The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. The restoration of 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands in biomes around the world—in line with the forest landscape restoration approach—will create approximately USD 84 billion per year in net benefits that could bring direct additional income opportunities for rural communities. Economics of Land Degradation Initiative (ELDI) estimated that sustainable land management globally could create an additional 2.3 billion tonnes of crop production per year worth approximately USD 1.4 trillion, thus addressing the prevalent food crisis (ELDI 2013).

The landscape of India is as diverse as it is rich. A sizable portion of the country’s population live around forested landscapes. They are heavily dependent on the resources and services provided by these natural ecosystems. However, the march towards progress and economic growth has led to deforestation, degradation and fragmentation of forests and other ecosystems.

There is an urgent need to address the food, water and livelihood security for these local communities while ensuring long-term conservation of our forests. An integrated approach such as forest landscape restoration which engages all stakeholders in restoration activities is the way forward.

Forest landscape restoration is more than just planting trees—it is restoring a whole landscape to meet present and future needs by offering multiple benefits and land uses over time.

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**GLOBALY**

100 million hectares of tropical forests were converted to farmland from 1980 to 2012.

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**THE BONN CHALLENGE**

**INDIA ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE**

**INDIA’S POTENTIAL**

US$ 6.5 million economic benefit of restoration

1.99 GtCO₂ potential climate benefit

**PROGRESS SO FAR**

47 commitments

160.2 million hectares pledged; 94 million hectares till 2020 and 66 million hectares till 2030

15.66 GtCO₂ potential climate benefit

Source: www.bonnchallenge.org
FLR IN INDIA

India already has in place policies and laws aimed at participatory and sustainable management of degraded forests. Notable among them are the National Forest Policy (NFP), National Afforestation Programme (NAP), National Agroforestry Policy and Green India Mission (GIM). The Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) attempts to mitigate the losses that arise when forest lands are diverted for non-forest purposes.

Restoration efforts are carried out across regions by multiple implementing agencies.

Government agencies, especially the state forest departments, lead restoration efforts in the country. On ground implementation of restoration targets is made possible by active Joint Forest Management Committees. This partnership between the state forest departments and local communities is in line with forest landscape restoration.

Private companies undertake restoration of forests and other ecosystems either as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), or as a result of legal compliance (e.g., compensatory afforestation for forest land diversion) or as acts of philanthropy.

A number of Non-governmental organizations across the country have expertise in the field of forestry, biodiversity conservation and rural livelihood programmes. An ecosystem of knowledge through longstanding engagements at the grassroots, NGOs play a vital role in the planning and implementing stages of any restoration project. Specific restoration projects also extend, focus to unique and threatened ecosystems such as grasslands and mangroves.

India is appropriately positioned to meet its restoration commitments under the Bonn Challenge pledge. Policies have evolved to focus on restoring landscapes while ensuring that the associated benefits are available to people and habitats. IUCN will continue to engage with MoEFCC and document in finer detail the restoration efforts being carried out in all states by the various agencies and also encourage cross-learning between States and across agencies by promoting best practices, so that India’s progress towards the Bonn Challenge pledge continues unhindered.

Photographs: Kalyan Varma, Anushree Bhattacharjee

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WAY FORWARD

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Designed by DamageControl

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