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GREEN THANE: TOWARDS A SMART GREEN CITY

Project Highlights

- Increase in the green cover and regeneration of degraded forest land of Thane City
- Conservation of the fast depleting bio-diversity of Thane City
- Restricting further erosion of soil and hence reducing landslides in the hilly areas around Thane city
- Adoption of methods to restrict the loss of fresh water due to runoff during the rainy season in this degraded forest lands and in turn recharging the water table in the high-water scarcity areas of the City
- Generating employment to the tribal youths in these areas
- Involvement of Citizens, NGOs, students, etc. in the plantation program and creating awareness regarding the importance of environment conservation

Background

Thane city located near Mumbai in the state of Maharashtra, is a rapidly growing city due to extensive immigration and urbanization. In view of this, there has been fast depletion of green spaces within the city as well as on its outskirts. Tree Census carried out in the year 2011 recorded 4, 55,070 of trees in the city, but in order to cope up with the fast growing concretization, Thane Municipal Corporation planned a drive of planting 5 Lakh trees in 3 years starting from 2015. Considering the scarce availability of land within the city, degraded forest land was identified within the city limits for the plantation drive in association with the Forest Department.



**Mumbra -
Diva, Thane,
Maharashtra**

2015-2018

(Not to scale)

Project Objectives

- I. Regeneration of degraded forest land within the city limits
- II. Plantation of local forest tree species on all the areas identified for the plantation drive
- III. Restricting soil erosion in identified hilly areas
- IV. Minimization of fresh water wastage and adoption of techniques to ensure ground water recharge to minimize water scarcity problems in the city

Key Stakeholders

Garden Department and Tree Authority, Thane Municipal Corporation

Approach of Green Thane initiative

The project was planned with an initiative to resolve the issue of fast depleting green spaces due to the ever-increasing urbanization of Thane city as per the following criteria:

- Identification of big open spaces for plantation within the city limits due to scarcity of land in association with the forest department



- A large patch of degraded forest land located in the hilly regions in Mumbra and Diva city was taken on lease from the forest department for 7 years
- A tri-party agreement was made between the Forest Department, Thane Municipal Corporation and Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra for the plantation project
- Distribution of free saplings to the Local leaders, NGOs, Citizens, schools and colleges within the city limits to ensure mass plantation initiatives across the city
- Extensive campaigns, media as well as community engagement drives to increase mass-awareness levels about the initiative: Local leaders and celebrities were also involved in the plantation drive
- Adoption of techniques like Nala bunding, mulching, etc. for the conservation of water in order to make it available for a longer time for the plants, as well as check dams for helping the water to percolate in the soil and recharge the water table in that area
- Geo tagging of the planted trees with the help of GIS/GPS technology
- Maintenance of the plants for 5 years by FDCM of the plantation carried out on Forest land which involves watering of plants, weeding, replacing dead plants with new, etc.
- Generation of employment opportunities for local tribal youth

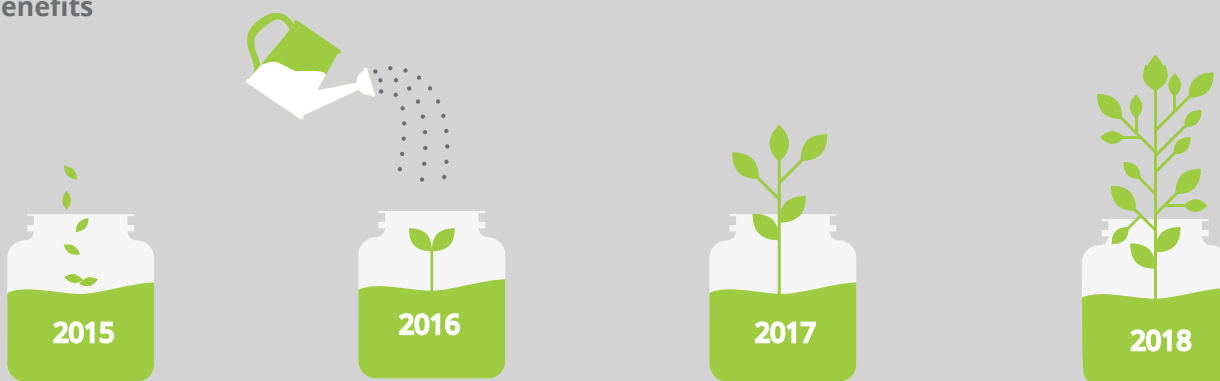
Financial Structure of the initiative

Project was funded through the annual budget of Thane Municipal Corporation

Achievements



Benefits



In 1st year 2015, total 49,638 no. of trees has been planted.

In 2nd year 2016, total 1,61,554 no. of trees has been planted. Out of which a record of 76,496 no. of trees were planted in a single day on 1st July 2016.

In 3rd year 2017, total 2,88,810 no. of trees has been planted. Out of which a record of 82,870 no. of trees were planted in a single day on 1st July 2017.

In the year 2018, total 1,19,000 trees has been planted, out of which 50,000 were mangroves.

More than 6 lakhs were planted within a period of four years in the Thane city limits involving local leaders, celebrities, NGOs, students, citizens, on degraded forest lands, roadsides, reservation plots, dividers, etc.



Co-benefits

- Creation of employment for the local tribal people during the plantation process and maintenance period of the project

Success Factors

- Strong and stable leadership of Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra
- Intensive campaigning and mass involvement for the drive

Limitations

- A total of 600 ha of land was made available on lease but due to intense degradation only 400 ha could be used for plantation
- Water availability a problem due to hilly areas

Future Prospects

- Inclusion of local species of fruits, flower trees in the plantation drive will help to conserve and regenerate the depleting Bio diversity in Thane City area
- Plantation of fruit trees and flower trees can become permanent source of income for the tribal youths
- Increase in the green cover can help to reduce the pollution in Thane city

Source: As received from ICLEI, South Asia