

**Cultural  Survival**



**2025 APPLICATION  
GUIDELINES**

**KEEPERS OF THE EARTH FUND**





# Who we are



Cultural Survival has defended the rights of Indigenous Peoples and supported their political and cultural self-determination and resilience since 1972. We work toward a future that respects the inherent rights and cultural dynamics of Indigenous Peoples, which are deeply interconnected with their territories, languages, spiritual traditions, and artistic expressions, and which are rooted in self-determination and self-governance. The Keepers of the Earth Fund (KOEf) seeks to respond to the local needs and solutions of Indigenous Peoples. It supports community projects led by emerging and grassroots Indigenous groups, and often serves as the first source of funding for some organizations and communities. KOEF is led by Indigenous people, and the projects are collectively evaluated and approved by an internal committee, which is also composed of Indigenous people.

## — WHAT IS OUR APPROACH?

Cultural Survival guides its work with the concepts of self-determination, Indigenous worldviews, trust, humility, interculturality, and community, as well as under the principles of respect, equity, solidarity, and responsibility. Cultural Survival values collective projects managed by and for the benefit of the entire community.

Projects must be designed and managed by Indigenous members of the same community served by the project, identifying and using the values that are their own. We appreciate strategic and innovative approaches to community development based on Indigenous values, in collaboration with others for the good of the entire community, and on the development of strategic capacities with specific results. For example, if you are documenting a language, song, or traditional dance, why is it important for the community, and how will it be used, shared and stored so that community members can have access to them? The ultimate goal should not be simply to produce documentary materials, but to use the documentation to promote the continuation of tradition, practices, and community development.

Cultural Survival will prioritize projects proposed by organizations, communities, collectives and Indigenous governments who are applying for a fund for the first time and who work at the local level. Applications coming from women associations and other genders are also welcome.

# | AREAS OF FOCUS

For the 2025 call for proposals, we are particularly interested in projects focused on the following topics and their intersections:

- **climate change** - (e.g. reforestation, adaptation of crops, flood prevention)
- **food sovereignty** (e.g seed banks, Indigenous traditional food systems, fishing and hunting rights)
- **Indigenous economies** (e.g. production, distribution and circulation of products, trade, community enterprises, arts and crafts when they are a strong part of the local economy).
- **Indigenous governance based on ancestral systems** (e.g. inclusion of women and youth on Indigenous governments, strengthening assemblies or other forms of decision making)
- **Indigenous knowledge systems** - (e.g. transfer of knowledge from knowledge keepers to youth and children).
- **Indigenous spiritualities** - (e.g. practice of rituals for agriculture, cycles of the moon, the rain, knowledge transfer of Indigenous cosmovisions to new generations or the community).

However, applicants should feel free to propose projects on any issue or solution that is important to their community.

*\*\*\*For projects related to community radio and Indigenous communication, please contact the Indigenous Community Media Fund at [radio@cs.org](mailto:radio@cs.org)\*\*\**





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# GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITY AND COMMUNITY VISITS

As part of our grantmaking process, Cultural Survival deeply values building long-term relationships with the communities and organizations that receive our funds—our partners. For this reason, we strive to personally visit most of the funded projects. For this call, to facilitate these visits, we prefer proposals from the following countries:

**Botswana**

**Namibia**

**South Africa**



A person with short dark hair, wearing a red and black plaid shuka, is seen from the back, looking out over a vast savanna landscape under a clear blue sky. The person's hand is raised near their face. The background shows rolling green hills and a clear horizon.

# REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING

- The project is Indigenous-led with collective decision making or with community engagement at all stages of the planning and implementation of the project
- Eligible applicants are
  - Indigenous communities,
  - Indigenous governments,
  - Grassroots Indigenous organizations
  - Nonprofit organizations
- Must have a bank account able to receive international transfers
- Legal registration of the collective is not required

# GRANT AMOUNTS



- Grant amounts can be up to a maximum of **\$8,000 (eight thousand)** US dollars. The fund is intended as a boost that facilitates initial project activities aimed at sustainability and self-sufficiency.

## WE DO NOT FUND:

- Projects that do not originate from Indigenous communities or organizations, or that are not led by Indigenous Peoples
- Political campaigns
- Missionary or proselytizing projects
- Conference registration fees
- Individual work or projects
- Academic research (institutionalized, western university research)
- Projects modeled on government programs

> [www.cs.org/koef](http://www.cs.org/koef)





# HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDS

- This is your community's opportunity to imagine and design a project that only you, with your knowledge of your community, culture, and values, can develop to address a specific problem. To apply, submit the **seven-question note** we pose and send it to [koef@cs.org](mailto:koef@cs.org). Please limit your application to a maximum of two pages of written text, or 5 minutes of video.
- You can submit your detailed proposal form in English, Afrikaans, Setswana, and Khoekhoegowab.

**Deadline: August 22, 2025**

➤ [www.cs.org/koef](http://www.cs.org/koef)



# Project Proposal Format



**Please send us a document or video answering the following questions:**

1. Name of the organization, community or tribe applying to this grant, and its location.
2. Two contacts responsible for the project and their relationship with the community served by the project. (We encourage Indigenous leadership to lead projects).
3. Please tell us about the identity of the people, nation, tribe or culture served by this project.
4. If your community or tribe is working towards recognition as an Indigenous tribe within these three countries, please share any evidence of gatherings, activism or documentation related to your advocacy for recognition.
5. What do you want to do? For how long? How much will it cost? Why is this project important for your community? Provide any relevant context.
6. Who will support the work? Describe any support by community members, foundations, volunteers, etc.
7. Is your community facing any threats? Specify the type of threat. For example, if it is monoculture, specify the type of crop, or if mining, specify which minerals are being extracted.

# PROCESS AND TIMELINES

The proposals will be evaluated by our internal committee made up of Indigenous members of the Cultural Survival team. Please consider the following phases when developing your proposal:

1. Submission of concept notes after this public call
2. Review of concept notes by the KOEF team
3. Submission of detailed proposals if selected as eligible applicant on the first phase (mid-September)
4. Evaluation of detailed proposals by the evaluation committee
5. Confirmation of selected projects to be funded (by the end of October)
6. Documentation and signing of agreements
7. Disbursement of funds ( November)

The process can take about four months, depending on the flow of communication with selected partners.



# To our non-Indigenous allies:



At Cultural Survival, we know that our partners experience different processes on the path to autonomy and self-determination, so we understand that some seek support from non-Indigenous allies to submit an application. However, in such cases, we prioritize projects that were born collectively in, and for the benefit of, the Indigenous community, and we encourage that Indigenous leadership is at the center of decision making for all projects selected.

For any questions, please contact the fund at [koef@cs.org](mailto:koef@cs.org)

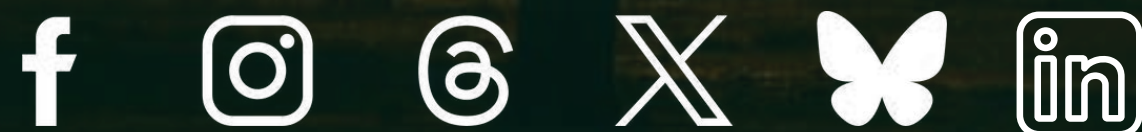
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