



IWGIA

INTERNATIONAL WORK GROUP FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Terms of Reference

Study/mapping of Indigenous persons with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)

1. Background and context

IWGIA is a non-governmental human rights organisation promoting and defending Indigenous Peoples' collective and individual rights. We have supported our partners in this fight for more than 50 years. We work through a global network of Indigenous Peoples' organisations and international human rights bodies. We promote recognition, respect and implementation of Indigenous Peoples' rights, including the right to self-determination by virtue of which they can freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Indigenous Peoples today, in all parts of the world, are still fighting discrimination and targeted violence, struggling against a shrinking civic space, lacking recognition of their rights as peoples, and suffering from land dispossession, evictions and the negative consequences of climate change and conservation efforts.

At IWGIA, we recognize that Indigenous Peoples experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including those based on gender, status, class, ability, age, sexual orientation, and more. We are committed to applying an intersectional approach in all our work, striving to understand and address how these overlapping forms of discrimination impact Indigenous Peoples both individually and collectively. Upholding the principles of self-determination, non-discrimination, inclusion, and care is central to our mission. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards abuse, harassment, discrimination, and exploitation in all their forms.

In IWGIA's strategy 2026-2031, we are strengthening our focus on supporting Indigenous women and persons with diverse SOGIEESC. The strategy includes the following priorities.

IWGIA's strategic actions under this priority will advocate for the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against Indigenous women and Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIEESC, positioning this work within a broader human rights and intersectional equity framework.

IWGIA will strategically engage with and support Indigenous women's organisations and those representing Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIEESC, reinforcing their leadership and agency in asserting rights and combatting systemic discrimination and violence.

IWGIA will support and invest in strengthening the institutional capacities of Indigenous women's organisations and those representing Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIEESC to enhance long-term impact and for them to better lead transformative change within their communities and beyond.

IWGIA will support the advocacy efforts of Indigenous women and Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIEESC at local, national, regional, and international levels to strengthen their access to decision-making spaces and enhance their influence.



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IWGIA will assist in documenting the lived realities, contributions, and rights violations experienced by Indigenous women and Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIESC, highlighting their resilience and leadership in addressing global challenges.

Internally, IWGIA will build its own institutional knowledge, resources, and operational capacities to more effectively promote and defend the rights of Indigenous people affected by intersectional discrimination, ensuring that its approaches are informed, inclusive, and responsive.

Objectives and purpose

Whereas IWGIA has been working in support of Indigenous women and their organisations and movements for many years, it is a new area to start working in support of Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIESC.

To make sure IWGIA is not causing any harm, and to decide on strategic ways to address the assumed issues of violence and discrimination faced by Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIESC from within and outside their communities, we need more knowledge.

To gain more knowledge and to be able to set the strategic direction for the coming years a consultancy is offered.

Deliverables

A report responding to the research questions below.

A mapping of actors (including organisations, networks, movements, activists, influencers, allies and opponents) within the field of Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIESC globally, including recommendations on where it would make most sense to start the work, and gradually build on moving forward.

Research hypothesis

Colonial and state-imposed patriarchal policies have historically dismantled Indigenous women's leadership roles, responsibilities, and authority within their communities. In many societies, Indigenous women traditionally held significant social, economic, and spiritual roles, which were eroded through colonization and external governance systems. Understanding this history can help communities reclaim and restore women's rightful leadership and status.

The same can most probably be said for Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIESC.

Research questions

The research and the mapping should respond to the following research questions:

1. Who are Indigenous persons of diverse SOGIESC in the different socio-cultural regions?
2. Unfolding a few examples of the history of these groups in their IP societies (from pre-colonial times before 'outside' religions were introduced until today), and looking into the roles, responsibilities, status and authority they used to have, and may still have traces of today, what potential is there for reclaiming and restoring some of the past positions of Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIESC?



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3. What are the main challenges, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses of Indigenous persons/groups of persons of diverse SOGIESC? Both within the specific communities and on a national/regional/international level?
4. How are Indigenous persons of diverse SOGIESC organized? Do they have specific Indigenous organisations, or are they part of broader movements and organisations of ‘mainstream’ persons with diverse SOGIESC?
5. Who are their allies and main opponents?
6. How do patriarchal structures and/or systems affect Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIESC?
7. What are their main needs, and how can IWGIA support considering our triangle of change (documenting, advocating, and supporting empowerment – see IWGIA strategy), and limitations in resources?
8. What capacity strengthening initiatives could be recommended for IWGIA internally?

Methodology

Desk research and interviews with experts, activists, academics, Indigenous persons with diverse SOGIESC will be the primary methodology of the research.

Before any interview is conducted - Free, Prior, and Informed Consent from all interviewees is ensured. Anonymity can be guaranteed if they wish.

The research will use a human rights-based approach throughout.

Timeline

A total of 60 days’ work is expected.

	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
2026	Contract signed	detailed plan of action and content outline agreed on, desk research + online interviews + drafting report			First draft report to IWGIA for review	Consultant to work on comments and finalise report	Final draft to IWGIA

Work in between deliverables is flexible. Status and clarification meetings between the consultant and IWGIA can be organized ad hoc and as needed.

Deadlines

Detailed plan of action (including suggested list of people/organisations/experts to interview + draft interview questions) & content outline sent to IWGIA – **June 15th, 2026.**

First draft report sent to IWGIA for review – **September 1st, 2026.**

IWGIA to send back comments and suggestions – **September 30th, 2026.**

Final report sent to IWGIA – **November 1st, 2026.**

Presentation to IWGIA staff and board of the research findings – **November/December 2026**

Remuneration

60 days * 250 USD pr. Day = 15.000 USD (98.000 DKK)



Ethical minimum Requirements

Considering the sensitivity of the research topic, the consultant will ensure to tread carefully and probing with respect when conducting the interviews and formulating the report. The principles described below apply to all aspects and stages of a research project, as well as to all interactions between researchers and Indigenous Peoples. This includes research conceptualization, design, data collection, analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and dissemination of results.

A. Indigenous Peoples' Self-Determination

All research must recognize Indigenous Peoples as rights-holders, not research subjects.

All research must recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' self-determination and, as such, must defer to Indigenous leadership and ownership of the project.

B. Consent

Building on the principle of self-determination, any research involving an Indigenous community may only be carried out with the community's and/or the individual's free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).

C. Transparency and Good Faith

Transparency refers to researchers' intentional and proactive sharing of information about the research project with all involved.

Good faith refers to acting with honesty and integrity, and fulfilling commitments in line with the goal to "do no harm."

D. Partnership

Research projects involving Indigenous Peoples must recognize Indigenous Peoples as knowledge holders and equal partners. Research involving a specific Indigenous community should be led by that community, unless the community requests or agrees otherwise.

E. Respect

Research must respect Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies, and must promote recognition, respect, sensitivity, reciprocity, and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples.

Deadline: 10 May 2026

Send CV, motivation letter and draft plan of action for the research to position@iwgia.org

Send any inquiries to Erla Huld Hadaoui at ehh@iwgia.org or Signe Leth at sil@iwgia.org