

GreenBridge

India's Global Connect In Environmental Services



SEPC

SERVICES EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL
Set up by Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India
www.servicepec.org

A Quarterly Newsletter From
Services Export Promotion Council
Set up by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Government of India

ISSUE : October 2025



OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH EMPOWERING SUSTAINIBILITY

Our Expertise

Banking & Finance (Green Energy)

- Environmental and social risk assessments (ESRA)
- Environmental, social and Climate Health impact assessments (ESIA & CHIA)
- Env. & Soc. Framework and ESMPs based upon WB-IFC Environment & Social Standards

Healthcare

- Biomedical waste management system
- Green and sustainable hospitals
- OHS and Infection Prevention and Control programs
- Assessment and capacity improvement of Port Health Services at Point of Entry (PoE)

MSMEs

- WISE -Small manufacturing units
- HealthWISE-Small healthcare facilities
- WIND-Small farmers and Agri sector works
- WISH-Micro enterprises and home-based workers
- Responsible Production-Small chemical units

About Us

Occupational and Environmental Health Services (OEHS India) is an international public health consultancy providing consulting services in the niche areas of environmental and occupational health since 2000. We have served diverse sector industries, industry chambers, international organizations e.g. World Health Organization, World Bank, UNDP, governments in India, SE Asia, Africa and Middle east nations.

Manufacturing

- Workplace risk assessment and occupational health survey / Surveillance
- Development and digitalization of OHS Management Systems and protocols
- Occupational Health Services audits and capacity development
- Workplace preparedness and response for biological and climate heat hazards
- Workplace ergonomic assessments for material handling and IT usage
- Health sustainability projects under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

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Message from the Chairperson

It is with great enthusiasm that I present the 2nd edition of Green Bridge: India's Global Connect in Environmental Services. As the newly appointed Chairperson of SEPC, I am honoured to carry forward this initiative, which reflects our council's unwavering commitment to advancing India's contribution to global sustainability. With each edition, we aim to deepen engagement across sectors and provide a meaningful platform for dialogue and collaboration. I am confident that this publication will continue to inspire impactful ideas and strengthen India's role in the global environmental landscape.

Since its inception, Green Bridge has grown into a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange within the environmental services ecosystem. In this decisive phase of global climate action, India's capacity to innovate, lead, and partner has gained unprecedented relevance. This edition highlights the remarkable progress being made across diverse sectors—renewable energy advancements, sustainable water and waste management solutions, climate advisory expertise, eco-tourism potential, and more. These contributions showcase India's evolving leadership and our readiness to engage meaningfully with global stakeholders.

At SEPC, we remain dedicated to amplifying such success stories, facilitating cross-border partnerships, and strengthening India's global footprint in environmental services. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all contributors, experts, and collaborators whose insights enrich this publication.

I invite each of you to stay connected, share your perspectives, and work closely with us as we build a future rooted in sustainability, resilience, and shared responsibility.

Together, let us continue to build bridges that connect India with the world—paving the way for a greener, healthier, and more sustainable tomorrow.

Warm regards

Dr. Upasana Arora
Chairperson





Message from the Director General

As we present the October 2025 edition of **Green Bridge**, I am encouraged by the growing recognition of India's environmental services sector as a strategic pillar of our nation's global engagement. Over the past months, we have witnessed remarkable progress across industries—driven by a unique blend of scientific expertise, entrepreneurial spirit, and a deep-rooted commitment to sustainability. This momentum reflects the collective determination of our ecosystem to innovate responsibly and respond decisively to emerging global challenges.

What continues to stand out is India's ability to convert challenges into opportunities. Whether it is through advanced climate analytics, nature-positive tourism models, innovative waste-to-resource solutions, or scalable clean energy technologies, our ecosystem is demonstrating readiness to deliver high-impact solutions that align with global sustainability goals. This edition reflects that diversity and depth.

Green Bridge has emerged as a purposeful interface connecting Indian capabilities with international demand. It brings into focus not just achievements, but also the evolving conversations, regulatory developments, and market trends that shape the environmental services landscape. I believe such knowledge-sharing is essential as we work toward expanding India's participation in global value chains.

I extend my sincere thanks to the contributors, institutions, and industry partners whose insights continue to enrich this publication. Your involvement ensures that Green Bridge remains a reliable and forward-looking resource for stakeholders worldwide.

As we look ahead, I encourage our community to think boldly, engage proactively, and collaborate widely. The path to sustainability is built on collective effort, and India is poised to play a defining role in shaping that future.

Warm regards

Dr. Abhay Sinha
Director General

➤ **India's Expanding Green Footprint**

India has achieved a significant milestone in global forest statistics by advancing to the 9th position worldwide in terms of total forest area, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s Global Forest Resources Assessment (GFRA) 2025 released on 22 October 2025. In the previous assessment, India was ranked 10th. India has also maintained its 3rd position globally in the annual net gain of forest area.

➤ **Clean fuel of future could pose hidden climate risk**

Levels of hydrogen in the atmosphere have jumped by 60% since pre-industrial times, underscoring the dramatic impact fossil fuel burning has had on the planet's atmospheric composition. Hydrogen isn't a greenhouse gas, but has an indirect warming effect through reactions with other molecules.

➤ **Union Environment Minister chairs High-Level Review Meeting on Air Quality Management in Delhi-NCR**

During the meeting, Shri Yadav reviewed the progress on critical interventions such as the installation and real-time monitoring of Online Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (OCEMS), deployment of Air Pollution Control Devices, and the execution of an Integrated Waste Management Plan for efficient waste collection and disposal, potential for stubble burning in the upcoming harvest season.

➤ **World Court says countries are legally obligated to curb emissions, protect climate**

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, Netherlands, issued its advisory opinion on the obligations of States in respect of climate change, read out by the President of the Court, Judge Iwasawa Yuji, on 23 July 2025.

➤ **Govt. to demand concessions on carbon tax on EU Trade Deal**

India's government is demanding concessions from the European Union (EU) on its carbon tax, officially known as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), as part of ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations.

For more details or guidance on **CBAM** and related compliance measures, you can connect with SEPC's Carbon Cell, established to assist Indian exporters in navigating carbon-related trade requirements.

Carbon Cell is LIVE now on the SEPC web portal : Cell
(<https://www.servicesepec.org/home/carbonCell>)

➤ **Amit Shah unveils National Cooperative Policy with focus on taxi, insurance, tourism & RE sectors**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled the National Cooperation Policy 2025 on July 24, 2025, which aims to expand the cooperative sector into new areas like taxi services and insurance. This policy, the first since 2002, focuses on strengthening the sector through legal reforms, digitalization, and financial empowerment, with the goal of tripling its GDP contribution by 2034.

New Delhi, August 18 — In a decisive move to align India's logistics sector with its net-zero ambitions, the Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) convened a high-level round table on Monday, August 18th, to chart a roadmap for a sustainable logistics ecosystem and its export potential. Held in hybrid mode at SEPC's New Delhi office, the session brought together policymakers, industry leaders, think tanks, and academia to forge actionable strategies for green transport and carbon-efficient trade.

Dr. Tarvinder Kaur opened the session by framing the discussion around India's 2070 net-zero target and the interim goal of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030. She emphasized the need to reduce logistics costs from 14% to 8–10% of GDP while building consensus on sustainable green logistics and export readiness.

Delivering the keynote, **Shri Manish Dabkara, Chair of SEPC's Environmental Panel**, called for collaborative decarbonization strategies, including the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), green warehousing, and carbon credit aggregation for small businesses. He urged SEPC to take a lead role in shaping policy recommendations and supporting micro carbon credit markets.

Dr. Abhay Sinha, Director General of SEPC, proposed the drafting of a policy paper on green logistics and the formation of a dedicated task force. He also advocated for pilot projects on sustainable transport corridors and partnerships with institutions like IITs and the Skill Council for Green Jobs to address skilling and certification gaps.

Government and industry experts echoed the need for standardization, financing models, and integration of startups. **Mr. Jeevan Jethani from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** emphasized stakeholder feedback in shaping EV and storage policies. **Shri Abhijit Sinha** of Ease of Doing Business called for standardized GDP logistics cost metrics and urged SEPC to lead training and certification efforts.

Representatives from WRI, Deloitte, TERI, and Vaultus Green Funding highlighted the importance of leveraging existing global certification tools, improving export quality, and recognizing startup innovations in reducing emissions and costs. Academia, represented by IIT Kanpur and the Skill Council for Green Jobs, stressed the urgent need for hands-on training infrastructure and workforce development.

Key takeaways included the proposal to establish a **Green Logistics & EV Services Export Task Force** with focused desks on decarbonization, digitization, and certification. Participants also called for pilot hydrogen corridors, carbon-linked financing models, and the creation of a Green Logistics Fund in collaboration with multilateral partners.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to position India as a global hub for sustainable logistics services, with SEPC pledging to continue its role as a convening force linking policy, industry, and innovation.

Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, in collaboration with CleanCarbon.AI, launched “Carbon Cell”, a dedicated end-to-end Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) reporting support platform. This strategic initiative aims to empower Indian exporters, especially Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the iron and steel sectors, with seamless CBAM compliance and uninterrupted trade with the European Union.

The ceremonial launch was attended by Mr. Abhay Sinha, Director General, SEPC, and Mr. Nilesh Bhattad, Founder and CEO of CleanCarbon.AI, Dr. Tarvinder Kaur and Mr. Deepak Verma from SEPC and Mr. Shubham Thakur from CleanCarbon.AI.

Speaking about this collaboration, Mr. Manish Dabkara, panel head of the SEPC Environmental Services, stated, “CBAM signals a shift in global trade norms. The Carbon Cell is poised to help lakhs of MSMEs, especially in the iron and steel sector. CBAM compliance ensures uninterrupted business with the EU. it’s an opportunity to lead with sustainability and redefine our export edge. Indian exporters must align with low-carbon practices to stay resilient, and relevant in the EU market.” He emphasized the need for timely and accessible resources for exporters as global carbon regulations become stricter.

The EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism was introduced in October 2023. It is the European Union’s initiative to ensure that imported carbon-intensive goods reflect a fair cost for the carbon emissions released during their production. It aims to promote cleaner industrial practices in non-EU countries by levelling the playing field for EU industries and preventing carbon leakage. CBAM is currently in a transitional phase from 2023 to 2025, with full implementation from 2026. This phased rollout is designed to align with the gradual removal of free allowances under the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), supporting the EU’s broader goal of industrial decarbonisation.

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad, CEO of CleanCarbon.AI, remarked, “Through our collaboration under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, we will be able to save millions in carbon tax for Indian businesses. This partnership means effective and timely help for Indian manufacturers and suppliers to the EU. Once the CBAM becomes mandatory from January 2026, carbon tax will be imposed on the embedded emissions associated with the product, which will be 6 to 8 percent of additional tax on the profit of the trade. Hence, it is important to start early CBAM reporting to avoid taxes and maintain a competitive edge.”

Clean Carbon.AI, India’s #1 CBAM compliance partner, will provide robust tools and consulting services for carbon emissions calculation, documentation, and CBAM report submissions in accordance with EU mandates.

This launch marks a significant step in India's efforts to promote green trade and support exporters in aligning with evolving international sustainability standards.

New Delhi, August 5 — In a significant step toward strengthening bilateral cooperation, the High Commission of The Gambia hosted a multi sector industry delegation under leadership of the Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) at the Gambian Chancery in New Delhi. The gathering brought together diplomats, healthcare leaders, and representatives from India's services sector to explore collaborative opportunities across healthcare, education, environment, legal services, and IT.

Presiding over the meeting, His Excellency Mr. Mustapha Jawara, High Commissioner of The Gambia, emphasized the importance of expanding India's services footprint in the West African nation. He was joined by Mr. Ebrima Maboob, Deputy Head of Mission, and Ms. Penda Njie K, Counsellor.

Sustainability featured prominently during the discussions. One of the most important outcomes was the expression of interest from the government of Gambia in electric vehicle technologies and collaboration under the International Solar Alliance (ISA). The Gambian Ministry of Industry and SEPC are expected to engage in policy dialogues and technical workshops on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

MVT sector was represented prominently by Yashoda Hospital which proposed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Gambia's Ministry of Health, aimed at medical cooperation and capacity building. The High Commission also acknowledged its ongoing partnership with Fortis Hospital, with plans to scale up telemedicine and joint healthcare programs. The Gambian delegation also shared plans to build a WHO-affiliated hospital, inviting Indian stakeholders to contribute to infrastructure, equipment, and training. Connectivity was another focal point, with discussions on establishing direct air routes between India and The Gambia to boost trade and tourism.

To streamline cross-border communication, stakeholders agreed to create a dedicated WhatsApp coordination group linking SEPC members with Gambian ministries in health, trade, environment, IT, and legal affairs.

The High Commission proposed organizing a trade delegation visit to The Gambia, offering visa facilitation and accommodation support. Discussions also touched on upcoming events, including the Eco-Tourism Council meeting, SEPC's Annual Conference in India, and an energy summit in Ghana. Plans are underway to co-host a multi-sector trade fair with Gambian chambers and explore partnerships in warehousing, pharmaceuticals, tailoring services, and textiles.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to deepen India–Gambia ties through actionable partnerships and sectoral innovation.



Mr. Nilesh Bhattad
Founder
CleanCarbon.ai

Nilesh Bhattad is a recognized expert in Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) implementation and ESG compliance, with extensive experience guiding industries through complex carbon reporting frameworks. As the Founder and CEO of CleanCarbon.ai, Nilesh has led the company in assisting over 200 companies ranging from SMEs to large exporters in preparing more than 1,000 validated CBAM reports under the EU's evolving climate regulations. With deep expertise in sustainability compliance, digital automation, and legal frameworks related to CBAM, he has become a trusted advisor to exporters navigating the challenges of ESG mandates. Recently SEPC's Sustainability Desk Head Mr. Deepak Kumar Verma got an opportunity to interview Mr. Bhattad and was en-

lightened with his perspective on lingering challenge of losing competitiveness in European market by Indian exporters. Here are some of the excerpts of the interview.

SEPC: Mr. Bhattad, for those hearing this term for the first time, what exactly is CBAM and why has it become so important?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: CBAM, or the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, is a policy introduced by the European Union to put a carbon price on imported goods essentially extending its domestic carbon pricing system to imports. The idea is simple but transformative: products entering the EU should pay the same carbon price as those made within Europe. This is meant to prevent “carbon leakage,” where industries shift production to countries with looser climate rules.

For exporters, particularly in carbon-intensive sectors like steel, aluminium, cement, and fertilisers, CBAM represents a major shift. It's no longer just about the price of your product, it's about the carbon intensity behind it.

SEPC: Why should Indian steel exporters, in particular, be paying attention to CBAM?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: Because steel is right at the centre of this policy. The EU is one of India's largest destinations for steel exports, and under CBAM, every tonne exported will soon carry a carbon cost.

From 2026 onwards, EU importers will have to buy CBAM certificates to cover the embedded emissions of imported steel. If Indian steel has higher emissions than EU steel, it becomes less competitive. This directly impacts pricing, profit margins, and even buyer relationships.

SEPC: What are the immediate compliance requirements Indian exporters must meet?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: We are currently in the transitional phase, which started in October 2023 and runs until December 2025. During this period, exporters are not paying any carbon tax yet but they are required to report the embedded emissions of their products each quarter.

The CBAM enters the mandatory reporting phase from January 2026 and there will be a penalty for wrong, delayed and inaccurate data submission. However, the carbon tax for these exports has to be paid from January 2027.

Simply put, higher emissions would mean more carbon tax to be paid by the importers and exporters.

The first deadline passed in January 2024, and many companies found it extremely challenging. Data collection is complex, especially for small and medium-sized firms that rely on multiple suppliers. You need to track everything from fuel use to process emissions, and then map it to EU-approved reporting templates.

SEPC: What are the biggest challenges Indian steel companies are facing with CBAM reporting?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: The biggest pain point is data transparency and consistency. Steel manufacturing involves multiple stages, like mining, processing, rolling etc and often multiple facilities. Capturing accurate emissions data across this chain requires a system that most companies don't yet have.

The second challenge is methodology. The EU has its own calculation methods aligned with the EU ETS (Emissions Trading System). Many Indian exporters have never reported in this format before. So, translating internal carbon data into EU compatible formats is proving time-consuming and error-prone.

And finally, supplier engagement is a major bottleneck. If your inputs, for example pellets or billets, come from suppliers who don't have emissions data, you can't report accurately.

SEPC: What are the consequences of inaccurate or missing CBAM reports?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: In the short term, it may result in report rejections or delays in customs clearance. But the real impact will come from 2026 onward. If your reported emissions are incomplete or inaccurate, the EU importer may face penalties or higher carbon costs.

That can make them reluctant to buy from Indian suppliers who can't provide verified emissions data. Over time, this could lead to loss of market access or reduced contract renewals.

SEPC: How can Indian exporters turn this challenge into an opportunity?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: Great question. CBAM is tough, but it's also a chance to modernise and differentiate. Indian exporters who invest early in accurate carbon accounting and low-emission processes will have a competitive edge.

Buyers in the EU are already shifting toward "green steel" suppliers. If you can demonstrate verified low-carbon production, you can secure better prices, longer-term contracts, and even attract climate-focused investors.

Think of CBAM not as a tax, but as a carbon currency. Those who learn to manage and minimise their emissions efficiently will thrive in the new trade environment.

SEPC: How does CleanCarbon.ai help companies navigate CBAM?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: CleanCarbon.ai is India's first dedicated carbon accounting and CBAM reporting platform. We built it to simplify what was previously a manual, spreadsheet-heavy process.

Our platform automates emissions tracking, supplier data collection, and EU compliant report generation. Companies can map their entire value chain, calculate embedded emissions for each product, and export ready-to-submit CBAM reports in just a few clicks.

SEPC: What makes CleanCarbon different from other platforms or consultants?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: We focus on industry specificity and compliance assurance. Our platform is tailored for Indian exporters, especially in steel, aluminium, and manufacturing. With over 200 customers and generating more than 1000 CBAM reports, we are the most trusted CBAM reporting platform.

Second, we combine technology with expert advisory. Many platforms can calculate emissions, but very few help you interpret the data in the context of EU CBAM requirements, SEBI's BRSR framework, and global reporting standards.

Lastly, we provide real-time insights that help management teams make informed decisions, whether it's switching to low-carbon inputs or preparing for third-party audits.

SEPC: How should steel exporters prepare between now and 2026?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad:

There are three key steps:

1. Start measuring emissions properly- You can't manage what you can't measure. Build a reliable database of direct and indirect emissions, and engage suppliers for emissions data.
2. Adopt digital tools- Move away from excel-based tracking to automated platforms that can scale and align with EU templates.
3. Build internal capacity- Train your compliance and sustainability teams on EU regulations, carbon accounting, and verification processes.

If you do these now, you'll be ready not just for CBAM, but for the broader global carbon price shift that's coming.

SEPC: Do you believe India's steel industry is ready for CBAM?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: We're getting there, but there's work to do. India's steel industry is diverse. Some large producers are well-prepared with sustainability teams and verified emissions data. But many mid-sized exporters are still in the learning phase.

That said, I'm optimistic. We've seen Indian companies adapt quickly once they understand the business case. CBAM isn't just an EU compliance issue. It's a wake-up call for all exporters to align with a low-carbon global market. If we embrace it now, India's steel sector could lead Asia in sustainable exports.

SEPC: Finally, what's your message to Indian exporters navigating this transition?

Mr. Nilesh Bhattad: Don't wait for the regulations to tighten. The global market is already moving toward carbon transparency and climate accountability. Invest in understanding your emissions today. Adopt tools that simplify compliance, engage with your supply chain, and see sustainability as a value driver, not a cost. CBAM is not just about reporting, it's about reimagining how India competes in a climate-conscious world. The earlier you start, the stronger your position will be when carbon becomes the new currency of global trade.

The entire world is facing climate heat stress due to global warming, with average temperature rising alarmingly in the last decade, mainly due to anthropogenic activities, of which fossil fuel burning to generate electricity being the key one. The climate change impacts are in presence across the globe in the form of flooding, wildfires, droughts, cyclones, etc. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 99 percent of people in the world population are exposed to the air that exceeds air quality limits and threatens their health. Air pollution is associated with seven million premature deaths a year. Heat stress exposure is leading to reduction in work productivity among many outdoor occupations along with both acute and long-term health impacts and agricultural productivity loss.

The green energy options are being adopted worldwide to carry out transition from carbon based to non-carbon-based energy generation. To promote such transition, green financing mechanisms e.g. green bonds, carbon trading etc are fast evolving worldwide. Green energy projects form the majority of the investments under Green Finance. The Indian Green Energy market has reached USD 23.9 Billion in 2024 and is expected to grow at CAGR of 8.1 % between 2025-2033 (IMARC).

Green energy projects comprise of a wide range of projects, technologies and associated storage and transmission systems. The common categories of Green Energy Projects are given in the Table-1.

Though mainly implemented to provide positive benefits, such projects do have associated environmental and social risks that need to be identified, assessed and managed properly throughout the project cycle i.e. planning, designing and implementation stages.



Dr. Shubhendu Mudgal

M.D., D.O.S.H & Dev. (Sweden)
(Consultant with the World Bank
Environment Team and member of Env &
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Power Pool Project of ECOWAS)

Table-1 : Common types of green energy projects

Category	Examples, Technologies
Solar Energy Projects	Solar Photovoltaic (PV), Concentrated Solar Power (CSP)
Wind Energy Projects	Onshore Wind Farms, Offshore Wind Farms
Hydropower Projects	Large Hydropower, Small / Mini / Micro Hydro
Geothermal Energy Projects	Dry steam and Flash steam, Binary cycle
Biomass and Bioenergy projects	Biomass combustion, Biogas, Biomethane, Biofuels
Ocean /Marine Energy Projects	Tidal energy, Wave energy

The **World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF)** guides borrowers and project proponents in identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social (E&S) risks throughout the life cycle of green energy projects. Under the ESF, there are ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESS).

- ESS1: Assessment and management of E&S risks and impacts
- ESS2: Labor and working conditions
- ESS3: Resource efficiency and pollution prevention
- ESS4: Community health and safety
- ESS5: Land acquisition and involuntary resettlement
- ESS6: Biodiversity conservation
- ESS7: Indigenous Peoples
- ESS8: Cultural heritage
- ESS9: Financial intermediaries
- ESS10: Stakeholders engagement and information disclosure

Each ESS is supported by IFC/World Bank EHS Guidelines, which define good industry practice and technical performance criteria for renewable energy projects (solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, etc.).

Key Environmental, Health, Safety and Social Risks

A. Construction and Operational Hazards

Construction stage: accidents from lifting operations, work at height, trench collapse, heavy machinery, and fire/explosion risk (battery storage).

Operational stage: maintenance hazards (turbines, transformers), electrocution, confined space risks, and fires in battery systems.

B. Environmental Risks

Pollution from oil leaks, chemical spills, noise, and dust emissions.

Water quality and flow alteration, especially in hydropower or geothermal systems.

Waste from end-of-life components (solar panels, turbine blades, batteries) containing heavy metals or toxic materials.

C. Health, Safety, and Community Risks

Public exposure to noise, dust, and electromagnetic fields; increased traffic accidents; communicable disease spread due to labour influx.

Emergency scenarios: dam failures, floods, or battery explosions.

D. Social and Biodiversity Risks

Land acquisition, resettlement, livelihood loss, and cultural heritage impacts.

Habitat fragmentation, bird and bat collisions (wind), and altered aquatic ecosystems (hydropower).

Prevention and Control Measures

A systematic and planned approach is required to be implemented, covering aspects under each of the Environment and Social Standard that is relevant and applicable for the project.

A. Environmental and Social Management (ESS1)

- Conduct ESIA or ESMF with baseline data and risk analysis.
- Establish an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and detailed Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).
- Implement Stakeholder Engagement Plans (SEP) and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM).

B. Labor and Working Conditions (ESS2)

- Enforce Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) programs: Job Safety Analysis, permit-to-work systems, PPE, toolbox talks.
- Guarantee fair employment, non-discrimination, and protection against forced or child labour.

C. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention (ESS3)

- Control pollution through dust suppression, spill containment, and noise barriers.
- Implement safe management and recycling of e-waste, batteries, and solar panels.
- Promote energy and water efficiency; design for circular material use.

D. Community Health and Safety (ESS4)

- Manage traffic, worker influx, and communicable diseases.
- Develop Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans for fire, flood, and dam failure; train workers and local authorities.

E. Land, Livelihoods, and Indigenous Peoples (ESS5 & ESS7)

- Prepare Resettlement Action Plans (RAPs) with fair compensation and livelihood restoration.
- Conduct Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) with Indigenous Peoples; avoid involuntary displacement.

F. Biodiversity Conservation (ESS6)

- Conduct biodiversity baselines and apply the mitigation hierarchy (avoid–minimize–restore–offset).
- Use mitigation technologies (e.g., turbine curtailment, fish ladders, fish lifts).
- Monitor impacts and adapt management actions as needed.

G. Cultural Heritage (ESS8)

- Implement Chance Find Procedures during excavation; consult cultural authorities for artefact discoveries.

H. Stakeholders engagement and information disclosure (ESS10)

- Plan and implement stakeholder's engagement plan
- Conduct stakeholders' consultations
- Disclose decisions and views on public portals.

Today's Bharat retains only a fraction of the cultural economy that once defined our civilization. Much of what exists now are imitations—products of centuries of impact, influence, and imposition that reshaped an ancient cultural ecosystem into a Western-styled version of Bharat, renamed India in 1947.

Colonial powers like Great Britain, France, and Portugal ruled parts of India for more than 400 years, extracting its wealth and eroding its civilizational identity in the process. Yet, history has come full circle. Within just 75 years of independence, one of their former colonies has surpassed them—pushing these empires to the sixth and seventh positions in global rankings—while Bharat has emerged as the world's fourth-largest economy.

This transformation is more than an economic resurgence; it is the reawakening of a civilization. As Bharat stands today as the fastest-growing major economy, its composition, agility, and depth of strength demand closer attention. The state has evolved beyond merely being a protector of wealth—it now serves as the custodian of our cultural sovereignty and civilizational continuity.

On an individual level, this mirrors a familiar truth. It is disheartening when a person builds wealth but their next generation cannot sustain or grow it—or when one works tirelessly to build assets but lacks the health to enjoy them. These reflections, though philosophical, capture a universal reality: economies falter when they lose touch with the cultural and moral frameworks that once gave them purpose.

India's soft power—rooted in hospitality, yoga, wellness, and health services—continues to inspire the world by blending ancient wisdom with modern relevance. By transforming these heritage sectors into structured, service-led industries, India is building new pathways.



Mr. Abhijeet Sinha

National Program Director
Ease of Doing Business

Rapid integration in wellness science, holistic healthcare, and dietary consulting with digital learning and skill-based training is helping redefine global service excellence rooted in practiced traditions.

Alongside the rise of technology and digital advancement, the youth of India is gaining expertise in artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, quantum computing, blockchain, nanotechnology, health-tech, and geo-spatial technologies, big data computing, automation.

India stands as the ideal global destination for service-led growth, powered by its rich human capital and technological capabilities. From Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and FinTech to healthcare counselling, EdTech, online training, and hospitality management, India offers a diverse range of world-class services rooted in both skill and culture. The nation's strengths extend to mental health and therapeutic counselling, spiritual wellbeing, dietary consulting, and creative domains such as art, literature, music, and cultural heritage. With its strong digital infrastructure and innovation-driven ecosystem, India today represents the world's most well-conditioned environment for product-tech and service excellence.

Author is the National Program Director-Ease of Doing Business.

Maharashtra's Action Plan for Climate Change : A Blueprint for Urgent and Inclusive Action.

Maharashtra, India's second-most populous state, stands at a critical juncture. With over 125 million residents, a sprawling coastline, and a mix of urban and rural landscapes, the state is uniquely vulnerable to climate change. The Maharashtra State Adaptation Action Plan on Climate Change (MSAAPCC) outlines a sobering future: by the 2070s, average temperatures could rise by 4.4°C, with monsoon rainfall becoming increasingly erratic.

The implications are profound:

Agriculture, which employs over 50% of the population, faces declining yields due to droughts and heat stress.

Urban centers like Mumbai and Pune are evidently grappling with flooding, heatwaves, and air pollution.

Water resources are under pressure, with groundwater depletion and seasonal shortages becoming more frequent.

The 2022–2027 Climate and Health Action Plan adds another layer of urgency. It identifies rising cases of acute respiratory illnesses, heat-related disorders, and vector-borne diseases like dengue and malaria as direct consequences of climate shifts.

Maharashtra's Climate Action Plan is a bold blueprint for resilience, aiming to safeguard 125 million citizens from rising temperatures, erratic monsoons, and public health threats. With projections of up to 4.4°C warming by 2070, the state is racing against time to adapt.

The State's Response : Adaptation Over Mitigation

Unlike many climate strategies that focus on reducing emissions, Maharashtra's plan emphasizes adaptation. This is a pragmatic choice for a state where industrial emissions are dwarfed by climate vulnerability.

Key initiatives include:

- Heat Action Plans in major cities, with early warning systems and public cooling shelters.
- Air pollution control measures targeting vehicular and industrial emissions.
- Vector surveillance programs to track and contain outbreaks of climate-sensitive diseases.
- Disaster preparedness upgrades in hospitals and emergency services.



Parts of Maharashtra submerged due to heavy rainfall. Photo: Mid-Day

The plan also integrates climate projections for 2030, 2050, and 2070, allowing for phased interventions. For example, the agriculture sector is being nudged toward climate-resilient crops, drip irrigation, and soil health monitoring.

Yet, challenges remain. Funding gaps, bureaucratic inertia, and lack of public awareness threaten to stall progress. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) report highlights that over 60% of districts lack localized climate vulnerability assessments.

The Road Ahead: Equity, Innovation, and Accountability

To succeed, Maharashtra must embrace inclusive climate governance. Rural communities, women, and marginalized groups must be central to planning and implementation. Climate justice demands that those least responsible for emissions are not left to bear the brunt.

Innovation will be key. Following valuable strategies can be considered in this regard.

- Using digital tools for climate data collection and disease tracking.

- Developing green infrastructure in cities. From permeable pavements to rooftop gardens.
- Promoting Public-Private Partnerships to scale renewable energy and sustainable transport.

Accountability must also be strengthened. Transparent monitoring, citizen scorecards, and independent audits can ensure that climate promises translate into real-world impact.

Financing Maharashtra's Climate Future :

Maharashtra's State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) is a bold roadmap to safeguard its 125 million citizens from rising temperatures, erratic monsoons, and public health threats. But ambition must be matched by financing. Without robust, sustained investment, the plan risks becoming a paper promise.

The state has taken a progressive step by mainstreaming climate finance into its annual budget, encouraging departments to tag climate-relevant expenditures. This allows for better tracking, prioritization,



**Maharashtra is
among nine states
on global top 50
climate risk list
- The Times of India**

and accountability. Sectoral interventions, like heat action plans, disease surveillance, and climate-resilient agriculture, come with detailed cost estimates, enabling targeted funding. For instance, implementing heat action plans across major cities is projected to cost ₹200 crore over five years.

Maharashtra also leverages national schemes such as the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC), Smart Cities Mission, and NPCCHH to co-finance projects. However, these funds are often fragmented and short-term. To scale its efforts, the state is actively pursuing international climate finance from the Green Climate Fund, World Bank, and UNDP, while building internal capacity to design bankable proposals.

Private sector engagement is another pillar. Through public-private partnerships, Maharashtra aims to mobilize innovation and capital in renewable energy, sustainable transport, and green infrastructure.

Despite these impressive steps, the challenges persist. Especially in aligning departmental capacities and ensuring equitable distribution of resources.

In sum, financing climate resilience in Maharashtra is not just a fiscal exercise. It's a moral imperative. The state must continue to innovate, collaborate, and

invest boldly to turn its climate vision into reality. The cost of preparedness is high, but the cost of inaction is far greater.

In conclusion, Maharashtra's climate action plan is not just a policy document. It's a lifeline. With science-backed strategies, community engagement, and political will, the state can turn vulnerability into resilience. But the clock is ticking. The next decade will determine whether Maharashtra becomes a model of adaptation or a cautionary tale.

Sources:

[UNEP: Maharashtra State Adaptation Action Plan](#)

[NCDC: Climate Change & Human Health Action Plan](#)

[TERI: Climate Vulnerability Assessment Report](#)



Mr. Anil Jauhri

Former CEO
National Accreditation Board of
Certification Bodies

SDGs provide comprehensive framework for member countries to align their policies and strategies with the objectives in view and ensure that all members work towards the same goals.

SDGs and Standards

The United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 to address poverty, inequality and environmental challenges by 2030. The 17 SDGs are adopted by 193 countries as part of the agenda for sustainable development and officially came into force on 1 January 2016.

It may be desirable to list the 17 Goals:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. No poverty | 11. Sustainable cities and economies |
| 2. Zero hunger | 12. Responsible consumption and production |
| 3. Good health and well-being | 13. Climate action |
| 4. Quality education | 14. Life below water |
| 5. Gender equality | 15. Life on land |
| 6. Clean water and sanitation | 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions |
| 7. Affordable and clean energy | 17. Partnership for the goals |
| 8. Decent work and economic growth | |
| 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure | |
| 10. Reduced inequalities | |

Where do standards fit into this framework if at all?

Each of the goals needs actionable methodologies, roadmap and milestones.

It has to be understood that many of these goals may need regulations in each economy which given the urgency of sustainable development, are likely to rise further. For example, SDG 3 on Health obviously lends itself to regulation of both products and services— be it food or drugs or medical devices or medical labs or hospitals. The SDG13 on Climate action has lately become a priority and India is responding to it by developing the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme which has a mandatory compliance mechanism and targets for emission reduction for specific sectors of industry. Not only India but many developing economies are now developing national regulations relating to emission reduction besides adhering to the provisions of the Paris Agreement signed in 2015.

Standards are an excellent tool to support both regulations and voluntary action in meeting the SDGs.

Standards provide a sound basis for such regulations— from organizational quantification (ISO 14064-1) to emission reduction projects (ISO 14064-2) to methodology for validation and verification (ISO 14064-3) to requirements for GHG validation and verification bodies (ISO 17029 read with ISO 14065).

Standards also provide platform for promoting voluntary action for example in SDG 7 on Clean energy through its work on renewable energy— from photovoltaic modules (IS 14286 in parts) to power inverters (IS 16221 in parts) to domestic water heating systems (ISO 9459 in parts).

The global market is increasingly concerned with social issues like child labour, fair wages and workplace safety and is increasingly demanding action beyond regulations. Which has led to rise of social responsibility standards like ISO 26000 and even in private space like SA 8000 by the Social Accountability Institute in USA or FSSC 24000 by the FSSC Foundation in Netherlands which in turn have secured global acceptance and have become a prerequisite for access to the market.

Another set of standards which supports achievement of SDGs is what is called the Management Systems (MS) Standards– pioneered by ISO 9001 for Quality Management Systems published in 1987 which is arguably the world's largest certified standard. It has led to a series of MS standards which support various SDGs– ISO 14001 (environment), ISO 37001 (antibribery), ISO 45001 (workplace safety), ISO 50001 (energy) et. Al. A complete list of MS standards can be seen at <https://www.iso.org/management-system-standards-list.htm>. Which brings us to another aspect– the demonstration of compliance to such standards– called conformity assessment comprising such methods as testing, inspection and certification (TIC). Be it regulations or voluntary standards, credible and reliable conformity assessment is a necessary adjunct.

Here also standards play an important role. **How do I trust a test report or organic certification?**

Standards have stepped in here too by providing common global standards for what are called conformity assessment bodies– ISO 17020 for inspection bodies, ISO 17025 for testing laboratories and ISO 17065 for product or process certification to name a few of them.

These not only provide confidence in conformity assessment but also, through a system of accreditation of such bodies, promote global acceptance of test or inspection reports or certifications.

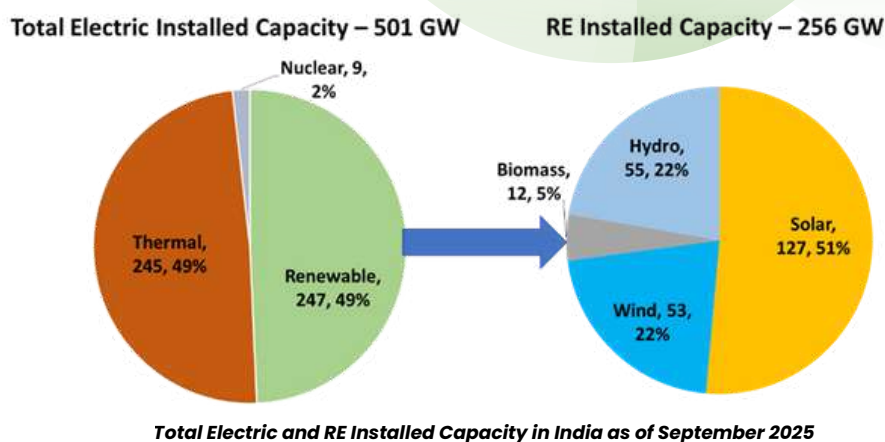
Courtesy: SDG SAMVAAD Issue 14 published by CSSA, GIM



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Renewable Energy Sector in India

India achieved 250 GW of renewable energy capacity in October 2025. Earlier in July 2025, India achieved its NDC target of 50% of the total electric installed capacity from non-fossil resources, more than five years ahead of the 2030 deadline. The Renewable Energy (RE) sector is now poised to reach a 500 GW capacity mark by 2030.



The year 2015 marked a turning point for the RE sector in the country, when the newly elected Government decided in June 2015 to upscale the National Solar Mission target from 20 GW to 100 GW of solar capacity by 2022. Further, at COP21 in December 2015, India also announced its ambitious target of 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022.

The Government not only announced the ambitious RE targets but also undertook several initiatives to achieve them. In December 2014, a Scheme for setting up solar parks accommodating 20 GW of solar power projects with central government financial support was approved. The target capacity was later doubled to 40 GW.

The Reserve Bank of India, through its circular of April 2015, on 'Priority Sector Lending: Targets and Classification', has issued revised guidelines for all scheduled commercial banks, making significant inroads for renewable energy in the priority sector lending. The limits on the loan amount were subsequently enhanced.

For the evacuation and transmission of RE power from RE potential-rich states, the Government approved the Green Energy Corridors (GEC) project in July 2015. The project, which involves creating an intra-state transmission system in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, was approved with a grant component of 40% of the total cost. The next phase of GEC-II was approved in January 2022. Now the GEC-III is being planned.

Regulatory and policy reforms have been undertaken to promote rooftop solar in the country, including provisions for net metering, purchase of surplus solar power, and other measures. The government announced subsidies and incentives for various categories of consumers for the installation of rooftop solar. Such initiatives started in FY 2013, and different schemes were implemented.

The latest flagship scheme, PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, was announced in February 2024 and aims to install rooftop solar systems in 10 million households across the country by FY 2027, adding a capacity of 30 GW. Under the scheme, the Government of India provides subsidy of up to 60% of the cost, with a provision of INR 750 billion. By the end of October 2025, approximately 2.2 million households have benefited from the scheme.

The Government of India also announced the National Offshore Wind Energy Policy in 2015 to encourage the growth of offshore wind energy. The policy aims to use the country's coastline of around 7600 kms to generate renewable energy. It covers offshore wind energy development, the establishment of offshore wind power projects, and research & development activities in waters within or near the country, up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline. The National Institute of Wind Energy assessed offshore wind potential off the coast of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. In June 2024, Government of India approved the 'Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme for offshore wind energy projects' at a total outlay of INR 74.5 billion, including an outlay of INR 68.5 billion for installation and commissioning of 1 GW of offshore wind energy projects (500 MW each off the coast of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu), and grant of INR 6 billion for upgradation of two ports to meet logistics requirements for offshore wind energy projects.

To ensure the availability of skilled manpower in the solar energy sector, the Surya Mitra Scheme was launched to create 50,000 trained personnel within a five-year period (2015-16 to 2019-20). The programme was further extended to develop skills for other RE sectors, including wind, hydro and bioenergy.

For solarisation of the agriculture sector, Government of India announced PM Kisan Urja Suraksha and Utthan Mahaabhiyan (PM KUSUM) in March 2019. The scheme enables farmers to install small solar power plants and sell the generated solar power to the local electricity distribution company. This will facilitate farmers to generate additional income. The scheme also targets the solarisation of diesel as well as grid-connected irrigation pumps, providing a subsidy of up to 50% from the Government of India. The scheme also scaled up to solarise around 5 million irrigation pumps, adding 35 GW solar capacity with the support of INR 340 billion.

In 2021, the Government of India approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for High-Efficiency Solar PV Modules, aiming to promote the manufacturing of high-efficiency solar PV modules in India and thereby reduce import dependency in the renewable energy sector. The total financial outlay was scaled up to INR 240 billion in September 2022.

In 2021, the Government of India also approved the National Bioenergy Programme with an outlay of INR 8.6 billion under Phase I. The National Bioenergy Programme comprises of, (i) Waste to Energy Programme (Programme on Energy from Urban, Industrial and Agricultural Wastes /Residues), (ii) Biomass Programme (Scheme to Support Manufacturing of Briquettes & Pellets and Promotion of Biomass (non-bagasse) based cogeneration in Industries), and (iii) Biogas Programme.

In January 2023, the Government of India announced the National Green Hydrogen Mission with an initial outlay of approximately INR 200 billion.

The Mission targets developing a green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonne) per annum, with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of approximately 125 GW in the country by 2030. It estimates investment of over INR 8 trillion and creation of six lakh jobs.

The Government of India announced the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme in February 2023 for the development of 4,000 MWh of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) capacity in the country, with a budgetary support of INR 37. billion. Due to the decline in BESS prices, the VGF support has been extended to a maximum of 13,200 MWh of BESS capacity, within the same budgetary support. Further, the Ministry of Power has extended this scheme to develop an additional 30,000 MWh of BESS capacity, with a total financial support of INR 54 billion through the Power System Development Fund.

In addition to the grid-connected RE projects, equal emphasis is given to off-grid applications for providing affordable and reliable energy access, particularly in rural and remote areas where grid connectivity is not tech-economically feasible. Standalone solar pumps for irrigation, electrification of households through mini-grids and solar home lighting systems, small biogas plants for cooking needs, and other similar initiatives are a few examples in this regard. Considering the importance of decentralised renewable energy for livelihood applications, a framework for the promotion of DRE livelihood applications was issued in February 2022. Several schemes under various Ministries are supporting such applications through different modalities.

The renewable energy sector in India has attracted a total investment of USD 123.3 billion between 2014 and 2024. An additional investment of USD 340 billion is expected in the sector by the year 2030.

On the policy side, major initiatives taken include announcement of the long-term trajectory for the renewable purchase obligation, waiver on charges for inter-state transmission of renewable energy, tariff based competitive bidding guidelines for RE projects, Wind-solar hybrid policy, allowing open access to consumers with contracted capacity of 100 kW, stringent penal provision for non-compliance of the renewable consumption obligation, issuance of resource adequacy framework guidelines, framework for promotion of energy storage systems, etc.

With the conducive policy and regulatory framework available for the RE sector in the country, achieving the targeted 500 GW capacity from non-fossil sources is likely to be well ahead of the 2030 deadline.

1. Formation of Carbon Cell in Association with Cleancarbon.ai

SEPC has signed an MoU with Cleancarbon.ai and launched a dedicated Carbon Cell to support Indian exporters. This initiative helps members align with evolving EU regulations such as CBAM, enhancing the global competitiveness of Indian exports through tailored guidance, resources, and strategic insights. For more details, visit carbon cell website <https://www.servicesepec.org/home/carbonCell>

2. Formation of SEPC Climate Finance Committee (CFC)

To advance India's sustainability agenda and drive investments in clean energy, carbon reduction, and climate adaptation, SEPC has formed the Climate Finance Committee (CFC) comprising experts from industry, academia, and government:

1. Shri Jeevan Kumar Jethani, Scientist F, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)
2. Mr. Sharif Qamar, Associate Director, TERI
3. Ms. Amshika Amar, Associate Research Fellow, TERI
4. Shri Arun Krishnan, Program Director - Climate Finance, WRI India
5. Shri Anil Jauhri Chairman, Carbon Registry India
6. Mr. Kaushal Mahan, Sr. VP, Chase Advisors
7. Shri Jai Kumar Gaurav, Project Manager -Climate Change and Circular Economy, GIZ India
8. Shri Abhay Misri, ESG Advisory, KPMG India

3. Formation of SEPC Sustainable Logistics and Mobility Committee, now renamed to Green Logistics Committee (GLC)

Formerly the Sustainable Logistics and Mobility Committee, the GLC aims to accelerate sustainable logistics and electric mobility through clean energy and climate investments. Members include:

1. Shri Prashant K Banerjee, Executive Director, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers
2. Mr. Sharif Qamar, Associate Director, TERI
3. Shri Abhay Misri, ESG Advisory, KPMG India
4. Shri Charu Gupta, Executive Director – Sustainability & Climate Change, Deloitte
5. Shri Jai Kumar Gaurav, Project Manager, Climate Change & Circular Economy, GIZ India
6. Shri Manoj Gupta, CEO-Ecofuel EV Charging Technologies, JBM Group
7. Ms Soumya Rao, Machphy Solutions
8. Shri Tajinder Singh, Head- Govt. & Institutional Relations, TI Clean Mobility (Montra)

Mr. Manish Kumar Dabkara, Head of Sustainable Services at SEPC, expressed satisfaction with these initiatives, highlighting their role in industry sensitization, policy guidance, and capital mobilization. These committees will foster collaboration, policy advocacy, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders.



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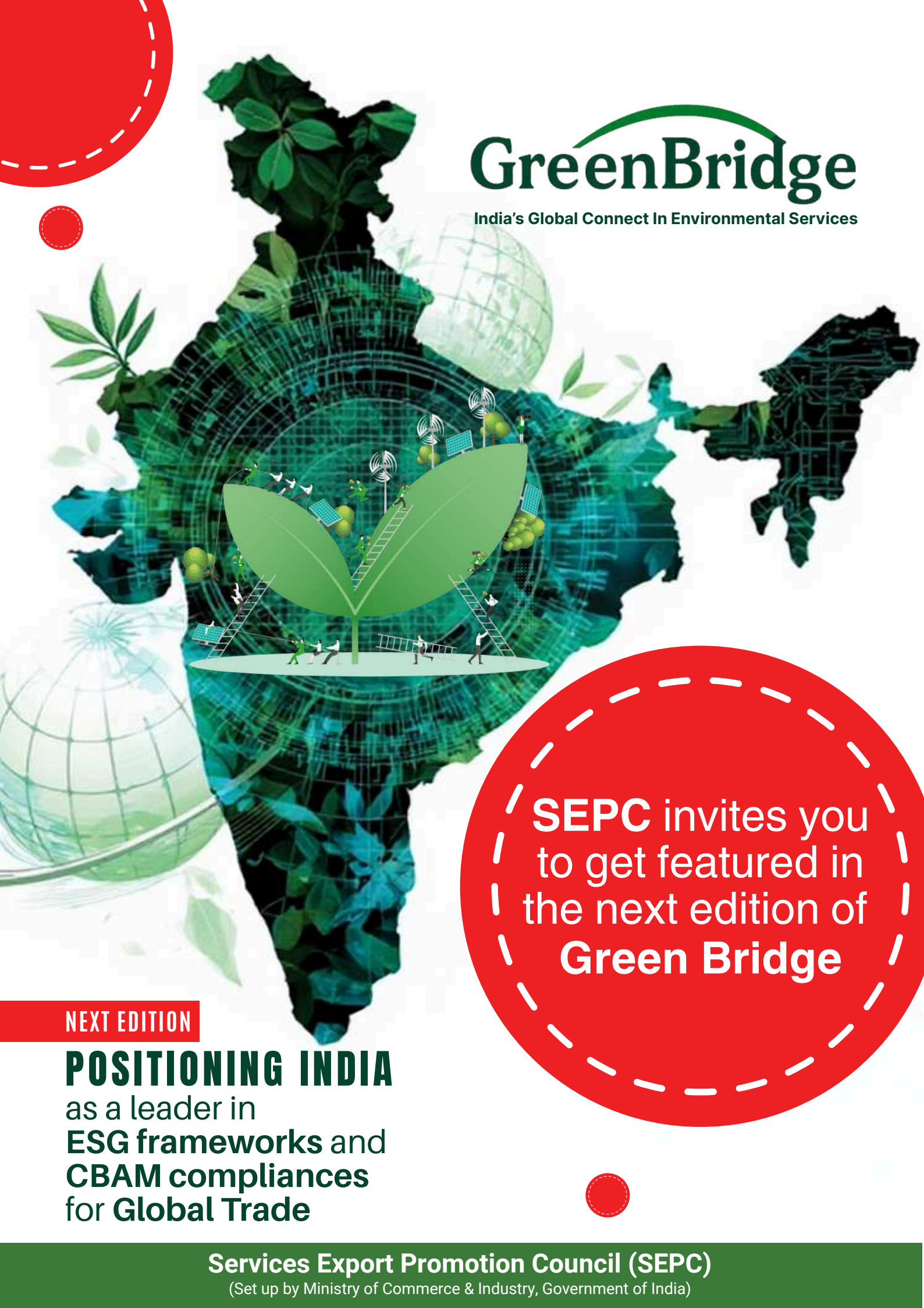


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Whether you're a climate expert, business leader, academic, or forward-thinking entrepreneur—we want to hear from you.

For further details, please contact: verma.deepak@servicesepec.org / 8178262474

Let's co-create a greener, more inclusive tomorrow. Together



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