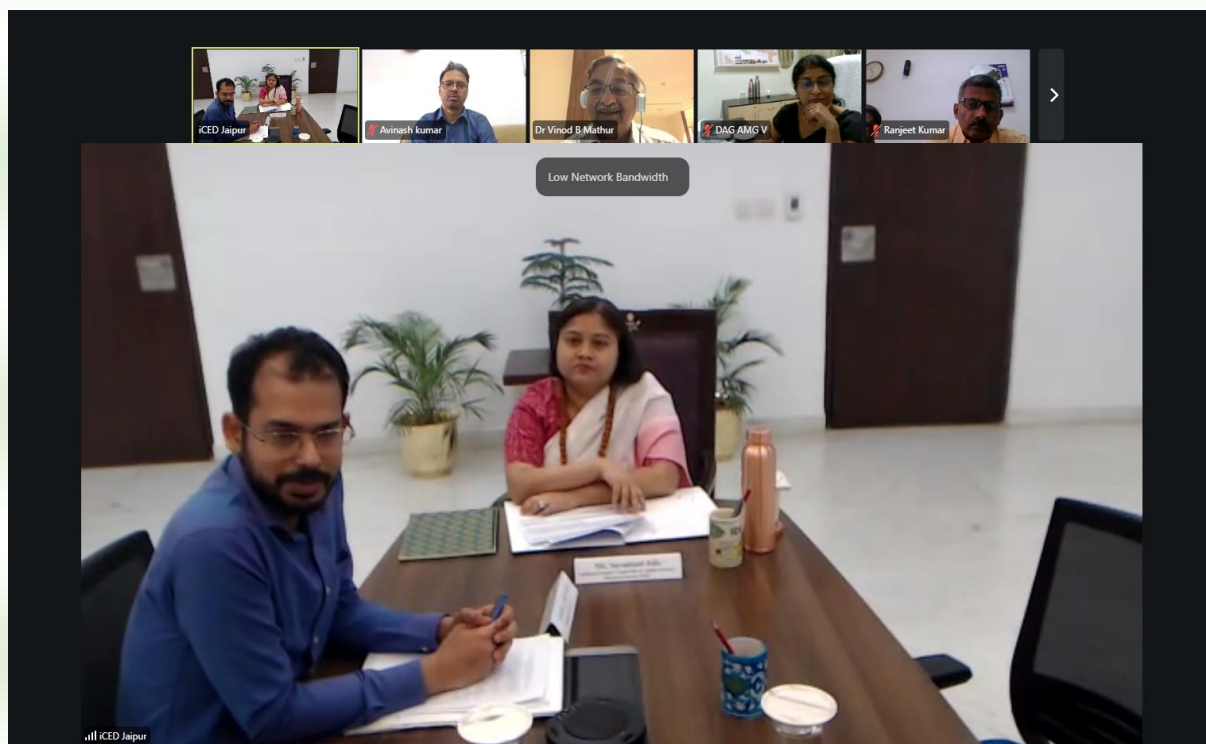


## **Summary of National Training Programme on “Audit of Forestry and Biodiversity Management Issues” (29<sup>th</sup> April to 03<sup>rd</sup> May, 2024)**

International Centre for Environment Audit & Sustainable Development (iCED) organized a 05 days’ National Training Programme on “Audit of Forestry and Biodiversity Management Issues” from 29<sup>th</sup> April to 03<sup>rd</sup> May, 2024 through virtual mode. A total of 21 participants from 07 field offices including 07 group officers, participated in the training programme.



### **Inauguration of the Online National Training Programme on “Audit of Forestry and Biodiversity Management Issues”**

Shri Mehul Grover, Director (Training and Research) extended a warm welcome to Additional Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General & Director General, Ms. Sayantani Jafa madam and all the participants. He highlighted that the training programme would cover a wide range of topics related to forestry and biodiversity. He requested ADAI 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 virtually and emphasized the importance of the National Training Programme on “Audit of Forestry and Biodiversity Management Issues”.

ADAI, iCED informed the participants about iCED's significant role with the recent establishment of 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.

ADAI, iCED highlighted that forests and biodiversity are vital for life on Earth, providing food, medicine, water, and resources but human activities like deforestation, habitat destruction, poaching and illegal trade, pollution, overexploitation of resources are posing significant threats.

She emphasized that India, a mega-diverse country with 2.4% of global land area, hosts 7-8% of recorded species, such as 45,000 plant species and 91,000 animal species. Its forests, including various types like tropical evergreens and mangroves, nurture diverse ecosystems with iconic endangered species like Bengal tigers and Indian elephants.

Further, she highlighted that how India's rapid development and industrialization have caused the fragmentation of natural habitats, leading to a decline in biodiversity. This imbalance in ecosystems poses a threat to humans and other living organisms. To address this issue, concerted efforts are being made by the Indian government at the Union and State levels to conserve biodiversity. Progress has been made, with the forest cover increasing to 21.71% and protected areas now covering 4.8% of the country's land area. Initiatives like Project Tiger and Project Elephant are in place to protect India's biodiversity.

She highlighted the provisions like Article 48-A and Article 51-A(g) of the Constitution of India that emphasize environmental protection and conservation, stating the state's responsibility and every citizen's duty towards safeguarding the nature.

ADAI, iCED also stressed that as auditors, we have a critical role to play in supporting environment preservation. By conducting audits that assess the effectiveness of environmental policies, programmes, and projects, we can ensure that resources are utilized efficiently, that environmental risks are properly managed, and that Sustainable Development Goals are being achieved. At the same time, we must strive for a balanced economic development trajectory. Thus a 'one size fits all' approach may have to be discarded in favour of nuance in examining each issue.

With this introduction, ADAI Madam again welcomed all the participants virtually, expressing hope for a productive and engaging training programme.

During these five days' training programme, 11 experts from IA&AD and many other reputed organizations like National Bio-Diversity Authority, Tamil Nadu, Malviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT) Jaipur, Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu, Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), Bengaluru, Pondicherry University, National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad etc. were invited to deliver the sessions. Details of the trainers and the sessions delivered during this programme are as follows:

Sl. No.	Sessions	Trainer/s
1.	Overview of Global Framework for Biodiversity Conservation	Dr. V. B. Mathur, Former Chairman, National Bio-Diversity Authority, Tamil Nadu
2.	Role of EIA in protection of Biodiversity	Dr. Vivekanand, Assistant Professor, MNIT Jaipur
3.	Fundamental concepts of EIA, Process, Issues and Possible mitigation strategies	Shri Subramaniam K., Pr. AG (Audit-I), Rajasthan
4.	Marine Biodiversity in India with special reference to Mangrove Forestry Conservation for Audit	Dr. Kathiresan Kandasamy, Professor, Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu
5.	Biodiversity Governance: Global Overview and Auditing Biodiversity	Dr. Ankur Awadhiya, I.F.S., HQ Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
6.	Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Forest Ecosystem Services	Dr. T. V. Ramachandra, IISc, Bengaluru
7.	Impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity: An Assessment of Vulnerable Species and Ecosystems	Dr. Chubbamenla Jamir, Ex. Assistant Professor, TERI and presently engaged in an Honorary position with Department of Science and Technology, Government of Nagaland
8.	Sustainable Tourism & Turtle Nesting Conservation Sites	Mr. Kartik Shanker, IISC, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Bangalore
9.	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Biodiversity Conservation: Progress, Challenges and Future Directions	Dr. K. Sivakumar, Professor, Pondicherry University
10.	Audit of Protection of Biodiversity: Experience Sharing	Shri Mehul Grover, Director (T&R), iCED, Jaipur
11.	Use of GIS & Remote Sensing for audit of Forestry and Biodiversity Management Issues	Dr. Suraj Reddy R, Scientist & Engineer-SE, NRSC, Hyderabad

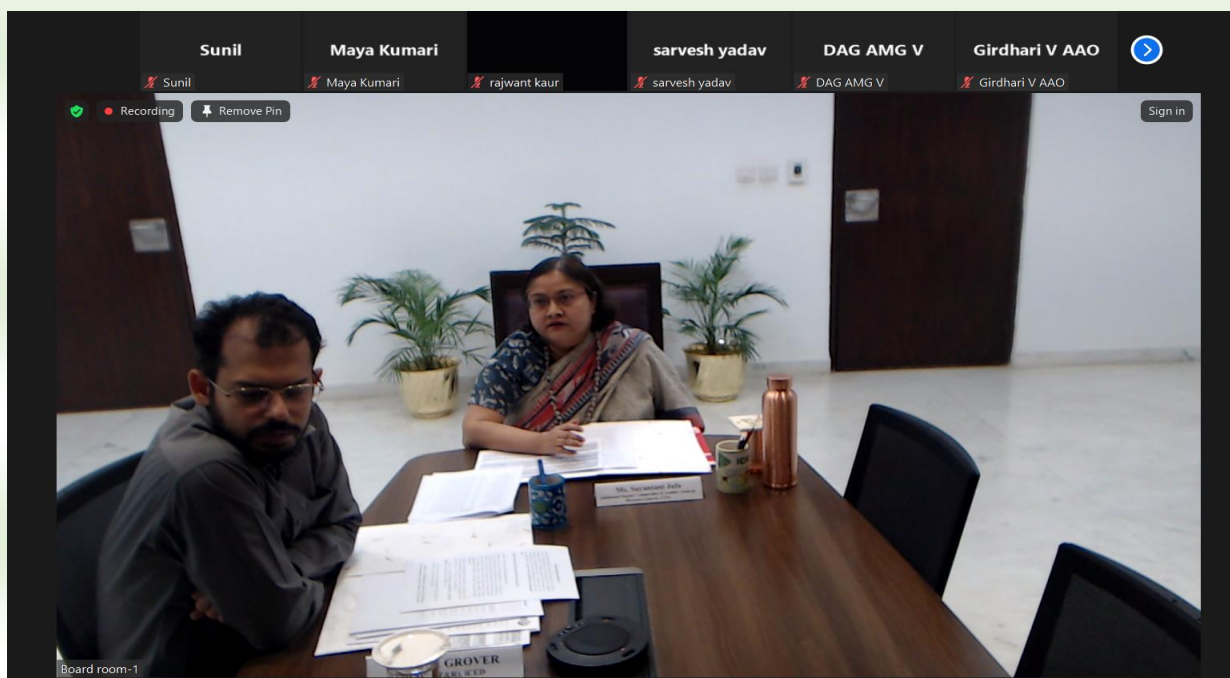
**Team Wise Exercise:** Team Wise Exercise was also given to the participants by dividing them in three groups. Ms. Sayantani Jafa, ADAI & DG, iCED evaluated the presentations given by all the groups of the participants during the pre-valedictory session.

**Feedback:-** Feedback on course designing, the time required, content, knowledge and its delivery by the resource persons was also collected from the participants through SAI Portal. The average feedback of the participants was 9.5 out of 10, which is very encouraging. Session on “**Audit of Protection of Biodiversity: Experience Sharing**” was rated as the best.

## Summing-up and valediction:

Ms. Sayantani Jafa, ADAI & DG, iCED graced the valedictory session of the National Training Programme on “**Audit of Forestry and Biodiversity Management Issues**” from 29<sup>th</sup> April to 03<sup>rd</sup> May, 2024 through virtual mode.

She highlighted that iCED brings out a quarterly journal, named "Green Files", which highlights topical auditing issues in the sphere of Blue Economy, Climate Change and other areas of environmental audit and sustainability. ADAI, iCED invited participants to take a look into the 47<sup>th</sup> Volumes of Green Files, which might provide them with important auditing goals in their respective areas.



**Ms. Sayantani Jafa, Additional Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General & Director General, iCED and Mr. Mehul Grover, Director (T&R) during the Valedictory Session**

Additionally, ADAI, iCED invited participants to peruse iCED’s Occasional Research Paper (ORP) Series, launched in May 2022, on various subjects relating to climate change, issues relating to urban flooding, transportation, air pollution, waste management, inter alia. So far, several ORPs have been published at the website of iCED and more are in the offing.

ADAI, iCED concluded the valedictory session by quoting Hon'ble PM of India when he said that “The more you know, the more you realise the magnitude of what you do not know. Our biodiversity too is a unique treasure for the entire humankind. We must preserve it, conserve it and explore further”. With this, she thanked all the experts and participants for their contributions in making this online event a success.