

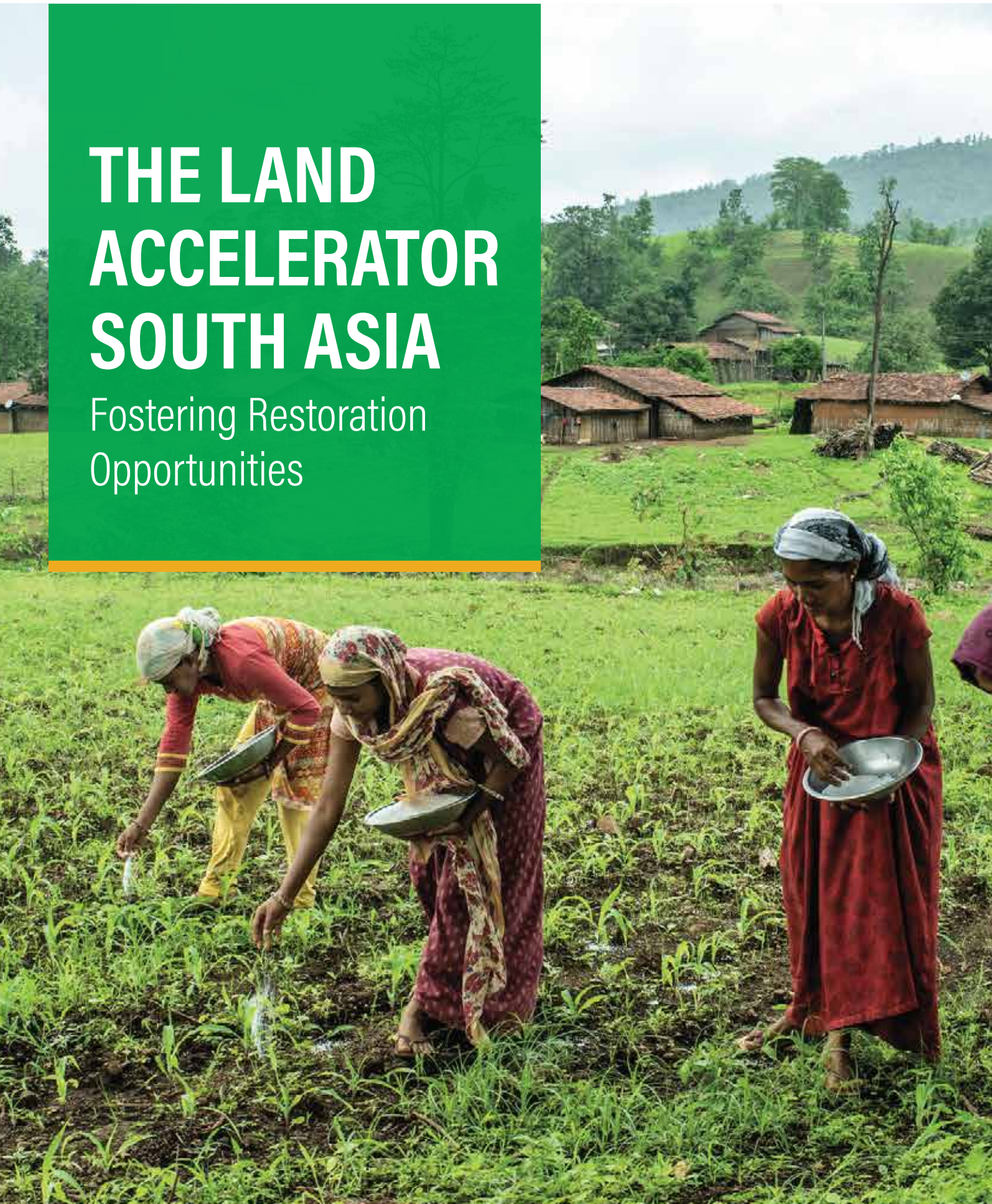


WRI INDIA



THE LAND ACCELERATOR SOUTH ASIA

Fostering Restoration
Opportunities





A SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION WITH RESTORATION BUSINESSES

Over 100 million hectares of India's total land offers opportunity for forest protection and landscape restoration and can sequester 3 to 4.3 giga tons of above-ground carbon by 2040. The Land Accelerator South Asia program aims to tap into this opportunity by inspiring and supporting entrepreneurs that work on sustainable business models.

In 2018, the **World Resources Institute** (WRI) launched the Land Accelerator Africa - the world's first training and mentorship program targeted specifically toward businesses that restore degraded forests, farmlands and pasture. Globally, this program has enabled plantation of around **22 million trees, restoring 207,000 hectares of land, while creating 13000 jobs and supporting 1.2 million farmers in 46 countries.**

The Land Accelerator South Asia is a unique initiative designed by the WRI India to strengthen entrepreneurial opportunities, enhance local livelihoods and incomes, and protect and restore India's forests and farmlands.

This first-of-its-kind program for South Asia was launched in 2020 to foster entrepreneurship through a unique accelerator curriculum and support leaders who develop sustainable and profitable business models to restore lands across South Asia.

- Building a network to create an enabling ecosystem for restoration entrepreneurs.
- Providing expert mentorship on developing business models, effective pitching, marketing and sales strategies and increasing consumer base.
- Connecting high-potential restoration businesses with debt and equity funders and public avenues of impact investment.
- Enhancing skills for tracking and measuring environmental and social impacts of restoration businesses.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

*Funding
supported by:*



Program partner:



Ecosystem partners:



Community partner:



FOSTERING RESTORATION OPPORTUNITIES

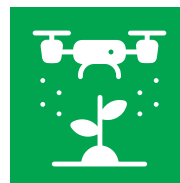
The Land Accelerator South Asia is an exciting **16-weeks tailored program** designed to provide an enlivening learning experience to land restoration entrepreneurs. The program offers a continual, guided mentorship through webinars, workshops, and fireside chats with its curated network of experts and mentors. While the program supports these entrepreneurial ventures with a grant, it also helps them raise more funds through **Demo Days** – an event where these entrepreneurs can pitch their solutions to various impact investors for fundraising.

KEY FOCUS AREAS



Sustainable Agriculture

Organic farming, regenerative agriculture, food-forest model, agro-forestry, farm-forestry



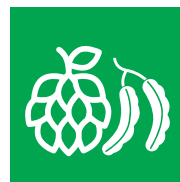
Smart Agri-tech Systems

Precision farming, weather sensors/climate smart agriculture, AI based pest-traps, robotics



Organic Land Amendment and Management

Organic farm inputs, insecticides, pesticides



Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) Value Chain Development

Mahua, custard apple, tamarind with indigenous communities/tribals



Circular Economy Solutions

Agro-residues to ecofriendly finished products like cutlery, construction panels, industrial enzymes, biochar



KEY BENEFITS

Restoration entrepreneurs supported under the Land Accelerator South Asia programme receive the following benefits:

€ 3,000 grant for top 15 entrepreneurs after successful completion of the program

A **zero-cost program** for entrepreneurs across South Asia (covering cost for registration, participation and, travel for in-person workshops)

Pitching opportunities with impact investors through Demo Days

Opportunities for **fundraising** through Demo Days' investor connects



Access to a **global network** of Land Accelerator alumni

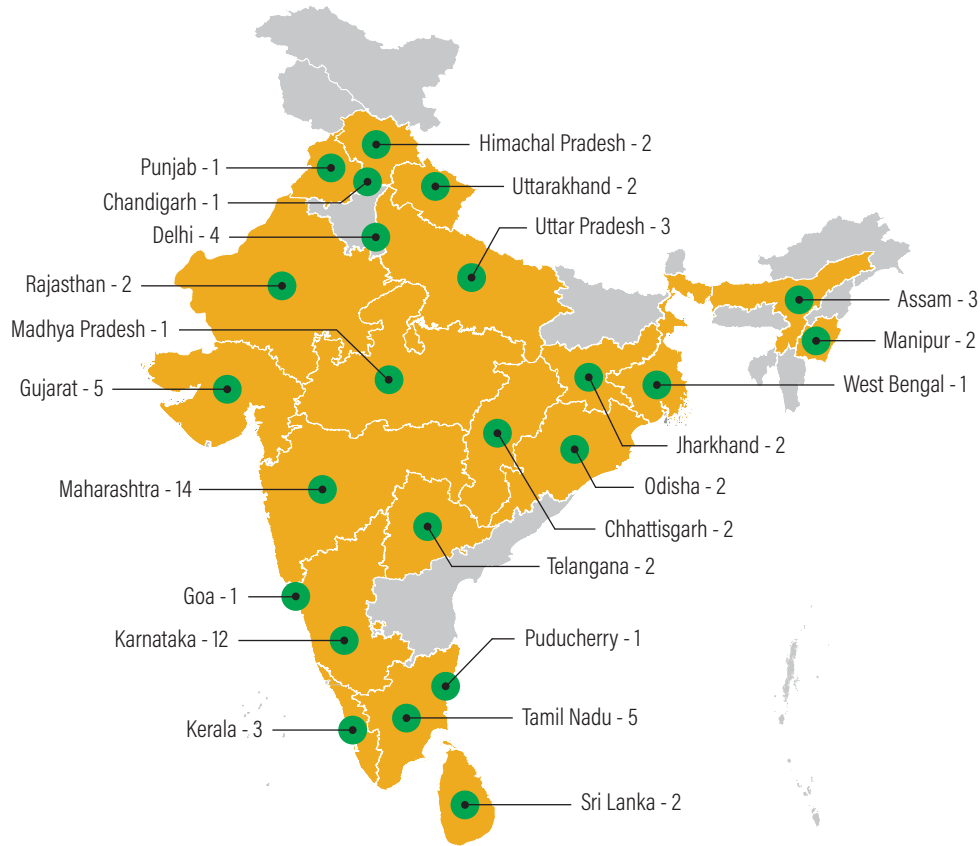
Gender inclusive approach with focused support to empower women entrepreneurs

Customised one-to-one **mentorship support** for each entrepreneur

Getting featured in the program's exclusive stories (for successful businesses)

THE COHORT

73 Entrepreneurs. 22 Indian States. 2 Countries



DISCLAIMER: This map is for illustrative purpose and does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of WRI, concerning the legal status of any country or territory or concerning the delimitation of frontiers or boundaries.

16

Weeks
Program

73

Entrepreneurs
(2020-21)



Cultivating
Opportunities for
Land Restoration

OUR FOOTPRINT

Impact Parametres	2020 Cohort	2021 Cohort	Total
Jobs created	236	1535	1771
Hectares of land restored	29111	941024	970135
Trees planted	15510	8729700	8745210
Small holder farmers engaged	6077	1145600	1151677

** As of July 2021*





INSIGHTS FROM THE COHORT

Restoring Farms & Forests In South Asia



Bee Basket

Rescuing and relocating honeybees to farms and forests, and training forest dwellers and farmers on sustainable honey harvesting

Amit Godse (Founder) - Pune, Maharashtra

"A real-time feedback and the weekly sessions refined our pitch, storytelling, business idea, financial model, and introduced us to new dimensions of impact measurement. The grant helped us to conduct our field experiments, which got us selected for Pusa Krishi Incubation Program by the MoA&FW. Through the Demo Days, we are now connected with many funders such as Nab Ventures and also started new pollination services for seed producing companies, progressive farmers and poly house farmers and it is receiving a thrilling response. We have also registered an FPO to collect wild honey in Sundarbans."

Jeev Anksh Eco Products

Providing market linkages to organic and indigenous farmers in Northeast India

Gunajit Brahma (Managing Director) - Guwahati, Assam

"The Land Accelerator grant enabled us to get our trademark licence and build market linkages. Both our team and revenue has grown tremendously now with export shipments to the UK and Netherlands. We are now empanelled as Technical Agency for MSME-Sfuri programme by the Government of India, and also received recognition and support from the Chief Minister of Manipur and Principal Secretary of Meghalaya for our export shipments of GI Black Rice (Manipur) and Lakadong Turmeric Powder and Ginger Powder from Meghalaya."





AI-GENIX International

Provides AI-based insect-pest traps replacing chemical pesticides

Shahnaz Shaikh (Founder & CEO) - Thane, Maharashtra

"It was an incredible experience to be part of the Land Accelerator. We received crucial support on pitching, mentoring, sales and marketing, impact measurement, and financial modelling. The grant helped us improve our branding and scale up our business by procuring more raw materials and designing a new website. The Demo Days connected us with Samunnati Financial Intermediation and Services Private Limited for debt finance & customer connect and with the Land Use and Rejuvenation team at Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI).

Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Co

Purchases and markets NTFPs sustainably harvested by indigenous people of Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve in Tamil Nadu

Jestin Paul (Founder) - Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu

"The Land Accelerator grant helped us to purchase machinery which significantly increased our processing capacity of millets from 300 kg to 11000 kg this year. It has also encouraged many indigenous people cultivate millets. The program supported us with excellent mentorship, Karthik sir helped us analyse our financials. Also, inputs from Eric Insler, our external mentor helped us improve sales through introduction of drop shipping and subscription services.



Gratitude Farms

Restoring abandoned farmlands through organic "Food Forest" model with multi-cropping tree-based agroforestry interventions

Major Ved Prakash Sharma (Retd) (Founder) - Puducherry, India

"The Land Restoration team completely transformed our business. Samunnati Financials shortlisted us on the Demo Day and provided a debt fund of INR 45 lakhs (expecting another INR 50 lakhs in next six months). With an improved pitch and networking support, we have raised around INR 1.6 crore in last six months and, aiming for another INR 5 crore soon. The early support for fund raising provided by the Land Accelerator team boosted our confidence as well as business manifold. My deep gratitude to Kavita, Amanda, Ashna and the panel of mentors who helped us get here."



Bastar Se Bazar Tak Private Limited

Sustainable harvesting and processing of NTFPs with small and marginal tribal farmers of Chhattisgarh

Satendrasingh Lilhare (Founder) - Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh

"I learnt the art of pitching in 180 seconds. As a result, we won Tata Social Enterprise Challenge Award, Incubation Support at Indian Institute of Management Calcutta Innovation Park and TATA seed funding support of USD 40,000. Additionally, we have received a support of USD 50,000 under Upaya Social Ventures. During the pandemic, we started tamarind processing with 920 smallholder women tribal farmers and produced 39 tons of tamarind pulp, providing employment of 83 days to 167 tribal women."

Rhodotion

Provides mixed farming system in northeast India, resulting in land stabilization and enhancing farmers' incomes

Subhankar Sanyal (Founder) - Kolkata, West Bengal

"This program is an exemplary blend of best practices on sustainability impact and successful enterprise management. After this program, we received support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India (under RKVY scheme) and IIM Kashipur; and established a processing unit in Uttarakhand for Himalayan Herbal Teas. It gave us a platform to connect with investors as well as like-minded entrepreneurs. We will soon launch a geo-location based IOT enabled Himalayan Coffee Roastery cum Experience Center in Guwahati."



Vasumitra Life Energies

Offers a suite of 100% organic fertilizers and plant nutrients which can reduce water usage by 50% and chemical inputs by 70% while delivering a high crop yield

Bhushan Jambhekar (Founder) - Pune, Maharashtra

"The Land Accelerator South Asia program opened new doors for me in terms of learning, new perspectives, better strategies, prospective investments and sales associations with great organisations. The grant helped us advance our field research trials on tomato and onion which helped us establish a strong proof of concept with valuable data for new products and grow our business."



Bio Craft Innovation

Makes plastic polymers from bamboo, rice and wheat residues which can replace single use plastics

Anubhav Mittal (Founder) - Noida, Uttar Pradesh

"The Land Accelerator South Asia program helped us define a vision, develop a business with goals and improved our pitch deck. The mentorship provided by them from startup industry in India and the US transformed us into a successful startup and brought us multiple funding support including INR 1.5 crore under National Bamboo Mission and equity fund of INR 1 crore from Jito Angel and INR 50 lakh ourselves. We are also able to set up our first Bamboo Pellet unit in Kotdwar, Uttarakhand with a capacity of 30 tonnes per month which can generate a revenue of INR 6 crore annually by producing sustainable industrial material which can replace single use plastics. We will soon set up a larger unit of 300 tonnes capacity."

SenzAgro

Provides climate smart irrigation solutions to farms and plantation sector

Miller Rajendran (CEO) - Colombo, Sri Lanka

"Marketing, finance and management strategies learnt under the Land Accelerator program helped us tailor new strategies even during the pandemic. After learning about impact measurement, we were able to present SenzAgro to several impact funders and got connected with leading agri-tech networks. Through the "investor email group" for a tailor-made premium fundraising campaign, which is facilitated by the Land Accelerator program, we now have access to 1000+ potential investment networks. The mentors took additional steps to make sure that my company grows. This relationship and support continue even today after one year of completing the program."





For more information about the Global Land Accelerator Program, please visit www.wri.org/initiatives/land-accelerator

For any queries about the Land Accelerator South Asia, please write to **Ms Kavita Sharma**, *Manager-Sustainable Landscapes and Restoration*
kavita.sharma@wri.org

Photo Credit

Cover page/FOLU; pg 2/FOLU;
pg 3/Daniel Fazio/Unsplash;
pg 5/Stockpexel; pg 6/Parikh Mahendra N;
pg 7/SenzArgo; pg 11/Jeev Anksh Eco
Products; Back cover/FOLU





WRI INDIA

