA, Morocco.** The project sought to raise awareness among Indigenous Peoples on the importance of preserving the argan tree to improve the socio-economic well-being of Amazigh women. It also encouraged a group of 25 women to set up a cooperative for the production and marketing of argan oil.
- **INWYN, Nepal.** The project supported the organization of four Kulung, Newar, Tamang and Thami women's groups to start up small enterprises by knitting and selling traditional clothes. Women leaders were also able to mobilize government funding to support and revive their activities in recognition of their culture and identity. This resulted in increased incomes for women, from US\$40 to US\$105 per month.
- **Sukhi Foundation, Pakistan.** The project helped Bakarwal youth dedicated to rearing goats and sheep to address the main issues affecting their livelihoods (e.g. limited organizational capacity, high animal mortality, poor wool quality, and a high levy imposed by the Forest Department for



© Edenhope Foundation, Vanuatu
Empowering Indigenous Youth and Women in Biodiversity Management and Sustainable Livelihood for Communities in the Santo Mountain Chain

allowing animals to graze in forests and upper meadows). In particular, the project organized 150 youth into 6 Youth Livelihood Collectives and trained them in veterinary care of sheep and goats. As a result, animal mortality decreased by up to 70 per cent, and wool production was enhanced with improved skirting, washing and drying practices. Youth were able to increase the returns from the marketing of raw wool by 30 per cent. Moreover, Bakarwal activists conducted advocacy actions towards decision makers at the state level and obtained a reduction of the levy on each animal in rangelands.

- **Edenhope, Vanuatu.** The project was successful in supporting women in the Santo mountain chain to establish a community-based cooperative for producing traditional handicrafts using locally grown and sustainable material. Thanks to the partnership with the Malapma Handicrafts Centre, women were invited to participate in fair-trade events, and had the opportunity to forge relationships and partnerships with other indigenous craftspeople. At project closing, a net profit of more than US\$2,000 was achieved through the sale of woven products.

Collective empowerment

Capacity-building and institutional strengthening provided by IPAF-supported projects were also means for promoting the collective empowerment of indigenous communities. Projects contributed to raise awareness among the communities of their rights, and to strengthen their capacity to manage their relations with the government, conduct advocacy and solidify their traditional government structures. Advocacy actions were conducted in many countries, in some cases leading to important achievements. For example, in El Salvador, the IPAF-supported project broadened the recognition of the leadership of the Sensunapán River Water Resources Defence Committee in its struggle against the construction of hydroelectric dams. On 2 July 2020, the Salvadoran Human Rights Ombudsman issued an opinion ordering the suspension of the public consultation and the development of verification visits to the project area to identify the environmental, economic, social and cultural impacts of the construction. In Thailand, Karen people mobilized through the project declared the community a Special Cultural Zone and obtained its recognition by the Ministry of the Environment.

Strengthening Indigenous Peoples' networks and organizations at the regional level

FIMI, SWT and Tebtebba successfully coordinated and managed the IPAF in their respective regions through a wide range of activities. They supported grass-roots organizations to finalize the design of projects with the organization of inception meetings. They ensured the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the Facility by improving baselines and logframes, monitoring project results and undertaking annual reporting. The added value of their support is that M&E practices and formats used are conceived and carried out based on principles and criteria which are relevant for Indigenous Peoples and are based on their vision of development. RIPOs also provided supervision and implementation support to subgrantees through midterm review missions. The missions were key to building the capacities of grass-roots organizations and addressing any implementation issues and associated risks.

Finally, RIPOs played an important role in strengthening networking among Indigenous Peoples' communities and organizations and linking them to regional and international platforms and fora. Experiences supported by the IPAF linked up and fed the dialogue at the international level within the context of the Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the UN Food Systems Summit, the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda.

Knowledge management

The IPAF serves as an instrument for listening to and learning from Indigenous Peoples' needs, solutions and innovations. During this IPAF cycle, an effort was made by RIPOs to capture and systematize knowledge and experience emerging from the IPAF-funded projects, and the social and economic changes they produce at the national and grass-roots levels, to feed policy dialogue and influence pro-poor initiatives with Indigenous Peoples.

- **Studies and analyses.** RIPOs prepared analytical studies on the proposals received from the call for proposals, in order to understand the issues, perspectives and proposals for solutions to rural poverty and well-being of Indigenous Peoples' communities and their organizations.
- **Knowledge management workshops.** Knowledge management workshops were organized by RIPOs, thus enabling awarded organizations to share experiences, learn from each other, promote synergies, and identify scenarios for participation in policymaking.
- **Use of the web, online platforms and social media.** RIPOs were active in using online tools to share information about the IPAF. In particular, FIMI created a *storytelling platform*, and Tebtebba launched a *subpage on its website* and a social media page to host IPAF-related material.
- **Videos and photos.** RIPOs documented projects through the development of *videos and photos*, which represent extremely valuable material that should be further shared and exploited.

Lessons learned and recommendations

The IPAF and the self-driven development of Indigenous Peoples

The IPAF is confirmed as a relevant instrument to support Indigenous Peoples' self-driven development. IPAF projects were conceived based on the demand expressed by Indigenous Peoples; the decision-making systems, tools and bodies are governed by Indigenous Peoples themselves and are based on their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC); and the degree of ownership is high. By applying a holistic, integrated and multisectoral approach where economic, social and environmental sustainability are integrated, supported projects strengthened and improved the living conditions of beneficiary communities on multiple aspects, thus proving to be an effective response to the challenges and needs they themselves identified. Moreover, through the implementation of their initiatives, indigenous communities had the opportunity to jointly learn, build and test adaptive and innovative approaches, ensuring long-term appropriation and sustainability. Despite the short project duration, the relatively limited budget and the challenges faced over this cycle, particularly related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the results achieved were significant.

Projects enabled Indigenous Peoples to strengthen their income sources and improve their socio-economic well-being. In addition, they strengthened indigenous food systems, food security and nutrition. The IPAF also reinforced indigenous leadership and enabled leaders to consolidate advocacy actions, in some cases leading to important achievements. This approach certainly contributed to communities' management of their own development. Communities also improved natural resources management and addressed critical climate change issues, relying on traditional practices, and reviving and transmitting traditional knowledge to young generations. The involvement and active participation of women in project activities and the promotion of their participation in local decision-making structures fostered the recognition of the traditional role that women play in the well-being of their communities and as custodians of cultural values. Similarly, the focus on youth and their substantial involvement in project

activities reinforced their position and their responsibility for the intergenerational exchange of knowledge. The IPAF certainly contributed to improve the empowerment of women and youth and to reduce gender/age inequality in the communities.

The IPAF was also a flexible instrument in its capacity to adapt to emerging challenges within different contexts and to the needs of different institutions at varying stages of development. This flexibility means that the Facility can respond to needs that are usually not addressed by other partners or programmes. This proved to be particularly effective during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the IPAF was instrumental in helping communities to address the pandemic and reduce its adverse impacts.

In addition, the IPAF has a comparative advantage in its capacity to reach out to communities that are often geographically isolated and not generally benefiting from development initiatives, and linking them up to regional and international networks.

Despite many positive results, some aspects to be improved were identified, and the following is recommended:

- **Financing.** An effort was made for this IPAF cycle to mobilize additional funding. Considering the large number of proposals received within the call and the untapped potential for sustainable development, IFAD and IPAF partners should reinforce this approach to mobilize additional resources to scale up existing initiatives and/or finance a larger number of proposals. In addition, while IFAD played a key role in the mobilization of funds for the Facility, it did not centralize or manage cofinancing except for the Packard Foundation. This was a lost opportunity to manage the IPAF as a single instrument and to show the added value of cofinancing, with a negative impact in terms of lesson-learning and knowledge-sharing. IFAD has unique expertise in the dialogue and partnership with Indigenous Peoples' organizations, and it is recognized by the UNPFII as a champion in contributing to the translation of the aspirations of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into concrete actions. Based on the above, IFAD should take full advantage of its role and experience, centralize funding and become a catalyser and key reference for other partners or organizations aiming to support the self-driven development of Indigenous Peoples.
- **Women and youth.** Supporting and empowering women and youth require continuous efforts to address structural challenges which disproportionately affect them. More attention should be also given to developing gender/age-sensitive M&E systems and ensuring the regular collection of disaggregated data.
- **Project duration.** The implementation period of two years is considered too limited, especially given the need to implement preparatory and closing activities. The possibility of extending the duration of IPAF-supported projects to three years should be considered.
- **Free, prior and informed consent.** A poor implementation of FPIC was observed in some cases, with proposals being developed by organizations using a top-down approach that resulted in low sustainability and limited community mobilization and participation in project activities. The process of selection of proposals should be strengthened to ensure the full application of FPIC and the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples. The application of stricter criteria under this aspect should be discussed by IFAD, IPAF partners and the IPAF Board.
- **Sustainability.** While the IPAF embeds key features which contribute to sustainability, and projects promote ownership and sustainable approaches, assessing the sustainability of IPAF projects represents a challenge, particularly considering the short project duration. This aspect needs greater attention within the selection process.

The call for proposals

Compared to the previous cycle, improvements were made in the selection process. Nevertheless, for improved accountability and transparency, the selection process should be revised with a more sound and coherent scoring system. In addition, a mechanism to improve the dialogue and exchanges between RIPOs and the IPAF Board at different stages of the selection process should be discussed to improve the implementation and monitoring of financed projects while preserving the independence of the Board.

The role of RIPOs in managing the IPAF

Overall, the approach of decentralizing the Facility at the regional level is still relevant, as it contributes to empowering and building the capacity of both the regional grantees and subgrantees. RIPOs have become trustworthy and efficient partners in implementing the IPAF in their respective regions and in supporting grass-roots organizations to implement their projects. The IPAF was also instrumental in building the capacity of RIPOs themselves, contributing to their growth as institutions, although they managed the Facility with different degrees of effectiveness. The improved capacity of the three RIPOs to enter into partnership and leverage resources can certainly be seen as an indicator of their improved capacities and credibility. Overall, taking into account the limited time and resources available, results achieved by RIPOs were impressive and their institutional growth remarkable.

M&E, supervision and implementation

The supervision and implementation support provided by RIPOs to grass-roots organizations was effective and certainly represents an added value of their engagement in the IPAF. Notwithstanding progress, some aspects should be improved. In particular, the main constraint lay in the absence of a standard and coherent M&E system with the collection of common indicators and information by RIPOs and grass roots organizations. In addition, the midterm review process should be improved, particularly in relation to the elaboration of recommendations and related follow-up. The direct participation of RIPO staff in supervision missions (in addition to indigenous consultants, as is the practice within FIMI) should be preferred whenever possible to improve RIPOs' capacities in advisory support and strengthen partnership and communication with grass-roots organizations.

Knowledge management





A significant effort was made to improve the knowledge management function of the IPAF as compared to previous cycles, particularly in the case of FIMI and Tebtebba. More opportunities for peer knowledge-sharing and exchanges should be promoted at all levels. These should become a central mechanism to accelerate the learning process of peers within the Facility.

Linkages with IFAD country programmes and initiatives

During this IPAF cycle, efforts were made to connect the projects and organizations financed through the IPAF with IFAD country offices and large IFAD investment projects in several countries. Although a good level of interaction was observed, with several organizations participating in IFAD events at country level, the development of synergies between IPAF- and IFAD-supported projects did not progress as expected. This aspect should certainly be improved, and the identification and development of synergies should be better integrated in all stages of the IPAF cycle, with the definition of clear targets and regular monitoring.



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