

Is this a good “ICCA initiative”?



The ICCA
Consortium

GEF SGP Regional Workshop, Bangkok 14 Feb 2015



“ICCA” stands for:

Indigenous Peoples’ and Community
Conserved Territories and Areas



(or “the bio-cultural diversity jewels” of the world!)

ICCAs are found in all continents, span all types of ecosystems and cultures, have thousands of local names and are extremely diverse...



***de facto* capacity/power to take and enforce decisions** (functioning governance institution)

2

... but they all have 3 characteristics



1

decisions & practices lead to conservation of nature

(including sustainable use & restoration, positive trend)

3

ICCAs relate to some type of “*commons*”—
land, water and natural resources governed and
managed collectively by a community of people



- ICCAs possess an effective *governance institution* (organs for decision-making & enforcing decisions... systems of relations & rules often embedded in “local culture”...)



ICCAs are successful examples of collective decisions about nature ... the oldest form of “conservation” on earth... closely related to peoples’ livelihoods, culture and identity...



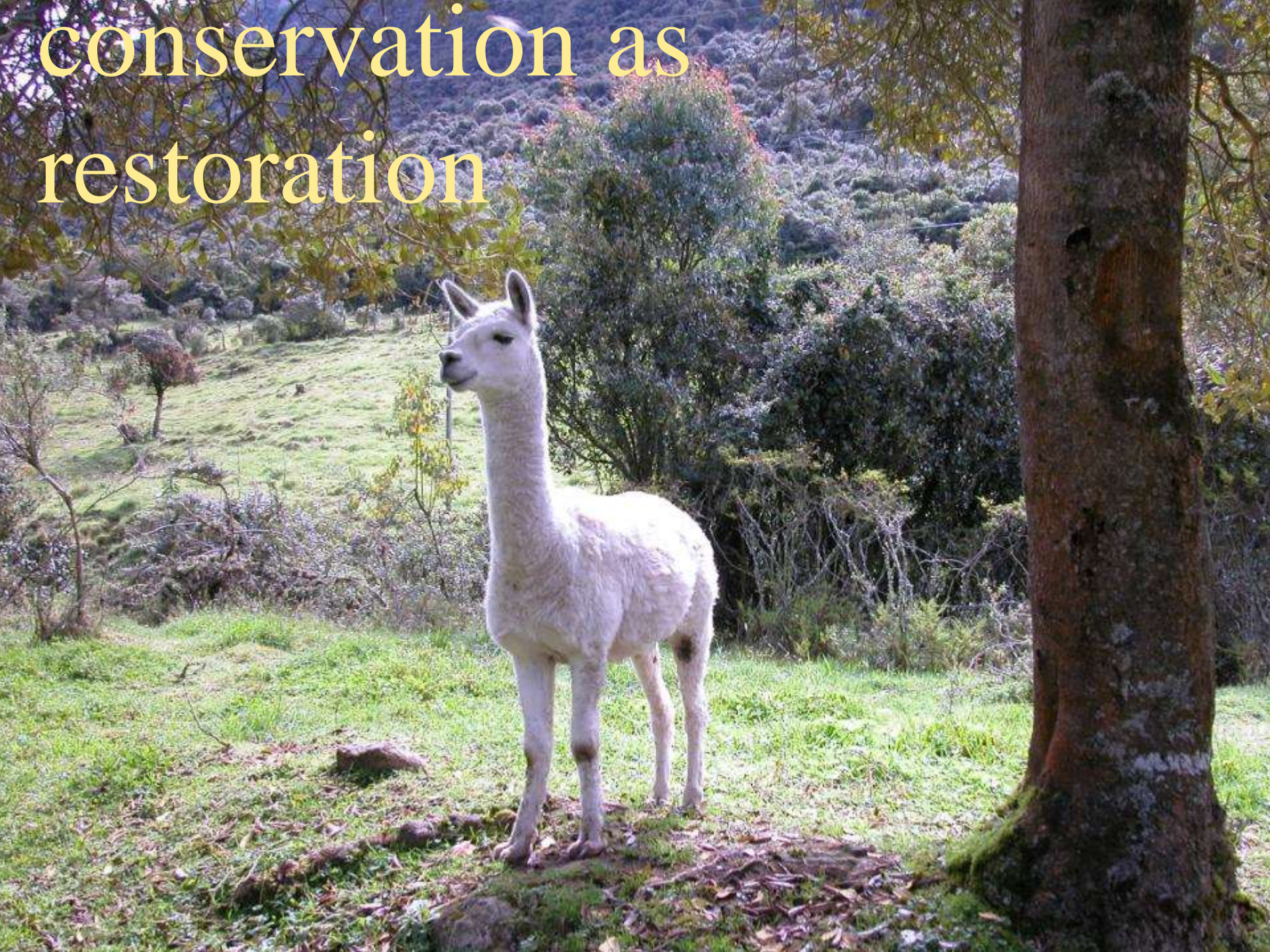
conservation as
“strict preservation”



conservation as sustainable use

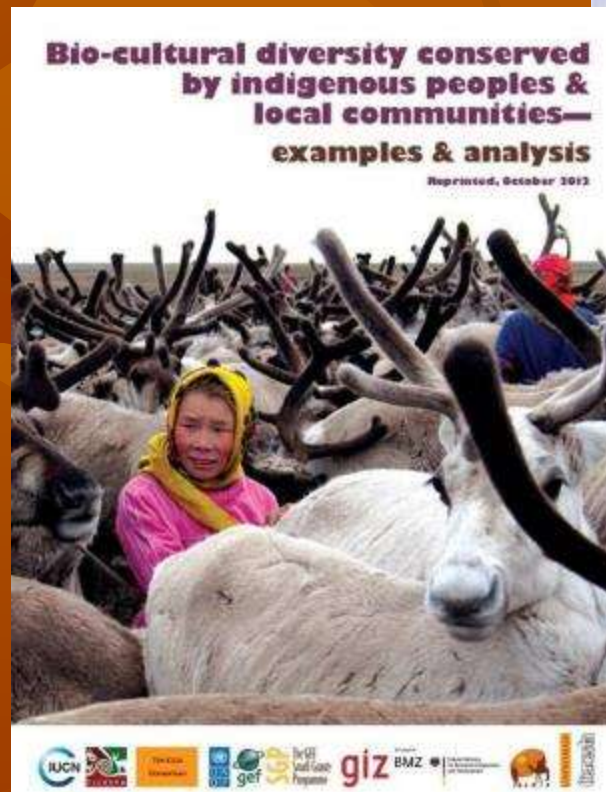


conservation as restoration



In 2010 the ICCA Consortium distilled advice on ways to recognize and support ICCAs

- community integrity and strength are essential to any ICCA;
- friends and allies from civil society can and do play crucial supporting roles;
- national governments have international obligations vis-à-vis ICCAs -- and international organizations, instruments, and projects can help them fulfil such obligations;



← GEF SGP!!!



- governments have a variety of avenues to officially recognize collective subjects possessing collective rights and responsibilities (and respect customary institutions, which should evolve at their own pace);
- At best, they would recognise ICCAs as coherent land, water, and natural resource units governed by self-defined IPs or LCs (legal subjects) under a common title (property or right of use) that is inalienable, indivisible, and established in perpetuity;



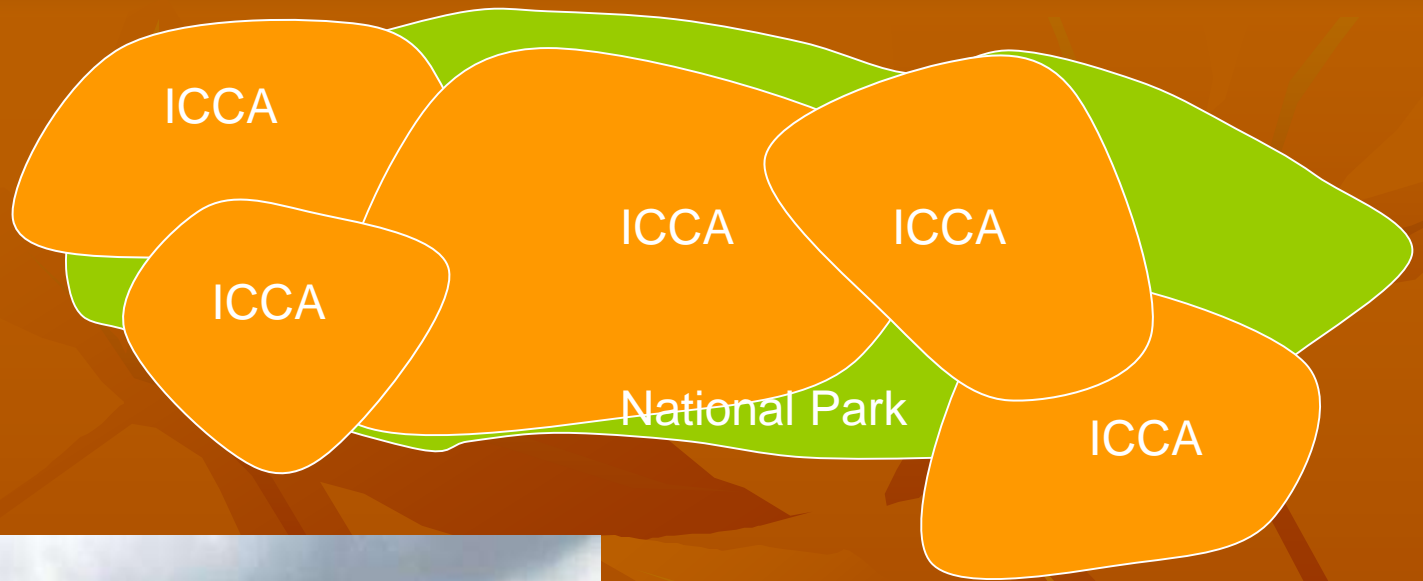
- free, prior and informed consent should be obtained in all matters regarding ICCAs;
- under appropriate conditions, and provided they maintain their own governance institutions, ICCAs can benefit from being officially recognized as protected areas;
- ICCAs that have been incorporated into official PA systems without the free, prior and informed consent of the concerned communities should be recognized as ICCAs and provided respect and support, as appropriate; positive collaboration should be sought between the relevant PA authorities and communities;



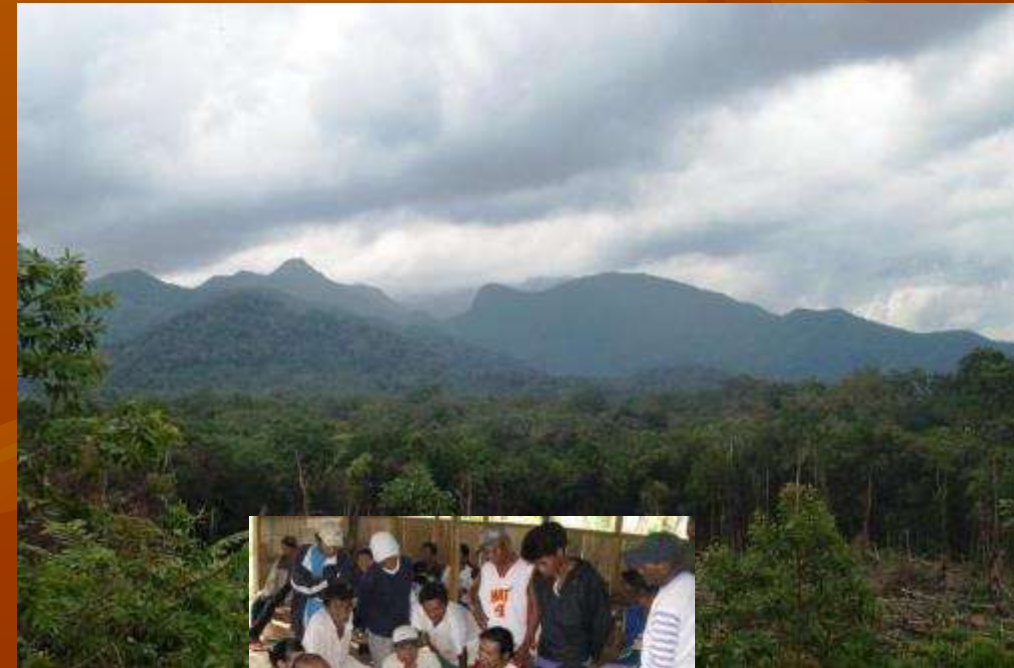
The relationship between ICCAs and protected areas is complex, and different cases are possible:

...you can find ICCAs tucked within protected areas (example of ceremonial grounds incorporated within Park W – transboundary among Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin) ...





...you can find protected areas that basically overlap with many ICCAs (example of Mount Kalatungan NP in the Philippines) ...



ICCA

Ramsar
site



...you can even find ICCAs that actually *include* protected areas (example of Kushkizar Wetland-- Ramsar site in the territory of the Kuhi, a Qashqai sub-tribe in Iran)

...in all cases, ICCAs should be recognised and supported



- What kind of support has proven helpful?
 - support to enforce rules and provide fair and coherent judgement and sanctions for violators,
 - capacity development to respond to threats and manage conflicts
 - opportunities for joint learning and advocacy (e.g. exchange visits, networking, federations...)
 - social recognition for ICCAs (e.g. through praise, awards, media coverage...)
 - financial incentives... but only with caution and safeguards to maintain and strengthen community independence and integrity;
 - promotion of good governance at all levels (e.g. legitimacy, transparency, accountability...)



Recently (Jan. 2015), specific advice on “good ICCA initiatives” was sought and obtained from Consortium Members and Honorary members (some of whom have important experience with GEF SGP as staff!)

This is what they recommend:

First, ask yourselves if the initiative concerns one or more ICCAs– actual or potential (i.e. to be revived, adapted, healed, developed...)

- Think about the three ICCA characteristics
- Are those currently there?
- If not, or not all of them, will they be developed, improved and strengthened by the initiative?



Initiatives “unique to ICCAs” that should be strongly supported:

- **Legal & social recognition of collective rights** to ICCAs in all ways suitable to national legislation & society (e.g. CADT)
- **Legal & social recognition of community/ customary organizations** in charge of governing their ICCAs
- Legal & social recognition of **coalitions and federations** of ICCA communities
- **Networking and capacity building** among ICCA communities, including via exchange visits and **joint advocacy** for national legal and social recognition
- Support to **ICCA-dedicated NGO for legal advice** (e.g. to file and follow up ICCA cases on land and resource issues & conflicts, back-up recognition of specific ICCAs, offer protection for collective rights whenever challenged, train on paralegal skills...).

RECOGNITION

Initiatives “unique to ICCAs” (cnt.):

- Enhancing ICCA **self-awareness and capacities**, including **collective visions & plans, inventories, documentation, , mapping**, zoning, photo & video-stories, **demarcation & analyses, monitoring, surveillance** and **protection** from threats...
- **Punctual support** for ICCA governance institutions appointed by their communities (e.g., for **key meetings, equipment & tools for surveillance, communication, functioning**, etc.)
- Promotion of **inter-generation and inter-community learning on ICCAs** (e.g. workshops, exchange visits)
- Support to **ICCA-dedicated NGOs for facilitation** of community self-awareness & learning, planning, governance, documentation, communication, collective validation and registering of ICCAs in UNEP WCMC registry... and **training communities on technical skills** (mapping, geo-tagging, video, organization, bookkeeping, bio-cultural protocols, monitoring, financial...)

Initiatives **NOT** unique to ICCAs, but most valuable for ICCAs:

- Support to **conserving biological diversity and wildlife** and enhancing the sustainability of **managing land & resources** for livelihoods (e.g., management plans, adapted seeds and cultivars)
- Support to **strengthening the links of ICCAs with food sovereignty and income/ wealth generation activities** (e.g., via local crops, seeds & breeds, small scale production, local knowledge, markets & fair trade safe water & energy, tourism, handicrafts...)
- Support to **community funds** fed by returns on collective investments on well-governed and well-managed commons
- Support to upholding the **cultural, non-economic values that sustain ICCAs** (e.g., identity and culture via food choice & food sovereignty)
- **Community cultural centers** (traditional artifacts, photos, videos, voices, music... and infrastructures to maintain them 'in situ' for intergenerational meetings and transmission/innovation of local knowledge and skills)

Initiatives **not** unique to ICCAs, but most valuable (cnt.):

- Support to **combining initiatives and linking ICCAs** (e.g. in COMPACT) and to repair wrongdoings (e.g. Whakatane)
- Support to **improving governance** of land, water & natural resources, including for ICCAs
- Support to recognizing and implementing **bi-cultural educational curricula** & classes with flexible schedule within ICCAs
- Support to **adapting to climate change**, and **reducing risks** of disaster by combining local and non-local knowledge and skills



Recommendations
to GEF SGP staff:



- **Enhance your own capacities about ICCAs** (deeply understand what you wish to support)
- Think about sustainability, **continuity, broader picture, the whole territory, systemic needs**... strive for **coordinated support to several ICCAs over a long time frame** (minimum of three years)...
- If “ICCA initiatives” are initiated by third parties, make sure that they enter into clear agreements with the concerned communities and ensure **effective community empowerment, on-going monitoring and transparency** in all financial transactions, and direct links between the communities and you GEF SGP staff...
- **Never** support initiatives that **dis-empower customary organisations** (any evolution should take place from within!)
- **Never** support initiatives that **reify, alienate, commoditize or monetize ecosystem functions and cultural values**

In summary, good “ICCA initiatives” leave behind :

- **communities** that are **better connected with their natural commons** and capable to govern and manage them well
- communities that are more **aware of their history & culture**, and better **able to govern themselves**
- communities that are **richer** in terms of resources, capital and infrastructure, and have **more autonomy**
- communities that are **stronger**, more **respected** by others and better **connected with other communities**
- communities that have dependable **friends and allies** in civil society and in government quarters
- communities that are **wiser**, more **self-aware**, more **responsible** and more **capable to learn, innovate** and **prevent** and **solve problems**



Many thanks for your attention !



www.ICCAconsortium.org

