

# Biodiversity Credits Pilot Project

Community-Led Conservation Finance  
for British Columbia Indigenous Communities



***InSight Biodiversity***

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# The Biodiversity Credit Landscape: An Emerging Opportunity

Biodiversity credits are a **new type of nature finance** designed to reward measurable conservation outcomes. Since 2020, voluntary biodiversity credit schemes have evolved rapidly in response to the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and growing pressure for corporations to manage nature-related risks.

## What makes them "voluntary"?

Voluntary biodiversity credits are distinct from government-mandated offsets or regulatory compensation schemes. They create a market for companies and organizations to voluntarily fund positive biodiversity outcomes as part of their nature strategies. While the market remains small, cumulative transactions are in the tens of millions globally and projections suggest it could grow to billions annually by 2030.

***Voluntary Biodiversity Credits are not tied to industrial development approvals or offsetting harm. Credits are purchased by choice - not regulatory requirement - and are positioned as contributions to conservation, not permission to damage ecosystems elsewhere.***

## Why this matters for BC Indigenous Communities:

Canada is increasingly recognizing nature as fundamental to life and society; with federal and provincial support for Indigenous-led conservation, Guardians programs, and nature-based finance tools. Global best practices emphasize that biodiversity credits must be Indigenous-led, with FPIC and equitable benefit-sharing embedded from the start.

22 January 2026 – Ottawa, ON.



*Indigenous Nations across Canada will gain greater access to carbon and nature finance through a major new investment in Indigenous-led conservation. First 30x30 Canada, led by Nature For Justice in collaboration with IISAAK OLAM Foundation and Nature Focus Development, will receive a multi-year USD \$10 million (~CAD \$14 million) grant from the BHP Foundation to help build capacity and turn Nation-led visions for land stewardship into reality.*

## Why pilot now:

This is a fast moving, early-stage market. Participating in a pilot now enables Indigenous Communities to lead, and shape methodologies and governance models inspired by traditional knowledge and governance systems, rather than adopting external blueprints later.

***Biodiversity credits are not a replacement for rights-based conservation or public funding, but they can create an additional, flexible revenue stream that rewards stewardship while keeping decision-making in community hands.***

# Why work with InSight Biodiversity?

**InSight Biodiversity** is a BC-based consulting team specializing in translating Savimbo's Indicator Species Biodiversity Methodology (ISBM) into locally credible, community-led pilot projects with British Columbia Indigenous Communities. We are in no way affiliated with or receive any financial incentives from Savimbo. We believe in the methodology, its emphasis on Indigenous knowledge systems and earth systems science; and want to help gauge it's potential to scale up around the world through solidarity networks, while reducing the burden for implementing Indigenous groups.



**Connor Haynes** is a British-born Canadian and co-founder of InSight Biodiversity. He has worked with Indigenous Peoples in B.C. on salmon habitat restoration and with local communities in Latin America on regenerating degraded farmland. As a Master of International Forestry graduate, he is currently working with the Alliance of Bioversity – CIAT, improving national land-use change emissions reporting for countries in Latin America. His passion lies with terrestrial restoration, in partnership with Indigenous and local communities and grounded in social justice.



**Vivekan Jeyagaran** is a Sri Lankan-born Tamil Canadian and co-founder of InSight Biodiversity. He has designed, implemented and evaluated systems-change programs focused on poverty reduction and inclusive, nature-positive agri-food systems across Africa and Asia. He holds a Master's in International Forestry and currently works with the Sunderland Lab's Carbon for Good Vietnam project and CIFOR-ICRAF, supporting climate finance initiatives for regenerative land-use systems.



**Jake Raynard** is a co-founder of InSight Biodiversity and a Master of International Forestry graduate from UBC with a special interest in the developing biodiversity credit markets. He has previously worked with the Global Landscapes Forum in Kenya to help re-design monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems focused on youth-, community-, and Indigenous-led forest restoration for organizations across Africa, Latin America and Asia. He brings a wealth of cross-cultural experience, and vision for community-led impact reporting.

*As a Benefit Company, our Articles of Incorporation and reporting requirements not only list our commitments, but legally bind us to supporting socio-ecological priorities like environmental conservation, Indigenous governance, FPIC, and data sovereignty.*

**Our role is to act as a bridge** by translating and adapting the ISBM framework for potential application in a B.C. context, within Indigenous Communities' governance structures and ecological realities.

We facilitate the co-design process, provide technical support, and help navigate certification pathways, but the methodology itself comes from Indigenous stewards, for Indigenous stewards.

- ★ **You stay in charge.** We are here to provide insight and support but the project proceeds only if you want it to.
- ★ **Protect culture & knowledge.** Data, photos and cultural info are controlled by your Community; we can draft data-use rules together.
- ★ **Build local jobs & capacity.** Monitoring, data collection and admin are run by community members with training provided.
- ★ **No loss of rights.** Participation does not transfer title, rights or ongoing control. Contracts are written so the Community decides if/when credits are sold.
- ★ **Funding support.** We'll pursue grants and partners to cover design and verification costs with the aim of reducing or eliminating Community costs for the design and/or implementation phase.

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## Savimbo ISBM

The **Savimbo Indicator Species Biodiversity Methodology (ISBM)** was [created by Indigenous stewards](#) in the Colombian Amazon working with scientists and community leaders to design a biodiversity monitoring and credit system that centres Indigenous knowledge, governance, and priorities. More than five Indigenous groups have co-designed the ISBM: the Kamëntšá, Cofan, Pasto, Emberá Chami, and Inga.



Since its development, Savimbo ISBM-based projects have become the **first in the world to issue biodiversity credits certified under the Cercarbono Biodiversity Certification Programme (CBCP)**, and these credits are now available for international trading. The methodology is currently being used by Indigenous communities in Colombia, Ecuador, and other regions.

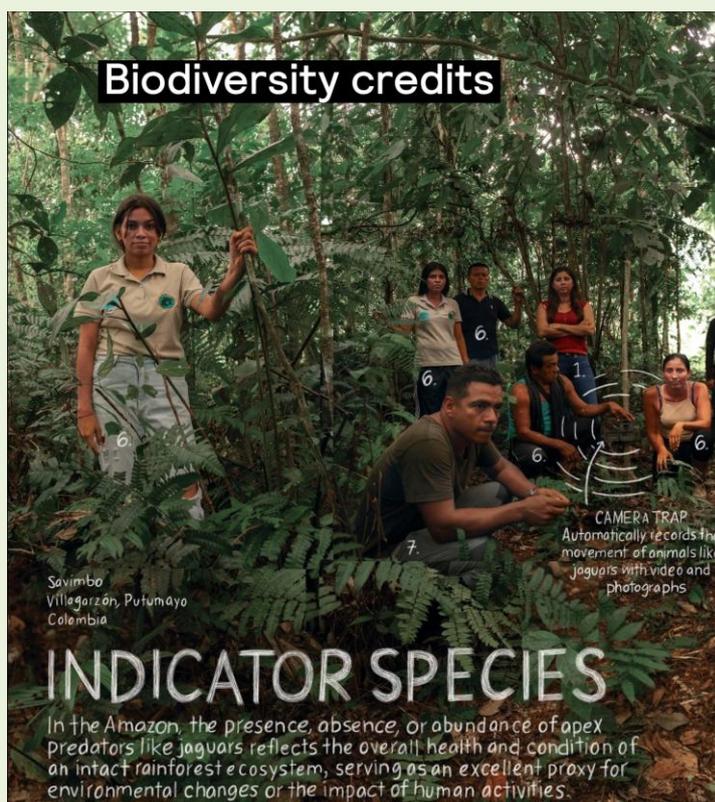
## Indicator Species Emphasis:

As Savimbo describes:

*"This methodology relies on indicator species. A simple but powerful concept: certain species of flora and fauna can survive only in functional ecosystems. A healthy specimen in the wild is a scientifically valid indicator that the ecosystem is functionally intact. Proving the existence of indicator species using non-invasive monitoring techniques (such as game cameras, photographs, or audio recordings), respects the wildlife and can be easily, and immediately implemented on the ground by IP and LC groups. This is practical, useful, and valid given the difficulties of knowing or monitoring the fauna and flora of large ecosystems." (isbm.savimbo.com)*

## Why it's different:

- ❖ **Indigenous-centred:** ISBM is designed so Indigenous Peoples lead decisions on indicators, monitoring, and governance.
- ❖ **Low barrier:** Easier to pilot and implement than many heavier regulatory schemes.
- ❖ **Partnership oriented:** Connects Indigenous stewards globally using similar approaches. Opportunity for developing strategic alliances with sister projects and fellow Indigenous Peoples internationally.
- ❖ **Two-eyed seeing approach:** Leaning on earth systems science logics and Indigenous knowledge systems of interconnectedness, the ISBM is lean and evidence-based, relying on indicator species as a proxy for ecosystem integrity.



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## Not like carbon projects:

- ❖ **Rolling 60-day system:** Credits are issued based on biodiversity presence in short, rolling windows (60 days), not multi-decade land locks.
- ❖ **Flexible land use:** Participation does not permanently restrict how you use your land, you remain in charge. Degradation reduces future credit payments, which aligns incentives with stewardship.
- ❖ **Outcome focus:** Measured by species/indicator presence and integrity rather than emissions accounting.

Learn more: [isbm.savimbo.com](http://isbm.savimbo.com)

# Pilot Project Overview

## A Co-Creation Process

This is a starting point, not a blueprint.

The pilot project described below is a template intended to be shaped collaboratively with your Community. We assume the structure, scope, indicators, governance, and timeline will evolve through consultation and co-design. Our role is to bring technical knowledge of the ISBM framework and facilitate the process, but **the project's final form will reflect your priorities, values, land-use realities, and governance structures.**

### Typical pilot project components (subject to co-design):

Geographic Scope	Indicator Selection	Monitoring Approach	Governance & Decision-Making	Data Sovereignty
Benefit Sharing	Verification Pathways	Timelines	Exit and Adjustment Options	Tiered Structure Options

#### Geographic scope:

Identify a pilot area (or multiple areas) where biodiversity monitoring can be tested. This could be existing stewardship zones, traditional territories under active management, or areas where guardians or monitors are already present. Size and boundaries will be defined collaboratively.





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### **Indicator selection:**

Work together to choose the indicator species (flora and fauna) that are most ecologically meaningful, culturally important, and feasible to monitor. Indicators will reflect both ISBM methodology requirements and priorities defined by the Indigenous Community. This includes both terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

### **Monitoring approach:**

Design a monitoring plan that integrates with existing activities (patrols, trapline checks, land visits, prescribed burns) to minimize new time burdens. This typically includes trail cameras, and traditional photo documentation. Training and equipment needs will be addressed.

### **Governance and decision-making:**

Establish a Indigenous Community-led governance structure (e.g., steering committee, appointed liaisons) that maintains oversight of the pilot, approves key decisions, and ensures alignment with community values. You decide

whether, when, and how credits are issued and sold.

### **Data sovereignty:**

All biodiversity data, photos, and monitoring records remain under Indigenous Community control. Data-sharing rules, access protocols, and use agreements will be co-drafted to protect cultural knowledge and sensitive information; aligned with OCAP® and CARE principles.

### **Benefit-sharing:**

Design a transparent revenue-sharing plan that reflects community priorities. This includes how credit revenues are distributed, who benefits, and how decisions are made about fund allocation.

### **Verification pathway:**

Participation in the pilot project, and progression towards certified credits does not in any way lock the Community into selling the credits. Based on these decisions, we can map the steps from baseline assessment through monitoring to credit issuance and certification (via CBCP or other pathways), including timeline, costs, and funder support.

### **Timeline:**

Typical pilot timelines would likely range from 12–24 months for the design and initial monitoring phase, with flexibility to adjust based on capacity, seasons, and Community priorities.

### **Exit and adjustment options:**

The Community can pause, adjust, or exit the pilot at any stage. Participation is voluntary and iterative; if the pilot doesn't align with community needs or expectations, it can be redesigned or discontinued. This is a learning process and everything we do can help inform future decisions.

### **Tiered structure options:**

This pilot can be structured into tiers, so Communities can move at the pace that feels right. A first tier could focus only on building a strong biodiversity baseline, local monitoring team, and controlled data systems, with no obligation to pursue certification, issue or sell credits. Subsequent tiers could add the steps needed to have this biodiversity data recognized and certified as voluntary biodiversity credits and potentially brought to market.

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## **Potential costs to Indigenous Communities**

### **For design phase:**

Ideally **zero**. We are currently seeking funder support through various avenues (e.g., IPCA / First30x30 and provincial/foundation streams). If co-funding or other financial aspects come up, we'll discuss them transparently with you.

### **For pilot implementation phase:**

Our aim is to make the pilot financially accessible and *light on additional time burden* for the Community. We will seek pilot funding (federal/provincial/philanthropic) to cover the usual implementation costs, which typically include:

- Certification/verification pathway costs,
- Monitoring equipment (trail cameras, tablets/GPS, data tools),
- Modest project team salaries/stipends (local monitors, admin),
- Training and capacity building,
- Travel and field costs, and
- Project management and reporting
- Our own advising fees

***Bottom line: We will work to secure funding for the pilot's cash costs and design the program so routine monitoring is integrated with existing activities, reducing new time-burdens while creating paid local roles where possible.***

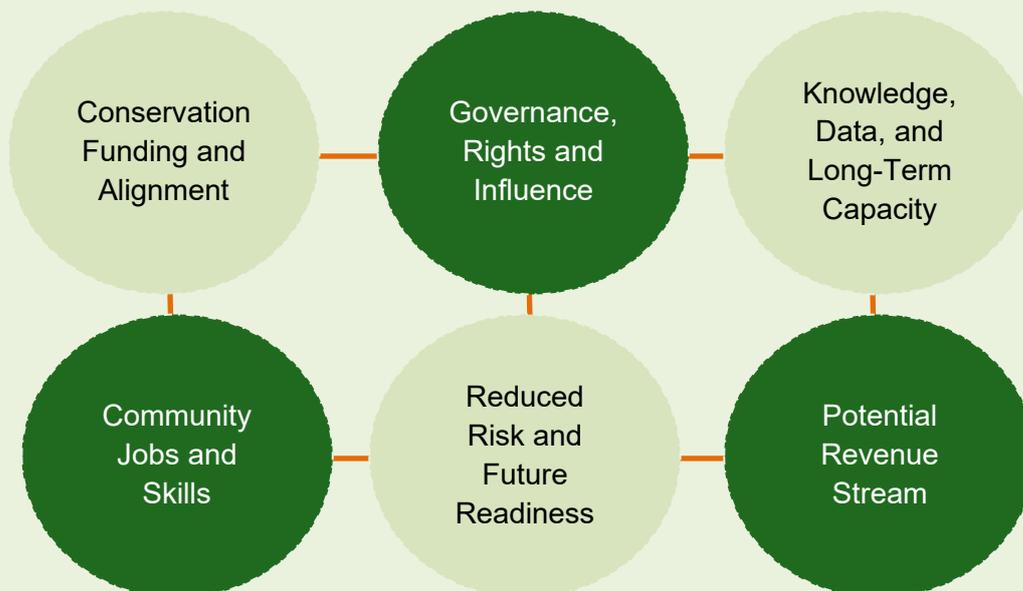
We also recognize **time** is a real cost. Our approach to minimize burden:

- **Piggyback fieldwork** — design monitoring tasks to align with existing land activities (patrols, hunting, trapline checks, maintenance visits etc.), so trail-camera checks and sample collection occur during trips already planned by Community members.
- **Low-friction workflows** — simple data collection templates, short training sessions, and light stipends so monitoring is not unpaid extra work.
- **Flexible participation** — the Community decides how much time to commit and can scale monitoring intensity to match capacity.

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## Potential Project Benefits

Even if a Community chooses not to pursue credit certification or sales, the pilot project itself creates valuable benefits through the baseline assessment, monitoring systems, and capacity-strengthening work.



## Conservation funding and alignment

- **Access to Indigenous-focused conservation funding:** This pilot can be positioned to align with the most recent IPCA and Indigenous-led conservation funding streams, potentially helping cover design, baseline, and monitoring costs.
- **Alignment with the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation:** A Savimbo ISBM-based pilot can showcase project's alignment with the agreement's objectives and credibly position itself for provincial/federal conservation funding pathways.
- **Leveraging matched funding and restoration programs:** A credible baseline and monitoring plan can make it easier to attract matched funding for restoration or conservation implementation through provincial/federal program.

## Governance, rights and influence

- **Evidence for protection and stewardship authority:** Verified presence of intact ecosystems, indicator species, or species-at-risk can support stronger protection pathways and help establish an area as a high conservation value landscape.
- **Strengthened negotiating position:** High-quality biodiversity evidence can strengthen the Community's position in negotiations with governments, industry, or regulators (for example in land-use planning, tenure discussions, or impact mitigation).
- **Policy alignment:** Alignment with recognized conservation frameworks enhances the Community's credibility and standing in provincial and federal policy discussions.

## Knowledge, data and long-term capacity

- **Community-controlled biodiversity data as a long-term asset:** Baseline and monitoring data become a Community-controlled resource that supports internal stewardship planning, land-use decision-making, and long-term conservation strategy.
- **Optional research partnerships on the Indigenous Community's terms:** If desired, the Community can use its biodiversity dataset to form controlled research partnerships (universities, conservation science groups, etc.) under Community-defined rules, including compensation and cultural safeguards.
- **Potential to generate additional revenue from data:** Biodiversity datasets can have external value for research, monitoring contracts, or conservation planning shared only under Community-approved conditions/agreements.
- **Reusable monitoring capacity:** Training, equipment, systems established for the pilot can support future stewardship projects and funding applications, beyond biodiversity credits.
- **Potential Indigenous knowledge sharing exchange:** Savimbo's Indigenous owners and partners are keen to welcome, share knowledge and experiences, and develop strategic alliances with sister Indigenous Peoples and projects globally.

## Community jobs and skills

- **Local employment and training:** Monitoring and project administration can create community jobs and skills development (Guardians, youth training, field monitoring, GIS/data roles).
- **Low-friction monitoring embedded in existing activities:** Monitoring tasks can be designed to piggyback on existing land activities (patrols, hunting, trapline checks, maintenance visits), with simple workflows and stipends so this is paid, manageable work rather than an extra burden.

## Reduced risk and future readiness

- **Diversified nature-finance pathway (not just carbon):** Biodiversity credits can complement (or remain separate from) carbon projects, creating a different funding pathway that does not require multi-decade land-use restrictions.
- **Reduced long-term risk compared to carbon contracts:** The Savimbo ISBM system uses rolling short issuance windows rather than locking the Community into decades-long restrictions. This reduces risk while keeping incentives aligned with stewardship.
- **Improved readiness for future conservation opportunities:** Establishing governance, monitoring, and benefit-sharing frameworks now positions the Community to move quickly if new conservation finance programs or partnerships emerge.

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## Potential revenue from biodiversity credits (if credits are issued and sold)

The voluntary biodiversity credit market is brand new, and buyer demand does not yet match supply. **Issuing credits does not guarantee actual sale of credits at this time.** However, we are optimistic, and looking to help position these projects for the future. Understanding the potential revenue helps inform decision-making about whether to pursue certification and credit issuance.

### Current Savimbo ISBM credit pricing:

Certified Savimbo ISBM-based biodiversity credits currently trade at approximately \$30 USD (~\$40 CAD) per hectare for each 60-day period. This equals about \$245 CAD per hectare per year.

If ~15,000 ha were credit-eligible, this could represent up to	<b>~\$3.7 million CAD/year</b>
On a conservative basis, if only 50% of the land qualifies, then	<b>~\$1.8 million CAD/year</b>
If, on the other hand, only 10% of land qualifies, then:	<b>~\$.37 million CAD/year</b>

### Important context:

These figures are illustrative only and depend on multiple factors including actual biodiversity presence, monitoring consistency, buyer demand, and market conditions.

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## What we Ask

*If you're open to an introductory workshop, please provide a contact and 2–3 possible dates to hold an introductory workshop with leadership and relevant stewardship/wildlife team members. We can further discuss the biodiversity credits, the Savimbo ISBM, and to hear your questions and concerns.*

*-InSight Biodiversity Team*