

All Things Shared

JANUARY-APRIL 2026

Common Ground



As India's Commons face mounting pressure from climate change, shifting livelihoods, and contested governance, the work of building shared institutions and pathways for collective action has grown more urgent. Between January and April 2026, Common Ground and its partners moved to delivery across Jharkhand, Odisha, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Meghalaya. The Collaborative now stands at 92 partners and 80 initiatives.

This update of *All Things Shared* captures how progress across the Collaborative's four pathways is translating into action on the ground.



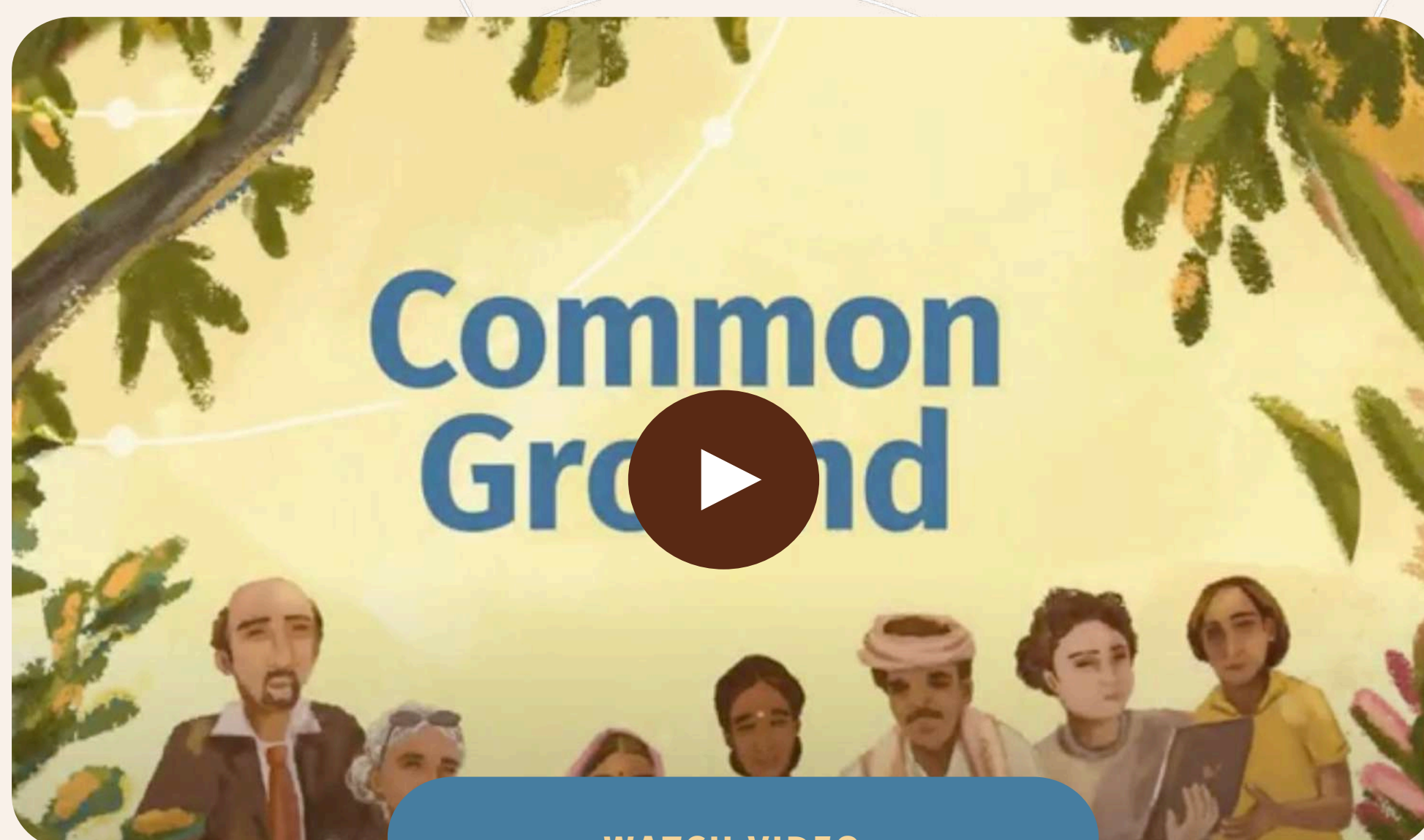
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92 PARTNERS →



1 COALITION OF NETWORKS



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In the Spotlight

Strengthening tribal area governance: Operationalising PESA Rules in Jharkhand

Following the Cabinet's approval of the Jharkhand PESA Rules, Common Ground initiated preparations to operationalise the rules across six districts and at least 60 Panchayats. In collaboration with partners Badlao Foundation, Abhivyaakti Foundation, and Kalamandir, alongside the State PESA Cell, this marks the transition from policy approval to district-level implementation. The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP), a Common Ground partner, has accepted the request from the Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Jharkhand, to set up a Project Management Unit (PMU) supported by Common Ground, to anchor this rollout. The PMU roadmap has since been completed, with engagements initiated for operationalisation through institutional partnerships and fellow recruitment.

Between February and March, three regional convenings were held in Ghatshila (Kolhan), Godda (Santhal Pargana), and Ranchi (South Chotanagpur), bringing together traditional leaders, Panchayati Raj Institution representatives, frontline workers, women's federation representatives, and civil society organisations. Discussions focused on strengthening Gram Sabha-led decision-making, translating statutory provisions into village-level practice, and embedding convergence through the Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) platform. A shared recognition emerged: effective PESA implementation must be rooted in community institutions, not only aligned with formal systems.

In April, Common Ground participated in the State Round Table Conference on PESA implementation, where departmental expectations of CSO engagement were discussed and the State plan was reviewed to identify areas for strategic and technical support. Community leaders raised field-level issues, sought clarity on their roles, and requested state orders to ensure departmental convergence. The department also emphasised documenting customary tribal laws through a multi-tier system to strengthen dispute resolution and preserve traditional governance.

Grameen Charcha: Listening to rural voices, leadership from the ground



Over three days in Bisam Cuttack, Rayagada, Grameen Charcha brought together over 1,000 participants from approximately 40 sangathans across six states. Hosted by Odisha Shramajeebi Manch, Mahila Shramajeebi Manch, and the National Consortium to Combat Malnutrition (NCCM), and anchored by Atmashakti Trust, the convening was co-created with the Foundation for Ecological Security, Socratus Foundation for Collective Wisdom, and Common Ground.

Sessions on landscape approaches, digital tools for landscape planning, and community storytelling ran in parallel, creating conditions for shared learning across regions and generations. Common Ground facilitated sessions on multi-actor processes and socio-ecological framing, contextualising the challenges Rayagada sangathans had surfaced. Thirty-eight community members shared stories from lived experience, facilitated by independent communicator Rakhi Ghosh and documented by students and faculty from IIMC Dhenkanal.

Across these sessions, a set of shared priorities surfaced: self-reliant village economies, decentralised infrastructure, deeper community governance through Palli Sabhas, and youth and women's leadership. The formation of the Indigenous Leadership Council — a body of sangathan leaders mentored by adivasi filmmaker and researcher Deepak Bara — gave institutional expression to this purpose, creating a structure through which tribal leaders across regions can continue to support one another.

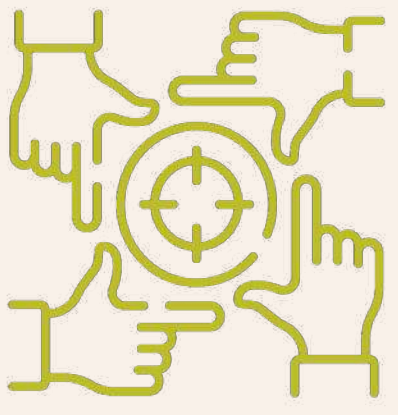
Positioning landscape restoration within CSR and ESG financing

A two-day workshop in Bhubaneswar from 30 to 31 March, preceded by a consultation with Landscape Partners from Jharkhand and Odisha, focused on strengthening how landscape NGOs engage with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) funding. Partners shared perspectives on restoration interventions, funding challenges, and experiences engaging with corporate funders. The workshop introduced a structured approach to fundraising covering funder identification, access pathways, and improving conversion through clearer positioning and outcome-focused communication.

Common Ground partner, Sattva, led an analysis of CSR spending patterns to identify market trends and corporates supporting integrated baskets of interventions, also examining Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) data to understand how corporate funds are distributed across geographies and themes. Together, these analyses are building the evidence base to match landscape restoration priorities with the right corporate funders, and guiding landscape actors to develop a curated pipeline of projects that makes it easier to deploy CSR and ESG funds toward community and livelihood outcomes.

Follow-on support will be provided through monthly troubleshooting sessions from May to July, alongside onboarding partners onto the India Partner Network (IPN) and Fund Assist. This body of work will be aligned with the initiative progressing with Vrutti on developing Landscape Finance frameworks suitable to different agroecological regions.





TURNING PLANS INTO OUTCOMES

PATHWAY 1

Advancing community-led governance of natural resources

Scaling Landscape Partnerships across new geographies

Common Ground is expanding the Landscape Partnerships approach from 54 to 120 blocks in Odisha and Jharkhand, and extending into new geographies. These include five blocks in Melkote, South Karnataka (through the Puttannaiah Foundation and Socratus); five blocks across two districts in Meghalaya (through Syrwet U Barim, a community-led federation of 40 cooperative societies conserving cultural landscapes around the living root bridges); and three districts in distinct agro-climatic zones — the Western Ghats, Eastern Plateau and hills, and Eastern Himalayas.

Together, these expansions build the geographic and institutional diversity needed for the Collaborative's approach to take root across India's varied ecological and governance contexts.

From village platforms to landscape systems

Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs) are now functional and in varying stages of consolidation, with focus shifting from nascent pilots toward systems-integrated governance. To support this, Common Ground is building a pool of mentors and facilitators, documenting emerging Landscape Partnership models, and enabling cross-landscape learning through Solver Jams, Addas, and weekly challenges.

In April, Common Ground LME Hub held reflection calls with Landscape Partners in Jharkhand and Odisha to align on upcoming priorities and support needs. Partners surfaced consistent priorities: clarifying the role of Catalysts, strengthening MAP facilitation and documentation, building field-friendly progress-tracking tools, and deepening engagement with government departments on water, livelihoods, and convergence.

Partners also pointed to the strong goodwill built with communities, active women's collectives (SHGs and FPOs), and rising Gram Sabha participation — particularly among women — as tailwinds for the work ahead.

Working with community networks

Common Ground is engaged with three community networks in Karnataka, Odisha, and Meghalaya. A key learning from these engagements is that proximate resource support organisations are essential to helping community networks translate landscape goals into local action.

Structured engagements are developing with water related issues with the Antaranga network and lakes with the Mulbagal network. Resource support organisations including ESG Trust, Biome Trust, Asar, and FEVOURD-K have been oriented on the landscape approach. Plans are underway to reach 180 blocks through an additional 60 networks across Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, supported by resource organisations such as Jagriti and Atmashakti. For instance, Atmashakti is planning a series of workshops for all bioregion groups starting in May across six states, and Common Ground is supporting agenda-setting through a landscape approach for each bioregion.

Work to strengthen Syrwet U Barim — the apex body of the Living Root Bridges Federation in Meghalaya, representing 74 villages and 40 primary cooperatives across the cultural landscapes around the living root bridges that conserve about 175 thousand acres of catchment area— is moving forward through a capacity-building and organisational development track.

A workshop planned for May will build facilitation skills, support roadmap development and institutional visioning, and strengthen working arrangements between community institutions, the Meghalaya Basin Development Authority (MBDA), and other government agencies — supporting community-led governance around forest and water conservation and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Engaging and supporting the Catalysts network

Catalysts across Jharkhand and Odisha continue to use Reap Benefit's Samaaja platform for lateral communication and learning, with participation on chatbot and detailed stories shared as weekly spotlights. Drawing on the MAP implementation experiences, Common Ground reoriented partner organisation staff, newly onboarded Catalysts, and community leaders on the role of Commons in sustaining agriculture, animal husbandry, and landscape-based livelihoods, and on the Catalysts' role in steering MAP processes — specifically block profiling and actor-network mapping and stakeholder engagement.

In addition to digital exchange platforms a more concerted effort is now being invested into well curated issue-based on-line and in-person interactions, that help build engagement and momentum in the local catalyst networks.

PATHWAY 2

Assisting policies and financial flows towards effective practice

Advancing tribal area development action agenda

In Jharkhand, the roadmap for a Project Management Unit to operationalise the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) was prepared, with the state moving toward institutional partnerships.

The preparatory work for the deployment of a collaborative Project Management Unit with the Department of Panchayati Raj anchored by CRISP and Common Ground has been completed. At the same time on-field issues, challenges and capacity building needs are deliberated through three regional level convenings with the participation of traditional leaders, Panchayat representatives, and civil society actors. The PMU will assist the department, PESA cell and greater Civil Society participation in effective operationalisation of PESA legislation with adequate capacity on the ground.

At the national level, with UNDP, a policy note titled *Mainstreaming Gender for Tribal Development: Lessons, Gaps, and Pathways* has been prepared. This policy note will be submitted to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for necessary advisories and guidelines for better integration of gender concern across tribal development programmes. The note analyses national and cross-sectoral policies, legal frameworks, implementation gaps, and budgetary issues related to gender equality in tribal and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) contexts, and proposes actionable policy pathways.

The implementation of the Forest Rights Act has witnessed a varied degree of success and challenges. UNDP has identified ten illustrative scenarios drawn from real world challenges faced by tribal communities in the exercise of rights within Community Forest Resource (CFR) areas.

A scenario-based learning module preparation exercise is being carried out through UNDP state teams working with various State Governments. At local level, CRISP has undertaken a field study to understand the convergence action in Post FRA scenario in two districts of Odisha with local partners. The study aims to help better integration of post FRA investment and NTFP value realisation in local area planning systems including Village Poverty Reduction Plan, Gram Panchayat Development plan and capacitation of Van Dhan Vikash Kendras.

Strengthening the grassroots level Institutional apparatus for planning, convergence and community-led monitoring

Continuous efforts through the GIST programme and UNDP have been advancing a systemic architecture for grassroots governance — one that links village planning, Commons stewardship, and tribal self-governance into a coherent institutional pathway.

Across multiple states, the work is anchored in three connected strategies: strengthening convergence between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs) so that village-level planning reflects community priorities; embedding Commons governance within formal Panchayat planning and public finance systems; strengthening local level outcome monitoring processes such as LSDG and aligning SDG indicator frameworks with local area priorities.

PRI–SHG convergence is the entry point through which these strategies come together. In Jharkhand, CRISP and WASSAN have piloted GP–SHG convergence and Commons governance in Anandpur, West Singhbhum, where SHG-level livelihood and entitlement planning has been completed, priority Commons identified through a community-led evaluation matrix, and protection and regeneration activities prepared for inclusion in the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and labour budget — enabling convergence with MGNREGA/VBGRAMG for Commons regeneration.

A status report from this pilot is now informing the drafting of Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP) guidelines, alongside parallel pilots in Pipilia Gram Panchayat in Odisha (where SHG-led community action plans and social mapping of water resources are underway), three Gram Panchayats in Karnataka (where VPRP guidelines have been finalised through a participatory process), and 35 Panchayats in Tamil Nadu (where Localising SDGs training modules and Village Panchayat Development Plans have been completed).

Building on these pilots, the programme is moving towards scaled implementation. Tamil Nadu has identified 370 Village Panchayats across 37 districts for scale-up, with phase-wise implementation plans, draft LSDG guidelines, and Tamil-language training materials under development; Karnataka is consolidating pilot learnings and process documentation for wider adoption; and a status report on PRI–SHG convergence in Jharkhand is informing both VPRP guideline drafting and the broader implementation framework.

To further the power and agency of the Panchayat, Own Source Revenue (OSR) rule-framing in Jharkhand has been prioritised as a critical requirement for Panchayat fiscal autonomy, ability to exercise its control over resource use and for access to 16th Finance Commission performance grants. The Group is also examining how existing Finance Commission resources can be aligned toward Commons restoration and natural resource management. A task group from the policy working group has been constituted to prepare a draft rule combining existing policy review, contextual opportunity mapping, cross-state learning, and engagement with the Panchayati Raj Department.

Strengthening household community resilience through greater access to social protection benefits

The social protection agenda that helps reduce household and community vulnerability has been a critical pillar of Common Ground engagement through various initiatives including work on DAJGUA, Aadi Karmayogi, PRI-CBO convergence and Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP). The action agenda has further strengthened with the partnership of SETU, a social protection collaborative of 75 practicing organisations and facilitating interface with landscape partners in Odisha and Jharkhand. The discussion revolved around mutual leveraging of Multi Actor Platforms and the institutional apparatus created in Jharkhand with the deployment of Panchayat Sahayaks as social-protection facilitators. SETU knowledge, expertise and tools including help desk models, entitlement mapping tools, helplines and capacity building framework has potential to build necessary capabilities at the community level for improving access to social protection benefits. In addition, the partnership has potential to address emerging areas of social protection measures e.g. adaptive social protection to cope with new vulnerability caused by climate vectors through co-creation process.

A [Community of Practice on Social Protection](#) was initiated with SETU, and is hosted on the Common Ground iECHO HUB. The CoP will connect grassroots challenges around documentation, awareness, and facilitation with peer learning and expert problem-solving, particularly in Odisha and Jharkhand, integrating social protection into livelihood and natural resource programmes.

Optimising opportunities for landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation and balancing conservation and livelihoods priorities of local communities

Specialised training sessions for forest guards across the Regional Forest Training Institutes in Ranchi, Hazaribagh, and Chaibasa, supported by the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), focused on integrating community-led approaches into restoration planning and building capacities to adopt the Comprehensive Landscape Assessment and Restoration Tool (CLART) by Divisional Forest Officers for springshed management. This has helped in advancing the Springshed planning and implementation work which has been taken through repurposing the CAMPA funds in Jharkhand state. In addition, based on the demands raised by landscape partners and local communities earlier, the forest department had issued a circular to include 20% of indigenous NTFP and food producing species in their plantation programme. During this quarter to operationalise this circular, training programmes were conducted for SHG members, forest department officials, NGO members for establishing decentralised nurseries of such species to make the desired saplings available for plantation programme.

Common Ground has joined the drafting committee for the Odisha Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (OBSAP) 2024–2030 through the Odisha Biodiversity Board — a significant entry point into one of the state's key biodiversity governance frameworks. Inputs are being shaped to ensure the strategy is participatory and aligned with community-centred conservation, linking with Biodiversity Management Committees, People's Biodiversity Registers, and community-led conservation systems.

Common Ground participated in a NABARD-led consultation, supported by GIZ under the Support to Agroecological Transformation Processes in India (SuATI) programme, to strengthen Northeast-specific approaches within the Joint Initiative for Village Advancement (JIVA).

Contributions from WASSAN and partners emphasised that agroecology in the Northeast must be approached as a landscape-level intervention integrating agriculture, Commons, forests, water, and customary institutions — not only as a farm-level programme.

Collective reflection on Policy Lab design and operational framework

A structured Policy Lab session brought together partners including CoRe, FES, Landstack, Vrutti, and the Living Landscapes team to reflect on actioning the Policy Lab imagination within Common Ground. Policy Lab is conceived as an intentional, facilitated space for multi-stakeholder dialogue aimed at policy reform, programme design, and investments in support of Commons restoration. The group discussed and endorsed the key principles of Policy Lab.

The Lab is positioned as an intermediate co-creation space where government actors, civil society, community institutions, and financing actors can engage across silos, deliberate on what the evidence shows, and jointly identify pathways toward change. Its design would rest on three phases: a preparatory stage involving rigorous evidence synthesis and stakeholder mapping, a core convening structured around specific thematic and geographic entry points, and a follow-up stage supporting actors to take forward aligned actions. Thematically, the Lab is expected to prioritise areas where government receptivity is highest — around climate resilience, landscape restoration, and financing transitions. At the same time, the group identified and mapped six potential areas for Policy Lab focus.

PATHWAY 3

Creating spaces for equitable negotiation between communities and markets

Design people-centric marketplaces for ecosystem service payments

Common Ground has initiated working with Vrutti's Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) project team to prioritise areas of action and improve cross-learning to surface the issues with current mechanisms. At the same time, Common Ground is exploring innovations beyond conventional credit markets, including local mechanisms for ecosystem service payments such as tourism, watershed services, and eco-labelling, as well as conservation-based incomes.

Developing and mobilising landscape finance mechanisms

Data collection for the parametric insurance product with SPREAD in Koraput has established unseasonal rainfall as the most significant negative driver of incomes, providing the key input to calibrate the parametric trigger. With Sal seed identified as the lead NTFP for initial product testing, the Working Group is positioned to finalise the parametric design and pilot across two geographies by June 2026.

In Boipariguda, the holistic MAP model is being operationalised, with WASSAN's implementation calendar, a central monitoring dashboard tracking public finance utilisation across FPOs, CSOs, and MAP actors, and two onboarded Community Catalyst cadres creating the conditions for sustained farmer engagement. Under the Social Success Notes (SSN), loan disbursements to three FPOs and onward to farmers are underway. At the field level in Boipariguda, implementation of key livelihood interventions — backyard poultry and goat shed construction — has begun, aligned with Phase 1 milestones under the outcomes-based financing structure. WASSAN has developed standardised financial and operational tools (loan cashbooks, passbooks, measurement books, labour logs), while Vrutti is leading FPO capacity building for on-lending to farmers, structuring a public-finance and credit-tracking dashboard, and developing a monitoring application for CBBOs and FPOs.

Orchestrating value chain innovations

Discussions with the Chief Secretary of Odisha and the CEO of NITI Aayog have resulted in an in-principle go-ahead to establish a Project Management Unit (PMU) for the Sal seed value chain, to be housed within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Department. This marks a significant institutional commitment to an integrated forest-to-market approach for Sal — a forest highly susceptible to fires and critical to tribal livelihoods. Common Ground has committed to support the PMU over the next six months, with a formal steering committee being constituted and funding being actively pursued.

Parallel efforts are underway to engage larger funding pools and market players, including discussions with KfW to explore an externally aided project for Sal ecosystem development in Odisha, supported by an initial two-district design and local processing infrastructure concept.

The NTFP price information system is moving into pilot phase, with Sundargarh (via SEWAK) and Keonjhar (via WOSCA) identified as initial locations, covering approximately 20 collectors across two villages per partner. Field teams have been deployed and key operational considerations addressed, including connectivity, validation mechanisms to prevent misinformation, and the treatment of different NTFP products such as Mahua flowers and seeds as distinct commodities. The pilot will generate evidence on whether real-time price information can meaningfully improve income outcomes for forest collectors.

Under the FPO Acceleration initiative anchored by Vrutti, after readiness assessment, three FPOs supported by SEWAK were selected to enter the next phase of the HSBC FPO Acceleration Programme (FPO Shakti) — a 24-month journey through which they will receive support on governance, business planning, market linkages, financial management, and digital systems to become more reliable market actors and viable credit candidates.

Developing bamboo landscape economy

Odisha

The Bamboo PMU, guided by detailed assessments of seven enabling conditions for the Ramgiri cluster in Boipariguda, is building the institutional, ecological, and financial systems needed to support community-owned bamboo enterprises across 3,500 hectares of CFR land in 20 villages. Central to this approach is the design of a decentralised network of community-owned, entrepreneur-operated nurseries led primarily by women SHG leaders. In the first cycle, 14 nurseries are being planned with the capacity to raise 50,000 bamboo saplings, creating a foundational social forestry asset for the Bamboo Village programme by establishing a reliable source of ecologically suitable and quality-controlled planting material for community forestry, landscape restoration, and bamboo-based livelihoods across the region.



Two convenings in March have helped build momentum for the Bamboo Village initiative and the broader bamboo value chain. The Baunsa Parab (Bamboo Festival) on 15 March brought together approximately 250 members from 20 villages, with the Mission Director of the Odisha Bamboo Development Agency committing support for nursery development, silviculture, and capacity building, and Forest Department officials aligning around scaling community-led bamboo stewardship.

A district-level convening on 17 March, with the Forest Department, ORMAS, civil society, and market actors, identified convergence pathways across institutions. Early market champions have also been identified in Lamtaput block, including a trader aggregating across approximately 40 villages.

Meghalaya

Meghalaya's bamboo development programme, anchored and owned by the MegREAP (Regenerating Economies through Accelerated and Inclusive Enterprises in Meghalaya), a cell under Meghalaya Bamboo Development Agency (MBDA), is making progress in securing financing and building institutional momentum. MegREAP is MBDA's collaborative platform, implemented in partnership with Common Ground, to scale community-led enterprises through blended finance and people-philanthropy-private-public partnerships in pursuit of the 'Meghalaya Next' vision.

A six-member Programme Management Unit has been onboarded in Ri-Bhoi district, with local actors stepping into active roles within the Umling Bamboo Village. An eco-tourism bamboo building initiative at one of the Living Root Bridge tourist sites is also being developed, opening new pathways for community livelihoods.

In a major milestone, MBDA — with technical support from Common Ground — finalised and submitted a Detailed Project Report (DPR) to the Asian Development Bank, proposing an investment outlay of INR 123.2 crore for bamboo-led landscape restoration and livelihood development across Meghalaya. The DPR received approval from both the State Mission Director and the Commissioner & Secretary, MBDA, reflecting strong government ownership and institutional backing. The document is currently under active engagement with ADB. In parallel, INR 6.82 crore has been committed from a JICA-supported project for capacity building, field operations, and programme coordination under the Bamboo Village initiative, with formal allocation underway.

PATHWAY 4

Catalysing collaborative action among and across civil society, government bodies and tech initiatives

Building digital public goods for landscape governance

Over the quarter, CoRE Stack has expanded both the reach and depth of its tools while strengthening the community of practitioners using them. The Know Your Landscape (KYL) platform now hosts data across 328 tehsils — up from 290 earlier in the quarter — reflecting growing demand from partner organisations for landscape-level data infrastructure.

New product features have advanced KYL and Commons Connect substantially. KYL now offers filters for assessing waterbodies at the micro-watershed level and evaluating village infrastructure access, with a village-level profiling module under development that will embed demographics, infrastructure, livelihoods, and local opportunity data. On Commons Connect, a Landscape Stewardship Network Dashboard and an organisation-level dashboard for waterbody rejuvenation are enabling partners to track stewardship activities and project outcomes; a new "Locate Me" feature, a Data Moderation Dashboard, and field-feedback-driven improvements are making the platform easier to use in field conditions.

Capacity building has continued through Community of Practice sessions on KYL datasets, report interpretation, and landscape stewardship.

View previous sessions and join the [Community of Practice](#).

Keonjhar Lab: Enabling adoption of digital public goods for landscape planning

The Keonjhar Lab Workshop, held from 16 to 18 March 2026 in Keonjhar, Odisha, was convened to test a critical question: how can digital public goods be brought closer to community-led processes for landscape governance? Hosted by the Women's Organisation for Socio-Cultural Awareness (WOSCA), with design and facilitation led by CoRE Stack and Living Landscapes, the workshop used Ghatagaon block as a living laboratory, bringing together community practitioners, civil society organisations, data and technology teams, governance actors, and cross-state networks.

The workshop explored how landscape data can be read, ground-truthed, and translated into action at the Panchayat, block, and district levels. Participants worked with the Know Your Landscape (KYL) dashboard and the Commons Connect platform — moving between hands-on use, field consultations at multiple levels of governance, and collective sense-making sessions that layered field findings back onto KYL to build landscape stories for relevant stakeholders. Organisations including WASSAN, the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), PRADAN, CYSD, Atma Shakti Trust, and the Karnataka CSO Federation FEVOURD-K shared use cases from their own geographies, helping frame a replicable model.

Two insights surfaced through this experience. First, digital tools are most useful when designed in close proximity to community decision-making, not delivered to it. Second, the value of dashboards like KYL is multiplied when ground-truthed observations are fed back into them, turning static data into living landscape narratives that communities and officials can act on together.

Developing infrastructure and consensus in the ecosystem on interoperability and data governance

Aapti Institute drafted a report on the current practices of governance of digital systems, delineating alignments and limitations of different approaches (FOSS, DPIs) and presenting expert views on how these can be best adapted for a digital commons approach. It also outlines infrastructural sovereignty as an overarching principle that Common Ground espouses. Further to this, Aapti is working on data management protocols for open source technology providers, rooted in the principles of community-centric data and technology governance — addressing data life cycle, consent, stewardship roles, and trust-building across the ecosystem — which would get embedded in the way data is accessed via the digital backbone, or federated data repository.

Along with CoRE Stack and Aapti Institute, Common Ground hosted a session at the Digital Commons Convening held on 9, 10 March in Delhi, co-hosted by Arghyam, CoRE Stack, CRDF-CEPT University, FES and Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC), on the ‘what, why and how of Digital Commons’. The conversation is being advanced through working groups on data standards, interoperable architectures, and governance.

India Development Review (IDR) has launched a collaborative initiative on Climate Knowledge Commons, inviting partners to co-create sectoral infrastructure for the climate knowledge ecosystem powered by AI. Common Ground partners Tarkam, Land Conflict Watch, Living Landscapes and CoRE Stack are contributing to developing it.

Building a shared knowledge and expertise across networks leveraging technology

A Common Ground Hub has been established on Project iECHO, where partners have begun running training programmes on themes including the Forest Rights Act and community mobilisation. Building on training programmes hosted by Badlao Foundation and SEWAK on the iECHO platform, the Living Landscapes team is working with the Tagore Society of Rural Development (TSRD) and the Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS) to facilitate sessions on MGNREGA and Localising Sustainable Development Goals (LSDG), expanding the platform's use as a knowledge exchange infrastructure across the Collaborative.

Check out the Common Ground [ECHO hub](#).

The Green Rural Economy (GRE) platform by the Rainmatter Foundation is being introduced to partners as an open marketplace to share knowledge and expertise across the ecosystem; the Digital Public Goods Working Group facilitated onboarding of multiple Landscape Partners and Community Champions, and in March, partners began uploading solutions and queries, with the platform connecting support requests to solution providers.

Strengthening reflection and learning across the Collaborative

The first round of Quarterly Reflection and Learning (QRL) sessions with Multi-Actor Platforms has been completed in two blocks of Jharkhand and two blocks of Odisha, in April-May 2026. The sessions surfaced key gaps in MAP functioning that need to be addressed for the vision of landscape-level alignment of policy, practice, and finance to be realised at scale. A full report is being prepared by the LME Hub.

Living Landscapes has launched a system-level sense-making platform for Common Ground in collaboration with Dots (formerly Ooloi Labs), enabling connections to be drawn between developments across the Collaborative and helping track how Common Ground's efforts are contributing to regulatory and normative shifts toward inclusive Commons governance.

The LME Hub is working with each Working Group to upload relevant information to the Dots platform to enable analysis at Landscape, Initiative, Working Group, and Collaborative levels.

Community-rooted storytelling, shared across landscapes

Storytelling efforts this quarter focused on connecting community narratives to policy moments, building a communicators' ecosystem, and making the work of the Collaborative more visible across geographies and audiences.

Connecting key moments to communicators' networks

The Economic Survey 2025–2026 included a dedicated section on village Commons, recognising them as a distinct land-use category. Asar led the synthesis of key points from the Survey and coordinated dissemination across national and state communicators in Jharkhand, Odisha, Kerala, and Maharashtra, anchoring a policy narrative around Commons that partners can draw on in their own engagement.

In Kerala, the government's declaration of Coastal High Tide Flooding as a state-specific disaster, a long-standing demand from coastal Gram Sabhas, was supported through coordinated storytelling and communicator engagement by Common Ground partners, drawing on documentation from Equinoct's KaBhuMm!!! process in Ernakulam. The declaration opens entry points for preparedness planning and locally anchored governance.

Commons Sensing Podcast

In February, the Common Ground Initiative launched *Commons Sensing*, a five-part podcast series hosted by Kanchi Kohli and produced by Asar and Common Ground. The series brings the idea of the Commons out of policy documents and academic debate into lived, everyday realities, drawing on the grounded experience of practitioners working across natural resource management, livelihoods, and collective governance. All five episodes are now available, featuring voices from across the Commons ecosystem on themes ranging from community institutions and land tenure to markets, law, and the everyday governance of shared resources.

Find it on the Common Ground [YouTube channel](#) or [website](#).

Animated series on the landscape economy

An animated series is in development to make the landscape economy approach more accessible, illustrating how markets, finance, value chains, and community institutions work together. The first part focuses on multi-layer natural farming. Subsequent parts will cover bamboo value chains, Sal-based livelihoods, CSR and ESG engagement, market price information systems, NTFP insurance, and FPO financing.

Check out the first [edition](#).

Building a shared body of stories

100 Stories of Commons, an initiative by Land Conflict Watch, has progressed, with 44 stories complete and ready for publishing and a further 12 in editing stages. The emerging set spans 20 states and covers governance and rights, women's voices, cultural practices, livelihoods and markets, ecological restoration, and Commons protection across forested, coastal, and agrarian landscapes. A dedicated microsite organised by typology is being developed to host them.

A widening network of partners

The Collaborative has grown to 92 partners across civil society, community networks, policy institutions, and market actors, with potential reach now extending to Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Nagaland. Three new formal partnerships were established this period.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Atma Shakti Trust focuses on amplifying Indigenous and local community voices — through the expansion of the Indigenous Yatra initiative, the building of listening channels, the integration of tribal knowledge into local planning, and a database of young community champions.

The MoU with the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS) focuses on influencing policies and financial flows to support ecologically sound and inclusive rural development through strengthened grassroots institutions.

The MoU with Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) establishes a collaborative framework to strengthen Commons governance, community institutions, rural livelihoods, and multi-stakeholder collaboration in Odisha through knowledge sharing, capacity building, policy engagement, and digital innovation.



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