

**Engaging with the private sector for ensuring  
sustainability of socio-ecological landscapes  
in the Northern Western Ghats of India-  
opportunities and challenges**



**Applied Environmental Research  
Foundation(AERF)  
[www.aerfindia.org](http://www.aerfindia.org)**

# The Western Ghats

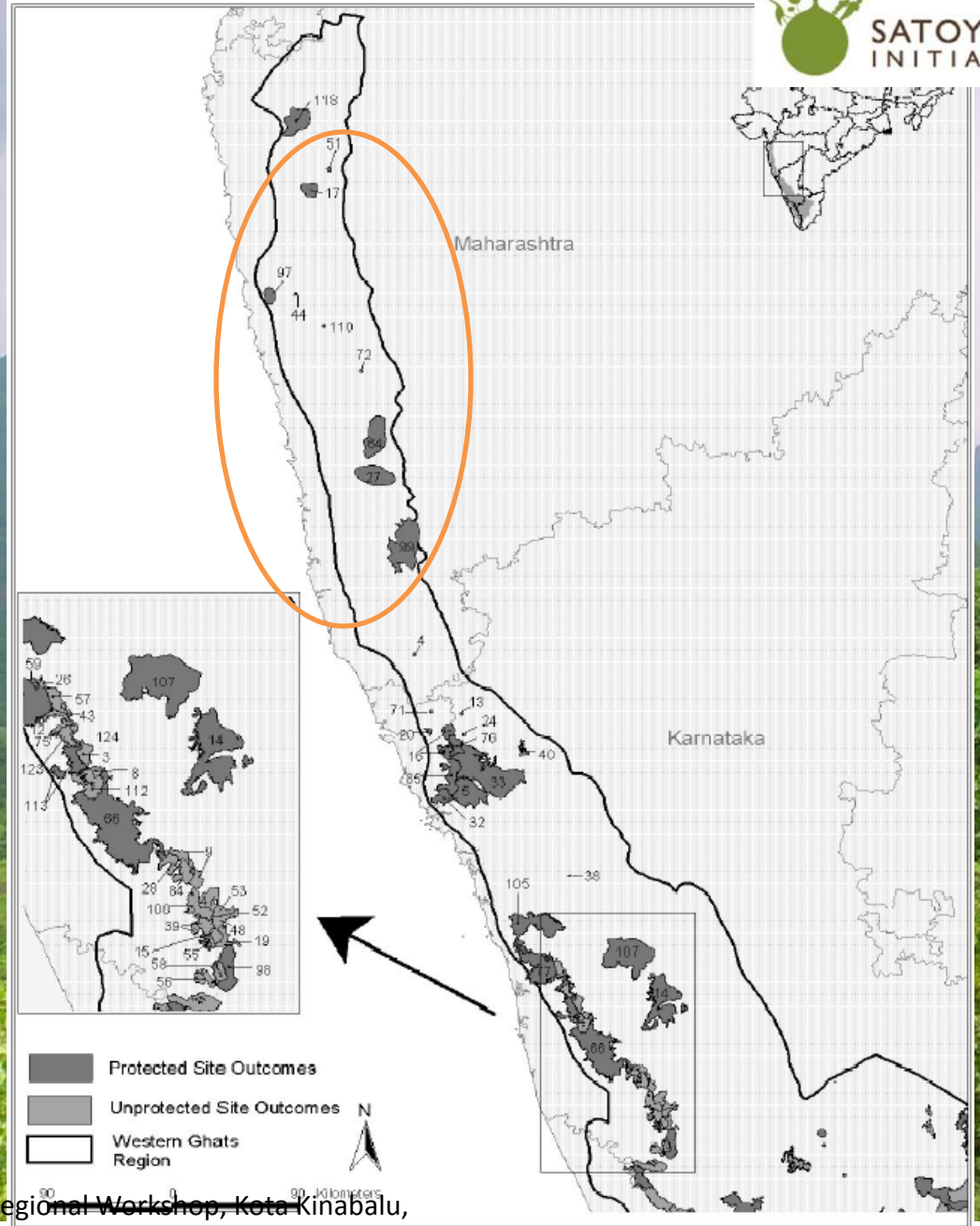
– *a global biodiversity hotspot*

- 78% amphibians, 62% reptiles, 38% plants, 12% mammals endemic to the W. Ghats



# North vs. South

**Between 0.6% to 5%  
of area currently  
being protected**



# Satoyama and Landscapes in North Western Ghats



# Status of forest cover in Sahyadri-Konkan Corridor (Maharashtra)



Sr. No	Name of the District	Geographical area (sq km)	Total forest cover ( sq km)	Percentage of forest cover w.r.t Geographical area ( Private land holding)
1	Raigad	7152	2864	40.04
2	Ratnagiri	8208	4199	51.16 (98%)
3	Sindhudurg	5207	2573	49.41 (90%)
4	Thane	9558	2912	30.47

There are about 1500 sacred groves in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg district.( As per the record from Revenue department)

Source- Department of Forest, Ministry of Environment, Govt of Maharashtra (2010)

# Dealing with the threats to biodiversity head-on



# ES valuations and need for investment

- 8% of the global greenhouse gas emissions come from tropical deforestation.
- Pollination currently valued at USD 112 billion/annually , natural coastal defenses , abundance and quality of water valued at USD 30 billion are all linked to biodiversity
- An estimated 300 billion US dollars is needed annually to preserve healthy ecosystems.
- It is no longer a case of conserving charismatic and endangered species ( e.g. Tiger)
- Rather it is an issue of global policy that the benefits provided by biodiversity are valued and accounted for within traditional business risk frameworks.

# Rationale

- Private sector companies –e.g. power, mining and ports create maximum impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services- important drivers behind biodiversity loss
- Significant presence of corporations sensitive to environmental risks in the Northern Western Ghats(NWG)- Sandoz, Unilever, Siemens, Akzo Nobel, Asahi Glass, Holcim
- A stakeholder group with financial muscle and political influence
- Opportunities for cross-sectoral learning



## *Credit Suisse*- Swiss investment bank

- Operations in 50 countries and employs ca.50,000 people.
- Manage 1200 billion USD worth of assets.
- Recognition of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services degradation as major sustainability risk at global level.
- Launched first conservation investment product globally – Nature conservation notes worth 10 Million USD to support biodiversity conservation through development of value chain and certified supply chains
- Use Sustainable Palm Oil Transparency Toolkit (SPOTT) as framework for assessing sustainability risks for investment in Palm oil sector.

# AERF's collaboration with *Credit Suisse*

- Engagement started in 2012 for developing program for CS employees in the environment sector.
- First volunteer engagement event conducted in November 2013 with clear focus on capacity building in biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- 4 Volunteer engagement events conducted till date with participation of more than 120 CS staff members.
- **AERF's efforts resulted in incorporation of forest and biodiversity conservation as focus area for support in CS philanthropy program.**
- In April 2016, CS supported a 3 year collaborative project to avoid deforestation and support incentive based conservation in Northern Western Ghats.
- The project will save minimum 500 acres of forest on community land in this area.

# *Pukka Herbs*- herbal tea maker

- Europe's leading herbal tea and nutrition supplement company.
- Exports tea and other products to over 50 different countries.
- Committed to sustainability through supply chain transparency and integration of strict and inclusive sustainability standard – FAIRWILD –in supply chain.

# AERF's collaboration with *Pukka Herbs*



- In the year 2011, first visit to the field to understand potential for establishing sustainable supply chain in Northern Western Ghats.
- In 2012, feasibility and situation analysis of FAIRWILD certification was completed.
- **In year 2012, Pukka Herbs supported conservation of 100 acres of community forest in the Northern Western Ghats.**
- In year 2013-14, sites were finalized and FAIRWILD certification scheme was implemented for 2 supply chains.
- **In year 2015, first lot of 4 tonnes of certified material supplied to Pukka Herbs.**
- Pukka Herb made a commitment of buying higher volumes of certified material over the next 10 years.
- **FAIRWILD certification of resource areas guarantees conservation, sustainable use and significant increase in income for communities at the same time.**

## *Daikin Industries, Japan*- air conditioning equipment manufacturer

- World's leading air-conditioning equipment manufacturer .
- Invested 4.5 million dollars to save critical forests across 6 different countries in the world
- Run a very effective – ***Forests for Air***- campaign that is linked to their product- clean air and forest conservation.

# AERF's engagement

- Development of concept note (March 2014) that was aligned with Daikin's campaign- avoiding deforestation.
- Identification of product that is aligned with the campaign- improved cook stove.
- Involving local communities for saving biodiversity rich forests from Western Ghats
- **1500 acres of forest** will be saved for the next 5-10 years and 500 families will reduce their impact on forests through use of improved cook stoves ( July 2016-2019)

# Strategies and approaches

- Leading by example/ learning by doing- establishment of private company to show that sustainable biodiversity use is scalable and economically attractive
- **Development of value chains and products for delivering key messages linked to biodiversity conservation- e.g FAIRWILD certification**
- Promotion of creative campaign/brand- My Forest and tailor made program in capacity building for scaling up effective engagement - Corporate conservation program.
- Visits to forests and interactions with local communities as mandatory part of employee engagement- HSBC, CS, CapeGemini

# Key Learnings....

- Investment in building right perception is critical for creating long term impacts for conservation
- Successful engagement with corporates needs professional attitude, patience and follow up over longer periods
- Maintaining fair visibility and networking is crucial for generating leads
- Identification and working with companies having clear sustainability standards is critical for success
- Heavy ignorance and absurd expectations on behalf of corporations are commonplace and often frustrating
- Activist attitude and biased approach can seriously impact relations over long term with the private sector
- Honesty and focus however pays for itself handsomely and should be never compromised.



Thank You!

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