

Summary of the International Workshop on Biodiversity with special reference to forest resources from 03rd to 07th February 2025

International Centre for Environment Audit & Sustainable Development (iCED), as the Global Training Facility (GTF) of INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA), organised International Workshop on 'Biodiversity with special reference to forest resources from 03rd to 07th February 2025 in onsite mode at iCED. A total of 09 participants from 07 SAIs participated in the workshop.



Group photo during the inauguration of International Workshop on 'Biodiversity with special reference to forest resources'

In his welcome address, Mr. Mehul Grover, Director, (Training & Research), iCED extended his greetings to Dr. Abhishek Gupta, Director General of iCED as well as to the participants.

Dr. Abhishek Gupta, Director General of iCED, in his inaugural address, highlighted the importance of biodiversity for sustaining life on Earth. He noted the growing significance of forest conservation, emphasizing the positive trend of increased forest cover and the expansion of protected areas. This progress, coupled with adherence to international commitments and the execution of focused conservation initiatives, reflects a proactive approach toward safeguarding global biodiversity.

He stressed that constant vigilance and unwavering commitment are essential to maintaining ecological balance and preserving our natural heritage for the generations to come.

He also addressed the challenges faced by countries globally in developing their forest sectors. These obstacles stem from weaknesses in institutional frameworks, a lack of effective policies to promote afforestation and social forestry programs, and financial difficulties. These issues

highlight the need for Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) to step up and focus on the forestry sector.

Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of SAIs in establishing a comprehensive auditing framework, which will help governments and stakeholders drive the development of this sector and he urged audit professionals to stay informed about the latest advancements, stressing their role in aligning innovation with responsibility.

He also shared details about a range of outdoor activities designed to enhance participants' connection with the environment and India's rich cultural heritage. He mentioned visits to iconic destinations such as the Taj Mahal in Agra and Chokhi Dhani in Jaipur. These excursions aim to offer participants a unique opportunity to experience firsthand the beauty of India's natural landscapes and historical monuments, fostering a deeper understanding of the importance of environmental preservation while also immersing them in the country's vibrant cultural traditions.

The inaugural addresses were concluded with expressions of gratitude to Mr. Sami Yläoutinen, Chair of the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing and Auditor General of the National Audit Office of Finland, and his team for their support in organizing the workshop. Special thanks were also extended to all the SAIs for nominating participants and SAI Finland and Maldives to contribute trainers to the workshop. The address ended by welcoming all participants and guest faculties.

During the workshop, experts from SAI Finland, SAI Maldives, SAI India, and other prestigious institutions shared their insights through relevant case studies, providing a comprehensive understanding of various aspects of Biodiversity Auditing. The session-wise details are outlined below:

S. No	Resource Person	Session
1.	Dr. Asha Rajvanshi, Former Head, EIA Cell of the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun	Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Development planning and Implementation
2.	Dr. Vivi Niemenmaa, Secretary General, INTOSAI WGEA Secretariat, National Audit Office of Finland &	Overview of Global Framework for Biodiversity Conservation
3.	Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Jaleel, Vice Chair and Environmental Audit Manager, Auditor General's Office, Republic of Maldives	Overview of Global Framework for Biodiversity Conservation
4.	Mr. Mehul Grover, Director (T&R), iCED, Jaipur	Use of Problem-Oriented approach in Environmental Audit
5.	Dr. V. P. Uniyal, Former Sr. Professor & Scientist-G, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun	Land and Terrestrial Biodiversity with reference to SDG-15

6.	Dr. Kathiresan Kandasamy, Professor, Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu	Auditing Biodiversity Conservation in Marine Environment
7.	Dr. Vinod B. Mathur, D.Phil. (Oxon.), Former Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority of India, Tamil Nadu & Former Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun	Performance Auditing for Effective Environmental Management: The Indian Experience
8.	Dr. P K Joshi, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi	Use of GIS and Remote Sensing for audit of Forestry and related issues
9.	Dr Neeraj Khara, Member of UNDP Global Policy Network (GPN) Exp Res Roster	Anchors and Instruments for mainstreaming Biodiversity into Forest Resource Management
10.	Dr. Dhruba Jyoti Das, Head, Rain Forest Research Institute (RFRI) Jorhat, Assam	Role of Forestry in Sustainable Development of People
11.	Mr. Arijit Banerjee, PCCF (HoFF), Forest Headquarter (Aranya Bhawan), Rajasthan	Project Great Indian Bustard: Success Story
12.	Dr. Sutirtha Dutta, Scientist - E, Head, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun	Project Great Indian Bustard: Success Story

Trip to the Taj Mahal, Agra, India: -

The Taj Mahal, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is renowned for its breathtaking architectural beauty and historical significance. A symbol of eternal love, it is considered a masterpiece of Mughal architecture. Constructed from pristine white marble, the Taj Mahal is adorned with intricate carvings, surrounded by lush gardens, and complemented by a serene reflecting



Participants during visit of the Taj Mahal, Agra (India)

pool. Its design seamlessly integrates Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Indian architectural influences, making it a timeless work of art. Attracting millions of visitors each year, the Taj Mahal stands as a proud symbol of India's rich cultural heritage. Participants were deeply captivated by its stunning beauty, with the flawless marble and detailed design leaving an unforgettable impression. The monument's grandeur, coupled with the poignant love story behind it, evokes admiration and awe in all who have the privilege of visiting.

Cultural Visit & Dinner at Chokhi Dhani: - A cultural visit, followed by dinner, was organized for the participants at Chokhi Dhani Village in Jaipur which is located about 20 kilometres from the main city. Chokhi Dhani is a heritage village designed to offer visitors an

immersive experience of Rajasthani culture in a compact, vibrant setting. It serves as a perfect showcase of the region's rich traditions, food, customs, and heritage. The name Chokhi Dhani itself translates to "Rajasthani Culture," reflecting its dedication to preserving and presenting the essence of Rajasthan. The participants thoroughly enjoyed this visit, as it offered them an introduction to the local cultural and culinary traditions, making it a memorable part of their trip.

Valediction of the International Workshop: -

Dr. Abhishek Gupta, Director General, & Mr Mehul Grover, Director, (Training and Research), iCED (SAI INDIA) were present during the valedictory session.

Mr Mehul Grover, Director, (Training and Research), iCED in his vote of thanks during valedictory session of the workshop thanked the O/o The



Dr. Abhishek Gupta, Director General & Mr. Mehul Grover, Director, (T&R), iCED during the valediction of workshop

CAG of India, New Delhi and INTOSAI WGEA Secretariat for the continuous supported in this endeavor. He also expressed his gratitude to the National Audit Office of Finland and Auditor General's Office, Republic of Maldives for supporting with faculties for this workshop.

Dr. Abhishek Gupta, Director General of iCED, graced the valedictory session of the workshop, expressing his gratitude to all the participants for their active involvement, dedication and enthusiasm throughout the event. He commended their commitment to learning and emphasized the importance of carrying forward the knowledge they had gained.

Further, He distributed certificates and mementos to all the participants. He congratulated the participants and thanked all the SAIs for nominating participants for this workshop.



Dr. Abhishek Gupta, Director General, iCED distributing certificates & Mementos to the participants.