



INDIA PROGRAMME

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The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with scientific knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together. Created in 1948, with India as one of the signatories, IUCN has evolved into the world's largest and most diverse environmental network. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its 1,300 Member organisations and the input of over 10,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. IUCN's experts are organised into six commissions dedicated to species survival, environmental law, protected areas, social and economic policy, ecosystem management, and education and communication.

IUCN has 38 Members from India and over 500 experts represented in the six IUCN Commissions. The India National Committee (INC) which is comprised of members of IUCN from India (representing Government institutions, research organisations and NGOs) works towards collaborative conservation efforts in India. The INC is chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest

and Climate Change (MoEFCC). IUCN has been granted the status of an autonomous, international non-profit organisation, in accordance with an MoU signed with the Government of India. Since its establishment in New Delhi in 2007, the office has implemented various programmes and projects relating to biodiversity conservation and wise use of natural resources. In addition, it has also worked on cross cutting areas viz. nature based solutions and engaging businesses for harmonising conservation and economic development.

Ongoing initiatives under various IUCN themes:

Marine and Polar:

The *Mangroves for the Future (MFF)* initiative aims to address threats to all coastal and marine ecosystems and communities across Asia. MFF in India currently focuses on building socio-ecological resilience of local coastal communities. Key outputs include strengthening of livelihoods and income security, science-based policy recommendations, knowledge and awareness products and capacity building of stakeholders for enhanced governance.

Species:

Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) initiative is an international collaboration under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) supporting elephant range countries in tracking trends related to the illegal killing of elephants across Africa and Asia. The sub-regional support unit for South Asia is hosted by IUCN in India and provides support in collating and analysing data on elephant carcasses collected by management agencies from 14 sites in South Asia (10 in India and one each in Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka) and identifies spatial, temporal and other trends in the illegal killing of elephants.

As part of the *South Asia Vulture* initiative, the Governments of India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, have signed a Regional Declaration for the conservation of endangered *Gyps* species. This initiative was steered by India culminating in the signing of a Delhi Declaration in 2012. India chaired this initiative until 2014 and Bangladesh is the current chair. The initiative has demonstrated how species having its distribution beyond national boundaries could be conserved through cooperation and knowledge sharing between range countries.

Water:

The *Regional Capacity Building - Water Governance* project seeks to develop training modules for professionals, bureaucrats and diplomats. These modules would be integrated in the curriculum of universities and other relevant institutions involved in capacity building of professionals on water governance. These learning modules will also be available online for use by various organisations across Asia.

Forests:

Forest landscape restoration (FLR) is the ongoing process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across deforested or degraded forest landscapes. It is more than just planting trees – it is restoring a whole landscape “forward” to meet present and future needs and to offer multiple benefits and land uses over time. The focus of the FLR programme in India has been to promote Bonn Challenge and to help the Government of India in documenting its progress made towards India’s Bonn Challenge pledge. To this end, it has meant compiling a report on India’s progress towards Bonn Challenge and organising a South Asia Regional Consultation on FLR and Bonn Challenge which saw the participation of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India and Sri Lanka. IUCN India has also piloted the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM), developed by IUCN in partnership with World Resources Institute (WRI), in the Himalayan State of Uttarakhand. The objective was to pilot and introduce the efficacy of ROAM to the State and also to provide technical assistance to the Government to create policy uptake of FLR assessment results.

Climate Change:

Coping with Uncertainties initiative in the Indian Himalayan Region looks at the impacts of climate change on livelihood needs of the people living in the three Himalayan States (Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim). Uncertainties in the availability of energy, water, fuel and fodder due to changing climate is being addressed through introduction of climate resilient interventions such as installation of micro-hydro, biogas plants and solar rooftop panels; as well as revival of natural springs, forest restoration, and creation of other income generation activities.

Business and Biodiversity:

IUCN Tata Steel partnership has resulted in the company adopting a Biodiversity Policy which includes the principle of no net loss of biodiversity. In addition, site-specific biodiversity management plans for Tata Steel’s mining operations in India, to minimise impacts on biodiversity have been developed and are currently under implementation.

IUCN Tata Power partnership works at both the Corporate and Plant level, in reviewing existing policies and approaches towards biodiversity conservation and developing guidance documents on mainstreaming global biodiversity standards into its existing policies and operations. Customisation of global biodiversity guidance for site level implementation and development of site specific Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Management Plan in its thermal plant Coastal Gujarat Power Ltd. are under implementation.

IUCN ABG partnership aims to review Aditya Birla Group (ABG)’s group-level draft biodiversity policy, technical standards and guidance notes. The partnership also includes preparation of biodiversity management plan for one of its high-priority sites, Ultratech Cement Ltd.

Leaders for Nature (LfN) seeks to engage leading private sector companies in various sectors to bring about transformational change in the way businesses should mainstream biodiversity concerns into its entire chain of operations. The programme organises series of capacity building workshops on natural capital and ways to minimise and offset ecological footprint of companies’ operations to its member companies and other interested stakeholders. Presently, LfN has 11 member companies.

The *Sustainable Agriscape for Future (SAFF)* – a partnership with ITC is being implemented in the Munger district of Bihar. Under this programme, ecosystem based interventions are being implemented for better crop productivity, while establishing sustainability of various ecosystem services. The learnings from these interventions would enable the design and development of a tool box on integrating key ecosystem services for sustainable agriculture that could be replicated in other areas.