# ECRICC INITIATIVES:

## Localising Climate Action in Odisha's Coastal Communities











**ECRICC Initiative: Localising Climate Action in Odisha's Coastal Communities**


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The collective efforts, expertise and dedication of all involved have enriched the study, holding immense value for future endeavors in promoting and scaling up ECRICC's intervention in the climate-vulnerable districts in the state and elsewhere.

**SHASHANK GRAHACHARJYA**

DIRECTOR, CGGO

# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CGGO | Centre for Good Governance, Odisha |
| DFO | Divisional Forest Officer |
| DPMU | District Project Management Unit |
| DR | Direct Recruit |
| DRR | Disaster Risk Reduction |
| EbA | Ecosystem-based Adaptation |
| ECRICC | Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| FNGO | Field Non-Governmental Organization |
| GAA | Gopabandhu Academy of Administration |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GP | Gram Panchayat |
| MGNREGA | Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act |
| MoEF & CC | Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OAS | Odisha Administrative Service |
| OT | Officer Trainee |
| PRA | Participatory Rural Appraisal |
| PRI | Panchayati Raj Institution |
| SAPCC | State Action Plan on Climate Change |
| SHG | Self Help Group |
| SPMU | State Project Management Unit |
| SRI | System of Rice Intensification |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |

# Executive Summary

Odisha has nearly 500 kilometers long-stretched coastline which is highly exposed to climate-induced hazards such as cyclones, storm surges, coastal erosion, and saline intrusion. These risks threaten fragile coastal ecosystems and the socio-economic stability of local communities. Their livelihoods depend largely on climate-sensitive sectors i.e. fisheries and agriculture.

The Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) project aims to strengthen the adaptive capacity of vulnerable coastal populations in Odisha by promoting ecosystem-based adaptation, climate-resilient livelihoods, and community-driven climate governance. The ECRICC project is implemented by the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, Government of Odisha, with the support of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It covers 7 landscapes in 4 coastal districts, namely, Balasore, Kendrapada, Puri and Ganjam. The ECRICC project pursues to build long-term resilience through integrated, science-based, and community-centered interventions.

This brief field study was undertaken by the Centre for Good Governance, Odisha (CGGO) at Gopabandhu Academy of Administration (GAA) to review the implementation progress, field-level outcomes, and broader relevance of the project's interventions, while getting the young Officer Trainees of Odisha Administrative Services (OAS) exposed to field reality and project implementation through GO - NGO collaboration. The study applied a qualitative and participatory methodology, including field visits to selected project sites, consultations with implementing partners, and interactions with community members and trained Climate Champions (mostly women). The field engagements provided insights into the effectiveness of project activities and their contribution to strengthening local climate resilience.

The findings suggest that the ECRICC project has made notable progress in enhancing community awareness and engagement on climate adaptation issues. The Climate Champion model has emerged as an effective mechanism for grassroots mobilization, enabling trained community members to act as facilitators of climate awareness, sustainable practices, and local environmental stewardship. This approach has strengthened community participation and helped bridge the gap between technical interventions and local implementation.

The project has also contributed to ecosystem-based adaptation, including initiatives aimed at protecting and restoring coastal ecosystems. Such interventions play a critical role in strengthening natural buffers against climate hazards while supporting biodiversity conservation. Additionally, the promotion of climate-resilient livelihood options, including aquaculture and other adaptive economic activities, has the potential to reduce household vulnerability and diversify income sources in climate-sensitive coastal areas. The project has added yet another feather to Odisha's successful journey of grass-roots disaster governance, since Super Cyclone 1999.

The study indicates that ECRICC demonstrates a promising model of integrated climate resilience that combines scientific expertise, ecosystem conservation, and community engagement. It highlights the importance of further institutionalizing successful initiatives, particularly the Climate Champion model, within local governance frameworks and strengthening monitoring systems to track long-term resilience outcomes.

The experience of ECRICC provides valuable lessons for community-led climate adaptation and grassroots disaster governance. The study advocates the projects replicability and sustainability. It recommends ECRICC's expansion to other climate-vulnerable coastal regions (Blocks and GPs) in the State.

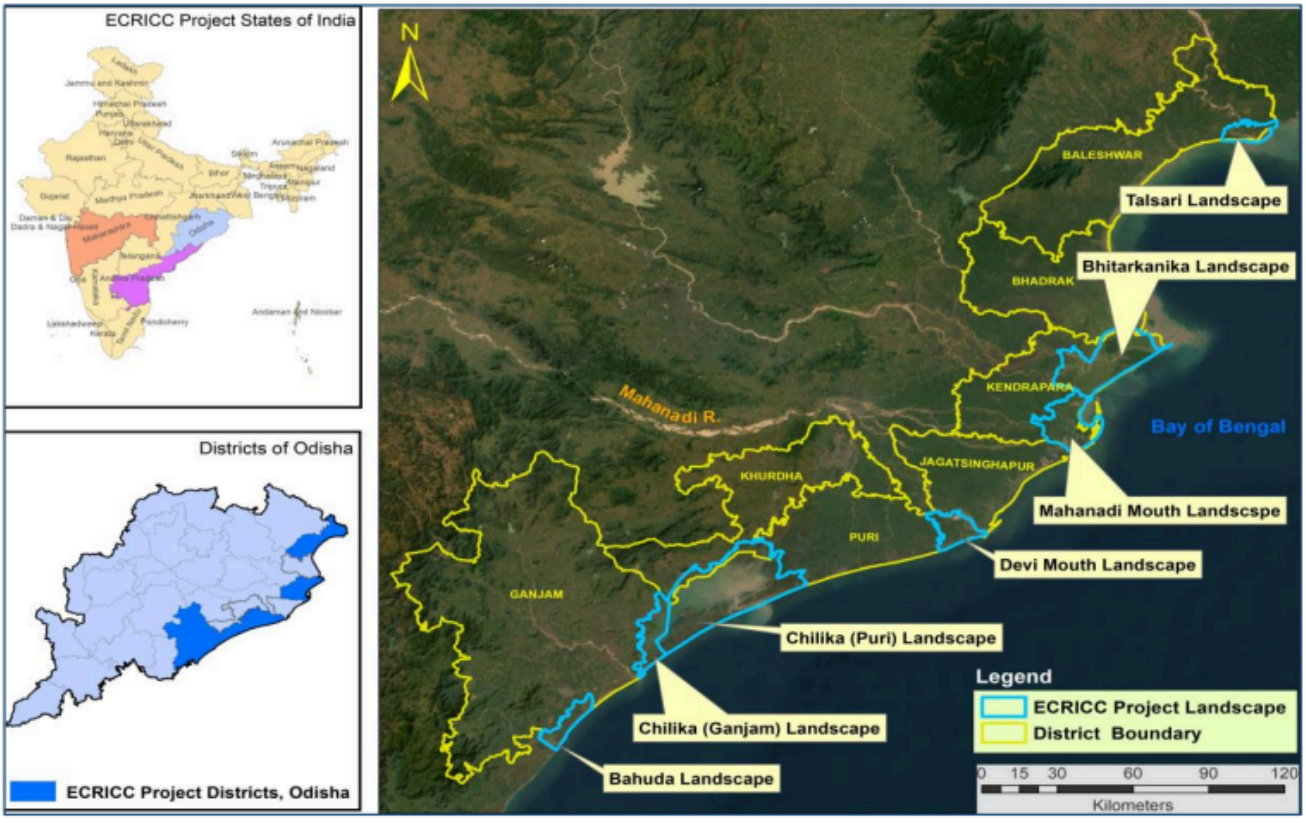
# Introduction

Governance at grass roots finds its most compelling expression during crisis. With around 500-kilometer coastline stretched along the Bay-of-Bengal, the cyclone prone state of Odisha is subjected to multiple climate induced hazards.

The Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) project is being implemented in 3 states- Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. The ECRICC project is a flagship coastal adaptation initiative to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable coastal populations to climate change impacts, such as sea-bed rise, coastal erosion, storm-surge, saline intrusions, etc.

ECRICC covers seven landscapes across four coastal districts, namely, Balasore, Puri, Kendrapada, and Ganjam, in Odisha. It adopts an ecosystem-centered, community-based approach. Core interventions include restoration of mangroves, seagrass, saltmarshes, and coastal watersheds, alongside promotion of climate-resilient livelihoods such as mud crab farming, ornamental fisheries, and seaweed cultivation.

Supported by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MEF&CC), and United Nation's Development Program (UNDP), and being implemented by FE &CC Dept. Government of Odisha, the ECRICC project represents a significant convergence of global climate finance with local community level implementation mechanisms.



The Centre for Governance and Good Governance (CGGO) – a permanent vertical of Gopabandhu Academy of Administration (GAA) is the hub for research and documentation of evidence-based development issues. As a part of GAA's overall mission of building capacity of State's human resources, CGGO highly recognizes and advocates the importance of involving young budding administrators in exposure field visits to foster practical experiential learning which in turn would enable them contributing immensely to the journey of Vikshit-Odisha@2036 for a Vikshit-Bharat@2047.

The ECRICC project has groomed over 300 Climate Champions, predominantly women, and has reached more than 32,000 community members through structured capacity-building programmes. Engagement with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), and local community institutions reflects a deliberate strategy to embed climate resilience within decentralized governance frameworks.

The ECRICC is particularly noteworthy for young OAS OTs, during their induction training at GAA, to get an exposure for its strong emphasis on institutional capacity building, grassroots leadership, and community mobilization. The project offers a valuable field-based model to assess how ecosystem restoration, livelihood diversification, and behavioral capacity building can be integrated within governance systems to produce sustainable climate adaptation outcomes. The ECRICC experience in Odisha thus provides important lessons for strengthening the learning ecosystem, improving last-mile delivery, and informing future scale-up of community-centric climate resilience initiatives. Its recognition at national platforms further underscores its emerging relevance as a scalable coastal adaptation model.



# Rationale for CGGO's Study

Given CGGO's mandate on governance strengthening and capacity ecosystem development, the ECRICC project presents an important opportunity to assess how climate resilience initiatives are being institutionalized within decentralized governance systems in Odisha.

Odisha has emerged as a national leader in disaster preparedness and climate-responsive governance. ECRICC represents the next generation of climate adaptation programming that integrates:

- Ecosystem-based resilience
- Women-led community mobilization
- Convergence with PRIs and SHGs
- Climate-resilient livelihood promotion

CGGO's assessment helps identify strengths, gaps, and pathways for mainstreaming climate resilience within the State's governance architecture.



# Objectives of the Study

The study aims to:

- Expose the young OAS OTs to field reality and community participation in development administration
- Examine the extent to which ECRICC interventions have strengthened institutional and grassroots capacity for climate resilience.
- Assess the sustainability and community ownership of ecosystem restoration efforts.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of climate-adaptive alternate livelihood models in enhancing economic resilience.
- Study convergence with PRIs, SHGs, and line departments for long-term institutionalization.
- Identify scalable good practices and policy recommendations for replication.



# Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method approach. Participatory qualitative method was mainly employed, while desk review of a few basic project documents, field visits to selected ECRICC landscapes, focus group discussions (FGDs) with SHGs, climate champions, and villagers, interactions with PRIs, NGO partners, quick observations of livelihood and ecosystem, etc., were also conducted. Representatives of State Project Management Unit (SPMU), District Project Management Units (DPMUs) as well as with officials of line departments at all levels were consulted. Additionally, rapid participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises were also conducted to gather additional insights of the project. The study also aimed to know the involvement of the community members, particularly women, regarding climate change concerns. It attempted to focus on understanding and navigating ECRICC initiatives from community perspective. Quantitative analysis of project data was not much focused though a few basic learning materials from secondary sources, mostly available in public domain, were referred to.

An exposure visit was also organized to the non-ECRICC project village, in the nearby Gram Panchayat/ Block of the same district for observing the differences in the understanding, awareness and practices of the villagers on climate concerns.



# Curated Field Visits

Three small groups of OAS Direct Recruit (DR) OTs of 2022 batch conducted week-long field visits to two ECRICC project districts of Puri and Kendrapada in two phases. Each group consisted of 8-10 OTs, both male and female. They were attached with two NGOs, namely, Hamara Bachpan Trust (HBT) and Nature's Club (NC). Both the NGOs are partners of ECRICC project. While HBT got the OTs exposed to Chilika landscape in Puri district, NC took them around Bhitarakanika and Mahanadi Mouth landscapes in Kendrapada district. OTs also visited to couple of villages which are not included in the project area.

The field visits were conducted during 12-15 October 2025 and 10-14 November 2025. While transport was arranged by GAA, all other logistics arrangements were facilitated by the NGO partners. OTs reported to have learnt a lot from the community during their stay in the field.





# Focus Areas and Key Questions

To guide field study and policy learning, the following integrated areas were focused on:

**1. Institutional Capacity and Governance Integration:** Convergence and durability of systems created.

- To what extent have PRIs and line departments internalized climate resilience within routine planning and implementation?
- How effective is convergence between ECRICC and ongoing sectoral schemes?
- Are institutional roles, coordination mechanisms, and monitoring systems clearly established and functional?
- What evidence exists of sustainability beyond project funding?

**2. Community Capacity, Leadership and Behavioural Change:** Translation of training and exposure into sustained grassroots capability.

- Do women climate champions demonstrate active leadership and peer influence?
- Has risk awareness translated into measurable behavioral change at community level?
- How inclusive and regular are capacity-building processes?
- What critical skill gaps remain at community and PRI levels?

**3. Ecosystem Restoration Quality and Sustainability:** Technical robustness and community ownership of ecological interventions.

- What are the survival rates and maintenance systems for mangrove, seagrass, and salt marsh restoration?
- Are local institutions involved in protection, monitoring, and benefit-sharing?
- Is scientific and technical support effectively reaching field implementation?
- Are ecosystem interventions visibly contributing to risk reduction (erosion, salinity, cyclone buffering)?

**4. Livelihood Diversification and Economic Resilience:** Income stability and vulnerability reduction.

- What income gains and risk reductions are observed from adaptive livelihoods (e.g., crab farming, seaweed)?
- Are market and input supply chains reliable and scalable?
- Is participation equitable, particularly for women and vulnerable groups?
- What financial, technical, or climatic risks could undermine sustainability?

**5. Scalability, Replicability and Policy Uptake:** Potential for statewide and national learning.

- Which ECRICC components show highest replication potential?
- What cost-effectiveness signals are emerging?
- Has the project influenced district or state climate planning frameworks?
- What institutional strengthening is required for scale-up?

Discussions on the above indicated focus areas and key questions on project ECRICC offered opportunity to the OAS OTs to get exposed to, witness and internalize how climate resilience could move beyond project-mode implementation into an institutionalized governance capability. The field study therefore prioritized qualitative change of system strengthening, behavioral transformation, and long-term sustainability, while identifying actionable pathways for scaling Odisha's coastal resilience model across similarly vulnerable geographies.





# Findings and Obervations

The ECRICC project is observed to have been demonstrating a strong, well-conceived approach to addressing climate vulnerability along Odisha's coastline through ecosystem-based adaptation, climate-resilient livelihoods, and community-centered governance.

## ✔Project Design and Strategic Alignment

The ECRICC project is noticed to have been well-aligned with India's climate adaptation priorities, particularly ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and community-centered resilience building. It is observed to have blended climate change concerns into local planning and development process. Its multi-sectoral design i.e. integrating ecosystems, livelihoods, and governance, reflects a mature understanding of coastal risks and vulnerabilities and the need for locally grounded feasible solutions. The explicit focus on women, marginalized groups, and climate champions strengthens planning, implementation, and monitoring, enhancing inclusivity and social sustainability.

## ✔Institutional and Implementation Strengths

Long standing grassroot engagements by experienced implementing NGOs such as Nature's Club (Kendrapada) and Hamara Bachpan Trust (Puri) have clearly enabled deep grassroots penetration and community participation. The already association of community members with various on-going program activities of different departments has been observed as an advantage. Convergence with government departments, and adoption of climate-resilient practices across the project villages and households have given momentum to the project. Such convergence, as envisaged by the project, has strengthened delivery, ensured local ownership, and reduced dependence on stand-alone project funding. However, control and regulatory practices of NGO partners, in some cases, are reported to be a bit counter-productive in long run, especially for the community members in taking independent decisions on their own than being indirectly and passively influenced.



## ✔Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation

The project reported to have been demonstrating strong innovation in ecosystem restoration, including:

- Mangrove restoration/ plantation (using innovative Fish Bone Technology)
- Protection and restoration of sea grass (available in Chilika only)
- Protection of saltmarshes
- Coastal watershed restoration
- Protection of ecosystem through community stewardship

These interventions are observed to have been well-integrated with local livelihoods, reducing the trade-off between conservation and income generation, particularly in high-risk landscapes (e.g. Satabhaya) of Bhitarakanika and the Mahanadi Mouth in Kendrapada district.





## ✔ Livelihood Diversification and Resilience

Livelihood diversification is a key strength of ECRICC project. It has reported to have been improving income stability and adoptive capacity in addition to strengthening sustainability.

- SRI-based paddy cultivation
- Crab farming and ornamental fisheries
- Seaweed farming (available in Chilika only)
- SHG-led micro-enterprises such as organic vegetable farming and marketing

The convergence with MGNREGA, Subhadra Yojana, Veterinary and Agriculture activities has observed to have been enhancing economic resilience and reduced dependency on single income sources. Such convergence has also been helping the community's holistic development, where not only livelihood and food security is strengthened but socio-cultural concerns are getting due attention.



## ✔ Governance, Disaster Preparedness, and Social Outcomes

The project has been contributing significantly to local governance and disaster risk reduction (DRR), as evident from:

- Preparation of Gram Panchayat Disaster Management Plans
- Adoption climate – informed Infrastructure adaptations (raised housing, lightning arrestors, all-weather roads)
- Empowerment of women leading to awareness on girls' education and public health

These outcomes suggest that ECRICC seems to have gone beyond climate action to strengthen overall human development indicators.







## Demonstration of Value Addition through Comparative Analysis

It has been observed that in the non-intervention areas e.g. Balia Grampachayat (of Kendrapada) and Luniapadar in Brahmagiri (of Puri district), there is lower awareness, weak institutional capacity, and limited livelihood options. This clearly underscores the value of climate consciousness, sustained facilitation and community participation as well as convergence of various existing program activities, as has been observed, under ECRICC project. Absence of the catalytic role of women climate champions, who are but the game changers of ECRICC project, has also been noticed in these non-intervention areas, though these are not far away from the ECRICC project area.






## Alignment of ECRICC with VikshitOdisha@2036 leading to VikshitBharat@2047

Odisha will be 100 years old in 2036, as a State. Government of Odisha has drawn a vision document for Vikshit Odisha@2036 which would obviously contribute immensely to the national vision of Vikshit Bharat by 2047.

### Climate Resilience and Ecological Security:

It has been observed that ECRICC has been silently contributing to the nation's climate leadership through the climate-resilient and ecologically secured Odisha. Integration of vulnerability in local planning, community-led coastal protection in high-risk zones (e.g. Satabhaya), restoration of sea-grass, salt-marshes and mangroves directly align with India's climate commitments at the last mile. This has been show-casing Odisha as a living model of nature-based climate solution.

ECRICC has received the 1st prize in the Government sector for outstanding contribution in Climate Resilient Aquaculture at Seafood Expo Bharat -2025 held in Chennai. (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/climate-project-wins-first-prize-at-seafood-expo/articleshow/122233495.cms)




### Inclusive Growth, and Sustainable Food and Livelihood Security:

ECRICC has been directly supporting inclusive economic growth by converting climate risk into livelihood opportunity, especially for women, who contribute the most in household food security. While it is reported to have enhancing the rural income, it has also been expanding the coastal livelihood opportunities, through diversification and market linkages. SRI paddy farming, crab culture and fisheries, etc. innovative climate-adoptive livelihood options are but augmenting to the nation's efforts for sustainable, green and equitable economic growth.





## Strong Local Governance and Disaster Preparedness:

ECRICC has been strengthening grassroots governance capacity, aligning with Odisha's leadership in DRR and decentralization. It has enabled institutionalization of women climate champions and their effective participation in Gram Panchayat's Disaster Management Plans. They are observed to have been playing proactive role of community institutions for planning and monitoring and convergence of MGNREGA and other activities of line departments. They are enabling marginalized sections to timely avail social protection schemes and are observed to have been establishing a strong decentralized, accountable local governance system.

## Human Resource Development through Youth and Women Empowerment:

ECRICC has been contributing to long-term demographic and social resilience by embedding leadership skills through women climate champion model and building skills and local enterprises while reducing youth migration.

## Knowledge, Innovation and Replicability:

ECRICC, as observed, is an evidence-based innovative project that offers replicable framework for other coastal states, supporting India's aspiration to lead globally on climate adaptation practices and to be and become Global knowledge leader.

ECRICC project has been showcased in the widely viewed international documentary series "an Optimist's Guide to the Planet" hosted by UNDP's Goodwill Ambassador Mr. Nikolaj Coster-Waldau. The story of '*Bagapatia*' (a village in Gupti GP of Kendrapada district) has been featured along with other evidence-based successful undertakings of the project. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hN0crkFqu3s).

ECRICC is strongly aligned with both Viksit Odisha@2036 and Viksit Bharat@2047, translating long-term vision into measurable grassroots action. With institutionalization and scale-up, the ECRICC project can serve as a flagship coastal resilience model for Odisha and the nation.



## Climate Champions: The Barefoot Architects of Odisha's Coastal Resilience

Sustained resilience is possible when communities are genuinely informed, actively engaged, and supported by appropriate infrastructure and ecosystem restoration measures. The ECRICC initiative has rightly prioritized both dimensions. It has operationalized an innovative Climate Champion model and is working toward institutionalizing community-led climate action through this cadre. The approach aligns strongly with the State's emphasis on decentralized governance, women's empowerment, and capacity building.

### Capacity Building: Training of Trainers

The UNDP and the Odisha Environment, Forest & Climate Change (FE&CC) Department provide structured training to Climate Champions on key technical and administrative aspects. These include climate risk literacy, community mobilization techniques, gender inclusion, basic monitoring and reporting, and sustainable agriculture and aquaculture practices. Capacity building of Climate Champions is a critical pillar of ECRICC and has a direct bearing on the quality of project implementation and outcomes. Continued mentoring support from partner NGOs has also proved vital in sustaining field effectiveness.

### The Climate Champions Approach

Climate Champions are trained grassroots community workers mostly women who function as local change agents for climate adaptation. They serve as the crucial interface between technical programme interventions and community behavior. Their role in ensuring continuous last-mile engagement represents both a unique model of distributed leadership and an effective participatory management function.

Importantly, the Climate Champion is not an external actor but an embedded community member who works alongside fellow villagers to achieve shared climate resilience goals.0

### Creating Risk Awareness and Facilitating Behavioural Change

As the primary link between the project and the community, Climate Champions first undergo technical training on climate information. They then translate this knowledge into locally understandable messages. Through household visits, village meetings, and community rallies, they strengthen awareness of climate risks and advocate appropriate adaptation practices.



## Connecting Communities with Climate-Resilient Livelihood Options

Climate Champions play a catalytic role in identifying, mobilizing, and handholding beneficiaries toward viable alternative livelihood options. These include System of Rice Intensification (SRI), mud crab farming, ornamental fisheries, and saline-resilient agriculture. Their close engagement helps reduce adoption barriers and improves uptake of ECRICC-supported technical innovations. In many ways, they bring laboratory knowledge to practical application in the field.

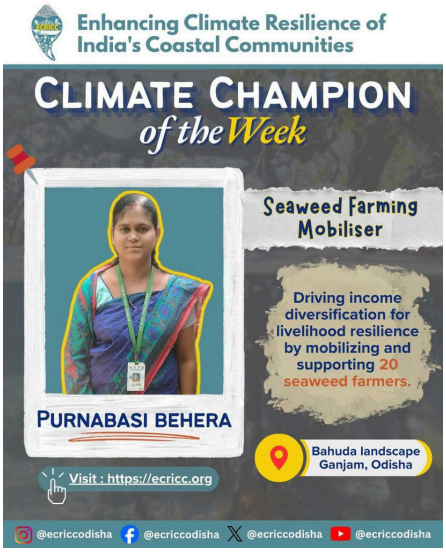
## Promoting Social Inclusion and Women's Empowerment

ECRICC places strong emphasis on social inclusion by positioning women as front-line actors. Field observations suggest that this women-led approach has:

- improved household preparedness
- strengthened SHG-based entrepreneurial activities
- enhanced women's participation in local decision-making
- mainstreamed women's concerns into local programme implementation
- increased women's confidence in financial matters
- contributed to improved outcomes for the next generation (such as continuity of girls' education and better health practices)
- reinforced the broader women's empowerment ecosystem

## Firming Ecosystem Stewardship

Climate Champions actively mobilize and monitor communities for ecosystem restoration activities. Mangrove protection, watershed works, and coastal cleanliness drives were found to be systematically organized with their involvement. They often maintain detailed knowledge of household-level participation and are able to track responsibilities and emerging issues with notable accuracy.






### Strengthening Local Governance

Climate Champions are emerging as community ambassadors who navigate and coordinate with PRIs, partner NGOs, and line departments. Their efforts help improve scheme convergence, ensure last-mile communication, gather community feedback, and build public trust in the project.

## Observed Outcomes

Field observations indicate that the Climate Champion model has contributed to:

- improved grassroots climate awareness
- stronger and more visible participation of women
- enhanced community–PRI interface
- accelerated adoption of SRI and aquaculture practices
- better maintenance of restored ecosystems

The model is showing encouraging results. It appears both cost-effective and socially sustainable, particularly because community women themselves are leading the resilience efforts.

### Advancing of Decentralized Governance

The Climate Champion approach demonstrates Odisha's citizen-centric capacity building and grassroots governance in a pragmatic manner. It is observed to be:

- strengthening decentralized climate governance through behavioral change
- improving last-mile service and programme delivery
- building durable community ownership
- enabling convergence across multiple government schemes
- gradually institutionalizing climate concerns within local development processes

### Institutionalizing the Model for Stronger Grassroots Governance

To further consolidate gains, it is suggested that the Climate Champion model may be institutionalized through the following measures:

- integrating the cadre more formally with PRI systems to support GPDP and local climate action planning
- introducing formal certification/accreditation to enhance legitimacy
- enabling simple digital tools (such as basic mobile devices) for real-time reporting and knowledge access
- creating structured peer-learning platforms for cross-learning and experience sharing
- introducing performance-linked incentives and recognition at district and State levels (building on initiatives such as "Champion of the Week")
- replicating the model in other climate-vulnerable blocks and districts of Odisha, and adapting it for other development programmes

The Climate Champions initiative under ECRICC demonstrates how women-led, community-anchored leadership can transform climate adaptation from a time-bound project activity into a sustained social movement. The approach appears scalable and holds considerable promise for embedding resilience within grassroots governance systems. It also offers valuable lessons for similar climate adaptation programmes in India and beyond.

## ECRICC's Technical Interventions: Integrating Science with Community Resilience in Coastal Odisha

The ECRICC project has gone beyond government programs, forging dynamic partnerships with leading technical organizations to bring innovative, science-driven solutions to Odisha's coastal communities. By integrating global expertise with local knowledge, ECRICC has been enhancing climate adaptation efforts, strengthening livelihoods, and ensuring long-term sustainability. These powerful collaborations drive impactful change, helping communities build resilience against climate uncertainties while securing a more sustainable future.

This yet another innovative approach of ECRICC project has been combining community-driven action with advanced technical expertise for facilitating climate adaptation in Odisha. It has been partnering with premier national and international research institutions and specialized technical organizations to integrate local traditional knowledge and scientific innovation to address the complex climate challenges in coastal Odisha.

ECRICC has introduced time-tested science-based solutions to address climate risks, strengthen coastal ecosystems, and diversify livelihoods to help vulnerable communities to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

### Promoting Climate-Resilient Aquaculture through Ornamental Fisheries:

ECRICC, in partnership with the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), promotes ornamental fisheries as an alternative livelihood for coastal households. This intervention enables communities to engage in small-scale aquaculture practices that require limited space and investment while generating sustainable income. This diversification of livelihood options, beyond the traditional practice of fisherman communities, help reducing economic vulnerability and promote creating new opportunities for rural households.



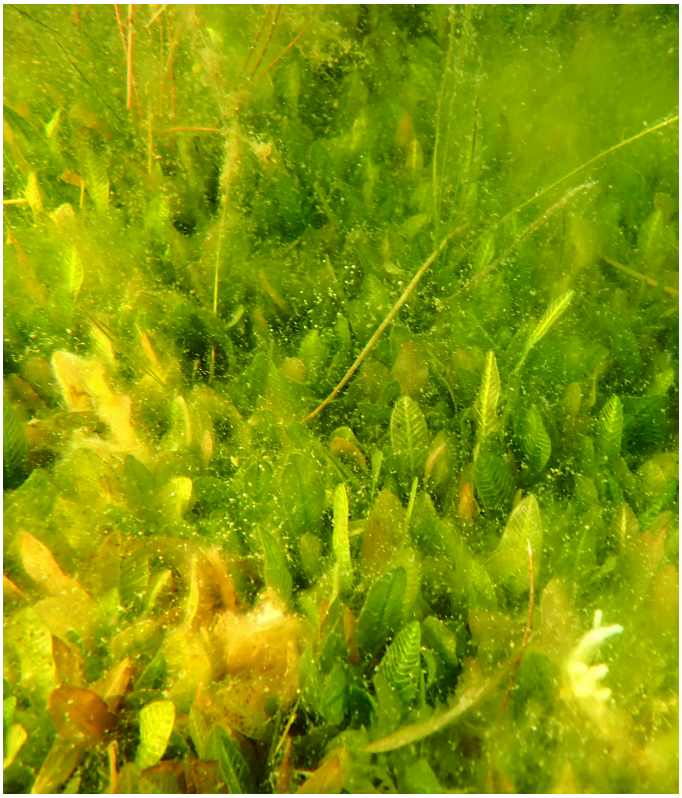
## Climate-Smart Agriculture and Mitigation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

ECRICC collaborates with the ICAR-National Rice Research Institute (CRRI) to promote the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) and conduct research on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from paddy cultivation to address the climate impacts on agriculture. This intervention improves water efficiency, increases productivity, and reduces methane emissions from rice fields. By encouraging climate-smart agricultural practices, ECRICC project strengthens food security while contributing to climate mitigation, by encouraging climate-smart agricultural practices.



## Protecting Coastal Ecosystems through Scientific Research

The ECRICC project, in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar supports research and conservation initiatives for saltmarshes and seagrass ecosystems. These ecosystems act as natural buffers against storm surges and coastal erosion while also serving as critical habitats for marine biodiversity. Scientific mapping and conservation efforts help ensure that these ecosystems continue to provide ecological and protective services to coastal communities. Through this, ECRICC ensures that healthy coastal ecosystems play a crucial role in protecting communities from climate hazards.



## Developing Sustainable Blue Economy Opportunities through Seaweed Farming

ECRICC is also promoting seaweed cultivation as a climate-resilient livelihood, in collaboration with the Chilika Development Authority (CDA). Seaweed farming provides coastal communities with an alternative income source while contributing to environmental benefits such as nutrient absorption and carbon sequestration. This initiative reflects the growing importance of nature-based livelihoods within the emerging blue economy framework.



## Advancing Climate-Resilient Aquaculture through Crab Farming

ECRICC, in partnership with the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), promotes scientific crab farming and the establishment of crab hatcheries. The initiative supports fisher households by providing improved seed supply, technical training, and market linkages. Crab farming offers a high-value livelihood option that can significantly enhance incomes while encouraging sustainable aquaculture practices. ECRICC has won 1st prize in the Government sector for outstanding contribution in climate Aquaculture at Seafood Expo Bharat 2025 held in Chennai by MPEDA.





## Integrating Science, Ecosystems, and Community Action

Transferring technology to rural areas, from laboratories to farmers in the field and to translate scientific theories into practice to benefit citizen have been an essential and integral part of the ECRICC project.

ECRICC demonstrates how science-based interventions can be effectively translated into community-level solutions. Technical research institutions of international reputation and credibility, being linked coastal communities through grassroots experimentation and implementation, the ECRICC ensures that scientific innovations reach the most vulnerable coastal populations for the latter's empowerment.

ECRICC's technical partnerships illustrate a unique model of climate resilience that integrates scientific research, ecosystem restoration, and livelihood innovation, enabling coastal communities in Odisha to adapt to climate change while pursuing sustainable development.

**Comparative Statement (Traditional vs SRI Method)**

| Sl. No | Activity | Traditional Method (₹) | SRI Method (₹) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Paddy Seed | 25 kg (1750) | 2 kg (150) |
| 2 | Cow Dung Manure | — | 1000 |
| 3 | Handi Khata | — | 50 |
| 4 | Jibamrut | — | 30 |
| 5 | Fertiliser | 800 | Nil |
| 6 | Labour | 5200 | 3600 |
| 7 | Land Preparation | 2000 | 2000 |
| 8 | Weeding | 2400 | 1200 |
| 9 | Water & Manure Application | 2400 | 2000 |
| 10 | Harvesting | 2200 | 2200 |
| | Total Expenditure | 16,750 | 12,230 |
| | Income | 50,300 | 77,222 |
| | Net Income | 33,550 | 64,992 |
| | Increase in Income | | 31,442 |

*Calculated based on the discussion with the local farmers in Kendrapada



## ECRICC as a Model of Grassroots Disaster Governance Practice in Odisha

The citizen does not see the State through policy documents or national plans, in disasters, but through the service providers at the door. Effective disaster management is therefore the highest expression of grass-roots governance and public service leadership. Odisha's experience in disaster management since the 1999 Super Cyclone represents one of the most instructive examples of how grass-roots governance, institutional reform, and community participation can collectively transform outcomes in the face of recurring natural hazards.

The ECRICC project has not only emerged as an important model of grassroots disaster governance in coastal Odisha by integrating community participation, ecosystem-based adaptation, and climate-resilient livelihoods, but also added a feather in Odisha's innovative structured well devised disaster management strategies.

### 1. Community-Centered Disaster Governance

ECRICC emphasizes bottom-up participation, where local communities actively engage in climate and disaster risk management. Through the training of Climate Champions, the project builds a network of local volunteers who facilitate awareness, preparedness, and environmental stewardship within villages. This strengthens community ownership of disaster preparedness and climate adaptation measures.

### 2. Ecosystem-Based Disaster Risk Reduction

The ECRICC project promotes nature-based solutions such as mangrove restoration, coastal ecosystem conservation, and watershed management. These interventions serve as natural protective barriers against cyclones, storm surges, and coastal erosion, which are major disaster risks in Odisha.

### 3. Strengthening Local Adaptive Capacity

ECRICC supports climate-resilient livelihood options, including improved fisheries, crab farming, and adaptive agriculture practices. By diversifying livelihoods, the project helps communities reduce economic vulnerability to climate-related disasters.



### 4. Integration with Local Institutions

The ECRICC project encourages collaboration between community groups, local governance institutions, and government agencies, helping embed climate resilience within local development planning and disaster preparedness systems.

### 5. Replicable Model for Coastal Climate Governance

The ECRICC project, through its integrated approach of combining community leadership, ecosystem restoration, and livelihood resilience, demonstrates a scalable model of grassroots disaster governance that can be replicated across other climate-vulnerable coastal regions.

ECRICC illustrates how community empowerment, ecosystem restoration, and climate-resilient livelihoods can collectively strengthen disaster governance at the grassroots level. The project's approach contributes to building long-term resilience among vulnerable coastal communities in Odisha while complementing state disaster management efforts.



# Recommendations

Suggestions and actionable recommendations for continuity and scaling up of the ECRICC project, based on the field observations and interactions with project functionaries and communities, are as follows:

### Institutionalization within Odisha State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) Framework:

Formally embed ECRICC tools (vulnerability mapping, resource mapping, EbA models, climate champions, climate risk integration, etc) into regular Panchayat and Block planning processes to ensure continuity beyond project duration.

### Strengthen Convergence and Budgetary Anchoring:

Establishment of district-level Climate Convergence Committees (may be part of DRR), chaired by the District Collector. Convergence with MGNREGA, CAMPA, Agriculture, Fisheries, Forest, and Rural Development departments through annual joint action plans and earmarked budgets for climate-resilient activities. The climate budget tags at GP and district levels may be introduced.

Budget allocations may be enhanced for effective convergence of State and Central Government schemes to sustain and expand interventions beyond the current project period which is likely to be ended next year 2027. Such climate-adaptation projects do take time and the current project period i.e. 2019 to 2027 (of which initial few years are said to be not so useful due to delay in project implementation).

### Scale Climate Champion Model:

Institutionalization of the Climate Champion approach through SHGs, youth clubs, and Panchayat committees, with structured and certified training modules, incentives, and leadership pathways, especially for women and adolescent girls.

### Enhance Livelihood Value Chains and Market Access:

The existing production-focused support may be shifted to full value-chain development (aggregation, branding, certification, and market linkages) for climate-adaptive livelihoods such as crab farming, organic produce, and fisheries. The climate-resilient coastal products may be promoted under a common brand/ label with a suitable tagline.

### Build Local Technical and Digital Capacity, and Reduce Dependency

Invest in skill development for local cadres on climate data use, digital tools, ecosystem monitoring, and enterprise management to reduce long-term dependence on NGOs. Too much and too long hand-holding would otherwise make the community dependent on external support and lack self-confidence to become self-reliant to take their own professional right decision at right time.

### Address Youth Migration through Local Enterprise Promotion

Promote climate-resilient micro-enterprises and green jobs in high-risk coastal zones to retain youth and strengthen local economies.

### Knowledge Management and Institutionalization of Experiential Learning

Systematically document best practices, case studies, and process learnings to support replication in other coastal districts of Odisha and nationally.

Such innovative, experimental and community-centric replicable development projects may formally be included and integrated as part of the training curricula of not only state civil servants but also for union and international civil service officers.

### Expansion Strategy:

Government of Odisha may consider scaling up the ECRICC approach to other climate-vulnerable coastal and estuarine regions by taking correcting/ improving measures, based on the time-tested lessons learnt cumulatively from the existing practices from all landscapes, and institutional experiences of project implementation. The high-risk zones/ landscapes of the remaining two coastal districts of Jagatsinghpur and Bhadrak may also be covered under the expansion of the ECRICC project for ensuring coastline inclusiveness.



# Conclusions

ECRICC is aligned with Odisha's SAPCC, India's NDCs, and long-term visions like Viksit Odisha@2036 and Bharat@2047. ECRICC enabled to position Odisha as a model for climate resilience nationally and globally by combining ecosystem restoration, livelihood diversification, and governance strengthening. ECRICC can evolve into a flagship coastal resilience programme offering replicable lessons for other coastal states and contributing meaningfully to India's climate adaptation.

ECRICC represents an innovative model of grassroots disaster governance in coastal Odisha by placing communities at the center of climate resilience. ECRICC's state-of-the-art approach i.e. Climate Champions, mostly women, - the barefoot architects of climate resilience, strengthen local leadership, awareness, and preparedness for climate-induced disasters. Ecosystem-based adaptation such as mangrove restoration and climate-resilient livelihoods, ECRICC reduces both environmental and socio-economic vulnerability. The integration of community participation, ecosystem protection, and livelihood resilience makes ECRICC a reliable, replicable and sustainable practice of locals for climate and disaster governance in coastal regions of India.

ECRICC is noticed to be more than a project. It is a replicable model of hope. It shows that when communities, ecosystems, and governance come together, resilience isn't just possible, but it's sustainable. Like any other meaningful project, scaling up requires deeper institutionalization, stronger financing, and continued capacity building, but thankfully it is observed that the foundation led by ECRICC is already strong.

ECRICC is a living library for development administrators of government as well as NGO functionaries to refer to. The interaction with women climate champions is an experience of gaining hope and becoming optimistic against all odds of life. ECRICC bears the stories of naturing positivism against all odds of nature. It claims collective confidence to slam anticipated adversities of climate change.

The brief study complements that ECRICC is a high-impact, well-aligned, and scalable climate adaptation initiative. It successfully integrates ecosystem restoration, livelihoods, and governance while strengthening decentralized institutions and social inclusion.



# Annexures

## Annexure I

### Case Study 1:

#### ECRICC's Women Climate Champions Leading Coastal Resilience in Odisha



Coastal villages of Odisha are climate - vulnerable. Cyclones, saline intrusion, and erratic weather patterns increasingly threaten the livelihoods of the coastal population. The Climate Champion initiative under ECRICC project has emerged as a powerful grassroots solution to counter such coercions.

Mama Swain and Subhadra Rout, like many other women in their villages of Pachimaveda (Kurunti GP) and Bharigada in Rajnagar and Rajkanika blocks of Kendrapada district, once depended primarily on small-scale agriculture and seasonal fisheries for their household income. Recurring climate shocks i.e. cyclones, flooding, and declining crop productivity due to salinity have made their livelihoods increasingly uncertain. Mama and Subhadra received structured training, under ECRICC project, from NGO partners and technical institutions on climate risk awareness, sustainable agricultural practices, and community mobilization. With enhanced knowledge and skills, they stepped forward as Climate Champions, representing a new generation of grassroots leaders addressing climate challenges.



Mama and Subhadra, with their interest and enthusiasm, quickly evolved beyond that of meagre trained volunteers. They started acting as bridge between scientific knowledge gained through the training and community practices. They began organizing village meetings, awareness campaigns, and demonstration activities to explain climate risks and promote adaptive solutions to the villagers. They encouraged farmers to adoptclimate-resilient agricultural practices such as the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). Being young and comparatively a bit more educated than other women in the village, they explained the advantages of SRI which not only improves productivity but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions. They also helped mobilize community members to participate in ecosystem restoration initiatives such as mangrove and coastal vegetation protection, recognizing their role as natural barriers against storms and erosion.

“Mangroves are our boarder security force and protect us from cyclone attack. We will tie Rakhi (sacred thread) on these plants. Our household income, through diversified livelihood options provided through ECRICC project, has increased many-a-fold. We and our concerns are being given top priority, especially from last one year.” said Mama Swain while others echoed the statement and affirmed.

The works of mama and Subhadra have helped strengthen community participation and trust in the ECRICC interventions. Being the daughters of the soil, they enjoy credibility among community members and are able to communicate climate issues in a culturally relatable way. Women’s groups and youth in the village increasingly look upon them for guidance on sustainable livelihoods, including opportunities in aquaculture and other climate-adaptive practices promoted under the ECRICC project.

Mama and Subhadra’s leadership reflect the broader vision of the ECRICC initiative, empowering local communities, particularly women, to become active agents of climate resilience. Their journey illustrates how informed community leadership can transform climate awareness into concrete action, making grassroots governance a cornerstone of sustainable coastal development.

“We have been to various events and are felicitated by dignitaries. Our products are being exported. We are the daughters of Sadhabas (merchants). Thanks to ECRICC project to have enabled us to cherish our cultural heritage.’, said Subhadra Rout with conviction and confidence while giggling amongst her fellow climate champions.



## Case Study 2:

### Silent Waves of Climate Leadership from Coastal Odisha



Brahmagiri is a coastal block in Puri district of Odisha. While Climate uncertainties increasingly affect rural life in Brahmagiri, a slow but sure yet quiet transformation has been taking shape. A young girl, namely, Kabita Kandi, is leading a movement of climate - resilient movement through her grassroots leadership.

She began her journey as a Climate Champion under the ECRICC (Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities) initiative. ECRICC's FNGO Humara Bachpan Trust (HBT) identified this creative and capable entrepreneur from the locality. HBT trained her with the skills for community mobilization and innovative climate-resilient agriculture practices being promoted under ECRICC. Kabita steadily grew into a confident local leader. Her hard work and commitment to the cause have enabled her to get promoted as a Cluster Coordinator, working across 17 villages in 3 Gram Panchayats in Brahmagiri Block.

Being a grassroot leader, Kabita's impact is rooted in practical action. She has promoted 156 kitchen gardens which significantly contribute to households' nutrition by increasing their dietary diversity scores. Kabita has supported nearly 2,000 women farmers in adopting innovative climate-resilient agricultural practices (e.g. SRI paddy, etc), responding to changing weather patterns. Establishment of couple of ornamental fisheries units are not only benefitting the local women groups but also encourage nearby villagers to go for diversified feasible livelihood options.




Kabita is a community person. Community mobilization is her forte. She has been spreading messages of environmental protection and climate adaptation directly to the people by organizing hundreds of awareness campaigns. She has been associated with nearly 150 women SHGs to enhance their income leading to their empowerment. Similarly, she has reached out to nearly 1000 of students by conducting 15 school programmes to create climate concerns amongst the future-ready citizens in her area. Kabita's tireless efforts have emerged from homes, grassroots, fields, and community platforms.

Kabita is a woman of essence. She has been recognized by many and her works draw attention for environmental peace and natural harmony.

The climate champions in Chilika Landscape (Puri) appreciate the support and expansion (execution) of activities of ECRICC project in recent months. They thank Ms. Arpita Pattnaik of HBT to have guided them to serve their own land for a better future.

While having adamantine faith on Lord Alaranath (the local deity) to protect the localities forever, Kabita and her friends are optimistic and are confident to lead the response to climate change.

## Annexure II

### List of Officer Trainees of OAS (DR) – 2022 Batch visited the ERRICC Project Area

### Period of Visit: 12 to 15 October 2025, Kendrapada

1. Purnata Aryavarta
2. Kadambini Jena
3. Shradhanjali Sahoo
4. Soumya Suchismita
5. Swayam Sidh Rout
6. Siddharth Anand Panda
7. Sailendra Kumar Mohanty
8. Harioum Sambhu Narayan Dash

### Period of Visit: 12 to 15 October 2025, Puri

1. Sheetal Mohapatra
2. Debasish Jena
3. Chinmaya Kumar
4. Sameekshya Behura
5. Soumya Ranjan Das
6. Pramod Kumar Mohanto
7. Anusandhya Pradhan
8. Sanjaya Mishra
9. Adyasa Rout

### Period of Visit: 10 to 14 November 2025. Kendrapada

1. Snigdha Mohapatra
2. Sweety Soren
3. Tanushree Patra
4. Nishant Bhatt
5. Suman Naik
6. Priya
7. Manisha Mahanandia
8. Chandan Mandal

## Annexure III

### ECRICC Odisha: Key Interventions and Observed Outcomes:

| Outcome Area | Key Interventions | Observed Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| **Ecosystem-based Adaptation & Coastal Protection** | Mangrove plantation (Fish Bone Technology), protection of mangroves, salt marsh and sea grass restoration, forest plantation | Improved coastal ecosystem health, enhanced natural buffers against floods and cyclones, community stewardship of natural resources |
| **Climate-Resilient Agriculture** | SRI paddy cultivation, organic farming, Azolla use, bio-fertilizers, soil testing | Reduced input costs, improved soil health, better resilience to climate variability |
| **Livelihood Diversification & Income Security** | Crab farming, mushroom cultivation, fisheries, horticulture, SHG enterprises, tailoring units | Diversified income sources, reduced livelihood risk, enhanced women-led enterprises |
| **Women & Youth Leadership (Climate Champions)** | Capacity building, leadership training, enterprise support | Enhanced participation of women and youth in planning, implementation, and monitoring |
| **Disaster Risk Reduction & Climate-Safe Infrastructure** | GP Disaster Management Plans, raised housing, lightning arrestors, all-weather roads | Improved preparedness and reduced vulnerability to floods, lightning, and cyclones |
| **Institutional Strengthening & Convergence** | Convergence with MGNREGA, Agriculture, Fisheries, Veterinary departments | Better service delivery, efficient use of public resources |
| **Knowledge, Learning & Replication** | Exposure visits, trainings, documentation, exchange platforms | Improved learning, scalability, and replication potential |

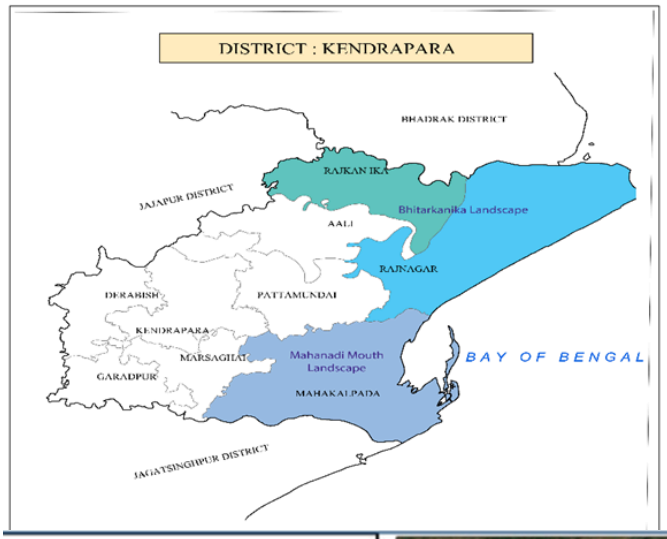
## Annexure IV

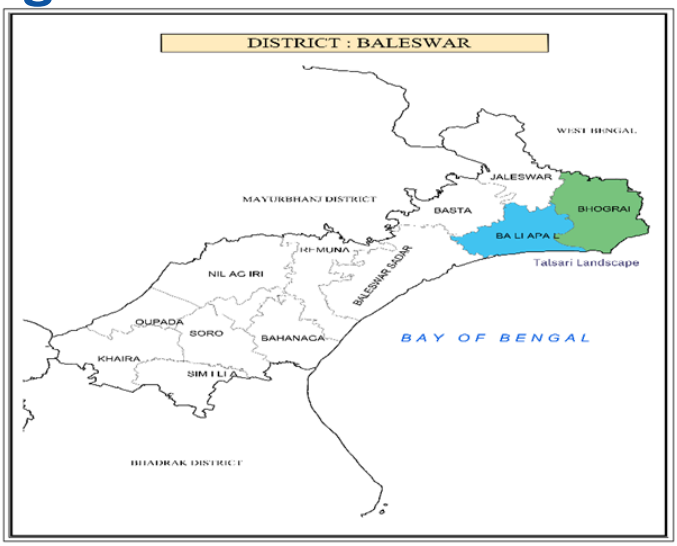
### ECRICC Odisha: Risk Mapping and related Mitigation Strategy

(Observation and Suggestions of OTs)

| Risk Category | Description of Risk | Likelihood | Mitigation Strategy | Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Financial | Project funding discontinuity post-cycle | Medium | Develop convergence-based financing; integrate into SAPCC budget; explore climate finance windows | High |
| Institutional | Over-dependence on NGO facilitation | Medium | Build GP-level technical capacity; train Panchayat functionaries; institutionalize tools | High |
| Climate | Extreme events damaging plantations or livelihoods | High | Diversify plantation sites; promote climate-resilient species; introduce crop insurance | High |
| Market | Limited market access for climate-adaptive products | Medium | Strengthen value chains; branding; private sector partnerships | Medium |
| Social | Community fatigue or declining participation | Low–Medium | Continuous engagement; leadership rotation; youth involvement | Medium |
| Administrative | Delays in inter-departmental convergence | Medium | District-level convergence committee; periodic review by Collector | Medium |
| Migration | Continued youth migration reducing local workforce | Medium | Promote local green enterprises; skill training and micro-enterprise grants | Medium |
| Environmental | Salinity ingress and ecosystem degradation | Medium | Strengthen EbA interventions; improve water management practices | High |

# ECRICC- Coverage in Odisha



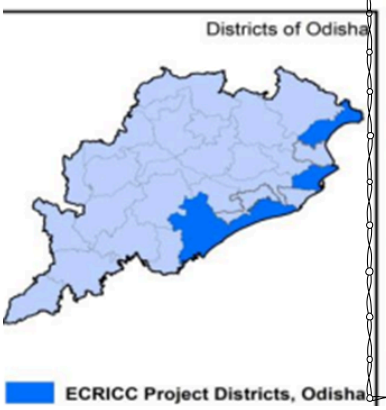


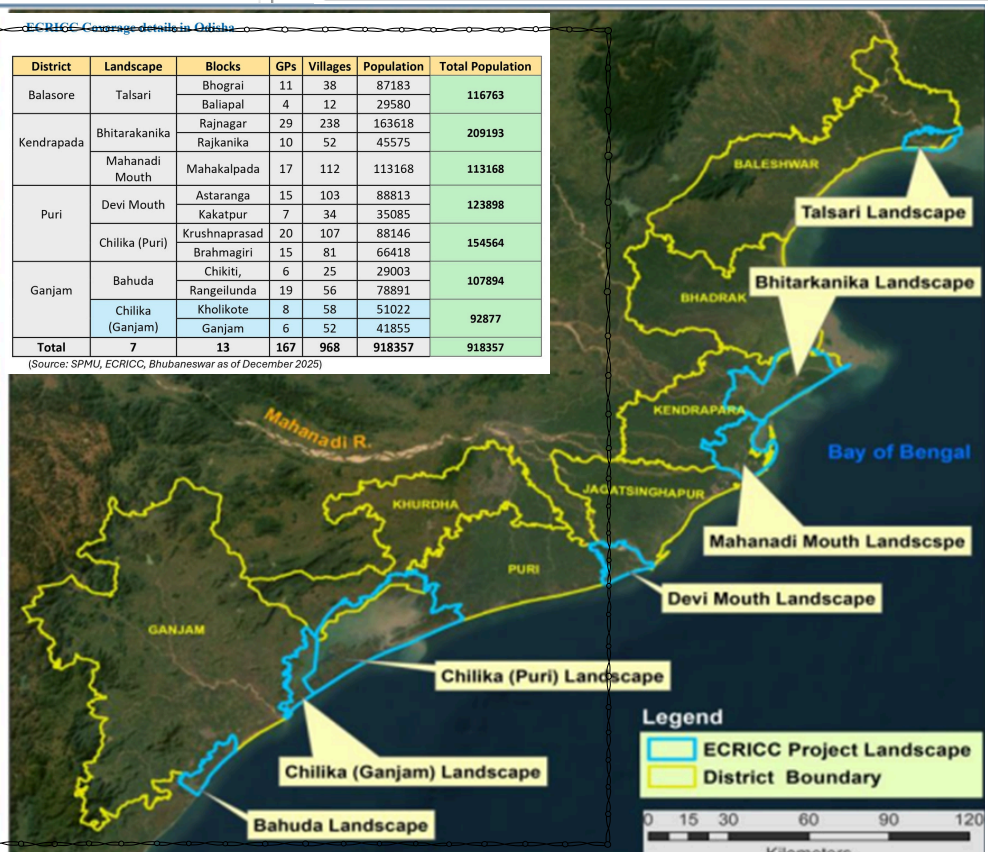


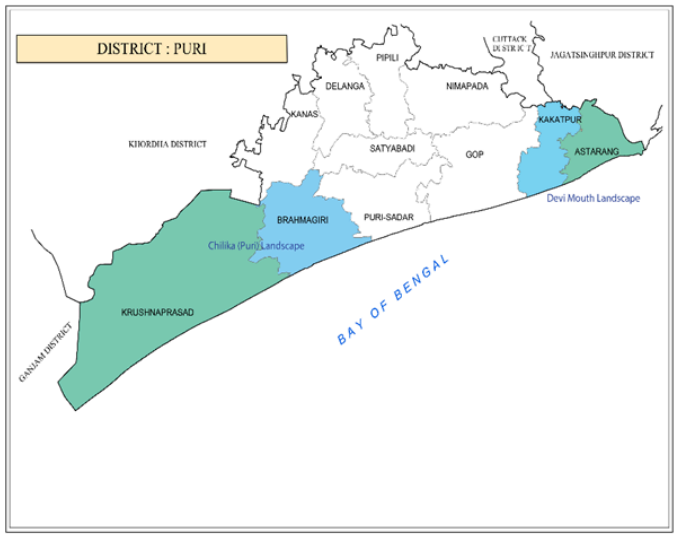
ECRICC Coverage details in Odisha

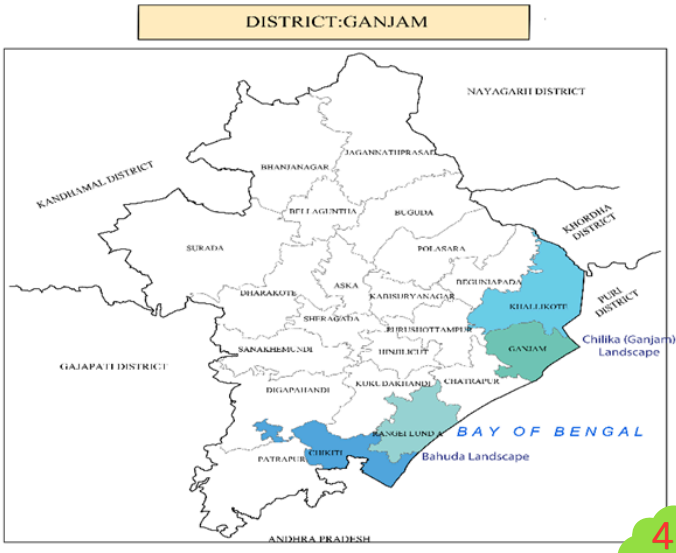
| District | Landscape | Blocks | GPs | Villages | Population | Total Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Balasore | Talsari | Bhograi | 11 | 38 | 87183 | 116763 |
| | | Baliapal | 4 | 12 | 29580 | |
| Kendrapada | Bhitarakanika | Rajnagar | 29 | 238 | 163618 | 209193 |
| | | Rajkanika | 10 | 52 | 45575 | |
| | Mahanadi Mouth | Mahakalpada | 17 | 112 | 113168 | 113168 |
| Puri | Devi Mouth | Astaranga | 15 | 103 | 88813 | 123898 |
| | | Kakatpur | 7 | 34 | 35085 | |
| | Chilika (Puri) | Krushnaprasad | 20 | 107 | 88146 | 154564 |
| | | Brahmagiri | 15 | 81 | 66418 | |
| Ganjam | Bahuda | Chikiti, | 6 | 25 | 29003 | 107894 |
| | | Rangeilunda | 19 | 56 | 78891 | |
| | Chilika (Ganjam) | Kholikote | 8 | 58 | 51022 | 92877 |
| | | Ganjam | 6 | 52 | 41855 | |
| Total | 7 | 13 | 167 | 968 | 918357 | 918357 |

(Source: SPMU, ECRICC, Bhubaneswar as of December 2025)



# ECRICC — At a Glance

*Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities*

## Context

- Vulnerable to cyclones, erosion & salinity
- Coastal livelihoods at risk
- Climate threats to ecosystems

## Project Goal

Strengthen coastal communities through:

- Ecosystem Restoration
- Climate-Resilient Livelihoods
- Community-led Governance

## Implementation Approach

- Community Participation
- Ecosystem Adaptation
- Climate-Resilient Livelihoods
- Climate-Resilient Livelihods
- Institutional Partnerships

## Key Interventions

**Ecosystem Restoration**
- Mangroves, Seagrass, Saltmarshes

**Climate-Resilient Livelihoods**
- Ornamental Fisheries, Crab & Seaweed Farming

**Climate-Smart Agriculture**
- SRI & GHG Emission Reduction

**Capacity Building**
- Training & Awareness

## Community Leadership

**Climate Champions**

Local Volunteers Driving Climate Action

## Technical Partnerships

Research & Innovation Partners

- Aquaculture
- Rice SRI
- Seagrass & Mangroves
- Crab & Seaweed Farming

## Key Outcomes

- ☑ 1 Climate Awareness
- ☑ 1 Resilient Livelihoods
- ☑ 1 Community Engagement
- ☑ 1 Resilient Livelihoods
- ☑ 1 Ecosystem Protection

## Way Forward

- Institutionalize Climate Champions
- Scale Up EBA Practices
- Monitor & Evaluate Impact
- Replicate Successes




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