

LEAF Coalition IPLC Engagement Strategy Executive Summary

1. Context: The Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF) Coalition is a voluntary global coalition that brings together companies and governments to provide results-based finance to jurisdictions that are committed to protecting their forests and halting deforestation. The LEAF Coalition is coordinated by Emergent, a US nonprofit that provides the platform to facilitate the transactions. In 2021, the LEAF Coalition mobilized \$1 billion in forward purchase commitments for jurisdictional REDD+ programs. The LEAF Coalition recognizes that Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) are critical stewards of tropical and subtropical forests and that large-scale land-use decisions are not without risk to them. LEAF acknowledges that in many jurisdictions capacity is weak, meaningful multi stakeholder dialogue remains a challenge, and laws and systems where they exist are often poorly implemented. To ensure the social and environmental integrity of jurisdictional REDD+ programs, participant jurisdictions must comply with stringent carbon accounting and social safeguards requirements of the TREES standard, including holding broad consultations, building participatory benefit sharing plans and having working grievance mechanisms. It is a priority to ensure that IPLCs' perspectives are incorporated into the design, development, and implementation of jurisdictional REDD+ programs that may receive funding through LEAF. TREES includes third-party validation and verification to ascertain that these requirements were met. If the safeguards requirements are not met, TREES credits will not be issued. As such, no transaction with the LEAF Coalition can happen if jurisdictions do not meet these requirements. ART is responsible for communicating clear information and guaranteeing the quality of the TREES standard. Emergent introduces stakeholders to ART when stakeholders have questions regarding ART and the requirements of TREES. This document summarizes LEAF's strategy for supporting IPLC stakeholder engagement.

2. Emergent's role: Coordinating LEAF; supporting the coalition participants and allies to share information with IPLC groups; and encouraging and channeling IPLC feedback- through direct and indirect engagement - back to LEAF.

3. Groups of stakeholders that Emergent and the LEAF coalition participants engage with:

- **Jurisdictions:** through regular interactions with forest country representatives to support them in their journeys to meeting TREES requirements, including the safeguards requirements.
- **Civil Society Organizations:** through individual interactions and regular bi-weekly meetings as part of the Stakeholder Engagement Group (SEG). The SEG is primarily focused on coordinating efforts to raise awareness of LEAF with IPLCs, and to support their inclusion in the design and implementation of jurisdictional ER programs that will transact with LEAF.
- **Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs):** Emergent reaches IPLCs on the ground primarily through SEG members to share information, gather feedback, and respond to such feedback. Additionally, Emergent can hold meetings ad hoc at the request of IPLC organizations and/or SEG members, for instance in the absence of a SEG member to facilitate engagement in the IPLC group's jurisdiction, and where misinformation about LEAF is spreading or where there is a need for clarification. IPLCs can also provide feedback online and make inquiries to LEAF through a button on the LEAF website, and a direct email (info@emergentclimate.com).

4. Stakeholder engagement processes: There are 2 processes associated with LEAF.

- **Process led by the jurisdictions:** They must lead consultations and stakeholder engagement processes with IPLCs and other relevant actors consistent with their laws and with ART/TREES requirements. Host jurisdictions have the ultimate responsibility to lead their own stakeholder

engagement processes within their boundaries, as part of the full and effective participation processes required under TREES. Credits will not be issued by ART– and therefore transactions will not occur – unless safeguards are maintained, consultation has demonstrably occurred, benefit sharing plans are in place and grievance mechanisms are working. Neither LEAF nor Emergent intervene in these processes. It is important to note that Emergent does not lead consultations or full stakeholder engagement processes, nor does it provide guidance to the jurisdictions on how best to engage with IPLC groups.

- **Process led by LEAF Coalition participants and Emergent** (focus of this document): This is an “information sharing and feedback mechanism” by which Emergent engages with IPLCs and CSOs, to support information sharing about the LEAF Coalition and to collect and channel their feedback back to LEAF. The aim is to render LEAF accessible to IPLCs and CSOs and to detect where there might be potential issues of eligible jurisdictions not being able to meet ART/TREES (social safeguards in particular) and thus not being able to deliver credits to Emergent. The focus of stakeholder engagement for LEAF is primarily on IPLCs.

4.1 Stakeholder Engagement bodies:

The Stakeholder Engagement Group (SEG) is led by Emergent and is composed of LEAF coalition members and leading international NGOs and other stakeholders. The SEG holds bi-weekly coordination meetings, facilitated by Emergent’s IPLC Focal Point, the SEG’s role is to:

- Coordinate outreach efforts, and a share ideas and lessons.
- Support the implementation of the strategy, through the capacities of its members.
- Conduct outreach activities on the ground and share with the key issues involving IPLCs.
- Some SEG members may also provide technical assistance to host jurisdictions in meeting the requirements of ART/TREES, and other LEAF requirements on IPLCs/safeguards.

The IPLC Advisory Panel (IPLC-AP) is composed of three indigenous experts who work on IPLC issues. It holds monthly meetings facilitated by Emergent’s IPLC Focal Point, the panel’s role is to:

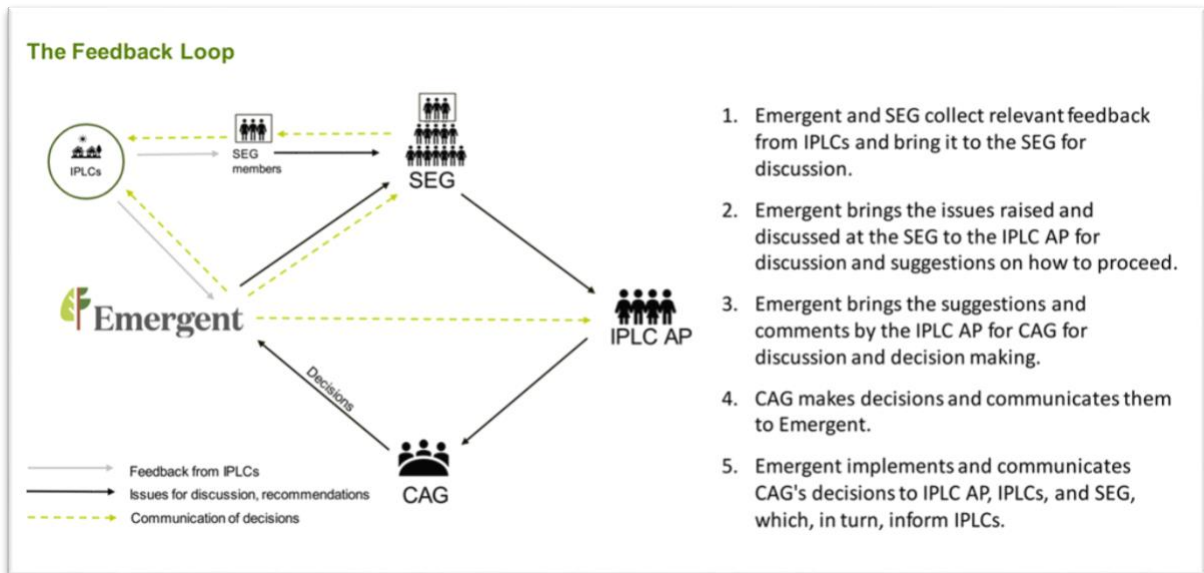
- Serve as a consultative body and advising Emergent on IPLC-related issues. The IPLC AP does not represent IPLC groups and their organizations or makes decisions on behalf of them.
- Assist Emergent in its direct interactions with IPLC groups and in wider activities.
- Discuss IPLC-related issues raised at the SEG, provide recommendations and channel them to CAG via Emergent's IPLC focal point, to take appropriate action.
- Follow up on the implementation of Emergent's stakeholder engagement strategies.
- Communicate with their communities and contacts about non-sensitive information around LEAF. They also endeavor to bring key and potentially changing concerns and interest of the IPLC groups in the corresponding region as well.

The Core Advisory Group (CAG) is composed by four founding members of LEAF Coalition and two rotating corporate contributors. Holds bi-weekly coordination meetings. Its role is to:

- Make decisions on behalf of the LEAF Coalition participants based on information of IPLC issues discussed by SEG and the IPLC AP.

If the SEG or IPLC AP highlights some concerns that TREES safeguards risk not being met, then CAG and/or LEAF Coalition contributors will confer and decide on applicable next steps, if any. These steps may include, i.e., relaying to the ART Secretariat the concerns we have been made aware of.

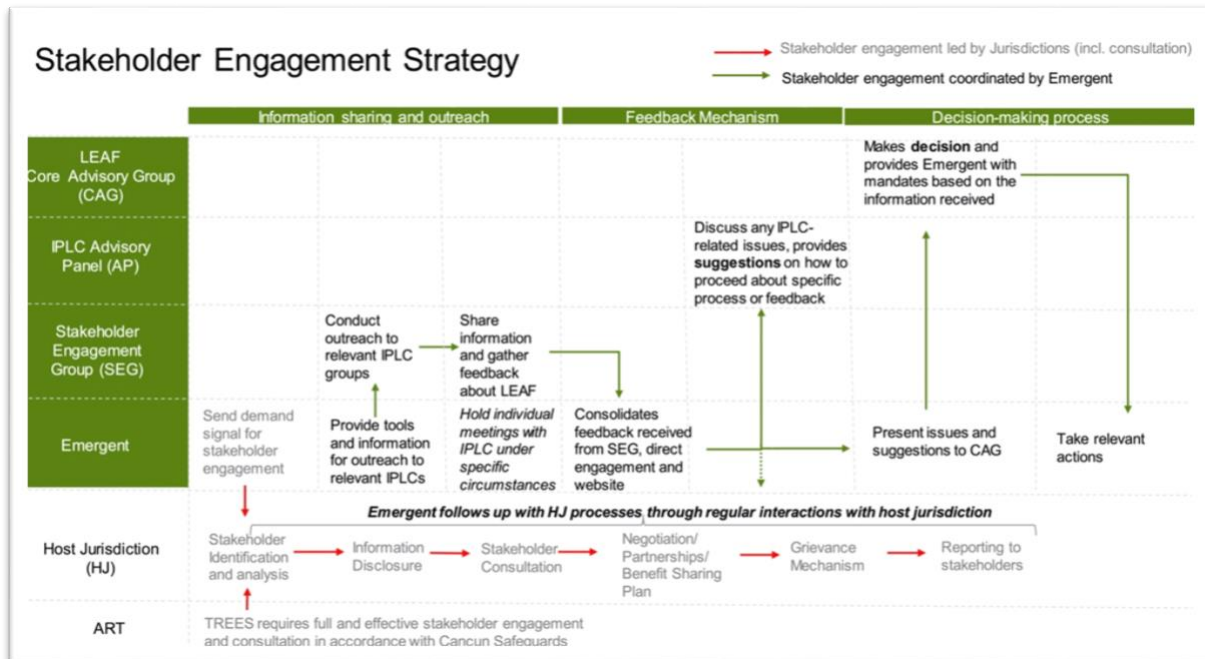
4.2 Feedback Loop: The SEG, IPLC AP and the CAG are the main instances of the information sharing and feedback mechanism. Emergent’s Focal Point facilitates the engagement and is responsible for running what is called a “feedback loop” and that operates as explained in the following image:



Picture 01, the Feedback Loop

4.3. Phases of the strategy:

- **Phase 1 (April-August 2021)**, LEAF launched the Call for Proposal (CFP), conducted outreach to increase awareness about LEAF and the CPF process, 23 jurisdictions were determined eligible to transact with LEAF.
- **Phase 2 (October 2021 – Emissions Reductions Purchase Agreement (ERPA) signature)**, LEAF is fostering dialogue, answering questions regarding how the Coalition will address and respect IPLC rights, and promoting IPLC participation in eligible jurisdictions. The focus is on providing public information, answering questions, channeling feedback for discussion at SEG and the IPLC AP before it is shared with CAG for decision making and implementation of such feedback. This phase is ongoing and Emergent is supporting the LEAF Coalition's efforts through the following:
 - **Communicating with IPLC groups** largely with and/or through the SEG to provide formation about LEAF so IPLCs can advocate for themselves for inclusion with eligible jurisdictions.
 - **Responding to inquiries that strictly relate to the LEAF coalition** and redirect IPLC groups to the ART Secretariat for inquiries relating to the TREES standard.
 - **Coordinating outreach** through the SEG and directly by Emergent to support the inclusion of IPLCs in the jurisdictions that are eligible for LEAF transactions.
 - **Mapping and contacting existing REDD+ civil society platforms** and CSOs which represent IPLCs' interests within HJs regarding climate & forest governance.
 - **Supporting the LEAF Coalition in amplifying the signal to jurisdictions** that the LEAF Coalition will only buy credits with high social integrity which have been validated and verified by ART.
 - **Creating mechanisms for incoming feedback to CAG** and communicate feedback to HJs, so that IPLCs' feedback is listened to, taken in, and, when appropriate, acted upon. Any grievance that needs more than simple clarification will be flagged to the Jurisdiction and the ART Secretariat.
- **Phase 3 (post-ERPA signature)**, during phase 2, LEAF will define the objectives and actions to be carried out in Phase 3 of the IPLC and stakeholder engagement strategy.



Picture 02, Summary of LEAF's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (Phase 2)

5. LEAF Stakeholder Engagement Broad Scope and Actions

- Communicate with IPLC groups and Stakeholders to provide information about LEAF, and offer IPLCs the opportunity to raise specific concerns, so they can advocate for themselves in case their jurisdictions decided to engage in LEAF. This is done through: bilateral sessions with IPLCs, regional dialogues¹, info sessions, and targeted communications materials in different languages.
- Map the programs already supporting IPLC inclusion in ER Programs: Emergent can help map sources of funding to connect jurisdictions and IPLC groups to them².
- Create feedback mechanisms for receiving feedback through dedicated form and email on its website, channeling it to CAG and communicating back to HJs, so that IPLCs' feedback is listened to, taken in, and, when appropriate, acted upon.
- Amplify the signal to Jurisdictions that the LEAF Coalition will only buy credits with high social integrity that have been validated and verified by ART.
- Emergent will prepare a report summarizing all the outreach activities conducted and major decisions taken and how these contributed to Phase's 2 overarching goal of raising awareness about LEAF among IPLCs and local stakeholders in HJs.

Resources:

- [Emergent Statement on IPLC rights](#)
- ART [TREES 2.0](#), [ART TREES Safeguards Guidance Document](#)
- ART Primers: [Nesting](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [Safeguards](#), [HFLD](#)

¹ Two virtual and one in-person events for IPLC organizations and regional and national CSOs and networks in each of these four regions: Latin America, Brazil, Asia, and Africa

² LEAF is focused on results-based payments. Providing funds for technical assistant is out of its scope.