

Opportunities and Challenges for Contributing to Sustainable, Inclusive, and Resilient Infrastructure in South America

Workshop Summary on the IDB South Connection Program

IDB Headquarters, Brasilia | July 1, 2026 | Hybrid format

On July 1, 2026, a workshop was held at the headquarters of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Brasilia, organized by the Bank Information Center (BIC), Conectas Direitos Humanos, and the Working Group on Infrastructure and Socio-environmental Justice (GT Infra), with the participation of IDB representatives, Indigenous Peoples¹ and Afro-descendant community organizations, civil society, and academic and research institutions from South America. The workshop —facilitated by Carolina Juaneda, with simultaneous interpretation from Spanish to Portuguese— aimed to open a space for frank, technically grounded dialogue on the [IDB South Connection Program](#) (PCS). Its purpose was to identify opportunities and challenges to support infrastructure strategies that contribute to regional integration with environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and climate resilience, taking into account lessons from previous initiatives, and to build a roadmap for ongoing civil society participation in the PCS. The event agenda can be found [here](#).

This workshop was conceived as a continuation of a series of meetings, dialogues, and conversations that BIC, GT Infra, CAUCE, and other member organizations of the Grupo de Trabajo sobre BID, or IDB Working Group¹ have held with the IDB since 2024, specifically with Renata Vargas Amaral, PCS Coordinator; Morgan Doyle, IDB General Manager for the Southern Cone; Tatiana Schor, in her former role as Head of the Amazonia Forever Program and now as Head of the IDB Civil Society Group; and other IDB staff. Many of the concerns and recommendations put forward by the Working Group had already been reflected in a [letter](#) sent to the IDB Board of Executive Directors in September 2025, and a [document](#) sent to the IDB in February 2026, which were also discussed at the IDB Annual Meeting in Paraguay in March of this year.

How to read this document

This document follows the structure of the workshop agenda. For each session, a summary of the presentations is given first, followed by a synthesis of the discussions and interventions from that section.

At the end of the document is a table of commitments and actions for following up on the commitments and next steps that emerged from the workshop.

At the close of the document you will also find links to the event agenda, the PowerPoint presentations, photographs, the list of participants, and the workshop recording.

Opening and Context-Setting

¹ The Grupo de Trabajo sobre BID, or IDB Working Group, is a group of international, regional, and Latin American organizations that advocate with the IDB Group to improve stakeholder participation, social and environmental standards, transparency, and accountability in the investments the IDB makes.

The South Connection Program: what is it?

The Chief of Staff to the President of the IDB Group, André Soares, and the IDB Representative in Brazil, Annette Killmer, gave the opening remarks. Both emphasized the importance of the program for the IDB presidency and the relevance of civil society participation in its development. Soares noted that South Connection aims to improve connectivity and trade among South American countries. He highlighted that at the IDB's annual meetings in Paraguay this year, the IDB sought to strengthen its ties with civil society and that an IDB Group-wide Action Plan is being developed to systematize its participation. He noted that the IDB is seeking to improve social and environmental standards and project quality. Vargas Amaral (IDB), in her role as coordinator, presented the PCS, emphasizing that South Connection is defined by the Bank as a **multidimensional connectivity program** —not one of regional integration or infrastructure per se— structured around three pillars: (i) physical and digital connectivity, (ii) logistics and trade facilitation, and (iii) regulatory frameworks and institutional strengthening. Social and environmental sustainability is a cross-cutting theme.

The PCS arose from a request by eleven IDB governors and South American governments (March 2025). Its implementation began in September 2025. The program "Rutas de Integración Sudamericana" (South American Integration Routes), proposed by Brazil in 2023 and initially discussed with neighboring governments in 2024, was mentioned as an input and a relevant, though not determining, factor in shaping the program. It was stated that projects falling under the PCS will not be defined based on a fixed logic of routes or corridors: the **Capricorn Bioceanic Corridor** is the only case with a defined route to date, set in 2015; the rest of the projects that become part of the program's portfolio will depend on government demand.

- The IDB explicitly clarified during the opening session that the **PCS is a living program**: it can be used as a driver of good practices and services. In its implementation, the IDB will assess project viability based on social, environmental, and economic criteria —not just technical-financial ones.
- It was emphasized that projects arising from South Connection will need to comply with the IDB's [Environmental and Social Policy Framework](#) (ESPF) and demonstrate their [alignment](#) with the Paris Agreement.
- The [South American Infrastructure Observatory](#) was mentioned, as a platform created out of the [Brasilia Consensus](#) and at Brazil's request, funded by governments. It was developed jointly by the IDB, [CAF](#) and [FONPLATA](#) within the framework of the Alliance for the Integration and Development of Latin America and the Caribbean ([ILAT](#)). The Observatory draws on data submitted by countries and seeks to provide an integrated view of connectivity networks in South America, as well as to support the identification of strategic project portfolios for regional integration. The platform brings together information on transportation, energy, and connectivity infrastructure, and is intended to serve as a tool for governments, institutions, and civil society interested in the regional integration agenda.

Reactions and additional context provided by the IDB

- At the IDB Group level, American University was engaged to draft an IDB/Civil Society Engagement Action Plan, built on a study and comments gathered at a workshop with civil society in Paraguay, which will soon be put out for public consultation.
- As part of South Connection, the first public version of a "*Stakeholder Engagement Plan*" (SEP) specifically for the program will soon be published. Both documents will need to align and be consistent with each other, but it is important to move forward with a clear sense of how stakeholder engagement will work specifically within South Connection.
- The need was highlighted for the Bank to create and maintain effective channels of dialogue with civil society in the design and implementation of South Connection, recalling that two documents

on the program were sent to the Bank by the Grupo de Trabajo sobre BID, or IDB Working Group — a [letter](#) sent to the Board of Executive Directors in September 2025, and a [document](#) — a more extensive analytical document sent to the Board of Executive Directors and the program's coordination team in February 2026— neither of which received a written response.

- Plans call for the creation of an Advisory Panel for the IDB Group (which would include or bring together civil society, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, the private sector, and academia), as well as thematic working groups. The idea is for this Bank-level Advisory Panel to be able to form working groups around the topics that need to be addressed and, from there, follow up on South Connection issues. It has yet to be determined whether and how this will happen. Workshop participants insisted that this should be a topic for discussion in the public consultation on the PCS Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
- For the Capricorn Bioceanic Corridor (CBC), a Strategic Environmental, Social, and Climate Assessment (SESCA) will be carried out; the IDB provides advisory services and has acted as executive secretary for the subnational entities of the eight territories involved. The governance structure includes eight operational working committees: Trade and Border Procedures; Health and Sustainability; Citizen and Indigenous Peoples' Participation; Security; Public Works, Transportation, and Logistics; and Municipalities, Tourism, and Culture. Four additional committees are also planned (Infrastructure, Logistics, and Energy; and Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant and Traditional Communities, and Civil Society and Women's Organizations) as part of a SESCO stakeholder engagement plan, which will soon be available for public consultation.
- The SESCO will include analysis of cumulative impacts along the corridor, the dynamics of agricultural and mining expansion, carbon emissions scenarios, a public geospatial platform, and coordination with the health and sustainability committee. The terms of reference were shared with civil society organizations of the IDB Working Group so they could make recommendations and offer suggestions. Comments have already been received, and the process of opening the call for consulting services is underway. Members of the IDB Working Group emphasized the importance of receiving a response from the Bank to the [comments](#) submitted by its members.
- In light of some of the uncertainties around PCS governance mentioned above, organizations representing Amazonian peoples noted that they preferred to assert their claims proactively as a more secure mechanism for defending their rights. The Bank acknowledged that tension persists around the timing and spaces available for channeling these concerns. It was noted that it is important, and indeed urgent, to begin these discussions promptly.

Recurring themes in this section

- ◆ **PCS governance and early participation:** The IDB previewed the PCS Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and the Advisory Panel (it remains to be determined whether this will be a program-level Advisory Panel or a Group-level one with distinct working groups). The open question from participants present is whether these mechanisms will ensure that participation is genuine and occurs before projects are defined, rather than amounting to consultation on decisions that have already been made.
- ◆ **Transparency and access to information before project approval:** The idea emerged of working with the IDB to create criteria for project selection and to apply these criteria before decisions are made. This also relates to the question of whether the PCS will help improve upstream planning tools and decision-making processes in the pre-project phase, which is decisive for defining priority project portfolios.

Session 1 — Lessons on the Role of Public Development Banks in Transportation Infrastructure

Presentations by Roberto Espinoza (BIC) and Denisse Linares (DAR), followed by a plenary discussion with participants from various organizations.

| Evaluation of IIRSA/COSIPLAN: what must not be repeated

- The Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) (2000–2008) and the [South American Council for Infrastructure and Planning \(COSIPLAN\)](#) (2011–2018) lacked indicators for assessing risks, asymmetries, and benefits; mechanisms for civil society participation; and analysis of Indigenous Peoples, biodiversity, or the Amazon. The [evaluation by the IDB's Office of Evaluation and Oversight \(OVE\)](#) concluded that infrastructure alone is not enough to promote territorial development and regional integration. It was necessary to think "beyond the works themselves" — extending integration to logistics, customs, regulations, and governance. Corridor-based approaches must incorporate, from the design stage, dimensions such as territorial development, access to services, governance, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability in order to achieve their development objectives.
- **What must be avoided:** technocratic designs without dialogue among different forms of knowledge; the absence of robust analysis of socio-environmental risks, including cumulative impacts, of transportation corridors and better alternatives, and of strategies for strengthening territorial governance —including measures to guarantee territories and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and other traditional populations— amid a climate of extractive criminal activity; the expansion of land speculation, the seizure of public lands, colonization, and deforestation; and negligence toward corruption during and after projects. Large-scale works generated illegal economies (logging, mining) in the regions where roads were built. In Brazil, the CAR (Rural Environmental Registry) was used to seize public lands rather than to fulfill its intended role of conserving and restoring protected areas within titled private properties.
- Environmental management tools, such as strategic impact assessments and environmental impact assessments used during IIRSA, proved unreliable: anticipating impacts does not by itself generate a positive outcome; it is essential to actually implement mitigation measures. Transportation planning cannot be the exclusive responsibility of the transportation sector; it must be multisectoral (Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, civil society) and interinstitutional (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Transportation).
- Cumulative and synergistic impacts —and indirect effects, such as land speculation following the announcement of a project— were systematically ignored during IIRSA's implementation. Indirect impacts and the financing of environmental programs must be taken into account and funded in order to safeguard the Amazon and local development.
- **Corridor ≠ road:** planning for Amazonian infrastructure must adopt a multimodal perspective that includes river, air, and rail connections, choosing roads only as a last resort given their greater territorial impact. The most efficient modes and means should determine the design, not conventional construction logic. History shows the need to strengthen integrity criteria: technical instruments do not always align with the cultural realities of territories and peoples, and consultation processes tend to present only the positive aspects of projects.
- Robust protocols and mechanisms are essential to protect environmental and climate defenders, who face specific risks in the context of large infrastructure projects. This point was raised repeatedly throughout the workshop.

| Voices and demands from participants

GT Infra: *It is important to remember the precedents set by IIRSA, for example, the Polonoroeste project in Mato Grosso/Rondônia (the BR-364 highway between Cuiabá and Porto Velho, financed by the World Bank in the 1980s) and the PMACI project (IDB-financed, BR-364 Porto Velho–Rio Branco, in the second half of the 1980s) — these are memories that must not be forgotten. Large-scale works act as drivers of economic activity, but the importance of territorial governance was not effectively taken into account, such as preventing and controlling the illegal seizure of public lands and illegal deforestation associated with major projects. In the case of PMACI, the rubber tappers' movement led by Chico Mendes secured a commitment to recognize territorial rights through the creation of Extractive Reserves, which, together with measures to protect Indigenous territories and populations, was considered a socio-environmental protection condition for the paving of the BR-364 highway between Porto Velho and Rio Branco. This only happened after rubber tappers' movements and Indigenous Peoples protested against the IDB's financing of the project and the absence of fundamental safeguards. Local territorial governance is a fundamental variable to consider in project design, and territorial security must be guaranteed before construction begins. These projects can bring about illegal land seizure and other impacts that project planners tend to underestimate.*

Instituto Madeira Vivo - IMV: *Construction is underway on a binational Brazil-Bolivia bridge connecting to the Northern Corridor (dating back to the IIRSA era): Rio Branco, Cobija, Riberalta, Yacombo, Rurrenabaque, and La Paz. Our peoples need to be heard, because so far it is government representatives and politicians who have taken part in these decisions. This corridor promotes monoculture (soy already occupies the Bolivian side), amid the expansion of soy cultivation and its side effects, including poisoning, which is already occurring. In three years, Porto Velho became the largest soy producer in Rondônia, and our waters are being poisoned. Climate factors need to be considered in project design, and they are already visible in this case. There was no analysis of synergistic impacts. Only governments have been consulted, not civil society. Please learn the lessons from this case — all the mistakes that were made here need to be taken into account.*

FENAMAD/AIDSESP (Peru): *For Indigenous Peoples, logistics connectivity has meant the invasion of our territory. Our peoples suffered greatly during IIRSA. Under this PCS, the protection of Indigenous territories must be guaranteed. There are peoples who have been waiting for their land titles for more than 40 years. Effective, quality participation is needed at every stage of the project cycle. The rights and safeguards of peoples in voluntary isolation must be fully protected. Infrastructure investments must be compatible with the productive projects of communities and Indigenous Peoples. In Madre de Dios, for example, we are waiting for investments in agriculture that have not been taken into account.*

WWF (Colombia): *I would like to know what actions or measures the IDB is taking to apply corrective measures or implement the lessons from the recently presented OVE report. I call for biodiversity to be placed at the center of the debate and at the center of planning. We put humans at the center, yet science has already shown these systemic relationships that exist with biodiversity, though they end up being treated as secondary in planning. I recommend that biodiversity be treated as part of the solution and that technical instruments elevate the importance of ecosystem services and biodiversity in planning processes.*

Fundación Tierra (Bolivia): *Environmental and social management tools that do not exist at the Indigenous territorial level fail to match the needs and cultural realities of these peoples. There is a power asymmetry in the drafting of technical documents, and as a result these instruments ultimately fail to reflect reality — for example, indirect impacts generated by projects are generally left aside. Consultation in this type of project is neither genuine nor continuous; it only takes place in the initial stages and disappears during the execution stage, and only the positive aspects are presented. Consultation should be a continuous process throughout the entire project cycle, not a one-time formality required for project approval.*

CONAQ (Brazil, Mato Grosso): *Quilombola communities live in collective territories but in a context of severe legal and territorial insecurity. The lack of land titling for quilombola communities (90 percent untitled) directly hinders their ability to participate effectively. Infrastructure projects can deepen the vulnerabilities of communities that are already highly vulnerable. We are always brought in too late, to discuss impacts rather than planning. The absence of effective participation spaces must be taken seriously in order to prevent violence against our communities — we have already experienced this with Ferrogrão. How can we build participation tools that account for our specific situation as a collective? Our participation comes at a cost, and sometimes it costs lives. It is not enough to appear in project documents; we must be participants in project design. I ask that a concrete commitment be made to create the conditions to guarantee our participation.*

AAS (Colombia): *This is the third regional connectivity agenda supported by the IDB (IIRSA, COSIPLAN, and now South Connection). We must revisit historical memory. It is important to recall the significance of the principles of*

prevention and precaution (which are enshrined in our regulatory frameworks), as well as to consider climate impacts and Advisory Opinion No. 32 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) on states' climate obligations. It reflects the habitability of communities in infrastructure planning processes. The Escazú Agreement is fundamental (19 Latin American states have already ratified it). Protection of rights and protection of investment (preventing corruption).

COIAB (Brazil): We have learned a great deal from IIRSA, and the Amazon is at a point of no return. So I have two concrete proposals: a) We must deconstruct the idea that integration must always be commercial; b) A just energy transition must be a central focus. These are two essential issues for Indigenous Peoples, and for giving meaning to and contributing to South Connection.

Transparencia Internacional (Brazil): Highlighting the importance of lessons learned from corruption cases linked to IIRSA projects How can we strengthen the program against corruption through social participation? Given that the project is recent, how can we participatorily build transparency criteria and mechanisms that also foster social participation? It is important to emphasize that social participation and procurement processes are key. Another option is to develop transparency criteria built collectively and participatorily to strengthen social oversight and participation.

WCS (Peru): With South Connection, it is important to focus on the territorial issue, raise standards, analyze synergistic and cumulative impacts, and guarantee territorial security. Strategic Environmental Assessments are extremely difficult to implement; strategic environmental assessment must be comprehensive and incorporated from the outset. The precautionary principle is fundamental to this process. Focus on the precautionary principle. For IIRSA, a program was designed and funded to strengthen monitoring of Indigenous identity, among other areas. It was a funded program that ended badly due to the enormous corruption of the government in power at the time. For the ESIA, a report was produced outlining a path for what should be done in the territory, demystifying the dominant justification for the Project.

Napo FOIN (Ecuador): In Ecuador, a national park was going to be divided by a 200-km road that was part of IIRSA, but it was not implemented as part of the project. Community participation is essential. A monitoring and oversight committee is needed so that communities can share information about impacts on their territories. We need technical instruments to have cultural relevance so that they can actually see us, the peoples.

Ministerio de Ambiente, Corazón de la Amazonía (Colombia): Highlighting the significance of Strategic Impact Assessments, which are not the same as EIAs. They are part of the information inputs — abiotic, biotic, historical, cultural, etc. — used to make decisions in the territory in a way that is consistent with the characteristics of the territories. We must emphasize that a corridor is not synonymous with a road. Analyzing a project in terms of a corridor allows us to start with a blank slate and think about more cost-efficient modes and means. River transport is more efficient than rail, and rail is more efficient than road. In terms of impacts, the mode chosen must be consistent with the characteristics of the territory. When we talk about a corridor, we can think about a low-altitude economy — transport infrastructure can be moved using drones and automation. In Colombia, heavy and light drone cargo has been approved and will soon be operational. For example, light cargo could move medicines to places roads cannot reach and where other means are more expensive. This is where the emphasis on satellite and communications connectivity comes in, which will become as prominent as physical infrastructure.

BIC (International): Civil society must have access to the final products or concrete outputs of the Technical Cooperations that the IDB finances under South Connection. Terms of reference are published, but never the documents resulting from the consultancies. It would be good for the IDB to publish the final document produced by the SESCA consultancy, as well as the other final products of Technical Cooperation projects being financed under South Connection.

IDB response to the session on the role of public development banks and lessons learned

Renata Vargas Amaral (South Connection): I would like to learn more about the binational bridge project mentioned, connecting Brazil and Bolivia, and understand what lessons can be drawn from that case. The IDB has revised numerous internal policies since OVE's evaluation of IIRSA. Several projects have since been rejected for failing to meet socio-environmental requirements. With South Connection, we want to do things differently. Carolina reached out to me from the very start of the program, and we have always explained and clarified that South Connection is not a replica of the Brazilian government's "Rotas de Integração Sul-Americana" program. They are distinct, though related, programs. South Connection went further by incorporating 11 member countries. From the outset we have sought to co-create this program, first in dialogue with the governments that are our clients and shareholders, and now by opening a new avenue of conversation and dialogue with you. We

are seeking to do things differently. I understand there is a moment of openness at the IDB that values the knowledge of those who live in these territories. For example, the IDB is developing an IDB-Civil Society Engagement Action Plan, and we will also soon publish a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). Tatiana of the IDB Civil Society Group is also considering developing an Advisory Panel at the Bank Group level. It is not yet known exactly what this will involve, but there will be concrete opportunities for dialogue. I urge everyone to seize this moment of openness to create these strategic spaces and do things differently.

Zachary (IDB, Environmental and Social Solutions Division): I want to acknowledge that we have several colleagues from the Division joining us here. The Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF), approved in 2020, significantly expands the Bank's operational policies compared to the era of IIRSA project implementation. We also now have an alignment methodology with the Paris Agreement, and a new IDB Institutional Strategy, [Impact+](#). The ESPF is now far more robust compared to the Operational Policies that existed during IIRSA. Many of the issues that have been mentioned are already part of the ESPF. On key infrastructure topics, for instance, we now have Standard 5 on resettlement, Standard 1 on the assessment and management of social and environmental impacts and risks, Standard 10 on stakeholder engagement, and Standard 7 on Indigenous Peoples², among others. Many of these standards were revised following a critical evaluation carried out by the Office of Evaluation and Oversight (OVE); since then, several projects have been rejected for failing to meet socio-environmental requirements. In addition, under the PCS, the IDB has committed to carrying out strategic environmental, social, and climate assessments (SESCA), as is currently being done for the Capricorn Bioceanic Corridor. This assessment will analyze cumulative impacts, review institutional capacities as well as national and subnational regulations, and generate recommendations for improvement at the subnational level. There are committees responsible for overseeing subnational entities that are interested in improving their socio-environmental management. For now, the IDB's clients are at the national level, but this is an issue we can look at to recommend improvements. The role of civil society here is key. I also want to highlight that the PCS does not apply solely to the Amazon region — it is much broader and applies to the entire Southern Cone.

BIC (International): The problems we currently see are in implementation. We agree that the ESPF is robust, and that if it were applied to the letter, all projects would turn out very well. However, we see that this does not happen, and that is where we have a role to play as civil society. It is also important to design mitigation and management measures that are actually applied.

Recurring themes in this section

- ◆ **Institutional learning:** IIRSA/COSIPLAN left documented lessons that must not be repeated: technocratic design without dialogue among different forms of knowledge, environmental assessments that were merely a formality, and risks and impacts that were ignored. The Bank explicitly acknowledged the limitations of IIRSA/COSIPLAN. South Connection is presented as an opportunity to do things differently. Civil society sees this as a demanding starting point.
- ◆ **Social and territorial risks:** Large-scale works have historically been exploited by criminal activity and have encouraged deforestation and land grabbing. Territorial governance —not just the construction itself— is a decisive variable in impact and must be a component addressed in every transportation project.
- ◆ **Technical tools to guarantee good projects are not enough if they go unimplemented:** They must have cultural relevance and must be adapted to the territories. The territorial dimension is the culture that lives alongside natural infrastructure. Integration should not be thought of solely from a commercial perspective but also from a territorial one.
- ◆ **Participation of Indigenous Peoples, quilombolas, and traditional communities:** Land titling pending for decades, late arrival to the process, and consultations that present only positive aspects are the three most frequently mentioned problems. Protection for Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation. Infrastructure should be designed to promote local communities' productive projects.

² For more information on the ESPF, the IDB shared this [link](#) with details on the standards and protections included under each one.

- ◆ **Governance and early participation:** Participation must be continuous, high-quality, and present at every stage of the project cycle. "We are always brought in too late, to discuss impacts rather than planning."
- ◆ **Multimodality of the corridor:** Corridor $\neq$ road. A multimodal vision (river, air, rail) and territorial governance are presented as an alternative to conventional road-based logic.
- ◆ **Biodiversity and climate change:** It is important to place biodiversity at the center of planning and to take into account the climate events that are altering our territories.

Session 2 — Strengthening Planning Instruments and Decision-Making Processes

Presentation by IEMA/Brazil. Comments from the IDB Working Group and the IDB. Plenary discussion.

Diagnosis: current weaknesses in transportation planning

- In his presentation, André Ferreira (IEMA) emphasized the need to strengthen planning tools and decision-making processes in transportation sector policy. Brazil has drawn up five national transportation plans. The persistent problem is the absence of clear criteria for project selection: plans end up serving as justifications for decisions that have already been made. He noted the relevance of a ruling by Brazil's Federal Court of Accounts (TCU), according to which "final" infrastructure projects have actually been only "input" designs, reflecting the interests of economic and political groups, rather than an "output" resulting from robust planning — and therefore subject to change. This means civil society can only participate in projects that are already politically defined, with routes already largely determined. This shows the importance of improving sectoral planning processes, with transparency and civil society participation. There are efforts in this direction from the Ministry of Transportation with the new National Logistics Plan (2050), but progress remains at an early stage. He stressed the need for the IDB to be aware of this ruling and to engage with the TCU, and to gain an in-depth understanding of the recent experience of the PNL 2050.
- Specific challenges for South Connection: a disconnect between transportation planning and territorial planning/management; the invisibility of the demands of Amazonian peoples and communities; a lack of transparency in modeling (assumptions, data, software); and weak socio-environmental risk analysis within alternatives analysis.
- Social and environmental safeguards applied to already-selected projects are necessary but insufficient. It is necessary to think beyond safeguards —particularly improvements to the upstream planning of transportation corridors, with comparative analysis of socio-environmental risks (including cumulative impacts) and of alternatives, taking into account integration with territorial planning, territorial policies, and territorialities; support for strengthening territorial planning and governance, including the measures needed to protect Indigenous and Afro-descendant territories, forests, and biodiversity, while avoiding the resettlement of Amazonian peoples; and financing instruments that fund not only infrastructure but also consultations, Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes, and life plans for Indigenous Peoples. Community-based infrastructure needs and initiatives (discussed in Session 3) should be included in both transportation planning and territorial planning.
- **Strengthening territorial planning governance requires:** recognition of territorial rights, consolidation of conservation units and protected areas, modernization of land registries that have historically been used for the seizure of public lands, and future-oriented vulnerability and climate resilience analysis, or context analysis, before project selection. This is an area where multilateral development banks, such as the IDB, have a key role to play.

- **Dialogue and consultation ≠ real participation:** participants noted that dialogue and consultation processes do not necessarily amount to real participation with the capacity to influence decision-making. To be genuine, they must take place before designs are finalized and must ensure that communities have complete information —not just the positive aspects—, along with the resources and time needed to prepare, and good-faith guarantees for reaching consent.
- **Proposed hierarchy of infrastructure options** given the fragility of the Amazon: air → river (without dredging waterways) → rail → roads (as a last option, given their greater territorial impact).

Voices and proposals from participants

GT Infra: *When individual projects are defined in isolation, it undermines the use of a tool such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which was designed to allow for a broader analysis of socio-environmental risks — including cumulative and synergistic impacts among projects — and of alternatives from a social, environmental, and economic perspective. There is a risk of the SEA tool being misused, as in the case of the repaving of the "Middle Stretch" of the BR-319 highway (Manaus-Porto Velho), where the political decision to proceed with the project had already been made without the proper analysis of risks and alternatives. In a scenario of fragile territorial governance, how can the implementation and effectiveness of preventive and mitigating measures be guaranteed, even before road construction begins? To a large extent, socio-environmental risks are linked to illegal economies, which typically involve organized crime, in contexts where the State lacks an effective presence. Part of the challenge of more robust planning is assessing socio-environmental risks at the territorial level, using participatory methodologies and transparency, and adapting information to the reality of communities, in line with the guidelines of the Escazú Agreement.*

CAUCE (Argentina): *The PCS should publish clear project selection criteria before the final decision, and have an advisory panel with significant representation of Indigenous Peoples, quilombolas, traditional communities, and women. The Bank is also reviewing its procurement policy, which has implications for project execution. This is important to consider in the context of South Connection.*

COICA (Regional): *First, what is transportation infrastructure for? What will be transported? Who will be integrated? And why do we want to integrate? Indigenous Peoples lack this information, and it is in this absence that the ghosts of past experiences resurface. From the lessons learned from IIRSA, we now see that the IDB is opening up to building things from the very beginning in a way that includes Indigenous Peoples. Second is how this transportation infrastructure is being built, or is intended to be built. Third is the role for us, as Indigenous Peoples, not only in contributing to the economy that will move through the region but also in participation from the planning stage and from the standpoint of the rights we hold as Indigenous Peoples. Many people do not like it when we talk about prior consultation, about free, prior, and informed consent, but these are rights we hold and that we will exercise when appropriate. We applaud the fact that, for the Capricorn Bioceanic Corridor, which dates back 11 years, coordination between the IDB and subnational governments is being considered. Will the IDB treat Indigenous Peoples merely as a collection of individual groups, or as INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS of collective Peoples with territorial autonomy? This changes the entire relationship and the way we engage in dialogue with the IDB. This is not simply a matter of Indigenous people requesting prior consultation to be given a soccer field or a job; rather, it is the IDB engaging in dialogue with Indigenous governments, thinking about the future of Indigenous peoples who will not be leaving these territories but who will have major transportation infrastructure there for life, in our territories. We are also grateful that the IDB is considering the creation of the Committee with Indigenous Peoples³ to have a direct dialogue with us, based on our own organizational structures, from the community level up to the international level, in order to participate in these processes.*

Fundación Tierra (Bolivia): *In cases where a serious consultation process is successfully established, discussions and efforts generally focus on identifying direct impacts, while indirect impacts are set aside — especially during the implementation process, which is when Indigenous Peoples begin to feel pressure over land issues and pressure on their resources (for example, when corridors leading to fishing or hunting grounds are cut off). So, how is this situation managed during the implementation stage, where the oversight body of multilateral banks is typically quite distant, and where the client's institutional capacity to meet the standards is put to the test?*

³ The IDB's Civil Society Group will create a dedicated committee for direct dialogue with Indigenous Peoples. This proposal has emerged in the context of the development of the IDB-Civil Society Action Plan, which seeks to establish clear channels for interaction and to institutionalize the participation of civil society and Indigenous Peoples as a key stakeholder for development within the framework of IDB investments.

Ministerio de Ambiente, Corazón de la Amazonía (Colombia): *As a proposal for how to approach the Program, I want to highlight the Green Road Infrastructure Guidelines. These guidelines address every stage, from the development of public policy and technical instruments through to the project level. A project should be considered complete only when all impacts across all countries have been taken into account. The project must be treated as continuous; understanding it as a single unit makes it possible to characterize indirect, synergistic, and cumulative impacts over time. The guidelines state that, at the pre-feasibility stage, before environmental permitting, modes other than road should be compared. Modes and means should be compared while taking environmental and social components into account, ranking impacts accordingly — and it is far easier to correct errors on a drawing, on a draft, than on the territories themselves, or on biodiversity. Planning ahead saves errors that can later be very difficult to reverse once decisions have been made. This is an early-intervention approach reflected in the guidelines, which call for addressing issues at earlier stages with the best information available.*

BIC (International): *The Minamata Convention (mercury and mining) and the Palermo Convention (organized crime) have been ratified by South American countries. Will the IDB incorporate them into PCS implementation? And if so, how?*

FCDS (Peru): *The improvement we need to promote is incorporating biodiversity elements. Sometimes these instruments end up being just a checklist, but the challenge lies in incorporating structural and functional connectivity themes that take into account conservation values associated with ecosystems and species. The message is to improve technical instruments by improving the information and technical evidence associated with biodiversity and functional and structural connectivity.*

BIC (International): *It is important to clarify that technical instruments must have cultural relevance in order to draw on the knowledge of local communities. There is a great disconnect between technical knowledge and local knowledge. For example, the dimension of rapidly expanding criminal activity is not integrated into public management or into project selection and design. Illegal economies tend to benefit more from infrastructure than local communities themselves do.*

GT Infra (Brazil): *What is the Bank's role in the initial planning of the transportation sector? What is the role of technical cooperation projects? Impacts begin even before construction starts: the announcement of a road already triggers speculation. The Bank's role in upstream planning for the transportation sector needs to be discussed with civil society.*

IDB response to the session on planning instruments and decision-making processes

IDB (Transportation Division): *The technical team cannot limit itself to technical-engineering analysis; it must assess social, environmental, economic, and climate viability in an integrated way. Project prioritization and eligibility will be defined based on these three viability criteria —economic, environmental, and social— and not solely on government demand. Multimodality cannot be ignored in the Amazon; it is clear that river transportation is a priority in terms of efficiency and accessibility. From the sector's standpoint, we will work in coordination with all of the Bank's sectors and divisions to ensure social and environmental viability are addressed when prioritizing projects. We seek to work in an integrated way across different sectors, which is already part of how we work on project design and implementation. The IDB is supporting Brazil in addressing challenges in the transportation sector and in planning this policy.*

Renata (South Connection): *The points raised in André's presentation — transparency, safeguards, the invisibility of local demands, and effective participation — are key. I want to emphasize that here we are seeking to do things differently. I know that these spaces for dialogue are rare in other multilateral organizations. I'll repeat that the SEP will go out for a 30-day public consultation in the coming days. The SEP was initially developed with input from some of you here who are part of the IDB Working Group; we circulated a draft for your comments last year. The SEP includes some specific working groups, such as one with Indigenous Peoples. We will also be using the PCS results matrix (which is available online). Based on that, we are thinking about aligning projects with the Bank's sector teams to understand which projects are aligned with South Connection. We are trying to understand whether the projects arising from government demands are aligned with the program, and we are working to understand where we stand. I'll repeat that South Connection does not share the same vision as Rutas de Integração, which originated in Brazil through the initiative of Minister Simone and President Lula, and which comprises five integration routes. South Connection was not created based on a corridor logic and was presented to various countries. The idea was to create a program specifically for South American integration. The only corridor that overlaps with Rutas is the Capricorn Bioceanic Corridor, which already existed since 2015 and was an*

initiative of subnational governments. South Connection also includes digital connectivity and regulatory convergence at the customs level, among other things.

IDB (ESG): *On SESCA, we do not have a single methodology at the IDB; we draw on best practices and methodologies that we will apply, and where we can innovate, we will do so as well. The SESCA will have its own stakeholder engagement plan. We want this study to capture all perspectives in order to incorporate local knowledge. The IDB will also be updating its procurement policy, and there is an opportunity for participation there as well. Regarding the 2018 Sustainable Infrastructure Framework: in my view, the concepts in that Framework are covered by the Bank's mainstreaming themes, together with the application of the ESPF. On the Capricorn Corridor committees: I want to emphasize again that the role of subnational governments is key. In this corridor, 8 subnational governments have formed a coordination space for public participation and Indigenous Peoples. That means they are already in discussions about how to improve their legislation at the corridor level. Although I recognize that this will vary, and this level of coordination will not always be present. That is why SESCA's recommendations need to be plugged in at the subnational level, with the support of national governments, in order to succeed.*

Recurring themes in this section

- ◆ **Strategic planning and territorial organization:** "A corridor is not synonymous with a road." The multimodal hierarchy and the Strategic Environmental Assessment must be applied before investment decisions are made, not after.
- ◆ **Governance and participation:** "Dialogue, consultation, and consent ≠ real participation." To influence decision-making, participation must take place at upstream stages, with complete information and resources so that communities are prepared to participate effectively.
- ◆ **Territorial and institutional governance:** The modernization of land registries, the recognition of territorial rights, context and vulnerability analysis, and interministerial coordination are preconditions for projects to avoid generating negative impacts.
- ◆ **Transparency and access to information:** Project eligibility criteria should prioritize environmental and social viability, access to technical tools with cultural relevance, and real-time information are presented as concrete, immediate demands for this program.

Session 3 — Community-Based Infrastructure

Presentations by Fundo CASA Socioambiental, Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), and Projeto Saúde e Alegria, with additional comments from representatives of the Amazonia Forever Program, COICA, CONAQ, COIAB, CIDOB, and civil society.

What is community-based infrastructure?

- The types of community infrastructure identified as priorities today are: i) "care infrastructure," covering services such as health, sanitation, drinking water, education, and mobility for people, and ii) "infrastructure for sociobiodiversity value chains," covering elements such as product processing, port infrastructure, cold chains, and connectivity adapted to the local economy.
- **The Amazon already has living infrastructure that must be recognized and strengthened.** Sociobiodiversity value chains (the economic chains associated with Amazonian biodiversity are intrinsically linked to the peoples and communities responsible for their conservation and management) have their own logistical characteristics, distinct from those of the large commodity flows that typically drive national infrastructure planning. The main bottlenecks facing chains such as Brazil nuts, pirarucu, açaí, and other forest products relate to river transport, storage, cold chains, port infrastructure, regional collection centers, and high logistics costs. These obstacles significantly reduce the economic competitiveness of sociobiodiversity chains and limit their access to national and international markets. Participants highlighted the importance of prioritizing

logistics for sociobiodiversity, designed around the territorial characteristics of the Amazon, such as investments in regional logistics centers, the modernization of river infrastructure, and strengthening local capacities for processing, value addition, and marketing.

- **Care infrastructure, understood as an integrated territorial development strategy that brings together health, education, sanitation, energy, communications, and income generation:** the experience of the Saúde e Alegria Project as a reference point in developing integrated solutions to promote health, improve quality of life, and drive sustainable development in Amazonian riverside communities. There are various examples of social technologies adapted to Amazonian conditions, including community water supply systems, low-cost water treatment filters, solar energy, digital connectivity, River Basic Health Units, and community training programs for the operation and maintenance of this infrastructure. Solutions must be designed together with the community to ensure operational sustainability and strengthen local ownership in the management of services.
- Cristina Orpheo, Executive Director of Fundo CASA Socioambiental, emphasized the need for programs that reach communities, with direct support for local solutions built from their own initiatives. CASA has supported nearly 70 percent of Brazil's ethnic groups through direct allocation of resources, with a total of more than 5,000 community initiatives. In 2025, Fundo CASA Socioambiental supported 252 projects worth USD 15 million, of which 101 projects were in the Amazon and 405 were sociobioeconomy projects. She pointed to the need to simplify financing mechanisms and to create channels that respond quickly to community needs. Investing in infrastructure without taking into account the needs of territories and their populations only increases existing inequalities.

Voices and proposals from participants: Community-based infrastructure

COICA (Regional): *For decades, much of the infrastructure for South American integration was designed with the goal of connecting markets. Very rarely was it designed to connect cultures, people, knowledge systems, or ecosystems. The result is well known: many corridors ended up accelerating deforestation, territorial and cultural fragmentation, and worsening environmental conflicts in the Amazon. We believe the PCS represents an opportunity to do things differently. Indigenous Peoples are not isolated populations waiting to be connected by States. On the contrary, we are peoples who have historically been connected to one another. Our peoples maintain economic, cultural, ecological, and family relationships that cross national borders. Our rivers and our ancestral pathways have existed long before the creation of modern States. That is why the first infrastructure that the PCS must recognize is the living, natural infrastructure that already exists in these territories. Second, planning cannot begin with a road or a logistics corridor; it must begin with Indigenous Life Plans and with the territorial planning instruments defined by Indigenous governments themselves. These already contain assessments on mobility, health, education, sustainable tourism, and forest economies. The question is no longer how to bring infrastructure to the territories, but how infrastructure can strengthen the life projects of those who inhabit these territories. Third, the concept of connectivity must be broadened. For our peoples, connectivity also means strengthening exchange among cross-border peoples, strengthening the exchange of essential goods and services, supporting sociobiodiversity value chains, and creating the conditions for local economies to thrive without destroying the ecosystems that make them possible. We believe the time has come to create a Dialogue Committee within the IDB for direct engagement with Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples, with the direct participation of organizations such as COICA and CONAQ. This would help support the design of projects tailored to Amazonian needs. The best project is not the one that extracts the most resources in the least time, but the one that strengthens territorial integrity, cultural diversity, forest resilience, and Indigenous governance. Connecting South America cannot mean fragmenting the Amazon.*

CONAQ (Brazil): *The demarcation of Afro-descendant territories is urgent. The IDB can support the strengthening of the instruments we have already developed. The quilombola Amazon and its relationship with nature must be at the center of the climate agenda. Implementation and continuity of quilombola bioeconomy initiatives are needed so they are not absorbed by predatory extractivism. Today, quilombola communities serve as a barrier against advancing deforestation, but we need security in our territories. We urge that mechanisms for strengthening our quilombos and our territories be taken into account. This is CONAQ's vision of territory as a source of energy for community members.*

COIAB (Brazil): Resources need to be allocated to the governance of Indigenous organizations, especially given the rollback of rights in the current regional political context. The PODÁALI Indigenous Fund emerged from 10 years of debate within the Indigenous movement and supports the Indigenous economy with autonomy and territorial governance.

CIDOB (Bolivia): The Bank's programs must set aside resources to mitigate the socio-environmental damage caused by the projects they support. Caring for biodiversity must be a shared responsibility among peoples, the State, and the private sector.

DAR (Peru): Land titling is a fundamental requirement for community infrastructure, particularly georeferencing as a tool for titling, but this tool consistently lacks funding. Local information remains difficult to obtain, including basic information on essential services. Communities still lack basic services such as education and sanitation, and also lack sufficient information. Infrastructure should be conceived as a catalyst for improving services, not as an end in itself. Another issue relates to the diversification of local production — the productive capacity of communities is not the same thing as microenterprises.

MPI (Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, Brazil): We observe difficulties in understanding what free, prior, and informed consultation actually means. It is often presented as a one-off instrument to be implemented at a given moment, but we must reaffirm that public policies cannot be built, nor investments made, without the participation of Indigenous Peoples. Social participation connects projects to the reality of the territory.

BIC (International): The importance of early local socialization of initial connectivity ideas, in order to build joint project-development processes with Amazonian peoples, which will be decisive for good FPIC processes and for sustaining their continuity through implementation, adjustments, and evaluation. It is also worth highlighting the role of IDB Invest, given that much of this infrastructure will be developed through Public-Private Partnerships, tolls, and the like. It should be clarified what the biodiversity fund means in the context of South Connection and how it will be applied.

GT Infra (Brazil): Governance must begin before project design and continue throughout its implementation. IDB technical cooperation must be collaborative and participatory with civil society, focused on transportation planning and its alignment with territorial planning.

Fondo CASA Socioambiental (Brazil): It is necessary to simplify the mechanisms and requirements for accessing financing and to create channels that respond quickly to community needs. The Bank could require counterparts, such as land titling, in exchange for granting resources for infrastructure and connectivity projects.

ISA (Brazil): Infrastructure suited to Amazonian communities includes port infrastructure and cold chains for sociobiodiversity —key elements for local economies that are often overlooked. The IDB and governments must understand bioeconomy production chains before designing projects.

Saúde e Alegria (Brazil): Community infrastructure must serve to provide essential public services: health, education, connectivity. It must be adapted to the conditions and needs of each community, rather than replicating urban models in the Amazon.

IDB response to the session on community-based infrastructure

Ellen (Amazonia Forever, IDB): In Brazil, the IDB makes direct transfers of resources to Indigenous groups (Metareilá, CONAQ, COIAB, among others) through the Grupo Minga mechanism. This is the first time in 60 years that the IDB has managed to finance Indigenous and Afro-descendant organizations directly, responding to a long-standing demand. In Brazil we are working with CONAQ and COIAB, and we are in the approval process with Fondo Casa. We also have a grant with AIDSESP, and with COICA we launched the Amazonia para la Vida Fund in 2023, administered jointly by COICA and the IDB, worth USD 10 million (approximately USD 1 million per country). The projects were designed by the peoples themselves; the IDB adapted its language and institutional requirements to make this possible. The Bank is looking for mechanisms to support small enterprises that can scale up sociobiodiversity protection. This kind of support is very important for backing bioeconomy initiatives and for territorial strengthening and organizational governance, which are structural conditions for these economic initiatives to succeed. We are compiling lessons learned from technical cooperation projects. In connection with South Connection, we are trying to understand productive activities and how to create structures that allow them to scale and be replicated.

Renata Vargas Amaral (South Connection, IDB): Renata introduces Eduardo Café, who is responsible for the operational side of South Connection. We recognize that there is a gap between our clients —the governments— and the populations who benefit from, or are harmed by, these projects. Regarding the fund, the program does

not yet have funding. We have not started that conversation yet for that reason. There is still no external financing to operationalize this fund. We have discussed the South Connection proposal document with the IDB Working Group, but we are considering whether to receive written comments or hold a dedicated meeting. One document that matters for South Connection is the SEP, along with the Advisory Panel. We will publish the proposed SEP so civil society can indicate how it can be improved and how the Bank can support communities. A final message for today: we want to convey that we are on the same side, that we want to build together, and that we are aligning with and learning from what has worked under Amazonia Forever. I want to stress that this is a work in progress, and that for an institution with as much bureaucracy as ours, timelines are sometimes longer due to the internal discussion and review processes we have to go through. It may be worth considering project-alignment criteria. We have also shared with BIC the projects that fall under the program, but internal discussions are still ongoing. When I arrived last year, there was a lot of skepticism about the program because of the experience with IIRSA and COSIPLAN, and here we are trying to do something different. There is also the Transport Alliance, in partnership with the World Bank, which is currently being developed. Keep in mind that nothing is set in stone and that there is room to learn. We are also trying to hold these dialogue sessions with governments. Let's think about how to continue these dialogues with concrete commitments.

BIC (International): We need to identify what can move forward in the short, medium, and long term. For example, something that came up often and became clear is that the IDB can play a role as facilitator and coordinator among the State, communities, and the private sector. We need to go beyond the IDB's social and environmental standards for project implementation and think about more robust transportation projects. For example, by effectively using information from strategic assessments, and by considering technical cooperation projects or dedicated funds that go beyond the cost of infrastructure to guarantee effective compliance with standards.

ESG (IDB): The IDB seeks to maximize the participation of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and other key stakeholders, such as the private sector. South Connection will have its own participation strategy. We will review all the suggestions presented at the workshop and try to incorporate them in order to maximize benefits for communities.

Transportation Division (IDB): Having worked at the IDB for 20 years, the Bank's shift in approach is evident. When this kind of exchange space exists, our technical capacity increases exponentially because we incorporate the debates and concepts that civil society contributes. Opportunities to communicate what the South Connection Program is doing are tied to strategic actions, such as the Amazon Transport Alliance (World Bank/IDB), which is moving forward in parallel. We are launching many activities in the transportation sector at the same stage, and these spaces benefit all of them.

Session 4: Governance, Transparency, and Participation

This section did not include presentations; instead, it drew on everything presented and discussed in the previous sections to address issues relating to the governance, transparency, and participation of the South Connection program. Some of the key topics that shaped the governance discussion were the announcements made by the IDB in previous sessions regarding the creation of a Multisectoral Advisory Panel; the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and its implementation; the possibility of developing project selection criteria; and the development of national and regional information workshops with Indigenous Peoples' and civil society organizations, under a joint-construction approach. Below is a summary of the discussion from each breakout table, as presented in plenary.

Proposals from the Breakout Tables on South Connection Program Governance

The workshop's breakout discussions generated concrete proposals organized by topic. The main contributions are summarized below:

- **Table 1** — For consultations in Indigenous territories, it was suggested that an oversight body be created to ensure compliance with consultation and consent standards. In line with this, the idea emerged of establishing an Integration Fund for Peoples and Communities to guarantee: a) the application of consultation protocols and social and environmental monitoring; and b) social and

environmental oversight and monitoring. It was also proposed that compliance reports for the Palermo and Minamata Conventions be incorporated and required.

- **Table 2** — It was proposed to create regional forums for sharing positive experiences, gathering lessons learned, and identifying good infrastructure models that respect ecological connectivity and cultural relevance. Infrastructure in the Amazon must include the perspective of its peoples.
- **Table 3** — It was proposed to strengthen governance structures to enable influence before project approval, through the creation of a council and mechanisms that allow Peoples and communities to participate in planning processes before decisions are made. The Amazonian Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples (MAPI) of ACTO, along with subnational governments/ITEs (Indigenous Territorial Entities and self-governments), were identified as key actors for dialogue. Work is needed to ensure coordination among all these actors within these bodies.
- **Table 4** — The development of a Green Road Infrastructure Plan (LIVV) in Colombia was highlighted as an example of a multi-stakeholder coordination process, and the group called for establishing a permanent forum for dialogue and exchange. Participants highlighted the IDB's positioning as a coordinator across levels of government (national, subnational, local), and the importance of an interministerial coordination agenda on infrastructure. The importance of co-design processes was also emphasized, which requires strengthening the negotiation capacities of Indigenous Peoples.
- **Table 5** — It was noted that everything agreed upon at the workshop for South Connection should also apply to IDB Invest operations; that financial resources must be guaranteed for consultations and plans for Indigenous Peoples; that coordination mechanisms should be established prior to project definition; and that continuous engagement with the IDB should be ensured.
- **Table 6** — The IDB must use its convening capacity and influence to create and support spaces for discussion between States and civil society, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and traditional peoples on impact prevention, drawing on existing good practices. Infrastructure must be understood on the basis of sociobiodiversity economies — not only large-scale ones — so that it effectively strengthens the lives of the peoples who inhabit these territories.

Recurring themes in this section

- ◆ **Community infrastructure and local development:** Infrastructure must respond to territorial and community priorities (health, education, cold chains, port infrastructure, bioeconomy), not only to the commercial logic of large companies or commodity exports. There is an implicit critique of the idea of understanding infrastructure solely as large roads.
- ◆ **Participation of peoples and communities:** Life plans as the basis for planning, a permanent dialogue mechanism, and co-developed selection criteria are the three most concrete demands. Infrastructure must strengthen territories, not merely facilitate trade.
- ◆ **Financing and capacity strengthening:** Direct funding to communities, simplified access mechanisms, and co-design with prior strengthening of Indigenous negotiation capacities are conditions for genuine participation.
- ◆ **Biodiversity and sociobiodiversity:** Bioeconomy, biodiversity value chains, and green infrastructure are presented as an alternative economic pillar to the extractivist model. The living infrastructure that already exists in these territories must be recognized.
- ◆ **Governance and participation:** The Advisory Panel, anticipatory governance mechanisms, and coordination among the IDB, civil society, and subnational governments are concrete proposals that emerged convergently from several breakout tables.

Cross-Cutting Concerns of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, and Civil Society

These concerns came up repeatedly throughout the workshop and are summarized here as items for follow-up.

- **Consultation and participation that are not genuine:** consultation processes typically present only the positive aspects of projects; what is ultimately approved often bears little relation to what is actually implemented. Participants called for the "joint development and implementation" of infrastructure projects from the earliest planning stages —upstream— rather than late-stage consultations once designs are already finalized.
- **Territorial security and land titling:** 90 percent of quilombola settlements remain untitled; Indigenous peoples have waited more than 40 years for their land titling processes. The lack of legal certainty limits effective participation in infrastructure projects and exposes communities to territorial insecurity. Infrastructure projects must include a strong component to guarantee the territorial security of Amazonian peoples and the protection of conservation units and protected areas.
- **Cumulative, synergistic, and indirect impacts:** environmental assessment tools remain insufficient to capture them. The announcement of a project already triggers land speculation before construction even begins.
- **Territorial governance and illegal economies:** large-scale works have historically fueled illegal activities (logging, mining, drug trafficking, land trafficking). Criminal activity is rarely factored into public project management. Participants called for explicitly incorporating the standards of the Minamata and Palermo Conventions.
- **Transparency and access to information:** difficulties in accessing timely information in appropriate formats from the design stage onward. Participants called for a transparency system with real-time information, public project selection criteria, and anti-corruption oversight.
- **Biodiversity, climate, and the Amazon's point of no return:** biodiversity and ecosystem services must be at the center of infrastructure project planning. Between 1985 and 2022, the Amazon lost 23 percent of its biodiversity connectivity. Advisory Opinion No. 32 of the IACHR and the Escazú Agreement are cited as reference frameworks.
- **Financing that is insufficient for the infrastructure of the Amazonian peoples:** land titling and other protection requirements chronically lack resources. Participants called for simplifying access mechanisms and creating rapid-response channels that support the sociobioeconomy and biodiversity value chains.
- **Protection of environmental and climate defenders:** large infrastructure project settings often put those defending their territories at risk. The workshop stressed the need for the IDB and governments to establish specific protection protocols and mechanisms for environmental and climate defenders, as a condition for any genuinely participatory process.

Summary: Key Messages from the Workshop

The following five messages emerged repeatedly and convergently throughout all the sessions and breakout tables. They represent the workshop's strongest areas of consensus.

The workshop's five most recurring messages

1. Participation must take place before decisions are made. It is not enough to consult on projects that have already been designed; communities must be able to influence strategic planning from the outset.
2. Corridors must be planned as territorial processes, not merely as transportation infrastructure. The idea that "corridor ≠ road" appears in multiple forms: multimodality, territorial governance, life plans.
3. Strategic Environmental Assessments and the SESCA must become central tools for investment decisions, not just for evaluating impacts once projects have already been defined.
4. Governance of the South Connection Program needs to be institutionalized. The Advisory Panel, permanent dialogue mechanisms, project selection criteria, continuous participation, and multilevel coordination repeatedly emerge as minimum conditions.
5. The Amazon requires a different infrastructure model: one that strengthens territories, protects biodiversity, supports the bioeconomy, respects and empowers Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, and traditional communities, and responds to local priorities —not solely to commercial or export demand.

A cross-cutting finding: *While there were calls for greater financing to ensure that transportation infrastructure projects respect territorial and peoples' rights and protect the Amazon biome, most of the discussion centered on how decisions are made, who participates, what kind of infrastructure is prioritized, and how to incorporate the territorial dimension from the outset. The central concern is not how much the IDB invests, but how it decides to invest.*

Commitments and Next Steps

The table below brings together three types of action: (i) **explicit commitments from the IDB** announced during the workshop; (ii) **proposals from the breakout tables of civil society and Amazonian peoples**, which require follow-up and negotiation; and (iii) **civil society advocacy actions** coordinated by BIC and the co-convening organizations. In all cases, the lead responsible party is identified.

Commitment / Table Proposals / Advocacy Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline / Follow-up
IDB COMMITMENTS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS <i>Some were explicitly announced by the IDB during the workshop, and others require follow-up and negotiation with the IDB</i>		
1. Send the South Connection Program's Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) directly to workshop participants to receive their comments and feedback within 30 days. The IDB commits to incorporating many of the suggestions presented at the workshop into the SEP.	Eduardo Café / Renata Vargas Amaral (PCS, IDB)	Committed to during the workshop. Immediate action.
2. Move forward with creating an expanded Advisory Panel including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities, the private sector, and academia.	Renata Vargas Amaral (PCS) / Tatiana Schor (HCS)	Being defined.

3. Create transparent criteria for selecting and prioritizing South Connection Program projects that incorporate social and environmental viability. For example, it was suggested that evidence of a link to robust sectoral and territorial planning could serve as one criterion.	Renata Vargas Amaral (PCS)/ Daniel Torres (INE, IDB)	To be followed up (date not defined).
4. Support improvements in upstream sectoral infrastructure planning as a basis for integrating projects and initiatives across countries, applying good practices in transparency, social participation, incorporation of the socio-environmental dimension, and alternatives analysis, drawing on the Bank's technical cooperation projects.	Renata Vargas Amaral (PCS), Civil Society Team, and Zachary (ESG, IDB) In collaboration with GT Infra, IEMA, BIC, and other CSOs	Ongoing
5. Complete the Strategic Environmental, Social, and Climate Assessment (SESCA) for the Capricorn Bioceanic Corridor, including the analysis of cumulative impacts and the public geospatial platform, taking into account the input submitted by the IDB Working Group. The SESCO will have its own Stakeholder Engagement Plan to incorporate local knowledge.	Renata Vargas Amaral (PCS, IDB) and Zachary (ESG)	Underway.
6. Share preparatory documents and final products of the Capricorn Corridor SESCO with the civil society organizations that participated in the workshop.	Renata Vargas Amaral (PCS, IDB)/Zachary (ESG, IDB)	Explicitly committed to during the session.
7. Share the final products of the Technical Cooperation projects being financed under the PCS	Renata Vargas Amaral (PCS, IDB)/Zachary (ESG, IDB)	To be followed up

PROPOSALS FROM THE BREAKOUT TABLES

Developed by civil society and Amazonian peoples; require follow-up and negotiation with the IDB.

1. As part of the discussion on the South Connection Program's SEP, consider how an oversight body could be established to ensure compliance with consultation standards in Indigenous territories.	Follow-up: COICA/ CONAQ	Proposal from Table 2. To be formalized.
2. Strengthen the governance structures being developed at the IDB (Action Plan, SEP, Advisory Panel, etc.) ahead of project approval, through the creation of a Council able to exert influence before the final decision. Involve subnational governments and Indigenous Territorial Entities as key stakeholders.	Follow-up: COICA/BIC/GT Infra/Conectas	Proposal from Table 4. Mechanism to be defined.
3. Apply the Belém Declaration as a reference framework for the design and implementation of South Connection.	Follow-up: COICA / GT Infra/Conectas	Proposal from Table 6. To be formalized.
4. Advance an interministerial coordination agenda within countries to integrate transportation planning with territorial planning.	IDB (facilitator) + national governments.	Proposal from Table 5. Long-term demand.
5. Bring corridor planning and other South Connection initiatives to the MAPI (Amazonian Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples) discussion and other ACTO initiatives, such as CETICAM, which is currently being reactivated.	COICA + Amazonian Indigenous Peoples	Proposal from Table 4. Advocacy action.

6. Create a Territorial Integration and Governance Fund for communities that guarantees resources for consultation processes, based on autonomous protocols, support for the recognition of territorial rights, and community strategies for territorial management and social and environmental protection against the socio-environmental risks and impacts of infrastructure projects.	Follow-up: Juaneda (BIC)	Carolina	Proposal from Table 2. To be negotiated with the IDB.
CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS <i>Advocacy actions coordinated by BIC, GT Infra, and Conectas.</i>			
1. Create permanent forums to share positive experiences at the regional level and gather lessons learned as part of the South Connection Program's SEP	IDB + BIC + co-convening organizations. Follow-up: Carolina Juaneda (BIC)/GT Infra/Conectas		Proposal agreed upon. Timeline to be defined.
2. Replicate this dialogue space in other countries in the region to share updates on South Connection's progress and build joint demands among South American civil society.	BIC + co-convening organizations. Follow-up: Carolina Juaneda (BIC)		Explicit proposal from the workshop. Timeline and priority countries to be defined.
3. Work with IDB Invest so that all the commitments we are seeking to advance under the program also apply to IDB Invest.	Civil Society Team (IDB)		Demand agreed upon by civil society. Pending formalization.
4. Continue the dialogue on governance and financing for community-based infrastructure projects, including direct support to communities, considering the possible expansion of the Amazonia para la Vida Fund and other multi-donor funds, as well as opportunities for complementarity with the Amazonia Forever program.	Eduardo Café, Tatiana, and Ellen (IDB) + COICA + Amazonian organizations		Ongoing.
5. Draft letters from local organizations in 5 countries (Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia) to their countries' IDB offices requesting follow-up meetings on transportation and infrastructure projects under South Connection	CONAQ, CIDOB, FENAMAD/AIDSEP, FOIN, COICA-Colombia. Coordination: Carolina Juaneda (BIC)		To take place in the coming weeks.
6. Hold virtual meetings with local organizations in the 5 countries to share updates on South Connection's progress and continue building joint demands.	BIC + co-convening organizations. Follow-up: Carolina Juaneda (BIC)/GT Infra/Conectas		To be scheduled.

Note on the Documentation Process

This summary was prepared based on notes taken during the workshop, a review of the recording, and the transcription of the notes compiled on the whiteboard during the workshop. Its structure follows the order of the agenda. Participating organizations are identified in the discussion sections; the commitments table includes the names of the people responsible for follow-up when these were explicitly identified during the workshop.

This document is for internal circulation among the workshop's co-conveners. For inquiries: cjuaneda@bankinformationcenter.org, giovanna.valentim@conectas.org, brent.millikan@gmail.com

Additional Resources

- [Link](#) to the event agenda.

Acronyms most frequently used in this document

IDB — Inter-American Development Bank.

PCS — South Connection Program (IDB).

BIC — Bank Information Center.

GT Infra — Working Group on Infrastructure and Socio-environmental Justice.

IDB Working Group / Grupo de Trabajo sobre BID — a network of international, regional, and Latin American organizations that advocate before the IDB Group.

IIRSA — Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America.

COSIPLAN — South American Council for Infrastructure and Planning.

SEP — Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

SESCA — Strategic Environmental, Social, and Climate Assessment.

ESPF — Environmental and Social Policy Framework of the IDB.

OVE — Office of Evaluation and Oversight of the IDB.

ESG — Environmental and Social Solutions Division of the IDB.

COICA — Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin.

CONAQ — National Coordination for the Articulation of Rural Black Quilombola Communities (Brazil).

COIAB — Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon.

CIDOB — Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia.

FPIC — Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.

MAPI — Amazonian Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples.