

Restore, Conserve and Protect Forest and Tree Cover for NDC Implementation in India (RECAP4NDC) Newsletter

Restore to Prosper



News on Forest Landscape
Restoration (FLR)

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Forest Survey of India (FSI)

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

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International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

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List of Abbreviations

ACF: Assistant Conservator of Forest

ALR: Aravalli Landscape Restoration

BMUV: German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection

CAMPA: Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority

CASFOS: Central Academy for State Forest Service

CCF: Chief Conservator of Forests

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

DCF: Deputy Conservator of Forests

DPR: Detailed Project Report

EC: Executive Committee

ECSWG: Environment, Climate and Sustainability Working Group

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

FSI: Forest Survey of India

FLR: Forest Landscape Restoration

GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

GoI: Government of India

IAS: Indian Administrative Service

ICFRE: Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education

ICIMOD: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

IELO: India Environment Law Organisation

IGNFA: Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy

IKI: International Climate Initiative

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

MGICCC: Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Combating Climate Change

MER: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

MoEF&CC: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

MT: Metric Tonne/Million Tonne

NCR: National Capital Region

NDC: Nationally Determined Contribution

RECAP4NDC: Restore, Conserve and Protect Forest and Tree Cover for NDC Implementation in India

RFO: Range Forest Officer

ROAM: Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology

SFD: State Forest Department

SPSC: State Project Steering Committee

TERI: The Energy and Resources Institute

ToF: Trees Outside Forest

ToR: Terms of Reference

VC: Video Conference



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Aerial view of deforestation in a tropical rainforest

RECAP4NDC

India's Lighthouse FLR Project

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav and Ms Steffi Lemke, German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection launching the Indo-German development cooperation project "RECAP4NDC" at the Environment, Climate and Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) meeting in Chennai



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The Landscape Approach

The landscape approach provides "a framework to integrate policy and practice for multiple land uses, within a given area, to ensure equitable and sustainable use of land while strengthening measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change."

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) is a paradigm shift in sustainable forestry as it recognises the intricate relationship between forests and society at the landscape level by finding ways in which a healthy environment can contribute to human well-being.

Lighthouse FLR Project

The Indo-German development cooperation project 'Restore, Conserve and Protect Forest and Tree Cover for NDC Implementation in India (RECAP4NDC)' serves to be a "lighthouse project" and aims to become a national and international reference for FLR. The project contributes to the Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) on FLR signed between the Indian and the German Governments in May 2022. This JDI aims to deepen cooperation on the Bonn Challenge, a global goal to restore deforested and degraded landscapes, through FLR and pilot new models in forestry and trees outside forests.

RECAP4NDC is carrying out implementation activities in the Indian states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Uttarakhand and the region of Delhi-National Capital Region (Delhi - NCR). A defining characteristic of the initiative is that it will foster greater collaboration and coordination among a diverse array of stakeholders leading to greater socio-economic and environmental benefits for society. Be it communities, civil society, or the government, the private sector, RECAP4NDC is designed to recognise and align with priorities and needs of all and adapt to fit to local social, economic, and ecological contexts.

The essence of RECAP4NDC is Forest Landscape Restoration, which goes far beyond planting trees and increasing forest cover. It entails restoring a whole landscape to meet present and future needs and to offer multiple benefits and land uses over time. It is the process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across deforested or degraded forest landscapes. FLR involves designing multipurpose interventions, considering landscape objectives and the impacts on different stakeholders. Not only does it focus on restoring degraded and deforested landscapes but also enhancing livelihoods of farmers and forest dependent communities, conserving biodiversity and improving the flow of ecosystem services.

Collaborative Implementation

Funded by the German Government's International Climate Initiative (IKI) with direct commissioning by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), the project is being implemented by a six-member Consortium with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate

Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India, as the government partner at the national level.

Led by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the consortium comprises the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) India, the Forest Survey of India (FSI), The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), the Indian Council for Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The project in each of the four geographies is being implemented in close collaboration and coordination with the respective State Forest Departments.

Goals

- **National Commitments:** Committed toward achieving ecological, socio-economic, governance, and climate change benefits in about 400,000 ha of land by 2029, RECAP4NDC aims to contribute to India's targets in the forestry Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), National Forest Policy 1988, the Bonn Challenge, and the National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC).

- **Climate Action:** By 2029, the restored landscapes are expected to function as additional carbon sinks, thereby, directly supporting India's NDCs under the Paris Agreement to combat climate change. Further upscaling is expected to lead to the restoration of 1.1 million hectares and 110 MT of CO₂ equivalent in 10 years.

- **Improved Livelihoods:** Forest restoration goes beyond environmental benefits. RECAP4NDC aims at benefiting around ten million people by promoting sustainable forest management practices and potentially creating new economic opportunities.

Landscape view of Gir National Park, Gujarat



Approach

With a multipronged approach, RECAP4NDC addresses five pillars essential to build a strong foundation for FLR. The five pillars include:

- **Pilot Projects:** Implementing pilot projects within the selected landscapes that aim to serve as demonstrations of best practices in FLR and Trees Outside Forests (TOF) measures including innovative approaches in agroforestry, assisted natural regeneration, mangrove and wetland restoration, urban forestry, forest and community governance systems, allowing for effective scaling up in the future.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems capturing the climate, ecological and socio-economic benefits of FLR.
- **Financing FLR:** Mobilising financing from public and private sources. Financing sources will include public finance from the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Green India Mission (GIM), state budgetary funds, among others; private sources such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds, investment funds; and international sources such as carbon finance, development finance. Business models around value chains for forest and non-forest products will form the primary basis for mobilising finance.
- **Policy and Programmatic Frameworks:** Strengthening and institutionalising FLR in the existing programmes and policy frameworks at different levels of the government and the society.
- **Capacity Building:** Enhancing the capabilities of both public and private stakeholders at the regional, state, and national level through developing training modules, induction courses on FLR and its related aspects. It will also include community empowerment by enhancing knowledge and skills necessary for effective restoration efforts. Capacity development at the international level will include experience exchange in South-South formats by organising an Indo-German platform on FLR.

The RECAP4NDC Logo

The RECAP4NDC logo has at its centre a human thumbprint signifying the uniqueness of each individual in society and their contribution to the environment. The print denotes an eternal impression that one bestows upon each other and their surroundings, a legacy one leaves towards Mother Earth by their positive contribution in terms of making our planet a better place to live in. The spirals inherent within the thumbprint represent the rhythm of life. They represent the consciousness of nature

starting from the centre and expanding outwardly – a continuity in life – creation, birth, evolution, awareness, growth and development.

The circularity in the thumbprint also denotes the uniqueness of every landscape – the sun and energy flow, water bodies, forests, grasslands, and mangroves. Also, the various human forms within the thumbprint highlight the central role of community, community diversity and the role of a multi-stakeholder approach in restoring



landscapes, particularly forest landscapes in India. Moreover, the different colours reflect various ecosystems and their interaction.

Translating literally, a thumb has a pivotal role to play in the very act of planting saplings by pressing a seed into the soil.

From the Editor's Desk



Alejandro von Bertrab
Project Director, RECAP4NDC

The Indo-German development project 'Restore, Conserve and Protect Forest and Tree Cover for NDC Implementation in India (RECAP4NDC)' is commissioned by the German Federal Government's International Climate Initiative (IKI). It emanates from the Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (GSDP) signed between India and Germany in May 2022, and aims to promote forest landscape restoration (FLR) in three states – Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand – and the Delhi national capital region. The backbone of RECAP4NDC is a six-member strong consortium formed by leading national and international institutions: the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) India, the Forest Survey of India (FSI), The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), the Indian Council for Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and GIZ. The project contributes directly to the pledge made by India in the framework of the Bonn Challenge of restoring 26 million hectares of land by 2030 as well as to other international and national commitments within the three UN Conventions on Biodiversity, Desertification and Climate Change.

FLR is a singular approach, since it attempts to strike a balance between restoring the functionality of ecosystems and improving livelihoods of people living in and around target landscapes. As such, it centres around sustaining the provision of ecosystem services, such as water regulation, carbon sequestration, habitat for species, among others, for the benefit of the society and strengthen ecosystem's and people's resilience to the impacts of climate change. In the project we seek to have an integral approach by not only improving

restoration practice but also expanding monitoring, providing advice on restoration finance, ensuring policy uptake and improving capacities of forestry professionals.

After one year of implementation, we have experienced a great deal of enthusiasm and commitment from the state governments and by our direct counterpart, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). We hope to continue along this path and make FLR a concrete reality in India and an international reference for similar endeavors. Enjoy browsing through this first edition of our newsletter. We hope you find important insights and inspiration for embarking on development measures which seek to reconcile the health of ecosystems with concrete benefits to society.

From the Editor's Desk

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) is not just an abstract concept; it is a tangible approach that is well-suited to address the needs of our environment, our communities, and future generations. Ecosystems support all life on Earth. Healthier ecosystems mean a healthier planet and its people. This is the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration with the vision to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. Restored ecosystems can help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations by ending poverty, combating climate change and preventing a mass extinction. Success of which depends on the active and effective role of various stakeholders.

Contributing to this initiative and the commitments between India and Germany, the two governments have come together with a shared vision – a vision of revitalising and safeguarding our precious forests, which are the lifeblood of our planet. Both nations recognise the invaluable role forests play in maintaining biodiversity, regulating climate, and supporting local communities.

Given the global and national momentum, there are several ongoing and planned initiatives by various actors on FLR in India. However, effective implementation of these FLR initiatives calls for establishing common understanding and coordinated implementation approaches on FLR. Key aspects of FLR such as defining and identifying landscapes for FLR, establishing baseline, monitoring, financing as well as stakeholders and institutional arrangements need to be arrived to support India in meeting its international and national commitments.



Kundan Burnwal
Deputy Lead, RECAP4NDC

Present day forest management in India has three-fold objectives which could guide FLR in the country. First is managing forest for water, which includes enhancing groundwater recharge as well as maintaining surface flows and sub-surface flow in rivers and springs. This also leads to other co-benefits such as enhanced natural regeneration and reduction in forest fires. The second is managing forests as a carbon sink for climate change mitigation. And lastly, managing forest for ensuring livelihood and sustenance of millions of people dependent on forest. RECAP4NDC facilitates the pooling of proficiency and resources from both countries. India's vast experience in forest management, coupled with Germany's advanced technology and research capabilities, create a formidable force to tackle forest restoration challenges effectively.

The Consortium

GIZ India

Responsible:
Policy and Planning

Consortium Lead



As a service provider with worldwide operations in the fields of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work, GIZ works with its partners to develop effective solutions that offer people better prospects and sustainably improve their living conditions. GIZ is a public-benefit federal enterprise and supports the German Government and a host of public and private sector

clients in a wide variety of areas, including economic development and employment promotion, energy and the environment, and peace and security.

For over 60 years, GIZ has been working jointly with partners in India for sustainable economic, ecological, and social development in the thematic areas of Energy, Environment, Climate Change and

Biodiversity, Sustainable Urban and Industrial Development, as well as Social and Private Sector Development. Under RECAP4NDC, GIZ is the overall Consortium Lead and is responsible to ensure that policies and guidelines for FLR are anchored in existing policy and planning processes, as well as coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the entire gamut of activities of all the Consortium Partners.

IUCN

Responsible:
FLR Model Implementation



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a membership union, and a global leading organisation in nature conservation, is uniquely positioned to provide sustainable forest and land-use solutions from conceptualisation through knowledge and data generation, and from policy and decision making at all levels to results on the ground.

As a representative of indigenous peoples' groups and civil society organisations, IUCN places a strong emphasis on achieving equitable outcomes in landscape management, with a particular focus on advocating for the rights and responsibilities of women and indigenous people.

In 2018, IUCN India conducted a project in Uttarakhand, piloting

the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) and proposing landscape restoration interventions. In 2019, MoEF&CC launched a flagship project to build capacity on FLR and the Bonn Challenge in partnership with IUCN. Under RECAP4NDC, IUCN will be the partner responsible for the FLR model implementation across the four intervention landscapes.

TERI

Responsible:
Financing FLR



One of India's premiere champions in sustainable development, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) spearheads research on energy, environment, and climate change, fostering innovation for a greener tomorrow.

TERI acts as a powerful catalyst for India's sustainable growth formulating local, national, and international strategies for shaping local to global solutions to critical issues. Under RECAP4NDC, TERI will be the partner responsible for the

development of models and tools for financing FLR from public, private and international sources.

FSI

Responsible:
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting



The Forest Survey of India (FSI) is a premier national organisation under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) responsible for regular assessment and monitoring of the country's forest resources. It prepares the biennial State of Forest Report, providing assessment of the current forest and tree cover in the country, monitors change, conducts inventories of

forest and non-forest areas and maintains a database on forest tree resources.

FSI also provides training for forestry personnel in the application of technologies such as remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) and supports the State Forest Departments in forest resources survey, mapping, and

inventory. Under RECAP4NDC, FSI will be responsible for ensuring that integrated systems are used for the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) to capture the ecological and socio-economic benefits of FLR.

Mosaic Landscape in the Himalayas



ICFRE

Responsible:
Building Capacities, Knowledge and Communication



The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) is an autonomous body of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. ICFRE is an apex body in the national forestry research system that promotes and undertakes need based forestry research extension. It has developed models and practices for FLR (restoration of degraded forests, restoration of mined degraded lands) and trees

outside forests (TOF), especially agroforestry models for increasing farmers' incomes. In addition, ICFRE has prepared the National REDD+ Strategy and Safeguards Information System which outlines a detailed framework for the implementation of REDD+ activities in India to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and to conserve and enhance forest carbon stocks. ICFRE has been designated as a Centre of Excellence on Sustainable

Land Management for South-South Cooperation with a mandate to facilitate networking of national and international institutions working on sustainable land and ecosystem management. Under RECAP4NDC, ICFRE is responsible for building the capacities of stakeholders, knowledge sharing, and communication mechanisms with regard to FLR.

ICIMOD

Responsible:
Building Capacities, Knowledge and Communication, South-South Exchange



The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), is a regional intergovernmental organisation working on forest conservation and management in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. Through its REDD+ Initiative, ICIMOD has been supporting capacity building for results-based management of forest resources in Bhutan, India, Myanmar, and Nepal. ICIMOD

champions sustainability through a multifaceted approach, bridging research, knowledge sharing, and regional cooperation, to ensure a greener, more resilient future for the people and ecosystems.

ICIMOD has also developed several manuals for implementing forest activities based on scientific methods which can be implemented

by the State Forest Departments. Under RECAP4NDC, ICIMOD will be a key partner in establishing South-South exchange of experiences and building human capacities and communication mechanisms for FLR.

The Landscapes



Delhi-NCR



Stakeholders

- BMUV
- IKI
- MoEF&CC
- IUCN
- FSI
- TERI
- ICFRE
- ICIMOD
- Delhi Forest Department
- Haryana Forest Department
- Rajasthan Forest Department
- Local Communities
- Private Sector
- Schools/Universities/Research Institutes
- Multilaterals/Bilaterals
- NGOs/CSOs/Think Tanks

Fostering Harmony between Nature and Urbanisation

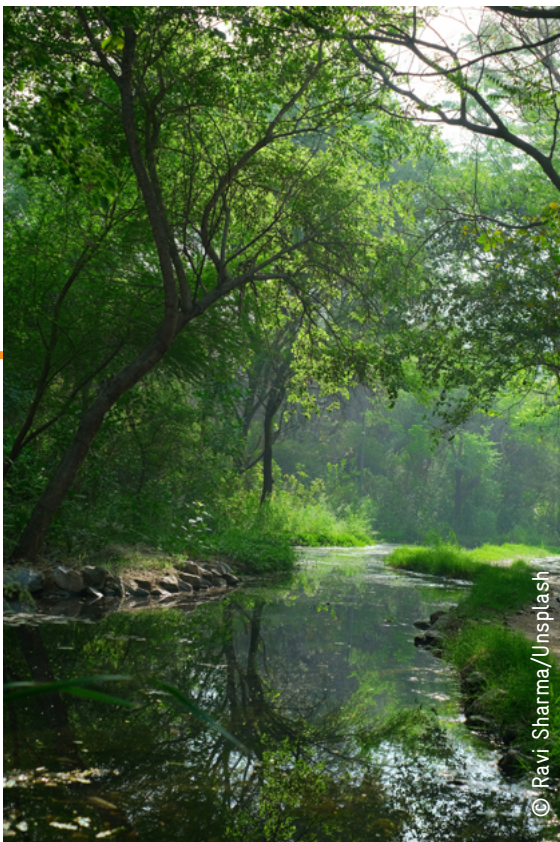
The Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) has one of the highest green covers among the world's megacities with 20.22% of its total area covered with forest and trees. Delhi's forests not only offer a sanctuary for its diverse wildlife, but also absorb tonnes of pollutants, and lower temperatures by up to 5°C. Delhi NCR forms the northern tip of the Aravalli Mountain ranges – one of the world's oldest mountain ranges – which is a critical ecosystem for the region's biodiversity and acts as a green buffer against the advancing winds and sand of the Thar Desert.

The region demonstrates the challenges of managing the rapid urban development and with the imperative of maintaining and improving green spaces and forests. At the same time, it offers the potential to engage in restoration of urban tree cover through cross-agency collaboration.

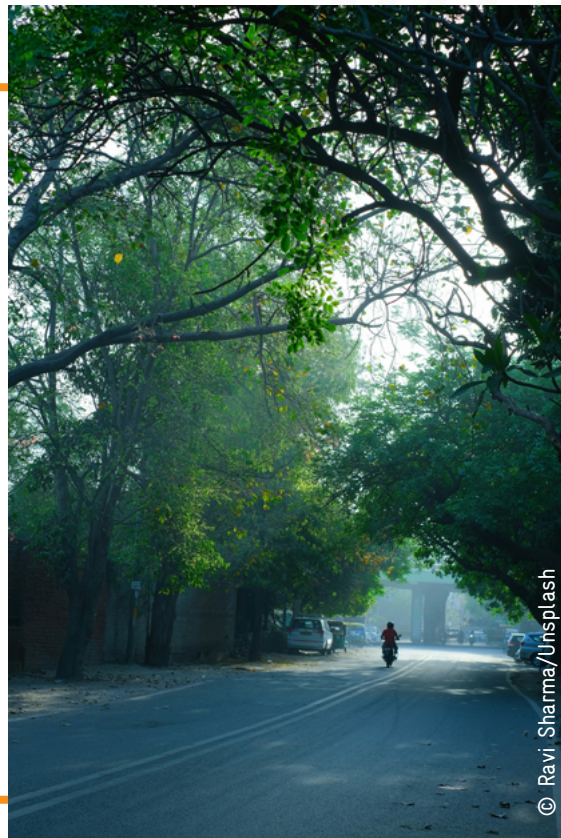
Aravalli forest landscape in Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, Delhi



Working in close collaboration and coordination with the Delhi Forest Department, RECAP4NDC seeks to strengthen the government's efforts towards navigating the delicate balance between urban growth and environmental responsibility in Delhi-NCR by enhancing capacities of public and private actors, piloting and designing restoration models to suit the location's unique challenges, exploring opportunities for eco-tourism activities, and facilitating mass communication and awareness campaigns.



Sunder Nursery, Delhi



Defence Colony, Delhi



Gujarat

Stakeholders

- BMUV
- IKI
- MoEF&CC
- IUCN
- FSI
- TERI
- ICFRE
- ICIMOD
- Gujarat Forests and Environment Department
- Local Communities
- Private Sector
- Schools/Universities/Research Institutes
- Multilaterals/Bilaterals
- NGOs/CSOs/Think Tanks

Opening New Horizons for Environmental Preservation and Climate Action

Gujarat has unevenly distributed forest areas, mainly concentrated along its eastern border and the hilly terrains of Saurashtra. The state has four forest types- tropical moist deciduous forest, tropical dry deciduous forest, northern tropical thorn forest, and littoral and swamp forest. It hosts the second largest mangroves in India, after West Bengal and is home to four national parks, 23 wildlife sanctuaries and one biosphere reserve.

The state has witnessed a net increase in its forest cover as a result of the Gujarat Forest Department's sustained efforts including afforestation initiatives and social forestry programmes. However, reduction in forest quality and decrease in tree cover are pressing concerns requiring urgent intervention.



Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on RECAP4NDC between the Gujarat State Forest Department and GIZ

Implemented in collaboration with the Gujarat Forest and Environment Department, RECAP4NDC is well suited to not only improve the state's forest and tree cover, but also harness the potential of enhancing carbon sinks, restoring wastelands and scaling agroforestry.



Maharashtra



Stakeholders

- BMUV
- IKI
- MoEF&CC
- IUCN
- FSI
- TERI
- ICFRE
- ICIMOD
- Maharashtra Forest Department
- Local Communities
- Private Sector
- Schools/Universities/Research Institutes
- Multilaterals/Bilaterals
- NGOs/CSOs/Think Tanks

Committed to Environmental Preservation and Climate Change Mitigation

Maharashtra is a state situated in Western India, with significant forest cover distributed across its diverse landscapes. According to the India State of Forest Report 2021 published by FSI, Maharashtra’s forest cover stands at approximately 50,798 km², representing around 16.51% of the state’s total geographical area. Additionally, around 26,866 km² of land is covered by Trees outside Forests (TOF). The total carbon stock in Maharashtra, including the TOF patches, is 451.61 million tonnes, which is 6.27% of the total forest carbon of the country.

This forest cover comprises various forest types, including dry deciduous, moist deciduous, mangroves, tropical thorn, and semi-evergreen forest. These types of forest are seen across different regions such as the Vidarbha region, the Sahyadri range, the Deccan Plateau and the Western Ghats.



Launch of RECAP4NDC in Maharashtra

The forests of Maharashtra are not only essential for the conversation of the state’s rich biodiversity but also contribute significantly to the ecological balance, water security, and climate regulation. Aligned with the Maharashtra Forest Department’s commitment of conservation and protection of forests, RECAP4NDC is well positioned to provide crucial support for achieving social, economic, and environmental benefits through forest protection and restoration. This is particularly important given that the state’s rural population largely depends on these forests and surrounding areas for their livelihoods.



Uttarakhand



Stakeholders

- BMUV
- IKI
- MoEF&CC
- IUCN
- FSI
- TERI
- ICFRE
- ICIMOD
- Uttarakhand Forest Department
- Local Communities
- Private Sector
- Schools/Universities/Research Institutes
- Multilaterals/Bilaterals
- NGOs/CSOs/Think Tanks

Prakriti Bahaal, Uttarakhand Khushaal

Uttarakhand, the 27th state of India was constituted in November 2000. Uttarakhand shares its border with China (Tibet) in the North, Nepal in the East, Himachal Pradesh in the North and North West and Uttar Pradesh in the South. The state is divided into two divisions: Garhwal and Kumaon and is rich in forest resources.

The recorded forest area in Uttarakhand is 38,000 km², which is 71.05% of its total geographical area and 4.9% of the national forest area. The forest cover is 24,305 km² which represents 45.44% of the state's total geographical area and 3.61% of the forest cover of the country. The tree cover in Uttarakhand is 1,001 km² which is 1.87% of the total geographical area. Total forest and tree cover of the state constitutes 25,306 km² which is 47.31% of the total geographical area.



Launch of RECAP4NDC in Dehradun, Uttarakhand

RECAP4NDC will supplement the ongoing efforts of the State Government of Uttarakhand towards forest fire management, community forestry, spring-shed management, and promotion of agroforestry and non-timber forest products through a value chain approach.

Project Updates

National Level

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India (GoI)

Constitution of the National Project Steering Committee and its first meeting

The National Project Steering Committee of RECAP4NDC has been constituted under the chairpersonship of the Additional Director General of Forests and Mission Director, Green India Mission, MoEF&CC having representatives from line departments and other ministries. The overall responsibility of the National Project Steering Committee include:

- Looking after all the matters related to the implementation and overall progress of RECAP4NDC.
- Providing technical inputs, policy interventions to the MoEF&CC and implementation partners in formulating the activities under the project.
- Monitoring and reviewing the project implementation in line with the objectives of the project and suggest mid-course correction(s) if any;
- Reviewing of overall progress of RECAP4NDC at least once a year or as desired by the Chairman of the committee.

The first meeting of the Project Steering Committee was held on 16 January 2024.

Preparation of a Framework document for the restoration of Aravalli Green Wall

The MoEF&CC, GoI plans to restore the Aravalli Landscape as it is a critical ecosystem necessary for improved provisioning of ecosystem services in the region. Accordingly, as a part of technical support to the MoEF&CC, GIZ under RECAP4NDC has taken-up the assignment for preparing and finalising the Detailed Project Report (DPR) on the Aravalli Landscape Restoration (ALR).

The primary deliverable for the assignment is to revise, update and prepare the framework document for the restoration of the landscape spreading across four region, namely Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. RECAP4NDC is also providing technical support to the Ministry during review meetings with the mentioned regions and the FSI to finalise degraded forest areas in the five km buffer around Aravalli range in the respective regions.

RECAP4NDC Annual Planning Workshop (19 – 21 March 2024)

A three-day Annual Planning Workshop of RECAP4NDC was held at Dehradun that was attended by the six consortium partners and senior officials from the Forest Departments of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Uttarakhand.

Comprehensive plans were formulated for the design and execution of Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) models. A thorough examination was conducted on the monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems aimed at assessing the ecological and socio-economic benefits of FLR initiatives.

Deliberations encompassed strategies for securing funding from various sources, including private, public, and international sectors, alongside efforts to develop overarching policies at national, state, and regional levels to support FLR endeavours.

A significant outcome of the workshop was the recognition of the imperative to enhance human capabilities, knowledge dissemination, and communication mechanisms pertaining to FLR. This was underscored by proposals for training programmes, community empowerment initiatives, and the establishment of an international platform for the exchange of knowledge and expertise in FLR practices.

RECAP4NDC team after the conclusion of the planning workshop



Representatives of the consortium partners attending the planning workshop

Green Bridges: An Enriching Knowledge Exchange and Study Tour to Germany (17 – 21 June 2024)

A study tour in the State of Hesse, Germany was organised for Indian Forest Department Officials from Gujarat and Uttarakhand and the MoEF&CC. The objective of the tour was to analyse the institutional and operational set up of forestry in one German state and foster an exchange on sustainable practices primarily to enhance forest resilience in the face of climate change.

The visit involved extensive discussions with the Hessenforst Forestry Training and Capacity Building centre in Weilburg (the central forestry training and capacity building institution in Hesse), Dieburg Forestry Management Unit (the forestry

office managing communal forests), HessenForst State Enterprise Headquarters (the state enterprise of the Hessian forest administration which plays a crucial role in management of state, municipal, and private forests), Kassel Regional Council (the authority responsible for convening sectors and mediating in policy and planning), Northwest German Forest Research Institute (NW-FVA) in Hann. Münden (an internationally renowned forest research institution catering to four Northern states, including Hesse) and the Kellerwald-Edersee National Park in Vöhl-Herzhausen.

Some of the key insights from the tour:

- Forests should be managed according to their multifunctional nature (they offer a variety of benefits to society, such as recreation, wood/timber, habitat for species, water regulation and provision). Strategies on habitat management like natural regeneration, soil moisture conservation, and assisted natural regeneration are crucial. Leveraging natural growth processes by protecting naturally occurring seedlings and young plants play an important role.
- Interventions which prevent storm damage, mitigate the adverse effects of forest fires and combat drought were thoroughly discussed. Promoting a diverse and resilient species composition and selecting species that are better adapted to withstand heat and drought are key in restoration efforts.
- Essential aspects of forestry and ecological research like wood quality conserving genetic resources, developing genetic analysis methods and long-term monitoring of water, soil and trees are important interventions to understand forest dynamics in the face of climate change.
- Strategic regional planning, balancing different sectoral priorities within regions and integrating biodiversity and climate protection goals into forest management is key to ensuring sustainable development while addressing climate change impacts.



Visit to the Kellerwald-Edersee National Park in Hesse under the Study Tour

Landscape Level

Delhi-NCR

Meetings with the Delhi Forest Department on hi-tech Interpretation Centre

The project has broadly discussed potential interventions with the State Forest Department, distilling the same into a concept note that has been tabled for endorsement and approval. In line with this concept note, the project has initiated the background work to design a hi-tech Interpretation Centre in the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary to facilitate and promote eco-tourism.



Visit to Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary for research for the upcoming nature interpretation centre

Development of Training Curricula for Forest Department Officials

The project has approached the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Combatting Climate Change (MGICCC) to institutionalise the training curricula to be developed for capacity building and capacity enhancement of the forest department officials. A context-setting

meeting with the ICFRE colleagues has been proposed for the same. The project also intends to support the state's activities under the Aravalli Green Wall Initiative of the MoEF&CC by providing technical assistance in the development of the DPR.

Selection of landscape for FLR implementation

The site selection process for on-ground implementation of pilots is underway with the help of a consultant. The initial discussions indicated that pilots may be taken up in the Aravalli region (dovetailing on the work under

the Aravalli Green Wall Initiative) and the Yamuna floodplains. Further, delineation and mapping of the sites based on these priorities are being undertaken.

Mapping of Legal and Policy Instruments

A mapping and analysis of legal and policy instruments, supported by the India Environmental Law Organisation, is being undertaken for all states. The mapping exercise for Delhi NCR,

covering the instruments in four states, has been completed and will be discussed with stakeholders for a more detailed analysis.

Gujarat

FGD on “Mapping the Policy and Legal Preparedness on Forest Landscape Restoration”

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on “Mapping the Policy and Legal Preparedness on Forest Landscape Restoration” was organised in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

Organised in collaboration with the India Environment Law Organisation (IELO) and Sustainable Environmental and Ecological Development (SEED) Foundation, the FGD was attended by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, retired senior officers of the

Indian Forest Service, representatives of Civil Society Organisations and Academia.

The discussion focused on how to convert India’s international targets into actual implementation through overcoming ground issues and enhancing community participation, as well as acknowledging the importance and value of ecosystem services at the landscape level.



Participants at the Focus Group Discussion in Gandhinagar



Attendees at the Focus Group Discussion in Gandhinagar

Notification of State Project Steering Committee

The Forest and Environment Department, Government of Gujarat published the notification regarding the formulation of the State Project Steering Committee and State Executive Committee on 14 June 2024 for the implementation of RECAP4NDC in Gujarat.

The committee includes officers from the Forest Department, representatives from line departments like Finance, Agriculture, Water Resources, Tourism,

Horticulture. Representatives from consortium partners, academia and experts are the invited members in this committee. This committee will meet at regular intervals to oversee and guide activities in Gujarat towards meeting project goals in line with directions from the National Steering Committee.

Maharashtra

Selection of districts for FLR implementation

Within the state of Maharashtra, ten districts have been selected as project districts, spanning across nine distinct agro-climatic zones. To date, a series of one-on-one meetings have been conducted with seven of these districts (Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Yawatmal, Ratnagiri, Pune, Ahmednagar, Jalgaon) via video conferencing (VC). These meetings aim to disseminate the findings of the geospatial analysis

conducted by GIZ for each of these respective districts, sharing key information around existing levels of degradation and potential for landscape restoration.

In mutual consultation with the respective district forest department, final selections are being made. The key participation for such VC involves forest officers - Chief Conservator of

Forests (CCFs), Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCFs), Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACFs) and Range Forest Officers (RFOs). This process also includes insights from additional participants, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) consultants, IUCN, and GIZ representatives. Through these collaborative efforts, 85,000 hectares of landscape have been selected for intervention so far.

Ground truthing of the selected landscapes is being done to comprehensively understand the local dynamics and further refine the site selection to greater accuracy.



Virtual Conference discussions on landscape selection, Maharashtra

Preliminary discussions for collaborating with other stakeholders

Preliminary discussions are being organised with potential stakeholders from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the private sector for possible collaborations. The CSOs include the Bhartiya Agro Industries Foundation, Applied Environment Research Foundation and Action for Agriculture

Renewal in Maharashtra. Private sector entities include the JSW Foundation (Jindal Southwest), Mumbai, Ambuja Cement Foundation, Lupin Foundation, CSR-Tata Group, Mumbai and the Maratha Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Agriculture, Pune.

Uttarakhand

Constitution of State Project Steering Committee and Executive Committee

The Government of Uttarakhand has issued an office order no. **645/x-2-2022-12(35)2010 Dehradun: Date 15 April 2024** regarding the formation of a "State Project Steering Committee (SPSC), RECAP4NDC" under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary, Forest and Environment along with the Secretary of relevant departments as members of the committee. An Executive Committee (EC) under RECAP4NDC chaired by the Principal Chief Conservator of

Forests and Head of Forest Force (PCCF - HOFF), along with the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF) of relevant wings of the Uttarakhand Forest Department has also been notified by the State Government. The Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests-Projects and Community Forestry/Nodal Officer of RECAP4NDC has been nominated as member secretary in both the committees.

The State Project Steering Committee will mainly be responsible for undertaking state-level policy decisions and issuance of important guidelines for effective implementation of the project. The Executive Committee will mainly guide in preparing the department level implementation strategy and annual action plan for effective implementation of the project in the state.

Meetings with State level dignitaries

A meeting was organised with the Principal Secretary, Forest and Environment, the PCCF-HOFF (Chair EC), and the APCCF - Projects and Community Forestry/Nodal Officer to apprise them of the progress of RECAP4NDC in the state. A long list of potential Intervention Landscapes was discussed with the APCCF - Projects and Community Forestry/Nodal Officer, RECAP4NDC. The landscapes will now be finalised in the first Executive Committee meeting. This will be followed by a state level validation workshop.

Moreover, the State Forest Department has given feedback on the initial draft of "Mapping the Policy and Legal Preparedness on Forest Landscape Restoration" prepared with the

help of IELO. GIZ will also provide technical support in digitising data and strengthening the MER processes and mechanism of the State Forest Department. Detailed work on this will be undertaken after an assessment of existing systems and processes.

Meeting with the PCCF - HOFF, Uttarakhand State Forest Department



Signing of an MoU between the State Forest Department of Uttarakhand and GIZ India

As it is a landscape based multi sectoral coordination project, a non-committal MoU helps both parties to successfully cooperate to achieve the objectives of RECAP4NDC. It supports in achieving the project outcome that is "Stakeholders at national, regional and local levels (including women, marginalised groups, local communities and indigenous people) have derived ecological, socio-economic, governance, and climate change related benefits from Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)".

The MoU signing ceremony was conducted under the Chairmanship of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests - Head of Forest Force, Dr. Dhanajai Mohan. On behalf of GIZ India, Dr. Alejandro von Bertrab, Head of Project, RECAP4NDC signed the MoU and Mr Kapil Lall, Additional Chief Conservator of Forest, Projects and Community Forestry, Uttarakhand Forest Department signed it on behalf of the Government of Uttarakhand.

Signing of MoU with Uttarakhand Forest Department



Activities by Consortium Partners



IUCN

The IUCN has appointed State Project Associates (SPAs) for each of the RECAP4NDC implementation states: Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Delhi-NCR, and Gujarat. These SPAs are working in their respective regions to initiate activities and maintain continuous communication with State Forest Departments and other stakeholders. The SPA for Delhi-NCR is based at the IUCN office in New Delhi, while the SPAs for Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Gujarat are based in Nagpur, Dehradun and Ahmedabad respectively.

The SPAs have undertaken field visits in their respective regions towards landscape identification and to understand the ground situation. They are assisting in preparing a longlist of landscapes and applying an evaluation matrix to narrow down this list to the final intervention landscapes.

Additionally, IUCN is providing inputs to consultants on landscape identification and selection and conducting one-on-one meetings with consortium partners on need basis. IUCN has been carrying out a state-specific literature reviews detailing the status of land degradation using the DPSIR (Drivers, Pressures, State, Impact, Response) framework, which highlights key land degradation issues and potential response strategies. This information will contribute to the subsequent tasks of conducting baseline assessments in selected landscapes and developing Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for Model Sites. Furthermore, IUCN is actively involved in preparing baseline questionnaires and Terms of References (ToRs) for consultants. In the coming months, once the intervention landscapes are selected, IUCN plans to engage NGOs to work in the same.

FSI

Currently, the FSI is leading the efforts on developing Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) frameworks and methodologies. GIZ is in the process of hiring an external agency to collaborate with FSI on this task. At present, FSI is meticulously reviewing the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this external agency, which will be responsible for creating the MER tools essential for the project's success.

TERI

TERI has initiated the literature review of financing mechanisms (public, private and others) available for FLR and allied activities in the states. The review is being undertaken state-wise, looking at the funding mechanisms, instruments, and funding volumes available with the state forest departments, allied departments, and private sector players. Other international funding mechanisms and 'innovative' financing models are also being studied. The review will be incorporated as separate chapters on finance in the state reports being prepared by ICFRE and IUCN.

TERI intends to schedule working level conversations with the other consortium partners from June 2024 to initiate discussions on the activities where synergies are to be expected (for example, funding mechanisms for the model sites with IUCN, developing MOOCs on finance with ICFRE). On the request of the State Forest Departments, TERI will expedite the value chain analysis of different forest and non-forest produce in the states to look at constraints and opportunities for value chain enhancement.

TERI in collaboration with Maharashtra Forest Department will be organising a one-day workshop in Pune. It will focus on the theme, 'State of Public Funding in Maharashtra for Forest Landscape Restoration'. Through this it is anticipated to understand the availability, expenditure and convergence of available public finance for the aforementioned project in Maharashtra.

GIZ

GIZ has been coordinating the progress of overall implementation of RECAP4NDC. Post a successful launch of the project at the national level and state level in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttarakhand, a National Project Steering Committee has been established and its first meeting was convened. State Project Steering and State Executive Committees are also being set up in the respective states.

A mapping and analysis of legal and policy instruments is being undertaken for all states and Delhi NCR. Stakeholder consultations with the state government departments, local communities and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are due in the months of July and August 2024 for detailed feedback on the analysis. A geospatial analysis using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) coupled with ground verification and application of a multi parameter assessment matrix is being undertaken, to map out and select the appropriate intervention landscapes for FLR implementation. A detailed methodology has been developed for the project regions jointly with the respective State Forest Departments. The GIS mapping is complete for all project regions which will be followed by ground truthing and application of the matrix in the months of July and August.

A communication and outreach strategy is being developed for positioning RECAP4NDC as a reference for FLR as well as enhancing capacities and facilitating knowledge exchange by designing appropriate communication and awareness interventions. An official LinkedIn page for RECAP4NDC has been created and weekly content is being disseminated on it for a larger audience. GIZ is also supporting the TNA that is being led by the ICFRE for Delhi, Gujarat and Uttarakhand.

ICFRE

ICFRE was actively engaged in organising the annual planning workshop of the project with GIZ. To achieve the objective of building capacities of stakeholders on FLR, ICFRE has hired a team of consultants for the states of Uttarakhand, Gujarat, and the region of Delhi & NCR. ICFRE is working on reviewing literature related to FLR and has prepared a draft status report on FLR related aspects for Gujarat, Uttarakhand, and Delhi. Questionnaires for Training Needs Assessment (TNA) for the State Forest Departments, other line departments and local communities have been prepared, post incorporating feedback from all Consortium Partners and the TNA has commenced for Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Delhi & NCR. A monitoring and evaluation committee has been constituted by ICFRE for further project monitoring. A brochure focusing on knowledge and communication has been prepared by ICFRE and an analysis of the course modules of forestry training institutions (Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS), other Training Academies/Schools) is ongoing. The setting up of the Project Management Unit at ICFRE and procurement of office equipment and furniture are under process.



The RECAP4NDC Quiz



Test your knowledge of the diverse forests and fascinating wildlife found in the four locations of RECAP4NDC.

1. What kind of forests are famous for their dense canopy cover in Maharashtra?

- a) Tropical rainforests
- b) Mangrove forests
- c) Himalayan subtropical forests

2. The Great Indian Bustard, a critically endangered bird, is a resident of which state's grasslands?

- a) Gujarat
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Uttarakhand

3. Identify the national park in Gujarat famous for its Asiatic lions

- a) Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve
- b) Gir National Park
- c) Pench Tiger Reserve

4. Which of these is NOT a common tree species found in the Gir Forest of Gujarat?

- a) Banyan
- b) Teak
- c) Sal

5. Project Tiger, a conservation effort for the endangered Bengal tiger, was launched in which state?

- a) Gujarat
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Uttarakhand

6. Which endangered antelope is found in the Delhi Ridge Forest Reserve?

- a) Blackbuck
- b) Chinkara
- c) Spotted Deer

Answers: 1 - a, 2 - a, 3 - b, 4 - c, 5 - b, 6 - a



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