



# *Project Brief*

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## **Small Grants Program:**

*The role of ecosystem services  
in adaptation to global  
change for human wellbeing  
(SGP-HW)*

*[SGP- HW 072] Incorporating Local and Traditional Knowledge Systems: New Insights for Ecosystem Services and Transdisciplinary Collaborations*

<https://www.transdisciplinaryresearch.com/>

*New Insights into Governance Modalities in Response to Biodiversity Loss*

SDG: Goal 15 (Life on land)

Across Latin America, biodiversity loss and environmental conflicts in a changing climate have degraded ecosystem services. In response to the crises, the Contracting Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) developed the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Yet, there remains a gap in the biodiversity strategy and ecosystem management initiatives at local and regional scales. Collaborative conservation efforts have been hindered by power asymmetries leading to a diminished importance of indigenous and local knowledges.

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) has supported transdisciplinary research focusing on the conditions and participatory processes of governance modalities that bridge the knowledge gaps. The research project *Incorporating Local and Traditional Knowledge Systems: New Insights for Ecosystem Services and Transdisciplinary Collaborations* has been working with stakeholders and researchers to integrate and synthesize socio-ecological datasets. Thereupon, scientists have built a basis for actionable science outputs and collaborative knowledge mobilization to advance biodiversity conservation implementation.

The research team conducted place-based case studies and analyzed their policy contexts in four countries –Canada, Uruguay, Chile, and Columbia– thereby drawing common topics of interest: forms of state organization, relationships with civil society, and engagement with regional/international organizations, among others.

The team developed Communities of Practice Collaboratories (CPCs), an innovative model of space for co-learning and integration of diverse knowledge. Utilizing the model, the team including local knowledge keepers, campesinos and academics, negotiated power dynamics in the research design and decision making, highlighting the importance of distributive and equitable relations amongst the project partners and participants. Based on the concept of ‘decentralizing academia’, the CPCs model engaged the diverse groups of social actors in conservation, acknowledging the legitimacy of different ways of knowing beyond traditional scientific disciplines.

Another transdisciplinary space for active participation of members outside academia was the invitation to local community members to contribute Chapters for our upcoming edited book: *Converging Boundaries: Transdisciplinary Experiences from Biodiversity Conservation Practices*

in the Americas (under contract with the scholarly press: DIO Press). As a result of this invitation, the team currently received 25 Chapter proposals authored by community members from Colombia, Chile and Uruguay. These proposals include stories, photo-narratives, testimonies, poems and autobiographies that center diverse, local voices in biodiversity conservation. In addition, this team has identified three key enablers or barriers for biodiversity conservation across different governance modalities –plurality, power asymmetries, and conflict. Through an extensive systematic review of literature, results demonstrate that many scholars tend to overlook the importance of clearly identifying and describing a conceptual or theoretical definition of these concepts. Investigators continue to work on identifying key findings.

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## SGP-HW 072



# INCORPORATING LOCAL AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Building a Common Platform for Understanding and Action



### Plug the Gap in Biodiversity Conservation

The Contracting Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) developed the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). However, there remains a gap in the biodiversity strategy and ecosystem management initiatives at local and regional scales.

The research team has conducted transdisciplinary research to find the conditions and participatory processes of governance modalities that incorporate local and traditional knowledge.

### Identify the Best Suitable Governance Modalities



### Place-Based Case Studies and Policy Analysis

Canada, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay

#### Topic of Interests

- Forms of state organization
- Relationships with civil society
- Engagement with regional international organizations among others



### Plurality, Power asymmetries and Conflict



A systematic literature review demonstrated that many scholars tend to overlook the importance of clearly define the concepts of plurality, power asymmetries and conflict.

### Key Enablers and Barriers for Biodiversity Conservation



### Communities of Practice Collaboratories (CPCs)

The team developed **an innovative model of space for co-learning and integration of diverse knowledge**



Engaging **local knowledge keepers, campesinos and academics** in collaborative work based on the concept of 'decentralizing academia'



Distributive and equitable relations amongst the project participants



Different ways of knowing beyond traditional scientific disciplines

### Upcoming edited book

Converging Boundaries: Transdisciplinary Experiences from Biodiversity Conservation Practices in the Americas

## 25 Chapter proposals

Community members from Colombia, Chile and Uruguay submitted their stories, photo narratives and autobiographies that center local voices in biodiversity conservation.