

A close-up photograph of a bright red bird of paradise flower (Heliconia) in a lush, green tropical environment. The flower's large, pointed bracts are a deep red color, with some green visible at the base. The background is filled with various green leaves and ferns, creating a dense, natural setting.

South America Fire Fund

ANNEX: Behavior Change



ANNEX: Behavior Change

Executive Summary

The most powerful strategy to address fire in the Amazon is to prevent the most destructive fires from starting. Virtually every destructive fire burning across the Amazon, Chiquitania, and Pantanal has a human cause. At its core, this is a behavior change challenge. Beyond knowledge and skill gaps that training can close, the barriers driving fire use are structural, social, emotional, and economic: fire remains the path of least resistance because alternatives are unaffordable, social norms reinforce the practice, local traditions depend on it, and weak land tenure reduces the incentive to invest in stewardship whose long-term benefits may never accrue to the current user.

The most powerful strategy to address fire in the Amazon is to prevent the most destructive fires from starting. Virtually every destructive fire burning across the Amazon, Chiquitania, and Pantanal has a human cause. At its core, this is a behavior change challenge. Beyond knowledge and skill gaps that training can close, the barriers driving fire use are structural, social, emotional, and economic: fire remains the path of least resistance because alternatives are unaffordable, social norms reinforce the practice, local traditions depend on it, and weak land tenure reduces the incentive to invest in stewardship whose long-term benefits may never accrue to the current user.

Because fire is deeply embedded in the social, economic, and ecological realities of these landscapes, banning fires has proven ineffective or, worse, counterproductive. Supporting smarter, safer practices and behaviors that reduce the risk of escaped fires holds far greater promise for lasting change. We identified four target audiences and assessed their capability, opportunity, and motivation to adopt fire-smart behaviors, which revealed that physical opportunity constraints outweigh knowledge gaps as the binding barrier. For agricultural land users, the highest-return interventions expand access to fire-smart alternatives (e.g., agroforestry, burn calendars tied to real-time risk data, firebreaks) while addressing the economic barriers that make open burning the default. Critically, individual behavior is shaped by what land users see and believe their neighbors are doing: the neighbor effect. Therefore, social norm interventions, community-wide engagement, and collective, coordinated action are essential for widespread adoption of alternatives and sustained results at scale.

As a cross-cutting initiative, the behavior change strategy directly supports the Fire Fund's financial incentives and technology innovation workstreams.

However, external incentives alone are insufficient for long-term behavioral adoption. The deeper psychological goal is cultivating genuine land stewardship: a sense of responsibility for the landscape that persists even when rewards are absent.

Proposed Interventions

The strategy takes an audience-first approach and operates across the Fire Fund's three core strategies in parallel, ensuring each intervention reinforces the others. It targets four interconnected audiences: agricultural land users (primary), broader communities (norm diffusion and social pressure), fire response teams (trusted champions and first responders), and fire governance committees (institutional foundation for local rule-setting and compliance).

Fire Prevention and Resilient Stewardship (Core Strategy 1): Interventions work alongside financial innovation to address the economic barriers that put fire-smart alternatives out of reach for most smallholders. Farmer associations build shared responsibility and collective commitment to fire-safe land management. Municipal fire governance committees are supported in developing locally appropriate fire rules, enforcement protocols, and accountability mechanisms, providing regulatory incentives for the correct use of fire.

Enhanced Detection and Coordinated Rapid Response (Core Strategy 2): Fire brigades, already identified as trusted and admired actors across LFTs, serve as dual-role ambassadors: trained for rapid response through the technology workstream, and equipped to champion fire prevention within their communities. Recognition and professional pride programs reinforce brigade culture and performance.

Integrated Fire Information and Decision Systems (Core Strategy 3): Risk forecasting data reaches land users in plain-language, visually accessible formats through radio, community apps, and printed materials in local languages. User-friendly decision tools translate complex risk data into clear, actionable responses during fire events.

Should additional funds become available, a cross-LIFT branding and public communications campaign will build regional identity and collective ownership around responsible fire use.

Key Partners and Stakeholders

Four stakeholder groups anchor the strategy: (1) agricultural land users, including crop farmers, cattle ranchers, and Indigenous communities; (2) broader communities in adjacent fire-risk areas, critical for norm diffusion and social pressure; (3) fire response teams, serving as both operational actors and trusted community influencers; and (4) fire governance committees, providing the institutional foundation for place-based fire management rules and compliance.

Strategic Relevance

The behavior change component functions as a force multiplier across the Fire Fund. LIFT teams embedded in communities strengthen social capital and reinforce uptake of financial and technology interventions, ensuring they reach and resonate with the people they are designed for. Incorporating emotional and motivational drivers of change into the strategy accelerates, diffuses, and sustains behavior adoption. The approach is evidence-based and adaptive, combining qualitative and quantitative research to inform strategy design, establish baselines, and track changes in knowledge, attitudes,

and behaviors over three years. By the end of the test phase, the Fund will have produced a validated, LIFT-differentiated behavior change methodology for fire prevention and response with tested interventions and metrics ready to scale across the broader South America Fire effort.

1. Technical Analysis

The analysis informing this strategy draws on published behavioral and conservation science literature, consultations with practitioners working across the target ecoregions, and insights gathered during stakeholder convenings. These inputs were synthesized using a COM-B diagnostic framework, which examines how Capability, Opportunity, and Motivation interact to produce or inhibit target behaviors across each priority audience. The findings below are presented as hypotheses grounded in available evidence rather than definitive conclusions. As a first and foundational step of the Fund's early implementation phase, target audience research - the cornerstone of any effective behavior change strategy - will be conducted to validate and refine these hypotheses before full implementation begins. This step is critical: only with a nuanced understanding of the four identified target audiences – their motivations, constraints, trusted sources, and the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which behaviors occur - can we responsibly design and describe LIFT-differentiated behavior change interventions.

1.1 Key Findings

While most initiatives have traditionally focused on strengthening the capacity to respond to and combat fires once they occur, there is a growing recognition of the critical need to shift greater attention to fire prevention by addressing behaviors that contribute to the start and spread of destructive fires (accidental and intentional). This includes not only what land users do on their own land, but whether the

governance systems around them, including the rules, enforcement protocols, and accountability mechanisms that define what is permitted and what carries consequences, are clear, credible, and locally legitimate. Where fire rules are absent, poorly communicated, or unenforced, even motivated land users lack the normative and institutional context that enables sustained behavior change.

The table below summarizes the key target audiences and associated behavior goals identified, whose practices, norms, and decisions play a critical role in how fire is used and prevented across the six LIFTs. While these audiences are consistent across LIFTs, it is expected that they will be at different stages of change for each behavior at each LIFT, requiring tailored behavior change interventions accordingly.

For example, agricultural land users in Paragominas (Pará, Brazil) are expected to be at a more advanced stage of change - open and motivated to adopt fire-smart practices - and interventions will therefore likely focus on addressing social, cultural, and financial barriers to adoption through behavioral levers such as financial mechanisms and public recognition for those adopting desired practices. In contrast, agricultural land users in Iñapari (Madre de Dios, Peru) appear to be at the early stages of change, often less aware of the risks of uncontrolled fire and the alternatives available to them, requiring interventions such as information sessions and visual materials to first build knowledge, awareness, and a positive attitude toward fire prevention. Additionally, unlike Brazil and Bolivia, Peruvian law prohibits

the use of fire entirely — with the exception of Indigenous territories under ILO Convention 169 — even when planned and controlled, making government engagement for locally appropriate rules a particularly critical condition for success in Iñapari.

These examples reinforce why starting with target audience research to ground-truth and tailor these findings is essential. Confirming the behaviors and findings below at the LIFT level is what will enable the program to design behavior change interventions that are truly LIFT-specific, contextually grounded, and positioned to drive meaningful change.

Audience	Umbrella Behavior Goal	Sub-behaviors included	Connection to Core Strategies
Agricultural land users (“Farmers”) Crop farmers. Cattle ranchers. Indigenous communities	Actively use fire-smart/safe practices on their land to protect forests, avoid unwanted fires, and prevent fires from escaping.	Fire-smart land management practices, including avoiding fire altogether. Maintain standing forests (i.e., no (fire-based) deforestation). Post-fire accelerated and fire-resistant land restoration practices. Early detection, warning, and rapid response to fire events.	Core Strategy 1, Objectives 1-4. Core Strategy 3, Objective 3.
Broader Community: Community members residing near Farmers and in adjacent fire risk areas.	Actively prevent fires from starting and spreading.	Reduce wildfire risk from household-level fires, like trash burning and mosquito control, by following burn/no-burn rules. Serve as first responders to property-based fire events. Spread risk and alert messages within the community, especially among last-mile households. Apply social pressure to farmers to adopt fire-smart practices.	Core Strategy 1, Objectives 1, 2 & 4. Core Strategy 3, Objective 3.

Fire Response Teams, comprised of: Official Government fire brigades Community-led or volunteer fire brigades	Respond to fire events rapidly, efficiently, and successfully, and serve as trusted messengers	Expand, strengthen, and equip fire brigades. Establish an easy-to-understand risk and alert system. Cross-border coordination, communication mechanisms, and protocols for fire events. Share accurate information with community members and land users about fire prevention and response.	Core Strategy 2, Objectives 1-5. Core Strategy 3, Objective 4.
Fire Governance Committees, comprised of: Municipal Gov't staff Farmers Community members Fire Brigade members Enforcement Team members Policymakers Private sector	Develop and implement an integrated fire management, prevention, and response plan.	Adopt new or improved risk-forecasting and fire-detection systems. Set locally-appropriate rules, enforcement protocols, and penalties for agricultural and household fire use, as well as for fire deliberately set to cause uncontrolled burning. Establish coordination and communication mechanisms and protocols (cross-boundary and within the Municipality).	Core Strategy 2, Objectives 1-5. Core Strategy 3, Objectives 1-4.

Five key findings anchor the behavior change strategy

Finding 1: Fire is a collective action challenge, not just an individual behavior change need.

Four interrelated social dynamics perpetuate deforestation and escaped fires across the three ecoregions: Wildfire risk is inherently shared across properties, so no individual can fully protect themselves, regardless of how carefully they manage their own land.

Burning decisions are often informed and driven by social observation and imitation, with farmers timing burns based on what neighbors are doing rather than a coordinated plan.

The willingness to adopt fire-safe practices is conditional on others doing the same. When farmers perceive their neighbors are not complying, their own motivation erodes.

Responsibility for fires is often contested, with different groups blaming each other. This diffusion of responsibility weakens accountability and shifts attention away from collective and coordinated solutions.

These dynamics indicate that individual-level interventions alone are insufficient — and since fire's threat cuts across socio-economic and political divides, it becomes a rare uniting force for collective action. The entry point for durable change must therefore be the community: collective fire agreements, coordinated burn windows, shared accountability, and social norms that increase social capital and make fire-smart behavior the expected default. Addressing the neighbor problem is therefore the strategic priority, and farmer associations and community-level engagement and governance structures are the primary vehicles for doing so.

Finding 2: Economics, not knowledge, is the binding constraint for agricultural land users.

For most agricultural land users, fire use is a rational response to structural conditions, not a symptom of ignorance. Fire is free, immediately effective, and widely available. Fire-smart alternatives, such as agroforestry inputs and fire-smart or fire-free equipment, carry upfront costs that smallholders often cannot absorb. Weak or absent land tenure rights further reduce the incentive to invest in long-term stewardship, since the future benefits of that investment may never accrue to the current user. These physical opportunity constraints are often more binding than knowledge or motivation gaps. Communication and training alone cannot overcome them. For this reason, the interventions associated with this finding are largely covered under the Financial Innovation workstream, which must be implemented in tandem with the behavior change strategy to design and implement the LIFT-specific financial mechanisms and incentive structures needed to achieve sustained results. Across the six LIFTs, these mechanisms include outcomes-based finance, jREDD, fire-criteria

credits, carbon and biodiversity credits, parametric insurance, partial credit guarantees, and savings clubs. The latter are of particular relevance to the behavior change strategy and are proposed initially in Santarém and Cruzeiro do Sul (Brazil) and Tahuamanu (Iñapari, Peru). Beyond their financial function, savings clubs are by design vehicles for community organization and social capital building, directly reinforcing the collective action and norm-shifting goals at the heart of this strategy.

Finding 3: Extrinsic incentives can unlock change, but intrinsic motivation must follow.

Financial incentives are necessary to shift the economic calculus in the near term, particularly where fire-smart alternatives carry real costs. Evidence from comparable programs confirms that even modest payments can deter fire use during high-risk periods when alternatives are not yet economically self-sustaining. However, programs that rely exclusively on external rewards risk creating dependency rather than building a lasting stewardship identity. When incentives end or become uncertain, behavior reverts unless a deeper motivation has taken root. The most durable change occurs when financial incentives are phased alongside emotional appeals and social norm shifts, so that protecting the landscape becomes part of how communities understand and present themselves, independent of financial reward.

Finding 4: Fire brigades hold untapped potential as community champions for prevention.

Fire brigades occupy a distinctive position in rural communities: they are trusted, visible, and locally respected. Their work is witnessed and celebrated during emergencies, giving them a form of social capital that few other actors possess. Yet this

influence has historically been directed exclusively toward response, not prevention.

Evidence from comparable programs demonstrates that trusted community figures who actively model and advocate for new practices accelerate norm adoption significantly faster than external educators or top-down campaigns. Training brigade members in the benefits of fire-smart and fire-free practices and equipping them to carry that message proactively into their communities represents a high-leverage, cost-efficient channel for behavior change that the SAFF program is uniquely positioned to activate.

That said, different brigades will be at varying readiness levels for this role, and implementation will need to align with the broader technology strategy, which appears to be primarily focused on volunteer brigades. Readiness is in large part a function of whether brigades are voluntary or full-time. Volunteer brigades, by nature, have limited availability and competing livelihood demands that constrain how much additional capacity they can absorb. Full-time brigades, by contrast, operate with dedicated personnel whose primary occupation is fire-related work - this makes them significantly better positioned to take on expanded roles in community engagement, behavior change communication, and proactive prevention outreach without the same constraints on time and availability. For this reason, the full-time brigade model offers a more immediate entry point. The full-time brigade operating in Corumbá and the advanced brigade model in Roboré represent natural entry points to pilot this approach quickly and generate early evidence before scaling to other LIFTs.

Finding 5: Defended Fire Use Requires a Fire-Smart Transition

Fire use remains a rational and deeply embedded land management practice for many agricultural land users because it is a cheap and efficient way to prepare land and manage weeds and pests. As a result, many farmers actively defend the use of fire as necessary for production and livelihoods. The core challenge is therefore not fire use itself, but the increasing risk of uncontrolled and escaped fires. Although the readiness to move beyond fire use varies across LIFTs, behavior change strategies should not begin by asking communities to stop using fire. Instead, they should first build community readiness for change by promoting fire-smart practices that reduce the risk of fires escaping (e.g., coordination, safer burning practices, and monitoring), laying the groundwork for a gradual reduction in dependence on fire-based land management over time. Tentatively during the third year of the test fund, this transition will be piloted first in LIFTs with higher readiness levels, such as Paragominas (Pará, Brazil), before being applied more broadly.

1.2 Comparative Insights or Case Examples

Cammelli, F., Garrett, R. D., Barlow, J., & Parry, L. (2020). Fire risk perpetuates poverty and fire use among Amazonian smallholders. Global Environmental Change, 63, 102096.

Abstract (excerpt): We provide evidence that fire risk in the Brazilian Amazon, the world's largest remaining tropical forest, perpetuates low yield and environmentally degrading agricultural activities. Using a combination of household interviews and remotely sensed data on fire occurrence in Eastern Amazon municipalities of Paragominas and Santarém - two of the Fund's six priority LIFTs - we show that smallholders in consolidated farm-forest frontier regions are locked into a vicious cycle that inhibits their adoption of fire-free practices. To overcome this fire-poverty trap, a "big push" of coordinated local incentives is needed. Policies mitigating fire risk may achieve a triple-win that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, forest degradation, and fosters inclusive economic development. These findings directly validate the emphasis on collective action and financial innovation at the heart of this behavior change strategy; an approach designed to shift the economic and social calculus that keeps smallholders locked into fire dependence.

Winkler-Schor, S., & Brauer, M. (2025). What Happens When Payments End? Fostering Long-Term Behavior Change With Financial Incentives. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 20(5), 925-940.

Abstract (excerpt): Financial incentives are widely used to get people to adopt desirable behaviors. Many small landholders in developing countries, for

example, receive multiyear payments to engage in conservation behaviors, and the hope is that they will continue to engage in these behaviors after the program ends. Although effective in the short term, financial incentives rarely lead to long-term behavior change because program participants tend to revert to their initial behaviors soon after the payments stop. In this article, we propose that four psychological constructs can be leveraged to increase the long-term effectiveness of financial-incentive programs: motivation, habit formation, social norms, and recursive processes.

1.3 Gaps and Risks

Risk – Overlap with electoral campaigns:

The timing of national or local government elections may coincide with the implementation of the social marketing and behavior change campaign. During electoral periods, political actors are actively campaigning, which creates a risk that fire prevention messaging or campaign activities could be perceived as being associated with, or supportive of, a particular political campaign. This could undermine the perceived neutrality of the initiative and reduce trust among communities or stakeholders.

Mitigation approach:

Campaign timing and messaging will be carefully coordinated to avoid overlap with electoral campaign periods where possible. Messaging will remain strictly non-political and focused on community safety, livelihoods, and environmental stewardship, and campaign activities will be implemented through trusted local partners to maintain credibility and neutrality.

Risk - Behavior change backlash:

For all behavior change communications and outreach efforts, there is a risk that interventions will inadvertently reinforce existing social inequalities, cause unintended community harm, or trigger local resistance (e.g., intra-household tensions or pushback against shifts in established land-use practices). This is particularly relevant when providing economic incentives, promoting fire-smart alternatives, or engaging communities where fire use is tied to cultural practice, economic necessity, or contested land tenure arrangements, all of which can implicate existing power dynamics.

Mitigation approach:

All behavior change campaigns and communication products must be designed and reviewed through a Do No Harm lens. Materials must be pre-screened to ensure they are culturally sensitive, locally appropriate, and accessible (e.g., using local languages, visual formats, and channels appropriate to low-connectivity contexts). It is ideal to secure buy-in from community members, families, and local leaders on behavior change goals and communication plans before launching broader campaigns, and establish clear feedback mechanisms to track and respond to unintended consequences or community resistance in real time.

Risk - Dependency and withdrawal:

Communities or land users become reliant on financial incentives to maintain fire-smart behaviors, and revert to burning when incentives are reduced, discontinued, or irregularly paid.

Mitigation approach:

Financial incentives should be designed as a bridge to lasting behavior change, not a permanent subsidy. From the outset, incentive programs must be paired with investments in intrinsic motivation and social norm shifts so that fire-smart behaviors become self-sustaining when incentives are phased out. Monitoring should track whether change is being internalized or remains incentive-dependent, allowing for timely adjustments.



2. Proposed Intervention Strategy

The behavior change strategy is organized around human-centered approaches that work across core strategies and geographic scales to reshape the social, economic, and institutional environment in which fire decisions are made. The intervention plan aims to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Build the social infrastructure, community-level conditions, and behavioral evidence base for fire-smart adoption across LIFT geographies. Test incentive and norm-shifting interventions that can be validated and scaled.
2. Harness wildfire's unique character as being both the problem and at the same time the uniting force for collective action and motivation for building community-wide fire agreements, coordinated governance, and a social norm of fire-smart behavior.
3. Strengthen fire brigade capability, motivation, and community standing; establish fire risk alert systems; and activate brigades as messengers for fire-smart practices, drawing on their trusted status and professional pride as powerful motivational levers for broader community engagement.
4. Strengthen governance and enforcement infrastructure that defines the enabling conditions for compliance, including illicit wildfires: locally appropriate fire rules, clear communication of those rules to land users and communities, and accountability mechanisms.
5. Ensure that fire risk information reaches land users and communities in formats they can understand and act on, and that behavioral implications of risk data are communicated clearly and consistently.
6. Build a movement around responsible fire use and prevention; activating shared and place-based identity, collective pride, and emotional connection to the land as the foundation for lasting behavior change that persists beyond external incentives.

2.1 Core Activities by Objectives and Scenario

Behavior change is most directly expressed through **Core Strategy 1**. The activities below engage three target audiences: agricultural land users, the broader community, and fire governance committees, to prevent destructive fires from starting and spreading through shifted norms, economic incentives, collective governance, and culturally appropriate land management practices.

Behavior change contributes to **Core Strategy 2** through two methods:

- Strengthening fire brigade capacity and motivation for rapid, high-quality response.
- Equipping brigades to serve as trusted community champions for fire prevention, extending their influence beyond response into the norm-shifting work of Strategy 1.

For **Core Strategy 3**, behavior change interventions ensure that fire detection, risk forecasting, and decision-support data are translated into communication formats that are actionable and relevant for communities, land users, and volunteer brigades.

The proposed activities are based on available evidence, expert consultations, and insights gathered during the strategy development process. However, as with any behavior change initiative, these approaches will need to be further validated and refined once implementation begins. As mentioned, early-stage activities (CC.4) will therefore include ground-truthing assumptions directly with the key target audiences to ensure that interventions are appropriately tailored to local contexts, realities, and perceptions.

Activity	Description	Audience(s)	Partner/s
Cross-cutting			
CC.1	Conservation X Labs provides strategic and technical guidance for behavior change strategies across the six LIFTs, oversees the regional social marketing campaign, and coordinates with partners and technical experts to support effective implementation.	na	na
CC.2	Establish, contract, and equip LIFT implementation teams that act as the delivery mechanism for behavior change interventions at the landscape level.	na	LIFT consortia
CC.3	Behavior Change (BC) Training and Coaching: Ongoing training and coaching to build place-based BC capacity and support the design, implementation, and measurement of the LIFT-tailored behavior change strategies.	(LIFT teams)	TBD
CC.4	Conduct LIFT-specific qualitative and quantitative behavioral research (Year 0–1) to identify barriers, map social norms, and confirm behavioral hypotheses for each priority LIFT. Research outputs directly inform LIFT-level behavior change strategies and intervention designs.	Agricultural Land Users, Broader Community Fire brigades	LIFT consortia
CC.5	LIFT-level implementation of behavior change strategies incorporating audience-specific cultural, material, and motivational tactics informed by behavioral research and, where relevant, drawing on activities under Strategies 1, 2, and 3. (see below)	Agricultural Land Users, Broader Community Fire brigades	LIFT consortia
Strategy 1, Objective 1: Escaped fires reduced via enhanced management and prevention plans			
Activity 1.1	Co-develop community fire management plans, with incorporated comms plans and participatory burn calendars grounded in local ecological knowledge and real-time fire risk data. Shared plans increase community ownership of fire rules, strengthen compliance, and create a governance foundation for coordinated action during high-risk periods.	Agricultural Land Users, Fire Governance Committees	LIFT consortia
Activity 1.2	Strengthen municipal fire governance committees. Hold constructive planning sessions with governance committees, enforcement teams, and community stakeholders. Support governance committees to develop integrated fire management plans with clear rules, coordination, and enforcement protocols, and accountability mechanisms that reinforce fire-smart community norms.	Fire Governance Committees	LIFT consortia

Strategy 1, Objective 2: Fire-free and fire-smart land management practices tested and adopted by land users			
Activity 1.3	Establish and support Farmers' Associations in each priority LIFT, with a formal commitment to fire prevention. Associations serve as the primary vehicle for social norm change, collective governance, peer learning, and resource-sharing. This forms the backbone of the collective action approach and creates the social infrastructure for coordinated burn windows and shared compliance.	Agricultural Land Users	LIFT consortia
Activity 1.4	Build farmers' capacity in fire-smart and fire-free land management practices, weather forecasting, fire response protocols, and restoration practices. Use participatory training methods with visually forward farmer guidebooks and decision trees in local languages. Leverage farmer associations as peer learning vehicles and integrate early adopter testimonials to build self-efficacy and shift social norms.	Agricultural Land Users	LIFT consortia
Activity 1.5	Train community members in fire-smart and fire-free practices, burn/no-burn rules, and fire response protocols. Engage the broader community in the value of being a fire-smart community and recruit volunteers to communicate fire risk alerts to last-mile households. Community members are a critical delivery channel for norm diffusion and social pressure on land users.	Broader Community	LIFT consortia
Activity 1.6	Deploy norm-shifting communications using commitment devices, peer pledges, and social proof to make fire-smart behavior visible and socially rewarded. Develop site-specific materials, including visual-forward guidebooks, burn/no-burn decision tools, and behavioral messaging adapted for local languages and literacy levels.	Agricultural Land Users, Broader Community	LIFT consortia
Activity 1.7	Events, conferences, and learning Exchanges, including learning from other regions. For example, tap into the Paamari initiative Indigenous community organizations on fire prevention and direct cash incentives	All audiences	Cross-border coordination team
Activity 1.8	Professional photography and videography	CXL, LIFT consortia partners, communities	TBD
Strategy 1, Objective 4: Innovative incentive systems tested and implemented.			
Activity 1.9	Design and pilot financial incentive mechanisms (outcomes-based payments, community savings clubs, biodiversity credits, fire suppression credits, etc.) to make fire-smart and fire-free practices economically competitive with fire-based land clearing. Incentive schedules should be designed to fade over time and be supplemented by social norm reinforcement to avoid creating long-term dependency.	Agricultural Land Users, Broader Community	Financial innovation

Strategy 2, Objective 1: Integrated fire response plans developed; brigade coordination strengthened			
Activity 2.1	Train fire brigade members as community champions for fire prevention. Build brigade capacity in fire-smart practices and the benefits of preventative action, and equip them to carry that message proactively into their communities during the off-season. Brigade members hold a form of trusted social authority that few other actors possess; this activity converts that authority into a norm-shifting channel that operates alongside the community engagement activities in Core Strategy 1.	Fire Response Teams	Technology and Response
Activity 2.2	Develop PPE and fire response compliance messaging for brigade members. Design recognition and rewards programs, including local media coverage and community celebration, that reinforce desired brigade behaviors such as PPE adoption, equipment maintenance, and response time targets. Build a culture of professional pride and shared commitment to fast, high-quality response.	Fire Response Teams	Technology and Response
Strategy 2, Objective 3: Fire brigades demonstrate improved suppression effectiveness			
Activity 2.3	Support the development and launch of a simple, accessible fire risk alert system for brigades, farmers, and the broader community. Train brigade members on how to use and communicate the alert system, and develop clear protocols for escalation and community notification during a fire event. An easy-to-understand risk tool that brigades actively communicate builds community trust and extends brigade influence beyond emergency response.	Fire Response Teams, Broader Community, Agricultural Land Users	Technology and response
Strategy 3, Objective 3: Agencies and the public access and use improved fire detection and risk information to inform behavior			
Activity 3.1	Develop a communications framework for fire risk data that translates technical detection and forecasting outputs into plain-language, visual-forward formats for community audiences. This includes color-coded burn/no-burn guidance, smoke and health alerts, and seasonal risk summaries distributed through radio, community apps, and printed materials in local languages.	Agricultural Land Users, Broader Community	Technology and response
Activity 3.2	Develop targeted media training for local and regional journalists and campaign influencers to improve the accuracy, nuance, and constructiveness of fire reporting. Train journalists to correctly use fire information and distinguish between destructive burning, culturally appropriate fire use, and fire-smart practices. Accurate media coverage creates a more enabling norm environment for behavior change, while promoting a fair and positive narrative around livelihood-based fire use to support behavior change.	Broader Community (via media reach)	Consultant(s) in media training. TBD
Strategy 3, Objective 4: Fire response agencies and brigades use coordinated decision support tools			
Activity 3.3	Develop a messaging playbook for brigade members and community outreach coordinators on how to communicate fire risk data and alert system information to farmers and community members. Complement with training on the fire risk alert system developed under Strategy 2 (Activity 2.3).	Fire Response Teams, Agricultural Land Users, Broader Community	

Scenario 2: \$100M

Launch a unifying cross-regional campaign that extends fire-smart norms beyond direct program participants to the broader South American public.

Activity	Description	Audience(s)	Partner/s
Strategy 1, Objective 2 (continued): Fire-smart and fire-free practices scaled across regions			
Activity 1.10	High-visibility outreach campaigns	All audiences, all LIFTs	TBD
Activity 1.11	Hire a regional brand and marketing agency to develop and launch a cross-regional behavior change campaign anchored by a unifying umbrella brand for fire stewardship. The campaign promotes the social and economic benefits of being fire-smart, builds place-based pride and conservation identity, and amplifies norm-shifting work at the LIFT level.	Broader Community, Agricultural Land Users	

2.2 Implementation Model

Conservation X Labs (CXL) will provide overall strategic and technical guidance for the development and implementation of behavior change strategies across the six LIFTs and, should additional funding be secured, will also oversee the regional umbrella social marketing and behavior change campaign. In this role, the team will coordinate closely with LIFT consortia, and technical consultants to ensure that LIFT teams receive the support needed to design, implement, and measure effective behavior change interventions.

At the landscape level, the development and implementation of the BC strategies will be led by dedicated, place-based LIFT teams comprising a project manager and three to four trusted community outreach fellows (COFs). The project manager serves as the liaison among stakeholder groups in the landscape, acts as the main point of contact for CXL, and oversees the work of the COFs whose primary task is to serve as the bridge between the project and local communities, facilitating engagement and co-design with the local target audiences and community champions, and implementation of behavior change interventions.

The LIFT teams will receive specialized training and coaching throughout the three-year implementation period to design, implement, and measure behavior change strategies that ensure local ownership, knowledge, and cultural practices. This includes methods for qualitative and quantitative audience research, COM-B and other behavioral analysis tools, social marketing, barrier removal, branding, and behavior change impact measurement.

The program will follow a structured cycle in which four training phases alternate with field implementation periods, during which teams receive coaching and apply tools and approaches directly in their landscapes; spanning research, strategy development, implementation, and measurement and learning. This design ensures training is explicitly oriented toward real-world application, supporting the development and launch of behavior change strategies — beginning in year 1 — that facilitate the adoption of desired behaviors among prioritized target audiences.

Institutional/Staff resources in LIFT	Profile and Responsibilities at a Glance
Conservation X Labs Behavioral Design Team (2 staff)	Role: Oversee behavior change strategy development and implementation across LIFTs; coordinate alignment with other Fire Fund workstreams; manage PIMs, consultants, budgets, and implementing partners; and support donor coordination and reporting in line with overall Fire Fund goals and indicators.
LIFT BC Implementation Partner (BCIP)	Profile: Consortia partners. Trusted relationships with Indigenous and local communities; Deep knowledge of local realities and legal context; Logistical infrastructure to operate across remote and hard-to-reach areas; Ability to reach last-mile communities and farmers. Role: Provide institutional, admin and logistical support to BC team (e.g., office space, internet, computer for PIM, and facilitates transport)
LIFT Project Implementation Manager	Profile: University degree in communications or conservation with an affinity for communications and the social side of conservation; 3–5 years of experience working with communities in the LIFT area; based in the departmental capital. Responsibilities: Leads development and implementation of LIFT-specific behavior change strategies; manages and supports field fellows; participates in BC training; liaises with regional governments and other key stakeholders; and serves as the LIFT point of contact for CXL behavioral design team.
Community Outreach Fellows	Profile: From the local community; recognized as a leader and trusted figure; technical or basic degree; computer and financially literate. Responsibilities: Supports qualitative and quantitative research for LIFT-specific behavior change strategies; leads day-to-day community outreach; and serves as the community-level extension link for technology, cross-border coordination, and financial innovation activities.

2.3 Integration with LIFTs

LIFT BC teams will be hosted and contracted through organizations already identified as Fire Fund consortia within each LIFT, rather than through additional organizations that would likely increase coordination demands and operational complexity for CXL and consortia without adding significant value.

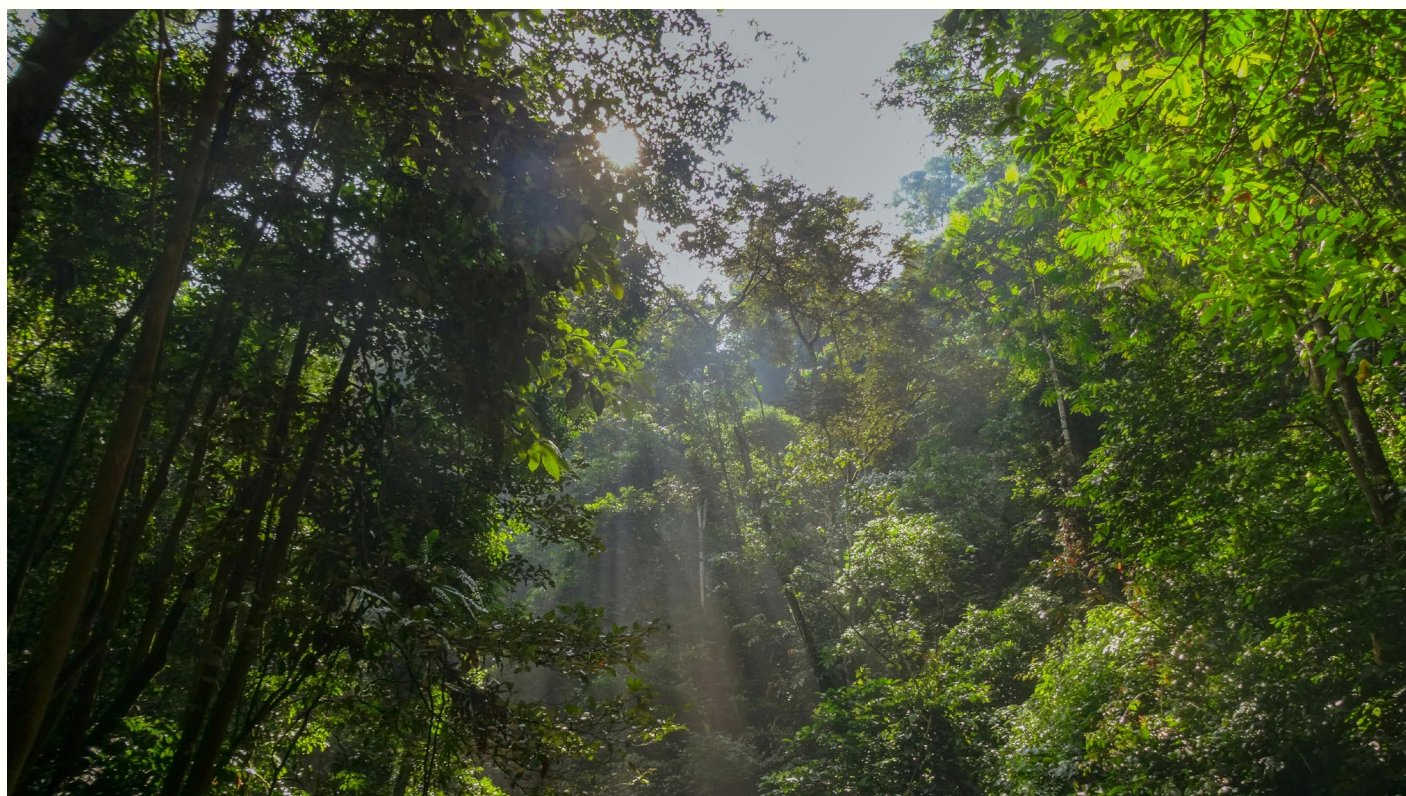
Because behavior change is a cross-cutting strategy within the Fire Fund, it is most effective when embedded within the consortia already leading other components of the initiative, ensuring it informs and reinforces their

work rather than operating in parallel to it. Embedding the BC strategy within these organizations ensures that behavior change considerations inform and reinforce the design and implementation of other Fire Fund interventions, such as financial innovation, technology, and cross-border coordination. In addition, consortia organizations have the profile and capacity to provide administrative and logistical support, as well as elements of the technical support required for the behavior change work.

Beyond integration, embedding behavior change capacity within the LIFT consortia contributes directly to the long-term sustainability of the strategy. As LIFT BC teams work alongside consortia staff, knowledge transfer and institutional learning reduce reliance on external technical support over time, strengthening the overall resilience of the Fire Fund's impact.

Consortia also have trusted relationships with Indigenous and local communities and a strong understanding of the local realities and legal context. They have logistical structures in place that allow LIFT teams to move through the LIFT territory, including remote and difficult-to-access areas, and facilitate reaching last-mile communities and farmers. As a result, they are well-positioned to begin implementation quickly and “hit the ground running.”

Overall, having consortia host the LIFT teams will reduce coordination and logistical complexity, accelerate implementation, and ensure that behavior change strategies are effectively embedded within broader program activities.



3. Budget and Resource Requirements

An anchor investment of approximately \$2,300,000 deploys six LIFT behavior change teams, each composed of one field lead and three to four community outreach fellows, ensuring a continuous on-the-ground presence critical for sustained community-level behavior change and trust to reduce the incidence of escaped fires. It further enables these local teams and institutions to build their capacity to research and design contextually grounded LIFT-specific behavioral interventions for fire prevention - spanning technical, cultural, emotional, and social dimensions - while providing core funding for their implementation and technical support for strengthening community fire management.

A Full Test Fund Budget would allow increasing interventions in the initial six LIFTs and expanding the geographic reach through additional LIFTs.

Additional funding of about \$1,400,000 would allow the initial LIFTs to increase their on-the-ground presence as well as develop (i) high-visibility outreach campaigns around key global awareness days (e.g., Earth Day), (ii) the engagement of a regional agency to develop and launch a cross-regional fire stewardship brand and behavior change campaign, and (iii) professional photography and videography to support storytelling and social marketing across the LIFT landscapes - complementing and amplifying the place-based, LIFT-specific strategies with a unified regional narrative that accelerates collective identity and norm change for ecosystem stewardship and fire prevention at scale.

At approximately \$600,000 per additional LIFT, the highest-impact interventions could be tailored and expanded to new geographies and ecoregions, broadening the program's reach and reinforcing the coherence of regional fire stewardship efforts.

3.1 Sustainability

The behavior change strategy is designed with long-term sustainability as a core principle. Anchor funding from the Fire Fund is essential to build community trust, institutional capacity, and a behavioral evidence base that no other funding stream can build in isolation or at speed. Without this foundational investment, the conditions for innovative finance, innovative technology, and cross-border coordination will struggle to remain over time.

Additionally, the capacity and collaboration built among land users and community members through the first three years of the program is a sustainability mechanism within itself and can attract future programs to invest in areas where initial success and progress have been achieved.

The place-based capacity building model further reinforces sustainability by ensuring that local teams and institutions are equipped to lead, adapt, and continue behavior change work independently. Rather than relying on recurring external expertise, this approach transfers ownership of the methodology to the people closest to the problem, creating a self-reinforcing cycle where locally-owned capability drives ongoing implementation, and increases

the probability to attract further investment, and sustain impact well beyond the life of the initial funding. Importantly, the capacity built through this model extends beyond fire prevention and response. That is, local teams and institutions equipped with behavior change skills are well-positioned to apply this same approach to other pressing socio-environmental challenges in their regions, multiplying the long-term value of the initial investment.

3.2 Leveraging Opportunities

The behavior change strategy is designed to catalyze investment and partnership well beyond the initial funding window. By generating the community trust, behavioral data, and institutional capacity that other workstreams depend on, the strategy functions as an enabler for a range of additional funding opportunities. Outcomes-based and results-based financing mechanisms represent a significant opportunity. As the strategy establishes baselines and tracks measurable changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, it generates the performance data required to attract outcomes-based funders and advanced conservation finance instruments such as biodiversity credits and fire suppression credits. The financial innovation workstream is well-positioned to channel these instruments toward communities once behavioral evidence and community trust are in place.

Government co-investment is a natural downstream opportunity. Strengthened municipal fire governance committees and locally appropriate fire management plans create a direct entry point for municipal and national government budget allocation toward fire prevention. As the strategy demonstrates results, it positions local governments to take on a greater share of coordination and enforcement costs, reducing dependence on philanthropic funding over time.

The behavior change methodology, once validated, also holds significant replication value. A documented, evidence-based model for fire-smart behavior change in tropical forest landscapes is a high-value asset for conservation organizations, bilateral funders, and multilateral climate programs operating across the broader Amazon biomes. This positions the Fire Fund to attract co-funding from climate adaptation, food security, and land tenure programs whose objectives align with fire prevention but whose mandates have not historically included behavior change as a core investment area.

Finally, should additional funds be raised, the cross-regional campaign developed creates a platform for private sector partnership. Sustainable agribusinesses, retailers, and consumer brands operating in or sourcing from the region will be attracted to an opportunity to deepen their commitment and engagement through a credible, community-rooted fire stewardship campaign, with the potential to generate unrestricted brand funding that complements and extends the impact of philanthropic investment.