



A Vibrant and Sustainable Future for India

India is home to nearly one-fifth of all humanity and its rapidly-growing economy is projected to surpass that of the United States by 2050. India is also a country of immense biodiversity, with forests, rivers, grasslands, wetlands, and Himalayan foothills that harbor a full 8% of the planet's total plant and animal species, including half of the world's remaining tiger population. The government and people have stated the need to balance growth with conservation, but that pathway is challenging. Burgeoning cities, dwindling water supplies, and demand for energy put India at a precipice, made sharper by a changing climate and a surging pandemic. How India develops will impact many global endeavors over the next decade—to tackle climate change, to sustain lands and waters, and to create a stable, prosperous, and equitable world.

With India so central to our global future, The Nature Conservancy is working there to advance truly sustainable development. Since 2015, we have been deploying science, policy, and finance solutions to guide renewable energy growth, conserve vital waters and habitats, and transform agriculture. Collaborating with government, communities, organizations, and businesses, we are committed to a thriving and resilient India, where climate innovation and natural resource management improves livelihoods for millions of people and sets a model for other nations.

Tackling Climate Change

As the world's third-largest energy consumer and third-largest greenhouse gas emitter, India is a driver of climate change and essential to its solution. The country's Paris Accord commitment to reach 40% clean energy by 2030 means wind and solar capacity must expand by more than 400% in the coming decades. Innovating how this occurs could lead a global energy revolution. To accelerate smart renewable energy growth in India without destroying forests, cropland, and cultural places, we created [SiteRight](#)—a comprehensive decision-making tool to help optimally site new infrastructure so that India can reach and even exceed its clean energy targets.

India's vast forests cover nearly a quarter of the country and have the potential absorb and store carbon at a global scale. The government has committed to sequester 2.5-3 billion additional tons of carbon by 2030, and the Conservancy is helping chart this course. Recently, we helped secure a [record \\$12 billion allocation of Central Government revenue](#) to Indian states based on the criteria of forest cover in those state—a powerful and ongoing incentive to preserve forests. In the states of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, we also launched tree-planting initiatives with vulnerable rural communities as a model for improving livelihoods *and* forest health.



Securing Healthy Lands, Waters, and Communities

India faces a looming water crisis. Already hard-hit by climate change, close to 60% of its lakes, rivers, and wetlands have become depleted or polluted in recent decades. Each year, water scarcity impacts 100 million people, threatening public health, food security, and economies, and straining natural and wild lands. The Conservancy is leading a diversity of public and private partnerships to advance science-based solutions for healthy lands, waters, and communities.

Making agriculture sustainable is vital. In the northern states of Punjab and Haryana, millions of hectares of fields are burned annually to clear crop stubble for the next planting. This causes severe air pollution in the Capital Region of Delhi, routinely pushing pollution levels to 20 times what is deemed safe by the World Health Organization, forcing schools and airports to close. To transform field-clearing practices, we are helping thousands of farmers [access new equipment](#) that mulches crop residue, regenerating the soil rather than scorching it. Through outreach, training, and policy incentives, we are promoting a widespread switch to regenerative agriculture that will reduce water use by 30%, cut air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and improve farmer income.

To secure India's freshwater, the Conservancy works both at the village level and in cities. In villages in the Devnadi River basin (Maharashtra), we strengthened drought resilience by creating climate-smart, equitable water plans—a model that can be scaled across other villages. In India's growing cities, such as Chennai (Tamil Nadu), we are demonstrating new ways to prepare for a water-scarce future. Chennai recently suffered an unprecedented, crippling drought. By 2050, its population is projected to reach 40 million people, making proactive planning for water critical. We have galvanized communities, city leaders, and partner organizations to restore Lake Sembakkam as a model for revitalizing the 200 wetland-lakes that historically fed this region. When restoration is complete, Lake Sembakkam will hold 50% more water, showcase new pollution control measures, and help safeguard nearby wetlands important for global biodiversity. It is part of our larger effort to incorporate nature into urban planning by developing a Greenprint for Chennai—a set of nature-based strategies to help cities across India sustain clean air and water in a climate-changing future.



Conserving Wild India

From the forests of the Central Highlands to the mountain deserts near the Himalayas, India's diverse habitats harbor rare species, including elephants and red pandas, while supporting rural communities. However, the staggering pace of infrastructure development threatens to undermine the country's remarkable conservation legacy.

The Conservancy works to proactively balance development and conservation by planning for landscapes *as a whole*. For example, in the forested Central Indian Highlands, we are identifying connections between existing undersized parks that must be conserved so that the world's remaining tigers and other species can thrive, even as India urbanizes.

In the northern Trans-Himalayan region—one of the world's last mountain desert wildernesses—we will work with remote Ladakh villages to safeguard landscapes for herders and the rare Himalayan brown bear. Through training and outreach, we aim to reduce bear-livestock conflict and gain new information about this elusive species—a first step to conserving a network of healthy northern rangelands for bears, snow leopards, and herding communities.

Please Join Us

In India, the pandemic and associated economic slowdown puts new, harsh pressures on already marginalized people and the natural resources they rely on. Reverse migration has sent many city dwellers home to villages, making reliance on water sources, farmland, and forest foods even more acute. As India emerges, it will strive to meet its ambitious economic and clean energy goals and build back better. The Conservancy is committed to co-developing, sharing, and scaling the science and on-the-ground solutions needed for a sustainable and vibrant India. Please join us to tackle climate change and secure healthy lands, waters, and communities—in India and around the world—so that future generations can thrive.



**For more information,
contact:**
Rahul Menon
Development Associate
rahul.menon@tnc.org
support.nature.org/india
www.tncindia.in