



External review action plan (January 2023)

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Introduction

In August 2022, IIED published the [External Review 2022](#), which was commissioned by Sida and Irish Aid to assess IIED's work and our impacts and partnerships, and whether we are functioning effectively and strategically. The independent Review Team was asked to focus in particular on how 'future fit' the organisation is, recognising there are huge and ongoing changes and uncertainty (COVID, global governance, research funding, fallout from Brexit and so on). The External Review is conducted every five years, and requires more than a year of engagement across a broad range of IIED supporters, partners and users of our work. The review team of Zenda Ofir, Yves Renard and Louise Gallagher spent 18 months conducting a rigorous and deliberative process, which involved high levels of participation from IIED staff and a wider range of actors. Their analysis identified several strengths within IIED's structure and approach that are core to our demonstrable impact, as well as caution that all these elements are subject to internal and external pressures. The final report provides a hugely valuable assessment of the strengths and challenges facing the organisation, as well as shifts in the broader context in which we operate.

Due to personal issues within the review team, the publication of the External Review was delayed significantly. As a result, the initial [management response](#) (published in August with the Review) was written by a few key stakeholders at IIED, without an opportunity for broader input from a wider cross-section of staff. In recognition of this, the Strategy and Management Team (SMT) committed to developing an action plan to take forward the six priority areas for action identified in the external review, which would be co-created by a wide range of IIED staff and offer an opportunity for all to engage. This process was coordinated by the Strategy and Learning Group, though the inputs come from across the Institute. In addition to being open to all staff for comments, this action plan was developed with specific inputs from the Race and Racism Working Group, Gender Equality Champions Network, People Team, Finance, Business Development, Operations, and the Strategy and Learning Group.

This Action Plan shows the many ways that staff across IIED are already working towards the challenges presented in the External Review, and what we plan to do in FY24. Importantly, this may not encompass *all* work being done, but is a snapshot of our plans and how key stakeholders are already addressing the major priorities presented in the review. This plan will then serve as an input into the Strategy Development process which will be undertaken throughout 2023, culminating in IIED's next Strategy to be launched in April 2024. Importantly, Priorities 4 and 5 have been deemed to be especially critical to the next strategy. As such, we have included an overview of the actions we will take in the coming months in order to incorporate these priorities into the strategy development process. They will be addressed more holistically and in greater depth once the next strategy is launched in April 2024.

Below is the Action Plan which addresses each of the six priorities in the Review. For each priority, we have presented the main recommendations from the review team, then a narrative response. Tables of actions (both planned and already underway) are included as an annex to provide more detail on next steps.

Actions to priorities recommended by the external review

Priority 1: Mobilise frame and strategic funding

Recommendation from external review

"The most pivotal and enduring challenge that IIED needs to resolve is finding enough financial support to alleviate the pressure on staff and allow the potential of the current strategy, and the solid foundation of work built up around it, to come to fruition. Funding that is not ringfenced, or only ringfenced for strategy or sub-strategy rather than project implementation, will be a great challenge during a time of dwindling resources, and the IIED leadership will have to take full responsibility for this important issue. It will also be essential to review the current strategy for using frame funding so that there is an appropriate and well-justified balance.

IIED is well-regarded and it will be worthwhile to consider creating a platform or forum of potentially interested conventional as well as atypical funders who can be motivated by a carefully crafted, inspiring narrative about IIED's (and its peers') past achievements, its future strategies, and why frame funding will lead to outcomes that are worthwhile funding. This can also be done with peer organisations to start promoting collective action around common agendas. As broadly captured in the strategy of the Business Development Working Group, such an approach will require moving beyond conventional funding sources to engage (i) progressive foundations or coalitions of foundations which are now becoming more adventurous in their foci for support, (ii) potential funding partners from those parts of the world who will in future have the most financing power, namely China and other large economies in the Global South that have a keen interest in knowledge and expertise at the intersection of development and environment, and (iii) carefully-selected private sector coalitions that can and want to benefit from independent, credible research and/or advice

However, it will also require the creation of well-developed synthesised narratives about what IIED with its partners has achieved and can achieve, and the importance of making available financing for (i) a sophisticated strategy and/or a (ii) set of portfolios where work can be done with confidence and agility. Innovation and transformative change fit for this time will require a good understanding of systems theory as well as experience in practice. IIED is well positioned to provide this in the areas that it identifies as priorities for the future."

Actions to address Priority 1

The Review rightly identifies the need for us to make substantial changes to IIED's income base and operating model. Identifying and achieving transformational shifts in these areas will be a key strand of the forthcoming strategy development process. Our current model relies significantly on maximising chargeable days to cover our overheads. When insufficient income is generated to meet these costs our principal means to eliminate the shortfall is to increase staff charge-out by securing new contracts. This has led to issues with staff welfare (as highlighted in Priority 2 below). In addition, the model is not delivering financially, as IIED has experienced losses over the last three financial years.

Unless we significantly change our current model, it is unlikely that we will be able to achieve both staff welfare and a return to surplus. Therefore, an urgent reset is needed.

The intent behind the changes we are now exploring is to move as fast as we can to a position where we can all work in a healthy, happy and impactful environment where IIED nurtures its people and partners and has a strong financial base. However, we recognise that the shifts required are not straightforward – they have their own risks and uncertainties, and the transition required to realise the projected benefits will be challenging. The actions we'll be implementing in the next 18 months to improve our financial situation can be categorised under three main headings:

1. **Diversifying and increasing IIED income:** On the one hand we will be sourcing new streams of funding from foundations, high-net worth individuals, and crowdfunding; on the other hand we have already started conversations with current and new potential funders of IIED work for increasing the level of flexible funding. To this regard we have substantially increased proactive marketing activities with both long-term and new funders. We will also work with the new IIED Europe Business Development Director to explore and map work in OECD countries funded by the EC, EU countries and other OECD countries.
2. **Improving IIED efficiency and profitability:** We are currently increasing transparency of IIED annual funding and improving the clarity about the viability of our current business model. A key part of this plan is to revise IIED's business model and maximise synergies with new Strategy. We will also review and revise financial model for collaboration with key partners, to support delivery of shared work programmes. The new Director of Finance has been implementing an ambitious agenda to better manage organisational growth by:
 - a. Developing guidance on IIED funding model considering what IIED business model should look like to be viable, whilst better support its partners.
 - b. Implementing changes to IIED costing model to diminish the burden of fundraising from individual researchers.
3. **Advocating for long-term flexible funding:** In the next 18 months we will identify new possible frame funders and initiate conversations about IIED offer – to include government

agencies and philanthropies. We will establish a funder table to bring together institutional funders and engage them actively in planning and collaboration. As part of this effort we will:

- a. Develop narrative about what IIED has achieved during the current strategy;
- b. Initiate conversation about the new strategy and frame funding agreements by identifying major ambitions and delivery models for the new strategy;
- c. align proposals and asks to funders' priorities to ensure better success rate, based on funder research and building relations with funders.

Reducing IIED's dependence on official ODA (through, for example, increasing philanthropic funding and bidding more for non-ODA funded research) will open possibilities for working across the HIC/MIC/LIC country categories in more creative ways, to address the truly global challenges at the heart of our current organisational strategy (rising inequality, the climate crisis, nature/biodiversity loss, increasing urban risk, and unsustainable markets). In relation to future geographies where IIED and partners could grow our funding base, it is important to note that the geopolitics of engagement will be a key and evolving factor.

Priority 2: Nurture IIED's people

Recommendation from external review

"Staff like and care for one another, like working together, and are generally proud of IIED. But trust levels across levels and functional positions are somewhat bruised. We propose that in the immediate future significant attention is paid to addressing issues related to IIED's people and the dynamics around them – fostering opportunities to act on issues that de-energise staff. This will help ensure that IIED becomes a healthier organisation during these difficult times. It will require people management approaches in tune with modern trends, and special attention to staff wellbeing.

Questions that can help identify priorities: What immediate pivots will alleviate current tensions and strains?

Ensure that the foundation is sound by refocusing attention on how to ensure that IIED's foundational values and principles are expressed in practice.

Foster trusting relationships through enough innovative and face-to-face opportunities for interaction even in a hybrid work environment; provide reasons for important leadership actions and decisions to ensure staff trust; foster open communication and transparency.

Remove obstacles to performance by acting quickly upon valid complaints; identify, analyse and address tensions, contradictions and trade-offs unnecessarily affecting leadership or staff performance; "de-bureaucratise" core support processes; wherever possible, find appropriate ways to lighten work burdens – within reason; remunerate task teams fulfilling special roles in a way that reflects the importance of the task. Ensure organisational accountability systems that work across programmes and groups.

Recruit and support well. Consider how to actively work against historical factors that are shaping recruitment processes; review to ensure that appointments, staff and associated experts have the right mix of experience and expertise; ensure that whatever attracts (the right) people to IIED is not lost; provide appropriate performance incentives, but also ensure accountability at all levels that is well understood by the incumbents, and enforced. An inspiring 'People and Culture' head can be pivotal – with the power to ensure that internal trust, power and other dynamics that hinder performance can be addressed quickly and innovatively – while an occasional independent staff survey done in trust can assist in taking the organisation's pulse."

Actions to address Priority 2

The Institute's success and influence depends on the passion, integrity, competence and collaboration of our staff and we welcome the reviewers' recommendation to improve staff relationships and wellbeing. We also note that the pandemic has set an unusually challenging context and we have worked hard on maintaining communication and helping individuals in challenging situations where we have been able.

To act upon the Review's recommendations, we will:

1. **Establish the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) working group** to take the actions identified in the people strategy forward. The group will be looking at how decolonialisation can

- brought into the organisation, by stripping down white British power, and bringing more diverse people into the organisation from the global south; Work that is carried out in or for the benefit of the global south, will be conducted and managed by people from the global south.
2. Implement the new Personal Development Review (PDR) process including the requirement for everyone at IIED to have a peer review and to demonstrate our values in terms of diversity, equity and inclusion. **Ensure that relevant skills and experience are increased for IIED staff in key positions** by implementing the proposed changes from the Recruitment and Selection working group, which are focused on inclusion and accessibility practices.
 3. **Engage and consult staff regularly on their well-being at work.** To do so we will conduct well-being pulse surveys and we will lead the Wellbeing Champions to engage groups in best practices around factors that impact on wellbeing
 4. **Recruit a full-time expert on gender and intersectionality** who can work across research groups to support building these elements into project proposals and ensuring their implementation
 5. **Develop and roll out aspiring leaders programme / new managers programme** by engaging external specialist to deliver management programme and follow up activities for those who have previously attended the leadership programme
 6. **Devise institutional KPIs that include aspects of staff wellbeing, diversity, and inclusive hiring** practices and also related to advancing gender justice, intersectionality etc. so they aren't just all output driven.
 7. **Include gender identity and sexual orientation in all relevant language** concerning ethics, safeguarding and non-discrimination.
 8. **Support adoption of a justice approach to DEI**, which will inform: IIED operations, the research strategy, IIED communications and organisation of events. Support will include devising and rolling out training to support this approach for both operational, comms and research staff

Priority 3: Decolonise IIED with sophistication

Recommendation from external review

“The study commissioned by IIED on the topic of decolonisation provides important guidance which can be supplemented by further tailored work. Decolonising IIED will have multiple foci within two main streams of action, stemming from the need to (i) recognise and address injustice, prejudice and arrogance towards ‘the other’, and (ii) shift from dominant reductionist, linear narratives about how societies work, towards the more nuanced (complex adaptive) systems-informed perspectives that are embedded in many of the philosophies of non-Western societies, and in practice also informing some of the most successful development efforts in the world. Decolonisation is important for both the Global South and the Global North; it should be driven by the Global South yet owned also in the Global North.

It will be necessary to start with, but also to move beyond, the most visible manifestations of ‘colonised’ mindsets and practices - such as the diversity in IIED’s leadership and staff composition, their location, and who controls the funding (or has “power over”); whose capacities are supposed to be developed, why and with what assumptions - to engaging deliberately with power dynamics and asymmetries in all aspects of IIED’s work; with dominant mental models and narratives that have shaped how development, evidence and (policy) influencing are conceptualised and done; and with how mindsets as well as practices by specialists from both the Global South and Global North need to change.”

Actions to address Priority 3

IIED has already undergone several processes apart from the study mentioned in the recommendations. Work on the anti-racist narrative analysis brought out examples of fragility and the colonial legacies with recommendations to address the findings. A scoping report of how IIED is addressing inequality was also done and provided recommendations on addressing decolonisation of IIED research and strengthening equitable partnerships. The race and racism working group has also supported internal processes of learning, reviewing IIED policies and practices with the purpose of reforming how IIED approaches racism and decolonisation.

The decolonisation of aid and development work commissioned by CCG recommended action that focuses on both internal and external efforts. Internal changes that were identified relate to IIED staff and include decolonisation of staff mindsets through work and reflections on positionality, saviourism

and fragility. Externally facing work will focus on engagement with our partners and unpacking and addressing underlying power dynamics, through improving IIED systems, research methods and narratives, in the aims to create more equitable partnerships. Achieving the recommendation to decolonise IIED with sophistication will require efforts from across groups and from the highest level. We recognise that IIED has much work to do to challenge and change embedded prejudice. We will act together to end racism and all other forms of discrimination in IIED through action and investment, and not just words. We will create change in our organisation and the systems in which we operate, in earnest and on a continuous basis. It will be a top priority for IIED to become a place that is welcoming for all people and a place for all employees to thrive. We will:

1. **Improve staff mindsets, skills & capabilities** by building on the recommendations made from the decolonisation study and the race and racism audit. Staff will improve their understanding what it means being an anti-racist organisation, in terms of IIED systems & individual behaviours. To implement the audit's recommendations, we will roll out a learning agenda which will be instrumental to support a refresh process of IIED values and cultures, so that they are aligned to anti-racism and decoloniality behaviours and support long term changes in how IIED operates.
2. **Develop an inequality strategy** that addresses both internal diversity equity and inclusion issues and external issues of racial and gender justice and decolonisation. The strategy will provide strategic guidance to how IIED will approach racial and gender justice as well as decolonisation.
3. **Achieve diversity in IIED's leadership, staff composition and location** by:
 - a. Refining and approving the distributed workforce policy in ways that are equitable and benefit IIED's position in the sector
 - b. Reviewing people policies to support inclusive recruitment, retention, promotion and pay and ensure that leadership is diverse recognising different backgrounds, expertise and lived experiences
4. **Decolonise IIED research methods** and approaches guided by the research ethics policy by:
 - a. implementing the revised research ethics policy (2022) from a decolonial perspective and identify innovative approaches to demonstrate how this can be done across groups
 - b. sharing and operationalising lessons from the GETs to inform research approaches and with partners
5. **Influence global aid system** working with LDCs/SIDS on their approaches by supporting processes of decolonising funding mechanisms and promoting locally led approaches
6. **Shift power through ethical and equitable partnerships** by
 - a. Supporting processes of shifting power with partners especially in the global south through respective groups and units' engagements
 - b. Reviewing IIED policies to support decolonial and ant-racist approaches

Priority 4: Strengthen coherence and mainstreaming for big thinking

Recommendation from external review

"IIED could once again contribute one or more 'big things' to the world. For this, greater coherence between programmes and groups has to be developed. This can be done through (i) mainstreaming, (ii) nexus work, (iii) portfolio management and (iv) timely exiting from 'tired' areas of work. Within the limited freedom provided by IIED's financing model, a (cross)portfolio management approach will support alignment and synergy.

The identification of major nexus themes that can cut across most, if not all, of the research programmes or groups will provide opportunities for aligned and synergistic action that can lead to the 'next big thing' for IIED. Obvious examples are the intersections of the thematic areas of all research groups with climate, or with gender or DEI. The world also needs new narratives and 'big thinking' around issues such as the biodiversity-wellbeing nexus, mainstreaming the environment into rural and urban food systems, or creating post-2030 narrative around the value and implications of degrowth and regeneration (and other issues and shifts briefly raised in chapter 5). The thematic areas identified by staff during peer discussions highlight further possibilities (Figure 4; Annex 9).

Or IIED can focus on analysing place-based work in many locations in the world to more quickly identify common, repeating emerging issues, agency gaps, structural barriers to

change - and what has worked in pathway finding - in order to propose new horizons in sustainability. What seems old news to IIED could be new to other organisations. IIED can use this to advance the global conversation on structural problems to systems change for resilience and sustainability outcomes, with strong roots in ground-level experiences”

Actions to address Priority 4

IIED has worked hard to move in this direction over the period under review, and has shown the ability to shift narratives at multiple levels and create impact – including examples of ‘scaling up’ that are, we believe, impressive for an organisation of our scale. However, there is an important impetus to adjust IIED’s strategy and operations to promote transformative outcomes over a broader range of our work. This will be discussed at length throughout the upcoming strategy development process.

Indeed, the process of developing the next strategy will itself be a mechanism by which to engage IIED staff, partners and a wider network of changemakers to coalesce around how we can contribute to an agenda of change that is co-created and locally led.

We will use the process leading to our next strategy as a developmental design opportunity: as regularly adaptable to needs, opportunities, and threats; as a framework for accelerated learning, both from our research itself and from the impacts or our advocacy and influence; as an opportunity to agree and communicate our values and non-negotiables; as a means to prioritise and decide what we do less of as well as more; as a platform for upgrading our own transformation capabilities; and as an invitation and space for radical collaborations and co-creation at each step where our intent is forged with others, including existing and new partners. We will:

1. **Design transformative ways of working and a more coherent vision for change** as part of the upcoming Strategy. The development of the next strategy will be designed to be a transformative process for IIED. It could involve a major restructure of IIED’s operations, groups, research agenda, finance, and more.
2. **Undergo a series of facilitated sessions with staff from across IIED and partners** to define and determine new strategies for research and impact. There will be multiple institute-wide facilitated brainstorming/co-creating sessions to develop the next strategy and ways of working.
3. **Conduct a consultative Horizon scan and futures assessment**, which will inform big challenges that IIED will focus on which will be led by the Research Strategy Team and shared with all staff during IIED annual retreat Open Space
4. **Restructure the finance model, and income levers** to support integration and coherence across the institute. Changes are currently in development to adjust IIED’s finance model, drive for unrestricted funding, and optimise efficiency (see Priority 1). These shifts, particularly to days/research funding, will be designed to enable collaboration and cohesiveness across IIED teams and departments.

Priority 5: Forge a progressive ecosystem of partners and relationships

Recommendation from external review

“IIED needs a stronger ecosystem of partners based on strategic ‘living’ connections between and across clusters with similar intent, rather than only between one or more partners for a particular project. We understand that a partnership study is underway, and this has to be an essential priority, especially now that IIED’s partnerships are not unique anymore, and their current value not optimally used. It will furthermore be helpful to reduce the time that IIED staff spend on developing fair and inclusive partnership decisions, exchange, work-flow, accountability systems and other operational processes in every separate project. More freely shared partnership information, including the types of partnerships to avoid, can also benefit others in IIED; current disincentives to learn from these and other experiences need to be explored and addressed.

Proposed initial priorities:

1. **Visibility, influence and scaling:** Develop purposeful partnerships crafted around own agendas that can provide greater visibility to, and amplify or scale, IIED's work, by either using power brokers in intergovernmental processes such as UNECA, the AU Commission and SADC in Africa, or more local thematic or geographic networks (as demonstrated, for instance, by IIED in Latin America);
2. **Collective Southern expertise:** Develop carefully-selected, highly reputable networks of Southern experts and demonstrated 'change agents' who can be mobilised around key priorities;
3. **Unusual / atypical relations:** Seek out partnerships for strategic reasons in the new power centres in the world, in countries such as Indonesia, China, Turkey and others, and engage with selected parts of the private sector based on carefully identified experience-informed opportunities for constructive engagement.
4. **Learning and sharing:** Generate partner information through the LIF to facilitate plans and decisions, and create opportunities to share how to make partnerships work and how to prevent falling into partnership traps, for example when working with powerful partners who do not allow IIED to have an equal voice. "

Actions to address Priority 5

Partnerships must remain front and centre in IIED strategy, and we welcome the recommendation to invest in an even stronger ecosystem of partners, extending it to new partnerships that do not depend solely on the project cycle of our operations. For IIED, collaboration with partners is pivotal to achieving lasting policy change for a fairer, more sustainable world (as stated in our mission), and we currently have over 350 partnerships working in more than 60 countries.

Many of these alliances are long term and span very different types of organisations and institutions. It will be important to develop our approach along two main directions: improving how we run these conventional operational partnerships and also developing new models for reaching out to new and unusual partners. This will be achieved through:

- Working with partners to develop shared vision, values and principles and guidance on what 'equitable partnerships' mean, and to define normative partnership standards. This approach will be coherent with anti-racism, gender justice, decoloniality and will build on existing IIED experience working in fair partnerships.
- Reviewing our existing ways of working to embed the ethical principles identified.
- Creating learning and sharing spaces to discuss the difficult questions, and share skills and knowledge on fostering equitable partnerships with IIED staff, partners, donors, intermediaries and other stakeholders.

We expect that the development of the strategy for 2024 will illuminate the roadmap to securing and innovating our partnerships. The 2022-3 Impact and Learning Exercise focused on 'building ethical partnerships' will be a highly significant means for internal learning and exploration and for increased engagement with a diversity of actors exploring similar challenges and opportunities. In addition, we will:

1. Utilise the strategy development process as an opportunity to **fundamentally shift our approach to our network of partners**, and to develop an ecosystem of transformative change. We will do so by:
 - a. identifying organisations, stakeholders and partners with whom our strategy development should collaborate
 - b. Forge new relationships with both funders and partners with emphasis on "unusual suspects"
2. **Undergo a review of IIED's Theory of Change (TOC).** IIED MEL team will lead a review of IIED's TOC through participatory processes with staff and partners. This review will involve partners, input from the stakeholder survey, and test assumptions about our impacts and relationships both externally and internally.
3. **Conduct a new and re-purposed Stakeholder Survey** to take the pulse of our partners and networks. The stakeholder survey will be conducted again this year, after a one-year pause. This will enable us to reinvigorate our contact with our stakeholders, take the pulse of our

partners, and capture key data around engagement and networks. This year, the survey will also include targeted questions around the strategy development process, and will help us identify collaborators who can help us in Q2-Q4 FY24 in developing the strategy.

Priority 6: lead with advanced, nuance MEL coupled to futures thinking and design

Recommendation from external review

“IIED has been somewhat behind the curve of some of the major evolutions in the landscape in which it works. The sophistication of its emerging LIF system coupled to a stronger futures orientation and horizon scanning capabilities can be of service not only for IIED, but also for partners and peer organisations. Among others, IIED’s public profile and capacities in MEL can be used to conduct strategic monitoring and evaluation that can bring to light how a systems approach can inform outcomes work in support of transformation, interrogate the assumptions underlying IIED’s theories of change, and illuminate the often-hidden reasons for both success and failure of flagship initiatives and efforts towards transformation. Linking such outcomes tracking and learning to futures work of importance for the organisation and for the broad field in which IIED works can give life to important dialogue on trends, risks and shifts both within IIED and among special peer group or partner leaders’ platforms. Inspirational formats within IIED can help engage staff on discussions within and across group foci and programmes. Connecting outcomes and futures work can help IIED to stay on top of important developments in its work - for example in new technologies that can greatly enhance data analysis and synthesis.”

Actions to address Priority 6

We agree that – although the monitoring and learning systems we have are good compared to other similar entities – we should explore new ways to use our current MEL systems and tools to influence sustainable development policies and research. In terms of monitoring outcomes influenced by IIED work, in the past three years we have mostly focused on collecting evidence about the observed changes, our contribution to those changes, and their relevance to the Institute’s Theory of Change. Investigating what we can learn about transformation from those changes is a logical next step.

Over the last three years we have gathered 154 outcomes from across all LIF work programmes and global engagement themes, thus we are in a strong position to conduct a comparative study aiming to identify what is necessary and what is sufficient for enabling system transformation. We will also use the Learning and Impact Framework (LIF) cycle to engage IIED staff across the Institute to review our current Theory of Change and propose changes if needed. These reviews will take place as part of the new strategy development process and they will produce information, evidence and analysis about IIED strengths and niche.

We particularly welcome the recommendation to focus on new technologies for data analysis and synthesis. This fits very well with the new research agenda launched by the IIED MEL team on forward-looking evaluation: ‘from what works to what will work’. It also fits very well with the ambitions of the Research Strategy Team to improve research methodologies and capacities across the Institute. To foster greater understanding and usage of new technologies to synthesise and analyse different forms of data we will focus on approaches and methods using technologies and tools for real-time data analysis, modelling, geo-spatial observations, foresight and forecasting. We commit to:

- Gather different experiences on the use of big data and new technologies from across all research groups and create a platform to share learning on new data collection and analysis methods that every IIED researcher can access, ensuring sufficient resources are available to do this work effectively.
- Develop a broad partnership around this new innovative approach that will focus on questions, methods and capacity improvement of organisations and institutions that are facing greater climate risks and uncertainty.

However, research is not only conducted through innovative methodologies that use new technologies and we recognise the importance of supporting all IIED researchers in identifying and using the most appropriate methods (being these traditional or innovative) to answer their thematic

and context-specific research questions; and develop sound evidence in the most efficient and effective way. For this reason we will develop curricula on identifying the most appropriate action-oriented research design, and use of qualitative and quantitative methods. The curricula will be made of a mix of internal training for all staff, recommended external trainings (including in person and MOOC). At the same time we will encourage all staff to identify their needs in terms of research methodology in collaboration with their line manager to further develop their personal learning plans by considering their methodological needs.

To sum up, to respond to priority six we will:

1. **Assess IIED added value and theory of change by reviewing the evidence** gathered through the Learning and Impact Framework. We will conduct a review/comparative study of all outcomes gathered through the LIF to identify common trends on effective IIED ways of working. Also, the MEL team will facilitate an institute-wide TOC review process which will be informed by all the evidence gathered through the LIF and discussed with all staff during IIED staff retreat.
2. **Generate learning on the analysis and use of big data and on innovative methodologies** for research on sustainable development by:
 - a. Establishing a working group on big data that meets every quarter to share ideas and experiences on innovative methods and help to identify good practices across the Institute.
 - b. Developing a big data and innovative methods platform on share-point where IIED researchers can find and share information and experiences on the use of big data and innovative methods.
 - c. Organising of a series of dialogues with organisations which are active on both the big data and sustainable development spaces.
 - d. Hiring a MEL manager with geospatial skills in the MEL team.
3. **Further develop the research and MEL methodological capacity** development of IIED researchers and their partners by:
 - a. Developing of a plan to improve IIED skillset in research and MEL methods. This can include the development of curricula on qualitative data gathering and analysis; quantitative research/eval design, data gathering and analysis; gender and intersectionality assessment in sustainable development research and MEL.
 - b. Assessing IIED critical gaps in terms of capacity and consider new hiring across groups if needed

Annex: Action plans for each of the six priority areas

1. Mobilise frame and strategic funding

Proposed Actions	Responsibilities and actions for SMT members	Responsibilities and actions for Groups (including Comms, SLG and Operations)	Timelines	Options, comments
<p>1. Diversifying and increasing IIED income</p>	<p>Tom M./Tom B./Clare FY23: Sourcing new streams of funding from foundations, high-net worth individuals, and crowdfunding; initiate conversations with current funders of IIED work for increasing level of flexible funding.</p> <p>FY24: Increase proactive marketing activities with both long-term and new funders; Work with new IIED Europe business development director to explore and map work in OECD countries funded by the EC, EU countries and other OECD countries.</p>	<p>SLG FY23: Conduct research into funders; Develop narrative about what IIED has achieved during the current strategy; Develop propositions for change and new concepts related to major ambitions to be proposed to new funders.</p> <p>FY24: Develop proposals responding to conversations started with funders in FY23.</p>	<p>FY23, 24: These steps will take at least 18 months:</p> <p>By April 2023 to develop narrative on what IIED has achieved so far during the current strategy</p> <p>By May 2023 identify major ambitions for the new strategy and the linkages with current thematic work</p> <p>June - September 2023 develop at least ten major concepts related to the ambitions</p> <p>By September 2023 initiated conversations with multiple funders</p> <p>September 2023 – April 2024 Develop proposals responding to conversations initiated with funders</p>	<p>IIED aims to achieve both diversification and increase of funding to improve its financial stability. Thus, we'll need concrete actions addressing both objectives which are built on the current BD plan.</p> <p>The development of work in OECD countries is directly linked to the relationships with IIED Europe and therefore it is crucial to facilitate improvement of capacities of IIED Europe.</p>

<p>2. Improving IIED efficiency and profitability</p>	<p>COO and Head of Finance lead FY23: increase transparency of IIED annual funding, improving clarity about the viability of our current business model, increase unrestricted and flexible funds; and identify creative solutions to better manage organisational growth.</p> <p>FY24: Confirm plan to revise IIED's business model and maximise synergies with new Strategy. Review and revise financial model for collaboration with key partners, to support delivery of shared work programmes.</p>	<p>FY23: Develop guidance on IIED funding model considering what IIED business model should look like to be viable, whilst better support its partners.</p> <p>FY24: Implement changes to IIED costing model to diminish the burden of fundraising from individual researchers.</p>	<p>FY23, 24: These steps will take at least 18 months.</p>	<p>Some issues to be considered:</p> <p>Possible changes to the 180-day model to reduce internal transactional costs.</p> <p>Strike the right balance between short term and long-term funding.</p> <p>Think out of the box to improve the current costing model and increase IIED profitability.</p>
<p>3. Advocating for long-term flexible funding</p>	<p>TOM M./TOM B./ CLARE LEAD FY23: Identify new possible frame funders and initiate conversations about IIED offer – to include government agencies and philanthropies.</p> <p>Establish funder table to bring together institutional funders and engage them actively in planning and collaboration.</p> <p>FY24: Seek to confirm major new grants from diverse funders. Put in place arrangements for funder table and</p>	<p>FY23: Develop narrative about what IIED has achieved during the current strategy; Initiate conversation about the new strategy and frame funding agreements by identifying major ambitions and delivery models for the new strategy; align proposals and asks to funders' priorities to ensure better success rate, based on funder research and building relations with funders.</p> <p>FY24: Develop suite of products alongside new strategy, which elaborate strong narratives on</p>	<p>FY23, 24: These steps will take at least 18 months:</p> <p>December 22 onwards: identify new possible institutional funders.</p> <p>By April 2023: develop narrative on what IIED has achieved so far during the current strategy</p>	<p>Further develop the decolonisation agenda by considering what IIED business model should look like in light of our partners' needs.</p>

demonstrate its value to participants.	IIED's ambitions and evidence of impact at scale.	<p>By May 2023: identify major ambitions for the new strategy and the linkages with current thematic work</p> <p>By June 2023: develop strategy refresh and discuss new strategy with current and new frame funders at the next donor dialogue</p> <p>September 2023 – April 2024 Develop new IIED strategy 2024 onwards</p> <p>Launch new strategy</p>
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2. Nurture IIED people

Proposed Actions	Responsibilities and actions for SMT members	Responsibilities and actions for Groups (including Comms, SLG and Operations)	Timelines	Options, comments
Looking inwards: Establish the DEI working group to take the identified actions (see people strategy DEI workstream) forward	COO (with new Head of People) Lead the DEI working group and implement DEI workstream as outlined in People Strategy, working closely with SMT.	<p>Initiatives to be rolled out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of People Policies - Safe Spaces - DEI commitment statement - DEI Induction - DEI related workshops and learning initiatives - DEI calendar and celebrations of individual differences <p>The group will be looking at how decolonialisation can be brought into the organisation, by stripping down white British power, and bringing more diverse people into</p>		This supports the ambition of the gender equality, anti-racist and anti-discrimination policies, as well as creating an inclusive and accessible IIED
Ensure relevant skills and experience are increased for IIED staff in				

key positions (including in the People Team).		<p>the organisation from the global south; Work that is carried out in or for the benefit of the global south, should be conducted and managed by people from the global south.</p> <p>- Implement the PDR process including the requirement for everyone at IIED to have a peer review and to demonstrate our DEI values.</p> <p>Implement the proposed changes from the Recruitment and Selection working group, focused on inclusion and accessibility practices.</p>	
Looking inward: Staff Engagement and Wellbeing	<p>COO and Head of People to continue to conduct Wellbeing pulse surveys and lead the Wellbeing Champions to engage groups in best practices around factors that impact on wellbeing</p> <p>Staff engagement survey to be rolled out, analysed and actions to be developed to address any issues that surface</p>	Groups to actively participate in staff surveys and commit to developing actions and implementing them	
Looking outwards: recruit to support research work and proposals	<p>SMT – COO, RST and others</p> <p>Recruit a full-time expert on gender and intersectionality who can work across research groups to support building these elements into project proposals and</p>	<p>GECN/Internal comms</p> <p>Aim to have a person in place by April 2023</p> <p>Aim to have at least two exemplary projects funded by Q3 latest (joining up w Gender Justice Venture Fund initiative)</p> <p>GECN to share good practice internally and work into bespoke training sessions for relevant staff</p>	<p>GECN has identified this need in its 2021 assessment of research ambition and from surveys, that confidence around these topics needs to be built</p>

	ensuring their implementation - stronger proposals - on the job learning and confidence building	
Looking inwards: Develop and roll out aspiring leaders programme / new managers programme	People Team to engage external specialist to deliver management programme and follow up activities for those who have previously attended the leadership programme	Group Directors to hold people accountable and set standards for good people management practices, and managers responsibility to nurture their teams and staff
Devise institutional KPIs that include aspects of staff wellbeing, diversity, and inclusive hiring practices and also related to advancing gender justice, intersectionality etc. so they aren't just all output driven.	SMT – TM and all People Team Agree how this KPI will manifest itself in operations of IIED and our research	Agree and provide People KPIs Business development GECN RST Comms COO Leading on practical implementation of strategies to achieve this KPI
Include gender identity and sexual orientation in all relevant language concerning ethics, safeguarding and non-discrimination.	SMT - TB	RST – Comms – GECN To make sure that sexual orientation and gender identity are listed in research ethics policy and training in research methodologies etc To make sure that any IIED brand refresh takes account of a more inclusive approach and associated language, images etc

Support adoption of a justice approach to DEI	SMT – TM and all	<p>COO – use this approach to inform IIED operations</p> <p>RST – use this approach to inform research strategy</p> <p>Comms – use this approach to inform comms and events (eg revisit policy on all-male panels and incorporate a broader lens of inclusivity eg race and geographic location, sexuality)</p> <p>GEEN – help to devise and roll out training to support this approach for both operational, comms and research staff</p> <p>RRWG</p>
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3. Decolonise IIED with sophistication

Proposed Actions	Responsibilities and actions for SMT members	Responsibilities and actions for Groups (including Comms, SLG and Operations)	Timelines	Options, comments
Internal: 1. Staff mindsets, skills & capabilities: Staff learning on decolonisation and being an anti-racist organisation IIED systems & behaviours, building on recommendations from decolonisation study and race and racism DEI audit.	Intersectionality lead - responsible for staff learning on decolonisation, and race and racism working with the race and racism working group. COO supporting people team to advance and support a learning agenda where needed and to support implementation the recommendations of the race and racism DEI audit.	Race & Racism Working Group & RST: Food for Thought Series with IIED partners and experts on Decolonising IIED research programmes R&R SMT/RRWG training/ RRWG-continue training and learning circles to all staff on areas including decolonisation, positionality, fragility and saviourism	September-March 2022, and sessions proposed for FY23 FY23 FY23 - FY24	This will be a process that is continuous beyond FY 2023 as it involved cultural change and reflection of IIED values in decolonisation ways of working and addressing race and racism
Developing an inequality strategy that addresses both internal diversity equity and inclusion issues and external	IIED executive director and head of people team to support the values and culture refresh process so that IIED values and cultures are aligned to anti-racism and decoloniality behaviours and	Implementation of the DEI audit recommendations and ensuring leadership is accountable to commitments to IIED being anti-racist organisation (RRWG, People Team, COO)	FY23	The culture and values refresh is key and will inform the new strategy on what IIED stands for and wants to influence internally and in

issues of racial and gender justice and decolonisation	support long term changes in how IIED operates ED and Intersectionality lead to support development of the inequality strategy to provide strategic guidance to how IIED will approach racial and gender justice as well as decolonisation	Safe spaces being established to allow staff to share concerns on race and racism and all forms of micro-aggression (People Team, RRWG and GECN) All groups engage in framing for the strategy and how it links to their research priorities People team lead discussions on diversity, equity and inclusion and the strategy for addressing this across the people strategy and other areas All staff engagement in the internal facing part of the strategy to ensure its inclusive	FY23	the wider sector. The inequality strategy is needed to guide IIED internal and external approaches and will feed into the new strategy discussions and approaches
2. Achieve diversity in IIED's leadership, staff composition and location.	SMT to refine and approve the distributed workforce policy in ways that are equitable and benefit IIED's position in the sector COO support to people team to review people policies to support inclusive recruitment, retention, promotion and pay and ensure that leadership is diverse recognising different backgrounds, expertise and lived experiences	Distributed workforce strategy refined and implemented (People Team) Review of people policies (led by people team with support from other groups)	FY 23 and FY24	Achieving diverse staff composition and leadership will be guided by systemic change to policies and practice than targeting individual roles in an adhoc manner The distributed workforce needs to be reviewed from an institutional cost benefit analysis of decolonising our work and linkage to the

				strategy of IIED's place in the world
3. Decolonise IIED research methods and approaches guided by the research ethics policy	<p>RST chair to guide implementation of the revised research ethics policy (2022) from a decolonial perspective and identify innovative approaches to demonstrate how this can be done across groups</p> <p>Directors of NRG and Comms use their influence to share and operationalise lessons from the GETs to inform research approaches and with partners</p>	<p>CCG, RRWG implement the decolonisation study recommendations and link to ILE Partnerships (see below). Consider if additional study or analysis needed for institute wide decolonisation efforts.</p> <p>Biocultural Heritage GET (NRG) will enhance understanding of BCH & decolonial methods (externally & internally) and provide lessons across the institution</p> <p>The GET on narratives of change, building on the anti-racist narrative analysis will strengthen lessons on anti-racist approaches to communication of research. (Comms, RRWG)</p> <p>Implementation of the revised co-authorship guidelines and research ethics policy will support recognition our partner's epistemologies and Co-authorship with IIED partners</p>	FY23 FY23-FY24	This work will require engagement with partners, collaboration and cocreation of decolonial research methodologies and approaches that recognise epistemologies from the global South and from intersectional groups that IIED works with

(comms, RST,
research groups)

4. Influencing global aid system working with LDCs/SIDS on their approaches	Director strategic engagement supporting processes of decolonising funding mechanisms and promote locally led approaches	Work with and for LDCs and SIDs, advancing their voice and positions on global stage, including through such programmes as: LDC leadership & climate diplomacy, LIFE-AR, (CCG) LDC & SIDS leadership on climate and development agenda (CCG, other research groups as relevant)	FY23-FY24	These approaches will support the most vulnerable countries, leveraging agile support and using locally led principles for effective delivery of finance
5. Shifting power through ethical and equitable partnerships	SMT supporting processes of shifting power with partners especially in the global south through respective groups and units' engagements	LLA in different spaces (CCG) IPLC-led nature finance work (NRG) Partnerships ILE (CCG & all research groups), review internal operations of IIED to identify changes to how IIED is managing and engaging with partners, and influence changes	FY23- FY24	This work will be exploring how to decolonise IIED partnerships with IIED staff and partners, including systems and contracts

COO support review of IIED policies to support decolonial and ant-racist approaches

internally. Externally the ILE will learn from, assess IIED's positionality through conducting the power analysis exercise from a racial, decolonial and gender framing. The ILE will also use findings to influence peers, intermediaries and donors on shifting power through codesigned normative standards and principles of equitable partnership approaches.

LLA Good Partnerships work is also working to influence LLA partners (providers, intermediaries, recipient & grassroots round tables) (CCG & NRG)

IIED systems & contracts analysis exercise started by the race and racism working group will contribute to the above processes and ensure internal review of policies, guidelines and contracts to support equity and fairness for IIED partners (RRWG)

4. Strengthen coherence and mainstreaming for big thinking

Proposed Actions	Responsibilities and actions for SMT members	Responsibilities and actions for Groups (including Comms, SLG and Operations)	Timelines	Options, comments
Design transformative ways of working and a more coherent vision for change as part of the upcoming Strategy	Tom M / Clare/Aditya The development of the next strategy will be designed to be a transformative process for IIED. It could involve a major restructure of IIED's operations, groups, research agenda, finance, and more. The leadership of this process will be provided by the Executive Director, with support from Clare Shakya, RST, and coordination support from SLG	All Groups The upcoming Strategy process will enable all groups and staff to feed into this big thinking	FY23-FY24, culminating April 2024 with the next strategy in place	
Undergo a series of facilitated sessions with staff from across IIED and partners to define and determine new strategies for research and impact	Tom M/Aditya/Tom B/SLG/Comms There will be multiple institute-wide facilitated brainstorming/co-creating sessions to develop the next strategy and ways of working. These include: Strategy Week: This will enable IIED staff to begin honing and refining major challenges and the path toward the next research strategy for the institute	All Research Groups Groups to participate in each session and will be expected to contribute ideas, learnings and collaborate on major challenges	Q4 FY23 Q1 FY24 Q2/Q3 FY24	

Open Space: The opportunity to refine and develop the strategy across IIED and to take major decisions collaboratively about the future of the institute

Further sessions with Partners to be planned for later in FY24 to enable external stakeholders to co-create the strategy as partners

RST to conduct a consultative Horizon scan and futures assessment, which will inform big challenges that IIED will focus on	Aditya/RST	All Groups	
	RST to lead on a horizon scan and futures assessment of IIED's change agenda, making a proposal at Open Space (Q1 FY24) for what should be IIED's change intent should be	Interviewees selected by RST to input into initial thinking of big challenges for the next research strategy	Q4 FY23
		Simultaneous all staff survey to inform the analysis of these findings and take the pulse of IIED staff re: major global challenges and solutions IIED should look to contribute to	Q4 FY23
		Groups to participate in Strategy Week and Open Space and co-create research agenda stemming from this assessment	Q4 FY23-Q2 FY24
		From there, there will be a deliberate period of co-creation (alongside new and old partners) of the next strategy, focussing on a	Q3-Q4 FY24

small number of globally relevant major shared challenges

Other actions related to restructuring Finance model, income levers to support integration and coherence across the institute	Finance/COO/Tom M Changes are currently in development to adjust IIED's finance model, drive for unrestricted funding, and optimise efficiency (see Priority 1). These shifts, particularly to days/research funding, will be designed to enable collaboration and cohesiveness across Groups	All Groups IIED staff to input to the design of these changes and to adapt to new funding models as and when they are implemented	FY24
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5. Forge a progressive ecosystem of partners and relationships

Proposed Actions	Responsibilities and actions for SMT members	Responsibilities and actions for Groups (including Comms, SLG and Operations)	Timelines	Options, comments
Utilise the strategy development process as an opportunity to fundamentally shift our approach to our network of partners, and to develop an ecosystem of transformative change	Tom M/Clare Identify organisations, stakeholders and partners with whom our strategy development should collaborate Forge new relationships with both funders and partners with emphasis on	All Groups All IIED staff and groups to build out networks and identify areas for collaboration and synergy with and between partners. This will be made possible through conversations throughout the strategy	FY24	

	“unusual suspects”	development process.	
Undergo a review of IIED’s Theory of Change	Tom B (with Stefano/MEL team) MEL team to lead a review of IIED’s TOC through participatory processes with staff and partners. This review will involve partners, input from the stakeholder survey, and test assumptions about our impacts and relationships both externally and internally	All Groups/Working Groups All relevant stakeholders to participate where needed in this review, particularly owners of nested theories of change.	Q1 FY24
New and re-purposed Stakeholder Survey to take the pulse of our partners and networks	Tom B / James P: Comms/MEL team Comms and MEL team will conduct the stakeholder survey again this year, after a one year pause. This will enable us to reinvigorate our contact with our stakeholders,	All Groups Group Managers/Project Managers GM’s/PM’s to support the survey by ensuring that all stakeholders are input to CRM, and helping to develop lists of key stakeholders.	Q1 FY24 Q2-Q4 FY24

take the pulse of our partners, and capture key data around engagement and networks.

This will involve attending training.

This year, the survey will also include targeted questions around the strategy development process, and will help us identify collaborators who can help us in Q2-Q4 FY24 in developing the strategy

6: MEL and Lead on futures thinking and design

Proposed Actions	Responsibilities and actions for SMT members	Responsibilities and actions for Groups (including Comms, SLG and Operations)	Timelines	Options, comments
Assess IIED added value and theory of change by reviewing the evidence gathered through the Learning and Impact Framework	Tom M./Tom B Oversee the LIF review processes undertaken by the MEL team and facilitate the uptake of findings emerging from that analysis into the development of the new strategy	MEL team to lead on the review/comparative study of all outcomes gathered through the LIF to identify common trends on effective IIED ways of working MEL team to facilitate an institute-wide TOC review process which is informed by all the evidence gathered through the LIF and discussed with all	FY23/FY24: The evidence review/comparative study of outcomes will take about 8 months while the review of the Institutional Theory of Change will be a key part of the new strategy development process and it will be run in different phases, which will build on the evidence gathered through the LIF. It	

		staff during open space.	will build on the evidence gathered through the LIF and it will be discussed at different points with all staff during key engagement moments like Open Space. IIED TOC will be subsequently discussed with key partners during in quarter 2, 3 and 4 of FY24.
Generate learning on the analysis and use of big data and on innovative methodologies for research on sustainable development.	<p>Tom B./Tom M./Clare S.</p> <p>Oversee the establishment of an internal platform for sharing learning on big data and innovative methods</p> <p>Identify new partners to explore how big data and new technologies can be used to address the what will work question</p>	<p>MEL Team/RST</p> <p>Establishment of a working group on big data that meets every quarter to share ideas and experiences on innovative methods and help to identify good practices across the Institute.</p> <p>Development of big data and innovative methods platform on share-point where IIED researchers can find and share information and experiences on the use of big data and innovative methods.</p> <p>Organisation of a series of dialogues with organisations which are active on both the big data and sustainable development spaces which could culminate in a</p>	<p>FY23/24: the working group on big data has already met a couple of times and we anticipate it will meet at least another time before the end of FY23. In FY24, the group will meet towards the end of every quarter to identify and share experiences.</p> <p>The intranet platform will be established during FY23, while it will be officially launched in the first quarter of FY24.</p> <p>Connection with key actors working on innovative methods for MEL and research will be established in FY23, while the organisation of a</p>

		<p>roundtable with funders and key actors working with new technologies.</p> <p>New hire of MEL manager with geospatial skills in the MEL team.</p>	<p>more formal roundtable will be explored in FY24.</p> <p>The new MEL manager with geospatial skills will be in post between December 2022 and March 2024.</p>
<p>Research and MEL capacity development for IIED researchers and partners</p>	<p>Tom B./Tom M.</p> <p>Oversee the development of a plan created by RST and the MEL team for enhancing capacity development of researchers and partners</p>	<p>RST/MEL Team</p> <p>RST to lead on the development of a plan to improve IIED skillset in research and MEL methods. This can include the development of curricula on: qualitative data gathering and analysis; quantitative research/eval design, data gathering and analysis; gender and intersectionality assessment in sustainable development research and MEL.</p> <p>Assessment of IIED critical gaps in terms of capacity and consider new hiring across groups if needed.</p>	<p>FY23/24: these actions will take place in both FY23 and FY24.</p>