India Climate Collaborative

Annual Report

January 2022

Letter from

OUR CEO

For the past two years, the ICC has accompanied India's most vulnerable on a path away from the compounding impacts of climate change. We have worked with remarkable organisations changing the landscape of possibility for local communities, and shared hard-earned learnings about listening across lines of seemingly unbridgeable difference. We have moved towards understanding climate change as something larger and more complex than solitary actions, and are working to define success by something larger and more complex than environmental solvency and public acclaim. We invite constructive conflict — within ourselves and among ourselves in order to balance the needs of the individual with the needs of the community, the need for climate solutions with the need for livelihoods, to continually hone and refine the instrument of social change toward a more equitable and dignified world.

"The longer the lever, the less perceptible its motion," Henry David Thoreau had written once in contemplating the long timescales of social change. Yet,on the timescales of our civilisation, a decade is an astonishingly short period for a radical transformation so profound. And yet this is the decade that matters most. India's climate ecosystem is fertile, there are so many individuals and organisations sowing the roots of building resilience and reducing our emissions, but we need to bring these solutions upto speed with the challenges we still face today. The fulcrum of the ICC's lever for change has to do with finance, or greater flows of capital, towards solutions that prioritise for scale, capacity, and collaboration.

This report is our journey, our goals and motivations, and our approach to a world that is changing by the second. It offers a glimpse into how we aim to accelerate the amount of finance flowing into the climate space, enable new channels of collaboration between disparate stakeholders, and drive the climate solutions being developed by our extensive network of partners to fruition.

We offer deep dives into various sectors that affect climate action, ranging from land use to communications, to paint a clear picture of the barriers facing rapid action; we profile Indian philanthropy's current engagement with the climate ecosystem; we reflect on our work and growth over the past two years from a team of two to nearly 20 full- and part-time members, our engagement with over 30 philanthropists, and more than 100 partners in India and across the globe, and we look forward to our plans for the future, with your support.

Of our many achievements these past two years, what I am most proud of, is the ICC team; people alongside whom I live and serve every day. Along the path of our shared devotion to combating climate change, I have come to know a number of outstanding human beings, many of them radically different from myself. Yet what they have in common, is the willingness to encounter another, to make someone feel valued and seen, bettered for knowing you, never belittled. I believe the ICC will change the world because these individuals exhibit a voracious curiosity about the world and other people, and a willingness to listen and empathise with those unlike them. They stand apart because of their reservoirs of courage, and because they stand for their beliefs, even if they stand alone.

Despite the incredible drive and dedication I see within the ICC team, I know that we would never be able to solve for this challenge alone. Climate action needs us all to come together, and we have derived our strength from our network of funders and partners. The success of the ICC is only a mirror for the incredible efforts and achievements of our community - together, we are much greater than the sum of our parts. We depend on your continued support and are grateful to be a part of this community.

I thank each and every single one of you for being part of the ICC's journey.
It has been the best part of ours.

With immense gratitude,
Shloka Nath
Acting CEO

The India Climate Collaborative at a glance

The India Climate Collaborative is a first-of-its-kind, India-focused, India-led organisation working to accelerate funding to, and engagement with, the climate ecosystem. We work with diverse actors – governments, philanthropies, businesses, civil society organisations, and research institutions – to mobilise funding, scale impactful solutions, and facilitate collaboration across the ecosystem to enable broad-based climate action. Here is a glimpse into our impact numbers over the last two years.

Galvanised nearly
₹45 crore
($6 million) in commitments

30+
domestic and international philanthropic partners

100+
technical partners

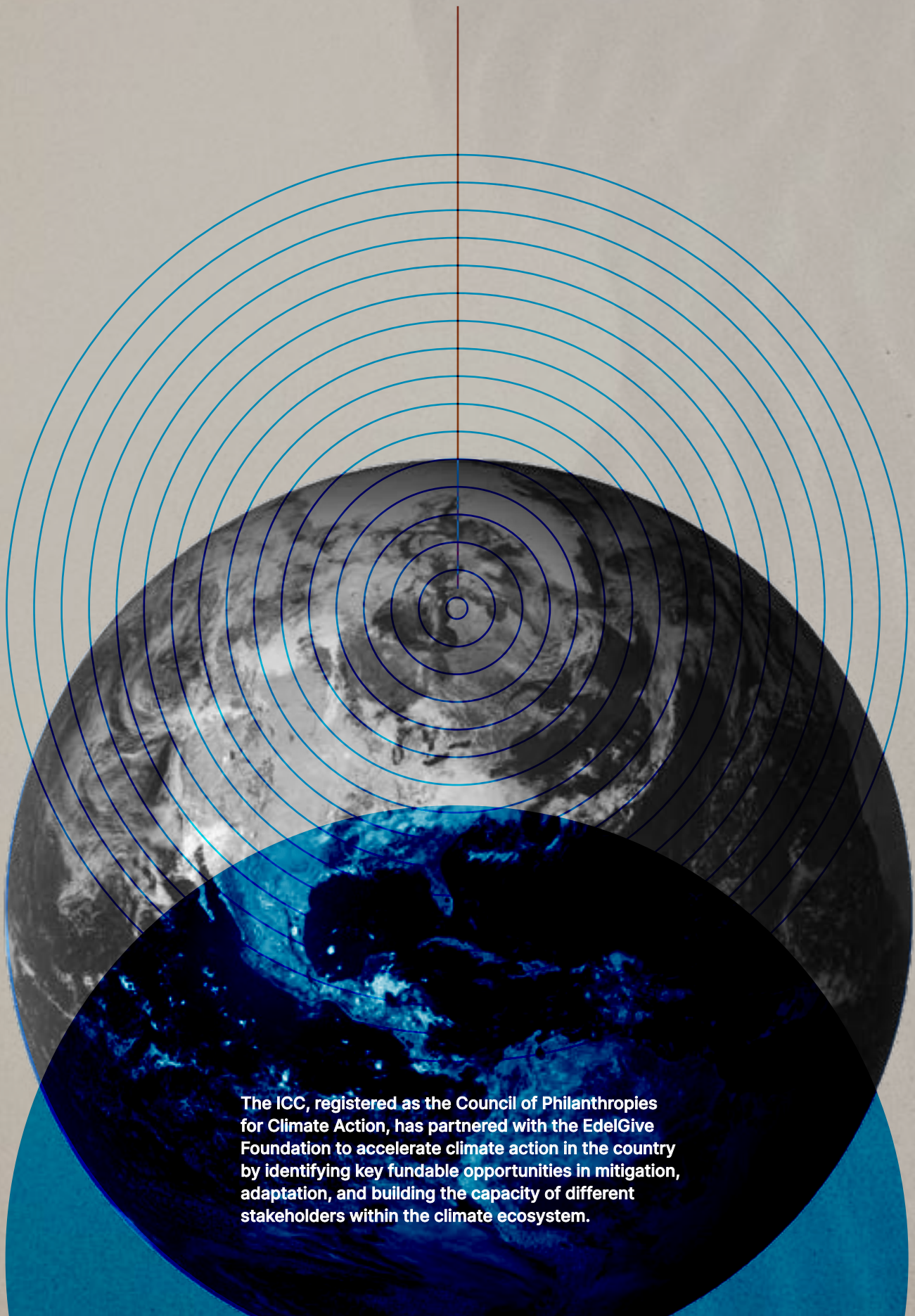
25
fundable opportunities created

10
thematic convenings and workshops

Climate adjacency workshops for
4
foundations

7
knowledge pieces

The Tata Trusts recognised the need for India to engage on climate change deeply while prioritising vulnerable communities, who are often ignored in the global climate discussion. To do this, the Trusts incubated the ICC to become a focal point for collaboration among philanthropies and the climate-linked ecosystem in India to solve critical gaps in the ecosystem like insufficient and misdirected funding, weak societal awareness, and inadequate research and data.



The ICC, registered as the Council of Philanthropies for Climate Action, has partnered with the EdelGive Foundation to accelerate climate action in the country by identifying key fundable opportunities in mitigation, adaptation, and building the capacity of different stakeholders within the climate ecosystem.

Vidya Shah, Executive Chairperson, EdelGive Foundation

India's diverse topography, dependence on agriculture, and rapid industrialisation, provides a large opportunity to reflect on the dramatic impact that climate change can have on its economic growth. The discourse on climate change needs to move beyond the international and national arenas into the heartlands of rural India, where its impact has already led to dramatic loss of livelihoods. EdelGive Foundation has continued to invest in solutions that will reduce such losses and build resilient communities. We see ICC as a fantastic platform that can take this goal even further.

Mapping India's Climate Ecosystem

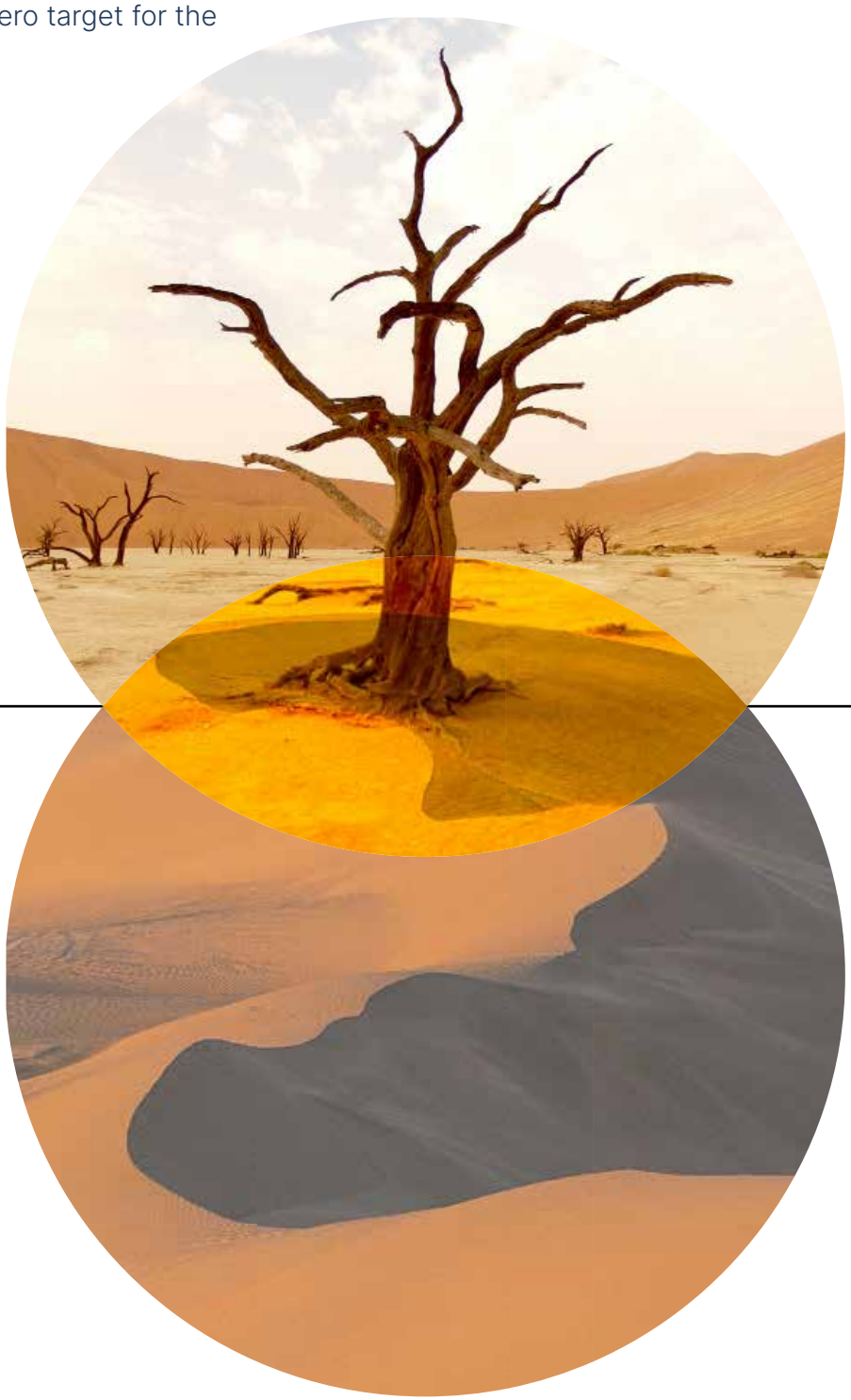
“

Ratan Tata, Chairperson, Tata Trusts

Climate change is one of the most pressing crises facing our world and our nation today and has become an integral part of India’s development journey. Adverse climate impacts impede socio-economic progress and threaten marginalised communities disproportionately; climate solutions, on the other hand, are the future of the global economy.

Yet to take on a challenge of this scale and complexity, we need the collective strength of diverse stakeholders along with accelerated ambition. Recognising the need for an apex Indian institution that can enable this, the Tata Trusts incubated the India Climate Collaborative, to enable funding and ambition to flow towards the critical gaps and opportunities in the climate ecosystem. We believe that the ICC can empower India’s philanthropies to become leaders in climate action, both within the country and globally.

India played a significant role at COP26 in Glasgow, deemed the ‘last best chance’ at catalysing decisive climate action globally. PM Narendra Modi announced ambitious and ramped-up commitments, ranging from tripling non-fossil fuel electricity capacity in under a decade to a net-zero target for the very first time.



Coupled with the significant progress we have already made on our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in the Paris Agreement, India has truly set the stage for decisive climate action. However, we remain the third-largest emitting country in the world, and the seventh-most vulnerable country to the impacts of climate change[1].

This means that India has access to a wealth of untapped opportunity to not only accelerate climate solutions, but also leverage the co-benefits of climate action to further development for the worst-impacted communities across the country.

Amit Chandra, Founder, ATE Chandra Foundation and Chairperson, Bain Capital India Office

"The recent IPCC report is an urgent wake-up call that immediate action is needed to save the planet for the sake of our own and the generations that follow. ICC is a unique and timely collaborative to accelerate climate action in India. We have experienced first-hand the team's commitment and passion to support scalable solutions to this critical problem."

Over the past two years, we have studied India's climate funding landscape and specific climate sub-sectors to identify and map out the defining challenges within India's climate ecosystem, as well as unearth the critical opportunity areas that we must invest in to address these challenges. Here's what we learnt:

The state of play

Reflections on climate philanthropy in India

I. Climate philanthropy in India has been insufficient

Despite climate change's immense impact on lives and livelihoods, philanthropies have historically allocated small sums to address the problem. Up until a few years ago, climate change was seen as a problem for the future. According to a Yale study, in 2011, 42% of the Indian public was 'unconcerned', 'indifferent', or 'disengaged' with the topic of climate change[2]. Today though, there is increased recognition of the grave risks posed by climate change to lives and livelihoods. The 2021 Global Commons Survey found that 77% of Indians surveyed recognise that Earth is close to a climate tipping point[3]. Another survey[4] found that more than half of Indian respondents were aware of the linkages between climate change and famine (58.4%), declining water supplies (75.6%), and insect outbreaks (59.8%). Yet philanthropic funding towards climate solutions remains meager compared with the scale of the problem and the speed with which the world must act to stop the adverse impacts it causes.

Less than 2% of global philanthropic giving is dedicated to climate change mitigation – this widely quoted statistic from ClimateWorks Foundation has served as a rallying cry for increasing philanthropic ambition globally. The lack of an analogous, India-specific figure

only serves to highlight the lack of focus on the sector domestically. The figure below showcases indicators that may be used as proxies for climate philanthropy in India. Our country is the third largest contributor to global emissions but receives only 5% of annual global foundation-based grant support for mitigation[5]. Domestically, cumulative philanthropic spending on climate and adjacent sectors stands at $300 million. To put the deficit in context, Cyclone Amphan, a tropical cyclone that impacted Eastern India in May 2020, alone caused an economic loss of about $14 billion[6].

5%
India ($55 Million)

8%
Climate and adjacencies,
$114 Million

6%
Environmental sustainability,
$192 Million

Lack of funding for climate solutions in India has been pervasive across different types of grant-makers – international philanthropy, domestic philanthropy, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) groups. The ICC's conversations with multiple stakeholders have suggested different reasons for the lack of philanthropic climate action.

A key factor driving the lack of grant-funding for climate action in India is the general duration of philanthropic learning cycles. The 2015 Paris Agreement was the seminal moment that brought climate change onto the world stage, as 193 countries committed to work together to keep the rise in mean global temperature well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and preferably limited to 1.5°C. Since then, we have seen a significant increase in global government spending on climate action. According to the Climate Policy Initiative, annual climate finance flows rose to $579 billion, on average, over the two-year period of 2017/2018; representing a $116 billion (25%) increase from 2015/2016[7]. Philanthropic grant-making, however, is governed by pre-set strategies that last for 3-5 years. Hence, organisational capacity building for climate action and re-orientation of grant-making strategies is bound to take time.

Factors hampering

international philanthropy

Unfavourable central policies

Lack of on-ground presence

Limited geographic reach

International philanthropic funding to India is also hampered by political headwinds, limited on-ground presence, and geographic reach. Historically, across sectors, it has been difficult to drive philanthropic capital into India given bureaucratic hurdles e.g., Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licenses that come with 5-year renewal requirements and administrative expenditure limits. Amendments to existing laws have made these barriers even more difficult to overcome.

Prior to the 2020 FCRA amendments, for international funders without a local presence in India, intermediary organisations enabled their funding to reach smaller, less visible organisations by providing due diligence in the selection, monitoring, and capacity building of grassroots NGOs. The recent amendments on regranting, by raising transaction costs, will shift these funders to focus on a few large organisations, which may disadvantage smaller, more rural, grassroots groups. Says Centre for Policy Research President, Yamini Aiyar, "The provision that constrains recipient organisations from sub-granting to other organisations in India will affect the ability to build networks and conduct collaborative research across institutions"[8]. Given the necessity of research and evidence-building for multiple climate solutions, recent policy amendments could hamper progress.

Furthermore, international funder strategies and investments have historically focused on national policy initiatives and programs, supported by grants to international NGOs and Delhi-based organisations. Estimates suggest that 60% of foreign funding is restricted to NGOs in Delhi[9], Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. Out of these, Delhi received the largest share at 23% of total foreign funds, primarily due to a larger share of NGOs being registered in Delhi. In multiple conversations, international foundations have expressed their difficulty in increasing funding to India due to a lack of access to grantee organisations at the sub-national level.

Factors hampering domestic CSR

Lack of favourable policy

Administrative spending cap

Restrictive reporting requirements

Domestic CSR funding is constrained by existing regulations, reporting guidelines, and outcome timelines. CSR regulations while necessary, come with their own constraints. First, while traditional sectors such as the arts, education, etc. are prescribed as areas permissible for CSR spending, climate change is not mentioned as a separate area for CSR activities and is instead perceived to be subsumed under the 'environment' category. Second, according to Dalberg Advisors, given the 5% limit on overheads stipulated by the government, smaller CSR spenders can only deploy a limited amount in its administration. Hence, firms tend to hand over the responsibility of the CSR department to individuals who may not have development sector expertise. These individuals may choose to spend on themes that already receive substantial support, such as infrastructure development (e.g., new schools or health clinics), or those that serve shorter-term self-interests, typically in geographies where they operate[10].

Finally, the reporting requirements for CSR expenditure may lead firms to spend on asset-focused projects with quantifiable impacts in the short term.

This does not align with the nature of projects in the climate sector, especially the land use sector, where projects have a long gestation period - typically 15–20-year time frames. For example, CSR money is channelled towards plantations where impact metrics in terms of greening, land brought to productive use, and tree cover can be computed to show immediate results. However, this does not align with the long-term land use and sustainability perspective that needs to focus on landscape-based restoration that ensures not only community resilience, but also carbon benefits.

Factors hampering

domestic private philanthropy

Traditional focus on legacy sectors

Preference for immediate outcomes

Capacity-side challenges

Domestic individual climate philanthropy is constrained by long-standing focus on legacy sectors and projects with immediate impact as well as capacity-side challenges. First, donors have legacy preferences. India's historically lagging socio-economic indicators have driven philanthropic focus on sectors that provide pathways to economic growth, such as education or livelihood enhancement through job training or food security interventions. Education makes up almost half of all family philanthropic funds in India and healthcare accounts for a little over a quarter[11]. Ramping up climate philanthropy to the same scale as that of such long-standing priority sectors will understandably require time.

Second, unlike education and healthcare, climate-positive programs have relatively longer gestation periods before achieving tangible impact. For example, education programs can track immediate, yearly progress through improvements in literacy rates, enrolment numbers, etc. but carbon sequestration initiatives generally require up to 15-20 years to show outcomes.

Finally, the capacity side also offers challenges. Despite being home to over three million non-profits, only a handful of NGOs in India have an annual operating budget of more than INR 10 crore. A 2018 Bridgespan survey of 949 NGOs found that 85% had annual expenditures less than INR 5 crore[12]. This limited proven capacity to absorb and manage big ticket funding further hampers domestic private philanthropy from making longer term and strategic investments.

II. Interest in climate philanthropy is growing rapidly

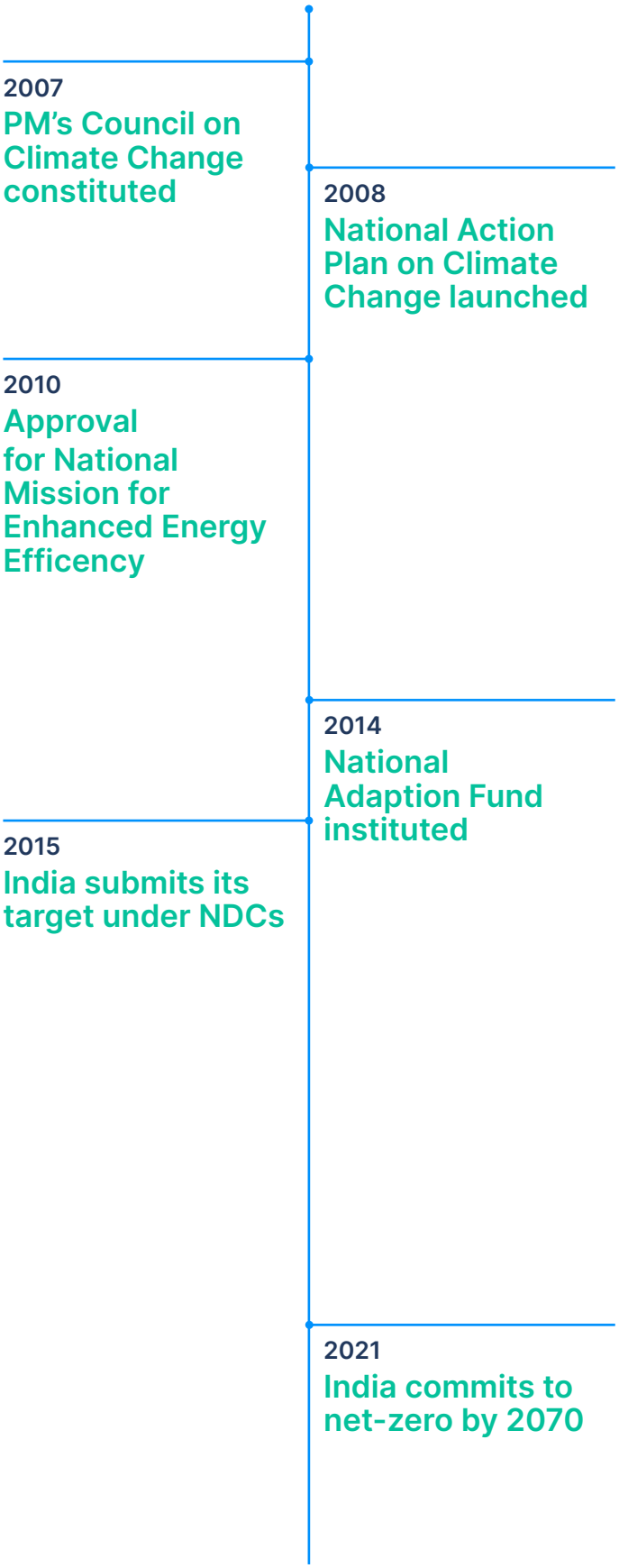
While philanthropic focus on climate action in India has been historically lacking, action from other sections of society is driving interest in the sector. Ambitious targets by the Indian government, corporate climate commitments, and civil society-led climate actions are driving attention towards and interest in combatting climate change. Given the momentum built by these stakeholders, philanthropy has also started showing willingness to tackle climate change.

Government's climate leadership:

Ajay Mathur,
Director General, International Solar Alliance

"PM Modi cut through the rhetoric and delivered a big promise of climate action from India. 50% of electricity generation from renewable energy sources speaks to Indian's leadership and commitment to climate action."

The Indian government has championed climate action on the world stage. As early as 2008, the government launched the National Action Plan for Climate Change to mitigate and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. When countries from across the world submitted their NDC targets in 2015, India was the only G20 country whose commitments were in line with keeping global warming below 2°C of pre-industrial levels. Recently, at COP26 in Glasgow, India announced a set of ambitious climate targets and committed to net-zero emissions by 2070 – an announcement that was lauded by experts globally.



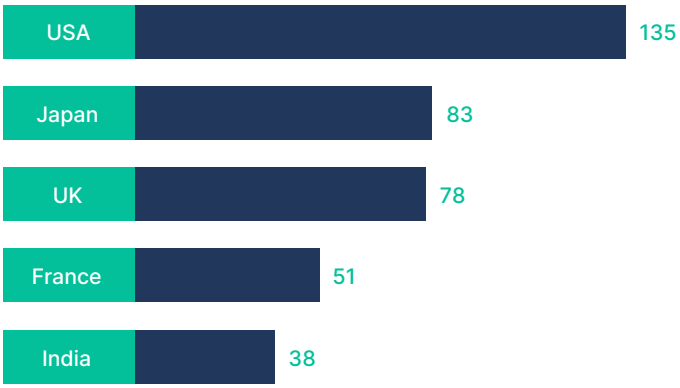
Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister, Government of India

“Today the entire world acknowledges that India is the only big economy in the world that has delivered both ‘in letter and spirit’ on its Paris commitments. We are making all possible efforts in a resolute manner.”

We believe the government’s actions are driven by two factors – a recognition of India’s critical vulnerability to climate change and a desire to become a global climate leader. India is acutely vulnerable to the climate crisis and ranked seventh on the Global Climate Risk Index 2021. According to the World Meteorological Organisation, India lost $87 billion in 2020 due to disasters such as cyclones, floods, and droughts[13]. Recognising the growing impact of climate change on its population and economy, the Indian government has strived to take a leadership role in global action. Through initiatives such as the recently announced Green Grids Initiative-One Sun One World One Grid project (GGI-OSOWOG), the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and the International Solar Alliance, the Central government has reinforced its commitment to ambitious climate action, both domestically and internationally.

Corporate climate ambition:

Top countries by number of companies committed to Science-Based Targets (SBTs)



India is the only developing country in the top 5. The number of Indian companies committing to SBTs, grew from 25 in 2018 to 38 in 2019.

Indian corporates are following suit by committing to emissions reduction targets. As illustrated in the above figure, India has one of the highest number of corporates with climate commitments. As of November 2021, 64 Indian companies have signed up for Science Based Targets[14]. Businesses are also increasingly putting an internal price on carbon to meet their climate targets, with 19 already pricing carbon in 2019 and 23 more planning to do so in the next two years, according to Carbon Disclosure Project[15]. Large conglomerates such as the Mahindra Group and Reliance Industries have also announced ambitious carbon neutrality targets.

We believe corporate climate ambition is driven by consumer and investor expectations, as well as business risks posed by climate change. At the start of 2020, global sustainable investments reached $35.3 trillion in the five major markets tracked by the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance, a rise of 15% in two years[16].

Almost 400 investors representing more than $35 trillion in assets under management (AUM) have signed the Climate Action 100+ initiative[17], which is committed to pressurising the largest corporate greenhouse gas emitters to "curb emissions, improve governance, and strengthen climate-related financial disclosures."

In addition, climate change creates a series of new business risks. Besides the most obvious physical risks (for example, the operational impacts of extreme weather events or supply shortages caused by water scarcity), companies are exposed to transition risks that arise from society's response to climate change, such as changes in technologies, markets, and regulation that can increase business costs or undermine the viability of existing products.

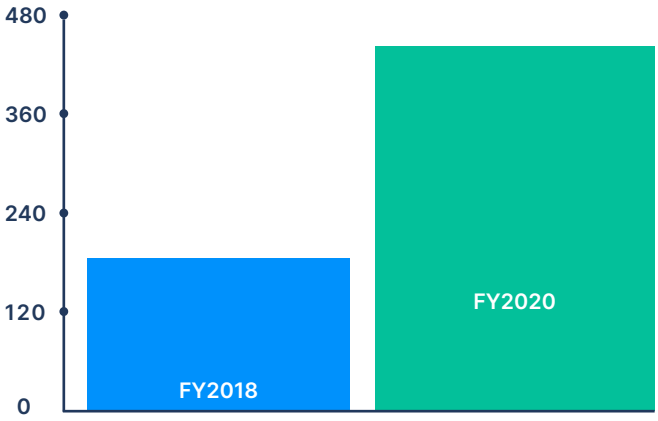
Civil society-led climate action:

With increasing awareness, civil society organisations (CSOs) are also taking action to combat climate change. In line with India's policy stance, until the early 2000s, perhaps less than five CSOs in India actually worked towards climate action – with The Energy and Resources Institute and Centre for Science and Environment being prominent ones. The 2009-10 period saw new civil society organisations emerge including the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water and Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation, and existing organisations such as Center for Study of Science, Technology & Policy (CSTEP), Centre for Policy Research (CPR), and Prayas began to take up more climate-related issues. Since 2015, civil society has focused on complementing government priorities and the current ecosystem of 40-50 climate CSOs has strengthened considerably[18].

III. Interest in climate philanthropy is also translating to action

Philanthropic contribution to climate adjacent sectors

Contributions to climate adjacent sectors (INR crores)

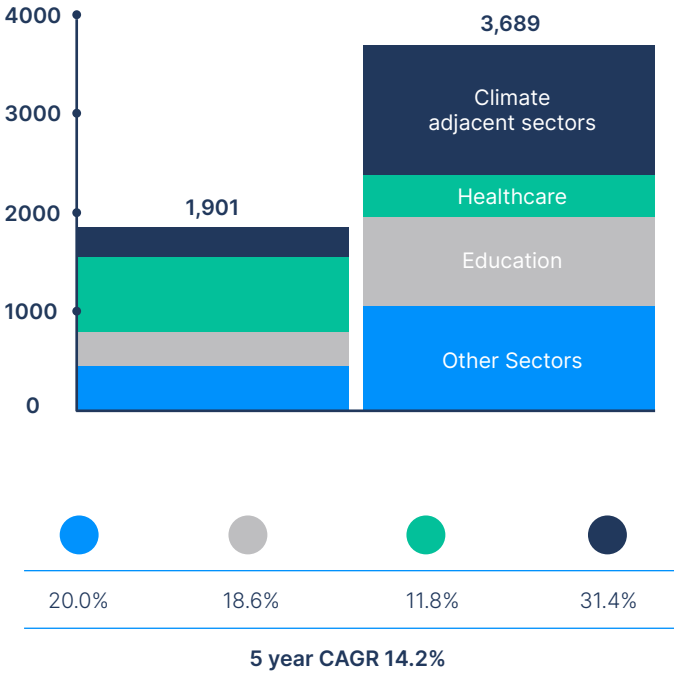


More than 50 donors contributing to climate adjacent sectors in FY2020 compared to ~20 in FY2018

Given increasing awareness around impacts of climate change, domestic philanthropy is increasing focus on climate action. As indicated in the figure, contributions to climate and adjacent sectors, such as environmental sustainability and rural development, have doubled between FY2018 and FY2020[19]. Donors historically focused on other sectors, such as healthcare and education, are also expressing concern about climate change. Rishad Premji, one of India's largest donors to education, said, "I also worry deeply about climate change. India will be ground zero for all effects of climate change — it will affect livelihoods, health and more. We must tackle climate change and its effects". Additionally, commitments from founders of India's unicorn start-ups are also an encouraging sign. The Kamath brothers, founders of brokerage firm Zerodha, have recently launched the Rainmatter Foundation, committing $100 million over the next few years to fund entrepreneurs and organisations working on climate solutions.

Comparison between FY2015 & FY2020 Top 10 private CSR spends across sectors

Top 10 private CSR spend (in INR crores)



5 year CAGR 14.2%

Corporate climate commitments are translating into their CSRs spending more on climate and adjacent sectors. We are seeing CSR arms (of companies making ambitious climate commitments) exploring grant-making to initiatives aligned with overall organisational climate strategies. According to our analysis of top 10 private CSRs, their spending on climate-adjacent sectors[a] has grown faster than other sectors since FY2014-15[20].

Companies are now increasing focus on initiatives in sectors such as sustainable agriculture and rural development. For example, ITC's Sustainable Agriculture Practices Programme is designed to assist small farmers to cope with challenges of erratic rainfall and poor soil health. Demonstration plots and farmer field schools in villages give them information and practical training on climate smart farming practices and technologies, such as water saving irrigation devices, organic pesticides and fertilisers, mechanisation appropriate for small plots, etc.

HCL Foundation, under its Village Electrification intervention, works for alleviation of energy poverty and holistic development of rural communities by making reliable and clean electricity available to habitations and public institutions. Currently 3,700 households, 68 public institutions, and 6 micro enterprises across 41 villages are being supported from 32 solar mini grids.

Given that parent companies of 41 of CSR Journal's top 50 private CSRs have committed to climate initiatives such as Science Based Targets, TCFD[b], and RE100[c] we can expect CSR funding to climate to increase further in the future.

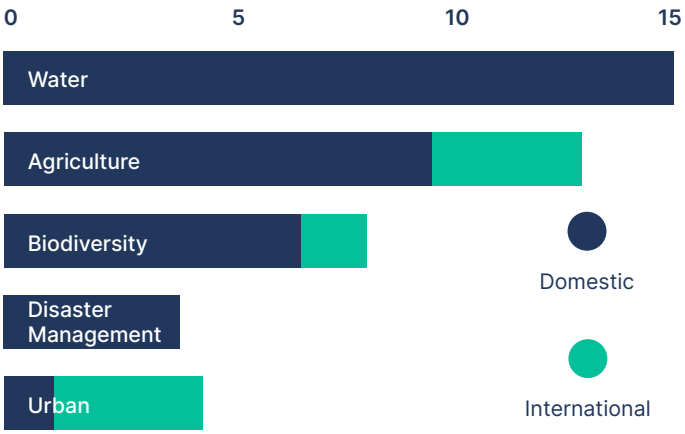
IV. Trends to watch out for

01

Traditional domestic philanthropists have a strong focus on funding adaptation programs for improving rural outcomes – this focus will continue. According to our analysis of 17 current and potential donor partners in our network, there is a heavy focus on funding to climate-linked sectors such as water (15/17 donors) and agriculture (9/17 donors). With both climate-induced natural disasters and subsequent socio-economic upheaval increasing in frequency and intensity, we expect that domestic donors' focus on sectors aligned with climate adaptation will continue.

Number of funders giving to climate-linked sectors

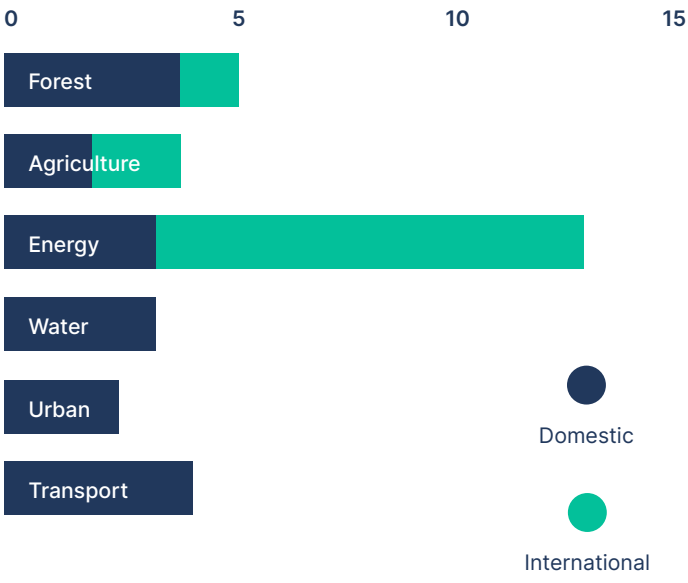
ADAPTATION - ALIGNED



- Among domestic funders, 15/17 funded water and 9/17 funded agriculture. Both sectors are funded with a lens to improve rural livelihoods.

- Few international funders fund these sectors.

MITIGATION - ALIGNED



- International funders more commonly articulate a climate focus (specifically mitigation). Their interventions focus on energy and transport and typically include policy and technology shifts to reduce emissions.

- Domestic funders typically fund development areas such as energy access.

“

Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Founder, Paytm

“I am ready to fund and build a network of start-ups or labs for environment and sustainability in India. Today 5 cities’ problem, tomorrow 50 cities’ problem. ”

02

A growing segment of new-age Indian entrepreneurs turned philanthropists are offering impact-linked capital for technology start-ups trying to catalyse climate action at scale. We are seeing a new generation of philanthropists who are coming of age through technology sector unicorns. Naturally, they are keen to bring to bear learnings from the technology space into climate philanthropy. Consequently, there is growing support for innovation-focused early-stage start-ups with the potential for significant climate impact, albeit carrying associated technology risk. For example, ACT Grants, a volunteer-led initiative by Indian entrepreneurs and venture capital funds, is raising ~₹500 crore in seed capital for solutions to problems in multiple sectors including environment. Other start-up moguls, such as Vijay Shekhar Sharma and the Kamath brothers have also expressed an interest in sustainable action. With the recent boom in unicorn start-ups (42 Indian start-ups achieved unicorn status in 2021), we expect more successful founders to engage with climate philanthropy.

03

International foundations and philanthropists are looking at India with a climate-first agenda. According to our analysis, MacArthur Foundation (one of the largest climate donors globally) increased their grantmaking to Indian organisations working on climate solutions by 80% in 2018-20, as compared to 2015-17[21]. In multiple private conversations with the ICC, other legacy international foundations have also mentioned a desire to reorient their India grant-making towards climate action. In addition, individual billionaires with philanthropic ambitions are beginning to fund climate action in India.

For example, in 2019, MacKenzie Scott announced that she would give away at least half of her fortune. Her initial rounds of grants, totalling $1.7 billion, had a $125 million giveaway to climate change[22], including grants to Indian organisations such as Digital Green and PRADAN. Other philanthropists, such as Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos, have also been at the forefront of climate philanthropy. With increasing recognition of India's importance in limiting global emissions, we expect this increase in international philanthropic focus on India to continue.

Credit: Saravanan Dhandapani/Flickr

Credit: Saravanan Dhandapani/Flickr

04

Rising voices for climate action will drive a favourable policy environment for CSR. CSR expenditures are heavily driven by existing policy. One needs to look no further than spending on disaster relief for evidence. In 2019, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs officially approved "disaster management including relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction activities" as CSR expenditure[23]. Since then, CSR contributions to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (government fund raised to provide support for people affected by natural and man-made disasters) have increased rapidly – totalling ~ ₹790 crores in FY2019-20, compared to ₹320 crores in FY2018-19. Similarly, demarcating climate action as an approved CSR activity could also allow for more companies to support climate solutions.

While we are already seeing CSR spending on climate and adjacent sectors increase faster in comparison to other focus areas, we believe favourable policy can further catalyse impact. Over the next few years, we hope to see more advocacy nudges to carve out "climate action" as a separate area for CSR funding.

05

Mass affluents, affluents, and individual retail givers could emerge as a force for climate action. There has been a general upward trend in individual giving in India, with the country's position on CAF's World Giving Index going from a 10-year average of 82 to 14 in 2020. At least $1.27 billion was donated in 52 days to the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) fund for COVID-19 relief[24]. Other encouraging signs for increased individual philanthropic commitments include the growing membership of LivingMyPromise, a community of individuals (with a net worth of above INR 1 crore) committed to giving 50% or more of their wealth to philanthropic causes either during their lifetime or in their will. Given the increasing public recognition of climate change and its impacts, we believe individual giving could emerge as a key contributor to climate action. Non-profits and foundations will find ways to tap into this capital – the size of which is better aligned to the capacity of non-profits.

To summarise, we recognise that climate philanthropy has been historically insufficient in India. But through our work over the past couple of years, we have noticed an upswell of interest in and commitment to climate action in India, both from international and domestic stakeholders. Working together, we believe philanthropy can play a catalytic role in enabling climate action in India.

Landscaping Summaries

In January 2021, we supported a critical climate ecosystem landscaping study with Ashoka Innovators for the Public to assess the lack of coordination and effective collaboration within the climate sector. Ashoka, in partnership with Green Artha, surveyed several diverse stakeholders in the sector to identify the barriers, opportunities, and innovative solutions to address the climate challenge in India. Through this study, we identified some of the key levers and enablers to amplify climate action in India - creative and collaborative finance, data-driven adaptation and mitigation efforts, a shared language for climate, and a co-benefits approach that has equity and justice as its central tenets. With these cross-cutting challenges and opportunities as our frame, we also worked to landscape the ecosystem for the specific climate sub-sectors that we focus on:

Resilient land use systems

Agricultural land and forests represent 70% of India's total land area[25] and contribute to India's rich biodiversity. At least 700 million people in India rely on agriculture and forests for their primary livelihood[26] and other forms of sustenance. However, nearly 30% (~100 mn hectares) of India's land is degraded and is not suitable for productive use[27]. The World Bank estimates that a reduction in India's natural asset base and the flow of ecosystem services may be resulting in at least 5.7% reduction in India's gross domestic product (GDP)[28]. Climate change is likely to worsen such losses.

At the same time, agricultural activities alone account for 15% of India's greenhouse gas emissions, providing both an immense need and an opportunity for mitigation. A study by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) pointed out that India has the potential to cut 18% of its annual greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and allied sectors[29]. India faces extreme pressure on its land, given its high population density and growth, and low agricultural productivity. Unsustainable agricultural practices and degrading forest quality have slowed India's progress on mitigation and sequestration goals. As India's population grows, pressures on agricultural land due to unsustainable food production and unplanned urbanisation are likely to increase further.

These lands, however, carry immense potential for carbon removal via improved agriculture and reforestation, and two of our targets under our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in the Paris Agreement – reducing emissions intensity and enhancing carbon sinks – are directly linked to land use and changes in land use patterns. Globally, nature-based solutions rooted in existing farmlands and forestlands can contribute 37% of globally committed carbon emissions reduction by 2030[30], and agriculture and forestry solutions offer more than two-third third of all cost-effective natural climate solutions. Landscaping the sector through our research on nature-based solutions in India, we unearthed some of the most impactful land use nature-based solutions that can enhance resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and significantly reduce emissions, while also furthering climate justice and equity. Nature-based solutions as strategies for sustainable land use include:

Regenerative agriculture

A farming system that includes practices like soil cover, zero tillage, cover cropping, crop rotation that builds healthy soil, protects biodiversity, improves water quality and efficiency along with promoting biosequestration. Through our AREST (Alliance for Reversing Ecosystem Services Threats) program, we have identified 11 MHa of degraded agricultural land with potential for restoration.

Climate resilient agriculture

Using drought and heat tolerant seeds and resilient farming practices, which can enhance the adaptive capacity of rainfed farmers and protect livelihoods and food security.

Assisted natural regeneration

A low-cost forest restoration technique to convert and restore degraded lands into productive forests and prevent ecological disturbance.

Integrated Landscape Management (ILM)

A landscape approach which requires collaboration among different groups of land managers and stakeholders to achieve multiple objectives such as agriculture production, water flow, climate mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity protection through practices such as forest landscape restoration and agroecological intensification, agri-scapes, etc.

Agroforestry

The cultivation and use of trees and shrubs with crops and livestock in agricultural systems, including practices such as alley cropping, forest farming, and silvo-pasture. We have mapped potential agroforestry areas especially in the central highlands of India.

Conservation measures

The maintenance of biodiversity hotspots, riparian zones, high carbon forest areas, and peatlands and slopes.

Restoration and conservation of Open Natural Ecosystems (ONE)

These are natural assets of high ecological, social, economic, and cultural significance comprising of naturally open habitats of savannas, scrublands, grasslands, ravines and dunes, dotted with occasional trees that sustain grazing-based livelihoods of millions of pastoralists and agro-pastoralist communities. Through the AREST program, we have identified ONEs to cover approximately 30 MHa (10%) of India's land surface, with the largest extent in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat.

Many of these solutions are being implemented in India by a diversity of ecosystem actors. However, current efforts to support solutions at the intersection of land, nature, climate, and livelihoods are hindered by critical challenges, both sectoral and structural. Some of the challenges we've identified include:

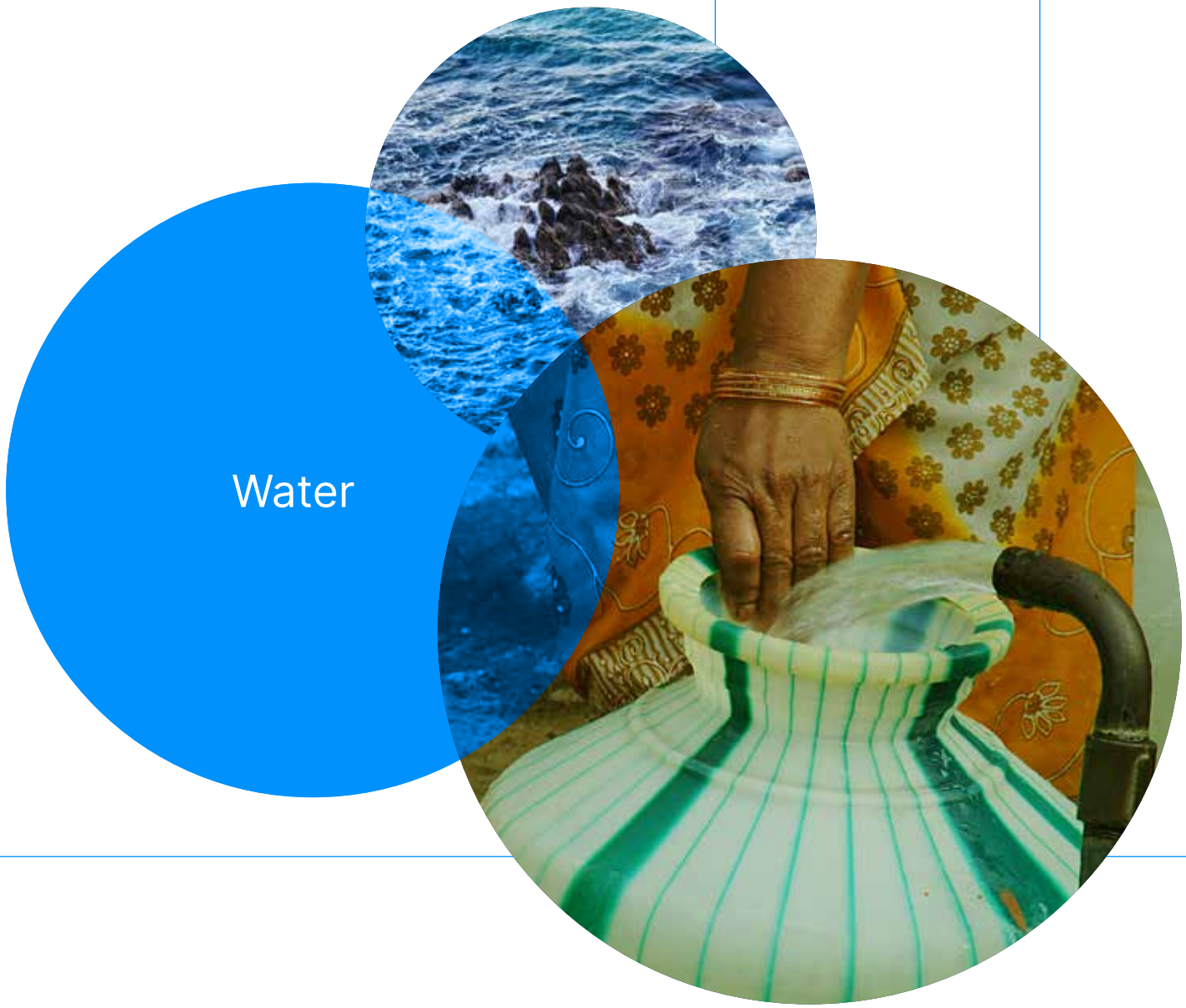
Fragmented work, lack of ecosystem collaboration, and conflicting institutional mandates, which constrain financial flows, program implementation, knowledge exchange, and the ability to adopt a holistic co-benefits lens.

Heterogenous taxonomy and lack of coherent impact metrics, which hamper decision-making, evaluation of programs and measurement of progress and impact, and adaptive learning. For example, ONEs are often designated as 'wastelands' and are being suggested as potential land for renewable energy projects.

Weak enabling environment for communities to transition towards sustainable pathways, such as lack of adequate finance, technical knowledge, scientific validation, access to markets.

Insecure tenure and resource rights, which inhibit meaningful community engagement, impactful implementation, and an assured flow of land benefits to communities.

Sustainable land use has immense potential to solve for India's multiple challenges of food, nutritional and livelihood security, groundwater improvement, biodiversity preservation, waste management, and the climate crisis. This demands a much higher order of collaboration and investments in this decade of action. Going forward, the ICC aims to focus on catalysing finance for creating a resilient land-use system that builds rural economies through improved land management and restoration, while also responding to carbon sequestration goals.



Rural India is in the midst of a water security crisis. We have been working with the Centre for Social and Environmental Innovation (CSEI) at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) on leveraging data and digital tools to address rural water security. Their research shows that although a lot of resources are being pumped into addressing the rural water crisis, aggregate indicators show no improvement – and are, in fact, worsening. According to the Ministry of Rural Development, INR 34,000 crores was spent on water interventions in just 2017-18 via Natural Resource Management expenditure under MNREGA, Har Khet ko Pani (Jal Shakti), and CSR programs.

However, multiple indicators such as groundwater level, rural wages, and farmer suicides continue to trend in the wrong direction. Either there isn't enough funding and resources for the right solutions, or they are being channelled into scaling the wrong solutions, or possibly a combination of both.

However, preliminary surveys revealed that our existing datasets are incomplete and dispersed and prevent decision-makers from making informed plans, schemes, and interventions on the ground. Data pertaining to administrative boundaries, land use, rainfall, elevation, and soil-related indicators, which are critical for designing and implementing robust water interventions, are scattered on different platforms and accessible to only those with technical expertise.

Clearly, money is being spent and solutions implemented without sufficient data. And the cost of an unsolved water crisis is ever-compounding – ATREE's sample research in Karnataka found that farmers whose wells had dried up, had their farm income severely affected, and about 25% lower than those whose wells were still operational. They cultivated less land, fewer times a year, and with less profitable crops, and took up more off-farm employment.

To tackle the rural water crisis, many agencies have implemented a number of Rural Water Security Programmes (RWSPs), focusing on maximising farmer incomes and agricultural productivity. Our implementing partner ATREE conducted a series of use case interviews with on-ground NGOs and philanthropic organisations to understand the role of data, maps, and digital tools in rural water security programmes. Some of our insights include:

40-80% of resources (time and money) go into manual data collection in the absence of digital tools. NGOs still collect a lot of household/farm data on paper because of lack of capacity and knowledge, and there is a critical need to build this capacity on digital data collection.

NGOs are limited by difficulties in assimilating layers of map data in usable formats to provide a holistic view of the watershed. They use paper maps or printouts of digital maps to help communities understand the watershed, which can be solved for by co-creating spatial data layers and removing hurdles to accessing them.

Although NGOs collect a lot of data based on checklists, it is unclear how the data informs decisions, and they require capacity-building support to help them use data and digital tools for specific purposes.

NGOs duplicate a lot of work in creating water data and map layers, and there is a need to co-create shared assets and protocols for all types of data.

The water crisis is also intricately linked to the climate crisis - globally, the impacts of climate change are experienced primarily through water. Extreme weather events and changes in water cycle patterns severely threaten water security for vulnerable communities. India's long coastline, dependence on water for livelihoods, and lack of disaster preparedness makes it extremely vulnerable to water-related impacts of climate change. 600 million Indians face high to extreme water stress, and by 2030, 40% of Indians will have no access to drinking water[31], disproportionately impacting vulnerable communities. Water-related events are increasingly forming the majority of extreme weather events in India. Climate change exacerbates the problems of both too much water (floods) and too little water (drought). Fast-depleting and/or contaminated groundwater threatens the livelihoods of nearly 70% of rural households that depend primarily on agriculture[32]. And just as a changing climate impacts our water security, the nature of human interaction with water contributes to biodiversity loss and emissions, thus exacerbating climate change.

Some solutions that work at this intersection, and have the potential to address the climate crisis while building climate resilience include:

Building decentralised water management systems with robust water budgets to address problems with water governance and transportation, such as open-source digital tools and assets to promote community-based water management and data-backed decision-making.

Installing robust water harvesting structures, including revival of community-led traditional water harvesting systems.

Investing in water-smart agriculture and farming, such as crops like millets and coarse grains which require less water and are also climate resilient.

Investing in ecologically relevant restoration strategies that improve ecosystem services (such as flow of water) while enhancing social and economic outcomes.

Energy

India has yet to provide electricity access to 200 million people and clean cooking energy to 600 million people[33]– addressing energy poverty is a key first step to India's future human development. Electricity demand is likely to double in the next fifteen years, and to create jobs at pace with India's shifting demographics, we will need more and better power. The quality and form of India's urban transition also have enormous implications for energy needs - development aspirations, infrastructure needs, and industrial growth are likely to accelerate and balloon the demand for energy and material resources from the industry, buildings, and transport sectors.

Traditionally reliant on fossil fuel-based production, these sectors are facing global pressures to raise environment sustainability benchmarks towards electrification and clean technologies, impacting costs and raising concerns on competitiveness and affordability. Managing these simultaneous pressures poses severe challenges as India tries to transform its energy sector to address issues of unreliable electricity supply, continued reliance on firewood as a cooking fuel, financially ailing electricity distribution companies, and air quality that has made Indian cities among the most polluted in the world. These competing challenges and the urgent need for change calls for coordinated cross-sector, collective action. Many of these challenges can be addressed by efforts towards clean energy and energy efficiency –

import dependence on oil can be mitigated by renewable energy-powered electric cars; low-carbon steel can reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from heavy industry and reduce coal imports; congestion in cities can be reduced through energy-saving public transport; and air pollution can be mitigated through cleaner renewable alternatives, all while addressing issues of energy poverty and energy security. The Indian government is leading globally on grid-scale renewable energy, and is seeding efforts in the development and acceleration of hydrogen as an alternative fuel, electric mobility, and industrial efficiency to address these challenges. However, these efforts need to be supplemented with philanthropic support in catalysing action beyond government-controlled sectors and institutions, by enabling other ecosystem actors such as civil society organisations, local planners and institutions, industrial actors, markets, and the larger public.

Growing domestic climate philanthropy to fund and scale low-carbon interventions is more important now than ever in this decade of action, particularly in light of India's ambitious and ramped-up mitigation targets announced at COP26. The 2020 FCRA amendment severely curtails funding channelled by international philanthropies, limiting the uses of foreign funding, creating a deficit of the much-needed administrative costs of running non-profits, and increasing the transaction costs of directing money to India. Domestic philanthropy must therefore pick up the mantle to support and scale the non-profit climate ecosystem, including think tanks, incubators, re-granters and implementers. From the ICC's network of 29 Indian philanthropies, no domestic donor currently funds climate mitigation, especially energy transitions. Indian philanthropy has immense potential to leverage social and political capital to invest in overlooked or underinvested subsectors. The Prime Minister's move to increase India's already ambitious renewable energy targets will dramatically alter the country's energy landscape. It will require technology shifts, policy stability, and coordination across the energy value chain.

The ICC conducted an internal scoping of the energy sector landscape to identify emerging priorities that would be critical to the ongoing energy transition. This exercise was informed by extensive stakeholder consultations with our community of partners, advisors, and sector experts. Based on this scoping, we identified the following key priorities to catalyse actions in the clean energy ecosystem in India:

Increasing funding to the clean energy ecosystem to deliver on India's renewable energy goals and SDG 7, and to support policy change and public mobilisation, domains where international donors have limited political license to invest.

Driving attention to and developing strategies for underserved sub-sectors including:

- Industrial decarbonisation for hard-to-abate sectors (including but not limited to heavy industries like steel), which will continue to see capacity expansion to meet a booming demand from automotive and construction sectors in the medium term.

- Clean cooling innovations in the farm-to-fork value chain to protect value loss of farmers and improve incomes, while addressing climate change by focussing on sustainable technologies and cost-effective business models.

- Sustainable energy transition of MSMEs as large domestic and international corporates focus on building more resilient supply chains.

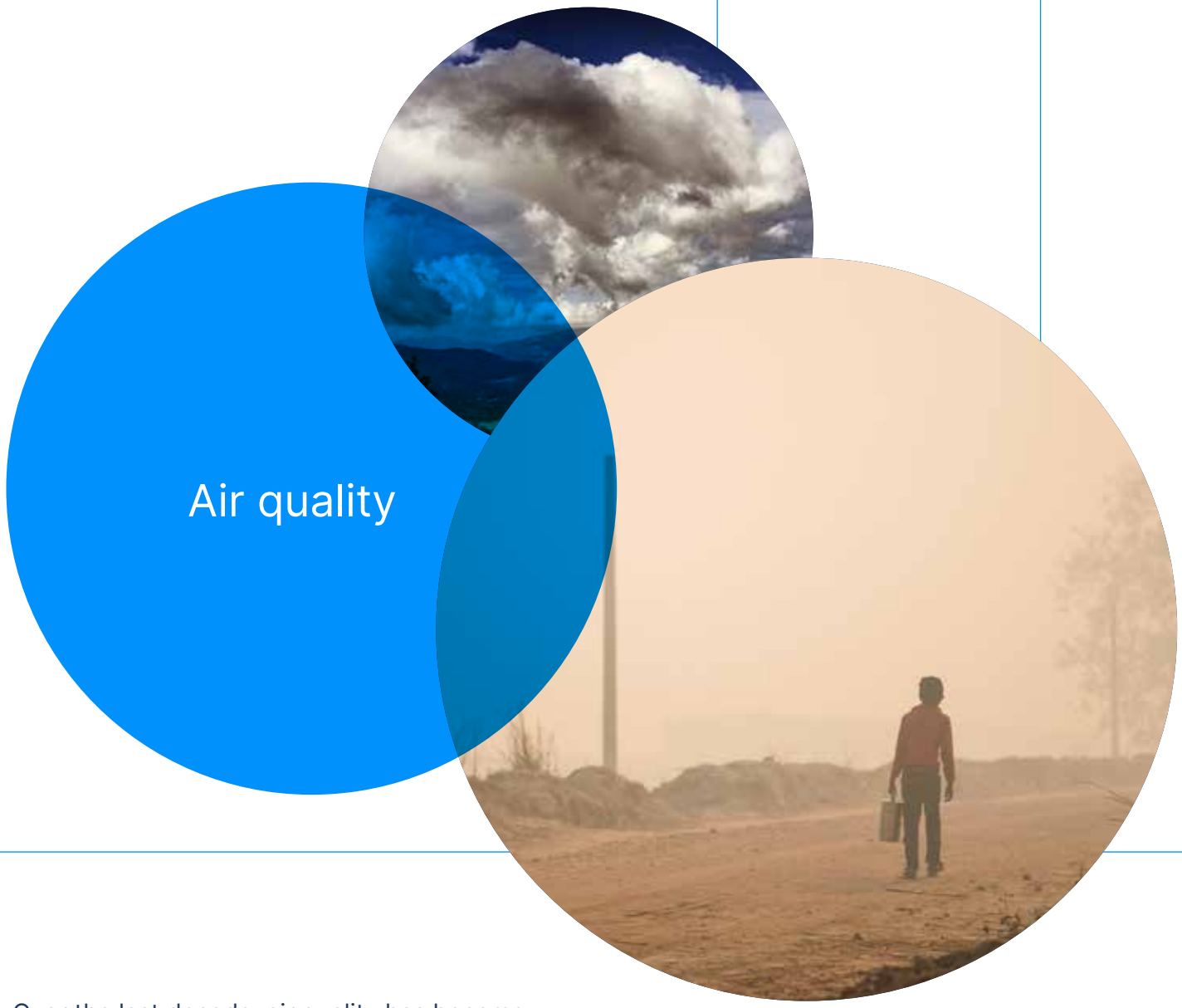
- Enabling just transitions by supporting those who stand to lose economically as India moves to a low-carbon future – coal mining regions, automotive hubs, fossil-fuel industries, forest-based communities, and workers.

- Renewable power and clean fuels for transport. With adequate evidence to support national policy frameworks, India has set ambitious national policy targets in renewable power generation, electric mobility, and hydrogen production. What remains is actionable regional roadmaps with feasibility assessments to bring industry and public actors together,

augmenting capacity at sub-national levels with decision support tools. These will be critical to overcoming seeming implementation barriers such competitions for land, grid infrastructure and operational planning, financing, and regulated disparate electricity markets. Similarly, evidence-based state and city level mobility plans will be critical to unlock low-carbon investments to setup e-charging infrastructure, green hydrogen infrastructure, and battery supply chains.

As India redefines its energy sector challenges, increases its sustainability ambitions in the sector, and addresses legacy development-related deficits to improve access and reliability, the ICC aims to accelerate climate solutions for scale using an ecosystem approach, connect and empower various ecosystem actors, support programmes that seed and scale solutions in priority sectors (with high GHG emission abatement potential, development co-benefits, etc.), and help de-risk and create roadmaps for climate solutions and technologies that can achieve scale.

Air quality



Over the last decade, air quality has become one of the most tangible concerns for civil society, not relegated simply to the scientific community. This has spurred accelerated interest and action on solving this complex, multidimensional, and nationwide challenge, and brought together diverse ecosystem actors to build on each other's knowledge and work. However, several challenges persist that hinder coordinated action to facilitate change and scale. Some of the key challenges that we've identified are an inadequate understanding of the stakeholders working on these issues and the work that they do. At the same time, limited and asymmetric distribution of resources has resulted in unnecessary competition, siloed work, and frequent duplication of efforts. It is also important to note that India is one of the fastest-growing countries for receiving air quality grants.

According to a report by Clean Air Fund, India received over USD 18 million in philanthropic grants at a 20% annual growth rate between 2015 and 2019[34]. Funding is being channelled towards diverse air quality projects, from policy and political work to awareness-building. Further, under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), regulators have drafted action plans for most cities, and committees have been formed to oversee their implementation. In addition, multilateral organisations and philanthropies are working closely with government bodies to support actors who can gather evidence, strengthen the field, build capacity, and raise awareness. The influx of funding and government action brings with it the promise of sustainable support systems.

Therefore, to understand the status quo and the potential of the ecosystem better, we supported Sensing Local in undertaking an ecosystem mapping initiative earlier this year, to consolidate the AQ ecosystem in India. The study mapped 350+ AQ stakeholders to assess the ecosystem of public, private, non-governmental, and civil society organisations working towards tackling air pollution in India with the key aim of unlocking barriers to air quality action at scale. Some key insights from this study are:

There is a need to foster greater coordination and collaboration within the ecosystem. This includes building a community-facing digital platform in order to bring visibility to all air quality actors and their work; appointing dedicated 'coordinators' to actively drive collaborations at the regional and local levels; channeling dedicated funding to support collaborative projects that bring together diverse organisations; building capacity for key stakeholders and enablers such as civil society organisations, academic institutes, philanthropies, and government officials; and making research studies and governmental decision-making processes more inclusive and participatory.

Accessibility and availability of knowledge and data needs to be strengthened. This includes making key governmental data necessary to support air quality work publicly accessible at a singular point; building complete datasets across sectors that measure air pollution, quantify impact, and inform solutioning; and humanising and personalising air quality information to maximise outreach and use across the country, amongst other things.

Air quality funding to key areas of work needs to be augmented to help grow the ecosystem. Funding agencies (philanthropies, multilaterals and private CSR) need greater coordination in order to synergise and prioritise initiatives. Emergent actors and new innovative ideas need to be supported with high-risk funding, and the philanthropic funding pool needs to increase for all actors with stronger participation from domestic funders. Government grants to academic institutions need to be made flexible.

The private sector must allocate more CSR funds towards air quality-related activities and widen the scope beyond surface-level interventions to play a more meaningful role in reducing the burden of the national crisis.

Greater alignment of national air quality efforts with the priorities and values of its stakeholders needs to be achieved. Government agencies need to make room for greater participation of local stakeholders from different sectors in the implementation of city clean air action plans, and air quality needs to be integrated as a key performance indicator (KPI) in sectoral action plans that are key to reducing real world emissions, amongst other things.

Specifically, air quality funding needs to prioritse five key areas for catalytic action:

- Democratising air quality data to ease public participation in air quality governance

- Strengthening the narrative of air pollution as a public health problem

- Strengthening the link between air pollution and health through research

- Building regulatory capacity for better monitoring and enforcement

- Sustaining long-term advocacy and campaigns to hold government agencies accountable

At the ICC, we believe that collaboration between local governments, civil society, and philanthropy is essential to facilitating locally relevant, sustainable action on air pollution, and that we can achieve catalytic action by stitching ecosystem coalitions, developing open-source knowledge, and scaling proven solutions.

Communications

Credit: Saravanan Dhandapani/Flickr

Communications play a key role in shaping public perception, influencing policy and business decisions, and driving the climate movement forward. The narrative around climate change has largely been shaped by the global North – primarily because of the concentration of resources in sectors like planetary science and research, as well as their longer-term engagement with fossil fuel use and emissions. To this backdrop, India has historically taken a development-first stance at international climate conferences, citing that emissions reduction is the responsibility of the West first, given their disproportionate contribution to the crisis.

However, this narrative has evolved in recent years, well-illustrated by the government's ambitious mitigation commitments at COP26. Supported by the acceleration of renewable energy in the Indian economy, this narrative was largely shaped by India's think tank community through the popularisation of a "co-benefits" lens on climate action. Through this lens, climate action became an enabler rather than a deterrent to India's development – through clean energy access, better living standards, and burgeoning green industries. This switch played a key role in shaping Indian policymakers' conception of climate, as well as India's role in international negotiations.

There is still a long way to go in terms of developing a strong, effective narrative for climate action in India at scale. Currently, the mainstream narrative is based on policy-focused, technical conversations primarily in English media, with spikes in reportage around international conferences and extreme weather events. While a general awareness about climate change has been established amongst wider audiences, there is a need to develop a focus on the actions required from communities, and institutions to solve for it. Yet many Indian newsrooms lack the capacity to generate strong analyses and compelling narratives on climate solutions, vulnerable communities and industries, and the impacts of and pathways towards economy-wide transitions to a low-carbon future. After speaking to our network of journalists, media organisations, advocacy groups, think tanks, and funders, we identified a few key gaps in the Indian climate communications ecosystem:

Narrative

The climate narrative lacks a strong focus on solutions, leading to a 'hope gap'; it's largely focused on the policy discourse, which can be intellectual and exclusionary; and there is a lack of local-level narratives, which can contextualise the problem and inspire action.

Skills and resources

There is a lack of vernacular communications on climate issues; communicators (such as agencies and journalists) often don't have the training to understand climate; there is a lack of state-level engagement with climate, with mandates largely being driven by the central government; and there are a lack of public champions for the cause.

Collaboration

There is limited collaboration amongst the different players in the ecosystem, leading to many small, disparate efforts that are unable to attain critical mass.

Based on these gaps, we have aimed to inform our communications work by keeping a focus on the following principles:

Solutions

Presenting clear and actionable solutions to inspire agency and hope about a crisis that often feels 'too big to solve'.

People

Narratives about climate that keep communities and local issues at the centre are much more likely to stir empathy and action.

Inclusivity

Presently, the climate change narrative is dominated by the elite policy community in English-language media. Bringing a diversity of voices into the climate conversation, ranging from local communities to the private sector, can tease out new aspects that enable greater engagement.

Intersectionality

Climate change doesn't exist in a vacuum; it influences and interacts with all of India's developmental goals, from gender equality to robust healthcare. These connections, when explored, can mobilise new stakeholders and lead to more holistic interventions.

Accessibility

The climate crisis is complex and technical, and effective communication must simplify these issues to be widely understood.

Building the field

India is especially vulnerable to climate impacts. With its long coastline, dependence on the monsoon, and low per capita income, a warming world poses several challenges to India's political, social, economic, and environmental security.

Climate change is a humanitarian crisis for India – because of its vast swathes of vulnerable communities, India's development outcomes are inextricably linked to climate change.

Its adverse impacts are likely to undo much of the progress we've made over the last few decades; however, on the other hand, mitigation and adaptation efforts offer a host of co-benefits for individuals, communities, and the economy as a whole. A clean energy transition, for instance, can create a new economy of sustainable jobs and provide energy security for vulnerable populations, while tremendously aiding mitigation efforts. Climate-smart farming methods can address agricultural crises, protect farmer incomes, enhance food security, and sequester carbon from the atmosphere. And climate adaptation measures can provide improved livelihood security and disaster preparedness systems for the worst-impacted communities.

However, leveraging these co-benefits requires collective and broad-based action to drive systemic change. The climate crisis is too big, too serious, and too urgent to rely on isolated actions by individual organisations or the finite resources of public institutions. Although India has a strong group of institutions and implementers with deep expertise, the landscape of climate actors is small, scattered, and often siloed. This is where the ICC comes in.

Anand Mahindra,
Chairman, Mahindra Group

"Scientific research tells us that the next decade will be critical in dealing with the global climate crisis. It is clear that the world cannot continue to pursue a business-as-usual approach, and nobody can solve the problem on their own. Business, government, and philanthropy must collaborate within and among themselves to drive results quickly and at scale. The India Climate Collaborative can make this happen – and together we will find solutions that will make climate action effective and impactful."

Our vision

for India's climate ecosystem

The ICC was conceived to address the nascency of climate philanthropy and the larger funding ecosystem for climate in India. We envision an India where climate action has enabled people and the environment to thrive. Specifically, we aim to work towards three overarching goals:

Drive catalytic funding towards climate action in India

COP26 was a testament to the criticality of climate finance for any meaningful action on mitigation and adaptation goals, particularly in developing countries. Achieving India's new and ambitious targets hinges on our ability to mobilise catalytic funding. A recent study has found that India needs $10.1 trillion to achieve carbon neutrality by 2070, but at current projections is expected to have a $3.5 trillion finance gap[35]. Our aim is to drive grant funding into the climate sector in India, which can be transformational in its ability to unlock larger sources of climate finance from the public and private sector. An essential pathway towards this is to build the field of domestic climate philanthropy, and to not only increase spending on climate solutions, but also to ensure that funding is directed towards solutions that are the most impactful and scalable.

Facilitate and scale catalytic climate solutions

We aim to support the development of critical solutions in sectors where existing stakeholders have limited capacity to scale and catalyse solutions, or where scalable and replicable interventions are yet to be developed. We aim to seed and scale solutions through interventions that break sector silos, address bottlenecks, and reduce entry barriers in emerging and critical areas. We work to bring in systems thinking to spaces that cannot be solved by isolated actors, and to unlock potential markets where suitable funders/ actors can come in to catalyse scale.

Foster ecosystem collaboration

We are working to build a community and network of donors, partners, and implementing organisations from the ground up, to engineer a robust ecosystem for collaborative and accelerated climate action in India – across business, government, civil society, and philanthropy.

Siddarthan Balasubramania, Principal Strategist,
ClimateWorks Foundation

I have the privilege of being a part of the evolution of ICC from an idea to a remarkable institution in just a few years. The ICC was set up to mobilise the power of philanthropy to discover, share, and scale climate solutions, keeping people at the centre of its strategy. And it is a formidable challenge as for Indian philanthropy, broadly, climate change is a new area of focus and hence ICC was an experiment in an unknown territory. However, in a short span of two years, ICC has proven to be a rallying point for domestic philanthropic action, supported by some of the most credible philanthropic voices of India. Facilitating collaboration, creating evidence for the need for climate action, raising resources to fund solutions, disseminating information and analysis, building bridges between domestic and international foundations, and projecting India's voice in the international forums – ICC is doing all these, with a small but extremely dedicated staff. The ICC is becoming the voice of Indian climate philanthropy and a vehicle to discover climate solutions.

Into the decade of climate action

Over the last 20 years, exceptional progress has been made to further climate research and awareness; it is now the decade to move towards ambitious climate action. Moving forward, the ICC aims to accelerate finance towards high-impact climate solutions and increase collaboration among various climate actors by creating opportunities for engagement.

ACCELERATING FINANCE

One of our key goals is to mobilise funding for the climate ecosystem in India, with a special focus on domestic funding. We believe that philanthropy can play a catalytic role in developing and scaling climate solutions in India. Philanthropies are inherently well-suited to tackle climate change for many reasons: they can increase national ambition, make patient bets, be flexible and take risks, fortify relationships across stakeholders, and innovate and pilot new solutions that can be scaled by private or public actors. Engaging philanthropic leaders has cross-sectoral impact and enables access to a broader pool of finance, given that a majority of Indian foundations are associated with large corporate houses. Philanthropy can also play an essential role in building new narratives, norms, and solutions that inspire ambitious political action as well as create future opportunities for private investment.

Caption:
A roundtable for Indian donors with the president of the MacArthur Foundation, to share donor philosophies on climate giving

Over the last

18 months, we have:

Engaged with over 30 domestic and international philanthropies to build a strong foundation for India's climate philanthropy sector, resulting in a commitment of

$6 million for our work.

Increased the number of

domestic donors supporting the ICC, and therefore the ecosystem, 6-fold

(from 2 to 12) and received support from 5 international donors for key areas of work.

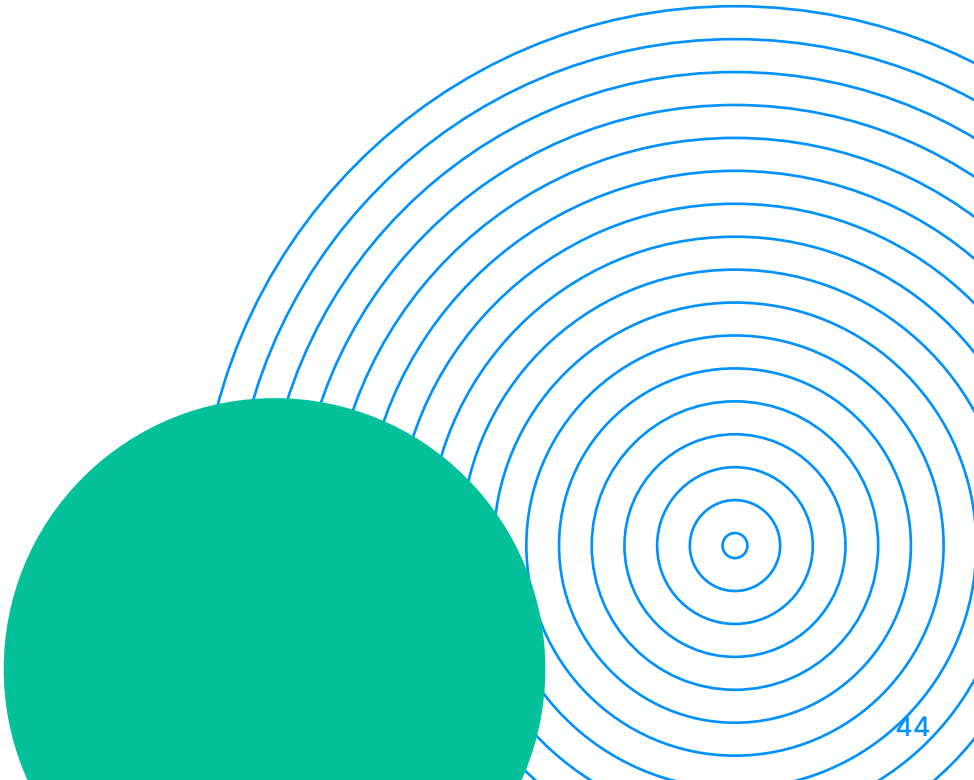
Advised

6 domestic and 3 international donors

on their climate investments, and supported them with strategy, research, and landscaping reports to facilitate their investment decisions.

In addition to directly funding 14 projects and research studies, we have

facilitated nearly ₹15 crore ($2 million) in grants to network partners.



Besides showcasing solutions and facilitating funding for our programs and our network partners, we also create research that can connect the funding community to solutions that are primed for investment, with a focus on pathways to scaling these solutions – including opportunities for alignment and collaboration amongst funders themselves. For instance, we are developing a first-of-its-kind, India-focused knowledge product aimed at unlocking finance (and re-orienting finance from private and public sectors) to scale up nature-based solutions for India.

Land use nature-based solutions, like place-based agroforestry, offer an impactful pathway towards promoting a socially just paradigm – one that can build resilience for communities, while also mitigating carbon. In this UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, we hope to inspire funders by offering a concrete way forward to actors who have the inclination and/or capacity to invest in nature, but perhaps lack the necessary information, connections, and tools to do so. For example, we will be offering a pool of land use-based investable projects, models of addressing uncertainties and transition risks, and building a nature-based arena for nature-positive stakeholders.

Another way in which we connect the funding community with investable solutions is through donor briefings and convenings. For instance, we co-hosted an India Deep Dive on Philanthropic Opportunities for India's Green Recovery in January 2021, in collaboration with the ClimateWorks Foundation and the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). The convening highlighted opportunity areas for philanthropies to pilot innovative models and support investments in India's green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on themes of energy access and transition, land use, and mobility.

After this session, we worked closely with our domestic donor network to narrow down and flesh out three solutions they were keen to pursue – climate smart agroforestry, sustainable cold chains, and a clean energy transition for the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector. We showcased these three solutions, through the work done by our implementing partners, at our Beyond COP26: Investing in India event series in October 2021.

Moutushi Sengupta, Director, India Office, MacArthur Foundation

"It has been a real pleasure to be part of ICC's journey of mobilising domestic capital for addressing the adverse impacts of climate change in India. It is a unique, one-of-its kind platform that provides a safe space to its members to share experiences, seek advice, and to test new approaches of grantmaking. It has been a strong learning experience for me too, to be associated with the strategy building process of ICC."

ACCELERATING SOLUTIONS

As an ecosystem enabler, we aim to use our vantage point to identify trends in the ecosystem, reduce duplication, and grow under-invested sectors. We landscape climate sub-sectors to identify challenges and best practices, and scale solutions by driving attention and resources towards key needs.

Caption:
A still from our work with CEEW and Drokpa Films on humanising climate risks, captured in Odisha.

Leveraging data and research to accelerate action

One of the most critical enablers for effective and coordinated climate action is credible data that can inform policy, catalyse innovative solutions, and enhance agency for vulnerable communities. The ICC supports and scales solutions that employ evidence-based approaches in India to map present and future climate risks, equip local communities with the tools and information to enhance resilience, and facilitate collaboration amongst diverse ecosystem actors to collectively respond to climate impacts.

01

Climate Risk Atlas

India is extremely vulnerable to climate risks, and it is critical to map, understand, and plan for these risks to build climate resilience for India's communities. To inform and accelerate this process, we are supporting the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) in developing a comprehensive Climate Risk Atlas (CRA) for India in partnership with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), the European Union, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The CRA will be a comprehensive climate risk assessment for Indian districts covering critical risks and vulnerabilities including extreme weather events, urban heat stress, water stress, crop loss, vector-borne disease, and biodiversity collapse. The Atlas will identify, assess, and project chronic and acute risks at a granular level to better prepare against extreme climate events.

In December 2020, CEEW published a report on Preparing India for Extreme Climate Events: Mapping Hotspots and Response Mechanisms, which found that over 75% of India's districts, home to 638 million people, are extreme climate event hotspots, and garnered coverage from 30+ mainstream media outlets. The analysis from this report is already being used by the Telengana government and the Disaster Management Information System, Ministry of Home Affairs, to assess risks, inform disaster plans, and design institutional capacity building.

CEEW also launched a study titled Mapping India's Climate Vulnerability: A District-level Assessment in October 2021, critical research on India's district-level climate vulnerability which was also presented at COP26 in Glasgow. By mapping exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity for states and union territories in India, CEEW presented a first-of-its-kind Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI). The CVI would help to map critical vulnerabilities, and plan strategies to enhance resilience and adaptation by climate-proofing communities, economies, and infrastructure.

State governments like Odisha and Rajasthan are in talks with CEEW to incorporate analysis from the CRA in their disaster management and resilience planning, and the Brazil government has also been engaging with CEEW to replicate the CRA in their context. The findings from CVI were tabled for discussion with the Minister for Environment, Forests, and Climate Change in the winter session of Lok Sabha in the Indian Parliament, and extensively covered by English publications like Indian Express, Business Standard, Hindustan Times, and Mint, as well as in leading Hindi newspapers like Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran, Navbharat Times, and Hindustan. The complete Atlas, including other research and datasets on heatwave vulnerability, infrastructure climate-proofing strategies, and climate risk-informed financing instruments, will be released by end of 2022.

We have also created a strategic communications campaign to accompany the Climate Risk Atlas; to learn more, visit page 58

Arunabha Ghosh, Chief Executive Officer, Council on Energy, Environment and Water

"Within a short span of a year, the ICC has emerged as a force multiplier within India's climate ecosystem. ICC cultivates multidisciplinary attention, new synergies, and capital to accelerate action on critical areas such as climate risk management and green recovery. At CEEW, we have been delighted to partner with ICC since inception and look forward to our collaboration and resolve in helping India achieve an ambitious, inclusive, and just low-carbon transition."

02

Water Diagnostic Toolkit

India is poised to face a severe water crisis in the latter half of the century, which will be exacerbated by climate change. Despite substantial investments in this space, success in implementing interventions at scale has been limited. This is because narrow problem definitions are unable to approach issues at the watershed level, thus solutions in one place often lead to further problems in another; practitioners tend to have blind-spots in their understanding that may have unintended negative consequences; and there is a lack of credible evidence to support existing solutions.

In addition, water issues usually need to be solved for at the local level – so it's critical to build the capacity of communities to manage their own resources.

In this context, we are working with Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) to develop a water diagnostic toolkit that uses open-source data to create digital tools that enable well-rounded, community management programs to make effective change in the water sector. This toolkit will help with the creation and validation of use cases for how data can be used to improve water security (for instance, using digital tools to estimate the water balance of a watershed or a gram panchayat), create the missing data layers and tools, and finally develop training material for better-informed solution designs.

As part of this work, ATREE's Centre for Social and Environmental Innovation (CSEI) launched Jaltol in November 2021, a free, open-source QGIS plug-in tool that simplifies water balance estimation in grassroots communities. Jaltol was developed through extensive consultations and learning circles with stakeholders on-ground, to understand their perspective and tailor the tool to their needs. With the Jaltol plugin, decision-makers in the rural water security planning process can get data on their watershed and estimate the water budget at the click of a button - enabling them to make more informed decisions about water management in their panchayat. CSEI has piloted this tool in training sessions with over 50 participants from 20+ organisations and are planning to continue to develop the tool based on feedback from these pilot sessions. In addition, they will be focusing on increasing engagement with CSOs to augment the uptake and usage of Jaltol for rural water planning.

Veena Srinivasan, Director,
Centre for Social and Environmental
Innovation at the Ashoka Trust for
Research in Ecology and the Environment

“ICC partnered with the Centre for Social and Environmental Innovation at ATREE in 2020 with the objective of co-creating systemic solutions for rural water security. Our joint objective was to help ICC’s network partners redirect investments and make data-driven decisions about which interventions to scale, how, and where. Our initial research resulted in a set of typologies and metrics to evaluate rural water security interventions. ICC also helped us co-design the “Jaltol” water budgeting tool. ICC is a truly collaborative partner who has been open to all our ideas. And their commitment to making these ideas happen has been phenomenal.”

03

Framing paper on AQ governance

To solve the air pollution crisis, we need to move urgently and strategically; this requires prioritising a few key solutions around which to focus efforts in the near term, and building a more effective governance structure for the long term. Alongside the Tata Trusts, we supported the Centre for Policy Research in publishing and launching a framing paper titled "Renewing India's Air Quality Management Strategy in the Shadow of COVID-19", which looks at two key approaches: consistent public messaging around the issue, and a broad shared agenda for AQ research and action. It emphasises that substantial air quality improvements in India can result only through sustained, long-term efforts, which needs strong, capable institutions at all levels of government. These institutions will be well-resourced and empowered only if air pollution is politically salient. Widening the ecosystem to include more actors working towards improved governance, deepening the discourse in Indian languages, and focusing public demand on priority asks could help set off a virtuous cycle towards transparent and responsive air quality management in India. Additionally, the paper also details pointed suggestions targeted towards domestic and global philanthropies working on air quality in India, especially given that COVID-19 responses have placed state capacity and finances under unprecedented pressure. To launch this paper, we hosted a panel discussion on rethinking India's AQ management and governance strategy with key voices from major sectors in the ecosystem.

04

Designing scalable business models for clean energy-based cold storage solutions

For the agriculture sector, cooling underpins the ability of millions of farmers practicing horticulture, floriculture, and dairy farming to improve their livelihoods and resilience in the face of multi-disaster stresses. However, inadequate access to farm-level cold storage facilities contributes to a high proportion of post-harvest agricultural losses and adverse effects on farmer incomes.

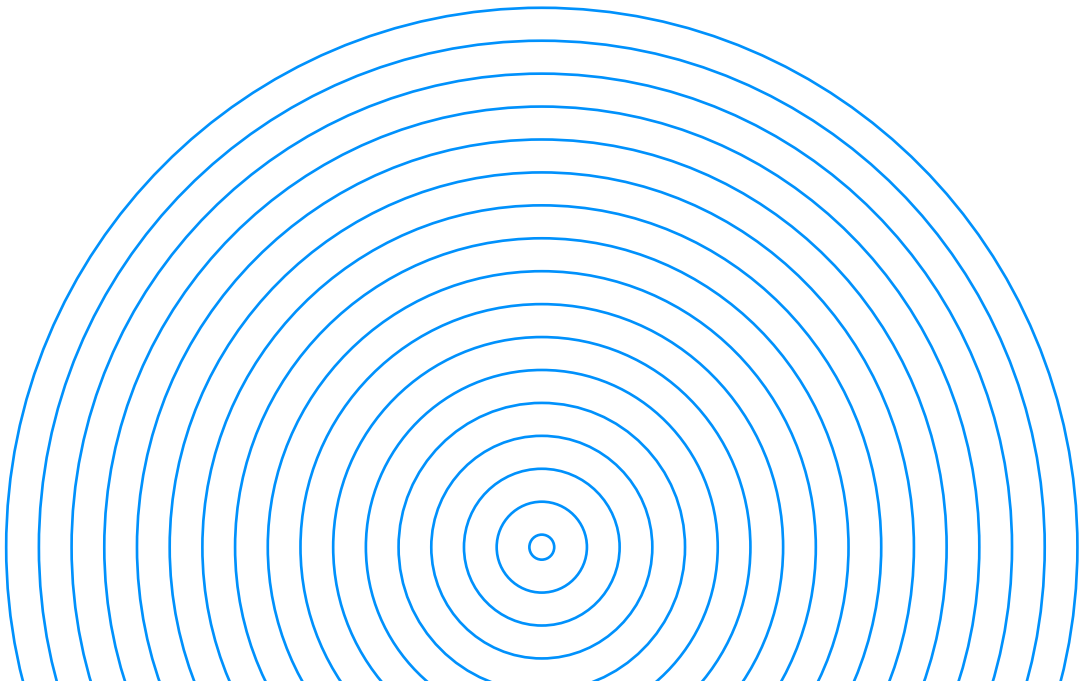
Caption:
A still from SELCO Foundation's pilot projects.

Building out sustainable cold chains is critical not only to enable resilience for farmers, but also to avoid future emissions from conventional technologies; if the latent demand for cold chain infrastructure is met through GHG-emitting solutions over the next decade, there is a ~136% possible increase in emissions over the 2017 level of 4.1 million tons of CO2 equivalent[36].

We began our work with SELCO Foundation to pilot three innovative, community-level DRE-based cold storage pilots in Odisha. The pilots are demonstrating the impact of these solutions on horticulture-producing farming communities, measurable in terms of increase in farmer incomes and reduction in post-harvest losses. However, there are many barriers that stand in the way of scaling up these solutions – farmer access to cleaner cooling continues to remain inadequate due to high upfront costs, access to financing, and poor market linkages. An ecosystem-level holistic approach is needed, which targets key levers associated with policy, finance, and community mobilisation, to overcome some of these challenges. To validate such an approach, we have commissioned a comprehensive, one-of-its kind study to assess cooling needs at a cluster-level and design community-based business model frameworks that can propel these solutions to scale, across clusters and agricultural value chains. The data from this study will inform the blueprint for our initiative, which aims to play a catalytic role in improving access to affordable DRE-based cooling at or close to the farm-gate.

Dr Harish Hande,
Founder and Chief Executive,
SELCO Foundation

"As climate change is hurtling towards humanity at great speed, ICC has risen to be that lighthouse of hope and solutions to numerous stakeholders, be it business or civil society. ICC is playing a role that will propel India into a country that balances development and growth goals without compromising on either. SELCO has collaborated with ICC to showcase models that link agriculture and sustainable energy in the cold chain area, proving that poverty eradication solutions can be created that balance social and environmental sustainability."



Building capacities of key stakeholders

Local communities are often at the frontlines of addressing climate impacts, given their role in preserving natural ecosystems and protecting the resources they depend on. Grassroots organisations and foundations that work with these communities often struggle to manage these impacts in their projects. We support projects that empower and build capacity for communities and organisations to sustainably manage local resources and enhance resilience against climate risks, with a focus on simultaneously improving development outcomes.

01

Building local capacity for air quality management

Sustaining a clean air movement requires evidence-based approaches to action, which in turn require AQ monitoring and data being available to various stakeholders, and in particular, to those most affected by the air pollution crisis.

With monitoring being sparse in most geographies of India, we collaborated with Waatavaran Climate Environment and Sustainability Foundation to co-locate sensors and build local awareness regarding AQ and air pollution in five non-attainment cities in Maharashtra, namely Ulhasnagar, Chandrapur, Aurangabad, Latur, and Solapur. Through the installation of three low-cost air quality sensors in each city, which could potentially pave the way forward for a network of sensors, one of the key goals of the project is to provide citizens with access to real-time AQ data. Additionally, this initiative also focuses on building capacity within communities to map the AQ landscape, track implementation of city clean air plans, and sustain the clean air movement. Currently underway, the programme is training local communities of change-makers, or Waatavaran Mitrs, to not only operate AQ sensors and analyse AQ data, but also reach out to local and government stakeholders and participate in decision-making processes to advocate for clean air.

02

Climate adjacency workshops

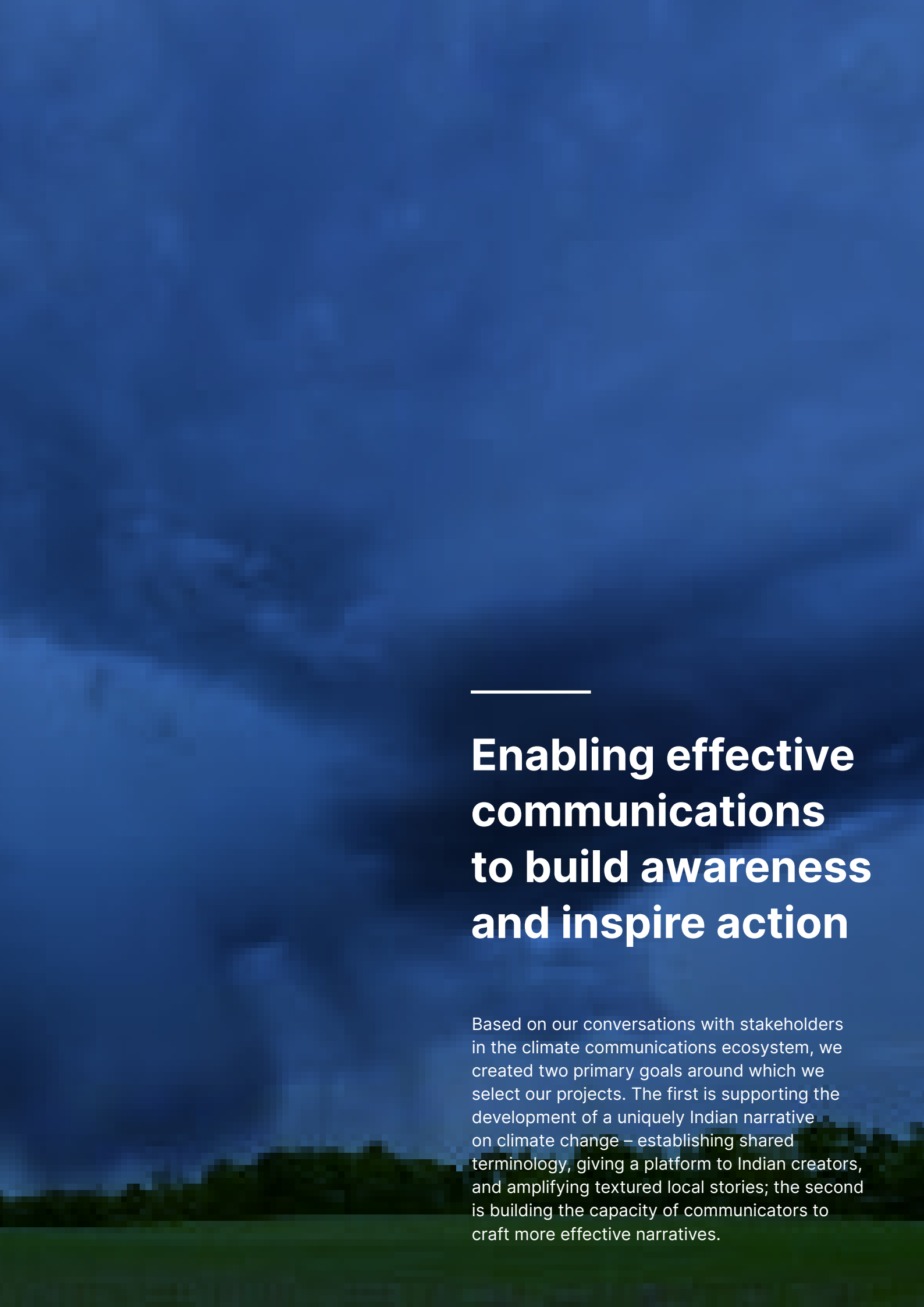
We worked with DESTA, a research and consulting firm specialising in systems thinking for sustainable development, to conduct climate adjacency workshops for the on-ground projects of four ICC donors. Using systems thinking tools and participatory engagement with the project teams, the workshops highlighted the intersections between development projects and climate change - co-benefits and maladaptive processes - around which organisations can design activities to enhance their climate action. Senior management of all these organisations shared that the workshop helped their teams identify low hanging fruit to reduce impact on soil health and groundwater, plan better for climate risks, and communicate their climate adjacencies better. Reflections from the workshop included the need for a checks-and-balances system to avoid over-exploitation of resources, new capacities in identifying cause-and-effect relationships and bottlenecks to projects, and the application of a climate adjacencies lens on future work, among others.

We also worked with one of our key supporters, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, to put together a synthesis report on the workshops DESTA conducted with their field partners. This report details four case studies in diverse geographies across India, where a systems thinking approach helped organisations map their projects' influence on local ecosystems and livelihoods. This enabled them to process how they affect the adaptive capacity of communities to cope with climate change, reduce emissions sources, or improve sequestration, while also addressing any potential maladaptations.

Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson,
Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies

“This past year has shown us the speed and scale of the many planetary challenges we face. The fires across the Northern Hemisphere and rain in Greenland are ominous portents of a volatile and uncertain future. But what has always given me hope is our ability to find ways to respond to our most urgent challenges creatively.

In its second year, the India Climate Collaborative is helping us all, as samaaj, bazaar, and sarkaar, leverage the power of good collaboration. Where we can lead with trust and let go of control to truly co-create a path together.”



Enabling effective communications to build awareness and inspire action

Based on our conversations with stakeholders in the climate communications ecosystem, we created two primary goals around which we select our projects. The first is supporting the development of a uniquely Indian narrative on climate change – establishing shared terminology, giving a platform to Indian creators, and amplifying textured local stories; the second is building the capacity of communicators to craft more effective narratives.

01

Climate justice lexicon

Climate justice is a frame that looks at climate change from the perspective of affected communities, human rights, historic responsibility, and other ethical dimensions – rather than seeing it solely as a conversation around science and emissions. While India has been a key proponent of climate justice in international negotiations, the domestic narrative on climate justice is still nascent, but growing rapidly. In this context, we collaborated with Justice Adda to create a climate justice lexicon, which aims to give users an introduction to the principles of climate justice through an A-Z of key terminology, in both English and Hindi. It is designed to be accessible and explores a multitude of concepts, ranging from climate science to international policy. Each term includes a definition and illustration, a section on its relevance to climate justice, a praxis of how it applies to real-world examples from India and beyond, and sources for further reading. As a whole, this project aims to help fortify a shared, cross-lingual terminology and understanding of climate justice, grounded in the Indian context.

02

Open-access air quality videos

While there is general awareness among wider audiences about the existence of air pollution, there is a lack of nuance in understanding how to tackle this issue. At the same time, many AQ actors don't have access to the resources required to create accessible and compelling materials to demystify the crisis. To address this, we supported ASAR Social Impact Advisors to create unbranded animated videos on a variety of topics related to air pollution, including air quality indices (AQI), health impacts of air pollution, potential solutions, and advocacy for local and government action. These videos are unbranded and open access, so that civil society actors can use them freely in their own materials and work related to AQ solutions. These videos are available for use in four languages – Hinglish, Marathi, Bengali, and Tamil; and have already been shared widely by a diverse set of stakeholders, including news platforms, citizen action groups, the Maharashtra Government, and publications like the Times of India.

Caption:
A still from our work with CEEW and Drokpa Films on humanising climate risks, captured in Odisha.

03

Humanising climate risks

Recognising that the climate narrative in India lacks a strong focus on people and communities, we decided to create a communications campaign that could address this gap in our outreach for the Climate Risk Atlas. Together with CEEW and Drokpa Films, we are creating a number of video and photo assets that capture how vulnerable geographies and communities across the country are experiencing climate change, as well as spotlight their local adaptations to this crisis. We identified districts based on data from the Climate Vulnerability Index, and are capturing stories in the form of videos and photo essays from four states across the country - Maharashtra, Odisha, Kerala, and Assam. Through this series, we hope to draw attention to the communities that are already grappling with climate impacts, inspire hope through their efforts towards adaptation, and illustrate the need for data to better inform decision-making and solutions across India. The first video of this series, Their Story, was released alongside the Climate Vulnerability Index in October 2021, and the rest will accompany the launch of the entire Climate Risk Atlas at the end of 2022.

04

Spotlighting young voices

Climate movements around the world are being driven by younger generations, who will disproportionately bear the consequences of a crisis they didn't cause. In recognising their power for advocacy and innovation, we have supported campaigns that uplift the work and voices of young actors.

In June 2020, we ran a month-long campaign with SELCO Foundation to spotlight the work of 40 young climate innovators across the country, working in a diversity of fields including energy, construction, education, food and agriculture, and many more. This campaign, titled Our Climate Solutions, was amplified by the Tata Trusts, Dia Mirza, and YourStory, and garnered over 60,000 views across platforms. Some of these innovators were also able to forge new connections to further their work, either through others spotlighted in the same campaign or through requests for introductions from our larger network of donors and partners.

In June 2021, alongside the Tata Trusts, we supported Sesame Workshop India to survey nearly 9,500 children across 28 localities in 9 districts of Delhi about their environmental concerns. While this campaign, Mera Planet Mera Ghar, mainly relied on digital tools like WhatsApp, it also involved Sesame Muppets – like Chamki and Elmo – travelling to various locations and interviewing children around highly affected areas. The results from these surveys demonstrated how environmental degradation, especially air pollution, is adversely impacting the wellbeing of children in their formative years – and how strongly they feel about seeing action to remedy these issues. They were also given the opportunity to present their demands, primarily in the spaces of increasing access to clean drinking water and the convenience and safety of non-motorised transport like bicycles, to local decision-makers, with the help of the Sesame Workshop team. This campaign was also covered widely in mainstream media, including in publications like Business Standard, Mint, and The Tribune.

Swati Agarwal, Program Officer - Climate and Energy, Oak Foundation

"Increasingly, there is an urgent need to bring together a diverse set of climate and development actors at all levels, and strengthen their ability to scientifically, socially, and collaboratively approach climate issues such that the benefits of climate action reaches everyone, fairly and equitably. At Oak Foundation, we are proud to support ICC's vision for catalysing India's climate ecosystem and their ability to employ innovative methods for delivering people-centric solutions. We hope ICC champions this mandate and brings further momentum in this direction."

ACCELERATING COLLABORATION

The climate ecosystem in India is still very nascent. We hope to increase the efficiency of climate engagement by identifying ecosystem blind spots and bringing together key stakeholders to solve problems at a systems level. We aim to support both climate actors and traditionally non-climate funders to build their capacity and help them understand India's climate challenge more holistically.

01

Air quality ecosystem mapping

We partnered with Sensing Local, an 'Urban Living Lab' that focuses on improving the state of the environment and public health, to map the air quality ecosystem in India with a view to foster collaborative action amongst diverse air quality actors. The study maps and assesses the ecosystem of public, private, non-governmental, and civil society organisations working towards tackling air pollution in India, with the key aim of unlocking barriers to air quality action at scale. This ecosystem mapping has been undertaken with the goal of sharing the insights and learnings from this exercise with the larger air quality community to inform both individual and collective efforts. Through this study, we mapped 352 actors working in the air quality sector in India and unpacked the spread and diversity of these organisations across four main aspects - geographic distribution, diversity of types of actors, sectoral focus, and modes by which actors are engaging with air quality. We are currently in the process of developing a shared platform to feature the collected information - an open-access database called the India Clean Air Connect - which will provide stakeholders with the ability to collaborate across the ecosystem, align on goals, and coordinate action across diverse sectors and geographies.

02

The Alliance for Reversing Ecosystem Service Threats

In collaboration with the Packard Foundation and the Climate and Land Use Alliance, we are co-funding the 'Alliance for Reversing

Credit: Saravanan Dhandapani/Flickr

Ecosystem Service Threats' (AREST). This alliance, comprising of ATREE, the International Center for Research in Agroforestry, Columbia University, Environmental Defense Fund, Foundation for Ecological Security, and the Central Agroforestry Research Institute, aims to create a roadmap for restoring degraded lands in peninsular India through reforestation. In addition to improving India's carbon sink, this initiative aims to enhance rural livelihoods, food security, and ecosystem services, as well as improve policies for managing commons, and other public and private lands.

The Alliance has been working towards developing a socio-ecologically responsible roadmap for degraded landscapes across four types of ecosystems, namely a) open and natural habitats (ONEs), b) lands infected by invasive species, c) degraded agricultural lands and d) riparian zones. AREST has made assessments on each of these exemplar landscapes, including their ecological features like land area, climate, and extent of invasive species, as well as socioeconomic features like landholding size, fuelwood use, and economic vulnerability of communities in the region, among others. All of this data together will enable the Alliance to identify potential sites for restoration, and eventually, create a roadmap that can support the government make judicious and targeted investments for the reversal of land degradation through regeneration and restoration. The roadmap will not only provide suitable sites for interventions, but will also put forth a set of tools, approaches, and activities for implementation.

Going forward, the Alliance will work on aggregated packages of financeable interventions for these exemplar landscapes. It will also produce a networking analysis map for relevant restoration policies in India, as well as map the budgetary flows for restoration.

Sumant Sinha, Founder, Chairman, and Managing Director, ReNew Power

"Over the last decade, we've seen an 80% reduction in the cost of solar panels — solar power in India now costs less than half of the new coal-based power, on per unit basis. I'm confident that renewables will become the basic unit of addition to meet new power demand in the future, in India and across the world. Our energy transition is well in sight, and there's no better time for a collaborative platform like the ICC to help shape the discourse around the systemic transitions we need to make to battle climate change and facilitate a collective and coordinated response to this crisis."

Nitin Pandit, on behalf of the AREST coalition (an alliance of ATREE, Columbia University, EDF, FES, and ICRAF)

“An urgent development and environmental challenge ahead of us, globally and locally, remains one of land degradation. If inadequately addressed, degradation of land will negatively impact efforts towards poverty alleviation. Resulting from poor land-use practices and already aggravated by climate change, the degradation threatens food, nutritional and water security, endangers wildlife and ecologically sensitive habitats, aids the spread of invasives, and aggravates biodiversity loss. We, at the Alliance for Reversing Ecosystem Service Threats (AREST) coalition (ATREE, Columbia University, EDF, FES, and ICRAF) along with the ICC recognise the urgency for socio-ecologically responsible science-based restoration. The task at hand is national in scale and scope, and the ICC provides us a much-needed platform to connect, collaborate, and converge the disparate efforts of many organisations towards environmental and human well-being.”

03

Convening the ecosystem

Early in our journey, we realised that there was a lack of spaces where ecosystem players could talk about their work and learn from each other, leading to them working in isolation. To bridge this gap, we have worked to create a platform for cross-discussion amongst the wide spectrum of stakeholders that have a role to play in solving for climate change – including research, implementing organisations, government, businesses, and philanthropy, among others. These discussions have spanned across sectors including energy, nature, transitions, air quality, industry, and much more. Below are a few select convenings we have hosted; we have included a long list in the addendum at the end of the report.

Beyond COP26: Investing in India event series | October 2021
In the timeframe around COP26 in Glasgow, we curated and hosted a 4-part event series, supported by EdelGive Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies. This series was aimed at translating ambitions set at Glasgow into fundable solutions on-ground, spotlighting our work and the work of our partners in fields like climate risk assessment, green recovery pathways, just transition, and fundable nature-based solutions for carbon abatement and land restoration. Our panelists included Mr. Anil Kumar Jain, Secretary of the Ministry of Coal, Mr. Aaditya Thackeray, Cabinet Minister for Tourism and Environment in the Government of Maharashtra, Mr. Kamal Kishore, Member Secretary of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Tim Christophersen, Head of the Nature for Climate Branch of UNEP, as well as senior leadership of various leading climate, corporate, and philanthropic institutions including WRI India, GIZ India, JSW Foundation, Climate Policy Initiative, Mahindra Group, and Rainmatter Foundation, among others. We also curated explainer infographics and other resources to provide a background for each of our events.

India Air Quality Convening | January 2020 & September 2021
In January 2020, we hosted the 2nd edition of the India Air Quality Convening in New Delhi, in collaboration with the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation. The ecosystem-wide event brought together 100+ AQ stakeholders from India and beyond to assess how far we have come as a sector, identify where substantial gaps and roadblocks still remain, spotlight key wins and investment opportunities, and establish the next steps required for delivering effective solutions. In line with the goals of the first-ever India Air Quality Convening in 2019, the 2020 convening also discussed critical themes like data and research, health impacts, policy, communications and advocacy, and the funding landscape.

In September 2021, amidst the pandemic — which highlighted the importance of addressing air pollution more than ever — we hosted the 3rd edition of the annual India Air Quality Convening, jointly with Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation, and this time around, with the Clean Air Fund as well. With nearly 200+ AQ stakeholders taking part in the event, themes such as the role of philanthropy in furthering AQ action, health-focused AQ communication, and a post-pandemic future for the ecosystem, took centre stage at the event. Furthermore, the convening spotlighted tangible ideas and success stories in AQ science and technology, policy, and action from all over India, to recognise the impactful, inclusive work undertaken by AQ actors in their fields, especially in current times of crisis.

Jane Burston,
Executive Director, Clean Air Fund

"The ICC brings a wealth of expertise in change-making to the climate crisis at this critical time, along with an approach that is built on and deeply values collaboration. It was a real pleasure to work with ICC to deliver the Air Quality Convening, bringing NGOs and donors together to share information and brainstorm transformative strategies to reduce air pollution, fast. The ICC's recent report on the air quality ecosystem in India has contributed a significant amount to the collective wisdom, and what it will take to address air pollution at scale."

Panel on industrial decarbonisation | March 2021
In partnership with the ClimateWorks Foundation, we moderated a panel on 'Developing industries for the future,' which served as a platform to connect prominent business leaders that have made commitments towards industrial decarbonisation with our donor community, to help identify investment strategies in India. Our panel included Mr. Mahendra Singhi, CEO of Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd, Mr. TV Narendran, CEO of Tata Steel, Mr. Arun Nanda, Chairman of Mahindra Lifespaces, and Mr. Nadir Godrej, Director of Godrej Properties. They highlighted the opportunities and challenges of decarbonisation in their respective industries, and the opportunities for philanthropy to support industry moving forward. This event brought together over 80 climate thought leaders from across the world, including representation from senior leadership of the biggest international funders.

Natural farming convening | December 2020
In collaboration with CEEW and the National Coalition for Natural Farming, we also hosted a convening on natural farming (NF)— a term that includes various agro-ecology based sustainable farming practices with the aim to create dialogue between disparate stakeholders in the ecosystem, and to assess the potential of NF as a nature-based solution to climate change. Our attendees represented a variety of perspectives, including the efforts of the Andhra Pradesh government (which has popularised natural farming in recent years), grassroots organisations working with farmers on-ground, research institutes, policymakers, Indian and international philanthropies, and others.

ICC IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Profiled by leading philanthropic publications, including Alliance magazine and the UBS Seeds of Change Report, as an example of why collaboratives are key to catalysing action towards protecting the planet.

Invited to present at a learning session on systems change with the Giving Pledge, a commitment by the world's wealthiest individuals to give away the majority of their wealth to charitable causes, alongside two other philanthropic collaboratives.

Hosted Al Gore in a closed-door briefing with leading Indian philanthropists, to inspire them to action towards climate change.

Mentioned in India's third Biennial Update Report, an official communication submitted to the UNFCCC by member countries, as an example of how India's private sector is actively engaging with the climate crisis.

Partnered with HRH the Prince of Wales' Sustainable Markets Initiative and the Mahindra Group to launch Terra Carta, a charter that puts sustainability at the heart of the private sector.

Supported Brazilian funders in designing and developing a collaborative modelled around the ICC, aimed at preserving the biodiversity of the Amazon region.

Represented on the advisory board of IUCN's Nature-based Recovery Initiative, in the core group of TERI's India-EU track II dialogue, and on the high-level panel of UNFCCC's Resilience Frontiers Initiative on regenerative food systems.

Represented on the selection committee of various climate awards, including ClimateLaunchpad's Global Grand Final, JSW's Earthcare Awards, TERI's Sustainability Awards, and World Economic Forum's Trillion Trees: India Challenge.

Selected to be official nominators of Prince William's Earthshot Prize, as well as a founding member of TED Countdown's Count Us In campaign.

Represented at 60+ panels and events, including the UNFCCC's Climate Dialogues, Project Drawdown's Global Collaborative, Economic Times' SDG Summit, India Today Conclave, TERI's World Sustainable Development Summit, the US Consulate's Opportunities for US-India Collaboration on Sustainability, and more.

Garnered 55+ media mentions – including Bloomberg Asia, Business Today, Economist Impact, Times of India, and Indian Express - and over 15,000 followers across social media platforms.

Contributed to various publications and podcasts, including ORF's Raisina Files, Mint Climate Change Tracker, Climate Centre for Cities' Understanding the Future (in association with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs), Alberto Lidji's Do One Better podcast, and more.

PS Narayan, Global Head of Sustainability and Social Initiatives, Wipro Ltd

“The climate change stage is a crowded one today with governments, businesses, academia, and civil society all pitching in. While that’s a positive development compared to a decade back, the urgency of the crisis requires shifting signal from noise and providing compelling clarity that can act as the basis for cogent, purposeful action. Having been part of the ICC for nearly 2 years now, I have little hesitation in saying that ICC has done exactly that. By bringing business and philanthropy together in meaningful ways, ICC is trying to leverage the best of two worlds that are different in some ways but that in their complementarity can deliver powerful multiplier effects. We all know that climate change is a wicked problem that requires systemic interventions at multiple scales and that are contextually aligned with different geographies. I am sure that ICC’s role in sense-making, in generating fresh insights, and in providing directive clarity to all stakeholders involved will make a key difference in India’s climate change journey ahead. All my best wishes to ICC for this stupendous task.”

Looking ahead

01

Strategy refresh

Our learnings since our launch in January 2020 have reinforced how pivotal it is to mobilise funding to solve the climate challenge. Yet in India, private and corporate (CSR) philanthropic giving to issues of climate and environment are still very limited. To streamline our efforts and achieve our goal of mobilising grant and impact capital towards climate solutions, we will focus on a three-pronged approach:

Simplifying access to solutions
Over the course of these two years, we have been approached by several domestic and international donors seeking credible organisations that operate in their focus area of climate action. To address this gap, we are planning to create a basket of ready-to-fund opportunities across sectors like water, energy, land use, and others, which will be made available to donors in an easy-to-use and accessible format.

Scaling nascent or critical sectors
There are several sectors that hold great promise for mitigation and/or adaptation, but face key barriers that prevent them from achieving scale. We will be selecting sectors that are nearing critical tipping points, and direct funding towards solving those barriers, so that they can be scaled by private, public, and philanthropic capital.

Building the domestic donor base
We recognise that simply providing access to solutions won't be enough, as domestic philanthropy faces key challenges in terms of existing regulations, a lack of nuanced understanding about climate issues, and the absence of an impact framework by which to measure and evaluate climate projects, among others. We plan to work closely with our network to support them through these challenges and enable them to engage more deeply with climate action.

02

A just transition program for India

Moving to a low-carbon future will require the restructuring of India's regional economies across sectors like power, transport, agriculture, and others. However, several coal-based districts with poor development indicators generate significant revenue from coal mining, while millions of people rely on coal- and other fossil fuel-based industries and services for their livelihoods. To enable a smooth transition, it's imperative to support those who stand to lose economically – coal mining regions, automotive hubs, fossil-fuel industries, forest-based communities, workers, and others. In collaboration with the IKEA Foundation, we are exploring opportunities to enable a just transition (JT) in India, which can ensure that these communities are not left behind. In an Indian context, it is important to characterise this along two key pillars – impact on livelihoods, in terms of jobs and quality of jobs, and the impact on access, i.e. the cost of goods and services, and income levels. After several consultations with key climate actors, the ICC – EdelGive Alliance is planning to launch a program that can fill key gaps in the transition landscape by:

Creating a multi-stakeholder platform for JT in India to prioritise inclusive and feasible investments, co-create roadmaps, and build policy momentum at multiple scales, by involving all key perspectives and identifying champions.

Filling knowledge gaps through evidence and research to feed into the planning and implementation of evidence-based solution pathways.

Testing the feasibility of solutions through pilots to gauge if they can be scaled up, by co-creating solutions with local communities and trusted civil society actors.

Deploying strategic communications to enable influential stakeholders to understand, engage with, and commit to a just transition for India.

Elizabeth McKeon, Head of Portfolio – Climate Action, IKEA Foundation

"We are living in an era defined by redefinition, one in which we must take stock and appreciate the fundamental systems driving growth and prosperity and ask ourselves whether what got us here will aid us on our journey to the next horizon. What I deeply appreciate about working with the India Climate Collaborative is the way in which it matches intellectual talent and technical pedigrees with emotional intelligence in its work. In a relatively short period of time, the ICC has proven to be an indispensable partner and interlocutor, working behind the scenes to facilitate discussions transition pathways in India that are as fair and just for people as they are for the planet."

03

Building the market for low-carbon steel

Industry forms about 22% of India's emissions, and this number is projected to rise as the manufacturing sector expands in the coming years. Given the difficulty of avoiding process emissions associated with sectors like steel and cement, as well as the long asset lives of these sectors (the average steel plant runs for 30-40 years), industrial decarbonisation needs significant attention in this decade to prevent carbon-intensive lock-ins. In this context, we are working with The Climate Group to develop the market demand for low-carbon steel in India. While we do have the technology in place to create low carbon steel, it isn't commercially viable yet – supply is limited because demand is limited and vice versa. This program involves building awareness about low-carbon steel, enrolling and supporting companies to make public commitments, creating working groups and roadmaps, among many other interventions to engage manufacturers and policymakers and drive a major shift in the Indian market for low-carbon steel.

Mahendra Singhi, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd

“The urgency of climate action NOW is even more established with new scientific studies. Clearly, as a society, we need to come together to forge strong alliances and partnerships to bring down climate change impacts for a better future to all. Dalmia Bharat continues to uphold our business unusual approach of “clean and green can be profitable and sustainable” and we are exemplifying it in our operations, as well sharing it with the globe at large. Greater collaboration is required to decarbonise industry, and I believe philanthropies can play an instrumental role in helping business and industry build sustainable models to reach our net-zero goals – by supporting early demonstrations, policy advocacy, and the demand for green products. In such a short time, ICC has started playing a critical role for the climate ecosystem in India – building a bridge to identify collaboration opportunities between these stakeholders, so we can collectively address the climate crisis while ensuring productive employment and just, equitable, and sustainable growth.”

ICC
Community

Funders

Tata Trusts | Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies | ReNew Power | JSW Foundation | EdelGive Foundation | Raintree Foundation | Swades Foundation | A.T.E Chandra Foundation | Sundaram Climate Institute | Wildlife Conservation Trust | RG Manudhane Foundation for Excellence | Dalmia Bharat Foundation | Wipro Foundation

International Supporters

Bloomberg Philanthropies | MacArthur Foundation | Good Energies Foundation | William and Flora Hewlett Foundation | Oak Foundation

Global and national collaborative platforms and networks

AVPN | Circulate Capital | Clean Air Fund | Climate and Land Use Alliance | Dasra | Forum for the Future | Global Alliance for the Future of Food Sankalp Forum | EChO Network | Wild11 | Confederation of Indian | Industry | Global Commons Alliance | Rights and Resources Institute | Climate Catalyst

Government agencies, think tanks, scientific institutions and universities

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and for the Environment (ATREE) | Centre for Policy Research (CPR) | Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) | Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) | The Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP) | Dalberg | IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative | Indian School of Business | International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) | Carbon Disclosure Project | The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI) | Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India | Government of Maharashtra | World Resources Institute (WRI) | World Wildlife Fund (WWF) | Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy | Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development (OICSD) | Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment (SSEE) | DESTA | JSA | Central Square Foundation (CSF) | CLASP | Indian Institute of Management | Ahmedabad (IIM-A) | Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay | Indian Institute of | Technology (IIT) Kanpur | Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi | Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS) | J-PAL | Health Effects Institute | IDinsight | International Union for Conservation of Nature | Bombay Natural History Society

Credit: Sushavan Nandy

Implementers and other non-profits

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) | India Development Review (IDR) | Intellecap | Mongabay | PARI Network | Sanctuary | The Climate Group | The Nature Conservancy | The Corbett Foundation | Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) | BAIF Development Research Foundation | SELCO Foundation | Development Alternatives | Green Artha Ashoka: Innovators for the Public | Cimate Breakthrough Project | Climate Justice Resilience Fund | Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation | Climate Leadership Initiative | Divecha Centre for Climate Change | Sustainability Mafia | Sehgal Foundation | The Climate Reality Project | The Tenure Facility | Sensing Local | UNCCD CSO | UNEP India | UNICEF | Sesame Workshop India | Idam Infrastructure | Alliance Magazine | Justice Adda | Care 4 Air | UrbanEmissions | Terra.do | Purpose | Natural Farming Coalition | Lung Care Foundation | Haiyya | Institute for Sustainable Communities | Jhatkaa | Blue Sky Analytics | Environment Defence Fund Conservation Action Trust | Climate Policy Initiative | Climate Launchpad | Climate Bonds Initiative | Air Pollution Action Group (A-PAG) | Association For Scientific and | Academic Research (ASAR). | Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) | ActionAid | World Bank | Observer Research Foundation | GSCC | YourStory | Technology for Wildlife | Dakshin | Jammu & Kashmir Policy Institute

Addendum

Convenings

India Air Quality Convening | January 2020 & September 2021
An annual convening of the AQ ecosystem, which aims to discuss trends and focus areas, spotlight key work being done by ecosystem actors, and build pathways towards effective collaboration.

MacArthur Roundtable | February 2020
A roundtable for Indian donors with the president of the MacArthur Foundation, to share donor philosophies on, discuss challenges of, and explore opportunities for climate giving.

AQ Funders Table at Dasra Philanthropy Week | February 2020
A Funders Table that convened 50 domestic funders and sector experts to showcase fundable opportunities in the air quality ecosystem.

New Worlds | May 2020
A three-part digital series on integrating climate change into our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Charcha 2020 | May 2020
In collaboration with a number of partners, we hosted a six-session track on climate change as a part of Charcha 2020, hosted by Nudge Foundation.

EIA briefing | September 2020
A closed-door meeting for 40-50 business leaders to discuss the draft EIA notification and its implications for businesses, people, and environment.

FCRA briefing | October 2020
A closed-door meeting for 50-60 international foundation representatives on the implications of the recent amendments to the FCRA, impacts on climate action in India, and potential routes forward.

Climate Risk Atlas (CRA) stakeholder consultation | November 2020
In collaboration with CEEW, we hosted a closed-door stakeholder consultation to present the CRA toolkit and create a platform for open discussion with key stakeholders, to strengthen and mainstream the approach and tool for broader usage.

Natural farming (NF) convening | December 2020
A convening hosted in collaboration with CEEW and the National Coalition for Natural Farming, to create dialogue between disparate stakeholders in the ecosystem and assess the potential of NF as a nature-based solution to climate change.

India Deep Dive | January 2021
In collaboration with ClimateWorks Foundation and CEEW, we hosted a session for Indian donors on fundable mitigation opportunities for India's green recovery.

Water Learning Circles | January 2021 & July 2021
In collaboration with Centre for Social and Environmental Innovation, ATREE (CSEI), we co-hosted two Water Learning Circles to discuss the role of data, maps, and digital tools in rural water security programs. The second convening focused on data-backed water budgeting and informed the development of Jaltol, an open-source water accounting tool.

Closed-door briefing led by Al Gore | February 2021
In collaboration with the Climate Reality Project India, we hosted Al Gore, the former VP of the USA and an ardent climate activist, to address some of India's leading donors. He spoke about US-India relations in the climate sphere, his own leadership journey, and the role of business and philanthropy in the climate crisis.

Agri-residue burning briefing | February 2021
A briefing to inform donors and stakeholders about the reasons behind the stubble burning issue in Punjab and Haryana, by drawing linkages to the underlying problems in the rice-wheat monoculture cropping system prevalent in the area since the Green Revolution.

Exploring the Intersections between Climate Change and Adolescents, with a Focus on Gender at DPW | March 2021
In partnership with Dasra, we hosted a discussion to explore the interlinkages between climate change, adolescents, and gender; showcasing relevant experiences and amplifying the voices of young people who are seldom included in this development agenda, and highlighting the role the philanthropic community can play at this intersection.

The Dynamics of the Third Great Energy Transition for a Fossil Free World | March 2021
In partnership with ReNew Power, we hosted a discussion on the ongoing energy transition to renewable sources, referencing themes from Sumant Sinha's recently published book, Fossil Free.

Green recovery consultations | June 2021
As a follow up to our India Deep Dive in January 2021, we hosted a series of donor consultations with our domestic donor community to narrow down philanthropic opportunities for India's green recovery. These consultations helped us select three priority interventions - climate smart agroforestry, sustainable cold chains, and a clean energy transition for the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector.

Just transition convening | June 2021
A convening of 30 stakeholders, including grassroots organisations, think tanks, academia, media, and legal experts, to ideate and prioritise interventions and outcomes that philanthropy can adopt to accelerate a just transition for India.

DRE Solutions at the Agriculture-Energy Nexus at Charcha 2021 | September 2021
In collaboration with Rockefeller Foundation, we hosted a session on how philanthropy can play a key role in scaling up DRE-based agricultural solutions, as a part of Nudge Foundation's Charcha 2021.

Beyond COP26: Investing in India | October - November 2021
A four-part series to translate ambitions from Glasgow into fundable solutions on ground, spotlighting climate risk assessments, just transitions, green recovery, and nature-based solutions.

Jaltol tool launch | November 2021
In collaboration with CSEI, we co-hosted the launch event for Jaltol, an open-source, digital tool for water balance estimation.

Additional key activities and engagements

Climate briefings
Over the last year, we have worked with multiple donor and partner organisations across the corporate, philanthropic, and civil society sector to conduct climate briefings with their teams. These briefings help them understand India's climate crisis more deeply, as well as highlight India's opportunities to address our climate challenge. They also serve as a pathway to enable our partners to engage more deeply with climate issues and solutions.

Echo Network
We were founding partners in a network that aimed to increase research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment with three key themes of interest – sustainability and agriculture, waste, and biodiversity conservation.

Science in a Visual Short
In September 2021, we supported All Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT.EFF) - India's first environmental film festival based out of Panchgani, to host a workshop called Science in a Visual Short. This session was orchestrated by multimedia artist Pooja Gupta, and was aimed at helping communicators translate dense scientific concepts into visual media – to explore issues of climate change in new, accessible formats. The artworks created in this session were showcased in a free-to-attend virtual event as part of the festival.

Exploring intersections: Climate change adaptation, adolescents, and gender
We collaborated with the Dasra Adolescence Collaborative to publish a report exploring intersections between climate change and adolescents, primarily girls. This report highlights the impact of climate change on women and adolescents, women and adolescent girls as change agents in climate action, and recommendations for climate philanthropy.

Sangam: Our Collective Voices
A short anthology with tales of self, community, and urgency, woven into the story of climate change in India; created for the ICC's one year anniversary.

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Our Acting CEO, Shloka Nath, is an avid naturalist and photographer, and this report features several of her images. Her work appears in the following pages: cover, 2, 8, 18, 32, 45, 46, 62, 73, 80 and 82.

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