

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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# International Land Coalition

JANUARY 2021



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## Context

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**The 2016-2021 Strategy** was the longest strategy ever for the ILC. It was approved during an incredibly positive moment for the recognition of the importance of land. The SDGs and the VGGTs offered historic global frameworks for action, in part achieved through the efforts of the ILC members. The ILC took this opportunity to demonstrate how – especially at the national level – strategic and inclusive partnerships could make these aspirations real through what members refer to as ‘people-centred land governance’.

The ILC organised its actions through a growing number of member-led platforms to work at various levels for system change. Good visibility won increased donor support. The Mid-Term Review, undertaken in 2017-18, revealed the ILC was having impact by working with a growing number of national governments. At the same time, efforts by members to combine efforts across countries on the ILC’s ten commitments achieved recognition and influenced regional and global processes, not least on women’s land rights, land and environment defenders, family farming, and the rights of indigenous peoples and pastoralists to land, territories and natural resources.

Over the period of the strategy, the ILC’s membership grew by 65%, giving momentum to the ILC’s capacity to actually achieve system change. Important strides were taken in focusing how the ILC works as a coalition in a transformative manner, epitomised by the new operating model introduced following the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review.

The MTR also pointed to the challenge of shifting the ILC’s role to fully being a network that catalyses partnerships for change, rather than the one of a donor, to its growing membership. While the ILC still faces challenges to extricate itself from being perceived as a donor, it has begun demonstrating a powerful role as a co-convenor of change processes at national, regional and global levels.

By the end of the strategy, the ILC will have mobilised almost USD100 million towards achieving people-centred land governance; with slightly over half raised directly by the ILC, and slightly under half leveraged by member-led platforms with the ILC’s support. The impact of the ILC as the lead global defender of land rights on the global stage is significant and far-reaching, including to the local level.

These achievements of the ILC over the last six years will be an important foundation on which the ILC can face the next strategy period from 2022-30. The ILC will need to win attention and investment in land governance in far more challenging contexts than it has faced over the last strategy. Nonetheless, the ILC has positioned itself well to do so. The ILC’s success will be significant to the whole ‘land community’.

In this overall context, this report responds to the request of the ILC Council to understand and evaluate the ILC’s capacity to achieve people-centred land governance (its strategy impact level) and to contribute to changes in policy, practice, and strengthened network capacity at the country level. In doing so, it evaluates the ILC’s delivery mechanisms as set out in its Roadmap, including its member-led platforms. It also examines the ILC’s status and reputation as a network in bringing about change and sustainability. The assessment is made with a forward-looking perspective, so as to inform the 2022-2030 strategy development process.

# Context

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## ESSENTIAL FINDINGS

To achieve its overarching goal “to realise land governance for and with people at *the country level*, responding to the needs and protecting the rights of those who line on and from the land”, the ILC has identified three interconnected outcomes in its results framework as “changes in policy, changes in practice and strengthened network capacity.”

Overall, the Impact Assessment confirms for the 2016-21 strategy, that the **ILC has largely achieved its mission**. It has recorded changes at the policy and practice level that exceeds the targets it set itself. It did so by working as a global network while largely organising its work through member-led platforms nationally, regionally and globally. It made progress in building and strengthening capacities for transformation across its membership.

That said, two elements need consideration: currently impact is measured largely through policy and/or practice changes. The ILC does **not yet sufficiently support members to generate and use people-generated data**, and as a result, has a limited evidence base for its impact on communities and/or individuals. In addition, **people-level stories and ‘impact’ are largely missing from the ILC’s current narrative and communications efforts**.

Capacity building remain key to sustain systemic changes. **Smaller members and frontline organisations need and recognise the benefits of the ILC support in their capacity strengthening**. External partners see this as the ILC’s primary role and value-add, in terms of both financial resources, visibility and general capacity strengthening.

The Impact Assessment further confirms the ILC was a **successful interlocutor for change**. It acted both globally/regionally and through its member-led platforms. While global communications was overall effective, **more communications capacity strengthening** for members and platforms is desirable, not least to help them position themselves within the wider community they talk to. The ILC’s multi-stakeholder platforms are effective but suffer from financial fragility, which in turns becomes an ILC’s fragility given its current operational model. Not only that, they are not yet fully well-linked with each other, failing to link effectively and meaningfully to the donor community and external partners, and require more peer exchange even when the info/infra-structure exists (the Land Collaborative is not used to its potential). Monitoring and Evaluation would be improved if it evolved from its current position as a compliance tool to more of a learning compass, which could unleash more of its transformative power.

The existing **10 commitments** appear to be the right ones in terms of their relevance to what the ILC network is trying to achieve in land governance. However, they risk diluting a sense of unity if broken down into parallel work-areas and it has become apparent that the ILC is seen to be **‘trying to do too much’** with a difficulty of tying its various thematic strands together – with almost direct repercussions on communications capacity and coherence for the ILC. People centred land governance can remain the focus of the ILC but possibly in its relationship to wider societal concerns. The Impact Assessment recommends the new strategy should focus on equality – as echoed by many members- as an informing element for all parts of the ILC’s work, from the membership approach to capacity strengthening, and from communications to internal operations.

**Bold progress** has been made on **regionalisation**, a new reality if compared to a decade ago. A multimodal coalition needs some **rethinking of its governance structures and distribution of roles**, looking within and beyond the ILC’s existing membership, as well as its funding models. A growing network should rethink the way it relies on core funding and possibly emphasise the ILC’s role in assisting platforms, with adequate capacity strengthening to leverage funding directly from donors. Regions and platforms should have more autonomy and responsibilities. As the ILC moves in this direction, detailed and transparent mechanisms for allocating funds directly from the ILC are critical. Perceived unfairness in distribution, even if misplaced, could undermine the legitimacy of the ILC.

# Context

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the years there have been great strides with the ILC towards regionalisation, while some feel more could be done, the last decade can be seen as the ‘decade of regionalisation’. This is embraced by almost all actors and is seen as important given the diversity of both members and regions. It is therefore important that *all* recommendations are discussed and explored at the regional level. While some recommendation areas include specific requirements for certain regions, all recommendations will need to be adapted and contextualised to the different realities of where the ILC works, and each region should be able to suggest how a recommendation should materialise at their level, where relevant. This will help ensure the implementation of these recommendations can involve bottom-up influence, rather than be seen as top-down diktats.

The recommendations are split into a three-tier system, where each recommendation is assigned a tier speaking to its importance and the urgency with which it should be addressed.

The three tiers are:

- **Red – urgent:** A critical change which should be made immediately. If left unresolved, it has the risk to undermine the work of the ILC, its impact, its reputation and member satisfaction.
- **Amber – important:** An important change which should be made whenever possible. It is unlikely to materially affect the ILC in the short-term but will reduce efficiency and could compromise impact in the long-term.
- **Green – desirable:** A ‘nice-to-have’ which should be considered in the fullness of time. Unlikely to immediately change the work of the ILC but can contribute to greater impact over time. While the lowest of the tiers, it should not be ignored or disregarded out of hand.

In total there are 13 Recommendations. In order to aid implementation, there are only 2 urgent recommendations, with more as you go down the tiers. This is summarised in the tier pyramid. Many findings and resulting recommendations are interlinked and inform each other, and as such the document should be looked at in its entirety.

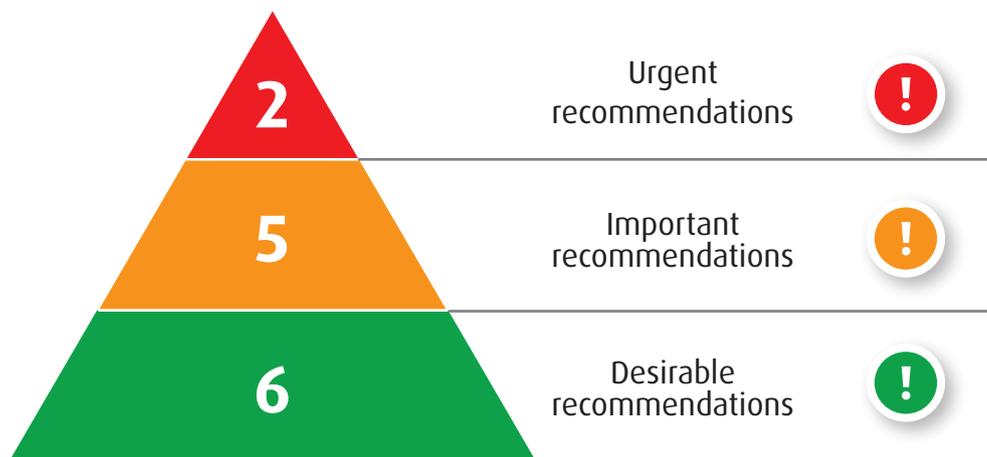


Figure 1: Distribution of recommendations

# Part 1: Impact of the Strategy

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The impact assessment examined what the ILC has achieved under the current strategy vis-à-vis its people-centred land governance by focusing on two main levels: (1) **Impact/outcome level** (including the impact of the ILC on the network, changes in policies/practices, and impact on communities), and (2) **Strategic level** (including the strategic success of the 10 commitments, the ILC's core value of gender equality, strategic objectives, New Operating Model, and delivery mechanisms).

Along the assessment, it did emerge that there is a certain degree of ambiguity and uncertainty within the ILC concerning the definition of *impact*. Opinions differ on whether impact revolves around the people who are affected by land governance, or more top-level outcomes, such as policy change and its implementation (practice).

Despite differing interpretations all agree the ILC's role is specifically to empower members and that is what should be considered its impact focus. In the view of members, the ILC does not need to be able to claim these policy and practice successes as its own, as long as ILC members can. There is a recognition that the ILC is facing more demands to show *something*, especially at community level none-the-less. For the purpose of this impact assessment, Keystone considers impact to occur at all three levels – policy and practice, member, and community levels.

To determine the ILCs impact, the assessment looked at three main spheres as defined by ILC's Theory of Change:

**SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:** the extent to which the ILC influenced key change-makers, including the triggering of wider change sought in policies, practices and agendas:

Overall, the ILC is considered to be succeeding here, and has exceeded its targets as set out in the 2016 – 2021 Strategy. While in many cases the ILC is indirectly contributing to this impact through its members and platforms, the collective successes are clearly visible.

Platform deep dives have indicated that National Engagement Strategy (NES) platforms are affecting policy and practice changes at the country level, and Commitment Based Initiative (CBI) platforms play a more important role in advocacy, which is an important precursor to policy change. While there are some CBI platforms that are also strongly affecting policy and practices changes, these are seen as exceptions, and most CBI platforms have had more success in amplifying member voices and supporting them with either training, shared learning or joint tools and materials.

Members generally believe that ILC participation has equipped them with the relevant tools and data to affect changes in relevant land practices and that members are therefore able to effectively engage and advocate with changemakers to achieve their goals.

## CHANGES IN POLICIES AND CHANGES IN PRACTICES

As indicated by the ILC, the Coalition's main focus and way to achieve its overarching goal, is to achieve impact at the country level, which is then intended to transform into global action.<sup>1</sup> This is also articulated in its theory of change. To achieve its overarching goal "to realise land governance for and with people at the country level, responding to the needs and protecting the rights of those who line on and from the land", the ILC has identified three interconnected outcomes in its results framework as "changes in policy, practice and strengthened network capacity."

Overall, the Impact Assessment confirms for the 2016-21 strategy, the ILC has largely achieved its mission. It has recorded changes at the policy and practice level that exceeds the targets it set itself (see Figure below). In terms of NES platforms and their impact at country level as per the ILC's Strategy focus, there was a wide range of impact across the examined platforms. Overall, all NES platforms show good examples of positive impact and suggest that they drive much of the value emanating from the ILC.

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1 International Land Coalition Secretariat (2015). International Land Coalition Strategy 2016 – 21. 20 years of ILC, p.7.

# Part 1: Impact of the Strategy

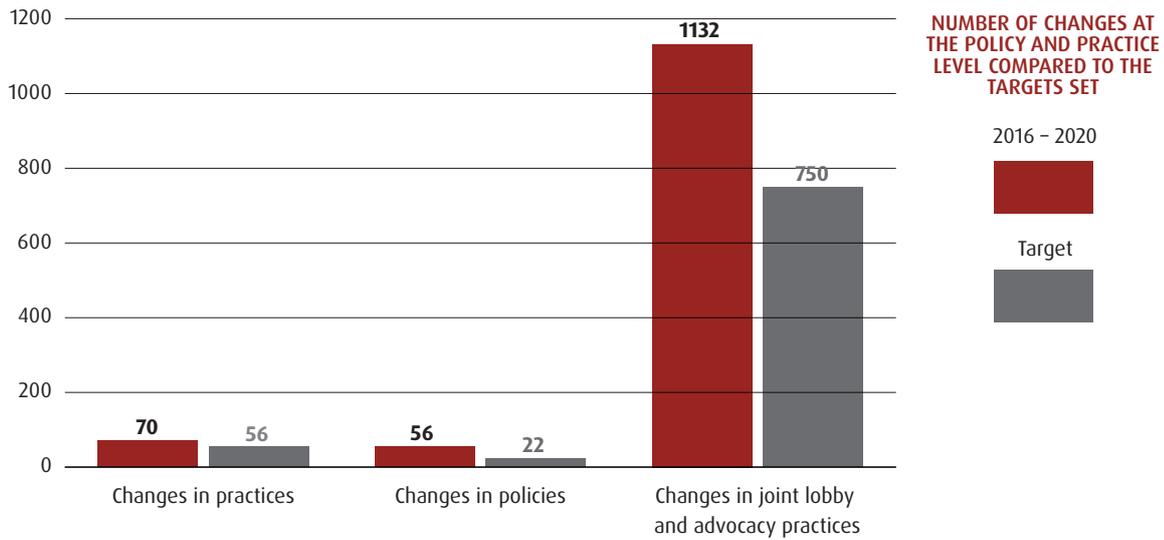


Figure 2: Impact – policy and practice

## **SPHERE OF CONTROL:** the extent to which the ILC strengthened the ILC network and supported its members

According to the results framework, the ILC has again met or exceeded its output targets as set out in its 2016 – 2021 Strategy. The ILC has been moderately successful in connecting members with each other but much less so in connecting members to non-members. The ILC has also connected members effectively within multi-stakeholder platforms, however links *between* platforms and collaboration among them is not happening to the extent it should or could.

Members generally feel that the ILC has been effective in providing them with the opportunities to build their capacities, however, there are currently not enough opportunities for peer exchange or to learn

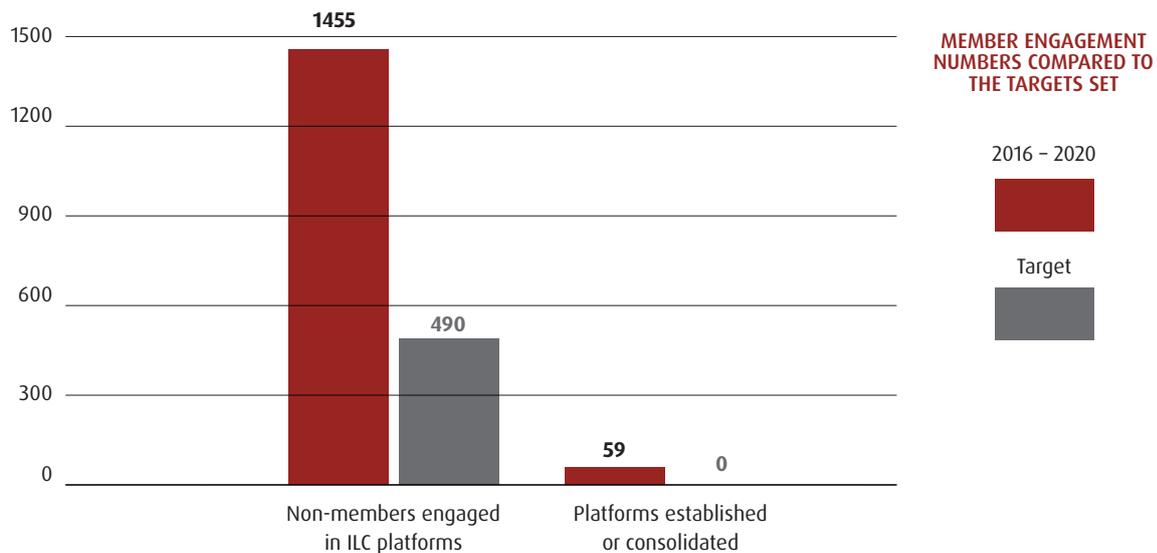


Figure 3: Impact – member engagement

## Part 1: Impact of the Strategy

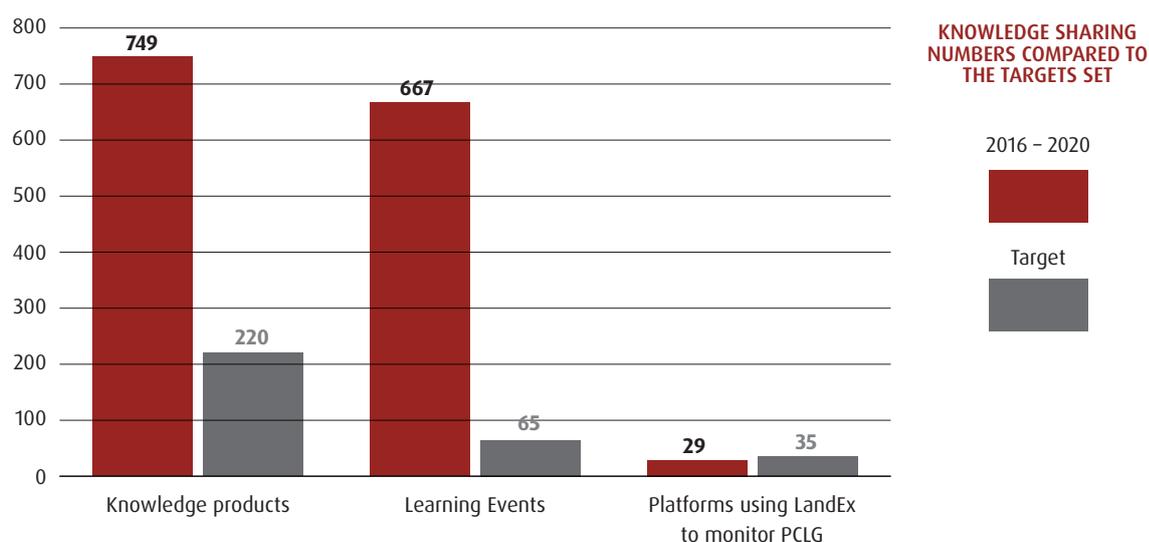


Figure 4: Impact - knowledge sharing

from one another's experiences. Moreover, members do not feel the ILC is supporting them sufficiently to find alternative sources of support. This is especially true for smaller members such as constituency-based organisations and indigenous groups.

### CONNECT, MOBILISE, INFLUENCE

Members consider the *Connect, Mobilise, Influence* (CMI) approach to be the right one – the three strategic objectives complement one another and are the right tools for achieving success. Members feel the ILC has helped them *Connect* with other actors and have a greater, more united voice on issues, which in turn has helped them achieve more. While members have indicated that they receive great value they have also indicated that they want the ILC to do more to connect them with each other. Under *Mobilise*, members are clear that they also want more capacity strengthening - they value it and would benefit from a more structured approach. In doing so, there are calls for the ILC to do more cross-member peer exchange and facilitate the sharing of member experience, recognising their skillset and expertise in certain areas. Concerning the *Influence* component, there is a sense that the ILC is not as effective in translating its efforts at the global level into resulting policy and practice changes, and that this should instead be left to individual members and platforms.

**SPHERE OF CONCERN:** the extent to which the ILC realised people centred land governance and the 10 commitments at the country level, impacting individuals and their communities

While the ILC currently measures its impact at the regional and national level (largely through policy and/or practice changes), it is less systematic at doing so at the community level. The ILC does not sufficiently support members to generate people-generated data, and as a result, has a limited evidence base for its impact on individuals and communities. This has made evaluating its impact at the sphere of concern difficult. That said, there are pockets of information – through either *Landex* or *Contribution Analyses* which point to some positive change.

# Part 1: Impact of the Strategy

## ILC'S GOAL OF PEOPLE CENTRED LAND GOVERNANCE AND ITS TEN COMMITMENTS

Looking back on the current 2016 – 2021 Strategy, there is a sense that the current strategy has been effective and that the focus on land governance and human rights was the right one.

Moving forward, however, this may not be sufficient to capture the work of the members or the imagination of donors. In sum, there is an overall sense that there is a lack of focus to the ILC's work. As a result, members suggested that the ILC's main focus for its next strategy should be around *overcoming inequality*. Moreover, members should be encouraged and supported to contextualise any new strategy to their own realities.

The existing 10 commitments appear to be the right ones in terms of their relevance to what the ILC network is trying to achieve in land governance. However, it has become apparent that the ILC is seen to be 'trying to do too much' with a difficulty of tying its various thematic strands together.

The three commitment areas in which the ILC performed the best in the past five years, include: 'Equal land rights for women,' 'Transparent and accessible information,' and 'protection for land rights defenders.'

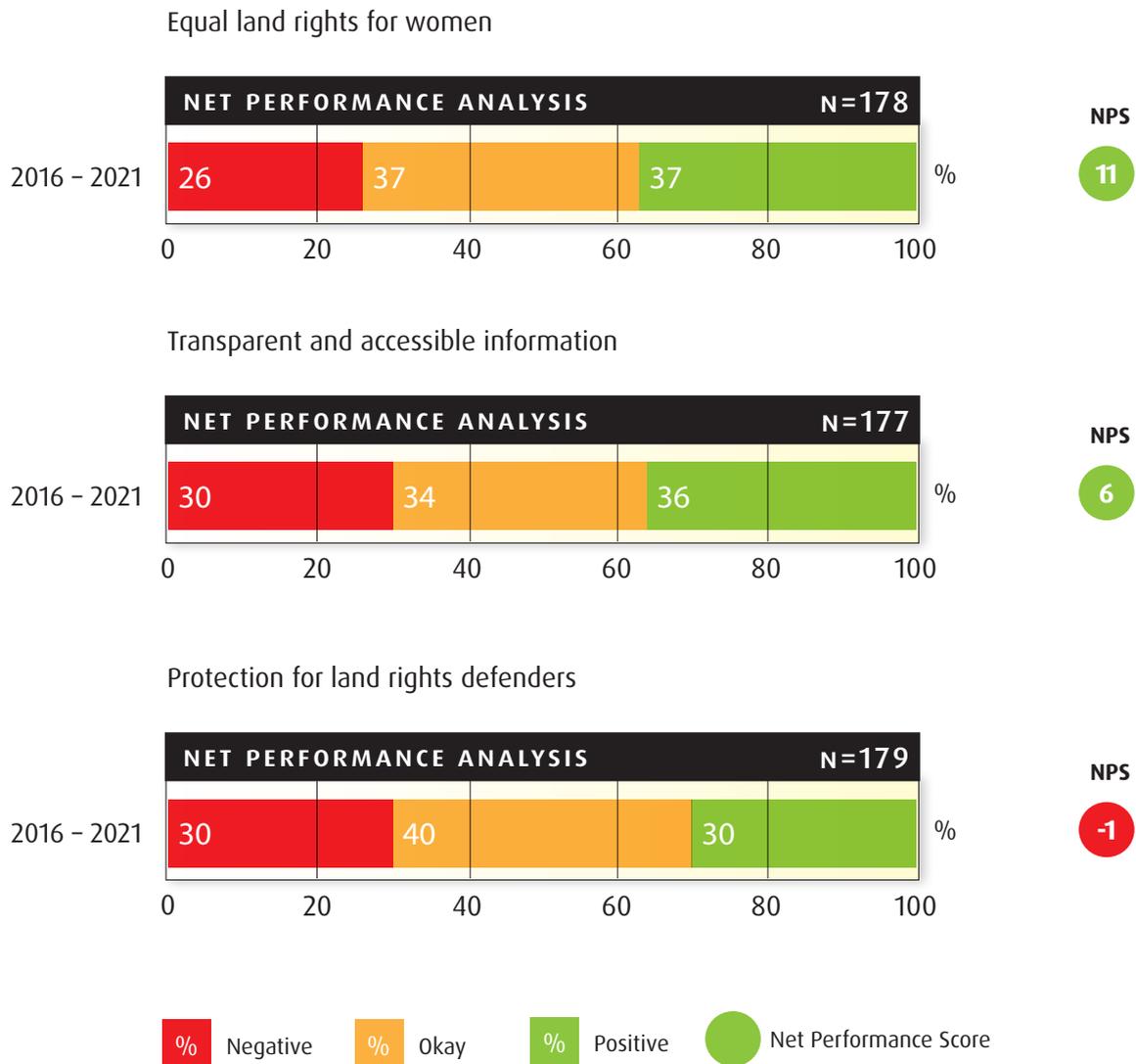


Figure 5: ILC highest performing commitments according to members

# Part 1: Impact of the Strategy

When members were asked to identify particular aspects of land governance that they felt were missing from the existing commitments, the top themes were around focusing more on youth and indigenous groups. While these two aspects are already addressed in the existing strategy and 10 commitments, the membership feel they are increasingly important and need greater emphasis moving forward.

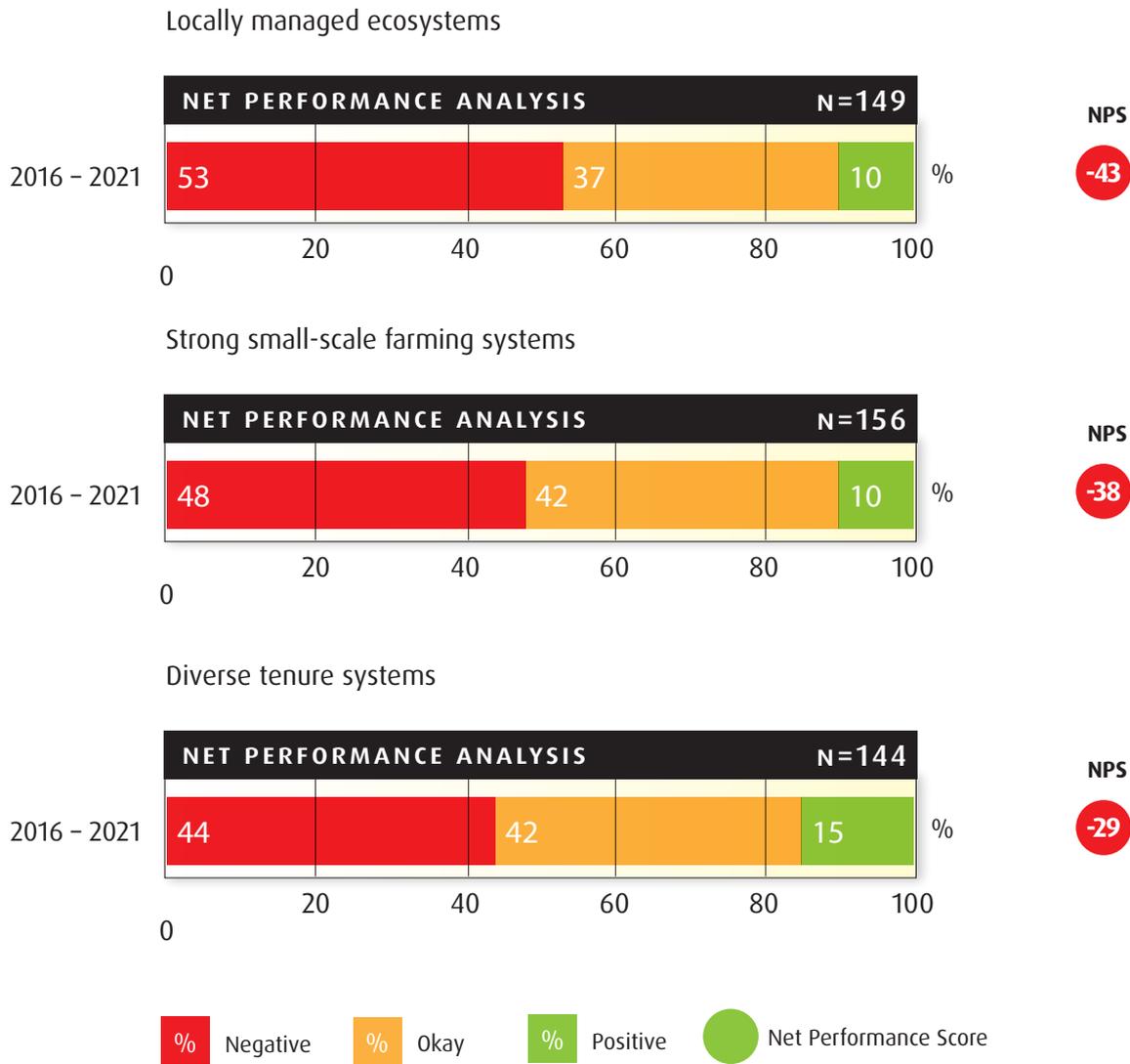


Figure 6: ILC lowest performing commitments according to members

# Part 1: Impact of the Strategy

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## ILC'S CORE VALUES – GENDER JUSTICE

Some major advances have been made since the gender audit in 2017. All platforms are at least being 'gender sensitive' if not yet 'gender transformative'. That said, there is still an inconsistency about how the ILC's main platforms approach gender, which was also flagged in 2017. There do not appear to be any formally agreed gender definitions or concepts, or a strategy about how these should be applied by each platform. This perhaps accounts for the differences between some of the platforms. That said, a lot has been achieved on gender under the existing strategy. For the ILC to be seen as gender transformative across the board, more needs to be done to harmonise and standardise the approach of both platforms and individual members.

### Gender responsiveness

The gender responsiveness of the platforms is a little mixed, but overall quite impressive. Some platforms specifically target gender in their work and make explicit attempts to challenge existing gender roles (gender *transformative*). Others are more modest in their ambition, and only work with existing gender roles and relations (gender *sensitive* or *responsive*). For example, the Global **Family farming CBI** have developed an 'action roadmap' for women's empowerment in family farming which aims to improve women's participation.

Similarly, the **Defend the Defenders Coalition CBI** promoted a toolkit for women human right defenders which gives women some of the tools they need to highlight and fight land inequality. **NES Malawi** also has a strong focus on gender, partnering with gender CBIs, producing a specific gender report in 2015, and including gender in the *2016 Land Act*. **NES Kyrgyzstan** uses quotas to include women and youth groups in all their activities and aim to have 65% of their community participation coming from women. Moreover, NES Kyrgyzstan want to propose gender equal laws for inheritance and promote gender-balanced management of natural resources. **NES Peru** not only has a good representation of women's organisation on the platform and encourages participation by women across all activities and process, but in 2017 also tackled the 'gender-blind' *Law of Peasant Communities* which was successfully amended by the government. The **Leadership Programme facility** included a module on gender justice in Asia, and also covered gender as a specific topic with its Africa cohort too.

At a minimum, all platforms record and disaggregate gender data in terms of their membership and training participants. This is however the lowest form of gender sensitivity. The **Moldovan NES** does not go much further than that, and although they recognise the need for a gender lens, have no explicit focus on gender in their strategy or documents. Neither does the **Indigenous Peoples CBI** in Africa, who while disaggregating according to gender for document workshop participants, have no explicit focus on gender in their work. In terms of data disaggregation, **LandEx** does a good job at separating out data by gender, and also has specific indicators focusing on women, which is great.

# Part 1: Impact of the Strategy

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## FUNDING

The ILC's role as a facilitator – bringing together members, donors and raising funds for projects – is acknowledged and appreciated among members. However, a big issue from members' point of view is funding (or lack thereof), especially moving forward with funders shifting focus and the ILC having less to disburse. While the ILC has tried to shift its focus and move away from solely being perceived as a funder, it has not been very successful and the perspective of the ILC is unlikely to change unless it addresses this head-on. Looking forward, the ILC needs to be fairer in how funding and power is distributed, and to move away from concentrating both in a core group of members. This will require the ILC to focus more on smaller CBOs rather than the larger members.



### **RECOMMENDATION 1 – MAXIMISE MEMBER SUPPORT (IMPORTANT)**

The ILC should double down on its capacity development efforts. Members have indicated that they would like to receive more capacity building support, and where the ILC has supported members with it in the past, it has been impactful. This should include a set of regional training modules with a type of accreditation for members. If possible, training modules should allow for peer exchange and showcase good practices of members where relevant.



### **RECOMMENDATION 2 – NEW STRATEGIC GOAL (URGENT)**

The ILC needs a new overarching goal, and it should focus on 'equality'. Equality can be applied across multiple domains, such as climate change, land governance, and food systems and is the best way to structure the ILC's work moving forward. The accompanying M&E framework needs to consider impact at multiple levels, and needs to find ways to capture them all, either directly or indirectly. The strategy, and in particular the focus on equality needs to also inform the membership approach, strategic partners, capacity strengthening, communications activities and even internal operations – everything the ILC does should face towards resolving inequality.



### **RECOMMENDATION 3 – ALLOCATION OF FUNDS (URGENT)**

The ILC needs an explicit and clear approach to funding across the network. It needs to explicitly outline what it sees as its responsibility, and as a result, what members can hold it to account for. Similarly, it needs to be explicit about what it expects from members and the platforms they are involved in. A new and strategic funding approach starts by accepting the reality that core funding for the ILC is likely to be reduced in the future. As a result, the strategy should emphasise the ILC's role in assisting platforms to leverage funding directly from donors. This needs to include adequate capacity strengthening on fundraising and where appropriate facilitation of peer exchange on fundraising experience and good practice. Moreover, in this new approach the ILC must detail transparent mechanisms for allocating funds directly from the ILC. Perceived unfairness in distribution, even if misplaced, could undermine the ILC.

## Part 2: Delivery mechanisms

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The primary delivery mechanisms of the ILC are national Engagement Strategy (NES) and Commitment Based Initiative (CBI) platforms. Overall, these are operating well, with both NES and CBIs delivering important outcomes on behalf of the ILC. Relevant outcomes include policy and practice change, mainly through NES at the country level, as well as regional and global policy advocacy through CBIs.

### NES AND CBI PLATFORMS EFFECTIVENESS

Initial interviews suggested that the lack of collaboration between NES and CBIs was problematic and had the potential to undermine the impact of national and regional platforms. Looking at the selected platforms from the deep dive, there are some positive examples, although there are others where better collaboration is needed. The **CBI for Defend the Defenders Coalition** have some collaboration with NES platforms, however, as the CBIs themselves concede, this has been limited. The CBI reports that a lack of budget and prioritisation has hampered collaboration opportunities with NES. **NES Malawi** are connected to four CBIs, including on **Women's Land Rights**, but there is no regional coordination with other NES. **NES Kyrgyzstan** are well-linked to a number of CBIs (CBI 2, 3, 6 and 8), and feel that there is some regional coordination of NES by the One Team. **NES Moldova** were involved in the EMENA discussions for a **CBI on youth**, and was actively contributing the youth CBI strategy, but logistical challenges in convening a joint workshop slowed down that relationship. In addition, NES Moldova reports there being a distinct lack of regional NES coordination, which could be incredibly useful to their learning and growth. According to **NES Peru**, there has been a lack of coordination between the NES and relevant CBIs' strategies. As a result, coordination has remained at the project level, which has meant potential benefits of working with CBIs have not been realised.

The Latin American **Mujer Rural CBI** demonstrates how different levels of collaboration can happen. A number of sub-CBI level collaborations have happened, for example to share experiences and good practice – such as when Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay came together around the issue of water which resulted in increased knowledge on best routes of access that were incorporated in each country. Similarly, a collaboration between Honduras and Nicaragua led to a creation of an approach to make the experience of women more visible, working closely with **NES Nicaragua**. These spaces allow members and individuals to form bonds and increase their networks and boost social capital. Inevitably, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many spaces had to go online but positively that has also increased the ability of rural communities to access the internet and connect with women all over the world on the same issues.

Several of the platforms call on the ILC to better facilitate linkages between NES and CBIs, and see this as one of the key potential value adds the ILC can bring to their functionality. One work lead interviewee raised the issue that if a platform (either a NES or a CBI) cannot raise funds independently from the ILC, then should that be a sign that the platform is not necessary and should come to a close? More broadly, the interviewee posited that there needs to be clearer criteria for having a platform in the first place.

Moreover, from the platform deep dives, it has become apparent that not all members participate equally, which makes it more difficult for delivery mechanisms to achieve their goals. In particular, it is clear that not all NES and CBI platform members are equally active. This is perhaps unsurprising, but a cause for concern among many. It also seems to be an issue which is relevant for each platform, to varying degrees. Even **NES Moldova**, which manages to have a high level of member engagement admits it cannot ensure all members participate equally. In **Kyrgyzstan**, the Coordination Council ensures member participation which is made easier by the mutually agreed memorandum of cooperation which details the principles of cooperation for members. Platforms with codified participation processes fared better on member engagement.

## Part 2: Delivery mechanisms

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### NES AND CBI PLATFORMS SUSTAINABILITY

Despite the effectiveness of NES and CBI platforms outlined above, many individual members and multi-stakeholder platforms are very concerned about their own financial sustainability. This has the potential to undermine effectiveness in the longer-term. Initial interviews show there has been broad recognition within the ILC that it can no longer be seen as a funder and external partners are conscious of the problematic potential for the ILC to ultimately end up competing with members for funding. The survey data suggests that, when segmenting the responses by whether a member is funded or not, the majority of unfunded members happen to be part of a CBI-only, and the majority of the funded members have indicated belonging to a NES and/or CBI platform.

According to the work done by the Land Collaborative, platform funding needs vary greatly from one to the other. From their perspective, the ILC needs to be strategic about where to invest in multi-stakeholder platforms and at a minimum be clear and transparent with its approach to funding, so platforms know the extent to which they can rely on ILC funding, and when ILC funding will come to an end. The role of the ILC in relation to funding does not end with its ability to dip its hand into its own pocket – much of the potential contribution the ILC can make to funding is by leveraging its reputation and evidence base to influence other funders to support multi-stakeholder platforms. By more effectively linking the work of NES and CBIs and their impact, the ILC will be in a better position to appeal to other donors for more direct funding to MSPs.

While some platforms, such as the Global **Family Farming CBI** are less reliant on ILC contributions, some platforms, such as the CBI on **Defend the Defenders Coalition**, rely heavily on in-kind member contributions, which limits the extent to which they can do everything they would like to do. Indeed, they call for long-term platform funding from the ILC to enable them to have the certainty they need to work more strategically. Similarly, **NES Malawi** is entirely dependent on ILC funding, and while they have achieved great success, they feel their future is precarious until they can diversify their incomes streams. According to **NES Moldova**, the ILC has been slow in finalising their contract, which has made it hard to secure additional funds from elsewhere and resulted in the NES platform covering certain activities itself. While NES Moldova understand the need to secure funds beyond the ILC, they feel more transparent and consistent support from ILC in their first few years would have helped them in this regard.

NES Peru fear they will be unable to attract additional sources of income beyond ILC as Peru is seen as a middle-income country. Resource mobilisation is a key concern for **NES Kyrgyzstan** too, and is identified as one of their key priority areas in the coming years. They have managed to secure some small funding from the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, but need more long-term funding prospects to be truly sustainable. In the short term, they are relying on co-financing from members, but they call on the ILC to play a bridging role and connect them to international donors. It is important to note, that although funding and sustainability is a critical issue for each platform, there is more value from participation than simply money. As one member of the Latin American **Mujer Rural CBI** said: “even if we didn’t have access to funds, it’s still important to be part of their network, it’s unique.”

When speaking to ILC staff, it was apparent that while the ILC may be seen by some members solely as a funder, it sees itself as delivering more than **financial support**. Initial interviews highlighted the range of added value and support it brings to its members, including: data, advocacy, learning, capacity, and ultimately the power of the network. However, it was also flagged that while the ILC sees the value in facilitating the sharing of knowledge across its network, it may have been restricted by a lack of capacity or experience at certain points. A clearer distinction between the roles and responsibilities of the ILC and that of its members, as well as a decentralisation and shift in roles and responsibilities can address such issues. This is further examined in *Section 3 – Membership and network*.

## Part 2: Delivery mechanisms

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### CONSIDERATIONS ON NESs

Members generally believe their NES platforms to be inclusive and transparent in their decision-making, however, concerns around financial sustainability, the unequal distribution of benefits, and the lack of engagement from some NES platform members has the potential to undermine positive impact.

The ILC has an established Community of Practice (CoP) under the Land Collaborative initiative. Although nascent and only relatively recently established, given the importance it could play in improving the effectiveness of NES platforms, there does seem to be strong impetus to invest the time needed to get it working properly.

### CONSIDERATIONS ON CBIs

There is a sense that some overlook the value that CBI platforms can bring, which while less tangible than policy change, are nonetheless important to ILC's overall success. There is a need to distinguish between 'learning' and 'advocacy' CBI platforms and sometimes the most useful part of CBI platforms is learning and information sharing, although a full CBI platform is not always required for learning purposes.

Members broadly consider their CBI platform to be inclusive to all partners and transparent in decision-making, although there is less consensus as to whether participation in CBI platforms has increased the visibility of their organisation's work. Again, the financial sustainability of CBI platforms is a strong concern.

### FACILITIES

Facilities have been quite effective and provide an important way for members to engage beyond the traditional NES and CBI platforms. Those who have participated in facilities report that they have benefited from increased understanding and knowledge on key topics. Moreover, the act of bringing different members together has resulted in positive peer exchange and has generated visibility on certain themes.

### ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS

As a global actor, the ILC "targets key regional and global policy processes and actors that have a high potential to instigate sustainable change in land governance".<sup>2</sup> This section therefore examines to what extent regional and global advocacy has given "precedence to the strategies, institutions and agency of the women, men and communities who rely on land for their livelihoods".<sup>3</sup>

The ILC is seen by its members and partners to be *bold in its public messaging on land-related issues*, however, some open text responses indicate a need to be even bolder in taking a stance. In initial discussions with the Council Committee there was a sense that stronger and bolder positions on key issues are needed to avoid being seen as either indecisive or weak. There were also examples given when the messaging was right, but the timing was wrong, and delays in getting involved in current debates did little to enhance ILC's image. Some Council members suggested this was in part a downside of a large and diverse membership, which meant quickly establishing clear positions on certain issues, was difficult, especially considering the wide array of individual interests that needed to be safeguarded. Members also generally believe that the *ILC has raised the priority of their issues on the relevant public policy agendas* and that the *content of its global advocacy work is well-suited to affecting policy change*.

Members and partners generally value the ILC's broader advocacy and communications work in keeping land issues in the public domain / giving the issues visibility. In terms of what makes the ILC effective, one partner suggested that it was the diversity of the ILC – the diversity of members, diversity of partners and diversity of thematic experience – that makes it such an influential actor. They continued that no other

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2 International Land Coalition (2020). International Land Coalition Strategy 2016 – 21. Impact Assessment Terms of Reference for Quotation, p.2.

3 *Ibid.*

## Part 2: Delivery mechanisms

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global land actor, of which there are many, brought the same range of ideas and people together as the ILC, and this was in no small part what contributed to its success. In a similar vein, several other partners argued that the reasons behind ILC's success was its elevating of voices of small members to the global arena. They suggested that the ILC is most impactful not when it engages in direct advocacy, but rather when it leverages the voices of members. They did however agree that global communication can complement direct support by the ILC to members and platforms. Another partner agreed and suggested that the ILC do more to use its regional and international weight to support local members and processes and it should not shy away from "throwing its weight around".

One of the ILC's greatest communications challenges revolves around remaining relevant on key issues, and there is often a sense the communications team lacks the content they need to do their job. While there are some examples of good global communications – the newsletter and recent reports in the mainstream media for example – there is a need for much more about community impact and 'people'. There is also a need to ensure communications highlighted the work of members more, bringing their stories and success to the global audience, which might need more creative and vibrant communication approaches.

Internally there is also a lack of capacity, and a sense that communications is somewhat neglected, especially in relation to its importance for the ILC's mission. This involves poor planning in terms of content generation, which hampers the effectiveness of any strategic communications strategy.

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The ILC's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts are currently predominantly seen as more of a compliance and external reporting tool, rather than focusing on using this data for internal learning and iterative improvement. This is closely linked to pressure from donors, where unless the ILC can demonstrate its impact, there is a fear that donors may side-line the ILC. As such, M&E data is seen to be passed up the chain with limited understanding of how it is used, and members sometimes struggle to understand what is being asked of them and for what purpose. This contributes to the sense that M&E is a top-down compliance necessity, which it does not have to be. At the same time, there is a partial disconnect between what is being measured and what the ILC aims to achieve, making it more difficult for the ILC and its members to generate people-centred outcomes or stories.

## Part 2: Delivery mechanisms

### PROGRESS SINCE ILC'S MID-TERM REVIEW AND ILC'S NEW OPERATING MODEL

Members feel that the ILC has made improvements in how the work of the ILC is planned and prioritised by encouraging multi-year strategies as opposed to individual projects. However, there has been less improvement around supporting member-led partnerships to have focused strategies and good visibility.

The New Operating Model has, however, led to funding delays and made it hard for platforms to plan, having the potential to undermine their impact. For example for NES Moldova the change in requirements on co-financing in 2019 meant they had to change and adapt their strategy, which further affected their ability to deliver agreed activities. **NES Peru** also reportedly struggled with the change in the operating model, and as a result, for much of 2019, they were operating without a direct budget, and only managed to continue with activities due to member contributions, including the costs of the NES facilitator and communicator. Moreover, there is a sense that too much funding is concentrated in a core bunch of (often larger) members.

Members strongly believe that the ILC promotes the role of women in its governance and events but are divided concerning the space given to Constituency-Based Organisations (CBOs) to take on leading roles in the network.

Members are also divided about the perceived improvement of the ILC concerning the implementation of clear and simple/straightforward procedure to help members conduct their work and having a clear results reporting process.

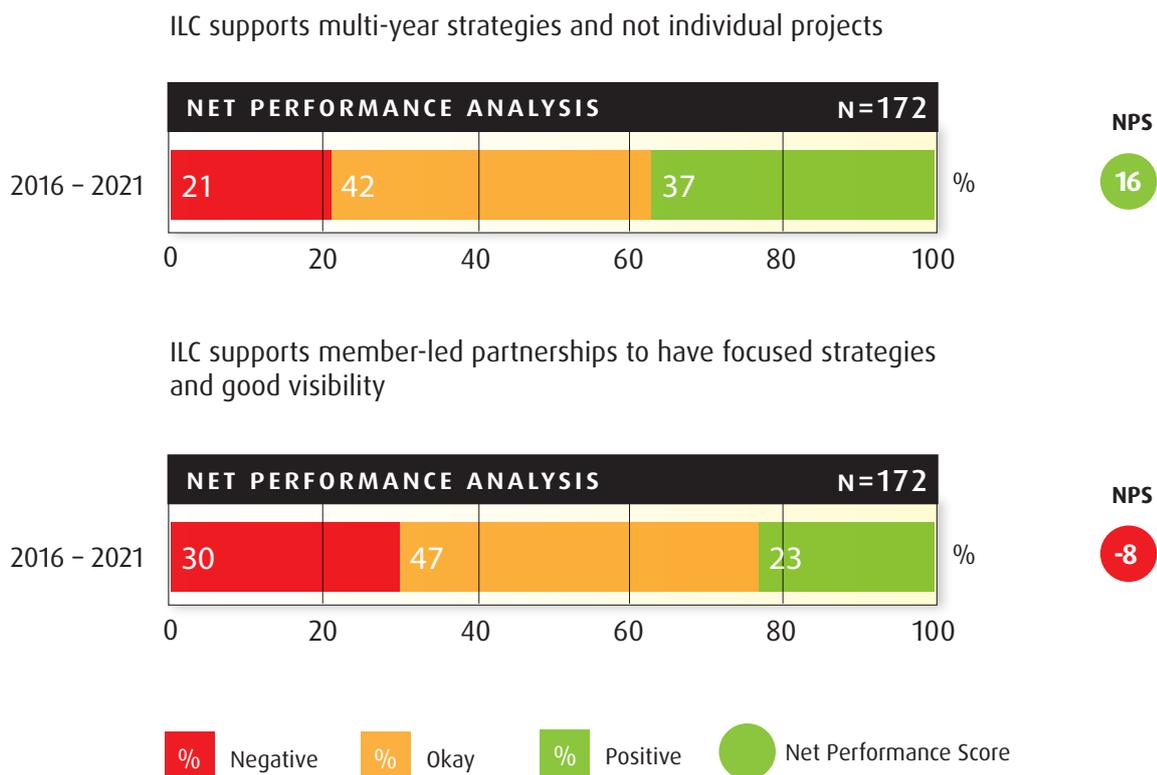
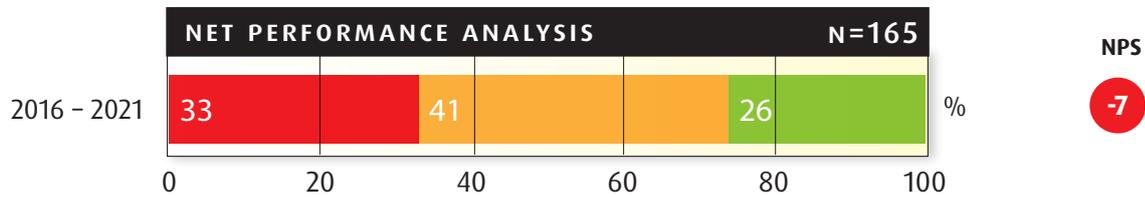


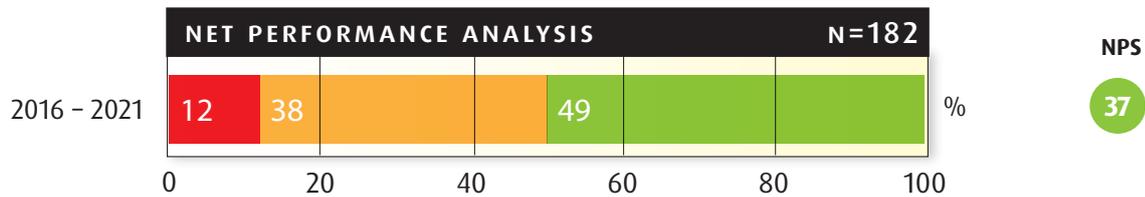
Figure 7: Planning and prioritisation of ILC's work

## Part 2: Delivery mechanisms

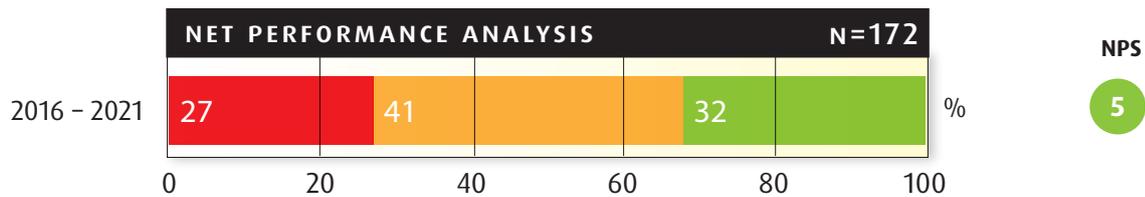
**Financial support:** ILC helps member-led partnerships raise resources beyond ILC financing



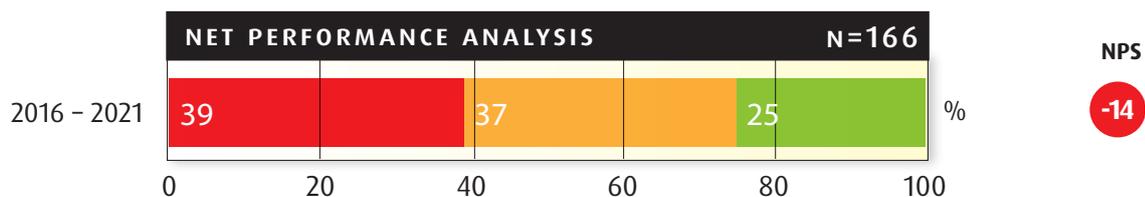
**Technical support:** ILC actively promotes women's participation in its governance and events



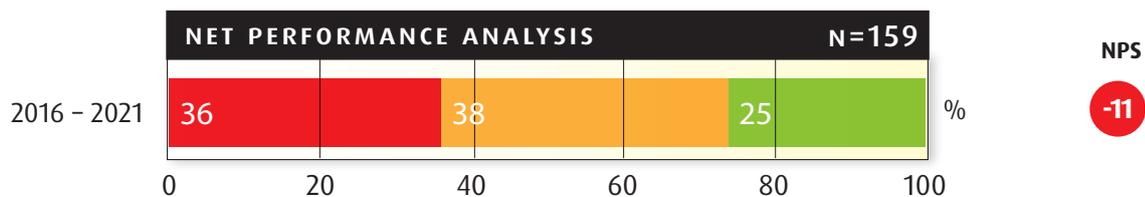
**Technical support:** ILC gives space to CBOs to play leading roles in its work



**Technical support:** ILC supports member organisations to build a new generation of leaders



**ILC support team:** ILC One Team provides more direct support to member-led partnerships



% Negative   
 % Okay   
 % Positive   
 ● Net Performance Score

Figure 8: How the work of ILC is supported

## Part 2: Delivery mechanisms

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### **RECOMMENDATION 4 – PLATFORM LEARNING AND COLLABORATION (DESIRABLE)**

There is a need to support more learning and exchange across platforms. While technically there is an existing NES Community of Practice (Land Collaborative), it needs to be prioritised and mainstreamed. Such a CoP would enable more peer exchange among NES platforms which would in turn identify and share good practice among members. It would also help encourage more regional coordination between NES platforms and encourage greater collaboration with CBI platforms, which currently tend to operate separately.



### **RECOMMENDATION 5 – PLATFORM STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE (IMPORTANT)**

There needs to be a better locally-led rationale for deciding when and where to create a platform, and it should include sustainable funding sources, member capacity, and expressed needs at local level, among others. Related, while some CBI platforms advance advocacy and policy change, many do not, and many could deliver the same learning value without the need to invest in governance structures. The ILC should also mainstream NES and a CBI participation agreement templates which should codify the expected behaviour of platform members, the lead agency, and the ILC.



### **RECOMMENDATION 6 – COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND ROADMAP (IMPORTANT)**

The ILC needs a more detailed and coherent communications plan that is agreed across the network and is well-communicated to all. The strategy should draw more linkages between the communications work of the ILC Secretariat and the ILC regional platforms and members. It needs to be accompanied by a more detailed roadmap for implementation, which ensures the strategy is adhered to and that there is sufficient capacity in place.



### **RECOMMENDATION 7 – COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY STRENGTHENING (DESIRABLE)**

The ILC must support members more in their communication efforts. Good communications do not happen by accident and many members and platforms would benefit from this type of support. It links to the broader emphasis on capacity strengthening among members.



### **RECOMMENDATION 8 – ADJUST M&E FRAMEWORK (IMPORTANT)**

The ILC should support members to collect more community-level information and aggregate it up at a regional and global level. The ILC should also collect more qualitative data about how it supports members, for example, simple but consistent feedback surveys after training or key moments of interaction with the ILC would enable it to adjust how it works with, and supports members. The ILC should allow for more regional and contextual adaptation of M&E indicators, as this would counteract the sense of it being top-down and would mean the M&E framework serves as a menu that members can choose from or even adapt.

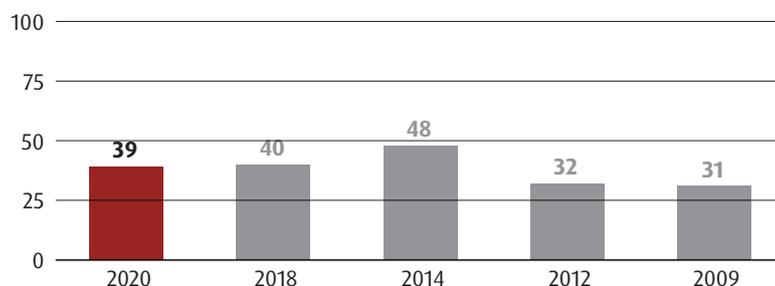
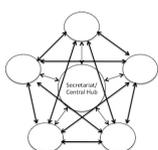
## Part 3: Membership and Network

### NETWORK

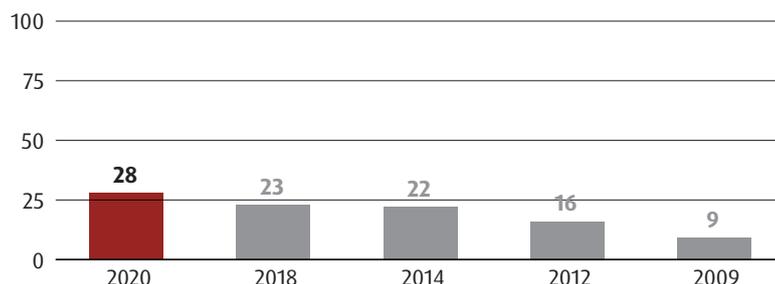
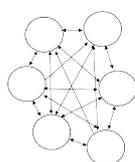
The majority of members consider the ILC to be a network with a clear centre but with interactions that may or may not go through it. Ten years ago, respondents considered the ILC to be a much more centralised network, indicating that the network structure has evolved in the past decade. That said, there is a sense that more could be done towards decentralisation, which is also closely linked to a redistribution of roles and responsibilities across the network, including greater regionalisation efforts. As part of this, members want the ILC to listen to them more, which for some, includes moving more decisions to a regional level and away from Rome.

An ever-growing network has meant that both members and partners perceive the focus to be on *quantity* as opposed to *quality* of membership. Many members are therefore anxious about increasing the size of the network. While diversity is a strength, increasing it further risks diluting the ILC's image and purpose. Although the membership strategy notes that growth is secondary to network functionality, there are still concerns among members about the perceived drive for expansion.

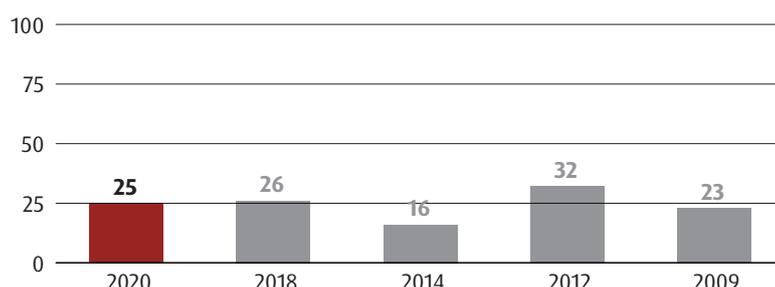
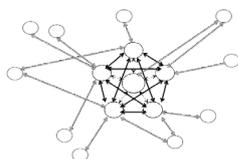
**A NETWORK WITH A CLEAR CENTRE BUT WITH INTERACTIONS THAT MAY OR MAY NOT GO THROUGH IT**



**A DECENTRALISED NETWORK: MULTI-HUB MODEL**



**A NETWORK WITH A DENSE INNER CORE AND LOOSER TIES WITH PERIPHERAL MEMBERS: CORE-PERIPHERY MODEL**



**A CENTRALISED NETWORK: HUB & SPOKE MODEL**

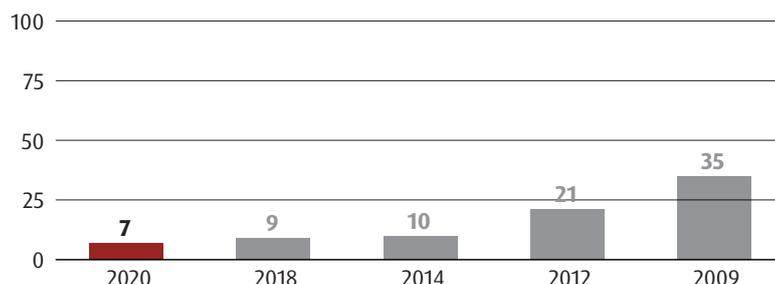
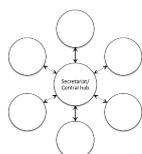


Figure 9: Member perceptions of current ILC network model

## Part 3: Membership and Network

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### INTERACTIONS

Members report that there is an abundance of skills across the network, however these are not currently being utilised or taken advantage of to their fullest potential. While members feel that the ILC has been successful in facilitating partnerships within the network, they have also indicated a strong interest in deepening these interactions, with a strong focus on learning and sharing of knowledge.

While the ILC is less centralised than it was, there is still further to go, and both members and partners would like to see the ILC continue along the path to greater being member-led. This involves moving certain decision-making away from Rome and to the regional components of the ILC.

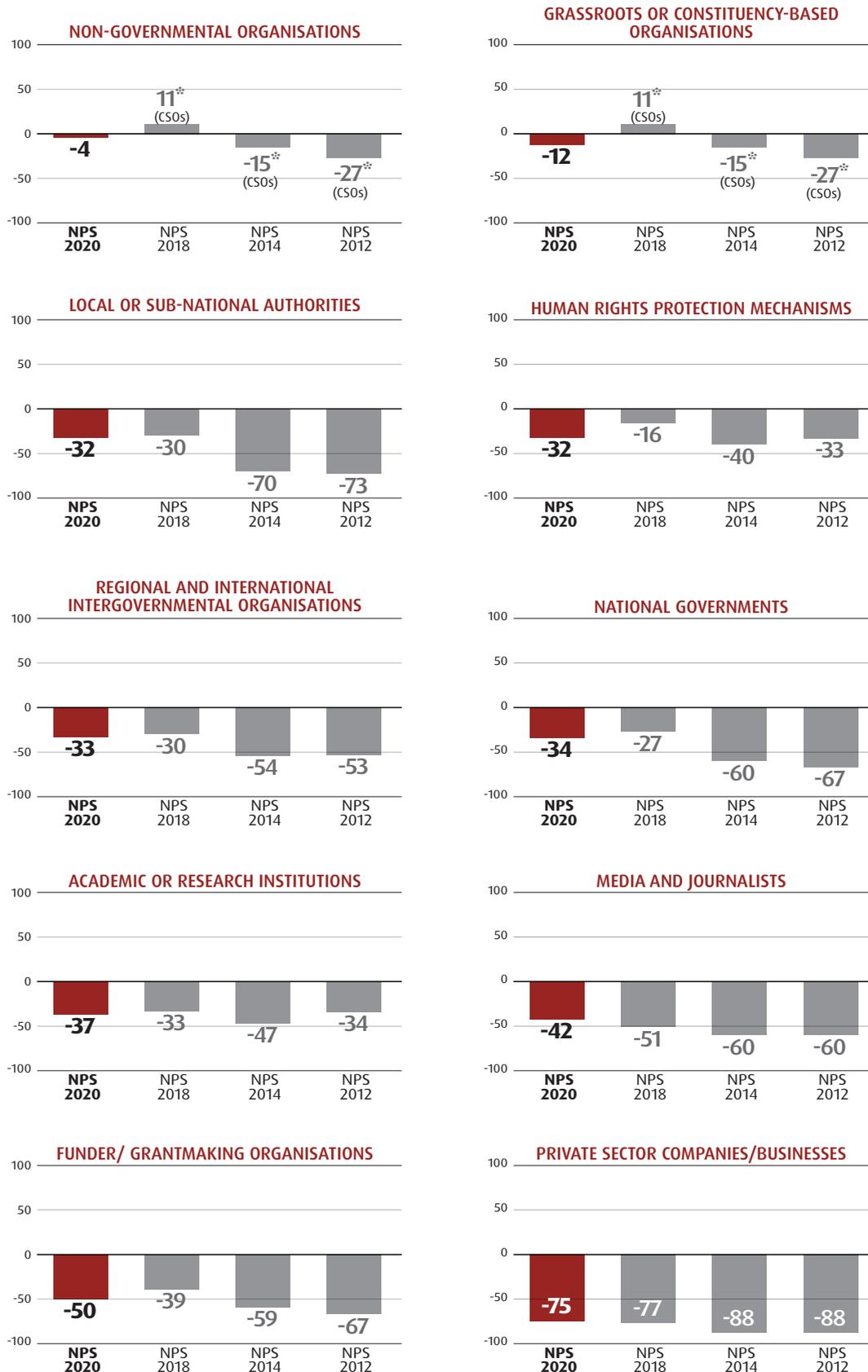
According to members, the most valuable relationships they have through participation in the network has been with non-governmental organisations and grassroots or constituency-based organisations. Members currently receive little value from their connections with funders and the private sector. Members would like to make more connections with funders but do not currently see the ILC as a path to the private sector. In general, some members are anxious about private sector involvement with the ILC, although there is a collective recognition that the ILC may need to interact more with the private sector to achieve its goals. The ILC will need to be very cautious about how it intends to engage with the private sector and how it will communicate such relationships to its membership.

### GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Many Council members are overburdened by their participation in the Council and as a result are not as involved as they could or ideally should be. Additionally, the focus of the Council is often on compliance matters which leaves very little time for the content of what the ILC does and as a result, Council members are not always taking the lead on important strategic matters where their input and guidance would be of great help. Many of the organisations the ILC purports to want to focus on, namely smaller CBOs and grassroots organisations, are also often under-represented within the Council.

From a governance perspective, the Regional Committees can be disjointed from the main Council, and as a result not as responsive or as active as they ideally would be. It is clear that Regional Committees need to be more involved and active, taking on a greater decision-making role, without necessarily diluting the global components of the network. One benefit of stronger Regional Committees would be greater regional adaptation of priorities and the regional contextualisation of the new strategy.

# Part 3: Membership and Network



\*Prior to 2020, there was not separate category for 'Non-governmental organisations' and 'grassroots or constituency-based organisations.' Instead, the option at the time was only for 'Civil society organisations (CSOs)'

Figure 10: Most valuable network relationships according to members

## Part 3: Membership and Network

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### REPUTATION

The ILC is seen as having a very positive global reputation. Despite the land sector being quite a crowded space, there is “no other entity quite like the ILC”. It is the diversity of members, of partners and of experience that makes the ILC such an influential actor and gives it its global reputation. Given the connection between members and reputation, there is an ongoing need to serve members and elevate their voices to maintain its external reputation.

The ILC is also seen as well-run and an expert on both data and land, and the quality of the ILC’s outputs are seen as high – accurate, with a focus on detail – which gives it a good reputation. The extent of the ILC’s reputation is clear by the number of events and fora the ILC was invited to participate in. It is also clear that the ILC is well-regarded by different actors as a good indication of its reputation at multiple levels – both governments and CSOs respect and trust the ILC, which gives it a unique position in the sector.



#### RECOMMENDATION 9 – SIZE (DESIRABLE)

The ILC must proceed with caution. Membership expansion is not a ‘no-no’ per se, but there are clear risks if it is (or seen to be) prioritised over and above improving the functionality of the network. As a result, expansion should be a carefully planned process, with mitigation plans in place to avoid issues of fairness, quality of interactions and negative implications on strategy.



#### RECOMMENDATION 10 – DECENTRALISATION (IMPORTANT)

The ILC has made good progress towards decentralisation in recent years. That said, more could be done, and members want to see more happening. Moreover, external partners see part of the ILC’s strong reputation and sense of legitimacy as stemming from its regional governance structures and involvement of members in decision-making. The ILC should therefore continue on its path towards greater decentralisation.



#### RECOMMENDATION 11 – PRIVATE SECTOR (DESIRABLE)

It is not recommended that the ILC shifts and allows the private sector to become members, but a private sector engagement strategy should be considered. The issue of the ILC’s engagement with the private sector is likely to be an ongoing point of contention, and there is unlikely to be agreement across the network on how best to proceed in the short term.



#### RECOMMENDATION 12 – GOVERNANCE (DESIRABLE)

There is evidently a need to reconsider the governance structures in two ways; firstly, within the Council itself, and secondly at the regional level. The ultimate solutions as yet is unclear, however, the ILC needs to dedicate some time to exploring this as a collective. In order to do so, the ILC should commission an open and inclusive review of governance structures to identify how best to move forward.



#### RECOMMENDATION 13 – EXTERNAL WORKING GROUP (DESIRABLE)

The external partners interviewed for this assessment provided a lot of helpful insight into the functioning of the ILC. They also hold the ILC in high regard, showing a lot of goodwill towards the ILC and demonstrating the availability of social capital among the ILC’s external network. The ILC could leverage this through a simple working group; a small panel of relevant outside experts and partners with whom it periodically checks in with on key issues relating to strategy, communications and functionality.

# Annexes

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## **ANNEX 1 – MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF ILC STRATEGY 2016-21**

**ANNEX 2 – METHODOLOGY SUMMARY**  
Attached separately.

**ANNEX 3 – EXTENDED IA REPORT**  
Attached separately.

## International Land Coalition Management Response to the Independent Evaluation of ILC Strategy 2016-21

### BACKGROUND

The Council commissioned the Impact Assessment on the 2016-21 strategy as a desk-based analysis, with a strong focus on informing the next ILC strategy (2022-2030). The terms of reference covered three interconnected dimensions of ILC's work:

- 1 Impact:** the difference ILC has made, as defined by the impact levels of ILC's strategy (policy/practice and strengthened network capacity).
- 2 Delivery Mechanisms:** The mechanisms to reach impact (NES, CBIs, Facilities and global and regional advocacy, and support structures).
- 3 Network:** ILC's reputation and image as used by its members and perceived by others.

The draft report submitted to the Council contains its findings, accompanied by 13 recommendations. This document summarises the management response of ILC One Team (Secretariat and RCUs) to the findings, and proposes broadly how to carry the recommendations into the work and organisation of ILC, particularly with respect to the next strategy.

### CONTEXT

The 2016-2021 Strategy was the longest ever strategy for the ILC. As the report notes, it was launched during a strongly positive moment for the recognition of the importance of land. The SDGs and the VGGTs offered historic global frameworks for action, in part achieved through the efforts of the ILC members. The ILC took this opportunity to demonstrate how strategic and inclusive partnerships could bring about 'people-centred land governance'. The report outlines the clear progress achieved over the strategy.

ILC reaches the end of this strategy period facing the COVID19 outbreak and its multiple impacts on the world in which we work. This brings a level of uncertainty that is unprecedented. It also underlines as never before the critical importance of securing land rights for resilient, sustainable and inclusive economies and societies. The recommendations of this report are critical to enabling ILC to be best equipped for what lies ahead.

### OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE REPORT

Keystone delivered a substantial report. Being entirely desk based without visits or face-to-face interactions with members meant that it relied more on secondary data and perceptions than primary evidence. Nonetheless, we believe that the report responds at its best to the TORs; its findings are fair and insightful, and it offers useful pointers for the new strategy in a manner that respects the autonomy of ILC governance and the network dynamics of ILC.

We appreciate the richness that emerges in the report in perceptions from across the ILC membership (the extensive survey and its sophisticated analysis covered two-thirds of the membership, as well as partners). These perspectives are complemented well by a desk review of more than 100 institutional documents and members' reports, 30 key informant interviews, and a deep-dive into 10 ILC NES, CBIs, Facilities and global advocacy initiatives.

# Annex 1

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We also find it important that the consultants engaged with the membership on their emerging findings before finalising their report. Survey findings were discussed with all regional assemblies, working groups of the Council, and the Council itself.

The positive findings of the assessment are highly significant for the work of ILC. In particular, we note that:

- 1 Overall, the **strategy has largely achieved its goal**. It won the confidence of members and donors (mobilising almost USD100 Million, almost half of which was leveraged by platforms), with a significant impact on people centred land governance, exceeding its impact-level targets.
- 2 The **strategy has worked well** for ILC. As such, the recommendations identify ways in which the focus and impact of ILC could be sharpened, without suggesting significant shifts in ILC's direction or how it works (while of course allowing for necessary adaptation to new contexts).
- 3 The ILC network **has brought real value to members**. The ILC ten commitments reflect well the work of members, and the connecting, mobilising and influencing functions of ILC have created opportunities at global, regional and national levels. Members have identified learning as a potential opportunity of the network that should still be developed further.
- 4 ILC enjoys a **strong reputation** beyond the network, opening the way for the next strategy to be more outward looking in terms of partnerships.
- 5 A representative portion of ILC members and partners agree that **ILC has changed how gender is discussed** and approached by policy implementers in relation to land.
- 6 ILC has become more fully a **multi-located institution** with global, regional, national and thematic partnerships and a multi-located support structure, with consolidated governance, delivery mechanisms and impact.

We find all 13 recommendations valid. They will feed into the ongoing work and planning of ILC as we move towards developing the next strategy in 2022, taking account of the level of urgency indicated by the consultants. Below we propose eight key actions, according to the three main thrusts of the assessment; **impact, delivery mechanisms and network**.

## 1. IMPACT

The impact-related recommendations refer to the **new strategic goal of ILC** (and **M&E and data management systems** capable of measuring it), and a clear approach to allocating funds across the network (**Recommendations 2, 3, 8**).

- 1.1 **Members will be consulted on how to frame the impact of PCLG** ('Equality' and/or other global challenges) without compromising on PCLG as the common goal that brings members together. M&E system will be upgraded (and simplified) to support members to collect this data, possibly through Landex.
- 1.2 **Member-led platforms will increasingly become financially sustainable and autonomous**. Diversification of donors and funding mechanisms and leveraged funds will become an even greater proportion of the overall budget of ILC work. ILC's restricted core funding will be allocated more and more strategically to position successful platforms for impact. Financial sustainability of ILC member-led platforms and facilities will become a key support function of One Team. ILC's overall funding model will be adjusted to best match with donor trends.
- 1.3 **Constituency-Based Organisations** will come more fully to the centre of ILC, with a focus on 'shifting power' to 'people's organisations' (Pastoralists, women, youth, farmers, indigenous, forest dwellers, etc.). Under the guidance of the CBO working group of the ILC Council, this will cut across governance, operations and capacity building.

# Annex 1

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## 2. DELIVERY MECHANISMS

The recommendations on delivery mechanisms refer to **platform collaboration (including on private sector engagement) and their governance**, the key role of **capacity development**, and the important role of communications for ILC's goals (**Recommendations 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11**).

- 2.1 Enhance the role of LandCollaborative** as the linking mechanism between platforms. LandCollaborative will be strengthened as a community of practice to build the transformative power of multi-stakeholder platforms on land. It will facilitate collaboration and learning between platforms, including on good practice in platform governance, and on engaging with the private sector. It will more fully embrace CBI platforms, and continue to add partners beyond the ILC network.
- 2.2 Multi-stakeholder capacity development will be a key pillar of the next strategy.** The enormous potential for learning and capacity development in the network will be further developed and structured, building on peer-to-peer learning opportunities across different types of members. It will touch all ILC work areas, both institutional strengthening, and a solution-oriented approach to what works for people-centred land governance. Gender justice will continue as a strong focus, with stronger inclusion of youth and constituency-based organisations.
- 2.3 Use communications more powerfully in delivering the ILC Strategy.** The new strategy will be supported by a single cross-regional communications strategy, accompanied by increased support capacity in One Team. This will focus in particular on equipping member-led platforms to use communications more strategically, and to feed off the collective reputation of ILC.

## 3. NETWORK

The recommendations on network refer to **regionalisation** of ILC and its **governance (Recommendations 9,10,12,13)**.

- 3.1 Further strengthen the roles of ILC Regions in the network.** The One Team support capacity will continue to be built in the regions. Measures to increase the financial autonomy of regions will be explored, including possible legal registration of Regional Coordination Units. At the same time, the Global Civil Society and IGO members of ILC will have clearer roles across regions in global advocacy and research, data and knowledge, and enhancing impact. The Membership Committee will define smart and highly targeted criteria for future membership intakes to balance diverse representation, relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and manageability of the network.
- 3.2 Assess how ILC's governance structures can become fit-for-purpose for the new strategy and the increasing size and complexity of ILC.** This may involve strengthening the coherence-building role of the Council, while also empowering a wider group of members in decision-making through more focused oversight groups. Advisory roles will also be considered for key change-makers from beyond the network to lend their expertise and reputation to ILC. One Team will facilitate this process with the guidance of a small working group of members, and possible support of an independent expert. Any necessary amendments to the Charter will be proposed to the next Assembly of Members.

These actions will all commence in 2021, with a view to their full application to the next strategy by 2022 (with the exception of the next membership intake, which will be 2024). One Team will report on their implementation to the 38th Council in early 2022.