

## Investing in Nature: Financing nature-based solutions for India

### Background & Concept

Nature-based solutions (NbS) are strategies that work with nature to address adaptation and mitigation challenges, while bringing long-term benefits for people and ecosystems. In the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, deployment of NbS has received significant attention as a promising strategy to address societal and environmental challenges. The recently concluded CoP26 highlighted the co-benefits generated from NbS to address the global crisis of biodiversity loss and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, according to the United Nations Environment Programme, globally, investments in NbS need to triple by 2030.

Agricultural land and forests comprise 70% of India's total land area, with agricultural activities representing 15% of India's greenhouse gas emissions, which means they provide an immense opportunity for NbS. In addition, they support over 700 million Indians in the form of livelihoods or sustenance – especially those communities that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change. NbS can also create significant job opportunities in India, with the World Economic Forum forecasting the potential of NbS to deliver \$3,565 billion of annual business opportunities and 191 million jobs by 2030.

The India Climate Collaborative aims for NbS to be implemented at scale in India and become mainstream; however, there is a need to close the existing knowledge and financial gaps that may impede its uptake. **Investing in Nature: Financing nature-based solutions for India** will bring together the domestic and international funding community and land-use actors from India to:

- Discuss the opportunities and challenges for scaling up of NbS in India
- Get insights and perspectives from experts, funders, and practitioners on how best to unlock, mobilise, and catalyse finance for nature from the private and public sector in India
- Inspire the funding community to support credible and ambitious scale-up of effective NbS as part of 1.5 degree-compatible, climate-resilient pathways

### Event Details

<b>Session title</b>	<b>Investing in Nature: Financing nature-based solutions for India</b>	
<b>Date</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	
<b>Time/duration</b>	6:30 – 8:00 pm IST (90 minutes)	
<b>Session flow</b>	6:30 – 6.40pm	<u>Welcome</u> by Shloka Nath, Acting CEO, India Climate Collaborative <u>Introduction</u> by moderator – Rohini Chaturvedi, Senior Advisor – Land Use, India Climate Collaborative

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6.40 – 7.40pm

Panel Discussion -

- Carolin Leeshaa (Director, Head of Social & Sustainable Finance | Natural Capital & Biodiversity Lead, KPMG Australia)
- Nitin Pandit (CEO, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE))
- Sameer Shisodia (CEO, Rainmatter Foundation)
- Sandeep Roy Choudhury (Co-founder and Director, VNV Advisory Services)
- Seema Paul (Program Director, Sequoia Climate Fund)
- Tim Christophersen (Head, Nature for Climate Branch, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP))

*Moderated by – Rohini Chaturvedi*

7.40 – 7.50pm

Q&A with the panelists

7.50 – 8.00pm

Closing remarks by panelists  
Vote of thanks by Rohini Chaturvedi

## Speaker Profiles



**Carolin Leeshaa**

***Director, Head of Social & Sustainable Finance | Natural Capital & Biodiversity Lead  
KPMG Australia***

Carolin has been at the forefront of global social & sustainable finance and impact investing for over 20 years. As a trusted impact strategist, she works at the intersection of government policy, capital markets, and communities across developed and developing countries. A common thread throughout her career has been the application of creativity, collaboration and finance to design and deliver impactful solutions to address the UN SDGs.

Carolin drives KPMG's natural capital & biodiversity market engagement and thought leadership and represents their global firm on the Taskforce on Nature Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD). With a background in global capital markets and securitisation, her principal area of focus

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includes advising government, financial services, and corporate clients to integrate nature as an opportunity in policy, strategy, investment, and risk management decisions, and on the design and structuring of innovative, blended financing, and decarbonisation solutions based on production from natural systems, including investments in land, oceans, sustainable agricultural land management practices, conservation, biodiversity and circularity across the full spectrum of the capital continuum.

Equipped with a systems view of complex challenges, she has a deep commitment to foster social prosperity and regenerative economic growth. She holds master's degrees in banking and finance and post-graduate qualifications of social impact from the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management and University of New South Wales. She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and is an accredited multi-sector partnerships broker. Carolin is a member of the B Lab Regional Standards Advisory Board Australasia, an expert contributor to the United Nations Global Compact SDG Action Platform and serves on various industry advisory boards.



**Nitin Pandit**

***CEO, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE)***

Dr. Nitin Pandit is the CEO of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE) in Bangalore, India. Previously he was the Director of Priority Initiatives at the World Resources Institute (WRI) in Washington, DC, USA, focusing on restoration and energy efficiency, after serving as the CEO of WRI India and leading WRI's work in India.

Before WRI, Nitin was President of International Institute for Energy Conservation (IIEC), with offices and programs in a dozen countries, for implementing novel sustainable energy approaches for developing countries. In the 90s, Nitin formed a boutique high-tech consultancy specializing in artificial intelligence (AI) applications in environmental and renewable energy systems. In the 80s, Nitin worked with reputed consulting firms. Nitin has a bachelors and couple of masters' degrees in engineering, and a doctorate in public policy.

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**Sameer Shisodia**  
*CEO, Rainmatter Foundation*

Sameer Shisodia heads Rainmatter Foundation as the CEO. He is passionate and outspoken about the need for big and swift action on climate issues. After his early career and entrepreneurship in the tech space, he has created businesses and communities around responsible travel and collective farming, and has individually helped with efforts to further the adoption of non-motorised and public transport in Bangalore.



**Sandeep Roy Choudhury**  
*Co-founder and Director, VNV Advisory Services*

Sandeep is a co-founder at VNV Advisory Services, a social enterprise working with communities and climate change in South and Southeast Asia. He heads VNV's ownership on low-carbon social development projects such as sustainable agriculture, social forestry, coastal resilience, clean cooking, clean air, drinking water, rural energy access, and waste management. Sandeep's work encompasses over 6 million rural households across 11+ countries in the region and over 100+ NGOs and implementation partners: currently working on over 1 million hectares of natural ecosystems through climate finance for rejuvenation, restoration, conservation of biodiversity ecosystems, and climate smart agriculture for small holders with a big focus on the Himalayan countries and the

Mekong basin regions.

He has recently launched a climate change impact fund to invest in start-ups related to climate solutions. He also works as an advisor to the private sector in the region with issues related to corporate sustainability and its relation to community impacts and action. He is on the board of numerous non-profits working on climate related projects including Worldview International Foundation Myanmar, Planting on Demand, Bangladesh Bondhu Foundation, and Environment Protection Centre Nepal. Sandeep has over 17 years of industry experience, has a degree in Electronics, and is a Salzburg global fellow. He is also a director at "Carbon Initiative Forum", a non-profit working on climate policy awareness for the youth and currently serves as the co-chair for the International Carbon reduction Alliance (ICROA).

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**Seema Paul**  
*Program Director, Sequoia Climate Fund*

Seema Paul's life mission is to connect the world's largest democracies to the planetary environmental agenda with a particular focus on climate change. She prefers to apply this mission specifically in the context of start-ups. Seema joins the Sequoia Climate Fund as the program director overseeing the India and global lands program. In addition to successfully leading the launch of two environmental organisations in India — Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation and, most recently, The Nature Conservancy — she has also worked at two philanthropic start-ups focused on climate change, notably Ted Turner's United Nations Foundation and Climateworks Foundation. Seema has also worked with international organizations such as UNAIDS.

Seema completed her international executive program at INSEAD and has two master's degrees — one in public policy from the University of Maryland and the other in English literature from the University of Delhi. Additionally, she is Rockefeller Foundation's Lead international fellow and an Alfred Friendly press fellow. Seema has also published widely in global and Indian media including Time, Dallas Morning News, and The Times of India, as well as in peer-reviewed and other professional journals.



**Tim Christophersen**  
*Head, Nature for Climate Branch, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*

Tim Christophersen leads the 'Nature for Climate' Branch of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and is the focal point for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030: [www.decadeonrestoration.org](http://www.decadeonrestoration.org).

He holds a degree in Forestry and Forest Conservation Engineering from Dresden University of Technology. He previously worked for the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), where he led the portfolio on the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity.

From 2002-2007, he was Regional Programme Coordinate for Europe, the Caucasus, and the Commonwealth of Independent States at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). He also worked for the Danish Ministry of the Environment, and for the European Commission.

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## Moderator



***Rohini Chaturvedi***  
***Senior Advisor – Land Use, India Climate Collaborative***

Dr. Rohini Chaturvedi is a consultant in international development and environment, with expertise in climate, land use, and tenure. She holds a MPhil and PhD from the University of Cambridge, where she was a Gates Scholar. She also has a sectoral MBA from the Indian Institute of Forest Management. Rohini has been associated with the India Climate Collaborative since its infancy and is presently Senior Advisor on the land use program.

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