United Nations Development Programme
EMPOWERED LIVES. RESILIENT NATIONS.

UNDP partners with all levels of society in 172 countries and territories where we operate. We offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations that can withstand crisis, and that drive and sustain growth that improves the quality of life for everyone.

The objective of UNDP’s biodiversity work is maintaining and enhancing the beneficial services provided by natural ecosystems in order to secure livelihoods, food, water, and health security, reduce vulnerability to climate change, sequester carbon, and avoid greenhouse gas emissions.

The portfolio of biodiversity and ecosystems projects managed by UNDP is the largest in the UN system. UNDP currently works in 112 countries, managing 550 projects on ecosystems and biodiversity with US$ 1.5 billion in funding from the global environment facility (GEF) and other sources, and co-financing of US$ 1.5 billion. The Ecosystems and Biodiversity Programme has been successful in helping to establish over 2,000 protected areas in 85 countries, covering 272 million hectares; undertaking interventions in production sectors and development planning in 38 countries, covering 244 million hectares; and promoting ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in 71 countries. UNDP’s programme has generated a globally recognized body of knowledge on best practices in ecosystems and biodiversity management.

For over a decade, UNDP has partnered with the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, to build the capacities of stakeholders to manage natural resources and to promote sustainable livelihoods. This includes strengthening institutional capacities at different levels and supporting efforts to enable communities to manage natural resources in an integrated, participatory and sustainable manner. UNDP has also supported capacity development initiatives to implement India’s Biological Diversity Act, 2002, the guiding framework for biodiversity conservation in the country.

Communities and governments

Conserving, managing and promoting biodiversity in joint partnerships

Defending biodiversity

Principles for Biodiversity Conservation

Innovative management of protected areas

Kanha Tiger Reserve

A range of biodiversity conservation measures undertaken by the Reserve Management have helped increase the population of species in the Kanha National Park, regenerated many areas of the National Park on the periphery of the Buffer Zone and improved livelihoods of people living inside the Park. The Reserve is home to a school for orphaned tiger cubs. One hundred and sixty-seven eco-development committees have enabled villages in the Buffer Zone to develop village-specific micro-plans on ecological and development activities. Intense patrolling, elephant patrolling, tiger cells and control of illicit grazing are amongst the measures undertaken to protect the Park’s biodiversity. Effective reserve management has converted pastureslands of old villages into grasslands that can support a wide range of grass species for herbivores. Around 500 daily wage workers are employed every year from villages located in the National Park. In 2011, nearly 3 million person-days of employment was generated through conservation works. Further, the Park has made significant investments in water harvesting facilities in villages, intensifying crop cultivation and supporting improvements in basic health, drinking water and primary schools.

Periyar Tiger Reserve

The Periyar model of conservation demonstrated by the Periyar Tiger Reserve in Thekkady, Kerala influenced a range of biodiversity conservation measures undertaken to conserve listed species, with a coordinated on-call response to poaching incidents in the National Park. In 2011, nearly 3 million person-days of employment was generated through conservation works. Further, the Park has made significant investments in water harvesting facilities in villages, intensifying crop cultivation and supporting improvements in basic health, drinking water and primary schools.

Communities take charge

In India, the biological heritage is what the people are responsible for, as protected areas are being managed by the community along with the authority. In Gadchiroli district, a scheduled tribe village shows that community participation is essential in biodiversity conservation. In 2012, 32 applicants from Shankarpur village in Gadchiroli were awarded the India Biodiversity Award for their conservation success to laws that prohibit hunting and poaching. The women of the village were employed in eco-tourism initiatives and education to raise awareness about forest products has drastically reduced migration. Many villagers are also employed in eco-tourism initiatives. The Indian government has also set about creating a network of protected areas.
India’s biodiversity sustains the livelihoods of millions. Many of the poorest households derive income, food, shelter and much more from the country’s wealth of biodiversity. Rapid degradation of the ecosystem and biodiversity is challenging this relationship. Across India, people, communities, governments and conservation agencies are demonstrating that the intrinsic value of biodiversity can be conserved and indeed harnessed, to sustain livelihoods and secure the futures of local communities.

The 2015 India Biodiversity Awards instituted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and UNDP recognizes outstanding models of biodiversity governance. The finalists this year represent good practices from across the country. They included community-run institutions, local self-governance, institutional structure, forest management and protected area management agencies engaged in preserving designated protected areas. Importantly, they recognize the central role played by communities that are at the heart of any effort to conserve biodiversity.

Biodiversity governance models are recognized in four categories:

- Community stewardship: Biodiversity governance driven by community institutions
- Decentralized governance: Biodiversity governance practices led by local self-governments
- Co-management: Biodiversity governance undertaken jointly by communities and the government
- Protected areas: Effective and innovative biodiversity governance practices demonstrated by management agencies of designated protected areas

Communities take charge

**Tanda Panchayat**

**Wadala Village, Maharashtra**

Historically a hunting community, the Pardi tribe in Wadala village in Akola district in Maharashtra set up the Tanda Panchayat to monitor conservation activities aimed at regenerating nearby forests and biodiversity, and securing alternative livelihoods for the community. The Panchayat allocates land for conservation to families, who are then entitled to the produce of the land. Conservation activities including participatory field surveys and protecting local species of grass, has improved a number of traditional endemic grass species. These are supplemented by livelihood development activities such as credit and savings schemes for goat rearing and fodder development. By 2011, hunting had reduced by 20 percent. A livelihood development scheme for traditional hunters based on the Wadala experience was also incorporated into the 11th Five-Year Plan.

**Pir Jahania Jungle Suraksha Committee**

**Gund Lara Village, Odisha**

Faced with the destruction of livelihoods, mangrove and forest cover following the devastating super cyclone in 1999, the women of Gundlaba village near the Devi river in Odisha took charge of rebuilding the lives of their community. They formed the Pir Jahania Jungle Suraksha Committee or a Forest Protection Committee focused on conserving mangrove forests and managing the nesting grounds of olive ridley turtles. Regeneration and conservation activities, driven by these women, have transformed the area. In the 12 years since they formed the Committee on their own initiative, forest cover has gone up by 55 percent and fish catch has increased from one kg to five kg per family. Migration has declined and coastal erosion has been checked by the regeneration of the mangrove cover.

Deepening biodiversity conservation: Local governance institutions drive efforts

**Shankarpur Village Gram Panchayat**

**Gadchiroli District, Maharashtra**

In 2012, 32 applicants from Shankarpur village in Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra secured community forest rights titles for 500 hectares of land under the Forest Rights Act 2006. Shankarpur was one of the first villages in the state to get these rights. Over the past decade, the Gram Panchayat of Shankarpur has been engaged in conserving biological diversity and generating local livelihoods. Between 2004 and 2007, the Panchayat undertook Joint Forest Management (JFM) projects with the state forest department to rejuvenate depleted forests. Three hundred dams have been built to improve the water table and check soil erosion. In 2009, the Panchayat set up a biodiversity management committee that includes members of each household. The community attributes much of its conservation success to laws that prohibit hunting and restrict grazing in forest areas complemented by regular plantation drives. Villagers have reported improved fodder and forest cover, and table and wild fruits. Employment generated through conservation activities and improvements in availability and quality of non-timber forest products has drastically reduced migration. Many villagers are also employed in eco-tourism initiatives.
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The 2012 India Biodiversity Awards instituted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and UNDP recognizes outstanding models of biodiversity governance. The finalists this year represent good practices from across the country. They included community-run institutions, local self-governance bodies, joint forest management committees and protected area management agencies engaged in preserving designated protected areas. Importantly, they recognize the central role played by communities that are at the heart of any effort to conserve biodiversity.

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Communities take charge

Tanda Panchayat
WADALA VILLAGE, MAHARASHTRA

Historically a hunting community, the Pandhi tribe in Wadala village in Akola district in Maharashtra set up the Tanda Panchayat to monitor conservation activities aimed at regenerating nearby forests and biodiversity, and securing alternative livelihoods for the community. The Panchayat allocates land for conservation to families, who are then entitled to the produce of the land. Conservation activities including participatory field surveys and protecting local species of grasses, has improved a number of traditional endemics grass species. These are supplemented by livelihood development activities such as credit and savings schemes for goat rearing and fodder development. By 2011, hunting had reduced by 90 percent. A livelihood development scheme for traditional hunters based on the Wadala experience was also incorporated into the 11th Five-Year Plan.

Pir Jahania Jungle Suraksha Committee
GUNDLABA VILLAGE, ODISHA

Faced with the destruction of livelihoods, mangrove and forest cover following the devastating super cyclone in 1999, the women of Gundlaba village near the Devi river in Odisha took charge of rebuilding the lives of their community. They formed the Pir Jahania Jungle Suraksha Committee or a Forest Protection Committee focused on conserving mangrove forests and managing the nesting grounds of olive ridley turtles. Regeneration and conservation activities, driven by these women, have transformed the area. In the 12 years since they formed the Committee on their own initiative, forest cover has gone up by 65 percent and fish catch has increased from one kg to five kg per family. Migration has declined and coastal erosion has been checked by the regeneration of the mangrove cover.

Deepening biodiversity conservation: Local governance institutions drive efforts

Shankarpur Village Gram Panchayat
GADCHIROLI DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA

In 2012, 32 applicants from Shankarpur village in Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra secured forest rights titles for 600 hectares of land under the Forest Rights Act 2006. Shankarpur was one of the first villages in the state to get these rights. Over the past decade, the Gram Panchayat of Shankarpur has been engaged in conserving biological diversity and generating local livelihoods. Between 2004 and 2007, the Panchayat undertook Joint Forest Management (JFM) projects with the state forest department to rejuvenate depleted forests. Three hundred dams have been built to improve the water table and check soil erosion. In 2009, the Panchayat set up a biodiversity management committee that includes members of each household. The community attributes much of its conservation success to forest rights and the forest rights code (FRL), which specify that all forest produce, including timber, non-timber forest products, antelope, honey, and even grazing rights, belong to local communities. Employment generated through conservation activities and improvements in availability and quality of non-timber forest products has drastically reduced migration. Many villagers are also employed in eco-tourism initiatives.

Communities and government: Solutions in joint partnership

Van Uttam Santhans
UDIPA, RAJASTHAN

Started in 1997 as an informal network of Forest Protection Committees, Van Uttam Santhans formed under the Joint Forest Management Programme in Udupa, Rajasthan today protects and manages 67,000 hectares of forestlands in more than 240 villages. VUS has been instrumental in addressing over grazing, mining and illegal privatization of forestlands. Conservation efforts have increased vegetative cover, important flora species and population of animals. It has also enabled better quality fodder. Families harvest about 40 to 45 lakh bundles of fodder from forests valued at between US$ 270,000 and US$ 300,000. In addition, communities regularly harvest

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"Investing in the sound environmental management of our natural heritage is not only of great intrinsic value but also has important implications for the quantity and quality of life on earth."

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator
United Nations Development Programme

EMPOWERED LIVES. RESILIENT NATIONS.

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to increase their capacity for social and economic transformation. UNDP’s strategic approach, called “Investing in the Sound Environmental Basis for Sustainable Development,” focuses on building and maintaining strong, accountable institutions and sustainable livelihoods as the foundation for sustainable development. UNDP works closely with governments and partners to strengthen the rule of law, improve governance, and ensure that the laws and institutions are consistent with national priorities and aspirations.

UNDP’s biodiversity work is focused on supporting countries to achieve the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. UNDP provides strategic advice, technical guidance, and capacity development support to help countries develop and implement biodiversity strategies and action plans. UNDP also partners with governments, civil society, and the private sector to implement biodiversity projects and initiatives that support conservation, sustainable use, and benefit-sharing.

UNDP’s biodiversity activities in India are supported by the Government of India and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNDP’s biodiversity work in India is implemented through partnerships with a range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector. UNDP’s biodiversity work in India is focused on supporting the conservation of biodiversity, promoting sustainable use, and ensuring that benefits are shared equitably.

India Biodiversity Awards 2012

Recognizing people, communities and agencies who have led effective models of biodiversity governance

Periyar Tiger Reserve

The Periyar model of conservation demonstrated by the Periyar Tiger Reserve in Thekkady, Kerala influenced a 2006 amendment to India’s 1972 Wildlife Protection Act. The Reserve set up the Periyar Foundation to generate resources for and sustain eco-development initiatives and community-based conservation of tigers and biodiversity.

Such a Foundation is now a requirement for all tiger reserves in the country. A range of eco-development committees (EDCs) include about 40,000 people and combine skill sets to contribute to different aspects of biodiversity conservation. Former poachers have been integrated into patrolling activities. The density of tigers has increased from 3.88/100 km² in 2008 to 5.41/100 km² in 2011, aided by tiger monitoring technology and a trained tiger monitoring team with tribal youths. The elephant population of the Reserve has also increased from 16.95 percent in 2005 to 27.4 percent in 2010. The active involvement of EDCs has improved detection of illegal activities. Community-based eco-tourism activities in 2011-12 generated INR 15 million in revenue.

Innovative management of protected areas

Kanha Tiger Reserve

A range of biodiversity conservation measures undertaken by the Reserve Management have helped increase the population of the species in the Kanha National Park, regenerated many areas of the National Park on the periphery of the Buffer Zone and improved livelihoods of people living inside the Park. The Reserve is home to a school for orphaned tiger cubs. One hundred and sixty-seven eco-development committees have enabled villages in the Buffer Zone to develop village-specific micro-plans on ecological and development activities. Intense patrolling, elephant patrols, tiger cells and control of black grazing have amongst the measures undertaken to protect the Park’s biodiversity. Effective reserve management has converted pasturages of old villages into grasslands that can support a wide range of grass species for herbivores. Around 500 daily wage workers are employed every year from villages located in the National Park. In 2011, nearly 3 million person-days of employment was generated through conservation works. Further, the Park has made significant investments in water harvesting facilities in villages, intensifying crop cultivation and supporting improvements in basic health, drinking water and primary schools.

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Resilient nations.

India’s biodiversity sustains the livelihoods of millions. Many of the poorest households derive income, food, shelter and conservation activities, driven by these women, have improved a livelihood development scheme for traditional hunters based on the Wadala experience was also incorporated in the Tanda Panchayat to monitor conservation activities and protecting local species of grasses, has improved a community forest rights committee on their own initiative, forest cover has gone up by 32 percent by 2006 amendment to India’s 1972 Wildlife Protection Act. The Reserve set up the Periyar Foundation to generate resources for and sustain eco-development initiatives and community-based conservation of tigers and biodiversity. Such a Foundation is now a requirement for all tiger reserves in the country. A range of eco-development committees (EDCs) include about 40,000 people and combine skill sets to contribute to different aspects of biodiversity conservation. Former poachers have been integrated into patrolling activities. The density of tigers has increased from 3.88/100 km² in 2008 to 5.41/100 km² in 2011, aided by tiger monitoring technology and a trained tiger monitoring team with tribal youths. The elephant population of the Reserve has also increased from 16.95 percent in 2005 to 27.4 percent in 2010. The active involvement of EDCs has improved detection of illegal activities. Community-based eco-tourism activities in 2011-12 generated INR 15 million in revenue.

Please unfold to read about the jury and selection process.
Greening the Development Agenda

Setting priorities in joint endeavor

Indigenous forest users in Van Utthan Sansthan, Rajasthan

Communities and Government

Communities and government: Key drivers of the success

Communities are central to effective biodiversity governance

Understanding the role of different actors

Tanda Panchayat

Periyar Tiger Reserve

Kanha Tiger Reserve

Innovative management of protected areas

Kanha Tiger Reserve

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Periyar Tiger Reserve

The Periyar model of conservation demonstrated by the Periyar Tiger Reserve in Thekkady, Kerala influenced a large number of protected areas and local communities in India and elsewhere. The principles governing the conservation of tiger reserves in India can be summarized into three broad categories: participatory, integrated forest management and sustainable development. The Reserve has been successful in helping to establish over 2,000 protected areas in 85 countries, covering 272 million hectares, undertaking interventions in production sectors and development planning in 38 countries, covering 244 million hectares; and promoting ecosystem-based adaptation to biodiversity conservation. The Reserve has generated a globally recognized body of knowledge on best practices in ecosystems and biodiversity management.

For over a decade, UNDP has partnered with the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India to build the capacities of stakeholders to manage natural resources and to promote sustainable livelihoods. This has included strengthening institutional capacities at different levels and supporting efforts to enable communities to manage natural resources in an integrated, participatory and sustainable manner. UNDP has also supported capacity development initiatives to implement India’s Biological Diversity Act, 2002, the guiding framework for biodiversity conservation in the country.

India Biodiversity Awards 2012

Recognizing people, communities and agencies who have led effective models of biodiversity governance
India
Biodiversity Awards
2012
RECOGNIZING PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND AGENCIES WHO HAVE LED EFFECTIVE MODELS OF BIODIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

Members of the jury

Chair: Prof. M.S. Swaminathan is a Member of Parliament and Chairman Emeritus, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF). He is widely regarded as the father of India’s Green Revolution and is the Founder of MSSRF. Prof. Swaminathan is also Chairman of the World Food Prize Jury.

Amita Baviskar is a sociologist whose research focuses on the cultural politics of the environment and development. She is Associate Professor at the Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi.

Kailash C. Malhotra is a fellow of the Indian National Science Academy and the Indian Academy of Sciences in Bangalore. He has undertaken extensive research on anthropological and ecological dimensions of tribal, dalit, nomadic and village communities.

Balakrishna Pisupati is the Chairman of the National Biodiversity Authority of India. He holds a doctorate in genetics and is a Fellow of the Linnean Society in London and the Cambridge Commonwealth Society.

Vishwas B. Sawarkar is the former Director of the Wildlife Institute of India. Mr. Sawarkar is also a member of the Steering Committee for Conservation of Tigers, Co-Predators and Prey, Government of India.

J.S. Singh is Professor Emeritus and NASI Senior Scientist at Banaras Hindu University. He is also Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World.

The selection process

The India Biodiversity Awards 2012 received 150 nominations from across the country through a well-publicized call for nominations. The nominations represented diverse and innovative approaches to governing biodiversity. The six-member jury chaired by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan arrived at a shortlist of 15. Desk review was followed by on-site visits to assess these individual models based on parameters including effectiveness of biodiversity conservation, benefits to local communities and institutional sustainability.