



# **Khasi Hills Community REDD+**

*India's first community based REDD+ project*



## About

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The project is located on Meghalaya's upland plateau in the East Khasi hills.

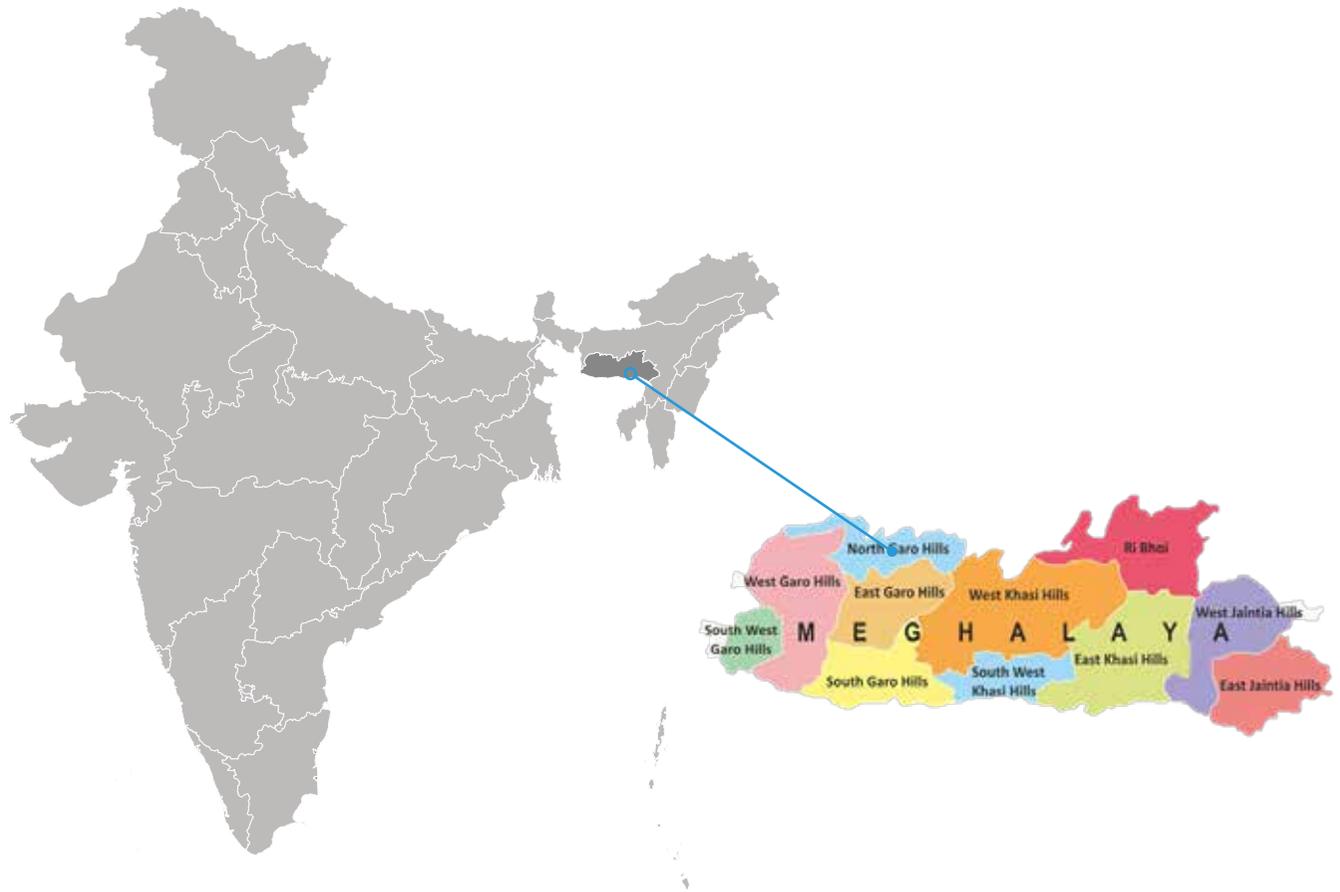
The area is managed by Khasi stewardship that integrates traditional practices with practices and science.

Khasi indigenous governments (hima) and village councils (dorbar) function as democratic institutions that manage the society and the natural environment.

The project area has unique montane cloud forest ecosystems.

Traditional sacred groves present within these montane forests have served as environmental protection for parts of the old-growth forests.

The project aims to link forest fragments to enhance hydrological and biodiversity services



### **Location:**

**Country:** India

**State:** Meghalaya

**District(s):** East Khasi Hills

**Project Area:** 27,139 ha

## Key features of the project

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- 1st community REDD+ project in India
  - Project developed and jointly managed by indigenous communities in the East Khasi Hills
  - Community led implementation and community level project governance
  - The project is mostly implemented in Community forests managed by the local forest councils.
  - Khasi indigenous government is known as Hima and each village is governed by a village council or dorbar
  - The Project area is comprised of ten such Hima, which have formed a Federation to coordinate management and implement the project.
  - The Federation has been registered under the Meghalaya Societies Registration Act as “Ka Synjuk Ki Hima Arliang Wah Umiam, Mawphlang Welfare Society” of Meghalaya.
  - The project areas possess a diverse mosaic of plant and animal species, many of which are either endemic or very rare.
- The region is classified as a global biodiversity hot spot



## Duration of the Project

**30 Year**

**Total Project Area  
27,139 hectares**

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## Baseline Scenario and Project Activities

The main drivers of deforestation and degradation were identified by the project proponent.

Firewood harvest, extraction of wood for charcoal production, grazing, conversion to agricultural lands, quarrying and forest fires were found to be the main contributors to degradation and deforestation

In addition, climate change was found to exacerbate key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

This is seen as a resulting increase in the intensity and extent of dry season ground fires, a reduction soil moisture and rainfall, and contributes to a historic pattern of aridization and biomass loss.

The loss of dense forest habitat as a result of this has placed pressure on the region's agriculture systems, water resources and biodiversity.

Satellite image analysis was conducted to establish the rate of deforestation and degradation in the area.

Through this community REDD+ Project, 62 villages are creating, restoring, and protecting a forest wildlife corridor along

the Umiam River, connecting sacred forests and regenerating forest fragments at the landscape level.

Restoration of degraded forests are being achieved by supporting communities in land management and forest regeneration activities in order to yield livelihood benefits

The project is slowing, halting and gradually reversing forest loss by providing institutional, financial and technical support to the communities that help with better monitoring and management of the forest, provide protection against forest fires and regulate firewood collection.

It also contributes to the preservation of 500-year old sacred groves with ancient megaliths that characterize Khasi indigenous culture.

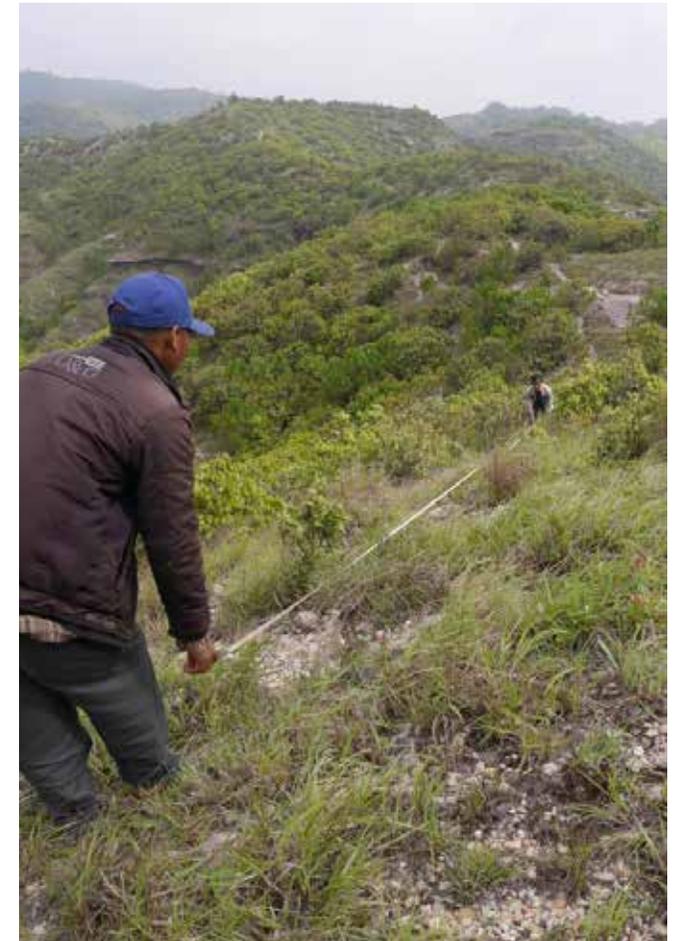
The programme uses a two pronged approach to forest conservation.

REDD+ is the protection of dense or open forest threatened by deforestation and forest degradation.

ANR is the protection, management, and regeneration of open forest.

Income-generating activities (IGAs) are designed to improve local livelihoods.

These IGAs have been designed by the communities and facilitated by the project proponent.



## Contribution to SDGs

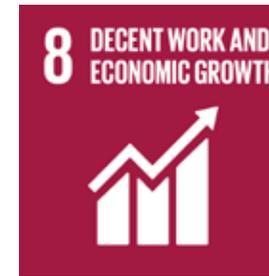
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Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and safeguarding of watersheds and forests



Improved livelihoods and income generating activities



Job Creation for the purpose of implementation of project activities.

Economic growth seen through improved agriculture, horticulture and livestock systems.



364,616tCO<sub>2</sub> carbon benefit over ten years through REDD and ANR



Formation of SHGs, Farmer Groups and Women-led micro finance institutions



Improved air quality due to fuel efficient and smokeless stoves. Facilitation of sustainable organic farming and horticulture systems



Access to fuel efficient and smokeless stoves

## Intended Outcomes

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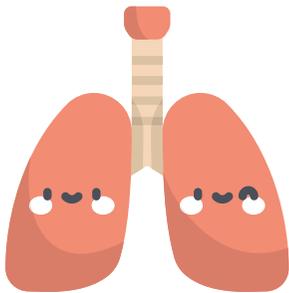
Over 27,000 ha of forest conserved and degraded forests restored.



Restoration of hydrological functions of watersheds



Carbon benefit of 364,616 tCO<sub>2</sub> over 10 years



Improved air quality with use of fuel efficient and smokeless stoves



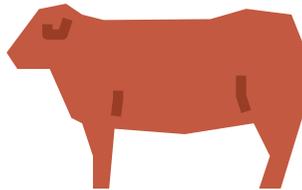
Reduced use of firewood with introduction of fuel efficient stoves



Biodiversity conservation of unique flora, fauna, and montane cloud forest ecosystems

## Intended Outcomes

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Commercial animal husbandry enterprises by exchanging low quality community cattle and goats for stall-fed pigs and chickens



Formation of SHGs and Farmer Groups and bank account creation



Income generation activities promoted/ adopted among the households in the area through sustainable organic agriculture, horticulture systems and livestock promotion.



Women administered micro finance institutions created



Community led implementation and community level project management and monitoring



Job Creation within the local community for the purpose of project implementation

## Current Status and Proposed Plan

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The Khasi Hills Community REDD+ project was registered under the Plan Vivo standard in 2012. It is India's 1st certified, community REDD+ forest carbon project and can act as a "Proof of concept" for conserving and restoring India's forests.

The Plan Vivo Standard certifies the implementation of project activities that enhance ecosystem services and allow communities to formally recognise and quantify carbon sequestration, biodiversity or watershed protection.

To meet the Plan Vivo standard, the programme has to demonstrate long term sustainability, high level of community involvement, tangible benefits to livelihoods and ecosystem services.

This project represents a long-term strategy to address the extreme poverty facing rural communities.

Plan Vivo is recognised for its focus on ethical and fair-trade climate services, ensuring that the climate benefits are received by the people who need them most.

The programmes are designed with the full participation of local communities. In addition to quantifying carbon benefits, the

project also quantifies ecosystem services and demonstrates good governance.

Results-based performance links to carbon finance and/or PES.

The project has been validated and certified under Plan Vivo standards. The project was validated in 2012. A verification was carried out in 2017 for the monitoring period January 2012 to December 2016, following which 178,610 Plan Vivo Certificates were issued.

The Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) has recently approved a REDD+ methodology that would be applicable to this project. The project proponent is looking to bring the project under the VCS and utilise this recently approved methodology that wasn't available at the time of initial project registration.







## VNV ADVISORY

VNV Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd. has been at the forefront of working with climate change and livelihoods. Our decade-long experience has seen us develop low-carbon projects that support these communities in getting their basic needs while adapting to and mitigating the harsh impacts of climate change. We work in areas of clean cooking, social forestry, sustainable agriculture, rural energy access and many other related community based technologies. With support from over 40 NGOs and implementation partners, our work encompasses over 3 million rural households across the South Asian (India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka) region. We have also been able to engage with businesses to address issues of Social Responsibility, Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Neutrality.



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