

UNDP MAHATMA AWARD FOR BIODIVERSITY 2023

Company Application: CRISIL Limited

Selected Award Category:

Human centric approaches to biodiversity with intensive community engagement – Innovative approaches to rejuvenate/replenish degraded ecosystems



Application Process:

Application submission is an online form with a social impact profile submission. The social impact profile will have the following headings:

1. Organisation's brief

CRISIL is a leading, agile and innovative global analytics company, driven by its mission of making markets function better.

Headquartered in India, it is the country's foremost provider of ratings, data, research, analytics and solutions, with offices also in the US, the UK, Argentina, Poland, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the UAE.

CRISIL's corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm, CRISIL Foundation, which was launched in 2013, focuses on two objectives:

- **Strengthening financial capabilities** among women in socially and economically underprivileged communities, and also promoting sustainable livelihoods among the programme participants
- **Environment conservation** through urban afforestation and sustainable water conservation initiatives

For its CSR efforts, CRISIL was awarded the prestigious National Corporate Social Responsibility Award, 2020 in the category 'Corporate Awards for Excellence in CSR' for financial capability building and environment conservation.

CRISIL has taken up the cause of expanding the green footprint in cities through urban afforestation initiatives. This is through encouraging employees to volunteer their time. In fact, all our environment conservation efforts are in the vicinity of CRISIL's offices, so that our employees can directly be involved in CSR initiatives to drive meaningful shared value.

>> Continued



Apart from urban afforestation initiatives, CRISIL has also integrated environment sustainability and ecological responsibility within its' livelihood initiatives too. In Assam, over 2,200 rural households are directly engaged with CRISIL's sustainable livelihood initiatives - namely eri silk rearing, organic farming and agro-hub and handlooms, These initiatives directly impact both the environment as well as women livelihoods in a positive manner, and in the long run, help preserve the ecological sustainability.

2. Organisation's commitment to bio-diversity – stated and publicly available – provide link

CRISIL's commitment to sustainability is woven into its policies and practices. We have a dedicated ESG policy, and, more specifically, an environment policy that underlines our commitment to improve our environmental performance across activities and encourage our employees and members of the wider community to work for the betterment of the environment.

CRISIL has also developed training programmes on environment awareness, with the aim to sensitise our employees on ESG.

Under the aegis of CRISIL's CSR policy, CRISIL RE was launched in 2015 as a flagship CSR initiative, focusing on conserving the environment. The programme centres on urban afforestation by planting native trees in the vicinity of CRISIL offices, and strives to constructively engage employees and their families, friends and relatives in environment conservation.



By emphasising a purpose-led approach, CRISIL RE empowers its millennial workforce with the freedom to drive change by attaching "Re" as a prefix to the aspect we want to transform, i.e "Re-build," "Re-imagine," "Re-create," Re-construct, and more.

Through CRISIL RE, CRISIL Foundation has delivered meaningful impact towards environment conservation. The programme majorly covers plantations across 22+ sites in nine cities, for which CRISIL has a formal arrangement with a set of NGOs as implementation partners. The scope includes the entire range of activities, starting from plantation of a sapling to maintenance of trees, including regular watering of the plants, spraying of organic pesticides, providing compost for the soil, cutting of grass/weeds, support sticks for plant growth, etc.

In fact, CRISIL stays invested with these plantation sites for 2-3 years to ensure survival and longevity.

Apart from plantations, the interventions also include creating long-term water harvesting and conservation structures to complement the green cover and enable sustenance of the plantations. These include initiatives such as rejuvenation of check dams, creation of farm ponds, and restoration of water bodies in Maharashtra and Gurugram (Haryana).

>> Continued

At CRISIL, we understand that our workforce, primarily comprising socially conscious millennials, seeks to actively contribute to society and make a positive impact. Indeed, we have harnessed the power of our vibrant and passionate workforce, who are keen to contribute to the larger CSR agenda, thereby making this a human-centric agenda for CRISIL.

Through CRISIL RE, 50% of our workforce has every year for the past four years volunteered their time towards the programmes. This is considered to be best-in-class volunteering participation rates in the industry.

Building environment sustainability through responsible livelihood initiatives:

CRISIL Foundation, in 2018 initiated a few livelihood initiatives in Assam – which has gradually grown in scale and impact.

These include:

- **ERI silk rearing:** Promotion of ‘non-violent silk’ through setting up of Eri Resource centres for collective marketing and sale of Eri Silk
- **Handloom and loom upgradation:** Upskilling of weaver entrepreneurs through capacity building, design skills, loom upgradation, and linking them with entities like NABARD.
- **Organic Farming and Agro-Hub:** Creation of a community-based institution of women farmers, to promote their market linkages and sale of produce.



Supporting links

CRISIL’s ESG Report, 2022:

<https://www.crisil.com/content/dam/crisil/investors/annual-reports/2022/sustainability/sustainability-esg-report.pdf>

CRISIL’s Annual Report, 2022:

<https://www.crisil.com/content/dam/crisil/investors/annual-reports/2022/crisil-annual-report-2022.pdf>

CRISIL RE: <https://www.crisil.com/en/home/crisil-foundation/crisil-re.html>

3. SDG alignment

CRISIL's afforestation agenda is closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – UN SDGs #13 (Climate Action) and #15 (Improving Life on Land) – which is being implemented at a large scale across cities to:



Promote native trees in cities where CRISIL offices are located



Ensure 80% survival across plantations



Regularly monitor the trees planted through post-plantation activities

CRISIL also recognises the urgent need to combat marine pollution, which poses a severe threat to aquatic ecosystems and marine life. Alongside our afforestation efforts, our focus on effective waste management has sharpened, while aligning our objective towards the UN's SDG #14 – Improving life below water – by reducing plastic in our oceans and water bodies through beach and lake clean-ups, and by effective water conservation initiatives.



From Water Scarcity to Hope:

How CRISIL and the local communities united to make **Jambrung water** accessible

In the vibrant village of Jambrung, nestled in Raigad district just 90 km away from the bustling metropolis of Mumbai, a tale of resilience unfolds. With a population of 1,500, they face a daunting water shortage from January to June. Despite the beautiful Ulhas river flowing nearby, it runs dry, leaving the villagers longing for relief. Even the bountiful rains of the Konkan region from June to September slip away, untapped and wasted. This forces the villagers to rely on expensive water tankers, burdening their pockets.

Moreover, their agricultural endeavors, from cultivating water-intensive paddy crops in the Kharif season to nurturing Lima beans in other seasons, further amplify their demand for water.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the local government authorities embarked on a mission to address the water crisis plaguing these households, some of whom have resided in the village for centuries. Last year, in an inspiring collaboration, CRISIL Foundation and its NGO partner erected a check dam to impede the escape of precious rainwater. The result? A lifeline for the village, ensuring access to water even in the dry month of April. This dam not only replenished the groundwater, revitalizing the village's weary borewells, but also provided a vital buffer, extending the water supply for an additional two months until the long-awaited rains arrived.

Recently, a dynamic group of CRISILites, accompanied by enthusiastic villagers, descended upon the check dam site to prepare the dam for the impending rainy season, meticulously cleaning and fortifying it with stones. This collaborative effort between the CRISILites and the villagers epitomized unwavering determination and teamwork, achieving remarkable progress in a short span of time.

Let us not overlook the remarkable hospitality bestowed upon our team by the villagers. Their warmth and generosity added an extra layer of fulfillment to this memorable experience. As we forge ahead, we remain committed to transforming communities, one village at a time.

Source: bit.ly/3MRt2Rb



Please refer Annexure 1 (Page 15) for the Jambrung impact story.

In addition, CRISIL's livelihood initiatives are closely aligned to the UN SDG #5 (Gender Equality) and #8 (Decent work and economic growth).

4. Business alignment / causality / logic used to choose this project for funding / support – not more than 200 words

CRISIL believes economic progress cannot be at the cost of the environment. We have initiated significant efforts to enhance the rigour of tracking our carbon footprint, which will help strengthen the reporting of our environment performance and lower carbon emissions in a planned manner.

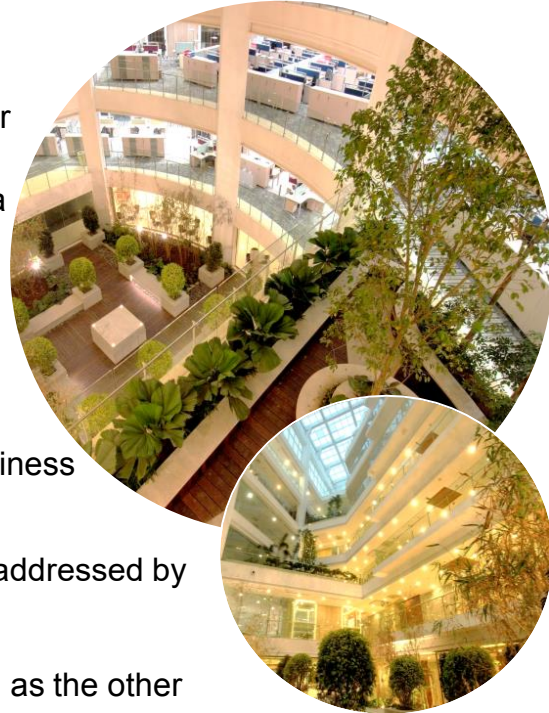
As a responsible corporate citizen, CRISIL has been strongly committed to the conservation of the environment. For e.g., CRISIL's corporate office in Mumbai (the largest of all its offices) is a **platinum-certified LEEDS green building**.

CRISIL is also seized of the growing importance and relevance of the ESG agenda. We are known for following the highest governance standards in all business practices.

The `social' agenda is being effectively addressed by various corporate and CSR initiatives.

Environment conservation has emerged as the other key area of focus. The CRISIL RE programme enables us to effectively fulfill the `environment' component of the ESG agenda. By making the interventions accessible to our employees – both the nature of activities and locations – CRISIL RE is able to effectively contribute to the strategic agenda of the company.

CRISIL RE, as mentioned, also promotes the culture of volunteering and social consciousness among its employees. This is based on the belief that sum-of-parts is greater than the whole.



5. Potential for climate change mitigation – offset carbon and or water impact. Is this measured and stated in your annual report? Details of the same.

CRISIL Foundation undertakes a comprehensive exercise in collaboration with The Centre for Environmental Research & Education, an environment-based research think-tank based in India, to audit and geo-tag trees planted since 2015 across the country.



Till date, approximately **50,000 trees** have been **geo-tagged** and calculated for carbon sequestration potential.



This exercise revealed that the trees planted between 2015 and 2021 are expected to **offset over 12,500 metric tonne of CO2 annually post maturity.**

As on date, **CRISIL has planted 76% native species and 24% non-native species.** Along with conventional environment benefits, native trees also preserve and promote the flora and fauna in the catchment areas.

Supporting Link: <https://www.crisil.com/content/dam/crisil/crisil-foundation/generic-pdf/crisil-re-tree-audit-report-2021.pdf>

Before



After



Before



After



Before and After CRISIL RE's plantation interventions in Maharashtra and Gurgaon.

Details of the project – not more than 1000 words

This should include:

- Provide in couple of sentence summary of the project
- Provide in couple of line summary of the impact, Rapport and history with the community
- Community needs assessment / /human centric biodiversity intervention
- List all objectives: Solution and Impact in numbers
- List each Target Audience – and how each TA benefits from the program and also state numbers of each TA
- Scale, Scalability and Replicability of Project (s) – not more than 200 words
- Sustainability – not more than 150 words
- Innovation – not more than 200 words
- Budget
- Social Impact – not more than 200 words
- Geography – not more than 100 words

>> Answered in the next page

Expanding the 'green' footprint – CRISIL's '#DateWithNature'

CRISIL RE, CRISIL's flagship environment conservation programme, was launched in 2015, with a focus on relevant causes in the vicinity of CRISIL's offices. The programme strives to constructively engage employees and their families, friends, and relatives in environment conservation. This includes preserving the oceans and forests, tackling climate change and its effects – thereby having a positive impact on 'Life below Water' and 'Life on Land' – two of the key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The projects are undertaken in collaboration with our NGO partners/other like-minded foundations in each city. CRISIL provides grants to cover the costs of pre-plantation, plantation, and post-plantation activities for tree plantation initiatives. CRISIL Foundation undertakes regular due diligence and tracks the progress of these funded initiatives to monitor plant growth, mortality, and maintenance.

Plantation projects taken up by CRISIL were initially supported for a three-year maintenance period. Mulching, watering, fertilising and pruning, which play an important role in developing and maintaining healthy trees were done through systematic maintenance management of the projects. To ensure the plants were watered regularly, micro rainwater harvesting projects were also initiated. Sites across locations such as Rabale and Aravalli have natural surface water storage options/deep pits. These get filled during monsoon, ensuring the water table is retained across the plantation site once the season ends.

Maintenance management systems have been designed in a manner that makes the NGO partners accountable for the sustainability of plantation sites over a longer period of time. Also, planting native species with a minimum height of 5-10 feet helps to ensure the durability of these plants in all weather conditions. Regular employee volunteering drives are organised for tree maintenance and mulching activities, to ensure steady growth in plants.

Since its initiation in 2015, on average, 20-25% of the total CSR budget has been allotted to the CRISIL RE programme – making it the second most significant programme within CRISIL Limited's overall CSR policy.



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OUR PRESENCE

Mumbai, Pune, Chennai, Delhi, Gurugram, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Kolkata



PLANTATION LOCATIONS

Mumbai (Jogeshwari, Mahul, Bhiwandi, Byculla, Rabale, Powai, Neral); Pune (Khadakwasla, Aundh, Chaturshrungi Hills, Hanuman Tekdi); Delhi and Gurugram (Aravali Biodiversity, Badshahpur, Kanhai); Chennai (Velacherry, Elliot's Beach and Kotturpuram); Kolkata (Naktala, Rajarhat Action Area) Bengaluru (Annur Village).



BEACH AND WETLAND CLEAN-UP LOCATIONS

Mumbai (Dadar, Powai Lake, Bandra-Carter wetland, Prabhadevi Beach); Chennai (Besant Nagar Beach, Keezhkattalai); Bengaluru (Hebbal lake); Hyderabad (Gangaram Cheruvu, Kapra Lake)

In Mumbai and Pune, CRISIL has adopted the 'Miyawaki' technique of creating urban forests using native varieties. This forward-thinking approach ensures the development of dense native forests over the next decade, contributing to a greener and healthier environment for generations to come.

Positioned as #DateWithNature, CRISILites participate in tree plantation, post-plantation and maintenance drives across CRISIL's offices, thereby playing a proactive role in protecting, restoring and rebuilding our planet.

Apart from urban afforestation, CRISIL has also taken decisive steps to reduce plastic waste and safeguard our precious aquatic ecosystem. Through extensive beach clean-up drives and mangrove restoration efforts, CRISIL is actively combatting the adverse effects of pollution, nurturing marine life, and preserving the beauty of coastal areas. Steps are also being taken to build water harvesting and conservation structures in plantation sites, thereby helping in the long-term sustenance of forests and plantations.

Impact:

The impact of CRISIL RE's initiatives on our key stakeholders has been significant and far-reaching. The key metrics for our plantation projects include:

- Number of cities covered
- Number of plantation sites
- Number of trees planted
- % of natives
- % of survival rate
- Unit cost of sapling
- Number of trees for which geo-tagging has been completed
- Carbon sequestration potential
- Employee: tree ratio

>> Continued

Our focus on urban afforestation has resulted in the planting of over 150,000 trees, with an impressive survival rate of 85-90% as per independent tree audits, as well as a 1:31 employee: tree ratio.

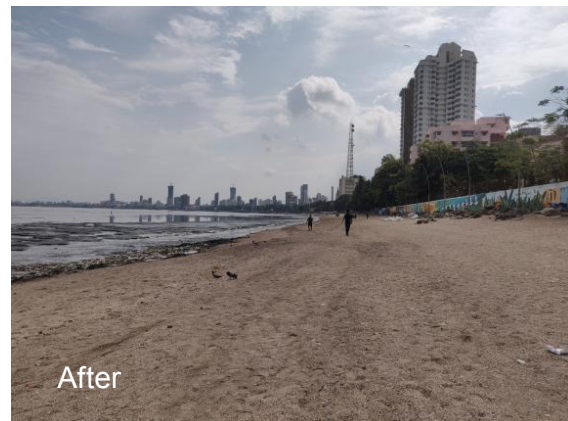
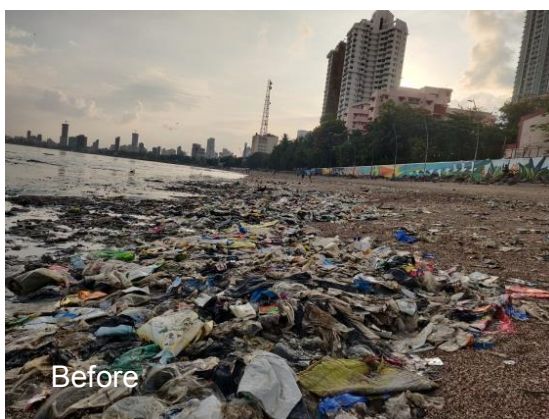
CRISIL has also undertaken two rounds of comprehensive tree audits and geo-tagging of the trees planted since 2015 to 2020. Over 150,000 trees were planted, with approximately 50,000 trees geo-tagged during this period. These plantation sites are expected to offset over 12,500 metric tonne of carbon dioxide annually post maturity, making a substantial contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change.

CRISIL has focused on planting more native species as they not only provide conventional environment benefits, but also preserve and promote flora and fauna in the catchment areas. So far, we have planted 76% native species and 24% non-native species.

By prioritising native species and ensuring their sustained growth, we are not only enhancing the visual appeal of our cities, but also promoting biodiversity and preserving the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

In our relentless pursuit of transparency and accountability, we make our internal research reports available annually on our websites – these include our third-party impact assessment reports as well as our larger corporate sustainability reports.

Our water harvesting initiatives have played a vital role in our endeavour to conserve water and reduce marine pollution. Complementing our afforestation agenda, these initiatives focus on building sustainability by harnessing and preserving this precious resource. Our impact reports on the beach clean-up activities showcase the amount of waste, plastic and debris collected from over 1,000 acres of beaches adopted in Chennai and Mumbai, clearing more than 61 tonne of coastal waste.



Before and After CRISIL RE's clean-up drive at Prabhadevi beach through CRISIL interns.

Shaping the larger 'social consciousness quotient'

CRISIL RE', CRISIL's flagship environment conservation initiative, also inculcates social consciousness among its employees. It encourages our workforce, primarily comprising socially conscious millennials, to actively contribute to society and make a tangible impact.

By participating in tree plantation drives, post-plantation maintenance activities, and other environment conservation efforts, our employees forge a deep connection with nature, embodying the spirit of responsible citizenship.

This year, during the 50th Anniversary of the World Environment Day (June 5), over 400 CRISILites across six locations (Mumbai, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune and Ahmedabad) got together to develop and put together do-it-yourself (DIY) solar lamps. Positioned as "Light A Lamp" initiative, these lamps are currently being distributed to rural households in Assam and Rajasthan, where CRISIL Foundation's financial capability building programmes are being implemented – thus integrating both elements of community impact and employee responsibility.



With an aim to keep the employees engaged in conversations pertaining to biodiversity, environment conservation, sustainability, and responsible volunteering, CRISIL Foundation organises a series of webinars and virtual knowledge sessions on environment protection, bio-diversity conservation, and social leadership. Thus, despite a hybrid work scenario, CRISIL continues to keep the employees meaningfully engaged by contributing to the 'social' agenda.

The virtual knowledge sessions on environment protection, bio-diversity conservation and social leadership have enabled CRISILites to engage and interact with key social impact leaders. In addition, an array of virtual volunteering opportunities has allowed them to give back their time and inputs to their community. Few of these initiatives (such as Wise Wednesdays) have helped create a win-win for both CRISIL and the Foundation, wherein CSR efforts and the on-ground team capacities are built through the corporate teams, by leveraging their strong data and analytical prowess. From a larger perspective, this has helped contribute immensely to the ESG agenda (especially the social factor) by inspiring and channelising employee strength and motivation.

>> Continued

To foster a sense of social consciousness among our employees, we have curated special initiatives such as Business Days of Action. Through these events, employees engage in activities such as educational theme-based wall painting for schools, where children can learn through colourful visuals and experience the joy of entering an inviting learning environment.

Additionally, the GreenSole school kit distribution programme allows employees to donate their worn-out shoes, which are then upcycled into bags and footwear for children in rural areas. These initiatives not only make a tangible impact but also foster team spirit and engagement within the organisation.

During annual events such as Daan Utsav, we partner with renowned NGOs to donate essential resources to the underprivileged, nurturing a culture of empathy and solidarity within the organisation. These events provide employees with the opportunity to personally meet the beneficiaries and contribute to their well-being.



Collaborations with NGOs such as the Robinhood Army and Goonj allow employees to donate essential items like dry ration and clothing to those in need. These experiences deepen our employees' understanding of the challenges faced by marginalised communities and sensitise and inspire them to take on a more active role in creating positive change.

Relevant links:

Annual Reports and Sustainability/ ESG Reports CRISIL RE – reports, documents and communication assets

CSR Policy	https://www.crisil.com/content/dam/crisil/investors/corporate-governance/Corporate-Social-Responsibility-Policy-of-CRISIL.pdf
CRISIL's ESG Report, 2022	https://www.crisil.com/content/dam/crisil/investors/annual-reports/2022/sustainability/sustainability-esg-report.pdf
CRISIL's Annual Report, 2022	https://www.crisil.com/content/dam/crisil/investors/annual-reports/2022/crisil-annual-report-2022.pdf
Previous Annual Reports	https://www.crisil.com/en/home/investors/financial-information/annual-report.html
Previous Sustainability/ ESG Reports	https://www.crisil.com/en/home/investors/financial-information/sustainability-report.html

CRISIL RE – reports, documents and communication assets

About CRISIL RE (on CRISIL Foundation microsite)	https://www.crisil.com/en/home/crisil-foundation/crisil-re.html
CRISIL RE Tree-audit report	https://www.crisil.com/content/dam/crisil/crisil-foundation/generic-pdf/crisil-re-tree-audit-report-2021.pdf
CRISIL RE brochure	Environment conservation
Audio-visuals on CRISIL RE	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1afqnTVGXXK7M1ByjqGHrp6gjNzM2upLUB/view?usp=drive_link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXPwGUy_Ocg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_qy8XlwDtk https://www.crisil.com/en/home/crisil-foundation/crisil-re.html

Annexure 1: Impact stories



From Water Scarcity to Hope:

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Moreover, their agricultural endeavors, from cultivating water-intensive paddy crops in the Kharif season to nurturing Lima beans in other seasons, further amplify their demand for water.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the local government authorities embarked on a mission to address the water crisis plaguing these households, some of whom have resided in the village for centuries. Last year, in an inspiring collaboration, CRISIL Foundation and its NGO partner erected a check dam to impede the escape of precious rainwater. The result? A lifeline for the village, ensuring access to water even in the dry month of April. This dam not only replenished the groundwater, revitalizing the village's weary borewells, but also provided a vital buffer, extending the water supply for an additional two months until the long-awaited rains arrived.

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Source: bit.ly/3MRt2Rb



Construction of check dams and farm ponds in Rabale eliminate the need for water tankers

Rabale (in Mumbai) is an existing plantation site of CRISIL. The total plantation capacity is approx. 16,000 – 18,000 trees; of which over 4,000 trees have been planted by CRISIL. The area comes under the Forest Department of Maharashtra, who are working with IAHV and Hariyali, (our NGO partners).

Earlier, tree maintenance required tankers in order to water the plants. Later on, it was decided to build check dams around the area – to help store the water as well as enhance the water table of the area in the long run. Of a total of seven check dams, three have been constructed by CRISIL. In addition, farm ponds have been created which help store the water for the entire year – even during lean summer months.

The tankers have stopped coming to Rabale now!

