

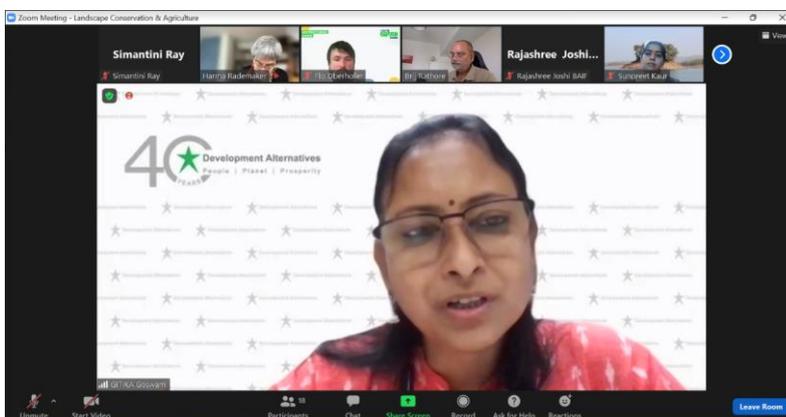
Biodiversity Means Business II: Greener EU-India Supply Chains and Technologies

The European Union (EU) had launched a campaign titled 'Lead the Green Change / Biodiversity is Life' in April, 2021 to illustrate the potential socio-economic benefits of adapting the European Union's Green Deal Strategy to Indian context (in particular regards with biodiversity in agriculture, land use, coastal areas, and green infrastructures/nature-based solutions). To culminate this campaign, Delegation of European Union to India and Bhutan organised an online event titled 'Biodiversity means Business II: Greener EU-India Supply Chains and Technologies' on 2 June 2022. In this webinar, Ms Gitika Goswami, Associate Vice President, Development Alternatives (DA) and Col. Raman Thapar, Deputy General Manager, Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF), DA Group participated.

This event brought together policymakers, stakeholders, organisations, corporates, and financial technology institutions from India and the EU. It addressed the adaptation, promotion, and enforcement of greener corporate and public policies, technology, innovation, and models at the national, state, and district levels.

The scope of discussion encompassed the elements of the (draft) Global Biodiversity Framework but with a specific focus on the four aspects of biodiversity conservation and restoration in India & the EU: (i) Terrestrial Landscape Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture; (ii) Marine, Coastal and River Ecosystems; (iii) Safeguarding and Restoration of Wildlife Habitats in Developmental Projects; and (iv) Wetland Conservation. The inputs gathered during the event were to be incorporated into a report by the EU, prior to 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Part Two).

Ms Gitika Goswami, Associate Vice President, Development Alternatives, was one of the panelists in the breakout session titled 'Terrestrial Landscape Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture'. She elucidated on how we can reduce the negative impacts on biodiversity and landscapes. She stated practicing exploitative land use, utilisation of painkillers in livestock, and the impact of agricultural waste are the major reasons of negative impacts on biodiversity. She highlighted that we need to practice farming in a more nature-friendly, biodiversity-supporting way, limiting the use of chemical inputs and replacing monoculture with more diverse farming practices.



Ms Gitika Goswami, Associate Vice President, Development Alternatives, speaking at the session

Further, she pointed out that several organisations in the country are working towards creating and enabling sustainable agricultural landscapes. With regard to this, she cited an example of DA's intervention in Bundelkhand, wherein the organisation aimed at agricultural landscape conservation in such a way that it makes the local communities more resilient and at the same time, restores and regenerates the natural soil and the local water resources. She also talked about the introduction of climate-resilient agricultural practices through models such as Integrated Watershed Management Programme and WADI, which have contributed to an ecologically sustainable model of development

for the communities in Bundelkhand. She also highlighted that the initiatives under the government and the corporate social responsibility purview should be disclosed and promoted.



Colonel Raman Thapar, Deputy General Manager, IMEDF, Development Alternatives Group, speaking at the session

Colonel Raman Thapar, Deputy General Manager, Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF), discussed about the existing forest-related laws and how IMEDF is helping farmers by introducing them to new techniques, technology innovations, resource mapping, stakeholder engagement, and promotion of circular economy.

Mr Ugo Astuto, Ambassador, EU India pointed out that financial needs assessment for biodiversity interventions has become essential. Later, Ms Anshu Singh, DDG, Statistics, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in her keynote address explored the concept of Natural Capital Accounting (NCA), System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, and efforts taken by the MoEFCC towards the implementation of NCA in government policies.

Mr Michael Bucki, Counsellor, Head of Section, Delegation of EU of India stated that there is a crucial need for analysing and documenting the impact of businesses on the environment. Mr Flo Oberhofer, Senior Expert, EUD (Terra Terra Preta Impact Innovations LLP) indicated that the development of nature-based solutions is central to building resilient and sustainable ecosystems. Technology providers from outside should work in consortium with India and standardisation and certifications of biodiversity process can be of help. Ms Nina Fenton, Head, European Investment Bank, representation for South Asia Office, Head, highlighted the urgency to streamline the available data on biodiversity. Mr Shyam Kumar Katta, Program Director, Heifer International, pointed out that the synergies between farmers and businesses should be explored.

In the concluding remarks, Brij Mohan Singh Rathore, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Policy Advisor, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Former Joint Secretary, MoEFCC said, "Biodiversity conservation is important for biodiversity discussions." He emphasised that the scale, operation, and limitations of biodiversity projects should be understood well.