

PATHWAYS LINKING BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY

August, 2025 | Centre for Business Leadership in Nature Restoration, UN GCNI



Message from Executive Director, UN GCNI

Welcome to Pathways Linking Profit and Planet, our business and biodiversity dispatch from the Centre for Business Leadership on Nature Restoration at the UN Global Compact Network India. This centre's goal is to help businesses incorporate biodiversity and sustainability into their drivers of growth, arming them with research-backed insights, hands-on training, and implementation of real-world restoration projects. Through this initiative, we try to put together a curated list of field stories, national and international happenings in the world of Business and Biodiversity Conservation. Our aim is simple: to show that healthy ecosystems and healthy balance sheets grow from the same soil.

- Ratnesh Jha

COP 15: Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future



@COP15

From 23 to 31 July 2025, Zimbabwe hosted the 15th meeting of the Ramsar Convention's Conference of the Parties (COP15). Under the theme "Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future," Ministers, CEOs, Scientists, and civil-society leaders from 172 nations gathered to align policy, finance, and action around the vital role wetlands play in climate resilience, water security, and corporate risk management. Anchored by four overarching goals biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, restoration & partnerships and structured around eighteen targets, the Plan charts a decade of coordinated investment, governance reform, and nature-positive finance instruments tailored for both public and private sectors. Major decisions included a 4.1 percent real-terms budget increase to CHF 15.5 million, sweeping wetland-restoration guidelines, the launch of the Global Waterbird Estimates Partnership, and accreditation of 31 new Wetland Cities, signaling a unified commitment to leverage wetlands as natural infrastructure.

Ramsar COP15 adopted 13 resolutions, presenting a global resolve to protect and restore wetlands. Key topics included wetland restoration, migratory bird flyway conservation, and the global waterbird estimates partnership. Parties also adopted the 5th Strategic Plan (2025–2034) with four goals and eighteen targets:

- Address and reverse wetland loss and degradation.
- Achieve the wise use of wetlands through policy planning and inclusive participation.



- Conserve and manage wetlands of International Importance effectively.
- Enhance implementation of the convention through scientific cooperation, capacity building, and resource mobilization.

The Ramsar Convention: Safeguarding Wetlands Worldwide

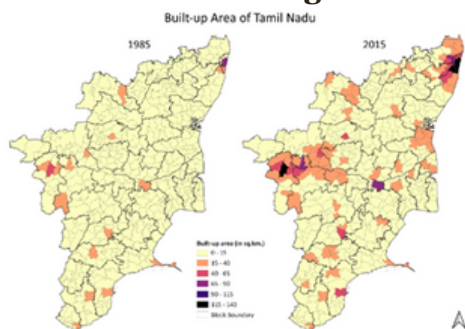
The Ramsar Convention is a Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. It was adopted in Ramsar, Iran on 2 February 1971 and entered into force on 21 December 1975. As of July 2025, it counts 172 Contracting Parties, including India, one of the earliest signatory joining on 1 February 1982. The treaty's governing body, the Conference of the Parties, meets every three years to set strategy, adopt resolutions, and steer global cooperation.

India's Executive Leadership and the Path Forward

At the heart of the business-biodiversity dialogue, India represented by Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav secured unanimous adoption of its resolution on Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles for the Wise Use of Wetlands.

Through Mission LiFE and the Save Wetlands Campaign, over two million citizens generated ground-truth data on 170,000 water bodies, enriching risk assessments and ESG disclosures and offering a blueprint for scalable public private partnership.

Urban Growth with Thermal Stress – Inside Tamil Nadu’s Heat Mitigation Blueprint



As global temperatures climb and heatwaves make headlines, Tamil Nadu is quietly setting a new benchmark in sub-national climate action. Far from broad proclamations, the state’s evolving heat governance model leans on rigorous science, interdepartmental collaboration, and hyper-local analysis. By shifting the conversation from statewide averages to block-level realities, Tamil Nadu is ensuring that resilience is built where people live, work and play.

Science and Collaboration at the Core

Over the past decade, the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission and the State Land Use Research Board (TNSLURB) have forged a tight alliance with health, water, urban and agricultural departments. Their shared mission uses data analytics to transform Heat Action Plans from generic guidelines into finely tuned interventions. This mosaic of expertise, ranging from satellite imagery specialists to public-health strategists has created a climate of trust, ensuring that every policy is underpinned by evidence.

On 7 July 2025, the Hon’ble Chief Minister inaugurated Tamil Nadu’s latest milestone in climate preparedness: a comprehensive assessment of heat stress across 389 development blocks.

Building on earlier urban heat island and statewide resilience studies, this report plunges into the finer details of local temperature dynamics. It has a singular goal of putting a spotlight on the neighbourhoods where rising heat poses a great threat to health, livelihoods, and infrastructure.

Prioritizing the Most Vulnerable

The intersection of long-term and present-day analyses identifies Tamil Nadu’s highest-priority heat-vulnerable blocks. These areas will receive the earliest roll-out of tailored Heat Action Plans, combining nature-based cooling such as restored wetlands and tree-lined corridors with sustainable infrastructure upgrades like reflective pavements and cool roofs. Community engagement and real-time warning systems will be woven into local governance frameworks, ensuring that residents are empowered to respond swiftly when temperatures soar.

Decades of Warming Meet Today’s Heat Burden

The study employed a two-layered analysis to distinguish chronic warming trends from acute exposure.

Decadal Heat Stress: Blocks showing consistent warming over decades & Current Heat Stress: Blocks currently experiencing above-average exposure (2018–2023) Data

The study covered 389 blocks, using high-resolution data on Land Surface Temperature (LST) – day & night, Air Temperature (ERA5) – max, min, mean, Building footprint change, Urban growth patterns & Universal Thermal Comfort Index (UTCI)

From Local Action to Global Inspiration

When Tamil Nadu unveiled its block-level heat-stress atlas this July, it did more than arm officials with precise data, it sketched out a playbook every state could borrow. Businesses that jump in now won’t just burnish their reputations; they will tap into brand-new markets. Picture developers carving out apartment rooftops filled with native plants, material-makers launching reflective, low-carbon wall claddings, insurers fine-tuning premiums block by block, agritech firms coaching farmers on heat-tough crop varieties, and utilities rolling out mini cooling grids with smart meters. By syncing with district heat-action plans and channeling funds through the Tamil Nadu Green Climate Fund, companies can safeguard communities, unlock fresh revenue streams, and slash long-term expenses, all while turning climate resilience into a winning strategy.

Source: TNSPC

Refex Group’s Commitment to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration

Refex Group has emerged as a trailblazer in environmental stewardship, embedding biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration into its sustainability mission. With a focus on innovative solutions and collaborative partnerships, the company is shaping a future where nature and progress coexist.

Trees for Life: A Reforestation Revolution

Launched in FY 2022–23, the “Trees for Life” program pledges to plant 100,000 saplings by 2030. By FY 2025, nearly 7,000 trees had been planted across regions, contributing to carbon sequestration, soil health, and biodiversity. The initiative reflects Refex’s long-term commitment to climate action and community well-being..

Mangrove Plantation in Uyalikuppam

In Tamil Nadu, Refex is restoring coastal ecosystems through a mangrove plantation in Uyalikuppam. With 10,000 saplings targeted by FY 2026 and the fishbone method employed for site preparation, the project enhances coastal resilience and supports marine



biodiversity. Mangroves, known for storing up to four times more carbon than tropical forests, are central to this climate strategy.

Water Stewardship and the Nirmal Jal Initiative

Water stewardship is another pillar of Refex’s sustainability strategy. Rainwater harvesting and recharge wells are now standard across sites. Under the “Nirmal Jal” initiative launched in FY 2023–24, Refex restored a 28,000 sq. ft. water body in Neknamalai and began work on the 1-km-long Kholan Deosar Nallah in Titlagarh, benefiting over 600 families. The company also aims to achieve water positivity by 2035.

Empowering Communities Through Sustainability

Refex Group’s initiatives extend beyond environmental restoration to include community empowerment. By integrating local communities into its projects, the company ensures that its efforts yield social and economic benefits.

Neknamalai Pond Rejuvenation, Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, India.

28,000 sq. ft

Water body
Depth ranging from 7-10 ft (average)

467

~ Beneficiary Households

Blasting Operations

- Rounds: 12
- Total Pits Drilled: 1,250
- Rock Removed: 20,000+ cu ft
- Challenge: Navigating 9 km of hilly terrain



Before



After

For instance, the mangrove plantation project in Uyalikuppam engages local stakeholders, providing training and livelihood opportunities, particularly to women, in nursery management and ecosystem monitoring. Similarly, the “Trees for Life” program supports agroforestry practices, enabling farmers to cultivate fruit trees that enhance food security and generate sustainable income. These community-centric approaches align with Refex Group’s commitment to creating shared value, ensuring that environmental progress uplifts those who depend on these ecosystems.



A Legacy of Impact

Refex Group’s multifaceted approach to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration reflects a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between environmental health, social well-being, and economic resilience. By planting trees, restoring water bodies, and protecting coastal ecosystems, the company is not only mitigating the impacts of climate change but also fostering a legacy of sustainability. As it continues to innovate and collaborate, Refex Group stands as a beacon of hope, proving that businesses are a force for good in creating a thriving, biodiverse planet for future generations.

Godrej & Boyce’s Magical Mangroves: Fifth Phase Sees On-Ground Conservation in Mumbai



Sushmita Pathak/NPR

Godrej & Boyce, part of the Godrej Enterprises Group, has moved beyond planning to execute tangible mangrove conservation work along Mumbai’s Vikhroli and Thane Creek coastline. On 26 July 2024, International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem. In partnership with WWF-India, kicked off the fifth phase of its “Magical Mangroves” campaign, scaling up on-the-ground restoration, biodiversity monitoring, and community engagement across seven coastal states.

From Awareness to Action

Since 2020, Magical Mangroves has blended virtual outreach (460+ webinars, quizzes, trail videos) with real-world restoration. This phase brings those plans to life:

- Field Restoration: Conservation teams and 95 trained “Mangrove Ambassadors” are rehabilitating degraded creek zones with sapling plantations.
- Biodiversity Management: Team of experts conduct monthly surveys, tracking the return of crabs, mudskippers, and native birds.

- Community Workshops: 50 workshops will be held in schools and fishing hamlets, teaching sustainable honey and fishery harvesting.

Three Decades of Commitment

Godrej’s Vikhroli conservation spans 30+ years, protecting hundreds of acres.

- Asia’s first mangrove-focused mobile app named **Mangroves** is now live in 11 languages to report illegal cutting and track restoration.
- 10,000 students will receive the bilingual book *Many Secrets of Mangroves* (English/Marathi).
- Baseline data on tree density and soil salinity is being published to guide adaptive restoration.

Scaling Impact by FY 25

With the goal of empowering 51,000 stakeholders by March 2025, this phase emphasizes:

- Volunteer Engagement: Expanding the volunteer network from 190 to 285 dedicated community members.
- Educational Outreach: Reaching an additional 16,370 residents via on-site field days and digital campaigns.
- Restoration Targets: Aiming to restore and protect an additional 50 hectares of mangrove forest along Mumbai’s critical creek corridors.

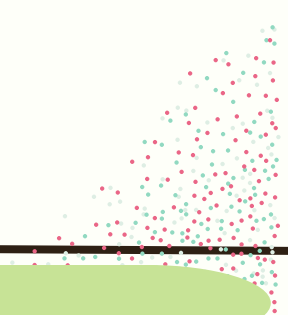


Photo by: Prajwal Kumar

Voices of Leadership

“Mangrove ecosystems are crucial for coastal protection, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration,” says *Tejashree Joshi, Head of Environmental Sustainability at Godrej & Boyce*. “This fifth phase intensifies our on-ground efforts through stronger community partnerships and scientific monitoring.”

Godrej & Boyce’s transition from planning to implementation in its Magical Mangroves campaign exemplifies how long-term corporate commitment, scientific partnership, and grassroots engagement can deliver measurable ecosystem restoration and safeguard India’s coastal communities for generations to come.



Conception: Mr. Suneel Padale
Edited & Designed by: Pavithra Ganesh & Prajjwal Kumar
Center for Business Leadership on Nature Restoration,
UN-Global Compact Network India.
Refex towers, Sterling Road Signal, Nungambakkam,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600034

Head Office:
UN Global Compact Network India
17th Floor, World Trade Tower, Sector 16,
Noida 201301



For queries, contact ratnesh@globalcompact.in,
biodiversitycenter@globalcompact.in

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@GCNIndia



<https://globalcompact.in/>