



iiied

# COMMERCIAL MARKETS FOR RURAL LIVELIHOODS

IIED strategy 2019–2024

**Our mission:  
to build a fairer,  
more sustainable  
world, using  
evidence, action  
and influence  
in partnership  
with others.**

**MAKE  
CHANGE  
HAPPEN**

**IIED strategy  
2019–2024**

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## In five years, we will be in sight of 2030, a make-or-break date for global sustainable development ambitions. This is our moment to step up and go further.

IIED's research takes valuable local solutions to influential global forums, achieving impact at many levels. In a fractured world our network of partners brings together the missing voices and evidence that policymakers need to make the right decisions for people and planet. Building on a careful process of analysis and consultation, we have identified strengths to build on, areas where we can make a difference to tackling urgent and interconnected global challenges, and new contexts to apply our thinking. A comprehensive Learning and Impact Framework will enable us to track the difference we make and apply lessons across all our work.

From now to 2024, we will play our part to make change happen. We will help vulnerable

communities achieve **climate** resilience and development, simultaneously pushing hard for global action to restrict planetary warming to 1.5°C. We will promote biodiversity alongside social justice, ensuring the women and men closest to the land, ocean and **natural resources** are heard. Our work towards healthier, more secure **urban futures** will emphasise community agency for truly 'local to global' outcomes. From big business to local entrepreneurs and public sector regulators, we will bring a breadth of vision and experience to bear on **fairer markets**. And underlying everything is our commitment to increasing **equality** — lived through how we work as well as the results we achieve.



The unprecedented crisis we face — accelerating disruption to the Earth’s climate, the natural world and the lives of the most vulnerable people — demands immediate attention and extraordinary responses. But despite the early promise of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, the ability of nations to come together and build a better future is deeply compromised.

The rise of nationalism and xenophobia provides a cover for destructive interests that threaten both planet and people, eroding the solidarity needed for effective global action. And time is short; whether in relation to the climate crisis or biodiversity loss, any delay in our response is potentially catastrophic.

IIED will fight for a fairer future, working with established and new partners for greatest possible impact. Over the next five years, we will strengthen our **partnerships for change** at three levels, across all programmes:

- Working from the bottom up to enhance sustainability and inclusion, in partnerships that mobilise action; we will amplify voices and represent realities that would otherwise be missing
- Shaping innovative ideas for tackling global challenges, together with experts and influencers who bring diverse perspectives to policy debates
- Pursuing yet greater excellence in our research through enhanced collaboration with outstanding institutions in the countries where we work.

Creating a future where both people and the natural world can thrive is a huge task; it requires many hearts, minds and hands working together. IIED’s growing global network, with partners ranging from multilateral institutions to citizen-led social movements, is positioned to ask and answer the most challenging questions and bring radical, locally tested solutions to the forefront of global policy.

To develop this strategy, we consulted extensively with partners, carefully analysed the changing context in which we work and reviewed the experience of the last five years. We have identified the specific areas where we can make our best contribution to reducing poverty and inequality, ensuring a stable and liveable climate and preserving the biodiversity and natural resources on which a prosperous future for all depends. Alongside this, we have developed a comprehensive Learning and Impact Framework. This essential tool for implementing the strategy will allow us to track progress, learn from experience and adjust our course as necessary.

The pace of change around us is rapid. Multilateral governance is in danger of being eroded, new actors will increasingly set the agenda for development action in both private and public spheres, and social activism will provide more of the momentum needed to confront the challenges we face.

Over the next five years, IIED will mobilise action at every level to play our part in resolving complex and connected global crises. We look forward to working with you to build a fairer and more sustainable world.

*Dr Andrew Norton*  
Director

MAKE  
CHANGE  
HAPPEN



Outdoor market  
for used textiles in  
Kampala, Uganda

Participative community  
exercise, Olderkesi  
Conservancy,  
Masai Mara, Kenya



**DEHYDRATING**

**OUR**

**AVAILABILITY**

IIED has a history of rigorous and original research that helps drive progress by taking proven local solutions to influential global forums. Our projects make a tangible positive difference in the policies and practice that shape the everyday lives of marginalised women and men and the spaces they call home, based on their own priorities.

Importantly, how we achieve this is also who we are: strategic collaborators, innovators, knowledge brokers and agents of change.

## Locally, globally, together

Our established theory of change will keep working hard for us over the next five years. It meets the demands of this fractured and unequal time by delivering solutions that come from the bottom up, are grounded in context and apply local evidence. In turn, that local action shapes workable and effective policy and practice.

Guided by the institutional theory of change (illustrated over the page), we will develop specific programme-level theories throughout the strategy period. These will enable us to be agile enough to meet the needs of a changing context, assess the effectiveness of our work and make changes where needed. For best effect, we will build on the four 'impact pathways' that have guided our work over the last three years. These capture how we have influence in the world, inform our project design and guide us towards delivering our goals:

**1. Convening dialogues for transformative change.** Our multi-stakeholder dialogues connect women and men lacking voice and power with decision makers — including government, development practitioners, business, academics and technicians. Through expert facilitation, we co-create evidence with local people, reflecting their knowledge and concerns. The findings can make an inspiring case for embedding social and environmental justice in policy and practice.

**2. Engaging practitioners and policymakers.**

We identify strategic opportunities for policy intervention at local, national and global levels. IIED has a track record of working with decision makers to both strengthen their capacities for creating and using evidence and help them reflect ground-level realities in policy.

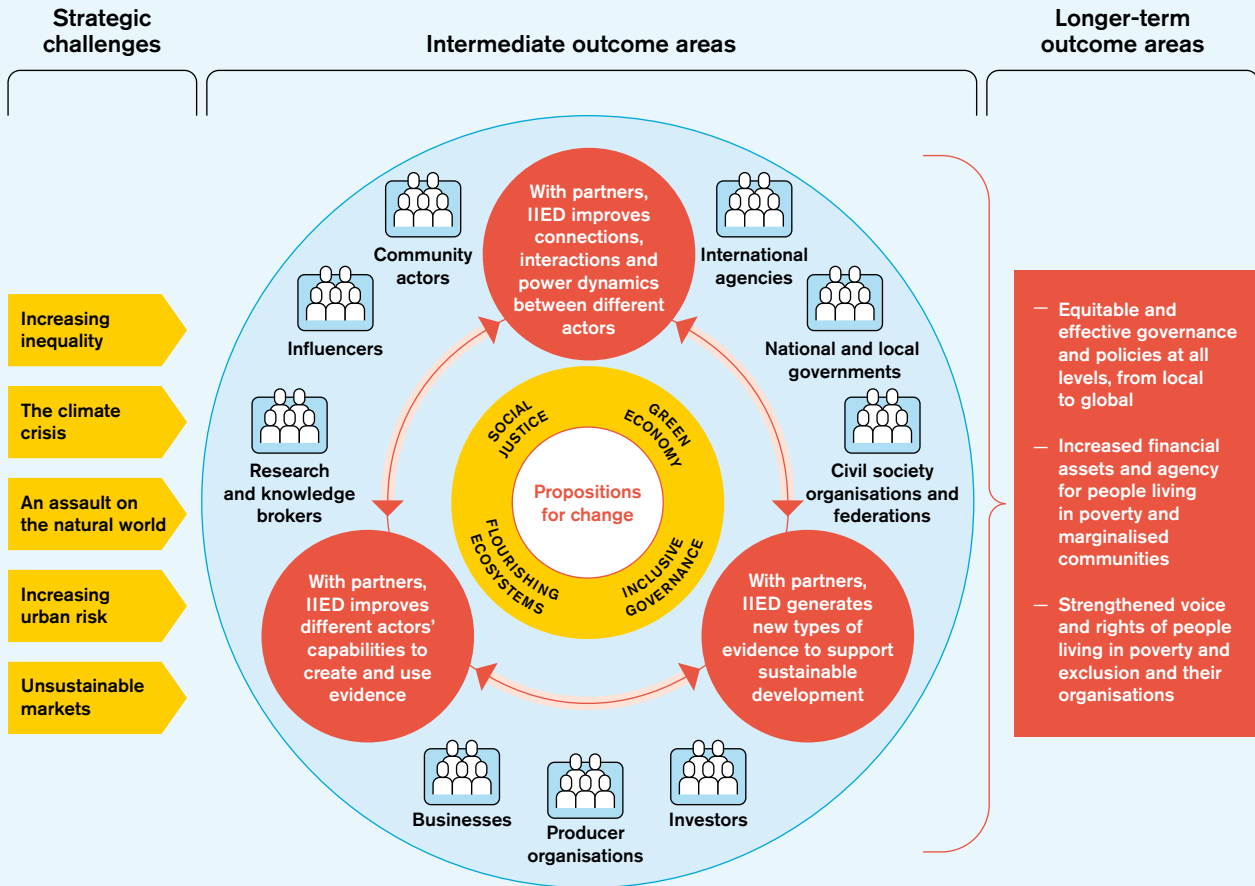
**3. Providing evidence and ideas to transform policy and practice.**

Action research with local actors and partners in many countries enables us to develop practical solutions that support pro-poor governance. Together, we present policymakers and the private sector with a rigorously researched evidence base for fairer ways forward, from local level to global scale.

**4. Empowering the excluded.** We help overlooked people and communities to generate and use evidence that ensures they are heard and can hold their own in decision-making arenas. This work ranges from building community capacity to organise, to supporting the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to influence global negotiations.

Our projects make a tangible positive difference in the policies and practice that shape the everyday lives of marginalised women and men

# Visualising our theory of change



Our institutional theory of change outlines how we develop propositions that improve communication, generate evidence and build capacity in order to drive change in policy and practice.

We believe that policy and social change are not rational and linear processes. Instead, they emerge from many different angles of influence and types of knowledge creation and are shaped by imbalances in power and voice. Our assumption is that changes in the body, use and framing of knowledge can help shape policy and practice at different levels, from local to global. For this to happen, we need to ensure that a range of relevant people and parties are strategically engaged in knowledge generation: decision makers, local communities, influencers, communication and knowledge brokers, and researchers. To ensure this engagement is effective, we work in ways that question and change power dynamics between the different actors involved. Our 'co-creation' approach results in powerful propositions that bring about changes in policy and practice.

**We work in ways that question and change power dynamics**





Farmer in the Mount Kenya region

## Living our values

As our research and ideas support others to tread more lightly on this earth, we recognise that our own activities also need scrutiny. We are committed to minimising harmful emissions, waste and use of natural resources throughout our operations. Specifically, we aim to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 2.5% per head annually, consistent with globally recognised reduction commitments

and our own ambitions for a safer world. To support continual improvement, we adhere to a strong Environmental Performance Policy and report annually on our carbon footprint — both are available on our website at [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org). We will build space to advance our environmental targets and practices by keeping them under review throughout this strategy period.

# CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE

The best outcomes are achieved together, so our communications work must lead the field. As isolationism and hostility to media threaten progress, we will focus on increasing informed influence and citizen agency. We will take an ambitious approach to engagement and listening — building our communities, strengthening current relationships, creating new connections, increasing media presence, sharing what we know — all with a view to making a difference on issues that matter.

**IIED will be bolder and louder, supporting partners to gain the same visibility**

To power this approach, IIED will be bolder and louder, supporting partners to gain the same visibility. Closer audience targeting and nurturing greater presence on key issues will build our influence by placing our research in the right hands at the right time. Specifically, we will:

- Strengthen our convening on and offline
- Target audiences precisely using a clear understanding of who we need to engage and how best to reach them
- Release regular analysis aimed at changing the terms of debate on critical issues
- Strengthen our country focus through national media assessments, new communications partnerships and gathering lived-experience testimonials
- Engage with social movements and activism to drive positive change.



Small-scale fisher in Khulna, Bangladesh



# BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

In the process of developing this strategy we consulted extensively with partners, analysed the context for our work and reviewed the experience of implementing our last strategy. This helped us to identify core elements of our practice that we will build on:

- **Continual learning.** Operating a comprehensive organisation-wide results framework over the last five years has given us insights into where and how we are able to make a contribution that builds on our distinctive strengths. We know how to share lessons across the organisation and to learn from both success and failure. We will use this experience as we realise an ambitious new approach through our Learning and Impact Framework. This institute-wide method for understanding organisational effectiveness is groundbreaking for a policy research organisation; we will share the lessons from it over the course of the strategy period.

- **Gender equality.** Already a strong focus, our efforts both 'look out' — through project design, training and support — and 'look in' to IIED itself — through our internal Gender Equality Champions Network. A peer-to-peer support group is one of the new initiatives to ensure gender equality is deeply embedded.
- **Partnership.** Our inclusive ethos has allowed IIED to develop an authentic partnership approach at all levels. Dialogue is a valued method of evidence generation. We future-proof success by building local capabilities, including making the most of moments of disruption. We will continue to grow, develop and seek new partnerships to meet urgent challenges.
- **Strategic patience.** We are known for our long-term partnerships; through them we have tested approaches that deliver influence and impact at global scale. Examples of our deep-rooted relationships include working with the LDC Group in climate negotiations, with urban social movements reducing poverty in informal settlements and with local governments to deliver climate finance to community level.
- **Research quality.** An independent external review in 2017 inspired a fresh focus on research quality. Our standards are now tested in three complementary ways: via peer review, a framework to interrogate research excellence, and a process to ensure ethics and integrity underpin all our work.

We future-proof success by building local capabilities, including making the most of moments of disruption

# SEVEN CHALLENGES MEMBERING THE

Our world’s gravest problems call for imaginative solutions. We cannot achieve a fairer future when those who have contributed least to the planetary crisis suffer most, yet are denied influence on the global stage. So we will focus our energies on the challenges where IIED can have greatest effect, making sure those who are excluded from decision making can gain greater agency over their lives.

IIED works at the intersection of social and environmental justice — where poverty reduction meets climate action; where the preservation of the natural world meets the need to protect local natural resource rights underpinning thriving communities. We have identified five global challenges which we will address through our work: increasing inequality, the climate crisis, an assault on the natural world, increasing urban risk, and unsustainable markets.

The challenges are linked; so are the actions we will take to drive change. Climate change exacerbates inequality — the poorest countries and people feel the most damaging effects — and is a major cause of declining biodiversity on land and in the ocean. Supporting the LDCs to demand ambition in global climate action contributes to progress in all areas. Supporting rural women and men’s land rights enhances their resilience in the face of climate change and enables them to conserve the natural resources that sustain local livelihoods. As we take forward the work programmes outlined below, we will look for connections, synergies and lessons that enable us to enrich partnerships and deliver greater impact.

## Increasing inequality

The struggle for greater participation, rights and equality underpins every challenge we address. Accelerating elite wealth and growing



**Rickshaws  
in 2017  
monsoon,  
Dhaka,  
Bangladesh**



inequality is undermining global solidarity and commitment to a shared future. Climate change, disruption to the world of work and disparities in access to digital technologies — if unchecked — will increase inequalities in income and power. In many countries, democratic freedoms and spaces for civic activism have declined. Women as well as young, indigenous and disabled peoples are among those who too often go unheard. A determination to promote inclusion and justice runs through everything we do: informing how we work, where and with whom.

### Our priorities for action

#### **IIED will promote the rights and voice of poor people in all our working contexts.**

We will analyse currents of change and promote policy, practice and social mobilisation that inspires effective poverty reduction and resists the drivers of increasing inequalities of all kinds.

#### **IIED will work to get ‘money where it matters’.**

Funds must reach the frontier of the climate crisis where building local-level resilience is an urgent priority, the urban informal settlements where public resources and local action can combine to improve incomes and services, and the communities under stress that need support to combat declining natural assets or the effects of conflict and displacement. We will counter the failure to channel climate and development finance to ground level through the best-placed local and national actors; we will address private finance’s inability to reach the lowest-income households. To do so, we will promote access to the full range of public and private finance systems by those who need it most, on fair terms. We will work to ensure that they experience real benefits, including better livelihoods, more resilient communities and access to vital services such as energy and sanitation.

**IIED will promote women and girls' rights to livelihoods, agency and security throughout our work.** Women are central to a climate-resilient future; we will make the case for improving climate action at all levels by including women's voices and gendered experiences. Our UNFCCC negotiator workshops will support women representing the LDCs to achieve a fairer deal. In other sectors, we will strengthen women's role in sustainable forest management and their control over land and nature-based livelihoods that are squeezed by commercial pressures.

**IIED will support our partners to manage disruption and to promote positive change.** We will support civil society actors to find effective spaces to promote social and environmental rights, respond to political and technological change, and work for progress.

**IIED analysis shows less than 10% of multilateral climate finance is intended to reach the local level, where communities are feeling the worst effects**

## The climate crisis

Global responses lag behind essential action as climate impacts are powerfully felt in the world's poorest nations. The countries responsible for driving climate disruption must act urgently to curb emissions — exceeding anthropogenic global warming of 1.5°C will spell disaster. At the same time, more climate finance is crucial to support poorer countries to build resilience and effect their own green transitions. We will work with policy and research partners to redress the balance by helping vulnerable communities in low- and middle-income countries achieve climate resilience and development — and by pushing hard in every arena we can call for ambitious global climate action.

## Our priorities for action

**IIED will work with the LDCs for climate justice and climate ambition.** Our 15-year partnership with the LDC Group has seen this bloc become a powerful advocate for the specific needs and situations of developing countries. As some G20 nations seek to frustrate rapid climate action, we will step up our support for the LDCs to deliver powerful analysis and advocacy at global level and effective action for mitigation and adaptation at country level.

**IIED will build the resilience of vulnerable communities living with the effects of climate change.** We will work with partners to find ways of enhancing long-term resilience and enabling people to thrive in the face of devastating climate shocks. This means working at a number of levels, from ensuring that more climate finance reaches affected communities, to securing poor households' rights to the natural assets vital to their livelihoods. It also means helping poorer countries and people to deal with the ways in which climate change amplifies the risks they face — from making adjustments to social protection schemes to build resilience to climate shocks, to assisting countries to deal with extreme weather events through index-based insurance.

Read about our current work at [iied.org/climate-change](https://iied.org/climate-change)

### Rice farmers in Yogyakarta, Indonesia



## An assault on the natural world

We are in danger of losing the struggle to protect vital biodiversity, on land and in the ocean. A false choice between people and environment is causing many conservation efforts to overlook communities and lay waste to local livelihoods, as well as failing to protect wildlife. Meanwhile, agribusiness, extractives and other investment projects often take an aggressively short-term approach. Across the world, people who co-exist with and rely on natural resources — terrestrial and marine — see their rights and livelihoods eroded. Environmental justice is at the heart of IIED. We believe solutions to the untenable pressures on the living planet must also be built on foundations of social justice. This can only be achieved through meaningful engagement with the people who feel the shifts in our natural world most keenly.

### Our priorities for action

**IIED will help small-scale producers and businesses to achieve sustainable livelihoods through environmental stewardship.** We will work with partners to empower smallholder, community and indigenous people's forest producer organisations — the world's biggest force for ecologically sound long-term forest management. We will generate knowledge that promotes resilient farming and pastoralist systems, helping organisations secure rights and supportive governance, build entrepreneurial capacity, harness technologies and access finance. Our coastal fisheries work will maintain fish stocks and protect economically critical but currently fragile local livelihoods.

**IIED will develop approaches to protect nature that advance the rights of local people and amplify the voices of those excluded from policymaking.** Shocking environmental loss calls for conservation interventions; we propose sustainable responses that work for local communities and nature. A just and effective approach is also needed to conserve ocean biodiversity — exploitation by wealthy nations is damaging marine resources upon which great numbers of people depend. IIED will support LDC negotiators as they strive to establish a fairer governance system for the blue half of the Earth, for the benefit of all of the world's people.

**IIED will support local women and men to claim and maintain rights to natural resources and a healthy environment.**

Investments in agriculture, mining, hydropower and other infrastructure are compounding pressure on both resources and communities, including farmers, indigenous peoples, pastoralists and fishers. With partners in Africa and Asia, we will create evidence, develop approaches and influence policy for increased local control over natural resources and investments. We will bring local realities into debates about strengthening the global human rights framework for environmental rights. We will advocate for proposals that give communities in low- and middle-income countries leverage to fight for secure livelihoods and a healthy environment.

Read about our current work at [iied.org/nat-res-management](https://iied.org/nat-res-management)



Smallholder farmers produce about **70%** of the world's food, yet are highly vulnerable to changes in climate



Main vegetable market in Jalandhar, Punjab, India

## Increasing urban risk

We know the lowest-income nations will be home to the majority of urban growth over the coming decades. Increases in existing populations and the arrival of men, women and children will swell the cities of Africa and Asia. Climate change and conflict will play their part in mass movement. But these nations often lack the institutions and infrastructure necessary to counter the poverty, social exclusion and unhealthy environments that too often accompany dense, spiralling populations. The Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement cannot be achieved without towns and cities that are inclusive and resilient. Our work in this area delivers on multiple fronts, placing local agency at the forefront for truly local-to-global impacts.

### Our priorities for action

**IIED will work with local populations and institutions to create urban futures that work for people and planet.** Most urban growth will take place in areas where planning and governance capacity is weak. Working with partners at local, national and global levels, we will promote policies that deliver urban growth that is low-carbon, healthy, resilient, prosperous and which leaves no one behind. To support the

realisation of sound policy, we will make the case for increasing resources and strengthening local capacity for effective implementation.

**IIED will support displaced and migrant populations to build new urban lives of dignity, security and solidarity alongside the local population.** Increasingly, displaced populations move into urban areas, within or beyond their own country, rather than dedicated camps. Together with longer periods of displacement, this poses testing challenges for local governments and aid agencies. IIED will work with institutions — international and local, development and humanitarian — with the aim of ensuring safe urban environments for all.

Read about our current work  
at [iied.org/urban](https://iied.org/urban)

Half the world's  
population lives in cities  
and towns; by 2050 about  
two thirds will do so



## Unsustainable markets

From small family businesses to corporates, the private sector is struggling to keep pace with a host of global threats. Too often good intentions fail to deliver real benefits for people or the environment, as businesses lack full knowledge of the supply chain or the realities on the ground. Governments are also being challenged: to count the true environmental, social and economic value of working with nature rather than exploiting it, from forests to fisheries. And until more equitable markets that preserve vital resources are a reality, our efforts to reduce poverty, combat climate change and protect biodiversity will suffer. Transitions to a more sustainable and inclusive economy must address social, environmental and economic dimensions — this is crucial if we are to deliver across the Sustainable Development Goals. We will build on our work to ensure that government and private sector policymaking treats inclusion and equality as central concerns, and that economic decision making fully includes the value of natural capital.

### Our priorities for action

**IIED will engage with policymakers, investors and business to promote transitions to policy and practice that is fit for the future.** Despite marine and coastal resources underpinning millions of livelihoods in low-income nations, they are

often overlooked by policymakers. We will develop cost-effective policy instruments to increase the use of economic incentives for sustainable marine resource management. And as a founder member of the Green Economy Coalition, we will work collectively for inclusive and just green transitions, seeking to shift policy and investment practice to fully include the economic benefits of nature. To support the global ambition of clean, affordable and reliable energy access for all, we will deliver innovation that enables the necessary policy and investment frameworks and that links energy use to income generation.

**IIED will help shape markets that enable micro-entrepreneurs to engage with policy and thrive.** Entrepreneurs and other workers in the informal sector are the foundation of prosperity in low- and middle-income countries, be they small-scale farmers supplying food to growing urban centres, coastal fishers, artisanal and small-scale miners or small traders underpinning the growth of mobile communications. To help address the challenges they face, we will explore the realities at the base of the supply chains and promote policy that delivers wellbeing, inclusion and enduring prosperity.

Read about our current work at [iied.org/sustainable-markets](https://iied.org/sustainable-markets)



Vendor selling batteries and solar power in Mbomou, Central African Republic

Globally,  
nearly  
**1 billion**  
people lack  
access to  
electricity

# INTEGRATED SCALE

## ACHIEVING

IIED has a track record of developing and testing ‘scalable’ approaches: sustainable change that can grow from a single community to many, crossing national and regional borders. Over the next five years we will build on our experience, working closely with local partners in government, civil society and the private sector. We will apply this thinking to existing areas of work and to new domains where innovation at scale is needed. The following examples illustrate common features of our approach to creating change from the bottom up.

### Strength in numbers: organising to thrive

**A unique partnership is empowering collective action to achieve far-reaching effects. Organising unleashes producer power by helping them break into markets and shape policy decisions that secure resilience for livelihoods, societies and entire landscapes.**

The Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) recognises that those who live off the land — ‘forest and farm producers’ — are vital custodians of our natural resources. Strengthening their hand at scale improves everyone’s environmental future. FFF supports producer organisations in ten partner countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America, offering direct financing, training, peer-to-peer learning and more. It has become a leading mechanism for delivering climate and development funds to local level. Over five years, FFF has channelled finance directly to over 900 producer organisations, representing 30 million people. IIED leads on knowledge generation, monitoring and learning; we help co-create, document and distribute the ways in which producer organisations are changing the big picture. Mass mobilisation has upscaled

262 sustainable business clusters and convinced decision makers at different levels, from local to national, to deliver 51 documented policy improvements. These are concrete victories on land tenure, forest rights, financial incentives, tax and credit arrangements, technical assistance and even new roads. With project partners FAO, IUCN and Agricorn, IIED launched an ambitious second phase in 2018.

Find out more at  
[iied.org/forest-farm-facility](https://iied.org/forest-farm-facility)

### Putting communities in control of climate finance

**A locally led approach for channelling finance to the frontline of climate change has grown from a pilot in one Kenyan county to cover a third of the nation, with similar mechanisms now being tested in three more African countries.**

Too often climate funding never reaches local level, or is spent without consulting community experience of building resilience. When IIED brought national and local government actors together with local partners in Isiolo County, Kenya, we avoided



this error, seeking their readings of the political and practical context. These insights informed the technical support IIED provided to help develop an approach and highlighted the need for it to fit with existing governance systems. Together, we established the County Climate Change Fund (CCCF): a mechanism that funnels climate money to county governments, then on to communities that we have readied to plan for and budget adaptation funds (with checks and balances). Empowering local people to make meaningful investment decisions has transformed the state/citizen relationship. Increased resilience in Isiolo saw the approach rolled out across a third of the country. The impact keeps growing: Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan prioritises taking CCCF nationwide; similar mechanisms are being tested in Mali, Senegal and Tanzania. There is interest in a pilot from Uganda. Building on this experience, our Money Where it Matters work will develop new ways of mobilising private and public climate and development finance for those most in need.

Find out more at [iied.org/drylands-response-kenya](https://iied.org/drylands-response-kenya)

## Influencing the urban transition, everywhere

**As urban areas in low- and middle-income countries grow in population and size, our contribution to cities that work for people and planet delivers much-needed impact at scale. By inspiring generations of researchers and practitioners, and by focusing policymakers on the realities of life in low-income and informal settlements, we drive change all over the world.**

Decades of locally informed and action-oriented research in urban spaces has afforded IIED a profound

understanding of the effects of migration, forced displacement, climate change, how low-income communities organise and the ways cities grow and change. One indicator of how widely we are bringing evidence from marginalised residents to the heart of research and policy is the reach of our journal, *Environment & Urbanization*. With more than 360,000 full-text downloads in 2018, our global network includes hundreds of contributors and millions of readers. Evidence leads to action: through the journal and collaboration with our unparalleled network of local partners, we promote inclusive, low-carbon and climate-resilient solutions to the biggest challenges facing towns and cities today. Local action leads to global influence: we support partners to elevate the needs of urban populations within key international agendas. A respected voice within and beyond low-income and informal communities, we advocate for policies and programmes that will shape urban futures which are just, sustainable and safe.

Find out more at [iied.org/environment-urbanization](https://iied.org/environment-urbanization)

## High stakes in the high seas

**From livelihood protection programmes for coastal fishers in Asia and Africa, to influencing supranational discussions on the effects of ocean governance on low-income nations: how understanding an issue from the bottom up is informing global decision making.**

IIED's inclusive blue economy work began by harnessing market instruments to protect the livelihoods of coastal fishers, seeking ways to sustainably manage the natural resources on which they depend.

Now our focus and impact has grown to addressing the ocean governance gap, which currently leaves 50% of the planet's surface vulnerable to unmanaged, unsustainable and unequal exploitation. Building on our experience of supporting the LDCs in global climate talks, we are helping to prepare negotiators from these and other nations to influence a new UN-led treaty that will seek to protect ocean biodiversity beyond national waters. Our vital early work has allowed us to make often overlooked connections between the high seas and national coastlines: the health of the former profoundly influences the lives of millions of artisanal fishers in low-income countries. Building our knowledge and networks — from poor coastal fishing communities to global policy and scientific actors — will continue to be a major focus over the next five years as we seek to ensure the 'blue economy' is well managed and offers a fair share of its benefits to the poorest nations and communities.

Find out more at [iied.org/inclusive-blue-economy](https://iied.org/inclusive-blue-economy)

# LEARNING FROM MAPPING OUR

IIED has strong bonds with particular parts of the world and local peoples. Decades of partnership and research have made us expert in particular spaces — such as urban informal settlements — and in distinct contexts that cross borders, including the African drylands. And as the challenges we face evolve and grow, so will our sphere of influence.



Working with pastoralist communities in **drylands environments**, particularly in Africa, has been a defining body of research for IIED. More recently, our deep contextual understanding, informed by decades of trusted partnership, has enabled us to develop effective climate action that is tuned in to the local political economy.

We bring national and local knowledge to inform global thinking. The SDG framework calls on us all to work towards a genuinely **universal framing** of challenges; a vision that requires bridges be built between richer and poorer countries. For example, LDCs have greater experience of adaptation action than many developed countries — there is scope to share this learning. We will keep up the pressure for global-level climate action, supporting the LDC Group to challenge the world's 'big emitters' to act ambitiously for a life-saving low-carbon future.

Interconnected challenges don't respect borders; over the coming years, we will develop and cement partnerships to support IIED's growing work on **ocean and coastal ecosystems** from territorial waters to the high seas. We are focused on improving the futures of communities whose livelihoods are under threat from climate change and the over-exploitation of marine resources.

Our success in working with partners to provide support to federations of forest and farm producers is built on decades of work with locally controlled **forest** enterprises across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Our long associations with **urban** social movements, particularly those working through the networks of SDI (Shack/Slum Dwellers International) and ACHR (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights), has enabled IIED to contribute to just, equitable and progressive urban development. Recently established programmes of work with refugees and humanitarian agencies reflect evolving urban needs.

At the national level, IIED has a long, deep partnership with the **Least Developed Countries (LDC)** Group. The Group represents 47 nations located predominantly in Africa and Asia, as well as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Oceania and the Caribbean. We support the Group to exert their rightful influence in critical international debates on global climate action and governance for the high seas.



**Vendor selling green onions in Oudômxai, Laos**

We will further develop this strategy over the next five years. By continually reviewing the changing policy and political environment, we will identify new issues to influence as well as specific opportunities where IIED can have powerful impact. To do this, we have a fully resourced focus on learning and strategy development.

In the first year of the strategy, we will put in place three key pillars:

- A people strategy to align our priorities, policies and procedures to the delivery of the new approach
- A finance strategy to ensure our systems are fit for purpose and represent value for money
- A business development strategy to secure the resources we need to realise our ambitions.

IIED's emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) reflects our determination to make change happen. We must be dedicated to continual learning — from our work, each other, our partners and beyond. Our Learning and Impact Framework outlines the individual

MEL approach applied by each body of work; we will review what we have learned regularly to ensure we are making the most of lessons from across our networks.

This commitment also connects with global concerns. The 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement emphasise the role of monitoring and evaluation: these are tools to inform and guide implementation of sustainable development policies and programmes at all levels. They are a touchstone for transparency and accountability. And beyond this, the 2030 Agenda stresses the value of learning generated by MEL processes for both strategic planning and adaptive management. We have co-created and shared significant policy papers on evaluating the SDGs and will continue to contribute to global MEL thinking.

**We must be dedicated to continual learning — from our work, each other, our partners and beyond**

# Join us.

We would like to acknowledge the vital contributions to our work made by our partners, donors and many other people and organisations around the world.

**We make change happen, together.**

## Image credits

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