



# WRI INDIA

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## **Release: WRI India launches Restoration Opportunities Atlas**

*Web-based platform aims to support policy makers combat climate change through tree-based interventions in India*

**10 September 2018, New Delhi:** WRI India launched the Restoration Opportunities Atlas, an interactive, web-based platform to boost tree-based climate action in India, today. The portal – <http://india.restorationatlas.org> – aims to help policy makers create strategies to achieve India's climate goals through landscape restoration.

Landscape restoration is the deliberate integration and enhancement of tree-cover within different land uses, to improve an area's ecological functions, promote human well-being, and more broadly, combat climate change. These interventions form the bedrock of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in countries worldwide, as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

India's NDC commits to sequestering an additional 2.5 to 3 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent by 2030 through increased forest and tree cover. Official estimates suggest that this commitment can only be achieved if existing forests are protected and improved, and tree cover is extended by 25-30 million hectares. The Atlas brings together data, rigorous analysis and studies to help understand how, where and through what interventions can forests and tree cover be improved across the nation.

Developed after 18 months of rigorous efforts, with guidance from a Technical Working Group (TWG) comprising experts from leading organizations in the environment and development sectors, the Atlas collates information on a selection of past and on-going initiatives that can be replicated and scaled-up to deliver a wide range of benefits including carbon sequestration and livelihoods security.

Using layers of dynamic maps, it analyses conditions essential for successful restoration, including:

- **Potential risks:** Like forest fires, land conflict and diversion of forests for other uses, that would impact improving and extending forest and tree cover;
- **Tenure and resource rights:** Providing information on extent of joint forest management, potential and recognition of community rights under the Forest Rights Acts and the presence of Scheduled Areas.
- **The flow of public finances:** tracing the potential financial base for improving forest and tree covers to achieve India's NDC goal.



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Introducing the Atlas, **Dr. Rohini Chaturvedi**, Director, Sustainable Landscape and Restoration Program, WRI India, said, “India has tremendous potential for tree based action... far more than we ever thought. The Restoration Opportunities Atlas begins to address information gaps, compiles information from various sources and simplifies it to support decision-making. The launch today, is just a beginning.”

**Ms. Moutushi Sengupta**, India Director, MacArthur Foundation, explained the relevance of the platform: “The Restoration Opportunities Atlas gives a good baseline indicating where we are today in terms of forest restoration and our national level targets. This is a complex area of engagement, but also a nuanced form of integration of various factors.”

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*About WRI India:*

*WRI India is a research organization with experts and staff who work closely with leaders to turn big ideas into action to sustain a healthy environment – the foundation of economic opportunity and human well-being. We envision an equitable and prosperous planet driven by the wise management of natural resources. We aspire to create a world where the actions of government, business and communities combine to eliminate poverty and sustain the natural environment for all people.*