The UpLink Trillion Trees Innovation Network

BACKGROUND

In September 2021, 1t.org and UpLink launched the Trillion Trees: India Challenge to call for successful examples of forest conservation and landscape restoration that support the implementation of India's commitment to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 and create and additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons CO2 equivalent through additional forests.

The Challenge was designed and run in collaboration with the Global Shapers Community and the Forum of Young Global Leaders. It received 73 submissions that were carefully reviewed and assessed by the community of experts from 1t.org and partners, including the World Resources Institute and the Food and Land Use Coalition, to elect a cohort of 13 Top UpLink Innovators.

Over the coming months, the Top Innovators will have an opportunity to share and learn from each other, and 1t.org and UpLink will work extensively with this group to scale their impact by promoting their work on our social media platforms, presenting them at our events and introducing them to experts and potential funders who can accelerate their ideas. All Top Innovators will also have the chance to participate in 1t.org's newly formed India Chapter.

WELCOME TO THE 13 UPLINK TRILLION TREES: INDIA CHALLENGE TOP INNOVATORS

If you would like to get in touch with one of the Top Innovators or learn more about UpLink Trillion Trees, please contact Gianluca Gygax, Community Specialist, 1t.org/UpLink (Gianluca.Gygax@weforum.org) or Sudheer Dewarapalli. 1t.org India Coordinator (Sudheer.Dewarapalli@weforum.org)

Acacia Eco Plantation Services based out of
Ahmedabad, Gujarat implements greening solutions to
increase urban forests and mass plantation projects
across India. They specialize in Miyawaki forests tailored
to the project requirements ranging from plantations
connecting the usable community spaces, or alternatively
dense pockets of forests near high emission zones like
traffic areas, and also large scale projects like the
Sabarmati Riverfront.

Theme
Urban Restoration

Type
Social Enterprise

Co-Founder & CEO
Shailie Metha
shailie.mehta@acaciaeco.com

Phase
Seed Funding

UpLink Page

Founded
2017

Needs: 1) Expertise in carbon credits for Miyawaki forests 2) Mentorship 3) Visibility

Avani Bio Energy, "Avani" meaning Earth was
founded in 1997, originally as the Kumaon chapter of the
Barefoot College, focused at developing conservation-
based livelihood opportunities that Sustain Rural
Lifestyles. Avani Bio Energy uses a community-centric
business model in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand
which transforms the rising risk of wildfires caused due to
pine-needle litter, and turns it into electricity and
charcoal.

Theme
Restoration enabler

Type
For-profit

Co-Founder & CEO
Rajnish Jain
rajnish@avani-kumaon.org

Phase
Scale-up

UpLink Page

Founded
2011

Needs: 1) Expertise to access carbon markets 2) Funding through patient capital for rural
entrepreneurs 3) Funding for operating costs.

Centre for Wildlife Studies' is a major wildlife
research, conservation, policy, and education research
organization possessing a deep understanding of the
landscape and the communities. Equipped with a
profound understanding of over four decades, they strive
to reduce human-wildlife conflict, and create livelihoods
by incentivizing farmers to transition from agro crops to
agroforestry based livelihoods around Bandipur and
Nagarhole wildlife reserves in Karnataka (Western Ghats).

Theme
Agriculture & Livelihoods

Type
Non-profit

Executive Director
Dr. Krithi K. Karanth
krithi.karanth@cwsindia.org

Phase
Seed Funding

UpLink Page

Founded
1984

Needs: 1) Funds for saplings and salaries 2) Mentoring on carbon calculations 3) Partnerships to
expand throughout the country

[Farmers for Forests](#) is a dynamic team of young ecopreneurs employing a unique approach- Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), towards preventing deforestation and reforestation/afforestation activities. Tracking the forest cover through satellite and drone monitoring, they plan to connect projects to carbon credit markets. Their current areas of interest are Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh.

Theme	Type	Co-Founder
Agriculture & Livelihoods	Non-profit	Krutika Ravishankar
		krutika@farmersforforests.org

Phase	UpLink Page	Founded
Seed funding		2017

Needs: 1) Partnerships with climate progressive companies 2) Advise on precision forestry monitoring systems 3) Expertise on ecology and soil science

Good Food Village Farm Products and Services

[Good Food Village Farm Products and Services](#) excel at building community-centric natural food forests with diverse and dense planting of short and long term fruit trees, known as 'Good Food Village'. Urban communities are encouraged to own/support unused rural farmlands in the 'village' to improve rural economy and generate employment. The Tamil Nadu based initiative goes a step further bringing in transparency through traceability systems using blockchain for farmers.

Theme	Type	Founder & CEO
Agriculture & Livelihoods	For-profit	Sudheer Kumar
		sudheer@goodfoodvillage.org

Phase	UpLink Page	Founded
Growth		2018

Needs: 1) Developing and implementing the blockchain technology platform for traceability and accountability 2) Product Advances to the farmers for changing their crop patterns 3) Setup Cottage industries with Community kitchen in Ongur GFV

Gratitude Farms

[Gratitude Farms](#) have built a food forest value chain. Infertile lands are converted into microbially-rich organic soil, while providing livelihoods for army veterans and rural women across Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu. Their offerings include farmland business, solar drying business, B2C sales (also through a mobile application), consulting and training

Theme	Type	Chief Executive Officer
Agriculture & Livelihoods	For-profit	Ved Prakash Sharma
		vpsharma@gratitudefarms.co.in

Phase	UpLink Page	Founded
Seed funding		2018

Needs: 1) Technology Platform (Farm ERP) and a central organisation (Agri-Operations Centre) to collate manage the knowledge across the eco-system of our business model. 2) Funding support (need about USD 1 million in next one year) to scale the solution to 500 acres. 3) Help in R&D for improving the productivity on farms and scientific systems for measuring the impact of our work, as it scales across India.

Isha Outreach's Cauvery Calling is a large-scale movement seeking to achieve a tenth of India's carbon sequestration goals for 2030. Equipped with significant government collaborations and innovative monitoring techniques, the initiative plans to mobilize 5.2 million farmers, and plant 2.42 billion trees in the 83,000 square kilometer area spread across Cauvery river basin in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka in a span of 12 years, shifting to a tree-based agriculture.

Theme	Type	Project Head, Cauvery Calling
Restoration at scale	Non-profit	Anand Ethirajalu
		anand.ethirajalu@ishaoutreach.org

Phase	UpLink Page	Founded
Scale		2009

Needs: 1) Funds to handhold farmers to transition to tree-based agriculture 2) Platforms and Infrastructure to Support Farmers in Selling Trees on Maturity 3) Global visibility for cross borders implementation and funding

Orgro Fibre, is a Gujrat based innovation restoration enabler that reduces single-use plastic waste generated in the process of large-scale plantations. These biodegradable sapling bags are made from agro-waste from wool, banana fibre, sugarcane, and jute.

Theme	Type	Chief Executive Officer
Restoration enabler	For-profit	Gaurav Parmar
		orgroindia@gmail.com

Phase	UpLink Page	Founded
Seed funding		2019

Needs: Proof of concept is tested and on small scale soled in market with industry partner support, Orgro need support to set up own fabric manufacturing unite. strong sales and marketing team support

SAI Sustainable Agro works in partnership with farmers of Odisha, intercropping traditional crops with high-value tree plantation. This one-acre agroforestry model ensures farmer access to quality inputs & cultivation techniques, ensures direct market access as well as resilient livelihoods to the youth & the landless.

Theme	Type	Co-Founder & CEO
Agriculture & Livelihoods	For-profit	Jitendra Sinha
		jitendraksinha@hotmail.com

Phase	UpLink Page	Founded
Seed funding		2013

Needs: 1) Finance 2) Board members and advisors 3) expertise in marketing

[Saytrees Environmental Trust](#) has perfected large scale reforestation and afforestation project management, working across multiple states across India. They'd facilitate reforesting 20,000 hectares of degraded croplands in Andhra Pradesh through multilayer cropping of diverse fruit and timber trees on farms with minimized inputs.

Theme	Type	Founder & CEO
Agriculture & Livelihoods	Non-profit	Kapil Sharma kapil@saytrees.org

Phase		Founded
Seed funding	[UpLink Page](#)	2013

Needs: 1) Funding: to establish and manage centre of excellence and support others in effectively scaling up the models across India 2) Visibility: to showcase our work at a global level and inspire others 3) Partnerships: to create impact at scale

[St. Jude Herbals](#) have produced an inexpensive, efficient, and sustainable alternative to common pesticides. It is a toxicology-proven, herbal agri-biostimulant protecting crops against a broad spectrum of plant diseases. Farmers source the offered solutions through traditional as well as e-commerce channels.

Theme	Type	Founder
Restoration enabler	For-profit	Vinoj Raj vinoj@stjudesindia.in

Phase		Founded
Seed funding	[UpLink Page](#)	2016

Needs: 1) Manpower, Funding, Expertise

[Sustainable Green Initiative](#): have refined their planting management system through scale and practice. They help farmers plant fruit trees helping create sustainable livelihoods, and combat hunger, poverty and climate change. Innovations in the supply chain like low cost seedlings, installing nurseries in close proximity, help reduce prices, and create employment.

Theme	Type	Founder
Agriculture & Livelihoods	For-profit	Raj Mohan rajmohan@greening.in

Phase		Founded
Scale	[UpLink Page](#)	2012

Needs: 1) Funding partnerships

[The Energy and Resources Institute's](#)

patented Mycorrhizal technology acts as a biofertilizer, as well as restoring abandoned fly ash ponds, chlor-alkali ash dumps and land loaded with distillery effluents. This enables better water and nutrients uptake from the soil to the plants and also assists roots in soil aggregation. This technology is particularly useful in the reclamation of barren land and improving productivity, as previously implemented in Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujrat, UAE, and Qatar.

THE ENERGY AND RESOURCES INSTITUTE
Creating Innovative Solutions for a Sustainable Future

Theme	Type	Director General
Restoration enabler	Non-profit	Dr. Vibha Dhawan
		dg@teri.res.in

Phase	UpLink Page	Founded
Seed funding		1974

Needs: 1) Government recognition of mycorrhiza technology 2) Funding 3) visibility at national level.