

Annual Report 2022-23



**Ecotourism & Conservation
Society of Sikkim**

Table of Contents

Chairman’s Note	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Note from the CEO	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile of the Governing Body members	3
Profile of Staff	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ECOSS Activities:	5
1. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funded Sikkim Biodiversity Conservation and Forest Management Project. https://forestsbfpc.nic.in/	5
2. Project of Forest & Environment Department in the North District (now Mangan District)	8
3. NABARD, Springshed Based Watershed Development Project	10
3.8 Homestay Operator’s Training	15
3.12 Pickle & Jams/Preserves Making	19
4. Other activities	21
4.8 Others/ Meetings, workshops, seminars, events attended	36

ECOSS

Profile of the Governing Body members

Mr. Prem Das Raiis an Indian politician from Sikkim who served as a Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha for two consecutive terms (2009–2019) representing the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) party. He holds a B.Tech in Chemical Engineering from IIT Kanpur and an MBA from IIM Ahmedabad, making him the first MP to have both degrees. Before entering politics, he worked at Bank of America and later held leadership roles in Sikkim's industrial sector, including as Managing Director of Sikkim Flour Mills and the Sikkim Milk Union, and as Chairman of the Sikkim Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (SIDICO). He is the founding member of the Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) to promote sustainable development. In recognition of his work, he was awarded the Eisenhower Fellowship in 2000.

Mr. Karma Nidup Bhutia, a retired Secretary to the Government of Sikkim, has served over 33 years in public administration, beginning his career as an Assistant Mining Engineer in 1978 and later holding key leadership roles across sectors including renewable energy, tourism, taxation, transport, industries, and finance

Was inducted in the prestigious Indian Administrative Service (IAS) cadre in the year 2004, he was instrumental in major reforms such as introducing the Value Added Tax system and modernizing tax administration, and received the State Government's Certificate of Meritorious Service in 2002

Following his retirement in 2012, he continued contributing to public institutions as Chairman of the Teesta Urja hydro project, OSD for establishing postgraduate programmes at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, and through long-standing involvement with various social, cultural, and sports organizations, including the Bon Monastery, Royal Tsuklakhang Trust, and ECOSS, where he is a founding member.

Mr. Loday Chungyalpa: Graduated from University of Santa Clara California with a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA). Has worked overseas for over 20 years in senior management roles in the corporate sector. Since returning to Sikkim in 1996 he has been actively involved in the areas of education transformation, sustainable livelihood generation, and environment issues. He is a founder member of a number of NGOs and schools in Sikkim.

Mr. Ravi Pradhan is the owner of Rhenock House, a heritage-style luxury villa turned boutique hotel in Gangtok, Sikkim. He comes from a distinguished Newar - Pradhan family with deep roots in Sikkim: his ancestors established the renowned Chandra Nursery in Rhenock in the early 20th century. Known for his warm hospitality, Mr. Pradhan personally welcomes guests, helps with trip planning (including permits), and is praised in visitor reviews for the personal, home-away-from-home atmosphere he cultivates.

Dr. Satyadeep S. Chhetri is an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Nar Bahadur Bhandari Government College (formerly Sikkim Government College), Gangtok. He holds a PhD in Chemistry and has published his scientific work in both national and

international journals. In addition to his academic career, he is a dedicated science communicator, popular quizmaster, and columnist. Dr. Chhetri is also a bestselling author, having written *Gorkhaland Diaries: Even Dreams... Uneven Lives* (2022) and *Sikkim: From Autocracy to Half-Democracy* (2023). He is actively involved in civil society, serving on the board of Sikkim's SAATHI organisation and ECOSS.

Mr. Rajendra P. Gurung is the Chief Executive Officer of the Ecotourism & Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) and also member of Governing council of IMI(Integrated Mountain Initiative). He has been active in regional environmental policy dialogues, contributing to Sikkim's 2018 tourism policy alongside WWF India. Under his leadership, ECOSS has helped motivate state-level actions like banning plastic bags. He also represents ECOSS in national/international mountain-development forums.

ECOSS Activities:

1. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funded Sikkim Biodiversity Conservation and Forest Management Project.

<https://forestsbfm.nic.in/>

Background. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) assisted Sikkim Bio-diversity Conservation & Forest Management Project (SBFP) was approved for implementation by the Government of Sikkim from 2010-11 with a financial outlay of Rs.330.57 crores. The implementing agency of this project is the Department of Forest & Environment, Government of Sikkim. The project covers all the four districts of Sikkim. The project has the goal of improving the management of natural resources and alleviating rural poverty. In order to achieve these goals, the project has the following objectives:

- To strengthen biodiversity conservation activities and forest management capacity, and
- To improve livelihoods and foster community development for the local people who are dependent on the forest by promoting sustainable biodiversity conservation, afforestation and income generation activities including eco-tourism.

The following activities have been included in the Project to achieve the above objectives.

- Afforestation
- Protected Area Management & Biodiversity Conservation
- Income Generation Activities for poverty alleviation (involving NGOs, Community Organisers, Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) and Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) and Self Help Groups.
- Supporting Activities for Forest Management (Research and Training, Monitoring and Evaluation and Enhancement of Geographic Information System (GIS) and Management Information System (MIS).

The project area covers 9 Forest Divisions (four territorial, four wildlife and one KNP Divisions) spread over 26 Ranges located throughout the state of Sikkim. The programme envisaged to form or use the existing Joint Forest Management Committees, Eco Development Committees (JFMC/EDCs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the project areas in an active manner for the above activities for the residents of villages around protected areas and reserved forests. As these activities involve the

participation of rural people as well as the PMU through the holding of meetings at regular intervals, mass public approach, dissemination of information, and motivation to ensure that members of JFMC/EDC/SHGs have sustained interest in forest conservation activities and participate continuously, it was decided to take the support of NGOs as a facilitator.

ECOSS was thus assigned to work in the North (now Mangan) District under this project to achieve these objectives (KCC was assigned the West & South Districts while VHAS was assigned the East District). To carry out their responsibilities NGOs were required to appoint Community Organisers (whose salaries are borne by the Project) in the various ranges of each district assigned. The First MoU between ECOSS and the Project Director Sikkim Biodiversity & Forest Management Project was entered into on the 4th of March 2011 and has since been renewed every year. The project was scheduled to end in 2021-22, but has been extended further till 2023-24. Initially 6 Community Organisers were appointed under ECOSS which was subsequently increased to seven. The ranges assigned include six Territorial Ranges (Phodong, Mangan, Dzungu, Chungthang, Lachen, Lachung), two KNP ranges (Chungthang and Dzungu) and one Wildlife Range (Shingba).

The project in the North District commenced with the selection of 11 Initial Intervention Villages (IIVs) for start of project activities. From then onwards more Spread Effect Villages (SEVs) were selected every year. Since the initiation of the JICA Assisted SBFP in the Sikkim State, altogether a total of 42 (31 JFMCs and 11 EDCs) have been selected and adopted under the project in the North Division (Territorial, KNP & Wildlife) under fifth batches namely: IIVs (11 Nos), SEVs-I (11 Nos), SEVs-II (11 Nos) & SEVs-III (8Nos), SEVs IV (3Nos). There was a reorganization, reconstitution and rationalization exercise conducted in 2015-16 whereby some of these units were either dropped, merged or changed in its categorization as a JFMC or EDC.

1.1 Income Generating Activities through Self Help Groups.

One of the key activities under the JICA assisted SBF Project is the promotion of income generating activities through Self Help Groups (mainly run by women) that are attached to the JFMCs or EDCs. The Member Secretary of the JFMC or EDC is always a Forest officer of the rank of Beat Officer (BO) or Range Officer (RO). Under the SBFP Project a total amount of Rs.1, 80,000 was sanctioned to each JFMC/EDC for distribution as a loan to three SHGs @Rs 60,000 per SHG for income generation activities. The money is first transferred to the bank account of the JFMC or EDC from where it is finally transferred into the Bank account of the SHG. A nominal interest of 2% per annum is payable on the loan which is to be kept in the Village Development Fund of the JFMC/EDC. The process of loan approval for the SHG is carried out by the NGO and involves identification and listing of SHGs in the jurisdiction of the JFMC/EDC or the creation of a new SHG. The listed SHGs are then evaluated and graded for past performance and activities and a final selection is made. An income

generating activities is finally selected, a business plan is developed for the activity with the help of project consultants, and a final approval is obtained from the District Forest Officer. SHGs are provided trainings if needed for their respective IGAs and also with regard to record keeping (minutes of meetings etc), and book keeping. A set of registers for record keeping is provided to each NGO.



1.2 Activities of Community Organisers

ECOSS has engaged seven Community Organisers (COs) for the project whose work is monitored and planned by one Project Coordinator. The COs all of whom are Graduates are: Mr Ugen Lepcha, Mr Tilak Adhikary, Mr Krishna Sharma, Mr Tashi Lachenpa, Mr Pema Lachungpa, Mr Jigme Lachungpa and Ms Nima Doma Lepcha. Project Coordinator is Mrs Aruna Pradhan. Activities of the COs include:

- i) Assisting in maintenance of proper records of SHG's and Minutes book of JFMC/EDCs
- ii) Assistance in preparation of Business plans of SHGs
- iii) Holding of regular meetings with SHG groups regarding the repayment of loans.
- iv) Monitoring of IGAs of SHGs, v) Assistance in holding of AGMs, vi) Disbursement of loans to SHGs
- vii) Attending meetings at PMU, FEWMD HQ and NGO office

2. Project of Forest & Environment Department in the North District (now Mangan District)

The project for which ECOSS has been engaged through the Forest & Environment Department in the North District (now Mangan District) has been extended a further two years, beyond its 10 year tenure, to 2023-24. A decadal Report was prepared by ECOSS and presented to the Department. The Income Generating Activities of the Self Help Groups working under the JFMCs and EDCs under the seven Ranges covered in the project, continued during the year, being monitored by the seven Community Organisers and our Project Coordinator Mrs. Aruna Pradhan employed under the project. Out of a total of 71 SHGs who participated during the course of the project, around 60 are still actively engaged in their IGAs. A review of the IGAs during the year showed the following:

	IGA	Number of SHGs engaged	Remarks
1	Large Cardamom Nursery	18	Not much success because of disease and drying up of the plants and lack of demand for plants
2	Piggery	26	This is one of the most successful IGAs as this is a traditional activity, piglets and feed are available and market for the meat or piglets is good. Loans are being paid back on time with repeat loans being taken
3	Bamboo Handicrafts	1	Earlier the unit was doing well with good demand. But due to the COVID-19 they went into losses and are not able to revive production strongly.
4	Vegetable Cultivation	05	Mixed success.
5	Grocery Shop	08	They do not have a big margin of profit, but they are paying the loan on time.
6	Dairy	07	This is a traditional and successful activity and they are paying the loan on time
7	Handloom	01	They are doing well with timely repayment
08	Pickle Making	02	They are doing good
09	Poultry	03	They are doing well

It was observed that for most of the SHGs the IGA work was secondary in nature to their daily activities. In terms of choice of IGA activities the maximum preference of the SHGs was piggery followed by Grocery Store and Selling of Household Items. It was informed by the SHGs that these activities were chosen as the risk of loss was low and also that they did not have to spend much

quality time carrying out these livelihood activities. Piggery has proven to be the most successful activity for maximum SHGs. The minimum income from one piglet is Rs. 10,000/-in a year. One SHG grading, namely Menlon SHG in Upper Singhik JFMC has been conducted this year, along with respective Member Secretary and ECOSS Community Organizer and their IGA activity, namely piggery has been approved. The standard Rs 60,000 loan has been advanced to the SHG. In terms of return of loan taken, a total of Rs.10, 89, 340 out of total loan amounting to Rs.35.40 Lakhs being disbursed for IGA activities to SHGs has been repaid by them as on 31.03.2023 There has been several cases of reloan to SHGs this year (they have paid back their old loan and retaken the same amount) amounting toRs.7.80 Lakhs in total. A total amount of Rs 1,09,000 interest has been collected by the JFMCs and EDCs to date from the SHGs from loans advanced to them. An amount of Rs.18.60 lakhs has accumulated as non-revolving funds (loans returned by SHGs, but not taken again) which was lying in the bank accounts of JFMCs/EDCs. This reflects a general tendency amongst the population not to take loans as they are not so confident of repaying back.



Member of Ekta SHG under Rangrang Village under Tingchim Chadey JFMC.

Piggery of Kursongreep SHG of Tcong-Naga

3. NABARD, Springshed Based Watershed Development Project

The Springshed Based Watershed Development Programme of NABARD is being implemented in the Hel-Khola Watershed under 25-Namcheybong GPU, Pakyong Block, in the East District of Sikkim with a total area of 647.935 ha and covering four wards of the GPU. Raigaon, Basilakha, Priklakha and Naibutar. The Watershed falls under Pakyong Block which also includes the Karthok Reserve Forest which is the recharge area of the springs. The project area has a population of approximately 756 persons with around 220 households. There are a total of 26 springs in the four wards of 25-Namcheybong of which five have been selected for monitoring during the project period. Most of the springs are perennial but had been showing increasingly lowered discharge during the lean season thereby impacting the potential for winter agriculture. The project seeks to augment the winter discharge of springs in the area to support winter farming activities, decrease soil erosion, while at the same time improve water management and strengthen the livelihoods and welfare of people in the watershed area. The major project measures identified for implementation are:

- a) Catchment area treatment through construction of staggered trenches in recharge area of springs. b) Plantation/afforestation to combat soil erosion, improve moisture retention and reduce quick runoff while providing additional income from such trees and plants.
- c) Construction and improvement of water storage and distribution infrastructure
- d) Formation of Village Water Security Committee, their training/capacity building on water resource management and for monitoring spring discharges, precipitation and trench maintenance.
- e) Livelihood strengthening: Training and capacity building of women/landless and others on diversified livelihoods such as ecotourism/homestays, nature guides, piggery, dairy farming, poultry farming, bamboo and other mushroom cultivation, handicrafts. Agricultural and horticulture development activities are also be carried out.

The three-year project, whose preliminary pre-project activities commenced in 2018, was sanctioned in February 2020, but was stalled almost immediately for almost a year and a half due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second-year activities have almost been completed during the current financial year. Project activities completed during the year include:

3.1 Construction of trenches in the Karthok Forest Recharge area.

The core activity for the NABARD Springshed Project is the rejuvenation of springs in the four wards that fall in the project area, through the construction of staggered trenches in the recharge area. The

recharge area identified through a geohydrological survey falls in the Karthok Reserve Forest. As desired by the Forest and Environment Department the work of construction of the trenches was entrusted to members of the Karthok RF JFMC. A total of 663 trenches was planned to be constructed in the second half (six months) of the second phase/year of the project at a cost of Rs 1.28 lakhs. This was done in two phases, the first phase was executed in April to June and the remainder in December. The approximate total area for trench digging in the project area is 257 hectares. For the 2nd year a total of 1,325 trenches have been constructed at a total cost of Rs 2.56 lakhs. The average unit sizes is 3' x 6' x 2.5' or multiples thereof.



3.2 Terracing:

Terracing has been earmarked as an important Watershed Development Activity. Terracing is an important measure to reduce rain runoff, increase percolation, increase area for cultivation by utilizing fallow land, raise yield of crops, prevent soil erosion and preserve soil fertility and

moisture, Terracing was carried out in land with slopes that had quick runoff and involves back cutting of the slope and containing the soil with a dry rock wall. The beneficiaries for terracing have been selected from Raigaon and Basilakha wards. The work was carried out by the individual land owners with help from local community groups. Total cost of terracing works done during the 2nd phase of the 2nd year starting from April 2022 was Rs 4,40,000, of which the beneficiaries contributed Rs 70,450 as *shram daan* (by way of labour and material)



3.3 Educational visit for farmers of Namcheybong to the ICAR farm in Tadong Gangtok on the 20th of April.

Piggery, dairy, fruit farming (kiwi, banana and papaya) poly house tunnel and integrated farm technology inspected and explained by the farm officials including scientists of different departments. Around 15 persons attended.



3.4 Training in Fish Farming 25th April 2022

A day long training on Fishery was jointly organized by ECOSS and Directorate of Fisheries, Govt. of Sikkim at Basilakha; one of the wards under the Project Area. The programme was attended by Shri N. Jaswant, Director, Directorate of Fisheries GoS; Shri Nitesh Gurung, Assistant Director, Directorate of Fisheries along with two range officers of Pakyong district. The main purpose for organizing the program was to give training and awareness on different schemes which are implementing under Directorate of Fisheries, Govt. of Sikkim and various techniques used in fish farming relevant for Sikkim including ornamental fish breeding. Shri N. Jaswant IFS suggested that the fish farmers form the Fish Farmers Producers Organization (FFPO) and avail the maximum benefits under PMMSY, MMMUY schemes. Shri Krishna Prasad Sharma, Range Officer Fisheries Gangtok District spoke on the importance of ornamental fisheries, its culture, breeding and seed production techniques. The participants visited the fish farm of Mr Phipraj Subba and learnt about the techniques of tank construction and breeding. Mr Subba has been breeding grass carp, common carp and ornamental fishes.



3.5 Field Inspection by NABARD team.

A one-day field inspection by a team led by Ms Bhama Deuri AGM NABARD was conducted on the 29th of April 2022. The team inspected the trenches constructed in the recharge area, the plantation works and other interventions conducted under the training.



3.6 Water Security Planning training.

On the 9th of July 2022, a meeting was held at the Raigaon Jr High School which was attended by the Panchayat president, Panchayat members and members of the Haikhola Springshed Project Committee. Field Facilitator Rural Development Department, Mrs Ganga Sharma conducted a small training on the various aspects of preparing a village water security plan. The Watershed Committee members and the Panchayat members agreed that the trench making activities in the Karthok Forest, under the project, was very important for the water security of the area and that there was a need to properly manage the water resources of the GPU, in particular that of Heikhola and its associated springs. It was resolved that the Springshed Committee would be trusted with the monitoring of the tapping from the Heikhola source and that in future the permission of the committee would be needed before any new water pipeline was taken from the river.



3.7 Cooks Training for Homestay operators.

In view of the interest shown by the residents of the GPU in setting up homestays, a Cooks training for potential homestay operators was conducted on the 26th of September in Raigaon. Mr. Sabal Chettri, restaurant entrepreneur and a graduate from the



Institute of Hotel Management Rumtek was the resource person for the training. Mr Sabal talked about basic kitchen management, hygiene and food safety, essential utensils, the various cuisines and types of cooking, meals planning, costing and portion control, proper handling of knives and types of vegetable and meat cuts, selection of ingredients, waste management, food packing and storage, and demonstrated correct use of knives, and preparation of some basic Indian, Chinese and Continental dishes. He also talked about healthy food and leveraging the use of organic food and ethnic dishes found in our villages. Around thirty persons, mainly women, participated in the training. Participants thoroughly enjoyed the training and enthusiastically participated in preparing the dishes



3.8 Homestay Operator's Training

A Homestay Operators training was held in Yakten Homestay village on the 28th February. 2023. The objective of the training was to introduce the potential homestay operators to the various aspects of proper homestay management. CEO

ECOSS explained to the participants the different aspects of homestay hospitality, basic standards of room furnishing, ventilation, lighting and toilets, the guest register, departure protocol, and the planning of

itineraries. Resource person from the Institute of Hotel Management Rumtek, Senior lecturer Ms Indira Singh talked about simple aspects such as bed making, room décor and cleanliness, setting the dining table,

meals planning and serving of meals, kitchen hygiene and management. She also emphasised on the need to leverage the attraction value of traditional dishes, ethnic cooking and serving in the traditional kitchen. Due to various cultural engagements in the community the



attendance was a bit on the low side and it was proposed to have a refresher course once the homestays became operational.

3.9 Plantation works: Afforestation helps check the over-use of natural resources by providing an alternative source pool and ensures trees and plants that hold the soil in these sensitive areas remain protected thereby, reducing quick run-off and checking soil erosion and landslides. Plantation has been carried out in or around the water sources and areas vulnerable to erosion. The varieties chosen for plantation were those that would also provide monetary and other benefits. Plantation included saplings of fruit trees like guava, banana, avocado, peach, plum, also oaks, poplars, broom-grass, bamboo and nakima (*Tupistra nutans*) an edible flower of the lily family that is highly priced. A bamboo and other seedling nursery was also constructed. Plantation works was carried out by different community groups in different locations in the four wards of the project area. A total of 17,780 plants are to be planted in the 2nd phase of the second year of the project valued at Rs 1, 74, 250 with a shram daan component of Rs 27,775. Around 50% of these have been planted in the current financial year ended March 2023.



Bamboo nursery



3.10 Exposure Visit to Regu



An exposure visit to the farm of Mr Gauri Narayan, a progressive farmer from Regu was conducted on the 13th August 2022 for the farmers of Namcheybong. He provided information on organic agriculture practices highlighting the support from ATMA and other line departments in making his traditional agriculture field into a modern organic farm. Present during the visit were Mr. Amit Chettri,



Assistant Technology Manager, ATMA and Mrs. Keshori Sharma, HDO, Rhenock Block. The team visited farm school's low cost poly tunnel green house for off-season vegetables. The latter were exposed to the importance of organic farming, organic manure, bio-pesticide, vermin composting, low cost water harvesting and various innovative technologies for organic farming. There were interactions between the progressive farmer and the visiting farmers. The purpose of the tour was to enhance and upgrade the skill and knowledge of the farmers.

3.11 Training in Poultry Farming

A one day training on poultry farming was conducted in Yakten ward on the 18th December 2022 under Karthok GPU. Around 15 participants were present in the mentioned training. Dr. Kamal Bantawa Rai from the Department of Animal Husbandry was the Resource person for the training, Dr Bantawa Rai explained the various aspects of poultry farming. There are a few key things to keep in mind when training poultry, and certain tips and suggestions were given by the resource person. The first session was given on handling the chicks. He suggested that one way to make it easier to handle chicks is to place them in a



little box with a heating pad underneath them. This will keep them warm and comfy while they get used to being handled and will make it easier to train them. The chicks can also be placed in a cardboard box lined with a heating pad to help them stay warm while training them.

Dr. Bantawa also informed that proper care should be taken while building chicken coops. The floors should be slanted so that the droppings do not fall inside. Care should also be taken on the protecting the poultry against diseases. Many of the diseases that can affect poultry can be transmitted from hen to hen through direct contact or contaminated feed and water. Chickens should be kept in a clean environment with adequate ventilation to prevent the build-up of bacteria and odour. All manure in the coop should be removed regularly and disposed of properly. As a conclusion to the training session, the resource person also informed the participants on the several schemes available for farmers who are interested to take up poultry farming. There are various schemes available under various government organizations which provide training and technical support to the farmers who take up poultry farming. In addition to providing financial assistance, they also conduct training programs regularly to impart new skills to the farmers and help them upgrade their skills so that they can compete with other farmers and market their products more effectively. The Government also provides subsidies to the farmers who engage in

poultry farming. The government subsidy is provided directly to the farmers under the farmer income protection scheme.



3.12 Pickle & Jams/Preserves Making

A day long training session on Jam/Preserves and Pickle making was organized for the members of Self Help Groups in Raigaon ward on the 19th December 2022 with the help of resource persons from the College of Agricultural Engineering and Post-Harvest Technology Ranipul. The resource persons were Dr. Prashant Sharma and lab assistant Mrs. Kabita Chettri. The training imparted knowledge, techniques and skills in processing of vegetables and fruits into pickles, jams and preserves, using available local raw materials. 25 women from different Self-Help Groups participated in the training. The women learned about different varieties of fruits and vegetables and their nutritional benefits. Various health issues associated with preserved foods were highlighted and tips were provided to ensure that the foods are consumed safely. The resource persons provided a broad description of the various types of jams and preserves that are available in the market today and how they are prepared. He also talked about the various health benefits of preserved food and the nutritional value that they add to the diet. Methods of preserving the fruits and their shelf life were discussed. The different types of equipment and ingredients and the steps involved in the preparation of jams and preserves were demonstrated practically with the active involvement of the trainees. This included the preparation of jam and preserve from locally sourced guavas and oranges. The expert showed the various steps involved in such preparation and the important techniques used such as using correct proportion of fruit, preparing pectin, mixing, boiling, cooling, filtering, checking and adjusting sugar content, adding preservatives and filling etc. Preparation of Dalley (red cherry peppers) paste and pickles was also demonstrated.

3.13 Sustainable Menstrual Hygiene

In consonance with the Women and Landless Development component of the project, ECOSS has taken a separate initiative, (not part of the funded component of the project) to promote the making of reusable sanitary napkins. Our Project Coordinator Ms Uden Bhutia who has a specialised background in promoting sustainable menstrual hygiene is spearheading this initiative. Four sewing machines had been donated by the Lupin Foundation to ECOSS from their CSR funds while a cloth cutting machine had been donated by our GB member Mr Rai. Initially, an awareness programme was conducted in Raigaon for around 21 participants which included the members of Self Help groups from the selected wards. The women from the SHGs were provided awareness on menstrual hygiene where they were informed on the management of hygiene during menstruation and mentioned the different sustainable menstrual products available in the market. After the training, the SHG members were trained in the manufacturing of cloth pads, a reusable sanitary napkin. The SHG members were provided with the raw materials and equipment for producing the cloth pads. Mrs. Naina Kala Rai, who has been leading the SHGs in producing the cloth pads has showcased the finished products in various events, including an event in Kerala. The SHG is now working on improving the design and marketing of the products.



4. Other activities

4.1 Meeting regarding Springshed Management

Apart from the above activities, ECOSS also participated in the NABARD Partners



Meet held at Hotel, The Fern on the 22nd August 2022 and the First State Level Springshed Project Review Meeting held on the 23rd September 2023 at the NABARD office (photo below) and the State Credit Seminar held by NABARD on the 22nd March 2023 in Hotel Denzong Residency. CEO ECOSS also

attended the ICIMOD/SDC/ ACWADAM Springshed Co-learning workshop held at the Forest Secretariat on the 1st February 2023 followed by a field visit to the Dhaara Vikas project site at Suldung Kamlang Mangalbarey, Soreng District on the 2nd February attended by Ms. Uden Bhutia Project Coordinator and Mr Santosh Rai President Hailkhola Springshed Committee. ECOSS has also conducted survey, physical tagging and geo-tagging of the trenches and has also uploaded all geo-tagged activities of the project in the Bhuwan portal. Besides this the spring water discharge measurement of five springs is being regularly recorded every month.

4.2 New Springshed Project in Chumbung Soreng District.

DDM NABARD has approached ECOSS with a request to explore the possibility of a new Springshed Project in Chumbung GPU Soreng District. The area suffers from water shortage issues particularly during the winter months as it falls in a rain shadow area. A preliminary meeting was held with the BDO Chumbung Ms Sabina Limbu on the 29th of March 2023 along with the Panchayat President Mr Yogesh Rai, Ward Panchayats and staff of the Block Administrative Centre. Mr Rupen Lamichaney DDO NABARD South & West was also present in the meeting. The BDO and Panchayat members were apprised of the purpose of the proposed project and preliminary information about the GPU were obtained including location of springs and status of water supply. A proposal has subsequently been submitted to NABARD after obtaining baseline data and approval in n

principle for commencing of Entry Point activities and awareness programme. It is proposed to have a preliminary investigation done about the geohydrology of the area and possible recharge area through the Rural Development Department.



4.3 Exposure Visit by Himachal Pradesh Forest Department Officials to Sikkim

On the recommendation of the Forest & Environment Department and in view of ECOSS's experience in Ecotourism, Springshed Development, and Forest Conservation, ECOSS facilitated the visit of two groups of around 15 persons each of officials and staff of the Forest Department Government of Himachal Pradesh. An MoU in this regard was signed between CEO ECOSS and Deutsche Gesellschaft for Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in India who sponsored the visit. GIZ through the German Development Cooperation, is implementing a Technical Cooperation project with the HP Forest Department titled "Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystem Services". Group 1 comprised of middle level and frontline staff and Group 2 had senior forest officials (CCFs, CFs, DFOs). The field visit to Sikkim by the HPFD officials had been planned to facilitate learning and experience sharing on the following topics:



- a) Springshed management
- b) Conservation of Oak Forests
- c) Community based eco-tourism
- d) Grazing management in forest areas
- e) PES mechanisms in Sikkim

Learning goals: After the field visit, it was expected that the participants would be

- ◆ □ Trained in the
- ◆ □ Introduced to approach.
- ◆ □ Familiar with
- ◆ □ Exposed to grazing management especially in alpine meadows



use of Springshed approach.
the Community based eco-tourism
the methods of oak regeneration and

The first team visited Sikkim between the 30th November to 15th December, while the second team visited between 18th November to 25th November. CEO ECOSS accompanied both the teams throughout the tours. For Group 1 the visit comprised of

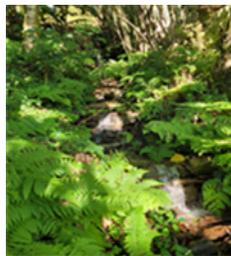


Day1. Visit to Kyongnasla Alpine Sanctuary, meeting with Sikkim



Forest Dept Officials and the members of the Pokhri Samraskshan Samiti and ended with a visit to Nathula Border.

Day 2. Presentation on Sikkim's Dhara Vikas Programme by Dr Subhas Dhakal of RDD and site visit to 28 Maniram Phalidara GPU, meeting with GPU functionaries and



presentation on Alley Dhara recharge works plus site visit to Alaichey Dhara nearby to check automatic data recorder installed there and the spring discharge.

Day 3. Visit to Upper Perbing Forest area and the Tendong Forest Ridge to examine the Dhara Vikas trenches constructed there, explanation of methodology of springshed works, including geohydrology, use of mobile apps and Brunton compass by Field Facilitator Sher Bahadur and Dr Dhakal followed by visit to Gaddi Dhara Spring on Namchi Damnthing Road and ending up with visit to the Buddha Park in Ravangla.

Day 4. Visit to office of DFO W/L Ravangla, Mr TB Subba with talk by him about the Sanctuary, the importance of oak trees for springs discharge and the method of sprouting oak seeds. Brief trek to Maenam WLS and interpretation of flora fauna there followed by



trip to the Tinketam Forest Nursery where wall sprouting of rhododendron and other seeds and nursery propagation methods explained. The day ended with a visit to the Buddha Park in Ravangla.

Day 5 Visit to Chalamthang Homestay, Namchi District run by Mr Amrit Sharma and experiencing rural tourism hospitality with cultural show and ethnic cuisine. Talk by Mr Sharma about community-based homestay tourism management and interaction with the visiting team. Evening farewell dinner and trip debriefing and interactions with Dr Sandeep Tambe IFS, APCCF and Chief Wild Life Warden and Mr Abhay Bhaskar, CF Working Plan,



The second team visit was designed along similar lines with some changes of the sites. For the ecotourism experience the team was taken to Yakten homestay village in Pakyong District set up by the GoS under the 13th Finance Commission. and then to Taalkharka village, also in



East Sikkim where WWF has been promoting conservation and homestays. The visitors were given a taste of Rai hospitality, cuisine and cultural dances and songs.

. The next day the group was taken to the Gaddi Dhaara Springs source and then on a short trek into the Mainam WL Sanctuary above Damthang to show the trench construction works and rocks structures there. Team then visited Samduptse and the Buddha Park.



Day

four comprised of visiting Tintekam Forest Nursery, talk and discussions with Mr TB Subba DFO W/L and short trek to Maenam W/L Sanctuary.



Final day comprised of visit to Tsomgo Lake and Nathula, interactions with the Pokhri Samrakshan Samiti. In the evening there was a dinner meeting preceded by an interaction



with Mr Pradeep Kumar IFS APCCF (Territorial & Working Plan) and Dr Sandeep Tambe APCCF -cum-Chief Wildlife Warden. Dr Tambe and Mr Kumar enquired about the experiences of the team during the tour and answered their queries. Mr Pradeep Kumar then spoke at length on the topic of payment for ecosystem services and about the recent Sikkim Payment of Ecosystem Services Rules enacted in July 2022. There was also a healthy exchange of experiences and ideas with regard to the menace of feral dogs, grazing in forest areas (a serious problem in HP), mapping of springs and preparation of DPRs for springshed development.



Conclusion. For ECOSS the facilitation of the two teams was a good learning experience not only through interaction with the visiting team members and visit to new forest sites, but also through the various interactions with the Forest Officers, knowledge of various aspects of forest conservation, oaks regeneration methods, role of oak trees in springshed conservation was gleaned. Further CEO was also updated on the latest techniques of springshed development through the talks and interactions by and with Dr Subash Dhakal and his Field Facilitator, RDD. Such knowledge will be of use in the NABARD projects on Springshed development both current and proposed that ECOSS is executing or planning to take up.

4.4 IMI Activities

ECOSS has since 2014 functioned as the State Chapter of the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) www.inmi.in and coordinating agency for IMI activities in the state. Two of the flagship events that IMI holds every year is the Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS) and the Meet of the Mountain States (MoMS).

4.4.1 SMDS XII Leh.

This year the 12th SMDS of IMI was held in Leh from 9th to 12th October 2022 with the theme “Harnessing tourism for sustainable mountain development”. The Himalayan Youth

Summit was also hosted simultaneously at the start of the Summit with the theme: “Sustainability for Entrepreneurship”. The Summit was organised by the Sustainable Development Forum of Ladakh (SDFL), the Ladakh chapter of IMI, along with the Office of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) led by the CEC Shri Tashi Gyalsen. The Youth Summit was inaugurated by Lt. Governor Ladakh Shri R. K. Mathur while the main Summit was inaugurated by the Honourable Minister, MoEFCC Shri Bhupender Yadav. Mr PD Rai, President IMI also addressed the inaugural session. During the 3 days summit, various technical sessions delved into issues of environmental sustainability, tourism products, security and others. A case was made that the uniqueness of Ladakh needed much more thought that needed to be considered through the tourism products, regulation and policy, waste management, water security, energy security, and regeneration and protection of landscapes. The issues of gender, culture and changing patterns of livelihoods figured prominently. Inputs received from the resource persons were interesting and insightful as it came from all across the Himalaya and other Mountain regions of the world. Sustainability and security was also discussed in a session which was Chaired by Shri Ram Madhav of India Foundation with the GoC, 14 Corps and Shri P. Stopdan of Ladakh International Centre also participating. One of the main side events of every SMDS is the Mountain Legislators’ Meet, and this year, MLM was cantered around the issue of Extended Producer Responsibility. The meeting that was chaired by the Chief Executive Councillor of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill District Council with an address by Mr PD Rai, came up with a declaration to amend the Rules of Extended Producers’ Responsibility (EPR) as applicable for the Mountain States. This was a corollary to the Declaration of the MLM held in Darjeeling in 2021. Endorsements from other Mountain States’ Legislators and MPs will be sought and which will be followed by a meeting with the officials of the MoEFCC for seeking an amendment to the EPR framework to bring in mountain specificities.

CEO ECOSS was nominated and actively participated in the planning of the core theme “Harnessing Tourism for Sustainable Development” along with other members of the IMI working group for the event, but could not attend the event in person. ECOSS nominated MrsNamrata Neopany and Ms Yangchen Lepcha of TASS for the youth and main event, while Ms Uden Bhutia of KCC was nominated to attend the main summit.



Dr Ms Smriti Basnet Glaciologist from Sikkim attended on behalf of her own organisation, Future Earth, while Ms Priya Shrestha member of Sikkim Chapter IMI and Secretary IMI was also present in the Summit and delivered the vote of thanks. Proceedings of the Summit can be obtained here: https://www.mountaininitiative.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SMDS12-Proceedings_SMDS_XI_web_correctied_1.pdf



4.4.2 Meet of the Mountain States.



The Meet of the Mountain States which follows the SMDS was held from 23rd to 24th March 2023 in New Delhi at Paryavaran Bhawan, MoEFCC, and was co-hosted by IMI with the Divecha Centre for Climate Change (DCCC) Bangalore. Mr P D Rai member GB ECOSS and President IMI and CEO ECOSS participated in the Meet. The welcome address was given by Shri PD Rai President IMI while Prof. SK Satheesh, Chair, Divecha Center for Climate Change, presented an overview of his institution. The outcomes and recommendations of the 12th SMDS held in Leh was presented by Shri Jigmet Takpa PCCF and President SDFL. Advocate Tashi Gyalsen, CEC, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council spoke about “Implementing Extended Producer Responsibility in the mountains” The Keynote Address on “Challenges to Mountain Communities under Changing Climate” was delivered by Dr. Anil Kulkarni, Distinguished Visiting Scientist, and DCCC. The two main

themes of the MoMS that were discussed on the first day were “Plastic Waste Management in the Himalaya- Pathways for EPR implementation” and “Agro-ecology in Indian Himalayas: Resurgence with Millets”. The Chief Guests for the occasion were Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Hon'ble Minister for State MoEFCC and Shri Ajay Bhatt Hon'ble Minister for State Tourism. Shri Ram Muivah MLA Manipur chaired the first session that was moderated by Mr Roshan Rai EC IMI. CEO ECOSS presented the compilation of responses on the status of EPR implementation in the states provided by the State Pollution Control Boards who had been consulted prior to the MOMS through the state chapters of the IMI. Shri Bhupender Yadav Hon Minister MoEFCC and Chief Guest for the second day addressed the gathering through VSAT link. Report on the MoMS can be seen here:

<https://www.mountaininitiative.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/MOMS-2023-FINAL.pdf>

4.5 Resource person for WWF SBI CSR Red Panda Conservation Project.

WWF India has been working for the past decade in the Khangchendzonga Landscape for the conservation of the flagship species Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*). In 2022 WWF entered into a partnership with SBI Foundation for taking forward the red panda conservation work at a transboundary level focusing on Sikkim and Kalimpong District of West Bengal. The 3-year project (January 2022 – December 2025) launched in May 2022, shall work with the main objectives of generating fine scale information on the species at a transboundary level, and engaging communities in the fringe villages of National Parks and sanctuaries for safeguarding key habitats in Sikkim and Kalimpong. Transboundary sharing and learning is also one of the key objectives for the project. ECOSS with its strong experience in ecotourism promotion, has in the past partnered with WWF in many of its initiatives such as the “Strengthening Sustainable Tourism in Sikkim” initiative under their Asia High Mountain Project in Kitam South Sikkim) and Lachen (north Sikkim) villages, the drafting of the Sikkim Tourism Policy 2018 etc. Part of the strategy for engaging communities in conservation in the SBI Red Panda Project is the promotion of homestay-based ecotourism in the villages bordering the Neora Valley national Park in West Bengal and the Pangolakha

WLS in Sikkim. CEO ECOSS was invited as a resource person for training programmes with residents of the targeted project villages.

In the first of such trainings attended by CEO ECOSS training on Responsible Tourism was organised for Tourism Stakeholders on 29-30th of June 2022, in Mangkhim Village, East Sikkim. The training program brought together around 30 participants that comprised of homestay owners, youth community representatives from Aritar, Mangkhim, Chandaney and Dokchin villages of Sikkim, and Tagathang village of Kalimpong District. Members of the Aritar Lampokhari Youth Tourism Development Association also participated in the training. CEO ECOSS gave an interactive presentation on “Introduction to Tourism” and “Why Responsible Tourism?” He focused on understanding the various aspects of tourism and what responsible tourism meant and the prospects of rural, nature based tourism for economic development. He provided an overview of the impacts of tourism, in which he alerted the participants on both the visible impacts such as waste and pollution, as well as on the invisible ones such as socio cultural changes. Participants from the different villages discussed and mapped out their tourism potential on the various criteria of the 5 “A”s of tourism, namely Attractions, Access, Accommodation, Amenities and Activities. Most villages scored high on the criteria of attractions as all places were endowed with scenic and natural beauty, as well as culturally diverse and rich. Access and amenities were low for most villages due to poor road conditions and poor internet connectivity, while accommodation through homestays was seen as emerging potential. Most of the discussion focused on how the ‘Activities’ component could be developed for tourists, that went beyond mere sight seeing but had educational elements through birding, nature hikes, cultural and village trails, etc. For the future, WWF- India would focus on developing these activities that were based around nature and culture in the red panda villages. Later the participants were divided into groups from the respective villages and were asked to do a SWOT analysis with focus on Strengths and Weaknesses which the participants were asked to present in a chart. This was followed by an elaborate interactive session on Responsible Homestay Operation which sought to expose the participants to various aspects of good practices in homestay operation such as welcoming and hospitality, essential guest room toilet and dining requirements, kitchen management, hygiene and sanitation, menu setting, communicating with visitors, safety and security, marketing and promotion, etc. The two day training also included sessions on waste management, itinerary planning and an early morning bird watching outing. Training needs for future programmes was also discussed.



Another training on “Tourism Resource Mapping” in which CEO ECOSS was invited as the resource person, was held in Tagathang village (West Bengal) on the 21st to 22nd July 2023. The training sought to document the ecotourism assets of the village through a process of participative discovery. The local villagers were asked to prepare a village resources map, then enumerate their ecotourism assets in terms of their natural and cultural heritage and reflect how these could be



converted into ecotourism products. The participants were asked to take the resource persons on a village walk and show them what they perceived as tourist attractions and these were evaluated, while those



which were not so apparent were pointed out. The importance of natural and cultural interpretation was emphasised and how this could be done for the tourists to provide them an enriching experience. Participants also reflected on the history of their village and their families, how the village had evolved, the changes that had happened in their agriculture, forests and their socio-cultural practices that resulted in the current situation in the village. The importance of intangible cultural heritage was also reflected upon through conversations with village elders. Participants sat in a traditional Lepcha house while a senior explained the architecture. A traditional oil extracting device was also displayed and explained. A birding list prepared festivals and cultural dances and songs listed. Accordingly itineraries and packages for tourists were attempted. The village already has a number of homestays in operation and a few birding guides. The villagers were tasked with

contemplating and deciding how this base accommodation and services could be increased and improved to provide more enriched and valued tourism experiences based on the training.



The third training on Responsible Tourism & Homestay Operations was held in Dokchin Village East Sikkim on 22nd to 23rd August 2022. Dokchen is a small village, under Regu Development Block, Pakyong District of Sikkim. The village lies in the periphery of Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary, an important habitat for Red Panda and is situated at an altitude of around 1800 meters and has around 34 houses. The village is dominated by the Sherpa community, an ethnic mountain tribe. They make their livelihood primarily through agriculture, of which large cardamom is the prime crop, along with livestock rearing. The village has recently been connected by road, though it frequently blocked during the monsoon due to landslides. With lush vegetation and good views of the Mt Khangchendzonga range, it is indeed a picturesque village with a high potential for tourist interested in wildlife, birding, trekking and camping. Besides the sharing of objectives of the WWF- India and SBI Foundation partnership for red panda conservation the training sought to discuss pathways for promoting sustainable community based homestay tourism and creating a pathway for establishment of this livelihood within the village. The training program brought together around 35 interested participants with a mix of both men/women, young and old for the training. The training was divided into two sessions:- Session I had an over view of Tourism, Tourist potential of tourism in the village through resource mapping, - Session II was designed to talk on homestay operations, impacts of tourism, waste management, and Government schemes and procedures for homestay operations and promotions in the state. The resource persons were Ms Tshering Uden, (CEO) Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee, [KCC], Mr. R.P Gurung CEO ECOSS, and Mr. Dewan Gurung (Assistant Director) from State Tourism Department. On his part CEO ECOSS gave an overview of tourism. He began with an



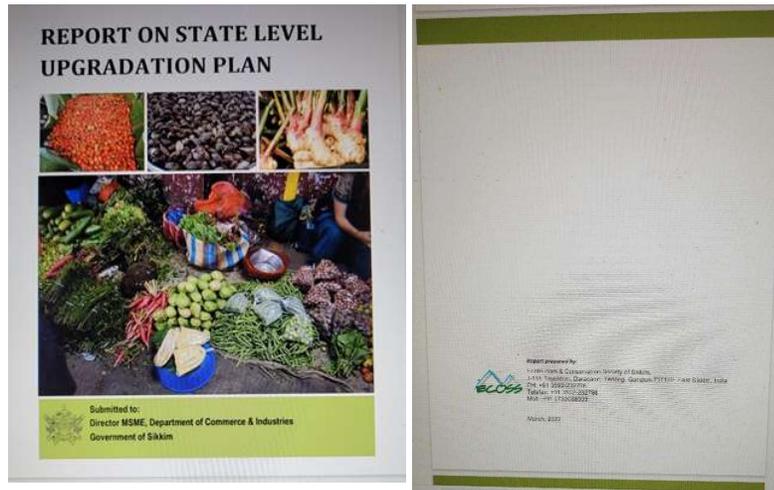
introduction to tourism and the concepts of responsible tourism/sustainable tourism and ecotourism. He explained the various aspects of the tourism value chain, the role of tourism in creating livelihoods and jobs as well as its negative impacts such as waste and pollution, environmental degradation, wild life disturbance and habitat destruction, overcrowding and competition for natural resources as well as the socio-cultural impacts such as wealth disparity, monetising of culture, loss of culture and economic vulnerability as was shown during Covid pandemic. The 5As of tourism- Attractions, Access, Accommodation, Amenities and Activities was elaborated upon. He also talked about factors that influenced tourism growth in terms of real income, leisure time, improved and highly accessible transportation systems, ongoing globalization of business linkages, including supply chains. Finally he spoke about the concept of homestay tourism and its value as a unique sustainable tourism product with many positive benefits that contributed to rural economic development, conserved the environment and culture, provided positive experiences to the tourists and promoted cross cultural learnings and appreciation amongst host and visitors.



4.6 MSME -SLUP AND ODOP

ECOSS had been commissioned in July 2020 by the Directorate of MSME, Department of Industries GoS for conducting a baseline study and preparing a report on the One District One Product (ODOP) programme under the Prime Minister’s Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Industries (PMFME) Scheme of the Government of India. The same was completed and presented to the department in September 2020. Subsequently ECOSS was also tasked in December 2021 with conducting a study and the preparation of the State Level Up gradation Plan for implementation of the ODOP initiative. The draft SLUP study and report was prepared and submitted to the Department in February 2022. In the current financial year a presentation of the draft SLUP was made by CEO ECOSS in a meeting

chaired by the Chief Secretary GoS held at the Tashiling Secretariat. The draft was thereby approved and subsequently submitted to the Ministry for clearance in November 2022



4.7 Zero Waste Himalaya activities and The Himalayan Cleanup

ECOSS has been a founding member of Zero Waste Himalaya (ZWH), a pan Himalayan platform for the promotion of Zero Waste principles and practices with a focus on tackling plastic pollution in the IHR. For the Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalayas ECOSS has partnered with DLR Prerna an NGO based out of Darjeeling and WWF India, Khangchendzonga Landscape to regularly conduct awareness events and capacity building initiatives for promoting Zero Waste action on the ground. One of the flagship events of ZWH is the Himalayan Cleanup whereby from May 27 to May 31st, volunteers across the mountain states in the IHR come together, select a spot for a cleanup, conduct the clean up, segregate the waste, count and weigh the waste and do a waste audit of the different types of waste as well as a brand audit of the companies whose products have been found in the waste collected. The audits are conducted according to an established protocol with the help of the mobile app KOBO. The results of the audits are collated and the final report shared across various local, national and international platforms (through organisations such as GAIA and BFFP).

With the COVID pandemic easing up, The Himalayan Cleanup 2022 was taken forward in person with the theme Reflect, Switch, Demand. Reflect: On one's lifestyle, What is your

contribution to the landfill and the waste crisis? Switch: To a more sustainable lifestyle. Where every action matters. Demand: For better systems and products.

An in person orientation workshop was conducted in Gangtok and Darjeeling prior to the Cleanup for around 30 volunteers mainly students in which the participants deep dived into zero waste principles and practices at an individual and institutional level and looked at stewardship for the Cleanup. The training sought to make the Cleanup a zero waste event in itself and also to work on linkages with recyclers and waste managers to manage the waste after the cleanup. Financial support was allocated for State Chapters of IMI, Organisations and Individuals hosting the Himalayan Cleanup as well as cash prizes were announced for educational institutions undertaking the Himalayan Cleanup. The Cleanup was conducted on the Ridge Park area. On the 28th of May. Students of Modern School, West Point School, Sikkim University, WWF and ECOSS staff and volunteers took part in the event.



The Himalayan Cleanup 2022 was undertaken over 150+ sites across the Himalaya with over 5000+ Volunteers taking it forward. All the regions of the Indian Himalaya were represented in THC2022 and there was even one site from Nepal. The volunteers were associated with over 100+ Schools /Colleges and 49 organizations. Quality data was received from 65 sites with 3336 volunteers. 114376 pieces of trash were cleaned up of which 105995 was plastic trash(92.7% of trash cleaned up was plastic). 4148.4 kg of plastic waste were cleaned up from critical sites across the Himalaya. 72% of all plastic waste cleaned up was non recyclable, 82% of it coming from food and drinks packaging followed by personal care products. The results of the top polluting companies of the Himalaya are out. The Himalayan Cleanup 2022 brand audit revealed that PepsiCo India, CG Foods India Pvt. Ltd., Perfetti Van Melle, ITC, Parle Agro Pvt. Ltd, Hindustan Coca Cola, Nestle, Hindustan Unilever Ltd., Mondelez India Food Pvt. Ltd., Dabur India Ltd were the top 10 companies polluting the Indian Himalayan Region.

Besides the Himalayan Cleanup ECOSS has been participating in Zero Waste Events throughout the year including the Plastic Free Challenge whereby volunteers pledge to go without plastics during the week from Zero Waste Himalaya Day on the 8th Augst till the 15th August, Plastic Bag Free Day on the 3rd July etc. On the 7th July on the occasion of “A Day for Mother Earth -ZWH, ECOSS and WWF conducted another cleanup in the Ridge Park with SU and Modern School students.

4.8 Others/ Meetings, workshops, seminars, events attended

- 13th April 2022 TERI Webinar on UN’s IPCC 6th Assessment Reports
- 27th April “Sustainable Tourism for West Sikkim” Workshop in Geyzing organised by Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee. CEO made a presentation on Sikkim Tourism Policy 2018.



- 28th April Zero Waste Training for Peer Educators
- 29th May Sikkim Chronicle Entrepreneurs Enclave Inaugural event



- 30th May Sikkim Chronicle Entrepreneurs Enclave.CEO moderated a panel discussion on “Tourism Trends and Policy Priorities”
- 7th June WWF workshop on “Waste in High Altitude Areas” discussion with stakeholders in Hotel Yangthang, Gangtok
- 13th June SANDEE ICIMOD Sikkim University: Inception Meeting on “ Organic Farmers as Green Entrepreneurs : Exploring the Impact of FPOs on Organic Cultivation in Sikkim, North East India
- 26th August WWF meeting with Project Partners
- 17th September Attended WWF Red Panda Day Celebrations at Bulbuley

- 11th December International Mountain Day



Programme at Louis Jubilee Hall Complex, Darjeeling on the theme “Women Move Mountains” Panel: Dr Sunita Pradhan researcher ATREE, Mrs Kamlesh Rai Zero Waste Champion Teacher St Teresa School, Ms Shanti

Rai first female rafting and Rescue Expert.

- 1st Feb 2023 ICIMOD/SDC/ACWADAM Springshed co-learning workshop at the Forest Secretariat.
- 2nd Feb Field Visit by Ms Uden Bhutia ECOSS Programme Coordinator & Mr. Santosh Rai, President Hailkhola Springshed Committee to Suldung Kamlang Mangalbarey Dhaara Vikas pilot Site of RDD, ICIMOD, and AQUADAM.
- 23rd February Break Free From Plastics meeting online for submissions to INC2
- 3rd March Meeting organised by Dept of Tourism & Civil Aviation GoS & World Bank. Theme exploring projects for Sikkim INSPIRE(Integrated Service Provisions and Innovations for Rural Economics Dept of Economic Affairs)
- 17th March Workshop organised by GB Pant on “Comprehensive Assessment of IHR Ecosystems” HE Governor of Sikkim inaugurated with Dr Eklabya Sharma moderating as the Key Advisor.