

Centre *for* Responsible
Business

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22

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A Tribute to Dr Bimal Arora

From the Governing Body Members

We the CRB Governing Body Members were shocked to learn about the sudden and unexpected demise of our dear colleague, the Founding CEO and then Chairperson of CRB, Dr. Bimal Arora on 3rd March 2022 in the UK.

Those who knew Bimal and his work, knew him as a passionate and tireless champion of Sustainability and Social Development. Bimal as the CEO of CRB till 2015 brought the organisation to a stable and self-sustaining foundation very quickly, before transitioning to become the Chairperson of the Board of CRB.

One of his contributions - CRB's flagship event - Indian Standards and Sustainability – Conference and Dialogues has now become an event of national and international eminence. For CRB, this annual affair has helped draw the attention and support of government, private sector, academia, research institutions and civil society, both locally and internationally. Building on his vision, CRB's frontiers on sustainability has been expanded energetically by our CEO, Rijit Sengupta.

As a colleague to us Board Members, we were, and continue to be challenged and infused with Bimal's views of developing CRB as a leading southern voice on Sustainability and developing CRB into a formidable think tank on the topic globally.

This direction envisaged by Bimal and endorsed by the CRB Board, will continue to guide CRB, expanding CRB's wide ranging activities and impacts on Sustainability.

Replacing Bimal's untiring spirit and commitment to Sustainability will be a challenge. However, the Board is fully committed to help evolve CRB into an entity following his aspirations. We will miss Bimal, as surely will CRB's leadership and staff. Needless to say, how he will be missed by his colleagues at the University, friends, partners and the massive network of sustainability practitioners in India and worldwide that Bimal worked to bring together.

CEO'S Message

The last year lived up to the expectation of being a landmark year on the Climate and Environment front. Backed by a record-breaking number of delegates not just Governments, but also private sector companies expressed their ambitious climate change targets at the Glasgow COP26 Summit in November 2021. The Glasgow outcomes are classified into four parts, viz. mitigation (net-zero commitments); adaptation and loss and damage; financing climate action and collaboration[1]. There is significant coverage of climate action related initiatives across Government agencies, the private sector and civil society including the academia in India, at various levels. There is some noise also to ensure that interests of people (youth, workers and communities) are integrated into the climate agenda and related action plans. This will ensure that 'nobody is left behind', and that the transition of industry and the economy is 'just' and inclusive. The IPCC report (Impacts, Adaptation & Vulnerability)[2] released subsequently in February 2022 underlined the interlinkages between climate, ecosystem, biodiversity and human societies. It underlined the importance of coordinated interventions to prevent and/or mitigate the impact of climate on ecosystems, biodiversity and people/communities.

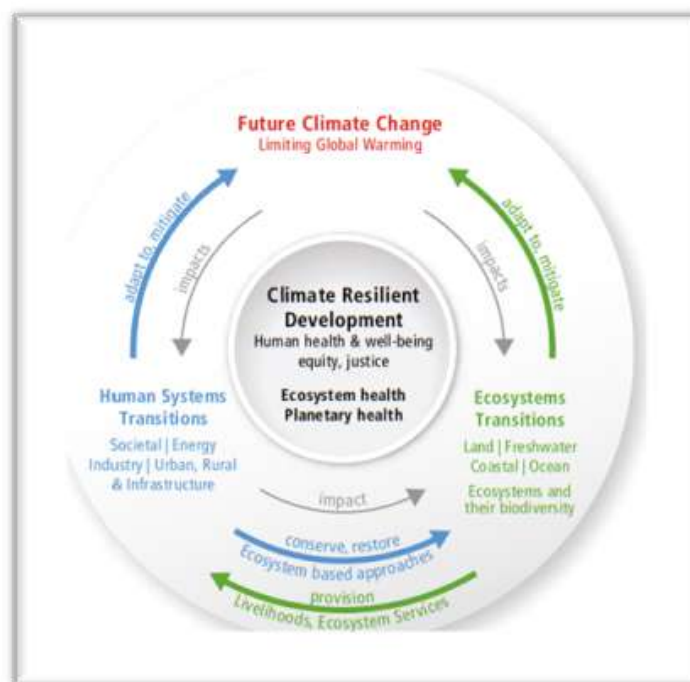


Fig: IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, 2022

At CRB inspired by these events, we introduced a new thematic area – Environment and Climate Change into our programmatic mix last year. Interventions in this thematic area will focus on: (i) Role of Private Sector in connection with Deforestation/Sustainable Landscapes – Biodiversity Conservation – Climate Change and (ii) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction by Businesses, in particular SMEs and small enterprises.

In November 2021, CRB completed 10years. A number of key CRB stakeholders including the Board, partners and well-wishers believe this, the second decade of our existence should focus on achieving attributable impacts. As part of our strategy, we have therefore envisaged an impact pathway that links measurable outcomes of CRB's interventions with long-term impacts through intermediate impacts (as illustrated below). At the organisational level, we will facilitate the achievement of positive impacts on people, planetary resources and prosperity by working in specific geographies and in industry clusters through innovative partnerships, enabling policies and facilitating responsible business practices.

[1] <https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/COP26-Presidency-Outcomes-The-Climate-Pact.pdf>

[2] https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

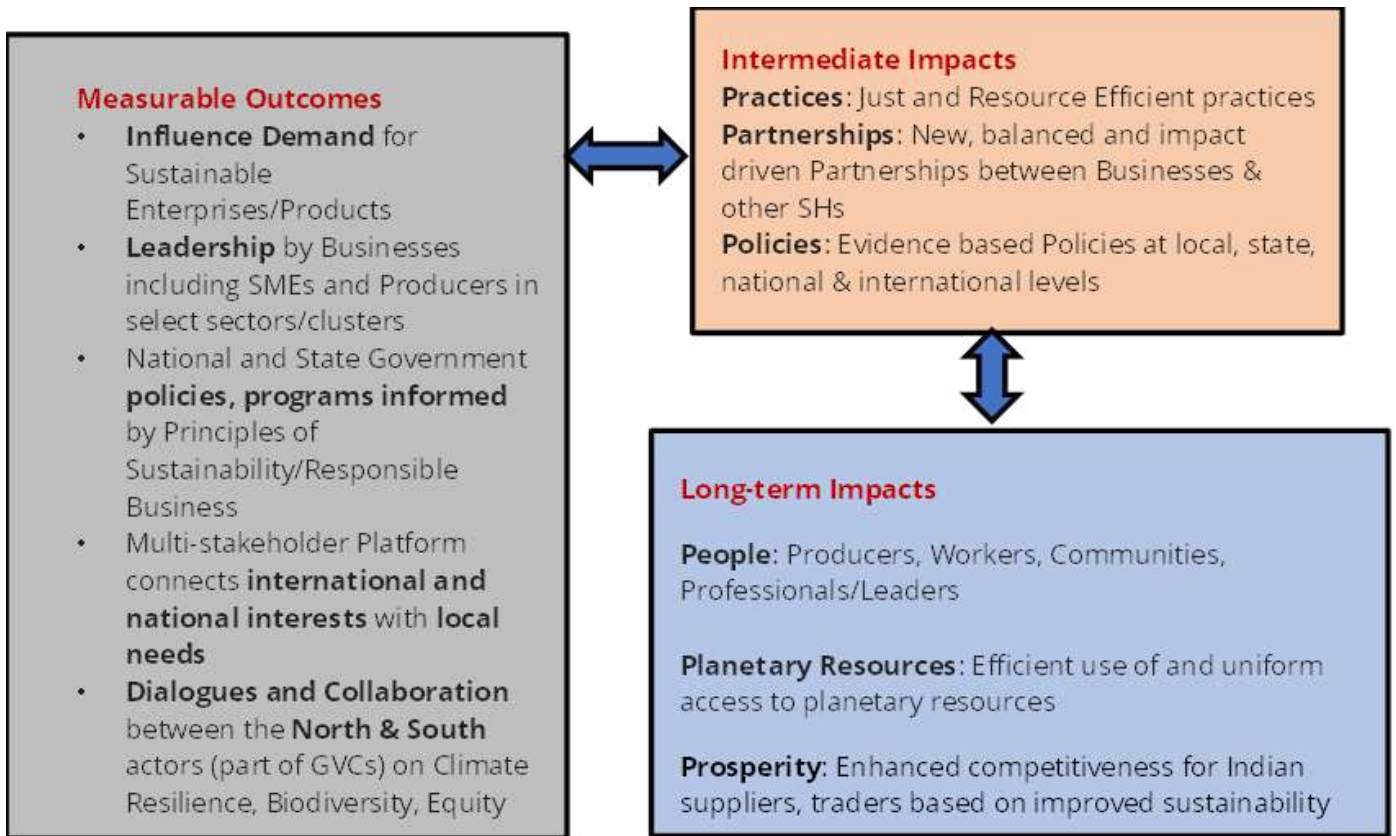


Fig: Impact Pathway

There is little doubt that private sector can play an active role in achieving measurable sustainability impacts across various industries and stakeholders, not just globally but in India. At CRB, we believe and endeavour to demonstrate how this can be done through specific pathways embedded in the six CRB thematic areas of the organisation, viz. business and human rights; circular economy; voluntary sustainability standards; private sector and SDGs; SMEs and sustainability and environment and climate change.

Collaboration between brands/buyers on one hand and suppliers/manufacturers on the other is no longer just a rhetoric. Various actors are advocating and supporting such partnerships, These are considered effective approaches in achieving sustainable value chains. Further, an enabling ecosystem involving government policies/initiatives; financial support; technology and standards can support uptake of sustainability practices across industries including small and medium enterprises, many of which currently remain excluded from these dialogues and actions. Finally, CRB is committed to facilitate an environment for a balanced dialogue between the North and South stakeholders on sustainability indicators and impacts. Given there are significant developments in regulations and processes that define global value chains, key actors from the North and the South need to engage actively to achieve win-win outcomes.

Rijit Sengupta
CEO, CENTRE FOR
RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS



A photograph of two women in a tea plantation. The woman in the foreground is wearing a purple patterned headscarf and a purple and black checkered long-sleeved shirt, smiling at the camera while picking tea leaves. The woman in the background is wearing a red headscarf and a red and white patterned shirt, also picking tea leaves. The background shows rolling green hills and mountains under a clear blue sky.

THEMATIC AREAS

Circular Economy

'Circular economy' defined by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation as an economy which is regenerative by design and where materials and energy flow in closed loops within the value chain – can offer solutions to numerous sustainability issues faced by the world. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair, Redesign, Refurbish and Remanufacture - also known as the 7Rs embodying circular economy are its basic tenets. In other words, circular economy is a way of conducting business which is less impactful towards the environment, uses resources efficiently and provides value to all stakeholders. It also boosts business competitiveness – especially in sectors dominated by large brands and buyers who have made commitments globally towards promoting circular business. Ideally, a circular economy is driven wholly by renewable energy, and the concept of 'waste' is eliminated by design. If adopted in a holistic manner, employing systems perspective, circular economy can help transform lives and livelihoods around the globe. It can help create robust, vibrant societies while reversing some of the harm done to the world's ecosystems. CRB has been intrigued with the subject – and therefore explored its potential in the apparel and textiles sector partnering with some leading national and international businesses and organisations, as well as government bodies.

Circular Economy is an area of strategic focus for CRB, with the following objectives :

- (i) Build capacity and awareness of industry players (with special attention to SMEs) – emphasise on developing the 'business case'
- (ii) Document and encourage 'good practices' across industries
- (iii) Undertake evidence based policy engagement to integrate the principles of circular economy in industrial/sectoral policy
- (iv) Contribute towards development of incentives, schemes/programmes to support innovations that advance circularity
- (v) Present needs, aspirations and experiences from the 'Global South' at various international platforms
- (vi) Develop and/or contribute towards development of multi-stakeholder driven initiatives/platforms

Activities

Promoting Circularity in the Apparel and Textile Industry

To take forward its work on Circular Apparel, CBR documented and encouraged 'good practices' on efficient and sustainable water use in the apparel and textile sector. Further, state-specific policy briefs were submitted to relevant government departments through the Purpose project.

Towards a Circular Approach in Electronics

CRB is currently also working with organisations such as SERI (Sustainable Electronics Recycling International) and Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) to engage stakeholders and delve into various aspects of circularity, such as managing e-waste and water stewardship.

Key Events

Fireside Chats – Purpose May – June 2021

CRB with support from The Refashion Hub organised a series of fireside chats to raise awareness and drive conversations about wastewater reuse and management in the textile industry. Catch the conversations below:

- [Holistic water management: Perspective of a watershed manager, 31 May 2021](#)
- [Water Reuse and Management, 2 June 2021](#)



National Workshop on 'Wastewater Reuse and Water Conservation in the Textile Industry, 18 May 2021

CRB, with support from The Refashion Hub, has also been working on a campaign to increase awareness among stakeholders about wastewater reuse, especially in the textile sector in India.. Under this initiative, CRB organised a multi-stakeholder workshop on various aspects of wastewater reuse and how it can be supported through policies and incentives. Catch the full conversation [here](#).

Circular Economy: Opportunities and Challenges for countries of the Global South, 9 Sep 2021

Circular Economy (CE) considerations (design out waste & pollution; keep materials and products in use, and regenerate natural systems) are emerging as a key factor in facilitating resource efficient, resilient and equitable growth for countries involved in global supply chains. While the discourse on CE principles has primarily emanated from countries in the Global North, countries in the Global South, as major producer economies, have different incentives and needs when it comes to applying CE principles. There is a need for awareness and capacity building, technology and business model innovation, more conducive policies and regulations and availability of requisite finance. CE principles also provide the opportunity to facilitate inclusive and equitable growth through creation of new employment opportunities, upskilling/reskilling and factoring in the requirements of just transition. Watch the recording [here](#) .

Managing Plastic Waste in the IT and Electronics Value Chains, 28 January 2022

Insightful discussion with Shobha Raghavan, Saahas Zero Waste and Sean DeVries, SERI on Managing Plastic Waste in the IT & Electronics Value Chains as part of Prem Jain Memorial Trust's Harit Bharat Mahotsav, 2022.

Stakeholder Consultations (Electronics sector) - 16 March and 21 March 2022

CRB organised stakeholder consultations in New Delhi and Bengaluru with regional stakeholders such as brands, recyclers, civil society and producer responsibility organisations (PROs) on several aspects of circular electronics such as water stewardship, sustainable recycling and sustainable procurement. This webinar was organised by 2030 Water Resources Group, the Government of Maharashtra, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Israel Trade & Economic Mission and India-EU Water Partnership. Watch the recording [here](#).



Representation

Catalyzing a Circular Water Economy : Mapping the Challenges and Benchmarks for Wastewater Reuse in Industries with a spotlight on Wastewater Reuse Certificates (WRCs), 30 November, 2021

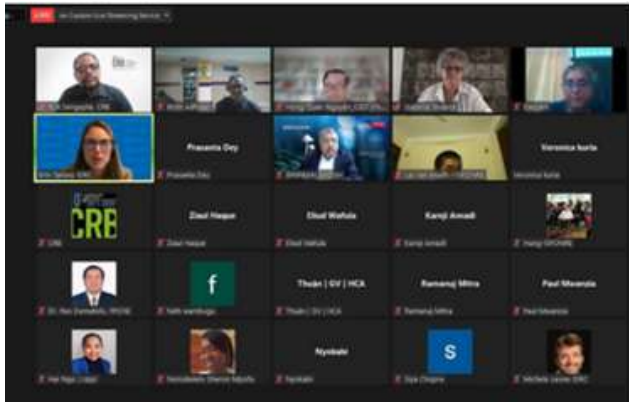
Ramanuj Mitra represented CRB at the Webinar on Catalyzing a Circular Water Economy. [ia-EU Water Partnership](#). Watch the recording [here](#).

Roundtable on Mainstreaming Resource Efficiency in Textile Industry in India on February 4, 2022

Devyani Hari represented CRB at the online webinar organised by TERI and presented the preliminary findings from the paper Circular Textile and Apparel in India Policy Intervention Priorities and Ideas at the roundtable. The need

for the textile sector and academia to work closely together and to share best practices and research was highlighted at the roundtable along with the need for circular economy interventions designed for the SME sector and to help with value chain support.

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Key Outcomes & Way Forward

Key Outcomes

CRB strives to disseminate research with relevant stakeholders while also highlighting the business case for a circular economy. It undertakes evidence-based policy engagement to integrate Principles of CE in industrial/sectoral policy.

- CRB worked on developing a policy paper on circular economy in the textile and apparel sector in India. The paper focused on the current state of the industry in relation to the circular economy; structural challenges facing the sector; examples of circular apparel initiatives in the sector; and policy recommendation/ ideas generated by CRB through stakeholder consultations and in-house research.
- CRB also undertook a study to provide inputs for policy consideration to further circularity, eco-innovation and sustainability in the Kenyan Apparel and Textile sector.

Way Forward

Over the course of the past couple of years (2019-21), significant headway had been made in mobilising stakeholders in a few significant apparel and textile sectors in the country. Government bodies, especially state textile departments and industries commissionerates have been engaged in the conversation. State-specific policy briefs have also been submitted to relevant departments.

However, there is immense scope for interventions for Circular Apparel and CRB will continue its efforts through potential areas of action such as:

- Facilitating CE dialogues in more textile and apparel clusters across the country to identify policy and practices areas
- Capacity building for stakeholders including policy actors in different clusters on potential for Circular Textile & Apparel
- Designing pilots for showcasing circular practices (e.g. How can local municipalities play a role in supporting reverse logistics for garment manufacturers to promote recycling)
- Documenting existing best practices and innovations for Circular Apparel
- Facilitate standard setting for circular apparel in India

Business and Human Rights

At CRB, we understand Business and Human Rights as integral to the realisation of India's Constitutional vision of equitable and sustainable growth for all. For any economy to be resilient, it should be founded on just and fair principles. In India, the centrality of this philosophy is embodied in the Constitution as part of the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. In the wake of the COVID19 pandemic, we find business and human rights issues at the heart not only of the ensuing humanitarian crises but also central to building societal resilience. Globally, the pandemic has exposed and accentuated the fault lines that exist in our current growth/ development models and priorities. There is a crying need to redefine growth and bring human rights to the centre of all endeavours to restore normalcy. There is today, both among businesses and its stakeholders a growing acknowledgement of building business with purpose that goes beyond conventional norms of shareholder capitalism. Rising to the need of the hour, CRB has engaged to raise awareness among key stakeholders on the subject and engage in convening policy and practice stakeholders on various issues pertaining to business and human rights, viz. UN Guiding Principles, Supply Chains Transparency, Human Rights Due Diligence and the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. On the policy front CRB is supporting the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India in the process of developing India's first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

[Business and Human Rights play an integral role in CRB's work and in the realisation of equitable and sustainable growth for all.](#)

In the context of COVID19, we find business and human rights issues at the heart not only of the humanitarian crises but also central to building societal resilience. Globally, the pandemic has exposed the fault lines and exacerbated inequalities that exist in our current development models and priorities for growth. In this context, CRB endeavours to raise awareness among key stakeholders on the subject and engage in convening policy and practice stakeholders on various issues pertaining to business and human rights, viz. UN Guiding Principles, Supply Chains Transparency (across various sectors and thematic areas), Human Rights Due Diligence and the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

The 15th EU-India Summit held in July 2020, laid foundations for a deeper and more ambitious strategic cooperation between the European Union and India (*A Roadmap to 2025*)[7]. Both the EU and India agreed to deepen cooperation among others on - climate change (Paris commitments); clean energy; sustainable urbanisation; transportation; food security; migration and mobility; global economic governance; Sustainable Development Goals; digital economy and connectivity.

Some of the key initiatives in this thematic area included:

Human rights risks and impacts in tea value chains

Designed, developed and implemented industry and sector specific interventions on business and human rights, including human rights due diligence. In partnership with the [Committee on Sustainability Assessment \(COSA\)](#), CRB studied the human rights risks and impacts in tea value chains in India and Sri Lanka through engagement with relevant industry stakeholders and ecosystem actors, and proposed a remediation framework.

Promoting application of B&HR by enterprises

Through its work on business and human rights, CRB has played a key role in disseminating its knowledge, expertise and networks built over the years and translated it into actions for promoting business and human rights across sectors. To further the understanding and application of B&HR by enterprises, CRB, in partnership with the [Friedrich Naumann Foundation \(FNF\)](#) and [IGCC \(Indo-German Chamber of Commerce\)](#) through a series of quarterly webinars focusing on Business and Human Rights from a practitioner's standpoint. CRB also partnered with the [Friedrich Naumann Foundation \(FNF\)](#), to conceptualise and develop a series of awareness building videos.

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Key Events

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Self-assessment framework on Business and Human rights for Indian Apparel and Textile Industry to safeguard precarious & vulnerable workers post covid19

CRB aims to develop a self-assessment framework for Indian RMG businesses to help identify human rights risks in their supply chains, take collaborative preventive measures to reduce possible impacts from any future shocks, and to comply with the growing expectations of buyers on BHR issues. It is envisaged that this framework will result in enhanced traceability of supply chains and also contribute to responsible production of ready-made garments. The objectives of this project/initiative are as follows:

- To develop the ability of suppliers and manufacturers in the apparel and textile sector to map and identify vulnerable workers and issues leading to precarious situations.
- To highlight the importance of self-assessment and disclosures in preventing and mitigating human rights related risks in the apparel and textiles supply chain.
- To foster stakeholder collaboration to address human rights related risks for vulnerable workers, especially women.

Unpacking Business and Human Rights for SMEs - The forefront to steer Responsible Business Conduct across industries, 27 August 2021

To ensure sustainability of operations keeping in mind the identity and values of SMEs, the webinar titled, "Unpacking Business and Human Rights for SMEs – The forefront to steer Responsible Business Conduct across industries", co-organised by Centre for Responsible Business and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) South Asia, endeavours to address the topics of relevance, expectations and implications of Business and Human Rights for SMEs through a webinar series. Watch the recording [here](#)

Webinar on Unpacking Business and Human Rights for SMEs

In collaboration with FNF and IGCC, CRB organised two webinars on Business and Human Rights for SMEs. These were held on 8 October and 14 December and saw participation from a variety of stakeholders.



JOIN US FOR A WEBINAR

एमएसएमई के लिए व्यापार और मानवाधिकारों को समझना - उनकी वास्तविकताओं से बात करना

Unpacking Business and Human Rights for MSMEs - Speaking to Their Realities

8th October | 15:30 to 17:00 IST

SPEAKERS


Vijaya Thore
Senior Vice President,
Sustainability,
Aditya Birla Mgmt.
Corporation Pvt. Ltd.


Anil Bhardwaj
Secretary General,
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Key Outcomes & Way Forward

Key Outcomes

CRB used the on-ground experience and knowledge to undertake evidenced-based policy work, engaging with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to develop the [India National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights](#) by providing research and technical support.

Way Forward

Business and human rights form a key cornerstone of CRB's activities and cuts across the different thematic and operational works areas. Going forward, our endeavour will be to strengthen and diversify the vertical to include various other aspects of business and human rights. Through our work in the field, we strive to further the understanding and application of BHR. This will be achieved through a collaborative and multi-pronged approach, which will entail consolidation of the work undertaken thus far, working with partners to design and develop frameworks, tools, trainings that enable adoption of BHR by enterprises, raise awareness through the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms, undertaken policy research and advocacy to advance the discourse on BHR. Some of the concrete activities planned in this direction include the following:

- Developing a roadmap for regional economic integration among South Asian countries with focus on business and human rights issues.
- Awareness raising through capacity development measures and multi-stakeholder dialogues on relevant topics (supply chain transparency, HRDD, risk and impact assessment) with eminent experts and practitioners
- Design, develop and implement industry and sector specific interventions on business and human rights, including human rights due diligence. Some of the sectors CRB has been actively engaged in include mining, tea, apparel and textile, forestry, and palm oil. The BHR issues investigated and worked on include child rights, worker rights, vulnerable and marginal community rights, women rights, etc.
- Use the on-ground experience and knowledge (across sectors) to undertake evidenced-based policy work. CRB continues to engage with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to develop the India National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights by providing research and technical support.

IMAGE SOURCE: CANVA

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Private Sector & Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Integrating sustainability into global and local value chains is imperative for equitable and inclusive growth and for pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 2015, with the adoption of the Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations, there has been consensus about the key role of the private sector and businesses in meeting the SDGs. CRB has worked across sectors with various approaches/methods/tools, which businesses can adopt to pursue specific SDG targets and indicators, and measure them.

In addition to supply chain sustainability, buyer supplier/producer partnership, public-private collaboration and voluntary sustainability standards offer some such possibilities. CRB has also been engaging with NITI Aayog at the macro-level with evidence gathered from these interventions to build the case and general awareness about private sector contribution to SDGs in India.

Promoting Responsible Value Chains in India for an Effective Contribution of the Private Sector to the SDGs (Progress)

CRB has explored how private sector companies in India could better contribute to the achievement of specific SDGs, particularly inclusive education and life-long learning (SDG4), employment and decent work for the youth (SDG 8), women's social and economic empowerment (SDG 5), sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), and Climate Action (SDG 13) through the PROGRESS project.

Promoting Nutrition Security and Zero Hunger

CRB furthered the private sector's engagement in working towards SDG2 and Nutrition Security in India through its partnership with the United Nations World Food Program (UNWFP) and Cargill to address the issue of malnutrition and SDG 2. The project addresses Nutritional Security in India by aligning with the priorities of the POSHAN Abhiyan by engaging the public and the private sector to collaborate and find ways to create approaches to address the problem collectively.

Towards India - EU CSR & Sustainability Forum (TIES Forum)

CRB has worked towards gathering insight into the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure of EU Companies in India and their contributions towards SDGs and sustainability through the Scaling EU Businesses' Contribution towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India project.



Key Outcomes & Way Forward

Key Outcomes

As a part of PROGRESS, a number of sectoral case studies are prepared for dissemination with different stakeholders to encourage wider adoption of new and effective practices for sustainability. Additionally, in order to identify local private sector-led initiatives intended at positively contributing towards promoting nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific environments through innovative interventions, CRB has launched the Nutri Innovation Challenge in collaboration with Cargill and WFP India.

Way Forward

There is no doubt that private sector participation is critical to the achievement of the SDGs and engagement with the private sector remains central to CRB's work and cuts across its various thematic and sectoral areas. The private sector can lead the way on innovations, traceability, efficiencies and capacity building for value chain actors. At the same time, there is a need to support private sector actors with a strong business case for sustainable action, awareness and knowledge sharing, facilitating unconventional collaborations, developing sustainability roadmaps and understanding sustainability risks and impacts from their actions.

IMAGE SOURCE: CANVA

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Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) in India

CRB has a nuanced understanding about the need for better integration of VSS to improve sustainable business performance in India. CRB has been working with Sustainability Standards organisations operating in India to be better informed about each other's initiatives and explore opportunities to collaborate.

VSS Collaboration India

8th meeting of Voluntary Sustainable Standard Collaboration India, 9 February 2022

Through the 8th meeting of the Voluntary Sustainable Standard Collaboration India, the focus was on "VSS & Climate Change in India". This meeting was attended by prominent leaders from different industries who are working on sustainability and issues relating to climate and climate change in India. At the outset, the meeting started with the self-introduction of the participants, and then Rijit Sengupta, CEO, CRB, started with a background of the VSS Collaboration India over the years. He also mentioned the steps taken by the Indian Government to address the issue such as highlighting a pathway to reduce the use of fossil fuels, lower carbon intensity, and achieve net-zero emissions by 2070. He further expressed his interest to find out how, if possible, the VSS Collaboration India can play a role in supporting the VSS organisations to achieve India's climate ambitions by 2070.

Engagement with VSS organisations in India

CRB entered into partnership with SERI and TCO Certified, , both standard systems for the electronics and IT sector. The aim of this partnership is to assess the market uptake of the respective standards and create visibility about them and their efficacy in the Indian market.

The Team



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Key Events

Role of Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) in post COVID19 Recovery, India and Sustainability Standards 29 October, 2021

The 8th edition of ISS (2021) saw the session on VSS and it's role in the post Covid recovery. This session led to the following takeaways

- Sustainability standards must communicate how they can be integrated into public policy and also communicate a business case for enterprises of all sizes across the supply chain
- Governments must recognise and understand sustainability standards to inform various government departments and to incorporate them into public policy
- Governments must also be dynamic and consider the role they can play in creating systems change

Way Forward

A Climate Action Protocol for the VSS Collaboration is proposed which could focus on the following priorities with further indicators-

- Renewable energy and Energy Efficiency
- GHG Emissions
- Adaptation and resilience
- Sustainable Finance and investments
- Just Transition
- Consumer Communication
- Circular Economy and extension of product life cycle

This protocol would essentially be an academic and a learning opportunity and annually the members could convene and map different initiatives taken by their respective organisation to see how far they have come.

SMEs and Sustainability

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are backbone of the Indian industry and indeed the economy. CRB recognises that integration of responsible businesses cannot happen in Indian industry without involving the Indian SMEs sector. It is an imperative, therefore to convey the business case for sustainability to the Indian SME sector. CRB recognizes the importance of Small and Medium Enterprises or SMEs in highlighting the business case for sustainability.

From CRB's experience across sectors, some of the critical elements in SME engagement on sustainability are:

- Engagement through the supply/value chain
- Leadership by SME Industry Association
- Enabling government support through schemes and
- Integration into global value chains through voluntary standards, certification

Developing Sustainable B2B Marketplaces

CRB has partnered with Snowkap to develop a B2B marketplace linking suppliers and buyers based on sustainability parameters. The initial focus of the initiative is on SMEs in the packaging, apparels and agri-commodities sectors. Large buyers are increasingly basing their procurement decisions based on sustainability parameters such as the carbon footprint/ emissions, sustainable materials etc. This marketplace aims to facilitate matching suppliers to buyers as per their sustainability requirements. Additionally, it will support Indian SMEs in strengthening their sustainability practices. This will be achieved by:

- Reducing marketing costs by becoming more discoverable to buyers business growth
- Reducing sales cycles by digitising key product, commercial and sustainability information
- Calculating emissions and building ESG reports for all stakeholders
- Providing access to consultants and experts on building processes and capacities in sustainability

Promoting Family Friendly Workplace in Apparel and Textile Cluster

CRB has been working with UNICEF to address SDGs 5 and 8 by exploring the possibility of developing a Family Friendly Workplace, specifically for female workers and their families in select Apparel and Textile Clusters in India. The aim of this initiative is to create an environment in these clusters that promotes equal opportunities and decent working conditions for women workers in the industry while supporting their children and families specifically in terms of childcare, early child development, health and educational needs, etc.



The Team



Way Forward

Taking its work on this forward, CRB aims to

- To convey the business case for sustainability, inclusivity and circular economy to the Indian SME sector and encourage them to not have a negative impact on the environment and the society.
- Awareness on adoption of resource efficiency concepts, methods, policies and techniques among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through on the ground implementation in collaboration with national and international stakeholders.
- Private sector participation and collaborations to ensure conducive industry ecosystem.
- Utilise CRB's experience to develop a 'roadmap' for an inclusive and sustainable supply chain and work together with SMEs, NGOs, Academia and Government.
- Connect SMEs, smallholder collectives (FPOs), to sustainable value chains through a process that tries to align the interest of the buyers with that of the SMEs/FPOs.

Environment and Climate Change

Addressing challenges that climate change poses to businesses, economy and indeed society at large is critical to achieving long-term sustainability. Such actions must protect the interest of people, especially the most vulnerable.

CRB has applied its approach of engaging and supporting the private sector to combat climate and engage multiple stakeholders to co-create solutions. Its work on this thematic area is broadly classified into two areas:

- (i) Private Sector's contribution to Deforestation/Sustainable Landscapes, Biodiversity Conservation & Climate Change
- (ii) Business/SMEs role in GHG Reduction

Raising awareness about application of the 'Capitals valuation approach' among Agro-businesses

Through the TEEB Agri Food project, CRB and Capitals Coalition aim to protect biodiversity and contribute more widely to sustainable agriculture and the food sector. Through this initiative, CRB encourages both public sector and private sector engagement with the agri-business networks in India. CRB and Capitals Coalition are working with 5-6 Agro-based Industries to develop case studies on application of the 'Capitals valuation approach' in their businesses.

Managing Food Loss and Food Waste in value chains

As part of Promoting Responsible Value Chains for an effective contribution of the private sector to the SDGs (PROGRESS) along with Aston University UK, CRB has developed a briefing paper on Addressing Food Loss and Waste for a Sustainable Agriculture Value Chain in India as well as case studies that document best practices that are contributing to the reduction of food loss and waste in India.



Developing a sustainability based framework for Farmer Producer Organisations

CRB's PROGRESS project also focuses on research and stakeholder consultation to better understand the role of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in driving sustainability. CRB is working on the development of a sustainability framework with the objective of aligning the interests of FPOs and markets while contributing to the SDGs.

Food and Land Use India (FOLU India) Action Coalition for Responsible Sourcing and Trade of Commodities (in short FOLU India CREST)

FOLU India launched its first action coalition in India in the form of the Food and Land Use India (FOLU India) Action Coalition for Responsible Sourcing and Trade of Commodities (in short FOLU India CREST) at the ISS Conference 2021. This action coalition brings together four organisations, viz. Centre for Responsible Business (CRB), IDH – The Sustainable Trade Initiative India, WWF India, and World Resource Institute India (WRI India). This initiative seeks to advance efforts on responsible sourcing and sustainable production, leveraging India's pivotal position in global agricultural and forest commodities trade. The coalition will aim to work on one hand in building the demand and uptake of responsibly sourced commodities. On the other hand, it will seek to enable and strengthen sustainable agricultural production and supply of responsibly sourced commodities to the domestic and international markets.

Sustainability Ambassadors

Since 2018, CRB has been working in partnership with the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil to promote awareness about the need and opportunities for greater uptake of sustainable palm oil along the supply chain in India. As part of this shared vision, CRB and RSPO continue working together on a project that aims to identify champions for the uptake of certified sustainable palm oil in India.

Over the past year, CRB has increased its engagement with businesses for commitment and action on Sustainable Palm Oil while also offering learning and sharing opportunities through the 'Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India' platform (I-SPOC, www.indiaspoc.org).

National Stakeholder Consultation: Determining the Scope & Feasibility of a Value Chain Alliance for Wood in India, 15 March, 2022

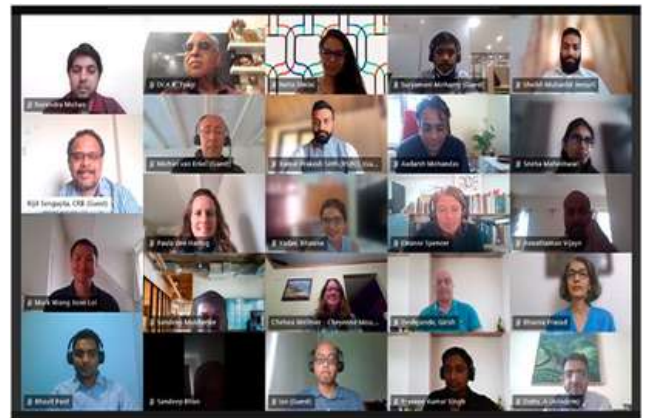
Rijit Sengupta represented CRB at a National Stakeholder Consultation: Determining the Scope & Feasibility of a Value Chain Alliance for Wood in India organised by WRI India to discuss demand, supply and policy related barriers as well as enabling factors.



Key Events

Fifth I-SPOC Members' Meeting, 27 May 2021

40+ participants from businesses and CSOs convened at the 5th meeting of I-SPOC (<http://indiaspoc.org>) to initiate specific actions on capacity building of value chain actors, government policy engagement and role of financial institutions in promoting uptake of Sustainable Palm Oil in India.



TEEB-Agrifood for Business Training, 17 June 2021

TEEB-Agrifood for Business training program, offered by the Capitals Coalition in collaboration with the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB), is an opportunity for businesses to learn and hone skills to measure and value their business' impacts and dependencies on natural, social and human capital. Guiding them through each stage of the TEEBAgrifood Operational Guidelines a tool for businesses, this program aimed to arm businesses with the knowledge to identify the risks and opportunities associated with their business' interaction with the capitals, and learn how to integrate and apply these considerations into their business decision making.



I-SPOC OPEN DAY, 23 June 2021

I-SPOC organised an open day on the 23 of June 2021 for its members, facilitated by I-SPOC Secretariat. It included 4 experts answering the questions of I-SPOC members related to sustainable palm oil. Some of the topics the first open day covered include:

- Building a business case - how to develop a business case for sustainable palm oil,
- Marketing - communication and branding
- Research - availability and access to information on sustainable palm oil, awareness creation and capacity building and
- Sustainability initiatives - Relevant sustainability initiatives on Sustainable Palm Oil by various stakeholders

Fostering Friends of Champions 12.3 in India, 7 July 2021

Rijit Sengupta, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB), shared his views on Food Loss and Waste at the webinar on Fostering Friends of Champions 12.3 in India organised by WRI India. CRB has recently authored a Briefing Paper on Food Loss and Waste.

His insights at the webinar include that businesses need to be engaged with the SDGs and calls for better capacity building on the business case of addressing Food Loss and Waste. Furthermore, he shared that the principles of Circular Economy can be applied in the approach of addressing Food Loss and Waste and that there is a need for a dedicated policy at the national level.



I-SPOC Second Open Day, 21 September 2021

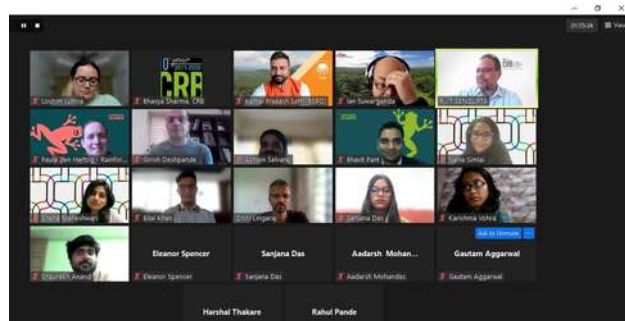
The Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC), organised its second Open Day session on 21st September 2021. The open day is a one-day virtual session to be facilitated by the I-SPOC Secretariat, the Centre for Responsible Business. Along with discussions on issues and challenges an organisation might face on the uptake of sustainable palm oil, the session also looked at examples of good practices. The session was conducted in the format of a round table discussion. It alluded to the recent approval of the National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP), its implications in India, domestic production, frameworks and timelines.



China Sustainable Palm Oil Alliance, 18 October, 2021

Rijit Sengupta, represented I-SPOC at a meeting of the China Sustainable Palm Oil Alliance (CSPOA) on 18 October 2021. The meeting was jointly organised by the China Chamber of Commerce of Foodstuffs and Native Produce (CFNA), the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and the World Wide Fund for Nature, Beijing Office (WWF China).

Mr. Sengupta, spoke about I-SPOC (the governance structure, its members and the work it has been doing in India on sustainable palm oil) and highlighted the palm oil consumption in India over the last 40 years, the challenges that are there in promoting uptake of sustainable palm oil and lastly the implications of the approval of the National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm (NEMO-OP) by the Central government of India.



I-SPOC Capacity Building Workshop, 17 November, 2021

The first members-only Capacity Building workshop of I-SPOC was organised on 17 November 2021. Some of the important points discussed were on Responsible Sourcing of palm oil in India, Transition towards sustainable palm oil highlighting the existing frameworks, good practices and the steps to move towards uptake of sustainable palm oil.

The workshop also discussed some relevant business cases, the challenges the members are facing in the uptake of sustainable palm oil and the support needed to move towards sustainable procurement.



Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) Member Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting, 7 December, 2021

The Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) conducted its 6th Member Meeting on 7 December 2021. The discussion at the meeting focused on updates from the Secretariat and the Working Groups on the activities they have undertaken since June 2021 and action plan for the first quarter of 2022. The actions of the new Working Group on Financial Institution and Domestic Production (part of Government Policy Working Group) were also discussed.

TEEB AgriFood for Business Closing Session : 17 February, 2022

CRB and Capitals Coalition conducted the closing session for TEEB AgriFood for Business, Promoting a Sustainable Agriculture and Food Sector'. The session consisted of a keynote address by Dr Ashok Dalwai who elaborated a global perspective on food system transformation and the importance of business action. There were also case studies presented

by Arvind, Go4Fresh and Ecociate who incorporated the methodology in their decision making. The session concluded with a discussion on next steps for the Hub in India

Your application on the User Template

Material impact driver or dependency	Indicator	STEP 5 Change in capitals resulting from the impact driver/dependency	STEP 6 Planning phase		Results of valuation Value
			Consequences of impact drivers or dependencies on business or society	Chosen valuation technique	
1.	Indicator	Baseline: Scenario 1:	Impact on society Impact on business	Qual/quant/monetary	Value to society Value to business
2.	Indicator	Baseline: Scenario 1:	Impact on society Impact on business		Value to society Value to business
3.	Indicator	Baseline: Scenario 1:			Value to society Value to business



I-SPOC: Steering Committee and Member Meetings, 9 March 2022

The Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) conducted its 7th Members Meeting on 10 March 2022. The meeting was conducted virtually, and had in attendance the Steering Committee Members, I-SPOC Members and Observers.

The discussion at the meeting included updates from the Secretariat, the three Working Groups and deliberation on actions that the Coalition should take in order to increase membership in 2022.



Key Outcomes

CRB's goal in engaging with the agri-business networks in India has been to disseminate research with relevant businesses and offer insights and perspectives. Perhaps the most crucial contribution of the TEEB AgriFood Implementation Project thus far is the Agri-food Operational Guidelines. The guidelines were presented to a wide range of stakeholders, and participants were given the opportunity to learn, provide comments and input into the development process. 2022 saw the closing session for TEEB AgriFood for Business, Promoting a Sustainable Agriculture and Food Sector'. The session consisted of a keynote address by Dr Ashok Dalwai who elaborated a global perspective on food system transformation and the importance of business action.

Another highlight was during the Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) Fifth Members' Meeting which saw representatives from 20 organisations and businesses initiate specific actions on capacity building of value chain actors, government policy engagement & role of financial institutions in promoting uptake of Sustainable Palm Oil in India.

IMAGE SOURCE: CANVA

The Team



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CRB 8th Annual Sustainability Conference 2021

The Centre for Responsible Business held its 8th Annual Sustainability Conference that concluded on the evening of 29th October. Like the earlier versions, this year's conference brought together diverse voices from a host of national and international stakeholders on this year's theme Accelerating and Reinforcing Transformative Change for Societal Resilience. This included sustainability enthusiasts, steadfast in their belief that promoting sustainable business, markets and societies is necessary and urgent. Some of the common messages from the discussions across sessions were - that the time to act on climate change is now; the need of the hour is to collaborate and together find specific solutions rather than reinventing the wheel; and to focus on voices of the marginalised and those who are often excluded from such discussions - to give them a platform and consider their perspective.

Watch the sessions [here](#)

INDIA AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS



International Engagements

IPBES Stakeholders Days Conference 2021, 9 June 2021

Rijit Sengupta represented CRB at the 'Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services' - IPBES Stakeholder Days conference and highlighted the importance of coalitions to drive business leadership on biodiversity conservation.

CRB presented the needs, aspirations and experiences from the 'Global South' at various international platforms involving a wider set of Northern and Southern stakeholders such as at the virtual event, Circular Economy: Opportunities & Challenges for countries of the Global South.

The 10YFP and IRP at the WRF2021 on "The Value-Chain Approach: A tool for prioritised action on sustainable production and consumption", 12 October, 2021

Rijit Sengupta represented CRB at the online workshop held over the course of The World Resources Forum 2021 "A Green Deal for Sustainable Resources", co-hosted by the Ministry for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation of the Republic of Ghana, and the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment. The workshop took place on 12 October, and involved stakeholders from policy, science, industry and civil society to delve into the most pressing challenges and co-design innovative solutions related to responsible sourcing, effective recovery processes, and circular systems for the use of resources. Watch the recording [here](#).

Other Initiatives

Moving Towards net Zero – Fireside Chats April 19 and 20, 2021

CRB and Climate Voices presented a series of conversations with India's leading corporate companies on what net zero looks like for India. Catch the conversations below:

- [P. S. Narayan, Wipro](#)
- [Anirban Ghosh, Mahindra Group](#)



Inclusive Finance India Summit, 22 April 2021

Devyani Hari represented CRB as a speaker for the Inclusive Finance India Summit session on Sustainable Finance, organised by ACCESS ASSIST. She shared her views on practising Sustainable Finance and what it means for financial institutions.

**Practicing Sustainable Finance
What it means for Financial Institutions?**

22 April 2021 | 3:30 PM

[Register Here](#)

Moderator
Neha Kumar
India Programme Manager
Climate Bonds Initiative

Speakers
Shalini Warrior
Executive Director
Chief Operating Officer and
Business Head - Retail, Federal Bank

Mohan Tanksale
Former CEO, IBA, Former CMD
Central Bank of India

Devyani Hari
Director - Programmes
Center for Responsible
Business

The Role of the G7 in Ensuring a Just and Sustainable Recovery: Building a Roadmap For Business Unusual, 6 May 2021

Rijit Sengupta represented CRB at an event titled, 'The Role of the G7 in ensuring a Just and Sustainable Recovery: Building a Roadmap for Business Unusual'. He advocated for 'business-led transformation for sustainable recovery' for G7 leaders including: (i) gender equality; (ii) sustainable use of Global Commons; (iii) net zero carbon based on 'Just Transition'; and (iv) Circular enterprises for youth employment.

People Centric Urban Ecosystem Restoration in India, 5 June 2021

On the occasion of World Environment Day, Rijit Sengupta represented CRB at an event organised by Avani, the Environment Club & IQAC, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi and shared his views on People Centric Urban Ecosystem Restoration in India.

CDP India Disclosure, 2021, 24 March, 2022

Rijit Sengupta represented CRB at the Mandatory Disclosure thematic Round Table session at CDP India Disclosure, 2021.

CDP
DISCLOSURE INSIGHT ACTION

**Thematic Round table session
Mandatory Disclosures**

KEY DISCUSSANT

Rijit Sengupta
CEO
Centre for Responsible
Business

Rijit Sengupta is CEO of the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) – and has over twenty years of experience in various areas of sustainable development policy and practice across Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. His interest lies in the interface of business and society – particularly environmental protection/management, consumer welfare, community welfare, livelihoods/SMEs, business regulation, responsible business and SDGs. He has designed and implemented various projects/programmes on these areas in Sub-Saharan Africa, South and South East Asia. Currently, while much of his work on sustainable business/SDGs is focused on India, he has been also advocating for greater North-South dialogue on sustainable business/SDGs at various international platforms, while researching and writing on these issues. He has a Master degree in Agriculture and in Environment Management. He is an Alumnus of the University of Caceres and the United Nations University (Tokyo). He is Member, Advisory Board of the Trade for Sustainable Development programme, International Trade Centre, Geneva and of the Consumer Information Programme of the One Planet Network.

CDP India Disclosure 2021
Climate | Water | Forest

Thematic Round table Sessions
24th March | 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

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Office Assistant



Recognition and Affiliations

Friends of Champions 12.3

CRB became a member of Friends of Champions 12.3, an international coalition working towards SDG 12 and halving food loss and food waste in India.



CRB became a member of the Evidensia's Stakeholder Council

An advisory body providing a space to hear the perspectives and priorities of different stakeholders on questions of impacts and evidence needs. It also assesses the value and uptake of Evidensia's activities, insights and analysis for business, government, policy and practitioner work. Evidensia is a leading global effort to make credible evidence about the impacts and effectiveness of market-based sustainability approaches accessible to inform policy and practice in the field. More information about this initiative may be found [here](#).

Evidensia Stakeholder Council

The Evidensia Stakeholder Council is an advisory body providing a space to hear the perspectives and priorities of different stakeholders on questions of impacts and evidence needs. It also assesses the value and uptake of Evidensia's activities, insights and analysis for business, government, policy and practitioner work.



Working Group on Taxonomy of Sustainable Finance

CRB became a Member of the working group on 'Developing a Taxonomy of Sustainable Activities' which is being constituted under the co-Chairmanship of NITI Aayog and The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), to help in promotion of sustainable financing in India.

Launch of Food and Land Use Coalition India Action Coalition for Responsible Sourcing & Trade of Commodities (FOLU India-CREST)

The Action Coalition (CREST) at present includes Centre for Responsible Business (CRB), IDH – The Sustainable Trade Initiative India, WWF India, and World Resource Institute India (WRI India). CRB will lead the action coalition for the next 3 years. The Vision of the Action Coalition is to advance efforts on responsible sourcing and sustainable production, leveraging India's pivotal position in global agricultural and forest commodities trade. Additional information may be found [here](#).



CRB's Tenth Anniversary, 15 November, 2021

CRB celebrated its 10th anniversary on 15 November and saw participation from a diverse group of stakeholders including experts who were involved with the conceptualisation of the Centre. Starting off as a programme implemented by GIZ India in partnership with SAI and BSCI (now, amfori), and evolving into an organisation - pursuing business led transformation towards sustainable economy and society. CRB has come a long way, as many friends and partners felt and has a long way to go in achieving its vision and should focus in its second decade on 'measurable impacts'.

CRB's journey was encapsulated in a video that was released at this occasion and can be viewed [here](#).



Key suggestions

- CRB must lead the way for effective North - South dialogues and actions and the next decade must be one of measurable and impactful initiatives
- There is a need to move beyond awareness generation and towards implementation of sustainable practices leading to measurable impacts in industries/clusters
- Private sector engagement with entrepreneurs and collectives along commodity/product value chains on sustainability issues and practices may also be facilitated by CRB
- CRB must focus on the interface of Voluntary Sustainability Standards with Climate Change (Adaptation and Mitigation)
- CRB may also expand its thematic areas to include Climate Change and on Sustainable Finance
- There must also be a focus on issues of equity and to bring together the government, civil society and business stakeholders as an intermediary through research and advocacy and bring the sustainability agenda in the impact value chain
- Broadening capacity building for MSMEs as well as for NGOs on business focused human rights remediation was another area where CRB could contribute
- A focus on biodiversity, nature loss and climate change and how business can address these concerns was also highlighted coupled with the value of sustainable finance and the need for models on green transitions
- CRB may also aid in highlighting the need for moving beyond compliance and focus on responsible business conduct
- There is also a need to develop case studies and methodologies of engaging with those who do not yet understand the need for working towards the Sustainability Agenda

Overall Impressions about CRB's work:

- CRB has not only sustained but has grown and has become an authentic voice and agenda setter in this space - **Amit Kumar, UNDP**
- The expertise and professionalism of CRB's leaders has made it possible to take the sustainability agenda forward - **Clement, UNEP**
- Conversations at CRB conferences/ session tend to be more distinct, more informed- **Anirban Ghosh, Mahindra Group**
- CRB has created a conducive environment for responsible business. - **Dr. Dietrich Keschull**
- The openness to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders has definitely increased the need for businesses to change their point of view and understand the positive impact they can have on people and the environment. - **Clement, UNEP**
- CRB has succeeded in bringing the international perspective to the national context - **Bhavna Prasad**
- Basis on which it was started was collaboration - **Ranjeet Sarma, M&S**
- Making policy changes in critical areas is to be appreciated. - **Jyotsna Stitling**

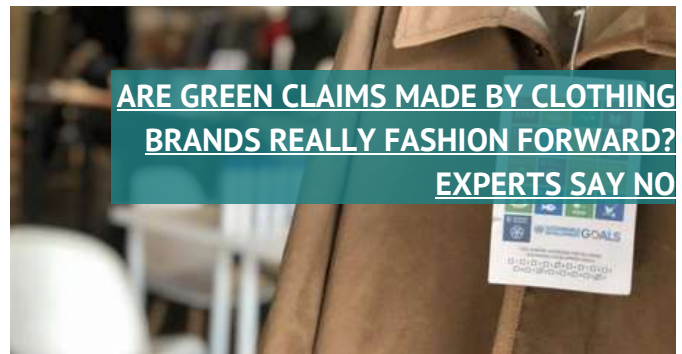
Expectation from CRB Going Forward

- Develop initiatives that are impactful and measurable over the next 10 years- **Dr. Bimal Arora**
- We have been creating awareness, beyond awareness we have to move. - **RC Kesar**
- Given the stability demonstrated, now the scope is to think bigger. Move forward to more ambitious targets. **Meera Mitra**
- The COP26 conference has shown that the private sector will be important. **Dr. Dietrich Keschull**
- Focus on climate change especially in relation to current areas of focus - **Bhavna Prasad**
- The triangle of Voluntary themes, public policy and other sustainability approaches is something to be considered. - **Karin Kreider**
- Working with business to ensure on the ground level transformation. - **Dr. Suresh Prabhu**
- Opportunity to work on policy and the synergy with VSS - **Karin Kreider**
- VSS has to give precedence to climate change. - **Dr. Dietrich Keschull**
- The role of multi-stakeholder partnerships is extremely important in relation to more areas, more commodities and driving the north south consultations. **Shubha Shekar**
- The role of CRB is important as an intermediary between market and government to promote the cause of equity and environmental sustainability. - **Jyotsna Stitling**
- To create awareness of the broader scope of the focus areas - **Bhavna Prasad**
- Capacity building is important and broadening - **Shubha Shekar**
- Need to do capacity building of NGOs on business remediation- **Shubha Shekar**
- Be braver and more ambitious in this decade. **Kamal Prakash Seth**
- Climate change is high on the agenda - **Ranjeet Sarma**
- Importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships is to be appreciated. **Nils Heuer**
- Sustainable financing has to move beyond climate finance. **Neha Kumar**
- National voluntary standards should be mandatory and there is great possibility for CRB to convene with Solidaridad - **Shatadru Chattopadhyay**
- Certain methodologies/case studies should be developed so that people who do not have awareness can become believers in sustainability. **Mukesh Gulati**
- Come up with achievements at the outcome level - **Mukesh Gulati**

CRB in the Media



Sustainable agriculture needs innovative partnerships



ARE GREEN CLAIMS MADE BY CLOTHING BRANDS REALLY FASHION FORWARD? EXPERTS SAY NO



World Environment Day 2021: Challenges in managing toxic wastewater from textile industry and solutions



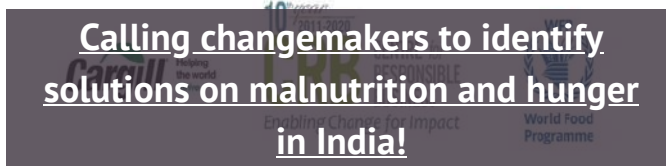
Running Out Of Time! Consciously Investing For Our Planet



World Environment Day: People-Centric Strategy Is Key To Restore Urban Ecosystem



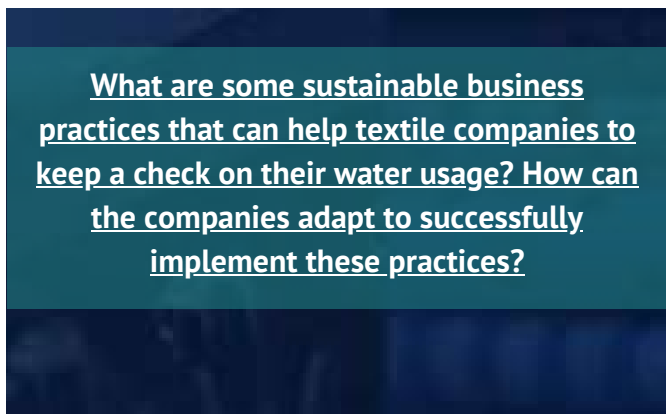
CRB releases Circular Textiles and Apparel in India: Policy Intervention Priorities and Ideas report



Calling changemakers to identify solutions on malnutrition and hunger in India!



Trendy clothes that are gentle on the earth



What are some sustainable business practices that can help textile companies to keep a check on their water usage? How can the companies adapt to successfully implement these practices?



Wasterprise - Rise Of New-Age Enterprises Redefining Waste



Questions? Contact us.

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