

## Summary

### National Training Programme on “Audit of Biodiversity Conservation Measures” from 30<sup>th</sup> October to 03<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023 at iCED Jaipur

International Centre for Environment Audit & Sustainable Development (iCED) organized a 05 days’ National Training Programme on “Audit of Biodiversity Conservation Measures” from **30<sup>th</sup> October to 03<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023** at its own campus. A total of 21 participants from 07 field offices including 07 group officers, participated in the training programme. Dr. Vivekanand, Assistant Professor, Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT), Jaipur also joined the participants for group photo.



Group Photo during National Training Programme on “Audit of Biodiversity Conservation Measures”

Dr. Nanda Dulal Das, Director (Training and Research) extended a warm welcome to the Additional Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General & Director General, Ms. Sayantani Jafa madam, Shri Mehul Grover, Director (Administration) and all the participants. He highlighted that the training programme would cover a wide range of topics including Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Biodiversity Conservation, Use of GIS and Remote Sensing etc. He further requested ADAI & DG madam to deliver her welcome address.

Ms Sayantani Jafa, Additional Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General & Director General, iCED inaugurated the training programme. She welcomed all the participants. ADAI Madam emphasized the importance of the National Training Programme on “Audit of Biodiversity Conservation Measures” and its role in creating awareness and imparting knowledge about the highly critical and relevant areas in Biodiversity, which poses serious impediments towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030.

ADAI madam informed the participants about iCED's significant role as a recent establishment as the Centre of Excellence on Audit of Blue Economy, iCED is now operationalizing the SAI India’s vision of upscaling knowledge and addressing critical issues related to the audit of Blue

Economy and proving to be an important instrumentality of global capacity building in the field of Environmental Auditing.



**Ms Sayantani Jafa, ADAI & Director General, iCED addressing participants during Inauguration**

ADAI Madam highlighted the crucial importance of biodiversity for all life on Earth, as it provides food, medicines, clean water and various resources. However, human activities including habitat destruction, poaching, climate change, pollution and overexploitation, pose significant challenges to biodiversity. India, a mega-diverse country, faces a decline in biodiversity due to rapid development and habitat destruction, risking ecosystem imbalance and threatening humans and other organisms.

She emphasized the increasing importance of biodiversity conservation and the concerted efforts being made by both Union and State Governments in India to halt the loss of biodiversity. India has made progress by increasing forest cover to 21.23% and expanding protected areas to 4.8% of the

country's land area. The commitment to international agreements like the Nagoya Protocol and Aichi targets demonstrates India's dedication to preserving biodiversity, given its significant biodiversity, vulnerable coastline, agricultural reliance and a large population. The Indian government has launched initiatives like Project Tiger, Project Elephant, and the National Bio-Diversity Act to safeguard India's biodiversity. She stressed the need for a shift in thinking to recognize biodiversity as essential for sustainable development and its role in "rewilding" degraded environments.

She highlighted that as an auditor, we have a critical role to play in supporting to save Biodiversity. By conducting audits that assess the effectiveness of Biodiversity Conservation Measures, programmes, and projects, we can ensure that resources are utilized efficiently, that environmental risks are properly managed and that SDG's are being achieved. At the same time, we have to strive for a balanced and sustainable economic development trajectory. Thus a 'one size fits all' approach may have to be discarded in favour of nuance in examining each issue.

ADAI madam also emphasized that we need to appreciate problematics in a macro-context - the issues of historical emissions, Big Agriculture and corporatization by global multi-nationals verses the genuine concerns of small farmers more attuned to natural bio-diversity practices; climate 'anxiety' and 'zero growth' agendas vis-à-vis the need of poorer countries of the Global South to keep pace and 'catch up' with the industrialized and developed Global North. She

referred to Amitav Ghosh's book, "The Nutmeg's Curse," which links fossil fuels to the economic and industrial development of colonial powers in the Global North, suggesting that green finance should hold the Global North accountable.

Further, she also briefed about outdoor activities like Shopping excursion to Bapu Bazar, the traditional market of Jaipur and Sports and other facilities at iCED Campus etc.

With this introduction, Ms. Jafa again warmly welcomed all the participants to iCED, expressing hope for a productive and engaging training programme and a pleasant stay on the campus.

During this five days' training programme, 09 experts from IA&AD and many other reputed organisations like Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT), Jaipur; WII, Dehradun; Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu; Himachal Forest Department, Shimla; Pondicherry University & National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad etc. were invited to deliver the sessions.

Sl. No.	Sessions	Trainer/s
1.	Overview of Global Framework for Biodiversity Conservation	Dr. Vivekanand, Assistant Professor, Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT) Jaipur
2.	Fundamental concepts of EIA, Process, Issues and Possible mitigation strategies	Dr J. A. Johnson, Scientist E & Head, Department of Habitat Ecology, WII, Dehradun
3.	Marine Biodiversity in India with special reference to Mangrove Forestry Conservation for Audit	Dr. Kathiresan Kandasamy, Professor, Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu
4.	Audit of Biodiversity: Experience sharing on Biodiversity Audit in Himachal Pradesh	Dr. Sanjay Sood, IFS, Himachal Pradesh
5.	Audit of Biodiversity	Shri Mehul Grover, Director (Admn.), iCED Jaipur
6.	Impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity: An Assessment of Vulnerable Species and Ecosystems	Dr Chubbamenla Jamir, Independent Researcher
7.	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Biodiversity Conservation: Progress, Challenges and Future Directions	Dr K. Sivakumar, Professor, Pondicherry University (Online)
8.	Use of GIS and Remote Sensing for auditing Government Efforts in Improving Agricultural Ecosystems	Dr. P.V. Raju, Group Director, Water Resources, Remote Sensing Applications Area, NRSC, Hyderabad

9.	Audit of Afforestation Programmes: Experience Sharing on Audit of Afforestation in Odisha	Shri K Surjith, IA&AS, Director (GST/ C&AB), O/o DGA (Central), Mumbai
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Teaching methods during the training programme included both formal lectures as well as various individual and group exercises, etc. Details of the trainers and the sessions delivered during this programme are as follows.

**Team Wise Exercise:** - Team Wise Exercise was also given to the participants. All participants



Ms Sayantani Jafa, ADAI & Director General, Iced; Shri Mehul Grover, Director (Admn.) and Dr. Nanda Dulal Das, Director (T&R) during Group presentation

were divided into four groups of five participants in each group.

Shri Rahul P, DAG, Shri Shiv Shankar, DAG, Ms. Nina S More DAG, Shri Krishna Pratap, DAG and Shri V K Salil Kumar, SAO represented their groups during this team exercise session.

**Ms. Sayantani Jafa, ADAI & DG,**

iCED evaluated the presentations given by all the groups of the participants during pre-valedictory session.

**Feedback:-** Feedback on course designing, the time required, content, knowledge and its delivery by the resource persons and facilities available at iCED was also collected from the participants through SAI Portal. The average feedback of the participants was 9.35 out of 10, which is very encouraging. Sessions on “**Audit of Afforestation Programmes: Experience Sharing on Audit of Afforestation in Odisha**” was rated as the best.

### **Summing-up and valediction:**

Ms Sayantani Jafa, Additional Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General & Director General, iCED graced the valedictory session of the National Training Programme.

ADAI Madam concluded the valedictory session by quoting the author Elizabeth Kolbert that “Neither optimism nor pessimism alters the fact that we live in an extraordinary moment. The choices that we’ll make —that we are making right now, without necessarily being aware of them— will determine the future of life for our children and their children and all the other species on earth for generations to come. This is the situation we’re in, and there’s no avoiding it, because, in the end, this marvellous, fragile planet is all we’ve got”.

She thanked all the experts and participants for their contributions in making this event a success and she desired to organize more sessions in near future to understand the topic more broadly.