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LEVERAGING CONNECTIVITY AND COLLABORATION TO ACCELERATE SDGs IN INDIA

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1. Context

1.1 The EU-India Partnership: Driving SDGs

1.1.1. Overview

The European Union (EU) and India, two of the world's largest economies, share a partnership rooted in mutual values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Their robust economic relationship and strategic alliance have been instrumental in advancing various aspects of socio-economic eminence including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the private sector playing a pivotal role. Both entities are committed to fostering an environment conducive to business growth and sustainable development.

1.1.2. Trade and Investment Dynamics

The EU, as India's one of the largest trading partners, and India, as the EU's 9th largest trading partner, have seen steady growth in their trade and investment relations. In 2022, the bilateral trade in goods and services between the EU and India reached €116.4 billion. The EU accounts for 11.1% of India's total trade, surpassing China (10.7%) and the USA (9.3%)¹. Similarly, the EU is also the leading foreign investor in India.

This is facilitated by several agreements such as The EU – India Trade and Investment Cooperation Agreement (TCA) which was signed back in 2007. This cooperation defines trade and investment including trade market access, intellectual property protection and government procurement.

On 17 June 2022, the EU resumed negotiations with India for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)² which aims to expand their bilateral ties through coverage of goods, services, investment and digital trade. As such, a number of steps have been taken to streamline business activities in the country considering that India has a flourishing economy coupled with a young population. They encompass regulatory simplification, infrastructure enhancements, and foreign direct investment encouragement. The EU and India have jointly initiated several projects to promote renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure development.

1.1.3. Partnerships to pursue Sustainable Development

European Union's Green Deal³ is a groundbreaking agreement aimed to make Europe a climate-neutral continent by 2050, decoupling economic growth from resource use. To get there, EU has pledged to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. The EU now has legally binding climate targets covering all key sectors of the economy. The overall package includes:

- emissions reduction targets across a broad range of sectors
- a target to boost natural carbon sinks
- an updated emissions trading system to cap emissions, put a price on pollution and generate investments in the green transition
- and social support for citizens and small businesses

Member States are required to spend 100% of their emissions trading revenues on climate and energy-related projects and the social dimension of the transition⁴.

Further, under the EU Global Gateway strategy, Team Europe⁵ will mobilise up to €300 billion of

¹ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/india_en

² *Ibid*

³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/>

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal_en

⁵ Team Europe consists of the European Union, EU Member States – including their implementing agencies and public development banks – as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

investments between 2021-27, for sustainable and high-quality projects, considering needs of partner countries and ensuring lasting benefits for local communities. This will allow EU's partners to develop their societies and economies, but also create opportunities for the EU Member States' private sector to invest and remain competitive, whilst ensuring the highest environmental and labour standards, as well as sound financial management.

EU and India have agreed to jointly drive several initiatives focusing on sustainability and sustainable development, based on as provided below:

- EU-India Strategic Partnership - A Roadmap to 2025⁶: This roadmap seeks to fortify the EU-India strategic partnership by strengthening cooperation on sustainable modernization, promoting green transition and circular economy.
- EU-India Trade and Technology Council 2022⁷: This initiative driven by Heads of Government of both partners, facilitates trade and technology cooperation to achieve long-term sustainable outcomes through technology sharing, innovation promotion, and sustainable business. The EU-India TTC focuses on three areas: (i) Digital governance and connectivity; (ii) Green and clean energy; and (iii) Trade, investments and resilient value chains.

1.2 Role of Collaboration in Achieving SDGs

1.2.1 The Imperative of Collaboration

Pursuing SDGs is a collective endeavour. No single country or organisation can accomplish these ambitious goals independently. It necessitates concerted efforts on the part of the government, private sector, civic society organisations and all other relevant stakeholders. EU and India exemplify this collaborative spirit in their joint efforts to promote sustainable development, as indicated earlier. In the current global context, marked by recovery from a pandemic and ongoing uncertainties around global warming, climate change, inequalities, and conflict, collaboration is more critical than ever.

This spirit of collaboration is embedded in SDG17 which promotes fostering partnerships for sustainable improvement. It emphasizes the significance of international cooperation, policy coherence, trade, technology, and financial flows to assist the success of the SDGs. This spirit of collaboration is not only about operating collectively, but about working together effectively, efficiently, and equitably to create a sustainable future for all.

1.2.2 Collaboration to Accelerate SDGs: Views from the G20 T20⁸

The importance of collaboration as a key catalyst to drive the SDGs has also been underlined in the G20 T20 Task Force "Accelerating SDGs - Exploring New Pathways to the 2030 Agenda". Collaboration (partnerships) has been identified as one of the four tenets for policy and governance to accelerate the pursuit of SDGs, also embedded in the G20 New Delhi Leaders Declaration (as follows):

- *Fostering a Community-Centric Approach*

The SDGs are implemented with a 'whole of community' approach that focuses on sustainable outcomes for the entire community and the environment.

- *Developing a Technology-enabled Ecosystem*

New technologies are utilized judiciously to create an ecosystem that improves accessibility, scalability, governance and transparency to accelerate SDGs and societal progress.



⁶ [https://indianembassybrussels.gov.in/pdf/Press_briefing_by_Secy_\(West\).pdf](https://indianembassybrussels.gov.in/pdf/Press_briefing_by_Secy_(West).pdf)

⁷ https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/36553/India_EU_Joint_Statement_1st_Meeting_of_the_Trade_and_Technology_Council

⁸ <https://t20ind.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Task-Force-6-ORF-digital-1.pdf>

- *Creating a future-ready society*

Resilience, preparedness, and inclusiveness should form the basis of a future-ready society by addressing opportunities and challenges, and augmenting capacities to meet future requirements

- *Reinvigorating global Partnerships*

All forms of global partnerships are strengthened to facilitate technology and resource transfers and capacity building in developing countries, especially the LDCs, for more sustainable and equitable development.

2. EU Delegation & CRB Partnership

2.1 Mapping EU - India CSR & Sustainability Collaboration

In 2021, CRB under the aegis of the Delegation of European Union to India, conducted a study titled, “Mapping and Conceptualising of EU CSR and Sustainability Action Platform in India”, on European Businesses operating in India, with a focus on the contributions by businesses through corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability in India.

The study analyzed the CSR expenditure of 77 EU businesses in India for 4 consecutive years. It also assessed the contribution of select EU businesses in India towards the SDGs by examining their Annual and Sustainability Reports. The findings revealed that Education was the top area attracting CSR investments, followed by Healthcare and Environmental sustainability. EU businesses contributed an average of about €15 million to education and saw a significant increase in funds allocated to healthcare and environment sustainability from about €3.75 million to well over €6.75 million.

The study further explored the potential for establishing an initiative for EU businesses in India to collaborate on CSR and sustainability initiatives. It outlined the governance structure, functions, and key success factors of the platform. It also highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing, engagement with government agencies, facilitation of partnerships, and capacity building. The proposed initiative aims to promote transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in CSR and sustainability efforts.

Salient features of the proposed collaborative initiative entail:

- A governance structure – a Steering Committee comprising representatives from the EU Delegation, EU businesses, and Indian stakeholders for strategic oversight and direction
- Members comprising EU businesses and relevant Indian stakeholders
- Thematic areas and working groups to collaborate on key issues pertaining to priority sustainability issues
- Driven by sharing knowledge, engaging policymakers, facilitating partnerships, and promoting visibility through various activities and outreach

2.2 Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration on Sustainability and SDGs: Views from the Ground

2.2.1 Background

Recognising the importance of promoting and fast-tracking collaboration between EU and Indian stakeholders to achieve common and agreed sustainability goals, CRB assessed the prevailing state of collaboration between EU and Indian entities across four States in India. This project was undertaken in partnership with the EU Delegation to India between March-Dec, 2023.

Four multi-stakeholder roundtable dialogues were organised in Kolkata, Guwahati, Pune, and Bangalore, in collaboration with credible local partners. The aim of these events was threefold.

- to identify opportunities and challenges that could influence effective and impactful collaboration between CSOs and businesses in achieving SDG targets;
- to pinpoint specific opportunities where CSOs and businesses could collaborate to promote inclusive business
- to provide valuable inputs for policy dialogue in India on ‘Accelerating SDGs’

These events were attended by industry experts, business leaders, academicians, CSOs, European Chambers of Commerce and many more key stakeholders to discuss and identify actionable strategies across different SDGs to strengthen regional development and sustainability.

NITI Aayog’s SDG India Index 2020-21 report⁹ tracked the progress of all Indian states and Union Territories (UTs) on 115 indicators, aligning with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)’s National Indicator Framework (NIF). Each state and UT were evaluated on a scale of 0 to 100 and categorized as: Achiever (100), Front-runner (65-99), Performer (50-64), or Aspirant (0-49).

In light of this report, CRB pinpointed several consistent “front-runner” and “performer” states and selected some of them as venues for the regional events to delve into the key factors driving their performance and explore how multi-stakeholder collaboration can foster positive change. The inaugural event took place in Kolkata, West Bengal, a performer state ranking 11th with a score of 62, followed by an event in Assam (Guwahati), which ranks 14th (57). Subsequent events were held in front-runner states like Maharashtra (Pune), ranking 5th (70), and Karnataka (Bengaluru), ranking 3rd (72).

It is noteworthy that while Maharashtra and Karnataka, are home to a large number of industries (including transnational businesses), West Bengal and Assam have a much less business presence.

2.2.2 Key takeaways from the dialogues

Over 250 stakeholders including EU businesses, Indian industry representatives, CSOs, EU member states representatives and other experts and practitioners participated in these dialogues. The events were designed with a focus on specific issues, based on discussions with the state-level partners.

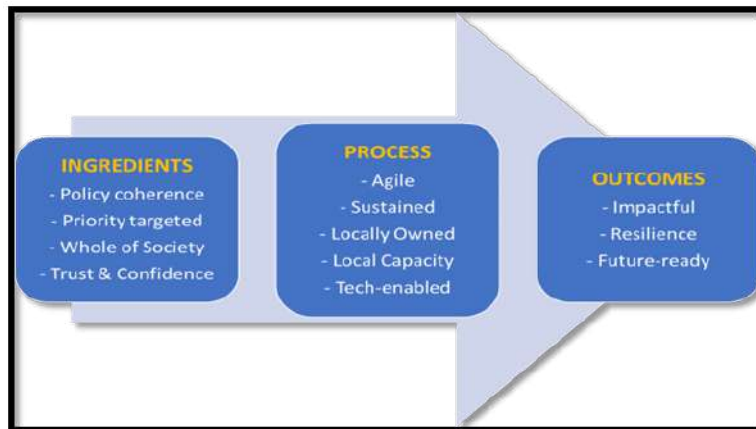
For example, in Guwahati, the event was aimed to enable a broad-based discussion on the pursuit of SDGs in the North-eastern region. In Kolkata, the event aimed to understand how businesses and the State Government have/could collaborate on specific SDGs. Sustainable Consumption and Production (SDG12) was the focus of the event in Pune – as suggested by the industry chamber partner and interest of the local industry. Finally, in Bangalore it was decided to focus on digitalisation, especially given the emphasis both of the State and the private sector in Karnataka on application of digitalisation for specific sustainable development related targets.

⁹ <https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/ranking?goal=AllGoal&area=IND&timePeriod=2020>

Here are some broad and common take-aways to promote collaboration between EU and Indian stakeholders on SDGs:

- **Sharing of (collaboration) Experiences/Cases:** Various stakeholders accepted the importance of collaborating among themselves on specific SDGs. It was recommended that successful cases of collaborations should be documented and shared widely
- **Partnership with State Government:** Local actors and stakeholders are interested and willing to support State Government in collecting data and evidence related to the pursuit of SDGs. This would particularly be helpful for States for their annual SDG progress report.
- **Recipes for Collaboration:** There are a number of factors that can facilitate effective collaboration (see: recipes to effective collaboration in section 2.2.3) to achieve specific SDG targets. Careful consideration in designing and implementing such collaborative initiatives is as important as the achieving specific outcomes
- **Value of local/community Knowledge:** Embracing local/community knowledge especially in pursuing specific SDG targets is an imperative in the North-eastern region. This is critical for inclusive and sustainable development, and should be considered in design and implementation of SDG initiatives.
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Mainstreaming gender is crucial to attaining inclusive development. Challenges faced by women and opportunities must be taken into consideration while designing and delivering programmes and policies.
- **Quality Over Speed:** While achieving SDGs it is important that the focus remains on the quality of output and outcome or impact rather than merely the speed of achieving it.
- **Power of Digitalisation:** A comprehensive understanding of digitalisation from an institutionalised perspective is necessary, rather than interpreting it as a process to convert physical entities into the digital form. This would also entail integrating elements of inclusivity, participation and access while designing digitalisation products.

2.2.3 Recipe for Effective Collaboration



Based on CRB’s experience and key takeaways from the discussions in the four states, a framework for business-stakeholder collaboration on SDGs is proposed. The framework envisages collaboration as a continuum comprising of certain key *ingredients* that flow through a *process* to help achieve measurable *outcomes*, as presented below.

Ingredients

- Policy coherence: An important constituent is an enabling and predictable policy environment, encouraging stakeholders to collaborate
- Priority targeted: Initiative is designed with certain priorities in mind, to help in tracking and measurement of outcomes (linked to specific SDG targets)
- Whole of Society approach: the Indian model of SDG localisation prescribes a whole of society approach, there is a need to ensure that nobody is left behind
- Trust and confidence: An extremely critical ingredient is trust and confidence among potential and existing partners (business, government, CSOs)

Process

- Agile and Flexible: process of collaboration and its components have to be flexible to enable prompt and timely actions
- Sustained: any process that is aimed to develop a collaborative initiative has to be designed for the long-term and sustained
- Locally owned: local and relevant stakeholders have to be part of the process right from the onset, especially to achieve local ownership and build local capacity
- Technology enabled: Given the paucity of time and the need to address a number of complex issues that are interconnected, technology will have to be harnessed, without compromising on the tenets of access and inclusivity

Outcomes

- Measurable Impacts: the design and implementation of any initiative should be done to achieve measurable impacts (and continually and periodically monitored against those desired impacts)
- Resilience: engagement in a collaborative initiative should improve the ability of the stakeholders to pursue complex challenges collectively, thereby building resilience
- Future-ready: ensure that systems are designed and stakeholder capacity is built to better address complex challenges in future



3. Conclusion

There is agreement at the highest level of Government, between the European Union and India to collaborate for the achievement of specific sustainability/sustainable development goals. This is embodied in the EU-India Trade and Technology Council focused on three areas, viz.: (i) Digital governance and connectivity; (ii) Green and clean energy; and (iii) Trade, investments and resilient value chains.

Over the years, domestic legislations in both European Union and in India have accorded considerable attention to the role of businesses in promoting sustainability and SDGs. In India, the mandatory BRSR disclosure for top 1,000 companies by market cap was recently bolstered with the notification related to BRSR Core¹⁰ (ensuring impacts on specific parameters, including supply/value chains). The upcoming EU legislations especially, Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) allocates responsibility on businesses to drive sustainable value chains leveraging trade and investment related activities. The EU has committed support to help partners in adjusting to and implementation of these legislations.

The current environment is conducive (and presents a win-win situation) for EU and Indian businesses and related stakeholders to explore partnerships to achieve SDGs through collective action in India. Relevant stakeholders need to convene and dialogue regularly to explore such opportunities. This is an activity that the upcoming Federation of European Businesses in India (FEBI)¹¹ should facilitate, given its vision to be the unified, independent, and influential voice of European business in India; and delivering value for its members.

It is evident from experiences across States that stakeholders on both sides (EU and India) are ready and willing to collaborate to pursue specific sustainability outcomes/SDGs. There are a few examples of successful collaboration (involving EU and Indian stakeholders) on SDGs – that could motivate wider adoption and scaling. However, such collaboration (or discussions to explore collaboration) is prevalent in States with stronger EU businesses presence. These States might not be the ones that are lagging behind in the pursuit/achievement of SDGs. EU and Indian businesses and stakeholders should explore the possibility of designing and implementing collaborative sustainability initiatives, particularly in some of the SDG-laggard States (that is *aspirants* and *performers*, according to NITI Aayog's classification of States, based on the SDG India Index).

Based on CRB's experience and key take-aways from the discussions in the four states, a *framework for business-stakeholder collaboration* (recipe for effective collaboration) on SDGs is proposed. This framework envisages collaboration as a continuum comprising of certain key *ingredients* (policy coherence; priority-targeted; whole of society approach; trust and confidence) that flow through a *process* (that is agile and flexible; sustained; locally owned and technology enabled) to help achieve measurable *outcomes* (impacts; resilience and future-ready). EU and Indian businesses, industry actors, agencies, CSOs and other stakeholders could consider elements of this framework while designing and implementing collaborative sustainability initiatives.

¹⁰ https://www.sebi.gov.in/legal/circulars/jul-2023/brsr-core-framework-for-assurance-and-esg-disclosures-for-value-chain_73854.html

¹¹ <https://ibbc.bg/federation-of-european-business-in-india-febi-vision-document/>

Annexures

Annexure 1: About State-level Events

Kolkata, West Bengal

CRB partnered with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC&I) to organise the first stakeholder dialogue of the series in Kolkata, West Bengal on 8 May 2023. Given that this was the inaugural event, the discussions were primarily broad in nature. Despite being the inaugural event and having a limited presence of businesses, particularly EU businesses in the state, the event received an overwhelming response from across the city. This indicates a strong interest in sustainable development and a need for such events in Kolkata. The event was graced by the presence of Chief Guest, Smt. Vandana Yadav (IAS), Principal Secretary, Industry, Commerce & Enterprises, Government of West Bengal & Chairperson and Managing Director, West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC), outlined various government policies aimed at accelerating SDGs in the state.



Guwahati, Assam

The second event of the series was held in one of the performer states in north-east India, Assam. The region is home to several key industries, including oil and gas, fertiliser, paper, tourism, and cement. However, recent reports¹² have highlighted a significant gap between the number of large industries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) established in Assam over the last five years.



CRB along with The Media Management Group for Literacy and Development (MMGLD), a civil society organisation, hosted this event on 31 May 2023 in Guwahati. The event, which was conducted in a hybrid format, attracted participants from across the North-eastern states. The discussions were centered around SDGs, with a particular emphasis on women’s leadership and entrepreneurship in the northeast region.

The event was graced by the presence of Shri Lok Ranjan, Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), who served as the chief guest and highlighted the unique approach of defining SDGs at the district level in the northeast region, emphasizing the vision of transformative and sustainable development to improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Pune, Maharashtra

The penultimate event of the series was held in Pune, a city in the western state of Maharashtra. Pune, being in close proximity to Mumbai, India’s de facto financial centre, is emerging as a growing industrial hotspot. This growth can be attributed to its moderate climate, superior transport facilities, and geographical advantage of being near Mumbai, which is already a well-established industrial hub. It is noteworthy that Maharashtra



¹² <https://guwahatiplus.com/exclusive-news/32770-msmes-but-only-86-large-industries-in-last-5-years-in-assam#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20data%20provided,set%20up%20in%20the%20state.>

ranks second¹³ in India for the highest number of registered foreign businesses, including those from the EU, trailing only behind Delhi. Consequently, this event attracted the highest number of attendees from the business sector, both domestic and foreign, as compared to the other three events.

In this context, CRB joined forces with the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce (IGCC) to host an event focused on sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) on 22 August 2023. The guest of honour, Dr. Ajit Ranade, Vice Chancellor, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), addressed the gathering emphasizing the responsibility of businesses towards future generations and highlighted the evolving perspective of responsible businesses, which includes employee well-being, environmental considerations, and the protection of small shareholders' rights. Dr. Ranade further emphasized the urgency to find dependable alternatives to coal. This is in response to the potential implications of border taxes on India's significant dependence on renewable energy.

Bengaluru, Karnataka

On 14 September 2023, CRB collaborated with the prestigious Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIM Bangalore) to host the concluding event of the series in Bengaluru. Known as the "Silicon Valley of India", this city is recognized for its significant contribution to India's information technology (IT) sector and its dynamic startup ecosystem. With a focus on Karnataka, this event endeavored to illuminate avenues for cooperation among key stakeholders in the realm of digitalisation, with a view to propel the SDGs not only within the state but also on a broader scale.



Dr. Mukund Raj, the Project Head of the SDG Coordination Centre (SDGCC) in Karnataka, delivered a special address during the event. He highlighted Karnataka's accomplishments in innovation and IT and stressed the importance of digital alignment in governance and bureaucracy. This approach has facilitated impactful programs that contribute to achieving the SDGs in Karnataka, and the state ranking in the top 3 in the SDG India Index 2020-21.



¹³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1009251/india-number-of-registered-foreign-companies-by-state/#:~:text=Number%20of%20registered%20foreign%20companies%20in%20India%20FY%202022%2C%20by%20state&text=Delhi%20had%20the%20highest%20number,India%20in%20financial%20year%202022.>

Annexure 2: Some Illustrations on collaboration (collated from secondary sources)

Case Study 1

On 23 September 2020, an EU-India sustainability project¹⁴ for the leather cluster in Kolkata, West Bengal, India, was launched by Solidaridad Regional Expertise Centre and its partners. The project, funded by the EU under its SWITCH-Asia Programme, aimed to support effective waste management and sustainable development of the MSME tanning companies in Bantala leather cluster. The initiative aligned with the Government of West Bengal's efforts to transition to a resource-efficient and circular economy model. The project aimed to support the Kolkata leather cluster to adopt cleaner and sustainable production processes. This project also complemented the West Bengal government's vision of making Bantala leather cluster into a leading leather geography in Asia. The project adopted four key approaches to achieve its end. Eco-friendly practices and technologies were demonstrated, the tannery workforce was trained on better practices, a public-private partnership platform was established, and the tanneries were enabled to adopt green practices and technologies. The EU's financial support through this initiative was in line with India's development priorities, which are aligned with the SDGs.

Case Study 2

A government agreement, aimed at promoting cooperation in research, technology development, and innovation among institutions, authorities, and private enterprises of both countries, was signed between Denmark and India on 28 May 2018. The Ministers for Higher Education and Science from both countries were the signatories of this agreement. A three-year action plan was formalized post-signing, with the Innovation Fund set to grant DKK 15 million in 2018 for research and innovation projects within energy and water in cooperation with Indian partners. The Innovation Centre Denmark in New Delhi, established in cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, played a crucial role in this collaboration by providing Danish research and educational institutions and companies access to Indian knowledge and innovation environments as well as the Indian market.

Case Study 3

The Indo-German Energy Programme (IGEN)¹⁵, a collaboration between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Indian government, was commissioned to address energy challenges in India. Significant progress was made in promoting energy efficiency, integrating renewable energy into the grid, and implementing energy-saving strategies. Energy efficiency labels were introduced, indicating the energy consumption of household appliances and energy-intensive machinery. Over 10,000 professionals were certified as energy managers or auditors, contributing to a skilled workforce in the energy sector. Private sector investment in energy efficiency measures exceeded 400 million euros per year, resulting in annual energy savings worth 300 million euros. The world's first calculation basis for determining the CO₂ emission factor for the Indian electricity supply grid was developed. A nationwide painting competition on energy conservation engaged over six million students, raising awareness about the importance of energy efficiency. A performance review of 85 state-owned thermal power plants identified potential annual savings of 6.92 million tonnes of coal, reducing CO₂ emissions by 31 million tonnes per year. These achievements underscore the successful collaboration between Germany and India in promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy integration.

¹⁴ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/transitioning-sustainable-future-kolkata-leather-industries_en?s=167

¹⁵ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/15767.html>

Case Study 4

A recent study titled “Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in India 2023”¹⁶, conducted by Team Sweden in India, Business Sweden, and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce India, received an 87% response rate with participation from 214 out of 261 Swedish companies. The respondents, primarily from industrial (53%), professional services (40%), and consumer companies (7%), provided diverse insights into the business environment in India. The survey revealed that 70% of respondents were profitable in 2022, and 60% plan to increase their investment in 2023, reflecting their confidence in the Indian economy. Despite the global pandemic, a strong and positive business climate was reported by 86% of respondents. This was attributed to policy reforms, investment facilitation, and initiatives like Make in India. Government efforts such as the Gati Shakti project and the Production Linked Incentives (PLI) Scheme also contributed to a favorable business environment. Owing to the long history of economic ties, and this partnership shared between the two countries that have strengthened in recent years, the business climate has become more favourable in India for foreign companies to operate. The survey underscored the successful collaboration between Sweden and India, suggesting that India offers significant opportunities for Swedish businesses.

Case Study 5

The Veolia-India water supply project¹⁷ in Nagpur, India is a successful example of collaboration between a French enterprise and a Municipal Corporation in India to address the challenges of water access, affordability, and sustainability. The project was implemented through a public-private partnership between Veolia-India and Orange City Water (OCW), a joint venture with Vishvaraj Environment Ltd. The project aimed to provide 24/7 water supply to all homes in Nagpur, including slum dwellers. This was achieved by upgrading the water supply system and implementing volumetric tariffs. The project also focused on increasing water production capacity, reducing leakage, and ensuring accurate billing. The Social Welfare Team played a crucial role in engaging with customers and addressing their queries. The project has also had a positive impact on the lives of the people of Nagpur, particularly women and girls. Key Issues addressed by the project: Water access, affordability, and sustainability, Gender equality and women empowerment, Public health and sanitation and Environmental protection.

¹⁶ <https://www.business-sweden.com/globalassets/insights/reports/business-climate-survey-2023-india.pdf>

¹⁷ https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/waterandsustainabledevelopment2015/pdf/Dominique_Gatel_Naipur_BM.pdf



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