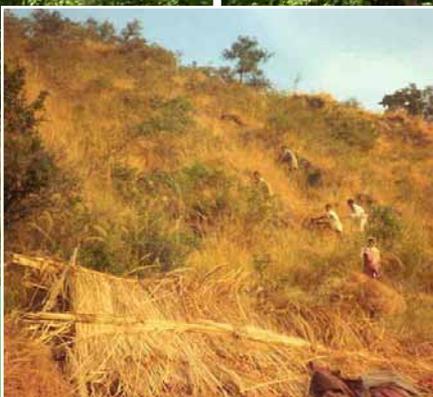


Integrating REDD-plus with poverty alleviation and development action



Proceedings of DSDS 2010 – Special Event
held on 4 February 2010 at New Delhi



Opening remarks by Dr P J Dilip Kumar, Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, Government of India



A section of the participants

Integrating REDD-plus with poverty alleviation and development action

Summary

Introduction

Tropical forests cover about 15% of the world's land surface and contain nearly 25% of the carbon in the terrestrial biosphere (Parker, et al. 2008). However, deforestation and forest degradation contribute to approximately 20% of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)-plus is the mechanism proposed for compensating countries to maintain and enhance carbon stocks by reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and increase forest cover.

In India, 300 million people depend on forests for at least a part of their livelihoods. The lack of development and livelihood opportunities pushes them into a vicious cycle of poverty, which is one of the drivers of forest degradation. REDD-plus could represent a shift to a pro-poor focus in the forestry sector if it integrates sectoral development strategies, enhances tenure security and community resource rights, generates new sources of funding that can be capitalized by the rural poor, and creates new Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). The role of the potential partners and the mechanism for benefit sharing need to be debated and appropriately formalized. A key message echoed in the event was to integrate REDD-plus with development projects so as to address the drivers of deforestation and degradation comprehensively, most of which

lie outside the forestry sector. Some of the development programmes suggested for linkages with REDD-plus were the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), watershed development, agriculture, and energy programmes. The Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy (LLS) was presented which, as an approach, has the potential for such integration. It was agreed that for effective implementation of REDD-plus transaction costs have to be reduced, capacities of local stakeholders have to be enhanced, and a robust mechanism for monitoring and verification needs to be developed.

Discussions and key messages

The key points that emerged from the presentations and discussions at the event were as follows:

- REDD activities need to be mobilized at the local level. All key stakeholders and community based organizations at the grassroots level need to be involved in designing, implementing, and monitoring.
- To forecast feasibility of a REDD project, it would be important that the implementing agency (whether government, private or non-government) engages local communities in drawing a work plan and a budget (prior to the start of the project) that reflects the opportunity costs. All the transaction and verification costs should be accounted for in the cost-benefit analysis.

- To ensure that the forest dependent communities get carbon benefits, it would be important that their capacities are built.
- A robust monitoring mechanism is essential for successful implementation. Simplified methodology for Measurement Reporting and Verification (MRV) was suggested to successfully implement REDD projects. Existing institutions like the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA), Forest Survey of India (FSI), and Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) could be effectively utilized. Additional elements to capture information relevant for a REDD project could be built into their existing monitoring system.
- REDD is a low-cost mitigation option giving multiple benefits, and efforts could be directed towards increasing biodiversity.
- There is a tremendous potential for rejuvenating the Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme as well as other community-based conservation programmes if these are aligned with strategies for implementing REDD-plus.
- A transparent and equitable benefit-sharing mechanism is key to the success of the programme.
- An institutional framework for implementing a REDD-plus project was recommended. It was suggested to have a REDD cell in the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), which would subsequently converge with the programmes of other ministries and line departments. This could be forged at the Centre, and subsequently in the States.
- Linkage of payments for ecosystem services (PES) with the REDD-plus mechanism could be forged. Communities in forest fringe villages look upon forests as a provider of their livelihood needs, hence they can be more directly involved in its management and conservation. Whereas, communities living elsewhere in the country recognize forests as a provider of various ecological and environmental benefits, but cannot contribute directly to their well being. Hence, a mechanism for compensating communities in the fringe villages that are actively protecting and managing forests by other communities using the PES tool needs to be worked out. In order to operationalize this, the country could be divided into different regions based on their forest cover.
- For integration of REDD-plus with PES, first evaluation of ecosystems goods and services is essential, an aspect in which our country lags behind.
- REDD is not a panacea for all the issues related to the forestry sector. Issues of deforestation and forest degradation have been the core problems of the forestry sector for a long time. Continuous efforts to deal with this needs to be an intrinsic component in all programmes of the forest department. REDD could be one of the tools available to address some of these issues.
- As an approach, the LLS – a global programme of IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, being implemented in 31 landscapes and 23 countries – takes a holistic view and looks at forests as being part of a larger landscape, thereby providing a potential for integration with other land uses to enhance livelihoods of the poor.

Inaugural session

In her welcome address, Dr Leena Srivastava, Executive Director, TERI, underlined the importance of the science of climate change that cannot be denied in spite of the mixed response on the outcome of COP-15 at Copenhagen. She expressed that on the issue of REDD and REDD-plus, there seems to be a larger degree of consensus although the quantum of financial resource still needs to be discussed. It is also important to ensure that the right strategy is adopted from the start and equity concerns are addressed, while implementing REDD-plus initiatives.

Dr P J Dilip Kumar, Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, Government of India, presented the opening remarks. He stressed upon the dilemma of development versus the need for reducing emissions especially for the emerging developing nations like India and China. Though the per capita emissions in these countries are low, with growing populations and accelerating improvement in living standards, it cannot be denied that their contribution to carbon emissions would continue to rise.

He stressed that while looking at REDD and REDD-plus, the concerns that need to be addressed are social equity, livelihood needs of the forest dependent communities as well as ecological and biodiversity concerns.

Ms Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director – Asia, IUCN, in her special remarks, stressed that there has been a lot of focus on the economics and physical impacts of climate change. However, the danger of only focusing on the technological and engineering aspects of climate change is that these do not provide long-term sustainable solutions and hence, sometimes result in a different set of problems.

The cumulative effects of climate change in the next two or three decades have the potential to reverse much of the progress made towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). That reversal is unlikely to be overcome by any quick-fix solution.

In addition to the framework laid down at Copenhagen, it is necessary to have nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change like REDD and other ecosystem based approaches. This approach has the potential for benefiting a large number of small-scale farmers and rural communities, while forests are simultaneously restored. Besides forests, other ecosystems like grasslands, marine ecosystems and mangroves also have the potential to reap benefits from REDD and REDD-plus.

The valuation of biodiversity and natural ecosystems is vital before addressing issues concerning climate change. Better management of the world's forests can have immediate impact on carbon sequestration and REDD is one of the tools to achieve this.

Session 1: Exploring linkages of REDD-plus

Setting the theme

Mr Ashish Aggarwal, Fellow, TERI, presented an overview of REDD and REDD-plus, its scope for integration with the ongoing forestry programmes, and also its linkages with other key sectors.

Deforestation and degradation of forests accounts for more than 20%–25% of GHG emission and so far this has not been addressed under the Kyoto Protocol. The potential of forests for mitigation was proposed in COP-11 in Montreal, then at Bali, and finally at Copenhagen where it was fully agreed upon. The

REDD mechanism aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation, maintain and enhance carbon stocks, sustainably manage forests, and suitably compensate the countries for their sustainable actions. The mechanism recognizes the opportunity costs related to these actions.

REDD-plus offers both environmental as well as developmental benefits. It is estimated that approximately Rs 15–20 billion could be generated through this mechanism. The various studies proposed and the wide range of options available under the mechanism would enhance and lead to capacity building of developing countries for monitoring and managing their forests. It also offers development opportunities for the forest dependent communities.

However, there are certain issues and risks associated with the mechanism which need appropriate attention. These are issues regarding the source of finances. There are fears that forests may become very lucrative and powerful stakeholders might take over, which would affect the rights (livelihood, socio-cultural, and religious) of the forest dependent communities. There are also fears that the REDD mechanism may lead to a very carbon-centric forest management approach.

An estimated 300 million people in India depend on forests for at least a part of their livelihoods. It is also known that poverty and forest degradation are interlinked. If REDD-plus is implemented in a more holistic way and integrated with other development programmes, there would be great scope for improvement of livelihoods of the forest dependent communities. As most of the drivers of deforestation and degradation are outside the forest area, for example energy and agricultural needs, there is a strong case for integration. REDD-plus could be integrated with the following; the central government's ongoing flagship programme

constituted under the MGNREGS as well as watershed, energy, and agriculture activities.

A REDD cell can be hosted by the MoEF for implementation of REDD. At the same time, there could be linkages with the other ministries: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) for energy plantation programme; Ministry of Panchayati Raj for effective implementation at the grassroot level; Ministry of Agriculture for integration with watershed development programme, agro-forestry, and horticulture; and Ministry of Rural Development for integration with the MGNREGS. Convergence with the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) network was suggested for devising a robust mechanism for monitoring of activities under REDD-plus. A similar kind of set up could also be replicated at the state and grassroot levels.

Dr Mark Poffenberger, Executive Director, Community Forestry International Inc. (CFI) gave his perspective on the sharing of REDD benefits with forest dependent communities and substantiated it with CFI's pilot REDD projects in Cambodia and Northeast India.

REDD-plus can represent a pro-poor shift in the forestry sector as it opens an opportunity for communities to be compensated for protecting and managing the forests. Moreover, if it is integrated with sectoral development strategies (community-based natural resources management, micro-finance, local government, and so on), communities are likely to benefit greatly from it. The mechanism offers a scope for tenural security and ensures rights of communities over resources; at the same time, it establishes a 30-year time frame and provides scope for capacity building.

The major markets for carbon include voluntary buyers (those who want to buy to offset travel and other fossil fuel energy

emissions); investors (those who want to buy carbon credits for future appreciation); and compliance buyers (who are legally bound by national or international agreements to buy carbon credits to mitigate emissions).

Two pilot REDD-plus projects implemented by CFI were shared. One of the projects is being implemented in Oddar Meanchey, Cambodia and the other in the Northeast Indian states of Manipur and Meghalaya. In these pilot projects, voluntary buyers of carbon credits were targeted. The key lessons learned from these pilot projects are as follows:

- REDD project development is a complex process and it requires partnerships between forest dependent communities, civil society organizations, national governments, urban developers, the private sector, and donor agencies.
- Communities are the key players in a REDD project as they have many roles to play. They are the only actors who are logistically and strategically positioned to mitigate the impact of the local drivers of forest degradation and deforestation.
- The focus should not be on compensation on household basis, but activities should target overall development of the village/region, hence community projects need to be targeted. Infusion of capital through REDD could be channelized through the existing community-based organizations like self help groups.
- There is a need to engage indigenous community institutions and work in tandem with local governance structures for effective engagement with the communities.
- Another important aspect is engaging communities in forest carbon monitoring, which is important for calculating changes in carbon stocks for REDD project payments.
- Communities need to be rightly informed in

an appropriate forum about the modalities, performance, and nature of payments under REDD.

Linkages with MGNREGS

Dr Nilay Ranjan, Knowledge Networking Officer, UNDP, New Delhi, explored linkages of REDD-plus with MGNREGS for enhanced livelihood opportunities.

The linkage between poverty and deforestation is well established. Rural poor, mostly landless and marginal farmers, are dependent on natural resources like land, water, and forests for their livelihoods. Hence, due to the very nature of their employment, which is based on natural systems, they are economically backward. It is also known that to achieve inclusive growth the agriculture sector cannot be ignored, especially since it is the backbone of India's economy. The MGNREGS was initiated to ensure livelihood security of households in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in each financial year to every household. The salient features of the Act are as follows.

- It is demand based (any rural resident above 18 years can demand for work).
- It is time bound (employment is to be provided within 15 days).
- It aims to conserve natural resources (work is centred on land, water, forests, agro-forestry, horticulture, and infrastructure on public, private, and community-owned lands).
- It strengthens rural governance (ensures women's participation, transparency, and accountability in all its dealings).
- To facilitate quick and consistent transfer of wages to the beneficiaries, the programme is implemented through the Gram Panchayats (GPs), who execute at least 50% of the work.

Convergence of MGNREGS with other poverty alleviation programmes is underway, which is expected to boost food production. Such pilot projects have already been initiated in 115 districts. The convergence of 17 pilot projects with the National Afforestation Programme under MGNREGS is currently being undertaken by the MoEF.

Hence, considering the nature of activities implemented under MGNREGS, its success mainly on account of its good governance structure and the ongoing initiative of convergence initiatives, there is a possibility of integration of REDD-plus programme with MGNREGS.

Linkages with energy programmes

Mr Gaj Raj Singh, Director Village Energy Security Programme, MNRE presented the linkages between agro forestry and green energy. In rural India, approximately 60% of domestic energy needs are met from forests, and kerosene is mainly used for lighting purposes. Livelihoods, especially agriculture is under stress due to erratic electric supply for irrigation. With this background, the MNRE has implemented several renewable energy projects (starting with 24 projects in 3 states and at present 80 projects are being implemented across 10 states) using locally available biomass to secure the energy needs of rural areas. Hence, approximately 25% of the villages (more than 80 000 villages in rural India) cannot access electricity by conventional means have been provided with renewable energy solutions. This programme focuses beyond rural electrification and provides an enabling environment for local communities to manage these projects and hence, is a source of employment and income generation.

Conclusion by the Chair

Dr T P Singh, Regional Group Head Ecosystems and Livelihoods, IUCN Asia, concluded the session by stressing on the importance of the ecosystem-based approach for mitigation and adaptation. Considering that approximately 9 million hectares of forests are being lost annually, the issue and concept of REDD is important. In addition, the existing institution of JFM has potential to play an important role in the REDD projects, for which some additional elements need to be built to make sure that those communities which are protecting forests and providing these environmental services are rightly compensated.

Session 2: Integrating REDD-plus

Integration with watershed development programmes

Dr V K Bahuguna, Technical Expert (Forestry), National Rainfed Area Authority presented the plan for integration of REDD-plus with watershed development programmes. The estimated potential forest resource in the country that is available for harnessing benefits from REDD-plus is as follows: open forests (28.24 million ha); scrublands (4.15 million ha); dense forests (40.25 million ha); grazing lands/ permanent pastures/ revenue lands outside forests (10.42 million ha); semi-aquatic wetlands (82,832 km²); and trees outside forests (9.28 million ha). The challenges, however, are to meet household requirements for fodder, timber, fuelwood; NTFPs (Non-Timber Forest Products); industrial requirements for timber; regulation of livestock grazing; biodiversity conservation; adaptation and mitigation to climate change; and poverty alleviation.

Dr Bahuguna stressed that watershed management is important for rural development and integrated land management programmes in the country. The areas of good forest cover, especially in the hilly areas of the country are the result of the adoption of ridge-to-valley approach of watershed development. He stressed that treatment of mangroves and coastal forest areas should be targeted with the watershed (plus) approach. Mangroves, both government and privately owned, need to be developed through a Public Private Partnership model.

The benefits for integrating REDD-plus activities with watershed (plus) programme are as follows:

- Annual revenue from REDD-plus would be available for re-investment for forest development
- Better management of forest ecology leading to biodiversity conservation, drought-proofing and enhanced adaptation capacity to climate change
- Productivity and tree species diversity, both within and outside forest areas would be improved
- Improvement in rain water harvesting
- Increased productivity from agriculture and allied sectors, and
- Poverty reduction because of enhanced livelihoods opportunities.

Integration with biodiversity concerns

Mr Pramod Krishnan from UNDP, New Delhi highlighted the scope of implementation of REDD-plus in India, and its integration with biodiversity concerns.

Managing natural ecosystems as carbon sinks and resources for adaptation is increasingly recognized as a necessary, efficient, and relatively cost-effective strategy. The major development agencies across the globe have

also started taking cognizance of this. The World Bank has termed this as a ‘convenient solution to an inconvenient truth’, whereas in UNDP it is termed as, ‘natural solutions over engineering solutions’. Not only it is cost effective, but also offers multiple benefits in terms of ecosystem services and helps in conserving biodiversity.

In terms of India’s preparedness to implement REDD-plus, Mr Krishnan identified three (but not necessarily formalized) phases. First, a national REDD-plus strategy needs to be developed and capacities enhanced. Secondly, implementation of national REDD-plus policies and measures, and finally, full-scale implementation.

The benefits that India can derive from REDD-plus are as follows: potential financial assistance, formal recognition of Natural Resource Management (NRM) efforts as a low cost, affordable strategy for addressing climate change issues, climate proofing of ongoing NRM programmes, and adding capacity building initiatives to the ongoing NRM programmes.

For a potential REDD-plus programme for India, Dr Krishnan listed a couple of initiatives to achieve the three major outcomes.

- **Outcome 1:** Strengthen multi-stakeholder participation and build consensus at the national level. To achieve this, a REDD cell could be established in the MoEF. All influential stakeholders like the line Ministries, Planning Commission, research organizations, and civil society groups should be involved. Consensus on key issues for national REDD policy development should be debated and finally agreed upon. There should be a sharing of lessons learned from other countries that have implemented REDD and their capacity should be developed at the national level.

An appropriate communications strategy should be established and benchmarking of carbon capture potential of ecosystems should be carried out. Data from economic evaluation of ecosystem goods and services should be collected and appropriately documented.

- **Outcome 2:** Successful demonstration of establishing a Reference Emissions Level (REL), MRV, and fair payment systems based on the national REDD architecture. To achieve this, there should be improved capacity and methodology design for forest carbon inventory within MRV framework, including sub-national pilot implementation. There should be a harmonized fair and equitable payment mechanism at the state level. Toolkits for priority setting towards maximizing potential carbon-benefits and incorporating co-benefits, such as biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation under MDGs should be developed.
- **Outcome 3:** Established capacity to implement REDD at decentralized levels. Capacities of local bodies at the district level should be built for spatial socio-economic planning incorporating REDD. Local stakeholders need to be empowered so that they benefit from REDD and multi-stakeholder-endorsed district plans for REDD implementation should be enforced.

Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy: potential for integration

The potential for integration of REDD-plus with LLS, a Global Programme of IUCN, funded by the Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation was presented by Mr Peter Neil, Regional Forest Programme Coordinator & Climate Change Focal Point, IUCN Asia, and Ms Sirisha

Indukuri, Research Associate, TERI. Mr Neil gave an overview of the LLS programme while Ms Indukuri's presentation concentrated on the LLS programme being implemented by TERI.

The LLS approach takes a holistic view, and looks at forests as being part of a larger landscape, thereby providing a potential of integration with other land uses, so as to enhance livelihoods of the poor. The programme is being implemented in 31 landscapes and 23 countries. In India, LLS is being implemented in two landscapes; one in the Shivalik foothills belt of Haryana being implemented by TERI and the other in Orissa being implemented by Winrock International India. For India, the focus of LLS is to improve and build upon institutional arrangements and benefit sharing mechanisms for community-based forest management and enhance livelihoods of the rural poor through landscape-level interventions.

The landscape chosen by TERI in Haryana is the Shivalik foothills belt in the Yamunanagar Forest Division, which has a history of JFM. Communities are dependent on forests particularly for water and NTFPs (especially fodder grass). The pilot site comprises four villages in the Sadhaura Forest Range, where Gujjars are the dominant community. The main source of livelihood for these communities is agriculture, livestock, and more recently there has also been dependence on daily wage labour. The selected landscape has moved from a first generation to a second generation landscape. JFM activities in the past have already helped in restoring the forests and improving the relationship between the forest department and the communities. The LLS activities in this landscape are focused on ironing out issues related to the functioning of the institutions, equity, application of the benefit-

sharing arrangements, and diversification of livelihoods.

The programme here also focuses on integrated village development planning process; the role of different stakeholders; different community institutions; linkages between local NRM institutions and Panchayati Raj Institutions; and drawing synergies between different Government departments like agriculture horticulture, animal husbandry, and forestry.

Conclusion by the Chair

Dr Prodipto Ghosh, Distinguished Fellow, TERI concluded the session by emphasizing that to implement REDD-plus, we first need to understand the incentive structure currently

being practiced by countries and experienced by local stakeholders who are undertaking forest protection or afforestation. Opportunity costs should be weighed, and accordingly incentives for compensating countries and communities should be designed.

He highlighted that India has made a lot of progress in REDD-plus negotiations. The country should eventually be able to set up a reliable, predictable, and adequate compensation mechanism for REDD-plus, which would address, to a large extent, the issues of the forestry sector especially in terms of provision of carbon services.

The event ended with a vote of thanks by Dr Arabinda Mishra, Director, Climate Change Division, TERI.

**INTEGRATING REDD-PLUS WITH
POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACTION
DSDS 2010 – SPECIAL EVENT
4th February 2010
Amaltas Hall, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi**

Agenda

0900–0930	Registration
0930–0940	Welcome Address Dr Leena Srivastava , Executive Director (Operations), TERI
0940–0950	Opening Remarks Dr P J Dilip Kumar , Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, Government of India
0950–1000	Special Remarks Ms Aban Marker Kabraji , Regional Director (Asia), IUCN, Asia
	Presentations and discussions Chair: Dr Prodipto Ghosh , Distinguished Fellow, TERI Co-Chair: Dr T P Singh , Regional Group Head, Ecosystems and Livelihoods, IUCN, Asia
1000–1130	Session 1 Setting the theme Mr Ashish Aggarwal , Fellow, TERI, and Dr Mark Poffenberger , Executive Director, Community Forestry International Inc.
	Exploring linkages of REDD-plus • With MGNREGS Dr Nilay Ranjan , Knowledge Networking Officer, UNDP, New Delhi • With energy programmes Mr Gaj Raj Singh , Director (VESP), MNRE
1130–1145	Tea
1145–1300	Session 2 Integrating REDD-plus • With watershed development programmes Dr V K Bahuguna , Technical Expert (Forestry), National Rainfed Area Authority • With biodiversity concerns Mr Pramod Krishnan , UNDP
	Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy: potential of integration Mr Peter Neil , Regional Forest Programme Coordinator & Climate Change Focal Point, IUCN, Asia Ms Sirisha Indukuri , Research Associate, TERI
1300–1320	Concluding remarks by the Chair Dr Prodipto Ghosh , Distinguished Fellow, TERI
1320 –1330	Vote of Thanks Dr Arabinda Mishra , Director, Climate Change Division, TERI
1330	Lunch

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About TERI

A dynamic and flexible organization with a global vision and a local focus, TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) was established in India in 1974. Deeply committed to every aspect of sustainable development, TERI has, over the years, evolved as a unique developing country (not-for-profit) institution. With an emphasis on finding innovative solutions to make the world a better place to live in, all activities in TERI include formulating local- and national-level strategies and suggesting global solutions to critical environmental issues. The genesis of these activities lies in TERI's firm belief that efficient utilization of energy, sustainable use of natural resources, large-scale adoption of renewable energy technologies, and reduction of all forms of waste would move the process of development towards the goals of energy security and sustainability.

TERI is headquartered in New Delhi, India, and has several offices in various parts of the country. TERI has international presence through its offices in North America in Washington, DC; TERI Europe in London; TERI South East Asia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; TERI Japan in Tokyo; TERI Gulf Centre in Dubai; and TERI Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

About IUCN

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. It supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, non-government organizations, United Nations agencies, companies, and local communities together to develop and implement policy, laws, and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network—a democratic membership union with more than 1000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11 000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries.

IUCN's work is supported by more than 1000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO, and private sectors around the world. The Union's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, Switzerland.

The Government of India has been a state member of IUCN since 1969. Today, IUCN has more than 25 members in India, one of the highest among Asian countries. IUCN's six Commissions include more than 420 experts from India. In 2007, IUCN established a country office and initiated its activities in India to deepen its engagement at the national, regional, and global level. IUCN India provides opportunities for members to enhance their collective strengths, and their collective contribution to national, regional, and global conservation.

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