

Empowering Indigenous Peoples Through Trade

A COMPREHENSIVE ROADMAP



International
Trade
Centre

In partnership with:

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School of International and Public Affairs

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Empowering Indigenous Peoples Through Trade

A comprehensive roadmap

ABOUT THE BOOK

Indigenous Peoples in developing countries face obstacles that limit their participation in global trade, from inadequate infrastructure and logistical challenges to insufficient access to financial services and discriminatory practices. The International Trade Centre's Indigenous Peoples and Trade Strategy aims to empower Indigenous businesses to trade regionally and globally while preserving and leveraging their unique cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and sustainable practices.

The strategy, prepared in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, provides a roadmap to build business capacity, while equipping business support organizations and strengthening governments to tailor their support and improve trade policies that boost trade opportunities for Indigenous Peoples.

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FOREWORD

‘Nothing about us without us.’

This principle has guided the International Trade Centre’s (ITC) approach to shaping the strategy you are about to read. It reflects our commitment to listening to Indigenous Peoples to understand what they want out of international trade, along with the challenges they face. The strategy is a roadmap that we as an organization will follow, and which will inform how we engage with our partners.

Trade has always been integral to Indigenous Peoples. Yet, history has shown a pattern of exclusion and exploitation in global trade in which Indigenous communities face market barriers and limited representation in trade policy decisions. This must change.

This is why we need a strategic approach that supports Indigenous Peoples who have their own distinct governance and decision-making structures, and who are driven by collective values and consensus-based decision making that has an impact on business and trade. Whether protecting their traditional knowledge and cultural expressions or supporting land rights that can drive opportunities for livelihoods, ITC will work hand in hand with Indigenous leaders.

Indigenous Peoples make up 19% of the world’s extreme poor, yet they steward 80% of global biodiversity and hold vital traditional knowledge for addressing environmental challenges. Their participation in trade is not just a moral imperative to boost livelihoods – it’s essential for sustainability.

Strengthening Indigenous businesses can also unlock significant economic growth, as was witnessed in the \$42 billion expansion of the Māori economy in New Zealand between 2013–2018. As trade policies become more inclusive, the time is ripe to prepare Indigenous businesses to make full use of these market opportunities.

ITC is committed to working alongside Indigenous Peoples to transform trade into a more just, inclusive and sustainable vehicle, capable of changing lives and speeding up progress in delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This strategy is a vital step in that direction.



Pamela Coke-Hamilton

Executive Director
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Indigenous Peoples

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ACRONYMS

Unless otherwise specified, all references to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

AMWAE	Association of Waorani Women of the Ecuadorian Amazon
ANMIGA	Association of Indigenous Women Ancestry Warriors
BSOs	Business support organizations
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
IASG	Inter-Agency Support Group
IPT	Indigenous Peoples and Trade
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MSMEs	Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCTAD	United Nations Trade and Development
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
WBG	World Bank Group
WEF	World Economic Forum
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive summary

Indigenous Peoples constitute just 6% of the global population. Yet they play a critical role as stewards of biodiversity, managing 25% of the Earth's surface and safeguarding 80% of its biodiversity. Despite their immense contributions, Indigenous communities face persistent challenges, including limited access to markets, infrastructure deficits and economic exclusion.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) designed its Indigenous Peoples and Trade (IPT) Strategy to empower Indigenous businesses to engage in regional and global trade while ensuring that their unique cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and sustainable practices are preserved and promoted.

ITC's unique position as a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO) equips it to lead this initiative effectively. With its dual mandate of fostering inclusive trade and advancing sustainable development, ITC has long supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in overcoming barriers to trade and accessing international markets. The IPT Strategy builds on this expertise, aligning closely with ITC's broader mission and global frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The need for an Indigenous Peoples and Trade Strategy

Indigenous Peoples face major barriers that limit their participation in global trade. These include inadequate infrastructure, logistical challenges, limited access to public services and finance, and discriminatory practices that exclude them from formal markets. Many Indigenous firms operate in remote areas with poor transportation networks, unreliable internet connectivity and limited access to export hubs, compounding their marginalization. Additionally, traditional knowledge and cultural expressions are often exploited without proper recognition or compensation.

Climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately affect Indigenous businesses, threatening the ecosystems on which they rely for livelihoods.

However, these challenges also offer opportunities. Indigenous communities possess valuable traditional knowledge, use sustainable practices and have unique cultural assets that drive innovation and actively contribute to biodiversity conservation. The IPT Strategy seeks to harness this potential by creating equitable opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs while addressing systemic barriers.

A difficult landscape

Through desk research and consultations with Indigenous Peoples, ITC has identified four unique and acute challenges they face in global trade:

- Land rights and resource access for traditional foodstuff and raw materials required for Indigenous crafts
- Intellectual property protection for traditional knowledge and cultural expressions
- Administrative barriers resulting from communal land ownership structures and non-traditional business models
- Intergenerational approach to business and sustainability that prioritizes community and environmental well-being over short-term profit

Various challenges that affect other marginalized individuals and groups were found to impact Indigenous Peoples as well. ITC categorized these challenges into five core needs:

Access to resources and infrastructure [N1]

Indigenous communities struggle to access resources, infrastructure and financial services. They often have **communal land ownership structures**, which can create uncertainty around resource use and business development opportunities. **Physical infrastructure**, such as poor road networks and limited access to airports, electricity, energy and water supply, drives up prices and reduces the availability of essential goods and services. This means many critical public services such as health, education and business-related services are deficient or absent.

Digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, limits access to essential services and e-commerce platforms. **Financial exclusion** is another significant barrier, with limited access to banking services, credit and digital payment systems. Indigenous entrepreneurs often find it difficult to secure loans or investment due to lack of collateral and limited financial literacy, among other reasons.

Skills and capacity [N2]

Indigenous Peoples face major **barriers in accessing education**, training and workforce opportunities, leading to lower post-secondary education rates and limited employment opportunities. Unfair hiring practices and the lack of recognition for skills acquired informally compound these issues. **Language barriers** and cultural differences in societal norms aggravate these challenges.

Additionally, Indigenous firms are often unable to attract employees with the necessary skills, affecting key aspects of operations such as **business planning, marketing**, customer relations and regulatory compliance. These gaps hinder their ability to compete internationally and to invest or save funds effectively. Training programmes tailored to these needs are often limited, with low retention rates, high costs and linguistic barriers. Lack of culturally sensitive approaches in training design also reduces their relevance and impact for Indigenous participants.

Trade-specific obstacles [N3]

Challenges in intellectual property protection, administrative barriers, market access and competition present critical barriers for Indigenous Peoples in trade. **Conventional intellectual property systems often do not protect traditional knowledge and practices**, making them vulnerable to exploitation.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge addresses these gaps by requiring patent disclosure of the origin of genetic resources and the Indigenous Peoples or local communities who provided the associated traditional knowledge.

Regulatory and institutional barriers also hinder Indigenous entrepreneurship, as they often operate informally due to complex processes and non-traditional business models. **Market access** and competition are major obstacles for Indigenous exporters, especially for niche or culturally significant products. Indigenous artisans face **competition from mass-produced goods**, which often undervalue their authenticity and craftsmanship.

Logistics and border issues are more pronounced for Indigenous firms, stemming from geographical remoteness, inadequate infrastructure, **high shipping costs** and complex customs procedures. **Limited business networks and mentorship opportunities** also hamper business growth and development.

Cultural and social challenges [N4]

Indigenous societies often prioritize long-term sustainability and the well-being of future generations, leading to a cultural connection to sustainability. If an individual Indigenous entrepreneur seeks to establish a business that puts short-term profit over environmental sustainability and community cohesion, this can create unique **internal tensions** and entrepreneurs may face scepticism or mistrust from their communities.

Stereotypes and racial discrimination remain pervasive barriers for Indigenous employees, making it difficult for them to secure jobs and advance in their careers. **Limited women's participation** in entrepreneurship is another issue, as entrenched gender norms dictate specific economic roles for women and men within the community. This limited participation not only affects the livelihood of Indigenous women but also hinders the overall growth of the economy, with **gross domestic product per capita losses attributable to gender gaps estimated at up to 27% in certain regions**.

Policy and representation [N5]

Disjointed institutional support from national and local governments, exclusion from trade agreements and lack of representation make it difficult for Indigenous Peoples to raise awareness of and confront systemic barriers or policies that perpetuate inequalities. **Government initiatives often fail to address the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples** and their enterprises, leading to infrastructure gaps and tensions with traditional practices. **Limited participation in trade policy development** also hinders alignment with Indigenous Peoples' unique needs and values.

A pathway forward

Indigenous Peoples have the innate capacity and determination to overcome these challenges. The IPT Strategy seeks to empower businesses owned by Indigenous Peoples, building their capacity to compete in global trade while recognizing their right to self-determination. It enables Indigenous entrepreneurs, producers and artisans to navigate the complexities of international trade while safeguarding their rights, cultural integrity and ecological sustainability and ownership of their knowledge.

This is set out across three overarching goals that are themselves aligned with ITC's core service areas:

Goal 1: Enhance the capacity and competitiveness of Indigenous Peoples in business and trade to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Goal 2: Empower business support organizations (BSOs) to support Indigenous MSMEs by improving access to networks, resources and partnerships for greater resilience and competitiveness.

Goal 3: Advocate for supportive national and international trade policy and regulatory environments to support Indigenous Peoples in entrepreneurship and trade.

Guided by principles such as cultural integrity, inclusive participation, broad representation, transparent consultations, Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and local leadership and sustainability, these goals form the foundation for 10 objectives designed to operationalize the strategy.

GOAL 1

Build business and technical capacity [O1]

Indigenous entrepreneurs often lack access to the training and resources needed to navigate complex trade systems. The strategy emphasizes culturally tailored programmes that address skills gaps in areas such as product development, e-commerce, marketing and pricing. These initiatives will ensure that Indigenous businesses can meet the demands of regional and global markets.

Expand market access and develop inclusive value chains [O2]

Integrating Indigenous firms into national and international markets is a priority. The strategy promotes the development of inclusive value chains that emphasize equitable benefit-sharing and support for sustainable practices. ITC will facilitate connections between Indigenous businesses and global buyers, creating opportunities for long-term partnerships.

Revitalize key sectors: Handicrafts and textiles, ecotourism, agrifood, bioeconomy [O3]

Handicrafts and textiles, ecotourism, agrifood and biodiversity-based products and nature-related services are identified as key sectors with considerable potential for growth. ITC's technical expertise working in these sectors will be instrumental in fostering innovation, improving product quality and aligning production with market demands while preserving cultural heritage.

Empower Indigenous women and youth entrepreneurs [O4]

Indigenous women and youth are pivotal to economic and cultural resilience. The strategy includes targeted actions – such as integration with the ITC SheTrades initiative – to provide mentorship, advocacy and market access for women entrepreneurs. Youth will receive training in e-commerce and digital tools to explore sector-specific opportunities, such as in the creative industries.

GOAL 2

Remove trade barriers and address logistics challenges [O5]

ITC will help relevant BSOs to streamline business registration and customs procedures. Through partnerships, ITC will aim to address logistical obstacles, including inadequate transportation networks and high shipping costs, to ensure that Indigenous goods can reach global markets efficiently.

Foster inclusive business networks and collaboration [O6]

Creating opportunities for collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous enterprises is critical. ITC will work with relevant BSOs to facilitate mentorship programmes, trade missions and networking events to build trust and expand market linkages.

GOAL 2

Advance the green transition through trade [O7]

Indigenous firms are well-positioned to lead the transition in sustainable trade. ITC will work with BSOs to offer support in building out sustainable value chains anchored in environmentally friendly business practices to enhance market competitiveness while supporting environmental stewardship.

Facilitate financial inclusion for trade growth [O8]

Expanding access to financial resources is essential for scaling Indigenous enterprises. The strategy includes financial literacy training, partnerships with financial institutions and innovative credit solutions tailored to Indigenous needs.

GOAL 3

Advocate for policy alignment and Indigenous representation [O9]

Ensuring the inclusion of Indigenous voices in trade policy development is a key priority. ITC will advocate for the integration of Indigenous rights into trade agreements and regulatory frameworks. ITC will also work to amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples in international forums.

Protect Indigenous intellectual property and cultural heritage [O10]

Collaborating with WIPO, ITC will work to safeguard traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and communal intellectual property. This will ensure that Indigenous innovations are recognized and fairly compensated in global markets.

Partnerships and collaboration

A comprehensive and collaborative approach is required for the success of the IPT Strategy. Partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, international partners, national governments and local entities are purposefully aligned with the strategy's goals, leveraging the unique strengths of stakeholders to advance Indigenous Peoples' trade readiness and economic participation.

Indigenous leadership should guide decision-making at every stage, ensuring cultural relevance and responsiveness to community needs. Respecting Indigenous Peoples' decision-making structures is crucial, including their right to FPIC.

At the international/United Nations level, the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) on Indigenous Issues supports the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and aims to strengthen inter-agency cooperation, promote human rights and advise in mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples' issues within the United Nations system.

ITC should consider joining the IASG to strengthen its network of international partners as it implements the IPT Strategy. Bilateral partnerships with other organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union, WIPO and

the World Economic Forum target specific initiatives such as addressing the digital divide, enhancing IP protection and building networks for Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Additionally, ITC could collaborate with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to develop best practices for Indigenous inclusion in trade, share best practices with WTO Members, and establish platforms for dialogue between Indigenous business leaders and policymakers. The World Bank Group has a strong track record of enhancing infrastructure and service delivery in Indigenous communities, and partnering with it on the IPT Strategy could tackle some of the challenges that fall outside ITC's remit.

National partnerships with governments, trade promotion organizations and other BSOs are essential to formulate policy, collect data and monitor progress. Trade promotion organizations offer specialized support tailored to Indigenous needs and advocate for Indigenous interests in trade policy discussions. Subnational partnerships with other local organizations provide local knowledge, networks and trust, ensuring continuity and long-term impact. These partnerships can help gain credibility and overcome scepticism when introducing initiatives.



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Putting the strategy into action

The IPT Strategy includes a robust implementation framework to ensure alignment with ITC's objectives and Indigenous priorities. In the short term, implementation will involve the Office of the Executive Director convening ITC sections to identify synergies with current and upcoming activities and to determine how the objectives of this strategy can add value to their activities.

Medium-term efforts will focus on designing and implementing projects aligned with ITC's five impact areas, such as green trade and e-commerce, while embedding Indigenous priorities into ITC's next Strategic Plan. In the long term, establishing an Indigenous Peoples and Trade programme will serve as a focal point for ITC's Indigenous initiatives, enabling more comprehensive integration of Indigenous perspectives across organizational goals.

A monitoring, evaluation and learning framework will track progress, measure impacts and adapt interventions based on feedback. Risk mitigation measures will address challenges such as resource exploitation, political sensitivities and over-commercialization of Indigenous practices. Resource mobilization efforts will focus on securing funding from international donors, development banks, foundations and private investors to ensure that opportunities for programme or project development align with the strategy.

Conclusion

By addressing systemic barriers, fostering partnerships and leveraging ITC's expertise, the IPT Strategy provides a comprehensive roadmap for empowering Indigenous Peoples in trade. It champions inclusivity, sustainability and equity, ensuring that Indigenous enterprises can thrive in global markets while preserving their cultural and environmental heritage. This strategy is not just a call to action, but a commitment to create a more equitable and sustainable future for Indigenous Peoples worldwide.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE INDIGENOUS?	2
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INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Peoples represent an important and diverse global population. According to the United Nations, there are an estimated 476 million Indigenous people worldwide, making up about 6% of the global population.¹ They are spread across more than 90 countries and represent more than 5,000 distinct cultures.²

The geographical distribution of Indigenous Peoples varies widely. Most (70.5%) live in Asia and the Pacific, followed by Africa (16.3%), Latin America and the Caribbean (11.5%), North America (1.6%) and Europe and Central Asia (0.1%).³ Despite their relatively small population size, Indigenous Peoples have a major global impact, as they effectively manage or hold tenure rights to about 25% of the Earth's surface area.⁴

What does it mean to be Indigenous?

The term 'Indigenous Peoples' does not have a universally agreed-upon definition under international law and policy. This was an intentional decision of the drafters of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.⁵ This decision reflects the principle that the identification of Indigenous Peoples is the right of the people themselves – a manifestation of their right to self-identification and a fundamental element of the right to self-determination.⁶

Additional characteristics often connected with Indigenous identities include:

- An ancestral and historical continuity with societies that inhabited a country or region before they were colonized or before other peoples became dominant;
- A strong connection to certain territories and the surrounding natural resources;
- Distinct social, economic or political systems that they are resolved to preserve and perpetuate;
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs.⁷

In accordance with the United Nations, 'Indigenous Peoples' is capitalized in recognition of their status as peoples in international law and with the right to self-determination.

Synonyms and other related terms

Terms used to refer to Indigenous Peoples vary across regions and stakeholders, reflecting diverse cultural and historical contexts. Some of these terms may carry specific legal or political connotations. Examples include:

- **Tribal Peoples** – Used in various international and regional contexts, often emphasizing traditional governance and social organization.
- **Indigenous Tribes** – Common in some national contexts, especially when referring to smaller, distinct Indigenous groups.
- **Ethnic Minorities** – Used in some Asian countries, such as China and Viet Nam, to describe Indigenous or native populations alongside other minority groups.
- **Native Peoples** – A general term used interchangeably with Indigenous Peoples in various countries.
- **Custodians** – Used to describe responsibility for safeguarding ancestral lands, environments and cultural heritage for present and future generations.
- **First Inhabitants** – Occasionally used in historical or regional narratives.
- **Original Peoples** – Found in certain Latin American contexts, highlighting ancestral connections to the land.
- **Autochthonous Peoples** – Used in some European and international contexts, often in legal or academic discourse.
- **Pueblos Originarios** – A term used in Spanish-speaking Latin America, meaning 'Original Peoples'.
- **Indígenas** – The Spanish term for Indigenous Peoples, widely used in Latin America.
- **First Peoples** – A term focusing on the historical and ancestral connection to a territory, used in countries such as Canada and Australia.
- **First Nations** – Commonly used in Canada to refer to Indigenous groups that are neither Métis nor Inuit.
- **Adivasi** – Used in India to refer to Indigenous communities, meaning 'original inhabitants'.

- **Aboriginal Peoples** – Often used in Australia to refer collectively to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- **Traditional Owners** – Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with ancestral and legal connections to specific lands or waters.
- **Native American or American Indian** – Used primarily in the United States to refer to Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.

Some government documents and policies may use terms such as ‘communities,’ ‘groups’ or ‘minorities’ interchangeably with ‘Indigenous Peoples’. These terms often reflect how Indigenous communities are recognized or classified within legal frameworks or cultural narratives. However, these alternatives should be used cautiously, as they may not carry the same legal significance in terms of rights to self-determination.⁸

The term traditional community is sometimes used, particularly to describe groups with longstanding cultural, social and economic practices rooted in ancestral ways of life. While it is not synonymous with Indigenous Peoples, this term is often used to refer to groups that share some characteristics with Indigenous communities, such as:

- Strong ties to specific lands or territories
- Reliance on traditional knowledge systems
- Unique cultural and governance practices

For example, in countries including Brazil, traditional communities may include Indigenous Peoples but also encompass other groups, such as Afro-descendant Quilombola communities or rural populations with distinct cultural identities. The term can also appear in discussions of rights to land, resources or cultural preservation.

It is important to note that ‘traditional community’ does not carry the same legal or political recognition as ‘Indigenous Peoples’ in many international frameworks (e.g. the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) and the term may not resonate universally with all groups it is meant to describe. Nonetheless, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and stakeholders sometimes use the term to describe communities with cultural practices tied to heritage and tradition.

The term **pastoralists** is commonly used, especially in contexts related to livelihoods and land use. However, it refers specifically to communities whose primary economic and cultural activities revolve around livestock grazing

and herding. While many pastoralist communities are Indigenous, not all are, and the term highlights their way of life rather than their identity as Indigenous Peoples.

Pastoralists are often recognized for their sustainable land management practices and deep understanding of local ecosystems, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions. Examples include:

- *The Maasai* in East Africa
- *The Tuareg* in the Sahara
- *The Sami* in Northern Europe, reindeer herders who are also recognized as Indigenous Peoples
- *The Bedouin* in the Middle East

In international development and policy discussions, ‘pastoralists’ is used to address issues such as access to grazing lands, water resources and climate adaptation strategies. The term can overlap with Indigenous Peoples in contexts where pastoralism is integral to their cultural and economic identity, but it is not interchangeable with ‘Indigenous Peoples’ as it focuses on livelihood rather than ethnicity or political status.

It is crucial to consider context and preference, as Indigenous communities may identify with or reject certain terms based on their history, rights and autonomy. Furthermore, it should be noted that terminology can change over time and preferences may vary among individuals and communities. When possible, it is best to use the specific name of the Indigenous group being referred to, and to consult with the Indigenous group or individual to determine the preferred terminology.

Indigenous culture, traditional knowledge and society

The sacred relationship that Indigenous Peoples maintain with their ancestral lands and natural resources is a defining characteristic that shapes their identity, culture and spiritual well-being. For Indigenous communities, land is not merely a possession but a living entity with which they share a reciprocal bond. This stewardship, rooted in generations of sustainable practices, ensures the protection of biodiversity, the preservation of ecological balance and the safeguarding of some of the world’s most pristine natural landscapes.

Indigenous Peoples’ holistic worldview emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things. This perspective reflects their spiritual understanding of reality,

the recognition of diverse truths rooted in individual and collective experiences, and their cyclical conception of time, often aligned with natural seasons and rhythms. This worldview fosters a deep sense of community and mutual respect, guiding practices that prioritize harmony and balance in all aspects of life.

Through their traditional knowledge systems, Indigenous Peoples contribute valuable insights to resource management, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction. These knowledge systems, passed down through generations, are tailored to the unique environments Indigenous Peoples inhabit and provide sustainable solutions to contemporary challenges. Their traditional medicine and healing practices, drawn from their intimate understanding of local ecosystems, continue to benefit their communities and beyond.

Indigenous social and political systems are rooted in collective values, often reflecting governance structures based on customary laws, consensus-based decision-making and traditional leadership. These systems uphold the cohesion of their communities and offer alternative governance models that emphasize sustainability, inclusion and shared responsibility.

Cultural expression and language are central to Indigenous identity. Through rich oral traditions, storytelling, art, dance and song, Indigenous Peoples preserve and share their history, values and knowledge. Indigenous languages, many of which face endangerment, encapsulate unique worldviews and cultural heritage. Despite the challenges of displacement and assimilation, Indigenous communities are actively working to revitalize their languages, ensuring they endure for future generations.

Indigenous Peoples often navigate systemic barriers as non-dominant groups within national societies, yet their resilience is evident in their continued assertion of self-identity and their efforts to protect their cultural heritage. Their knowledge and practices contribute to global efforts to address climate change, protect biodiversity and promote sustainable development, underscoring their pivotal role in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable world.

The enduring relationship that Indigenous Peoples maintain with their lands, coupled with their holistic perspectives and rich cultural heritage, exemplifies diverse ways of living in harmony with nature. Their contributions are essential not only for their own communities but for the global community, offering critical lessons in environmental stewardship, sustainable living and inclusive governance.

Indigenous economies

Indigenous Peoples' economic systems often differ fundamentally from those of non-Indigenous societies in their structure, values and objectives. These differences reflect the unique cultural, social and environmental contexts in which Indigenous economies operate.

Economic goals and measures of wealth

Indigenous economic systems frequently prioritize the well-being of the entire community, including vulnerable members, rather than the accumulation of wealth by individuals or entities. They stress sufficiency and equitable distribution of resources rather than infinite growth.⁹ This egalitarian focus supports social stability and cohesion.

Wealth in Indigenous societies is often measured through relationships, community strength and cultural continuity rather than just material possessions. Bartering, gifting and reciprocal exchanges are key components of Indigenous economic systems, targeting relationships and mutual support over monetary transactions. These practices strengthen social cohesion and foster networks of cooperation within and between communities.

Economic activities and integration of cultural and spiritual values

Many Indigenous economic systems are based on subsistence activities, such as hunting, fishing, farming and gathering, which are closely aligned with seasonal cycles and local ecosystems. Economic activities are frequently interwoven with cultural and spiritual practices. For example, certain resources may be harvested or traded only in accordance with cultural protocols or ceremonies, highlighting a holistic approach that integrates economic, social and spiritual dimensions.

Indigenous economic systems are characterized by multigenerational thinking with long-term decision-making focused on impacts for the seventh generation¹⁰ and beyond. Unlike the profit-driven focus of many non-Indigenous economies, Indigenous economies prioritize sustainability and resource stewardship, ensuring that natural resources are managed responsibly for future generations.

Relationship with nature

Indigenous economies are rooted in a holistic worldview that emphasizes balance, reciprocity with nature and sustainable resource management. Unlike extractive practices in many non-Indigenous economies, Indigenous systems prioritize long-term conservation for future generations and respect for all living beings, including plants and animals.¹¹ This stewardship-focused approach not only ensures the viability of resources for future generations, but also aligns with global efforts to preserve biodiversity.

With at least a quarter of the world's land under their ownership or management, Indigenous Peoples safeguard 80% of the planet's remaining biodiversity. Their economic activities, such as agroforestry (or diverse forest gardens) and harvesting natural products, are conducted in alignment with cultural traditions and a sustainable relationship with the environment. This model of wealth creation is sustainable by nature, emphasizing stewardship over ownership and invoking concepts such as usufruct, where resources are used responsibly without permanent ownership.¹²

Article 8(j) of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity underscores the importance of this ethos. This article commits parties to respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous Peoples. It also promotes the equitable sharing of benefits derived from biological diversity while strengthening Indigenous participation in biodiversity-related decision-making processes.

Indigenous societies also emphasize collective ownership of land, resources and production, contrasting with the private-property model of non-Indigenous economies. This communal approach ensures equitable resource distribution within communities and reflects a deep cultural connection to the land. Beyond their own territories, Indigenous Peoples contribute invaluable traditional knowledge and insights, offering essential guidance for environmental assessments and sustainable ecosystem management.

Emphasis on local markets and short value chains

Indigenous economies are typically localized, relying on nearby resources and traditional knowledge to meet community needs. This contrasts with the globalized, market-oriented focus of many non-Indigenous economies, which prioritize efficiency and scalability over local resilience.

Adaptation and resilience

Indigenous economies are remarkably adept at adapting to environmental changes and external pressures, relying on traditional knowledge and innovative practices to sustain livelihoods. This resilience is increasingly recognized as crucial to address global challenges such as climate change.

Rationale for an Indigenous Peoples and trade strategy

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is well-positioned to develop and implement an Indigenous Peoples and Trade (IPT) Strategy, given its unique mandate and expertise. As a joint agency of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations, ITC combines a focus on expanding trade opportunities with the aim of fostering sustainable and inclusive development <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=2824&menu=3170>. This dual mandate aligns perfectly with the needs of Indigenous Peoples seeking economic empowerment through trade while maintaining their cultural integrity and sustainable practices.

Although many programmes and initiatives support vulnerable communities through trade, a specific strategy focused on Indigenous Peoples is both necessary and timely. Indigenous Peoples face specific challenges and have distinct strengths that warrant a tailored approach. They are underrepresented in global trade due to disparities such as systemic barriers to market access, limited recognition of their rights to land and resources, and gaps in economic participation. Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions that align with their cultural, social and economic contexts.

Indigenous Peoples also represent substantial untapped potential in global trade. Their traditional knowledge systems, sustainable practices and unique approaches to entrepreneurship offer opportunities to create value in areas such as sustainable goods, creative industries and biodiversity-based products and nature-related services. Supporting their inclusion in trade systems not only fosters economic empowerment within Indigenous communities but also contributes to broader global goals, including sustainable development and biodiversity conservation.



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The development of an IPT Strategy also aligns closely with international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly those related to reducing inequalities (SDG 10), promoting decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), ensuring sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12), combating climate change (SDG 13), protecting sustainable land use and halting biodiversity loss (SDG 15), and strengthening partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17).

Moreover, the strategy reinforces the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially Articles 3 and 20, which affirm Indigenous Peoples' right to economic self-determination and development.

The strategy will also help advance the mandate of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) – notably its focus on the economic and social development of Indigenous Peoples. By addressing trade-related barriers and opportunities, the strategy will support UNPFII's objectives to promote inclusive economic systems, respect for cultural integrity and equitable participation in global markets.

Momentum is growing in international trade frameworks for Indigenous economic inclusion, as demonstrated by initiatives such as the Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement and the Inclusive Trade Action Group at the WTO. The increasing inclusion of Indigenous-specific chapters and provisions in trade agreements, including the United Kingdom–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, reflects a growing recognition of the importance of Indigenous participation in international trade.

While ITC has extensive experience with marginalized communities, supporting Indigenous Peoples in trade is a developing area. Discussions at the 2023 WTO Public Forum highlighted the importance of Indigenous Peoples in trade and attracted the attention of WTO Members.

By developing a dedicated IPT Strategy, ITC can address the specific barriers facing Indigenous firms, leverage their unique strengths and ensure that the benefits of international trade are more equitably distributed. Aligning the IPT Strategy with the broader initiatives mentioned above ensures coherence, builds on existing efforts and enhances the impact of collective action.

CHAPTER 2

Situational analysis and needs assessment

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SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Indigenous Peoples continue to face the impacts of historical marginalization, including colonization, land dispossession, oppression and discrimination, along with a lack of control over their cultural practices. Economic expansion by both colonial and modern states has restricted the rights and development of Indigenous Peoples, leading to their impoverishment. Indeed, Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately represented among the world's poorest. While Indigenous Peoples comprise just 6% of the global population (about 476 million), they account for a staggering 19% of the world's extremely poor.¹³

Indigenous Peoples are one of the most vulnerable populations in the world. Barriers ranging from difficulty accessing training opportunities to financial exclusion from banks and other capital providers prevent them from participating fully in the formal economy. Disenfranchisement has led to limited entrepreneurial activity and job opportunities among Indigenous Peoples in some countries, resulting in high unemployment and greater reliance on government support programmes.^{14,15}

They also have limited access to justice and little involvement in political processes and decision-making. Indigenous communities are often found at the bottom of the priority list for public investment in basic services and infrastructure such as electricity, road, internet and healthcare. Issues around access and quality of education result in limited literacy.

Indigenous Peoples struggle with the lack of formal recognition of their lands, territories and resources. Although many Indigenous communities occupy much of their land under customary ownership, governments typically recognize only a fraction of the land as legally belonging to the Indigenous community.¹⁶ Meanwhile, recognition of land does not guarantee the protection of boundaries and sustainable natural resources management. Insecurity in land tenure undermines economic and social development efforts in Indigenous communities.¹⁷

These systemic challenges mean it is vital to identify and address the specific challenges that Indigenous Peoples face in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Methodology for strategy development

The development of the IPT Strategy followed a comprehensive and inclusive methodology designed to ensure the strategy is both well-informed and representative. It began with desk research and initial consultations with ITC staff as well as missions to Brazil, Ecuador and Panama, conducted by a team of graduate students from Columbia University, which provided foundational insights into the needs and opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in trade.

Building on this, additional field research was undertaken during a mission to Indonesia to understand the trade contexts and challenges facing Indigenous Peoples there. Further desk research and follow-up consultations with ITC staff by an international consultant helped refine the strategy's focus areas, ensuring alignment with ITC's broader objectives. Importantly, the strategy was vetted with Indigenous stakeholders initially consulted during the missions, ensuring their perspectives and priorities were accurately reflected.

Input from Indigenous representatives from Benin, Burkina Faso, New Zealand, the United States and Brazil, which participated in ITC's Indigenous exhibition space at the WTO Public Forum 2024, further enriched the strategy, adding diverse global perspectives. This iterative and participatory process ensured that the strategy is grounded in practical realities and reflects the voices and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples. See Annex 2 for a full list of the stakeholders consulted.

The following needs were identified through this research and consultation.

Indigenous-specific challenges to international trade

While some of these issues affect other marginalized individuals and groups as well, they have a significant impact on Indigenous Peoples due to their unique historical and cultural context. Issues that are acute or unique to Indigenous Peoples include:

- Land rights and resource access
- Intellectual property protection
- Administrative barriers
- Intergenerational approach to business and sustainability

Access to resources and infrastructure [N1]

Land rights and resource access¹⁸

Many Indigenous communities have complex relationships with their ancestral lands, which may be governed by treaties or traditional laws. An important distinction is that Indigenous communities often have communal land ownership structures. This differs from the individual or private ownership models common in many other cultures and can create obstacles for individual entrepreneurs wishing to access shared raw materials required for Indigenous crafts. Similarly, policies that overlook Indigenous land tenure systems can create uncertainty around resource use and business development opportunities.

Exploitation of traditional foodstuff – for example, quinoa and açai – raises the price and reduces the availability of these commodities for local consumption and economic activity. This issue, compounded by environmental degradation and climate change, result in food insecurity for many Indigenous communities.

Physical infrastructure

Many Indigenous communities are located in remote or rural areas with limited access to goods, services and infrastructure. High transportation costs and inadequate infrastructure – such as poor road networks and limited access to airports, electricity, energy and water supply – drive up the prices of essential goods and services and reduce the availability of different products. The limited availability of public education and other essential services, such as healthcare, notary and taxation services, leaves many Indigenous Peoples unfamiliar with these systems or uncertain about how to access and use them effectively.

These challenges also hamper business operations and trade. Geographic isolation limits employment opportunities for many Indigenous individuals who live far from urban centres where jobs are concentrated. Poor transportation links aggravate this situation by making commuting or relocation difficult or unaffordable.

Additionally, these infrastructure deficits make it hard for Indigenous businesses to operate efficiently, connect with wider markets and networks, and compete effectively. Despite dedicated stalls for Indigenous artisans in marketplaces such as the Mercado Nacional de Artesanias in Brazil, many remain vacant or occupied by non-Indigenous individuals.¹⁹

Accessibility issues, such as inconvenient locations and distance of markets from Indigenous villages, hinder access for deserving Indigenous artisans. Access is not so much an issue for the Casco Antiguo market in Panama, but its lack of proper physical infrastructure detracts from the overall shopping experience.²⁰ Vendors set up stalls outdoors without permanent structures and the site struggles to provide basic amenities including washrooms, fans and electricity, posing challenges for both visitors and sellers.

In Ecuador, the Association of Waorani Women of the Ecuadorian Amazon (AMWAE) struggles to sell locally because of low customer traffic through its stores in Shell and Quito. The shop in Quito is located inside a museum and is typically visited by museum visitors rather than customers seeking out the shop specifically. Shell is located at the edge of the Amazon rainforest in a remote area with minimal tourism.

Digital infrastructure

Many Indigenous consumers face a digital divide, particularly in rural areas where internet access is unreliable or absent. Even where access is available, digital literacy remains a barrier, limiting their ability to navigate online marketplaces, compare prices or access essential services such as healthcare, education and government assistance programmes, which are increasingly digitized.

It also makes it more difficult for Indigenous entrepreneurs to sell goods on e-commerce platforms, market online and communicate with international partners. For example, AMWAE maintains a website and social media presence but lacks an online payment system, forcing potential customers to contact the association through Facebook or e-mail. This creates an additional barrier to online purchases.²¹

Financial exclusion and access to capital

Financial exclusion remains a major barrier for Indigenous Peoples, marked by limited access to banking services, credit and digital payment systems. In remote areas, the lack of formal banking services forces many to rely on informal money lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates, further limiting their purchasing power and participation in the market economy.

Indigenous entrepreneurs often struggle to secure loans or investment due to discriminatory practices, lack of collateral tied to communal land ownership or inadequate financial literacy. Many local financial institutions are reluctant to lend to Indigenous businesses due to unfamiliarity and weak credit histories – stemming from historical reliance on government transfers or self-financing – making risk assessment challenging. As a result, Indigenous businesses that do obtain loans often face higher interest rates due to perceived risk.

Additionally, microfinance options and grant programmes are rarely tailored to the unique needs of Indigenous entrepreneurs, leaving them without sufficient resources to grow or enter international markets.

Skills and capacity [N2]

Education, training and workforce barriers

Indigenous Peoples face systemic barriers to accessing education and vocational training, resulting in lower-than-average post-secondary education rates compared to non-Indigenous populations. This limits employment opportunities and often keeps Indigenous employees in low-paying or precarious jobs with few protections, perpetuating economic insecurity.

Discriminatory hiring practices and the lack of recognition for skills that Indigenous Peoples have acquired informally – due to limited access to formal education and vocational opportunities – exacerbate these challenges, as such skills are often not acknowledged or valued outside local or Indigenous contexts.

Language barriers and cultural differences in workplace norms present additional hurdles. Many workplaces fail to respect Indigenous cultural practices, such as time needed for community ceremonies or traditional subsistence activities, leading to alienation and higher turnover rates. The absence of culturally sensitive environments contributes to job dissatisfaction, while underrepresentation in decision-making roles further marginalizes Indigenous perspectives in professional settings.

Business and financial skills gaps

Indigenous firms often struggle to attract workers with the necessary skills or qualifications. This affects key aspects of operations such as business planning, marketing, customer relations and regulatory compliance. These gaps hinder their ability to compete internationally. For instance, AMWAE members in Ecuador struggle with pricing strategies for chocolate production. Product pricing is estimated by the amount of time and labour needed to produce and harvest the beans, without considering market pricing or competition.²²

Meanwhile, Indigenous handicraft producers in Panama lack adequate cost accounting systems to determine the pricing of their products. While the value-added prices for handicrafts are typically assessed based on factors including design, complexity and production time, they often overlook the inclusion of raw material costs.²³

In services trade, Indigenous ecotourism businesses in Panama require training to improve their services and meet the growing demands of the tourism sector. Many Indigenous communities possess practical experience with hosting visitors and showcasing their cultures but lack the entrepreneurial knowledge and resources to formalize and expand their operations. While some people and groups receive funding through international development projects, they often struggle with financial management, including how to invest or save funds effectively to sustain and expand their businesses over time.²⁴

Training initiatives often fail to address the cultural and logistical realities of Indigenous firms. Many training programmes overlook the importance of Indigenous values, such as environmental sustainability, resource reusability and collective decision-making.

Short-term programmes, such as those offered to AMWAE on cocoa production, are insufficient for long-term impact. Long-term programmes, while more effective, are prohibitively expensive and often conducted outside Indigenous communities, making them less accessible. Language barriers, particularly when training is delivered in non-native or international languages, further reduce comprehension and retention.

Meanwhile, Indigenous ecotourism enterprises in Panama require training to enhance their services and meet the growing demands of the tourism sector. Many Indigenous communities have practical experience with hosting visitors and showcasing their cultures but lack the entrepreneurial knowledge and resources to formalize and expand their operations. While some individuals and groups receive funding through international development projects, they often struggle with financial management, including how to invest or save funds effectively to sustain and grow their businesses over time.

Trade-specific obstacles [N3]

Intellectual property protection

Indigenous communities possess unique traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and practices that are often unprotected by conventional intellectual property systems. A major challenge facing many Indigenous Peoples is the difficulty in identifying and articulating their own intellectual property, as these assets are deeply embedded in their cultural practices and often lack formal recognition. Without this clarity, opportunities for protection or monetization can be missed, leaving Indigenous Peoples vulnerable to exploitation.

In 2019, for example, a leading shoe manufacturer was accused of using traditional Mola patterns of the Kuna Yala community to decorate a shoe launched in Puerto Rico.²⁵ Although the product was withdrawn following protests from Indigenous community members in Panama and Colombia, no financial reparations or recognition were provided to the Kuna community. Similarly, in the culinary sector, non-Indigenous chefs and researchers have often incorporated Indigenous ingredients and techniques without consultation or the protection of traditional knowledge.²⁶

Legal frameworks often fail to recognize or protect Indigenous intellectual property and traditional knowledge, making it difficult for Indigenous entrepreneurs to safeguard and monetize their cultural assets. This makes them vulnerable to exploitation, where their designs and practices can be copied without recognition or compensation.

This hurdle is compounded by the communal nature of Indigenous intellectual property, which encompasses shared traditions, practices and knowledge passed down through generations. Conventional intellectual property systems, which emphasize individual ownership and finite timelines, are poorly suited to safeguard these collective assets and risk undermining the cultural heritage of Indigenous Peoples.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, adopted in May 2024, aims to address these gaps. By requiring patent applicants to disclose the origin of genetic resources and the Indigenous Peoples or local communities providing associated knowledge, the treaty ensures improved recognition and protection of these communal assets.²⁷

Administrative barriers

Both domestic and foreign regulatory and institutional barriers hinder Indigenous entrepreneurship. Indigenous businesses often operate informally due to complex and inaccessible processes for registering businesses or securing permits. This challenge is further compounded by their non-traditional business models, including their collective ownership structures, which may not fit neatly within conventional regulatory frameworks. These factors create additional hurdles for Indigenous entrepreneurs seeking formal recognition of their enterprises.

Both domestic and foreign regulatory and institutional barriers hinder Indigenous entrepreneurship. Indigenous businesses often operate under collective ownership structures that align with traditional values but may conflict

with conventional business models. As a result, many Indigenous entrepreneurs operate informally due to complex and inaccessible processes for registering businesses or securing permits.

Additionally, while many Indigenous practices inherently embody sustainability principles, they are often not recognized by formal sustainability certifications because they do not conform to conventional industry standards and health regulations. The high cost of obtaining and maintaining Fair Trade certification makes it difficult for Indigenous businesses and associations to expand sales in European markets where certification is preferred.

Furthermore, regulations such as the European Union Novel Food regulation limit imports of food products that contain unknown ingredients. This has a disproportionate effect on foods of Indigenous origin, as ingredients sourced from Indigenous territories are often largely unknown outside the local area.

Market access and competition

Indigenous exporters report a lack of knowledge about foreign markets as a major obstacle to international trade, particularly for niche or culturally significant goods such as handicrafts, traditional foods, eco-tourism services or biodiversity-based products and nature-related services. Indigenous firms often lack access to information about market demand and may miss national, regional or global market opportunities by focusing solely on local preferences. For instance, they may have surplus products due to limited local demand but fail to recognize the potential in wider markets.

Indigenous artisans struggle to compete with mass-produced goods, which often undervalue the authenticity and craftsmanship of their products. Machine-made items, frequently marketed as Indigenous or similar looking, are sold at much lower prices, creating intense pricing pressures. This is especially evident in the handicraft sector, where power looms and modern machinery flood the market with generic products, devaluing handmade crafts.

Consumers often opt for cheaper, machine-made alternatives, unaware of the cultural significance, quality or sustainability of authentic Indigenous products. This lack of awareness makes it difficult for artisans to justify fair pricing for their work, highlighting the need for better information sharing about the value of traditional art and craftsmanship.

Logistics and border issues

Indigenous exporters struggle more with logistics and border-related obstacles than non-Indigenous businesses. These challenges stem from geographical remoteness, inadequate infrastructure, high shipping costs and complex customs procedures. Such obstacles can create bottlenecks that prevent otherwise high-quality and in-demand products from reaching global markets.

Remote locations pose a major challenge for Indigenous businesses. Many communities are situated in areas with limited access to transportation networks. In Ecuador, for example, some communities can only be reached by small canoes, requiring hours to access an unpaved road. From there, the cost of transporting goods to export points is prohibitively high.

The lack of infrastructure compounds the problem, as many Indigenous communities lack reliable internet connectivity, postal services or access to domestic logistics providers. In Ecuador, the absence of a national postal service further drives up shipping costs, forcing businesses to rely on expensive international couriers or informal methods.

Customs and border-related obstacles also disproportionately affect Indigenous businesses. Complex customs procedures, duties and tariffs make it particularly difficult for Indigenous micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to trade internationally, especially with other Indigenous communities across borders. One Indigenous entrepreneur noted that the ability to conduct tribe-to-tribe trade without these barriers would greatly enhance their exporting potential.

Additionally, time-sensitive industries, such as fashion, require efficient logistical systems that are not always available to Indigenous businesses. Shipping delays due to insufficient logistics services can result in lost opportunities for Indigenous firms.

Limited business networks

Indigenous entrepreneurs often cannot access established business networks, which can hinder business growth and development. This isolates Indigenous businesses from opportunities to secure contracts, gain market information and connect with mentors and collaborators.

Indigenous businesses have considerable difficulty securing contracts and partnerships. Without integration into mainstream business networks, they often miss opportunities to connect with potential clients, suppliers

and collaborators. For example, community-based tourism companies may struggle to succeed without established relationships with tourism companies or participation in trade missions and industry events.

Similarly, limited access to market information hampers Indigenous entrepreneurs' ability to develop and diversify their offerings. Without insights into pricing trends, consumer preferences and demand, they may find it difficult to create competitive products for regional or international markets.

Mentorship is another critical gap. Many Indigenous entrepreneurs lack access to mentors or advisers who understand their unique challenges and can provide culturally relevant guidance. Mentors can offer expertise in navigating trade systems, accessing finance and refining business strategies, but these opportunities are often unavailable to Indigenous business owners. This lack of guidance and connections with other Indigenous businesses prevents the formation of robust support networks, limiting visibility and the ability to attract customers, investors or strategic partners

Cultural and social challenges [N4]

Intergenerational approach to business and sustainability

Many Indigenous businesses and communities see their economic activity through an intergenerational lens, focusing on long-term sustainability and the well-being of future generations. This emphasis on intergenerational custodianship and sustainability can lead to business practices that prioritize community and environmental well-being over short-term individual profits – which differs from the approach of many other businesses. This also results in a deeply ingrained cultural connection to sustainability, where economic activity is directly tied to the well-being of the land and resources.

In some cases, Indigenous entrepreneurs may face scepticism or mistrust from their own communities if their business activities are seen as conflicting with community values or interests. This creates internal tensions not faced by entrepreneurs from other groups. There are instances where entire communities are hesitant or sceptical about market-led approaches, seeing them as contrary to their traditional structures.

Stereotypes and racial discrimination

Racial discrimination and stereotypes remain pervasive barriers for Indigenous employees. Discriminatory hiring practices and workplace environments can prevent Indigenous workers from securing jobs or advancing in their careers.

Additionally, stereotypes and discrimination can make it challenging for Indigenous firms to gain credibility and trust from potential customers, investors and partners. There may be a misconception that Indigenous culture is counterintuitive to good business strategies, creating barriers that affect Indigenous entrepreneurs' ability to form international business relationships. For example, efforts to promote Indigenous cuisine in one South American country initially faced criticism from some authorities who questioned the sustainability and quality of the cuisine, claiming that no one would want to eat 'primitive' food.

Limited women's participation in entrepreneurship

Deeply entrenched gender norms dictate specific economic roles for women and men in many Indigenous communities. In cocoa-producing communities in Brazil, for example, women tend to undertake physically demanding tasks in cocoa cultivation and harvesting, while men primarily focus on sales and distribution, often with higher authority and financial rewards.²⁸ Consequently, Indigenous women may face barriers to empowerment and economic independence due to limited access to resources and decision-making, and fewer opportunities for skills development.

Women's limited economic participation not only affects the livelihood of women themselves, but also hinders general economic growth. An International Monetary Fund study found that gross domestic product per capita losses attributable to gender gaps in the labour market reached 27% in certain regions.²⁹ While this statistic is not specific to Indigenous women, it underscores the macroeconomic impact of women's exclusion from economic activities.



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Policy and representation [N5]

Disjointed institutional support from national and local governments

Government initiatives, while well-intentioned, often fail to address the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples and their businesses. For example, Brazil's Ministry of Tourism promoted ecotourism by creating itineraries for tourists to visit Indigenous communities, intending to benefit Indigenous firms.³⁰ However, policymakers did not consult Indigenous communities during the planning phase. As a result, the locations that were selected were ill-suited and lacked essential infrastructure, such as roads and lodging, to support increased tourism.

Exclusion from trade agreements

Historically, Indigenous rights and interests have been excluded from trade agreements and negotiations. Such agreements have sometimes clashed with traditional Indigenous practices. For example, a perceived demand for

large, consistent year-round supply may push policymakers to enter agreements requiring continuous production. This jeopardizes the efforts of Indigenous producers to maintain environmental sustainability through seasonal planting and harvesting practices.

Lack of representation

Indigenous Peoples have typically had limited participation in the development of trade policies that affect their interests. This absence of Indigenous voices leads to a disconnect between Indigenous knowledge and trade regulations, hampering the alignment of trade policies with the unique needs and values of Indigenous Peoples.

For instance, small açai farmers in Brazil use few industrial additives, relying instead on traditional and sustainable methods. However, trade policymakers may misinterpret these traditional practices as substandard or incompatible with international market standards, creating difficulties for these farmers to obtain the necessary documentation to export the product.³¹

CHAPTER 3

Strategic framework

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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Indigenous Peoples have the innate capacity and determination to tackle the challenges they face, as demonstrated by their successful enterprises that create employment, generate revenue and stimulate regional growth. These businesses often reinvest earnings into public services and infrastructure. Establishing links to external markets creates multiplier effects, benefiting Indigenous communities and the broader economy while preserving culture and safeguarding Earth.³²

Vision

This strategy is designed to empower businesses owned by Indigenous Peoples, building their capacity to compete in global trade while recognizing their right to self-determination. ITC aims to foster equitable economic opportunities for Indigenous Peoples that honour their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and stewardship of biodiversity. This vision underscores self-determination and collaboration among Indigenous communities, governments and other stakeholders to address systemic barriers and promote inclusive trade.

Central to this vision is a commitment to sustainability, equity and intergenerational prosperity, ensuring that economic opportunities protect cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and natural resources for future generations.

Goals

The IPT Strategy enables Indigenous entrepreneurs, producers and artisans to navigate the complexities of international trade while safeguarding their rights, cultural integrity and ecological sustainability and ownership of their knowledge.

Goal 1: Enhance the capacity and competitiveness of Indigenous Peoples in business and trade to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Goal 2: Empower business support organizations (BSOs) to support Indigenous MSMEs by enhancing access to networks, resources and partnerships for improved resilience and competitiveness.

Goal 3: Advocate for supportive national and international trade policy and regulatory environments to support Indigenous Peoples in entrepreneurship and trade.

Guiding principles

Engaging with Indigenous Peoples requires a deep understanding and respect for their unique cultural frameworks, governance structures and decision-making processes. These frameworks prioritize collective well-being, environmental stewardship and cultural preservation, with traditional knowledge and community-based governance playing pivotal roles. Trade relationships and support initiatives must reflect these principles by honouring Indigenous heritage, safeguarding their lands and empowering communities as equal partners in fostering a sustainable and inclusive global economy.

Indigenous entrepreneurship operates in contexts that are distinct from conventional MSMEs, requiring tailored methodologies that account for the realities of their communities. This recognition stems from key considerations, including:

- In some economies, Indigenous Peoples are recognized as distinct nations with unique legal rights and land-use regulations
- Indigenous communities define their own values and development goals, often anchored in sustainable practices and intergenerational equity
- Indigenous decision-making processes, governance mechanisms and legislative arrangements are uniquely adapted to their cultural and societal contexts



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To uphold these distinctions, the following principles will guide the IPT Strategy:

- **Cultural integrity:** All project designs must respect and protect Indigenous Peoples' dignity, human rights, traditional knowledge and cultural uniqueness, ensuring social and economic benefits are delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.
- **Inclusive participation:** Indigenous Peoples must be fully and effectively engaged throughout the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects.
- **Broad representation:** Efforts will prioritize broad-based involvement, ensuring diverse perspectives within Indigenous communities are heard and respected.
- **Transparent consultations:** Public consultations must be conducted in an open, transparent and accessible manner, enabling meaningful dialogue and trust-building.
- **FPIC:** FPIC will be obtained where required to ensure that any development activities align with Indigenous communities' values, rights and aspirations.³³
- **Local leadership and sustainability:** Projects stemming from the strategy will transition from externally led interventions to locally driven initiatives by gradually transferring management and leadership responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples' organizations, community leaders and entrepreneurs. Comprehensive training and partnerships with local institutions will ensure long-term sustainability and inclusive development outcomes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The strategic objectives of the IPT Strategy provide a clear framework for action, designed to achieve the goals and address the challenges and opportunities Indigenous Peoples face in global trade. These objectives serve as a foundation for the strategy's operational activities, ensuring that its implementation is focused, impactful and aligned with the unique needs and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples. By guiding the strategy's efforts, the objectives aim

to create meaningful pathways for Indigenous economic empowerment and equitable participation in international markets.

The work of ITC is structured around five key impact areas that are relevant to Indigenous economic development. Each objective, where possible, is linked to an impact area below:



Sustainable and resilient value chains



Inclusive trade



Green trade



E-commerce



Regional integration and South-South trade

Goal 1: Enhance the capacity and competitiveness of Indigenous Peoples in business and trade to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth.



Build business and technical capacity [O1]

Deliver culturally relevant training programmes to enhance skills in product development, e-commerce, marketing, pricing and regulatory compliance. Ensure these programmes respect Indigenous values and are tailored to address the specific requirements of businesses engaging in regional and global trade.



Expand market access and develop inclusive value chains [O2]

Equip Indigenous businesses with the tools needed to access national and international markets. Promote sustainable and inclusive value chains that emphasize equitable benefit-sharing, value-added production and the integration of Indigenous products into global supply chains.



Revitalize key sectors: Handicrafts and textiles, ecotourism, agrifood and bioeconomy [O3]

Leverage ITC's technical expertise to foster innovation and create value in traditional sectors by helping Indigenous firms adapt to market demands while preserving cultural heritage. Support heritage-based products in handicrafts, promote ecotourism for cultural exchange and conservation, and support biodiversity-based goods value-chain development and nature-related services. Collaborate with stakeholders to create pathways for global and sustainable growth.



Empower Indigenous women and youth entrepreneurs [O4]

Support Indigenous women through customized capacity-building activities, advocacy efforts and financial assistance. Strengthen women's leadership in economic endeavours, address barriers to gender equity and promote the role of Indigenous women as drivers of community and economic development.

Goal 2: Empower BSOs to support Indigenous MSMEs by enhancing access to networks, resources and partnerships for greater resilience and competitiveness.



Remove trade barriers and address logistics challenges [O5]

Help BSOs streamline administrative and regulatory processes, such as business registration and customs procedures, to reduce barriers for Indigenous exporters. Address logistical obstacles, including inadequate transportation networks and high shipping costs, to ensure Indigenous goods can reach global markets efficiently.



Foster inclusive business networks and collaboration [O6]

Facilitate the integration of Indigenous entrepreneurs into national and international business networks. Build mentorship programmes, foster participation in trade missions and industry events, and promote collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses to enhance visibility and trust.



Advance the green transition through trade [O7]

Work with BSOs to offer support in building out sustainable value chains anchored in environmentally friendly business practices. Highlight Indigenous leadership in the transition to the green economy, enhance capacity for eco-friendly practices and connect Indigenous enterprises to global sustainability initiatives.



Facilitate financial inclusion for trade growth [O8]

Expand access to tailored financial products such as trade finance, export credit, and microloans to empower Indigenous entrepreneurs to scale their businesses for international markets. Enable BSOs to provide financial literacy programmes to help Indigenous firms manage trade-related transactions, navigate complex financial systems and access resources for growth.

Goal 3: Advocate for supportive national and international trade policy and regulatory environments to support Indigenous Peoples in entrepreneurship and trade.



Advocate for policy alignment and Indigenous representation [O9]

Help governments to promote the inclusion of Indigenous voices in trade policy development. Promote the integration of Indigenous rights into trade agreements and collaborate with governments to co-design policies that bridge gaps in infrastructure, sustainability and market access. Amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples in international forums.



Protect Indigenous intellectual property and cultural heritage [O10]

Partner with WIPO to establish legal frameworks and mechanisms to safeguard Indigenous traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, and communal intellectual property. Advocate for fair compensation and global recognition of Indigenous designs, techniques, and practices, ensuring their protection in international trade contexts.

Certain enablers, such as access to resources and infrastructure, are essential for facilitating Indigenous participation in trade but fall outside ITC's direct operational mandate. ITC will work closely with key partners – including national governments, multilateral organizations, financial institutions and private-sector stakeholders – to address these foundational needs. Through these partnerships, ITC will ensure that Indigenous Peoples benefit from infrastructure investments, access to financial tools and secure resource rights that are necessary for trade readiness.



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Strengthen trade-enabling infrastructure

Invest in transportation, the deployment of renewable energy and water management systems, market infrastructure and digital connectivity to facilitate the movement of Indigenous goods and services to regional and international markets. Address logistical barriers such as poor road networks, reliable and affordable energy sources, and unreliable internet, which limit Indigenous entrepreneurs' ability to participate in e-commerce, reach export hubs and engage with global buyers.

Ensure equitable access to resources for trade and production

Promote secure access to ancestral lands, natural resources and raw materials essential for Indigenous businesses to engage in trade. Advocate for policies that support Indigenous land tenure systems and sustainable resource management, enabling communities to participate in value-added production and global trade while mitigating challenges such as resource exploitation and climate-induced food insecurity.

CHAPTER 4

Key beneficiary groups and priority sectors

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KEY BENEFICIARY GROUPS AND PRIORITY SECTORS

A key component of the criteria of Indigenous Peoples is self-determination and self-identification. Therefore, the IPT Strategy must take into account that Indigenous Peoples define themselves and their relationship to the economy, and that approach may differ from a market-led approach to business. Furthermore, in implementing this strategy, ITC may encounter potential beneficiaries that do not wish to embrace a market-led approach, including adapting their economic activity to conform with international markets.

ITC and the IPT Strategy will respect the principle of self-determination and the wishes of all potential beneficiaries and will not mandate any group or individual to reform. However, given its mandate on trade promotion and export development for MSMEs, ITC will prioritize Indigenous entrepreneurs and artisans who have expressed an interest in, or are already active in, international trade.

Priority group: Support for Indigenous women

Indigenous women entrepreneurs often engage in economic activities that go beyond income generation, addressing the broader needs of their communities. For example, in Ecuador, an AMWAE leader regularly visits communities to assess medical needs, monitor school attendance and ensure access to essential services – activities that extend beyond the organization's day-to-day business management. This holistic approach contributes to poverty alleviation, infrastructure development and better health and education outcomes.

Indigenous men often support women's economic participation, amplifying their voices and promoting them to leadership roles, fostering greater representation and involvement in decision-making processes. By targeting Indigenous women, ITC can use the provision of business and trade support to accelerate development impacts in other areas (e.g. education, healthcare) in rural communities.

Empowering Indigenous women through associations

Indigenous women's associations play a pivotal role in empowering women and advancing economic inclusion. These organizations help women navigate the challenges of starting and running businesses in remote areas while advocating for policies that recognize and support their economic contributions, such as securing access to markets and financial services. By doing so, they not only uplift individual women but also strengthen the economic resilience of their communities.

In Brazil, organizations such as the National Association of Indigenous Women Ancestry Warriors (ANMIGA) and Suraras do Tapajós exemplify these efforts. ANMIGA defends Indigenous women's rights and enhances their visibility, particularly in areas affected by environmental degradation.³⁴ It empowers women through leadership development, educational opportunities and advocacy at national and international levels.³⁵

Similarly, Suraras do Tapajós leverages cultural practices to create income-generating opportunities, using traditional music and crafts to preserve cultural heritage while bridging traditional and modern economies.

In Ecuador, AMWAE demonstrates how women-led Indigenous organizations can drive sustainable development. Managed by an elected board of Waorani women, AMWAE oversees chocolate bar and handicraft production, promoting organic cacao farming to protect Amazonian wildlife and support sustainable development.³⁶ By shifting the local economy from subsistence hunting to cacao production, AMWAE has reduced wildlife poaching, effectively shutting down the bushmeat market in the region.³⁷

Priority group: Support for Indigenous youth

Supporting Indigenous youth is crucial for the success of any IPT strategy. Indigenous populations are much younger than non-Indigenous populations, with about 45% of Indigenous Peoples between 15 and 30 years of age

globally,³⁸ and as high as 63% of the Indigenous population in some countries.³⁹

However, Indigenous youth face disproportionate challenges in economic participation. In Australia, for example, 29% of Indigenous youth are not engaged in any employment or educational activity, compared to only 8% of their non-Indigenous counterparts.⁴⁰

While disaggregated data on Indigenous youth economic activity are not yet available for developing countries, ITC

expects similar trends to Australia. Supporting Indigenous youth is not only about addressing current disparities, but also about investing in the future of Indigenous economies and cultures. Indigenous youth play a vital role in bridging traditional knowledge with modern innovations, potentially contributing to more sustainable and resilient economic systems.⁴¹ By focusing on youth in the strategy, ITC can help ensure the long-term economic empowerment and cultural preservation of Indigenous communities.

Priority sectors

Handicrafts and textiles

Rooted in traditional skills and often using local materials, handicraft production offers a viable livelihood option, especially in communities with limited access to other economic opportunities. In Kenya, for example, tribes such as the Samburu, Turkana, Borana and Maasai maintain beadwork traditions, often through cooperatives, while Indigenous communities in Ecuador engaged in handicraft production can generate incomes far higher than the rural average.

Handicrafts are also deeply linked to tourism, with tourists often seeking unique, locally made souvenirs. In Myanmar's Pan Pet village, eco-tourism programmes support ethnic minority communities by promoting traditional crafts, such as the Kayah people's 'Deku'. This culturally significant item is formed from three pouches of glutinous rice wrapped in

a triangle shape to represent unity. It is then adapted into modern products such as keyrings and bags.

Despite its potential, the sector faces challenges in ensuring fair compensation for Indigenous producers. In Ecuador, for instance, intermediaries sell handicrafts made by Indigenous artisans at prices five to seven times higher than what producers receive. Addressing these disparities requires helping communities connect directly to markets, including through e-commerce platforms, and providing training in marketing, product development and pricing strategies.

Additionally, protecting intellectual property is critical to safeguard traditional designs, techniques and materials. While some countries have enacted legislation to protect traditional knowledge and cultural expressions, such measures remain uncommon globally, leaving many communities vulnerable to exploitation.

Indonesia: Advancing opportunities for Dayak Benuaq women through sustainable Ulap Doyo production

In collaboration with SheTrades Indonesia, there is an opportunity for ITC to support Indigenous women entrepreneurs from the Dayak Benuaq community in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, to preserve their cultural heritage and create sustainable economic opportunities through the production of Ulap Doyo.

This traditional woven fabric – made from the Doyo plant – is eco-friendly and deeply rooted in Dayak Benuaq culture. It is created without machinery and features unique designs that are integral to the community's sacred customs. However, the natural habitat of the Doyo plant faces increasing threats from palm oil plantation expansion, necessitating urgent conservation efforts.

This initiative takes a holistic approach, empowering women across the entire value chain – from sustainably managing Doyo plant resources to enhancing product design and international market access. Key activities would include capacity-building workshops to improve business and design skills, integrating natural dyeing and eco-friendly production methods, and collaborating with international designers to develop globally appealing products. Partnerships with local environmental NGOs and sustainable fashion experts would also aim to protect Doyo habitats and promote sustainable harvesting practices.

The project is expected to drive important outcomes, including improved profitability and market reach for Indigenous women entrepreneurs, sustainable resource management, and the preservation of Dayak Benuaq cultural heritage. By focusing on environmental sustainability and empowering local women, this initiative not only addresses economic challenges but also serves as a model for supporting Indigenous women-led enterprises in Indonesia and beyond.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism allows communities to showcase their traditions and knowledge while incentivizing the protection of natural resources, which become assets for economic development. Key activities include guiding, lodging, culinary-based experiences and selling local products and cultural experiences, diversifying local economies and funding community development. Additionally, ecotourism fosters cultural pride and encourages the maintenance of traditional practices while integrating Indigenous knowledge into environmental conservation and restoration projects.

However, successful ecotourism initiatives require Indigenous Peoples to be central partners in their design and implementation. These projects must respect traditional practices and align with community values, particularly as Indigenous approaches to economic development often prioritize cultural preservation over profit. Challenges include ensuring equitable distribution of benefits, preserving cultural authenticity and managing environmental impacts.

Training in areas such as marketing, hospitality and financial management, alongside support for market access and intellectual property protection, is crucial to enable Indigenous communities to participate meaningfully in ecotourism and ensure its sustainability.

Myanmar: Empowering ethnic minorities through community-based tourism

ITC's work in Myanmar showcases a model for fostering inclusive economic growth and cultural preservation through community-based tourism. In Kayah State, ITC partnered with local stakeholders, including the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, to empower ethnic minority communities. By leveraging their unique cultural assets, the initiative generated income, built skills and strengthened confidence. Activities included training in tourism management and hospitality, cultural preservation through craft demonstrations and traditional tours, and fostering market linkages with domestic and international tour operators.

Building on the success of the Netherlands Trust Fund III Myanmar – Inclusive Tourism project in Kayah State, ITC expanded efforts to the Tanintharyi Region under the Netherlands Trust Fund IV project, replicating its community-driven approach. These projects focused on sustainability by transferring knowledge locally, addressing unique community needs and bridging divides among ethnic groups in post-conflict areas. ITC's adaptive methods – such as translating materials into local languages and conducting evening sessions in remote areas without electricity – ensured cultural respect and participation.

This work not only preserved local heritage but also offered new economic opportunities, demonstrating how inclusive tourism can empower marginalized communities while informing ITC's Indigenous Peoples and Trade Strategy.

Biodiversity-based products and nature related services

Biodiversity-based products and nature services offer a sustainable pathway for economic development while ensuring the conservation of ecosystems and traditional knowledge. These products, derived from forests, rivers and diverse natural environments, include medicinal plants, natural fibres, essential oils and sustainably harvested foods.

By strengthening value chains, ITC helps Indigenous Peoples improve product quality, access niche markets and integrate sustainable practices that align with international standards. These initiatives not only generate income but also reinforce the protection of biodiversity as a valuable economic and cultural asset.

Beyond physical products, nature-related services such as biodiversity credits, biodiversity conservation and payment-for-performance mechanisms are becoming crucial tools in global sustainability efforts. These financial mechanisms reward Indigenous-led conservation and restoration initiatives, creating economic incentives for ecosystem protection.

However, ensuring fair participation in these activities requires building capacity in technical and financial literacy and establishing transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms. ITC facilitates access to these opportunities by fostering connections with responsible investors, supporting certification processes and advocating for inclusive biodiversity financing frameworks that recognize Indigenous knowledge and leadership.

For biodiversity-based sectors to thrive, Indigenous Peoples must be at the centre of their design and governance. Respecting traditional practices and ensuring that economic activities align with cultural values is critical to their long-term success. Challenges such as securing land tenure, protecting intellectual property rights and managing environmental impacts must be addressed through

holistic support that combines policy advocacy, technical assistance and sustainable business development.

By integrating biodiversity-based products and services into broader economic strategies, ITC contributes to a model where conservation and economic well-being go hand in hand.

Peru: Enhancing market access for Shiwi's sustainable botanical products

ITC, through Green to Compete Hubs, has been working with Shiwi, a Peruvian enterprise that partners with Indigenous communities to develop sustainable botanical products based on Amazonian biodiversity. Shiwi focuses on responsibly sourced ingredients such as *camu-camu*, *sacha inchi* and *copaiba oil*, ensuring that their production respects traditional knowledge while meeting international quality standards. With ITC's support, Shiwi has strengthened its sourcing model, ensuring fair benefit-sharing mechanisms with Indigenous producers and improving traceability to meet sustainability requirements in global markets.

To expand Shiwi's market reach, ITC has facilitated connections with international buyers, supporting participation in trade fairs and business-to-business matchmaking events. ITC experts have also provided technical assistance on certification processes and sustainable business practices, helping Shiwi navigate export regulations and access high-value markets. By linking biodiversity-based products with ethical trade opportunities, this initiative strengthens Shiwi's role in promoting Amazonian bioeconomy while reinforcing Indigenous leadership in sustainable value chains.

Agrifood and agribusiness

Agriculture has historically been a cornerstone of Indigenous economies, deeply tied to cultural practices, food systems and sustainable land management. Many Indigenous communities have extensive traditional knowledge of biodiversity and sustainable agricultural techniques, which are increasingly valued in international markets for organic, fair trade and ethically produced food products.

Crops and goods produced by Indigenous Peoples – such as cacao grown through agroforestry or textiles derived from alpaca – offer unique, high-value contributions to global trade. However, Indigenous agricultural practices often prioritize local consumption, environmental sustainability and cultural values over maximizing production or profit, creating a distinct approach to economic participation.

International trade in the agrifood sector presents significant opportunities as well as risks for Indigenous communities.

Increased demand for their unique products can strain production capacities, risking the disruption of sustainable practices and cultural priorities. Some communities may prefer focusing on regional markets rather than expanding into global supply chains to align with their values.

To engage successfully in international trade, Indigenous communities need targeted support in areas such as capacity building for business and marketing skills, developing products to meet international standards and ensuring fair trade practices that respect their intellectual property and traditional knowledge. It is also crucial to address infrastructure challenges and foster policy environments that promote equitable trade.

Importantly, the growing interest of Indigenous youth in agribusiness offers an opportunity to integrate traditional practices with modern entrepreneurial approaches, blending sustainable agriculture with innovative market engagement.

Ecuador: Improve production and quality of cocoa

ITC has partnered with AMWAE in the Ecuadorian Amazon to enhance the production and quality of their cacao. During an ITC-sponsored mission to visit the Waorani women, experts observed their cacao-harvesting methods and production processes. The mission identified areas for improvement, including training on proper harvesting techniques, storage practices and consistent fermentation to ensure higher-quality chocolate production.

As a result, ITC's Office for Latin America and the Caribbean team launched a pilot project bringing cacao experts and specialists from a prominent Ecuadorian chocolate factory to the communities. These experts provided hands-on training to improve cultivation, harvesting and fermentation techniques, and introduced equipment and tools to enhance production methods. Additionally, the team plans to assess the cacao trees and take grafts from the healthiest specimens to elevate the quality of the cacao harvest.

While Wao Chocolate already had a distinct branding identity, ITC's collaboration is opening new distribution channels to broaden the reach and market presence of the company's chocolate bars through Paccari, a nationally recognized brand with growing export potential.

Untapped potential – future value chains

To unlock untapped potential in communities, it is essential to move beyond readily apparent opportunities and employ a consultative, inclusive process that fosters the development of new value chains. Existing products or services may not represent the most promising areas for growth. By facilitating deep engagement with stakeholders, innovative ideas can emerge, leading to entirely new sectors and value chains.

One possible area includes medicinal herbs. During its work in Myanmar, the ITC Office for Asia and the Pacific identified medicinal herbs as a product with significant export and tourism potential, despite not being traditionally traded. The team collaborated with community members to design tours centred around these herbs, demonstrating their viability as a revenue stream.

This initiative revealed that the communities had previously only used these herbs for personal consumption and were unaware of their commercial potential. The Office for Asia and the Pacific team has identified this value chain as a potential promising area for future exploration.

The ITC framework for future value chains, developed by the ITC Strategies for Trade and Investment team, highlights five key value options:

- *Value acquisition:* Improving efficiency and reducing waste
- *Value retention:* Increasing the share of value generated within the country's borders
- *Value addition:* Introducing (in)tangible attributes to the product, such as quality and feature upgrades, to increase its worth
- *Value creation:* Expanding production or entering new value chains
- *Value distribution:* Ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits along the value chain

This iterative process focuses on efficiency, innovation and equity, enabling stakeholders to go beyond traditional offerings and enter unexplored markets. A critical aspect of this methodology is ensuring that all participants in the value chain receive their fair share of benefits through equitable value distribution. By embracing this approach, communities can diversify their economic activities, develop new market opportunities and create more resilient and sustainable economic models tailored to their unique strengths and aspirations.

To realize these opportunities, ITC will need to actively consult with Indigenous communities, ensuring that their voices guide the identification, development and implementation of new value chains tailored to their needs and priorities.

CHAPTER 5

Stakeholder engagement and partnership

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP

The successful implementation of the IPT Strategy requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders across multiple levels. At the core of this network are Indigenous Peoples themselves, whose leadership, knowledge and active participation are essential for the strategy's success and sustainability.

International partners, including United Nations bodies and other global organizations, bring valuable expertise, resources and platforms for advocacy on a global scale. National governments play a crucial role in shaping policies, providing resources and creating enabling environments for Indigenous economic participation. Equally important are subnational partnerships with local entities such as chambers of commerce, cooperatives and associations, which provide invaluable on-the-ground support and ensure the strategy's relevance and effectiveness at the community level.

Each partnership is strategically aligned with one or more goals of the IPT Strategy, leveraging the unique strengths of stakeholders to advance Indigenous Peoples' trade readiness and economic participation. This multi-tiered approach to partnerships recognizes that supporting Indigenous Peoples in trade is a complex endeavour that requires coordinated efforts from a wide array of stakeholders, each contributing unique strengths and perspectives to create a holistic and impactful strategy.

Partnerships with Indigenous Peoples – Goals 1–3

Partnerships with Indigenous Peoples are essential to the success and sustainability of the IPT Strategy and must be based on respect, self-determination and genuine collaboration. Co-designing initiatives ensures Indigenous Peoples are active decision makers, valuing their unique knowledge and expertise.

Indigenous leadership should guide decision-making at every stage – from planning to evaluation – ensuring initiatives are culturally relevant, aligned with their values and responsive to community needs. Prioritizing Indigenous-led partnerships fosters trust, builds capacity and enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of programmes, empowering Indigenous Peoples to shape outcomes that reflect their priorities and potential.

Respect for Indigenous Peoples' decision-making structures

Indigenous Peoples around the world exhibit a wide array of organizational and governance structures that reflect their unique cultural backgrounds, historical contexts and the specific challenges they face. In Latin America, for instance, many Indigenous organizations have evolved into formal entities that play a pivotal role in regional and national politics. These organizations often stem from traditional tribal governance structures but have adapted to engage effectively with modern state systems and international bodies.

For example, the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin integrates various national Indigenous organizations from across the Amazon to lobby for environmental protection and territorial rights.⁴² This adaptation from localized tribal governance to a broader, more interconnected approach to advocacy reflects the need to address transnational issues such as deforestation and climate change that affect the entire Amazon region.

In North America, Indigenous Peoples including the First Nations in Canada have a long history of sophisticated hierarchical structures, with chiefs and councils operating in each tribe.⁴³ These groups have further organized into political entities such as the Assembly of First Nations, which represents the interests of First Nations at the national level. The assembly works to influence federal policy and legislation, demonstrating a structured approach to governance that interacts directly with the Canadian Government.

This method of organization reflects the specific legal and political landscape in which Canadian Indigenous Peoples groups operate, characterized by treaties and other formal agreements with the state. Reliance on these treaties has shaped the way Indigenous groups organize, leading to a more legalistic and negotiation-based strategy in their advocacy efforts.

In the Pacific Islands, Indigenous organizations often focus heavily on environmental sustainability and community-based management due to the direct threat of climate change on their low-lying territories. Organizations such as the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs play a critical role in coordinating among various island communities to address these environmental challenges.

The Pacific Islands Association of NGOs helps to organize regional responses to environmental threats and advocates for sustainable development practices at international

forums.⁴⁴ This type of organization is less about formal political engagement with a national government – given the smaller scale and different political systems of the Pacific Islands – and more about pooling resources and knowledge to tackle shared existential threats. This highlights a more communal and cooperative organizational approach, deeply rooted in the traditional communal values and kinship ties prevalent in Pacific Island societies.

These examples illustrate the diversity in how Indigenous Peoples organize themselves globally, driven by the particularities of their cultures, regional contexts and specific challenges they encounter. Considering that Indigenous Peoples generally organize themselves in more communal structures, it is important to respect these structures and engage directly with Indigenous firms and associations rather than with non-Indigenous intermediaries, to the extent possible

International and United Nations partnerships

Action: Accede to IASG

The IASG on Indigenous Issues was established to support and promote the mandate of the UNPFII in the United Nations system. It has 44 members and its main objectives are:

- to provide an opportunity for the exchange of information about its work on Indigenous issues;
- strengthen inter-agency cooperation to promote the human rights and well-being of Indigenous Peoples, including the dissemination and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- analyse, disseminate and contribute to the implementation of UNPFII recommendations;
- interact with UNPFII and its members to provide and seek information, advice and substantive inputs;
- advise in the mainstreaming of Indigenous Peoples issues in the United Nations system and strengthen collaboration.

In 2015, the IASG finalized the system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach in the United Nations to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The IASG developed the action plan over 10 months, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, member states, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders. IASG members are now in the process of implementing the plan.

ITC should investigate potential membership in the IASG to strengthen its network of international partners as it begins to apply the IPT Strategy.

International Telecommunication Union – Goals 1 and 3

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has a longstanding commitment to empower Indigenous communities through information and communication technologies, as reflected in resolutions from ITU World Telecommunication Development and Plenipotentiary conferences.⁴⁵ By collaborating with ITU initiatives such as the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative, which aims to strengthen digital capacities in underserved communities,⁴⁶ ITC can help bridge the digital divide for Indigenous populations.

Such partnerships would facilitate the development of tailored digital skills training, infrastructure improvements and policy advocacy, ensuring that Indigenous communities have equitable access to the digital economy.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Goal 3

A partnership with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) would focus on advancing Indigenous inclusion in international trade through evidence-based policy development and stakeholder engagement. The OECD's expertise in economic research and policy analysis complements ITC's operational knowledge of trade facilitation and capacity-building for marginalized groups. Furthermore, ITC is strong at the business enterprise and ecosystem levels, so OECD research at the national level would create a strong synergy without duplicating work.

Collaboration could involve joint research on best practices for Indigenous inclusion in trade, leveraging the OECD's capacity to analyse economic data. This research would inform policy recommendations for OECD member countries, providing actionable strategies to support Indigenous trade. ITC could then share best practices with WTO Members that are members of the OECD.

The OECD is crafting a report that examines programmes in place to support Indigenous businesses to trade, drawing on examples from members. This report, to be published in 2025, focuses on areas that are critical to Indigenous trade, including access to capital, business networks, the internet, infrastructure and export logistics.

Furthermore, the OECD is analysing Indigenous-specific provisions in free trade agreements. It has identified 294 such provisions to date.

This work is not intended to be an in-depth legal analysis, but rather a way to show how much progress has been made in integrating Indigenous perspectives and to identify good processes to continue doing so.

The OECD is also conducting an Indigenous trade data review, drawing on data from governments. This review highlights the lack of disaggregated data available to support policymaking in this area.

A partnership between ITC and the OECD could create platforms for dialogue between Indigenous business leaders and policymakers. These forums would draw on ITC networks in Indigenous communities and the OECD's convening power among member states, fostering discussions that integrate Indigenous perspectives into international trade policies.

The OECD is studying engagement with Indigenous representatives and trade policymaking, looking at models from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. This includes analysing the processes that developed these systems. It is also looking at inter-Indigenous international trade and investment, examining how information sharing and culture sharing can create trade between communities.

Collaboration could be an opportunity to translate the OECD's policy-focused research into actionable insights for businesses. This is important and it could be a good area for collaboration, because ITC clients and partners have requested best practices from different countries. ITC also has a policy team that could be involved in this activity. ITC's trade and market intelligence system team could analyse trade agreements and determine what products are being traded, which would provide another opportunity for collaboration.

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – Goal 3

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples brings unparalleled expertise in Indigenous rights, advocacy and cultural preservation, serving as a global authority on implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This advisory body's vast network of Indigenous leaders and its role as a convening platform for Indigenous leaders and policymakers ensures that Indigenous perspectives and rights are central to global economic discussions.

A partnership with this body would create a transformative, rights-based economic model that positions Indigenous Peoples as equal and empowered participants in global trade. It would ensure that ITC tools, strategies and market insights for entrepreneurship development reflect Indigenous governance systems, community priorities and environmental stewardship.

Joint research initiatives could also explore the impacts of international trade on Indigenous economies, providing data to inform trade policy development while respecting Indigenous rights and priorities.

Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (*Special Rapporteur*)

A partnership with the Special Rapporteur would focus on addressing human rights concerns in trade and ensuring that trade policies and practices respect and promote Indigenous rights. The Special Rapporteur's mandate to investigate and report on violations of Indigenous rights positions this collaboration as a mechanism to identify, prevent and address the negative impacts of trade on Indigenous Peoples.

The Special Rapporteur has consistently highlighted the need to ensure that economic activities, including trade, align with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For example, reports by past Special Rapporteurs have examined the impact of extractive industries and large-scale agricultural projects on Indigenous land rights. The Special Rapporteur's role in monitoring the implementation of Indigenous rights could bring a critical accountability dimension to trade policy.

While UNPFII focuses on convening stakeholders and embedding Indigenous priorities into trade policy design, the Special Rapporteur could work with ITC to track the impacts of those policies on the ground. For example, they could jointly assess how trade agreements or policies influence and affect land rights, access to resources or economic participation, providing evidence for corrective actions where needed.

United Nations Trade and Development – Goal 3

A partnership with United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would combine research-driven policy development with on-the-ground technical assistance. This collaboration would allow UNCTAD's research and policy expertise to inform ITC's targeted interventions, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples benefit from an enabling

policy environment alongside capacity-building initiatives. Together, ITC and UNCTAD can drive systemic change by aligning global trade policies with the needs of Indigenous communities, bridging the gap between high-level advocacy and local-level implementation.

Additionally, ITC could integrate UNCTAD's BioTrade principles into its work with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that Indigenous firms benefit from tools and frameworks that support biodiversity-based business development. BioTrade's focus on valorizing Indigenous knowledge, cultural practices and languages tied to biodiversity aligns with this strategy's goal of fostering ecological resilience for Indigenous Peoples.

ITC's Trade and Environment and Trade for Sustainable Development programmes have a long-standing collaboration with UNCTAD's BioTrade Programme on capacity building for MSMEs, transparency building for voluntary sustainability standards related to biodiversity and global advocacy on multilateral forums, including the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity. For instance, ITC and UNCTAD worked together to develop the online BioTrade Principles and Criteria Self-Assessment Tool for businesses to support the adoption of sustainable management and trade practices in biodiversity-based value chains.

World Bank Group – Goal 3

The World Bank Group (WBG) Environmental and Social Framework includes a dedicated standard on Indigenous Peoples and Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities, known as ESS7. This standard ensures that projects supported by the WBG create opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to participate in and benefit from investments in ways that respect their collective rights, promote their aspirations and safeguard their cultural identities and ways of life. ESS7 is applied to about 33% of the bank's investment lending projects.

The WBG also operates a network of Regional Indigenous Peoples Focal Points, coordinated globally, to boost the visibility and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in its work. This includes integrating Indigenous priorities into its analytical work, systematic country diagnostics, country partnership frameworks, national policy dialogues, public investment lending and trust funds.

A partnership with the WBG would aim to address structural and financial barriers facing Indigenous businesses in international trade. With extensive experience in community-driven development programmes, the WBG can inform models to reach remote areas by working with local

leaders and systems. This collaboration could develop financing mechanisms tailored to the needs of Indigenous firms, leveraging the WBG's expertise in microfinance and inclusive investment models to facilitate access to capital for businesses expanding into global markets.

The World Bank Group has previously supported direct grant mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples, contributing to capacity building and the participation of Indigenous Peoples in climate policy dialogue, forest management and discussions on the benefits of emissions reductions. It also engages with Indigenous organizations to integrate traditional knowledge into climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The WBG has a strong track record of improving infrastructure and service delivery in Indigenous communities. In 2018, for example, it approved an \$80 million project to improve health, education, water and sanitation services in Panama's Indigenous territories, highlighting community-driven development.⁴⁷

Building on such initiatives, a partnership could focus on infrastructure projects in Indigenous areas to facilitate trade. By combining the WBG's funding expertise in transport and digital connectivity with ITC's understanding of trade logistics, this collaboration could address key structural barriers that hinder Indigenous businesses' participation in global markets.

World Economic Forum – Goals 2 and 3

A partnership with the World Economic Forum (WEF) would leverage WEF's global platform to elevate Indigenous business success stories, facilitate connections between Indigenous entrepreneurs and multinational corporations, and integrate Indigenous businesses into global supply chains.

WEF has a history of engaging Indigenous leaders at its annual meetings, providing a stage for sharing unique perspectives on sustainable and inclusive globalization.⁴⁸ The Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge and Leadership Network, launched during the 2024 annual meeting, fosters collaboration among Indigenous experts, public- and private-sector stakeholders, and global leaders, creating opportunities to address global challenges through Indigenous knowledge systems. ITC could work with the network to raise visibility on Indigenous trade opportunities among key stakeholders, including WTO Members.

ITC has actively participated in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Indigenous Trade Workshops, hosted by Australia in collaboration with WEF. These workshops convene Indigenous leaders, entrepreneurs, policymakers and international organizations to discuss strategies for increasing Indigenous businesses' access to trade benefits. Building on this engagement, ITC can identify new opportunities and expand collaborations in the South-East Asian and Pacific regions.

Finally, WEF's extensive network of multinational corporations could be instrumental in connecting Indigenous entrepreneurs with potential business partners, fostering collaborations that benefit both parties.

World Intellectual Property Organization - Goals 1–3

A partnership with WIPO would aim to protect Indigenous traditional knowledge and cultural expressions in global trade. WIPO's expertise in intellectual property frameworks, including its work on the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, helps member states develop an international legal instrument that would protect traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.

Through joint training programmes, Indigenous entrepreneurs could learn to navigate intellectual property systems, register trademarks or geographical indications, and protect their innovations. For example, ITC and WIPO have a longstanding collaboration on the Training, Mentoring and Matchmaking Program on Intellectual Property for Women Entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (also known as the Women Entrepreneurship Program). This global programme offers training on intellectual property, marketing, branding and business strategies.

The programme also provides a mentor for each participant for one year to help them build their intellectual property strategy. Since its inception, an ITC colleague has given export readiness workshops to programme participants. Under the Memorandum of Understanding between ITC and WIPO, there is scope to increase ITC's involvement with the programme.

Some Indigenous businesses may have service-based rather than goods-based business models and require different intellectual property strategies. Ecotourism businesses may look to trademarks to protect their branding while creative industries, such as those producing traditional art, music or digital media, may seek copyrights to secure original works and trademarks to maintain the authenticity and reputation of their cultural expressions.

WIPO's IP Diagnostics tool could be used to help BSOs incorporate better intellectual property services into their own organizations. The tool, combined with the joint ITC–WIPO guidelines for BSOs, provides tailored guidance on intellectual property strategies, educates businesses on relevant rights and offers country-specific legal insights. By fostering an intellectual property-aware culture, BSOs can empower Indigenous businesses to recognize and safeguard their valuable intangible assets effectively.

Even with intellectual property protection, small Indigenous entrepreneurs may lack the resources to enforce their rights, especially against large corporations. Therefore, it is also important to work with corporations, including designers and buyers, to raise awareness about ethical sourcing and the need to reward Indigenous communities for their traditional knowledge and designs. For example, ITC could work with corporations to ensure they have processes that respect and compensate traditional knowledge, while WIPO ensures benefit-sharing agreements respect intellectual property rights.

The ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative already facilitates similar activities as a core principle of its work. WIPO is also developing guidelines for the fashion industry on how to use Indigenous cultural expressions ethically, recognizing that many companies may not know what is appropriate.

Finally, it is important to consider the difference between protection, which refers to legal aspects, and preservation, which can be related to cultural heritage and tourism. ITC may consider additional partnerships with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization or the United Nations World Tourism Organization to explore mechanisms to use international trade to preserve Indigenous cultural heritage.

World Trade Organization – Goal 3

The WTO's role in shaping global trade rules and promoting inclusive trade provides a valuable platform for advancing the strategy's objectives. ITC can collaborate with the WTO to ensure that the unique challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples are addressed in trade discussions and agreements, including through advocating for Indigenous-specific provisions in trade policies and agreements.

The Inclusive Trade Action Group will be a strong partner as its members have already expressed interest in greater inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives in trade discussions. Additionally, ITC can leverage WTO initiatives such as the Trade for Peace Programme and the Public Forum to raise awareness of Indigenous trade issues among member states and stakeholders.

National partnership – Goals 2–3

National partnerships with governments are crucial for successfully implementing strategies to support Indigenous Peoples in trade. Several global leaders have already taken major unilateral actions to advance Indigenous economic inclusion, setting important precedents for others to follow. For instance, Australia has established an Indigenous Procurement Policy that has led to more than 2,600 Indigenous businesses being awarded contracts worth upwards of \$3.6 billion as of 2021.⁴⁹

Similarly, Canada's initiatives through the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business have fostered stronger relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses.⁵⁰ These national efforts demonstrate the potential for governments to create meaningful change through targeted policies and programmes.

Initiatives such as the Inclusive Trade Action Group in Geneva highlight the growing international momentum for Indigenous economic inclusion. Its members – including Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and New Zealand – are committed to integrating Indigenous Peoples into global trade. This collaborative approach among nations is essential to address the unique challenges that Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses face on a global scale.

The Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement further exemplifies the value of cross-national collaboration in tackling shared obstacles faced by Indigenous entrepreneurs. By aligning national efforts with international frameworks, governments can drive meaningful change both domestically and globally.

Partnerships with national governments are also vital for two foundational aspects of the strategy's implementation: policy formation and data collection. Governments play a key role in crafting legislation, regulations and support programmes that enable Indigenous trade.

Equally critical is their role in addressing data gaps, as highlighted by the OECD. Developing inclusive indicators – such as metrics for Indigenous participation in global supply chains – requires proactive action from national governments, including the involvement of Indigenous communities in the data collection process to ensure their values and perspectives are reflected. These partnerships are indispensable for monitoring progress, ensuring accountability and achieving sustainable, inclusive outcomes.

Trade and investment promotion organizations play a pivotal role in advancing Indigenous participation in international trade. These agencies serve as crucial intermediaries between Indigenous businesses and global markets, offering specialized support tailored to the unique needs and challenges faced by Indigenous entrepreneurs.

For instance, Colombia's ProColombia has developed initiatives to help Indigenous communities export their traditional products, notably in sectors such as handicrafts and specialty foods.⁵¹ In Chinese Taipei, the Council of Indigenous Peoples has been instrumental in promoting Indigenous economic cooperation through agreements such as ANZTEC⁵² with New Zealand, which includes a chapter on Indigenous cooperation.⁵³

Similarly, in the United States, the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development has received funding from the Department of Commerce to set up an export centre, providing one-on-one business development training and workshops for Indigenous companies across the country.⁵⁴

These agencies not only provide practical assistance in navigating complex international markets but also advocate for Indigenous interests in trade policy discussions.

Subnational partnerships – Goal 2

Subnational partnerships with local organizations play a crucial role in the successful implementation and sustainability of projects, particularly those aimed at supporting Indigenous Peoples in trade. These partnerships, which may include NGOs, business support organizations, chambers of commerce, cooperatives and associations, provide invaluable local knowledge, established networks and – most importantly – trust in the communities they serve.

By collaborating with these subnational partners, ITC can gain credibility and overcome potential scepticism when introducing initiatives.⁵⁵ These local entities often have a deep understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities across their regions, allowing for more tailored and effective interventions. Furthermore, subnational partners can act as vital intermediaries, facilitating dialogue between policymakers and the private sector and helping to create favourable business environments for Indigenous entrepreneurs.⁵⁶

Perhaps most critically, these partnerships ensure continuity and long-term impact, as local organizations can continue supporting and implementing projects long after the initial intervention by ITC concludes.

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APPENDIX I: IPT STRATEGY MAP

Table 1 Strategy core goals and objectives

Strategy core Vision	Goals	Objectives
Empower businesses owned by Indigenous Peoples, building their capacity to compete in global trade while recognizing their right to self-determination	Goal 1: Enhance the capacity and competitiveness of Indigenous Peoples in business and trade to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth	<p>O1: Build business and technical capacity</p> <p>O2: Expand market access and develop inclusive value chains</p> <p>O3: Revitalize key sectors: Handicrafts, ecotourism and agrifood</p> <p>O4: Empower Indigenous women and youth entrepreneurs</p>
Guiding principles	Goals	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cultural integrity ■ Inclusive participation ■ Broad representation ■ Transparent consultations ■ SPIC ■ Local leadership and sustainability 	Goal 2: Empower BSOs to support Indigenous MSMEs by enhancing access to networks, resources, and partnerships for improved resilience and competitiveness	<p>O5: Remove trade barriers and address logistics challenges</p> <p>O6: Foster inclusive business networks and collaboration</p> <p>O7: Advance the green transition through trade</p> <p>O8: Facilitate financial inclusion for trade growth</p>
Risks	Goals	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Political resistance ■ Limited capacity of Indigenous partners ■ Lack of funding ■ Lack of BSO preparedness 	Goal 3: Advocate for supportive national and international trade policy and regulatory environments to support Indigenous Peoples in entrepreneurship and trade	<p>O9: Advocate for policy alignment and Indigenous representation</p> <p>O10: Protect Indigenous intellectual property and cultural heritage</p>

Table 2 Goal 1: Enhance the capacity and competitiveness of Indigenous Peoples in business and inclusive economic growth

Objective	Output (indicative)
O1: Build business and technical capacity	An ITC customized training model that ensures Indigenous values are adapted to MSMEs in remote communities.
O2: Expand market access and develop inclusive value chains	ITC trade intelligence and data tools adapted in delivery to Indigenous businesses/cooperatives to increase their integration into global supply chains while highlighting priority export markets.
O3: Revitalize key sectors – handicrafts, ecotourism, agrifood and bioeconomy	Indigenous businesses/cooperatives in priority sectors are strengthened to meet market requirements and connect to market opportunities while preserving their culture and heritage.
O4: Empower Indigenous women and youth entrepreneurs	Indigenous women and youth are integrated into ITC programmes.

Table 3 Goal 2: Empower BSOs to support Indigenous MSMEs by enhancing access to networks, resources and partnerships for improved resilience and competitiveness

Objective	Output (indicative)
O5: Remove trade barriers and address logistics challenges	Solutions for reducing shipping costs with global logistics providers for rural communities developed and regional trade ecosystems, including inter-Indigenous trade, are strengthened
O6: Foster inclusive business networks and collaboration	Indigenous cooperatives/associations are strengthened and mainstream BSOs are equipped to support Indigenous enterprises.
O7: Advance the green transition through trade	Indigenous businesses' participation and advocacy in the green trade transition is bolstered.
O8: Facilitate financial inclusion for trade growth	Financial inclusion for Indigenous businesses through ITC's Access to Finance Strategy is expanded, with focus on tailored financial literacy training, alternative credit models, and impact investment promotion opportunities.

Table 4 Goal 3: Advocate for supportive national and international trade policy and regulatory environments to support Indigenous Peoples in entrepreneurship and trade

Objective	Output (indicative)
O9: Advocate for policy alignment and Indigenous representation	Indigenous Peoples are equipped and supported to participate in trade negotiations and in global policy forums.
O10: Protect Indigenous intellectual property and cultural heritage	In collaboration with WIPO, increased intellectual property training and technical assistance are integrated into ITC projects with Indigenous Peoples to safeguard and protect traditional knowledge and cultural assets.

APPENDIX II: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Table 5 External stakeholders

Name	Location	Types
Borari	Brazil	Indigenous Peoples
Emberá-Wounaan	Panama	Indigenous Peoples
Kumarua	Brazil	Indigenous Peoples
Kuna Yala	Panama	Indigenous Peoples
Munduruku	Brazil	Indigenous Peoples
Woorani	Ecuador	Indigenous Peoples
Carimbó Master Chico Malta	Brazil	Indigenous activist
James Johnson of the Tlingit Dalk-Aweidi Clan	United States	Indigenous artist
Tangimoe Clay of the Māori	New Zealand	Indigenous artist and activist
Linda Munn of the Māori	New Zealand	Indigenous artist and activist
Asociación de Mujeres Woorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana	Ecuador	Indigenous-affiliated association/cooperative
Commerce et Artisanat pour le Bien-Être Social	Burkina Faso	Indigenous-affiliated association/cooperative
Du Anyam	Indonesia	Indigenous-affiliated association/cooperative
Espace Tissage Djougou	Benin	Indigenous-affiliated association/cooperative
Red Turi	Panama	Indigenous-affiliated association/cooperative
REI Guatemala	Guatemala	Indigenous-affiliated association/cooperative
Rumah Rakuji	Indonesia	Indigenous-affiliated association/cooperative
OECD	Paris	International organization
WEF	Geneva	International organization
WIPO	Geneva	International organization
Permanent Mission of Canada to the WTO/ Government of Canada	Canada	National government

Name	Location	Types
Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries	Ecuador	National government
Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the WTO	Ecuador	National government
PRO Ecuador	Ecuador	Trade promotion agency
Autoridad de Turismo de Panamá	Panamá	National government
Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the WTO	New Zealand	National government
Secretary of State for Environment and Sustainability (Pará)	Brazil	Subnational government
Secretary of State for Tourism (Pará)	Brazil	Subnational government
CODESPA	Ecuador	NGO
MUTAK	Brazil	NGO
Projeto Saúde & Alegria	Brazil	NGO
Suraras do Tapajós	Brazil	NGO
CHOCOFACADI, S.A.	Ecuador	Private sector
Filha do Combu Chocolate	Brazil	Private sector
Instituto Iacitata Amazônia Viva	Brazil	Private sector
meLOOKmel	Indonesia	Private sector
Kartini Sjahrir	Indonesia	National expert
Peter Richards	Thailand	International expert

Source: ITC

Table 6 ITC internal stakeholders

Name
Access to Finance
Alliances 4 Action
Ethical Fashion Initiative
Global and Inclusive Value Chains
Institutions and Ecosystems
Office for Africa
Office for Asia and the Pacific
Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
Policy for Trade and Investment
Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness (digital and quality teams)
SheTrades
Strategies for Trade and Investment
Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance
Trade and Environment Programme
Trade and Market Intelligence
Youth and Trade

Source: ITC

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