A mapping app

Guidance to support indigenous peoples and local communities to map the territories and areas they are conserving
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Screenshots in this document do not represent known ICCAs. These areas were only “mapped” in the apps for the purposes of testing the app and creating the guidance.

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Introduction

Territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities are often known as ICCAs. ICCAs can be very diverse. Examples include indigenous territories, indigenous protected areas, cultural land and seascapes and sacred natural sites, among many others.

ICCA custodians safeguard and sustain species and resources, despite often receiving little or no recognition and support for their efforts. It is estimated that one-fifth of the world’s land could potentially be ICCAs (UNEP-WCMC and ICCA Consortium, 2021). In addition to currently documented protected and conserved areas, it is estimated the inclusion of potential ICCAs could roughly double the global coverage of protected and conserved landscapes.

The importance of mapping ICCAs

While estimations suggest that ICCAs play a significant role in conserving nature, it is not yet known exactly how many ICCAs there are in the world. UNEP-WCMC and partners are helping to address this issue through supporting the documentation of ICCAs in global databases. Accounting for these areas is crucial, and requires the ICCA custodian’s consent, alongside appropriate forms of recognition and support. Therefore, indigenous peoples and local communities, if they so choose, should be supported to map their ICCAs and have opportunities to share their data following a self-determined process of free, prior and informed consent.

This process could facilitate their efforts to gain appropriate recognition and defend their territories. From a global perspective, mapping ICCAs can result in their collective conservation values being better understood; the areas can be counted towards global conservation targets if the ICCAs’ custodians so choose; and they can be factored into decision-making across multiple sectors.

One of the ways to do this is to support the mapping of individual ICCAs through a mapping app. This document is a guide to using the ‘Mapeo for ICCAs’ mapping app. It will take you through the steps required to use the app, which allows you to:

- Map the boundary of your ICCA
- Describe your ICCA
- Export your ICCA boundary and information, including for submission to the ICCA Registry and the Protected Planet Initiative databases

Why use Mapeo for ICCAs?

Mapeo is a mapping app developed by Digital Democracy in close collaboration with indigenous partners in the Amazon. It is a free, easy-to-use, open source set of tools for documenting, monitoring and mapping many types of information. It can be used by individuals or by teams who want to collaborate and share information and is particularly good for working in offline and remote environments. It is already being used by a variety of communities around the globe to support territory mapping and monitoring efforts: https://docs.mapeo.app/overview/about-mapeo/how-mapeo-is-being-used.

‘Mapeo for ICCAs’ is a version of Mapeo developed specifically to support the mapping of ICCA boundaries and includes the requirements for submitting the information to the ICCA Registry and the Protected Planet Initiative databases.
There are two parts to the ‘Mapeo for ICCAs’ app - a mobile app and a desktop app, which can be used together, or individually:

1. **Mapeo for ICCAs mobile** is used to map out points along the ICCA’s boundary using the mobile phone’s GPS. This data is stored offline on your device. You will need to use the desktop app in order to submit data to UNEP-WCMC.

2. **Mapeo for ICCAs desktop** is used to create the digital boundary on a desktop computer, by linking up the points collected using the mobile app. This can be done in a participatory way, providing an opportunity for the community to collectively agree on the correct boundary. The desktop app is also used to provide details about the ICCA, such as its name and how it is governed. This data is stored offline on your device.

### Key features

- **Designed for ICCA Custodians**
  This app was designed specifically to support ICCA custodians in mapping the boundaries of their ICCAs. It also includes the requirements for submitting the information to the ICCA Registry and the Protected Planet Initiative databases to streamline the submission process for you.

- **Simple to use and learn**
  It has been designed to be simple to use. You can quickly and easily learn to collect data, GPS points and photos using your mobile phone.

- **Works offline**
  All data collected or created with Mapeo for ICCAs is stored directly on your device, without the need for an internet connection. Users can synchronise or exchange data over a local Wi-Fi network. Mapeo for ICCAs Desktop can also exchange information using a USB drive.

  The app uses a peer-to-peer (e.g., between communities) database system where the data collected is integrated into the app on the device. Information is easily transferred between devices, meaning multiple users can access a copy of the ICCA data collected if required.

- **You own the data**
  The data are stored on your mobile or desktop and are only shared if you choose to do so. This means you and your community can maintain ownership and control over the data.

- **Available in multiple languages**
  Mapeo for ICCAs has been translated into a number of languages already and many more can be added. For the most up to date list of languages please see this article, which is updated regularly to outline the latest language versions of Mapeo for ICCAs: [https://www.iccaregistry.org/en/news-and-stories/mapeo-mapping-app](https://www.iccaregistry.org/en/news-and-stories/mapeo-mapping-app).

More features can be found here: [https://docs.mapeo.app/](https://docs.mapeo.app/)
2 Getting started

This section provides an overview of the steps needed for downloading Mapeo for ICCAs mobile and desktop apps, and changing the language settings.

Step by step guide to downloading the apps

There are two parts of the app to download - a mobile app and a desktop app, which can be used together, or individually. Start by downloading one or both depending on your needs.

Mapeo for ICCAs mobile download


2. If needed, this app can be shared with those who do not have internet via Bluetooth. The mobile version of Mapeo for ICCAs is currently only available for android phones. If you do not have access to the Google Play Store, and you cannot be sent the app via Bluetooth, you can download the app from something called the APK: https://apk.mapeo.app/icca/latest/

Google Play Store is the preferred method for downloading the app, as it updates automatically when a new release of the Mapeo for ICCAs mobile app is available, whereas the APK does not. Therefore, you will need to re-download a new version of the app via the APK each time a new version of the app is released. Please refer to this article (https://www.iccaregistry.org/en/news-and-stories/mapeo-mapping-app) or contact iccaregistry@unep-wcmc.org if you are unsure whether the version you are using is out of date. You may also be required to temporarily turn off security settings on your phone in order to download the APK.

Change the language settings in Mapeo for ICCAs mobile

The default language is English. To change the language follow steps 3-5 and use Figure 1 as a visual guide. Otherwise, proceed to Mapeo for ICCAs desktop download.

3. Click the icon in the top right-hand corner.

4. Click the settings symbol in the top right-hand corner.

5. Select ‘Language’ and choose from the list of languages. There is no save button. It will automatically change the language once selected, so you can use the arrows to navigate back to the home page.
Figure 1. How to change the language settings in the mobile app, in 3 steps.

Mapeo for ICCAs desktop download

Mapeo for ICCAs desktop is available for Windows, MacOS, and Linux.

Please use the following instructions, depending on what operating system you have on your computer (Windows, Mac, Linux). You will need an internet connection to download it, but the app can be used offline once downloaded.

**Windows**

a. Go to https://releases.mapeo.app/desktop-icca/ia32/latest-win (Mapeo for ICCAs Desktop Windows 32-bit). Alternatively, if you are sure that your Windows is 64-bit, you can use this link instead to get higher performance: https://releases.mapeo.app/desktop-icca/latest-win.

b. If it has not automatically downloaded, select ‘Download for PC’.

c. Find the downloaded Mapeo for ICCAs Installer (usually in your ‘downloads’ folder) and double click.

d. Wait for the installer to finish. It will automatically open Mapeo for ICCAs on completion.

e. You may need to click ‘Allow Access’ if you have Windows Defender enabled.

**Mac**


b. If it has not automatically downloaded, select ‘Download for Mac’.

c. Find the downloaded Mapeo for ICCAs Installer (usually in your ‘downloads’ folder) and double click.

d. Drag the Mapeo for ICCAs icon into your Applications folder.

e. Find Mapeo for ICCAs in your Applications folder and right click to open.

f. Click Open – this verification step only happens the first time you use Mapeo for ICCAs.
**Linux**

b. If it has not automatically downloaded, select 'Download for Linux'.
c. It is recommended to use the .deb package for most systems.
d. Double click the .deb installer.

**Change the language settings in Mapeo for ICCAs desktop**

The default language is English. To change the language follow steps 6-8, with Figure 2 as a visual guide. Otherwise, proceed to Section 3.

1. Select 'View'.
2. Select 'Change language'.
3. Choose from the list of languages and click 'Submit'.

![Figure 2. How to change the language settings in the desktop app, in 3 steps.](image)

If you are having issues installing the download please see this page: [https://docs.mapeo.app/complete-reference-guide/mapeo-desktop-installation-setup/installing-mapeo-desktop](https://docs.mapeo.app/complete-reference-guide/mapeo-desktop-installation-setup/installing-mapeo-desktop).
3 Using Mapeo for ICCAs mapping app

This section provides a step-by-step guide for mapping your ICCA boundary using the Mapeo for ICCAs mobile and desktop apps.

Once you have downloaded the mobile and/or desktop app(s) and selected the language you want to use, you can start using Mapeo for ICCAs.

The first step for mapping the boundary of your ICCA is to record points (“Observations”) along the ICCA boundary in the mobile app, which uses the GPS location of the phone. Second, you will draw the boundary in the desktop app by joining up the point locations. Follow the step-by-step guide below.

In some instances, the desktop app can be used alone (i.e., without using the mobile app first). For instance, if you cannot access the boundary of your ICCA. However, using this method requires you to be able to see landmarks in the desktop app that help identify the location of your boundary. This is because you will be marking out the boundary using satellite imagery on the desktop. If there are no identifiable landmarks it will be difficult to accurately map the boundary.

Step by step guide

Mobile app

Please refer to Figure 3 as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

1. Open the Mapeo for ICCAs mobile app.
2. View the accuracy of your current GPS location in the top centre of the screen (e.g., ± 5m). When the accuracy is high, this ensures the points are marked in the correct location. If the accuracy is low (anything that is greater than ± 10m), simply remain still and wait for the GPS to further pinpoint your location until the accuracy has improved.
3. With the mobile app open, travel around the boundary of your ICCA and record point locations by clicking the ‘+’ button and selecting ‘ICC boundary’.
4. To save the point, click the orange tick ‘✓’ in the top right of the screen, and click ‘save’.
5. If you have weak GPS signal, a notification will appear, so you can choose to either wait, enter manual coordinates, or save.
6. As optional steps, you can name the point, for example ‘Top left corner of site’ or ‘Southern boundary point 3’ and you can add any further description on what is happening in the area, including adding a photo of the location.
7. To save this optional information, click the orange tick in the top right of the screen.
8. Continue to travel around your ICCA boundary and regularly mark and save points to map the full boundary of the ICCA. It is up to you how many points you record, but recording more points will result in a more detailed boundary. You do not need to collect all the points at once, and can come back to this over a period of time.

When you record a point along the boundary of your ICCA, it is known as an “Observation”. It has a latitude and longitude and any additional information you include about the observation, such as what is happening there, or photos. When you create an observation, you will need to select a category that defines it. As well as selecting ‘ICC boundary’, you can also mark the location of a ‘Settlement’ or a ‘Threat or impact’ for example (see section titled: ‘Entering other features of the ICCA’).
Figure 3. How to mark a boundary point (“Observation”) using the mobile app. You can describe what is happening in this area and take a photo. Use the ‘Add details’ button to add a name to the observation.

Synchronise to desktop app

Please refer to Figure 4 as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

9. Once you have finished recording the points, connect both of your devices (mobile and desktop) to the same local Wi-Fi network. The Wi-Fi network does not need to be connected to the internet. Some users use travel routers to create a Wi-Fi network in the field.

10. In the desktop app select the ‘Synchronize’ tab on the left. In the mobile app select the orange lightning symbol.

Figure 4. How to synchronise points (“Observations”) collected in the Mapeo for ICCAs mobile app.
11. The two Mapeo for ICCAs devices will discover each other automatically. Your mobile device will appear as an ‘Available Device’ on your desktop screen.

12. Select the ‘Synchronize’ button on your device once it has appeared to initiate the sync.

13. Information will automatically be transferred between the two devices from the mobile app to the desktop app (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** Information can be synced between Mapeo for ICCAs mobile and Mapeo for ICCAs desktop apps: https://docs.mapeo.app/overview/about-mapeo/mapeo-tools.

If you are having trouble synchronising your data, this might be because you are using old versions of the desktop and mobile Mapeo for ICCAs app. Try re-downloading the desktop and mobile apps of Mapeo for ICCAs (https://www.iccaregistry.org/en/news-and-stories/mapeo-mapping-app) and re-running the sync. Any data you have already collected will not be lost when you download the latest versions.

**View information in desktop app**

The observations tab is for viewing synchronised points ("Observations") from the mobile app. If you have not used the mobile app your observations tab will be empty. The Territory tab is always used for drawing the boundary of your ICCA.

1. Navigate to the ‘Territory’ tab on left-hand side panel on the Mapeo for ICCAs Desktop (Figure 6).
2. Select ‘View’ in the bar at the top of the screen, then ‘zoom to data’, or move the map to locate your recorded boundary points.
3. See detailed instructions on how to use the ‘Area’ tool to draw the boundary below in the ‘Calculate the area of your ICCA’ section - desktop app.

**Draw a boundary**

Please refer to Figure 6 and Figure 7 as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

4. In the ‘Territory’ tab select the ‘Area’ tool and use the boundary points as a guide for drawing your ICCA boundary. Note that you are not able to physically connect the points, but simply use them as a guide to draw the boundary from and to.
5. By clicking the ‘layer’ icon to the right of the map, you can change the background imagery. This might be helpful if you are unable to clearly see using the default background.
While drawing the boundary, you can move around the map using the arrow keys (←, ↑, ↓, →) on your keyboard.

Once you have finished drawing the boundary, press the ‘↵’. The boundary is then complete (Figure 7) and will flash red.

Add further information to your ICCA

Please refer to Figure 8 as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

After you have recorded the boundary of your ICCA, the desktop app prompts you to add more information about the ICCA in the ‘Edit feature’ tab, for example the name of your ICCA and its size (Figure 8). This information will be sent along with the boundary to UNEP-WCMC if you choose to submit your ICCA information to the ICCA Registry or Protected Planet Initiative databases.
9. If you have not been prompted to add information select ‘ICCA Boundary’ from the left-hand pane to add further details about the ICCA.

10. Once you have finished entering information on the ICCA, select the ‘✓’ button in the top right corner of the ‘Edit feature’ pane to save it.

Visualise, edit or delete your information

11. If you want to go back and edit the data you have entered for the ICCA, just click on the ICCA boundary on the map, and you can edit the details in the ‘Edit features’ pane. Make sure to press the save ‘✓’ button to re-save the data.

12. If you want to edit the boundary further, you can select and edit the boundary points using your mouse.

Figure 8. The window on the Mapeo for ICCAs desktop app where you can provide more information on your ICCA through the ‘Edit features’ pane.

Calculate the area of your ICCA

Please refer to Figure 9 as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

13. Select the ICCA boundary line on the map (in the desktop app) and press ‘Ctrl-i’ (or for a Mac use ‘Command-i’). This will bring up a black box in the bottom right corner of the map that contains the statistics for the area, including the area in kilometres squared (km²).
14. Select the blue box to switch between imperial and metric. You can then copy the ‘Area’ number in km\(^2\) and paste it into the ICCA details pane. Do not copy and paste the areas in hectares (ha).

What to do if the area is provided in m\(^2\)

If the area of the ICCA is smaller than 1 km\(^2\), it will be given in metres squared (m\(^2\)). You will need to convert the area into kilometres squared (km\(^2\)) before adding the figure to the ICCA details pane. You can do this by dividing the area in m\(^2\) by 1,000,000. For example, an area of 221,100 m\(^2\) divided by 1,000,000 is 0.2211 km\(^2\).

![Figure 9. The dialogue box that appears when you calculate the area of an ICCA using the Mapeo for ICCAs desktop app. Click the blue box to change from ‘Imperial’ to ‘Metric’.](image)

Record other features of your ICCA

In addition to recording points along the ICCA boundary, you can choose to record other features of the ICCA using the Mapeo for ICCAs mobile and desktop app. This information is not passed onto UNEP-WCMC when submitting your ICCA to the ICCA Registry or Protected Planet Initiative databases. However, you might want to use the mapped features for other purposes.

Both the mobile and desktop apps give you the option to record the following features:

- Community Resource
- Conservation Site
- Historical or Cultural Site
- ICCA Boundary
- Other
- Path
- Settlement
- Threat or Impact
- Tourism

![Figure 10. Optional features that you can record in the mobile and desktop apps.](image)
Recording other features in the mobile app

Please refer to Figure 11 as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

1. Open the Mapeo for ICCAs mobile app.
2. Stand at the location of the feature.
3. Record it in the app using the ‘+’ button.
4. Select the type of feature that you would like to add and provide more information on the feature.

![Figure 11. How to mark features of an ICCA using the Mapeo for ICCAs mobile app, using the example of marking a ‘Historical or Cultural Site’.

Recording other features in the Desktop app

Please refer to Figure 12 as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

1. Open the Mapeo for ICCAs desktop app.
2. Select ‘Point’ at the top of the map.
3. This will turn your mouse into a ‘+’ icon.
4. Move the ‘+’ to the location of the feature of the map and click.
5. Select the type of feature that you would like to add and provide more information on the feature using the left-hand panel.

![Figure 12. How to mark features of an ICCA using the Mapeo for ICCAs desktop app.}
After mapping your ICCA

This section describes what you can do after you have mapped your ICCA, such as view and filter the information collected, or export the information for submission to the ICCA Registry and Protected Planet Initiative databases.

Step by step guide

View and filter the information collected

Please refer to Figure 13 as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

1. In the desktop app, click ‘Observations’ on the left-hand side of the screen. This will show you all the ‘Observations’ or points that have been collected using the Mapeo for ICCAs mobile app, which have been synced to the Desktop app.

![Figure 13. Observations in the desktop app.](image)

2. You can filter and select your observations based on different characteristics. For example, you can select to view observations that were collected within a certain date range or you can select observations from a certain category, e.g., ‘ICCA Boundary’. You can also select options under ‘What is happening here?’ and ‘What is found here?’. Note that this information is not sent to UNEP-WCMC with your ICCA information.

If you do not see any observations on the map when you click on this tab, this might be for one of the following reasons:

a. You have not yet synced your observations from the mobile app.

b. The sync has not been successful.

c. You have filters selected or a certain date range entered and need to remove the selections.
Export ICCA information to UNEP-WCMC

You can export your ICCA information to UNEP-WCMC for inclusion in the ICCA Registry and Protected Planet Initiative databases. You can also export the data to others, or to your computer for your own use.

Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)

Before any ICCA data can be submitted to UNEP-WCMC through the Mapeo for ICCAs app, your community must have agreed to share the data through a process of **Free, Prior and Informed consent (FPIC)**. FPIC is a specific right that pertains to indigenous peoples and is recognised in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDIPR). It allows indigenous peoples to give or withhold consent for a project that may affect them or their territories. Once they have given their consent, they can withdraw it at any stage. Furthermore, FPIC enables them to negotiate the conditions under which the project will be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. This is also embedded within the universal right to self-determination. FPIC principles are applied in the context of the ICCA Registry and Protected Planet Initiative databases to prevent ICCA data being shared without the consent of its custodians.

Please refer to **Figure 14** and **Figure 15** as a visual guide as you go through these instructions.

3. Export the boundaries you have drawn on the Mapeo for ICCAs desktop app by clicking this symbol ("":"") in the top right-hand corner of the screen and selecting “Export ICCA Export Package…” option.

4. Answer a series of questions relating to the consent and use of your ICCA data. You will only be able to export your data if all questions are answered.

5. Once you have answered all questions, click save at the bottom of the questionnaire.

6. This will open your file explorer where you can choose a suitable location to save your export file (e.g., in your Documents folder).

![Figure 14. How to export a 'Mapeo ICCA export package' using the Mapeo for ICCAs desktop application.](image)
7. **Create an account** on the "Mapeo for ICCAs" web portal. For this, you will need an internet connection and an email address.

8. Upload your ICCA information by going to the "Mapeo for ICCAs" web portal and signing into your account. Select the "+ ADD ICCA" button and navigate to your saved "Mapeo ICCA export package" within your file explorer. Select and open the file to upload it to your web account.

9. UNEP-WCMC will be alerted via email that you have uploaded your ICCA information. They will be in touch to confirm and proceed with the submission process.

10. If you would like to save your ICCA information as a pdf, you can click the 'Report' button above the map and select 'Save as pdf'.

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**Figure 15.** How to save your observation(s) as a pdf.
Frequently Asked Questions

This section provides frequently asked questions that may be helpful to you as you begin using the Mapeo for ICCAs app. For general questions relating to the Mapeo app, please visit the frequently asked questions page of the Mapeo app: https://docs.mapeo.app/frequently-asked-questions or refer to the user guide of the original Mapeo app: https://docs.mapeo.app/. Some of the same questions and descriptions are applicable to both Mapeo and Mapeo for ICCAs.

Below are some frequently asked questions that relate specifically to the ‘Mapeo for ICCAs’ app:

1. Where can I find other resources to support me in providing data to the ICCA Registry and Protected Planet Initiative databases?
   - https://wcmc.io/iccadatamanual
   - https://www.iccaregistry.org/en/participate/webinars

2. Who will be able to access / view the data once I have submitted to the ICCA Registry and Protected Planet Initiative databases?
   The information you submit will be accessible to Digital Democracy and UNEP-WCMC only. The information is stored in a private and secure online location, and accessible to you through your login details. When you are logged in, you can view, edit or delete your data at any time. If you choose to share your ICCA data with UNEP-WCMC, a unique URL will be generated and sent to iccaregistry@unep-wcmc.org so they can access the data. Once the data is published in the ICCA Registry and Protected Planet databases it will be visible depending on any restrictions chosen.

3. Can I download my data and share it with others?
   Yes, you have 2 options: 1. You can export a “Mapeo ICCA export package” containing your ICCA data to your desktop or to a USB drive. You can then share the data. 2. “Export territory data as GeoJSON”. Once you have downloaded the json file, you can open it in GIS and edit the boundary and attribute information from there.

4. Will UNEP-WCMC contact me after I have submitted my ICCA data?
   Yes, UNEP-WCMC will contact you via email to confirm they have received the data. They will also contact you once the data has been included in the ICCA Registry and/or Protected Planet Initiative databases, asking you any questions needed to finalise the ICCA data submission.

5. What is the difference between ‘Mapeo’, ‘Mapeo for ICCAs’ and the ‘Earth Defenders toolkit’?
   Mapeo is a mapping app developed in close collaboration with indigenous partners in the Amazon. It is used for documenting, monitoring and mapping many types of information. For example, it was used by the Waorani people to map villages and biodiversity in the Ecuadorian Amazon to defend against oil extraction in their territory: https://www.digital-democracy.org/ourwork/case_study_waorani/

   ‘Mapeo for ICCAs’ is a version of Mapeo developed specifically to support the mapping of ICCA boundaries and includes the requirements for submitting the information to the ICCA Registry and the Protected Planet Initiative databases.

   The Earth Defender’s toolkit is not an “App”. It is a collection of guides and best practices for using technology for defending the earth. It is co-created with several other NGOs and stems from Digital Democracy’s work alongside communities around the world and drawing upon the approaches that they have seen to be successful and sharing those in case-studies and guides.

   Mapeo is one of the tools that Digital Democracy recommends in this toolkit.

6. I’m getting an error, who do I contact for support?
   Please email iccaregistry@unep-wcmc.org with a description and screenshots of the issue.