

Concept Note

Theme: Climate Smart panchayat

Context and Rationale

As Odisha navigates the twin challenges of climate disruption and ecological degradation, its Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) stand at the frontline of both vulnerability and opportunity. From forest stewardship in tribal belts to biodiversity management in coastal zones, elected PRI representatives are increasingly called upon to lead climate-smart planning, restore Commons, and anchor inclusive development.

Yet, the pathways through which Panchayats can lead climate action, and the types of support they require to do so effectively, remain inadequately articulated. This thematic session seeks to sharpen that understanding by bringing together elected representatives, civil society actors, and institutional stakeholders.

Objectives

- To showcase PRI-led innovations in forest conservation, biodiversity management, and climate-smart planning.
- To facilitate cross-learning among elected representatives and CSOs on ecological restoration and Commons governance.
- To identify policy and operational gaps in empowering PRIs for climate action.
- To co-create a roadmap for strengthening PRI capacities in climate resilience, adaptive governance, and ecological justice.

The track discussion will revolve around two central questions:

1. What can Panchayats do for climate resilience?

This explores the scope of PRI leadership in areas such as Commons management, climate-smart planning, vulnerability reduction, livelihoods, and local institutional strengthening.

2. What support do Panchayats require from Government, CSOs, and other stakeholders?

This examines the enabling environment—policies, technical assistance, convergence mechanisms, financing, and community mobilisation, that empowers PRIs to perform these roles effectively.

By collectively reflecting on these two questions, the session aims to generate clarity on actionable roles for PRIs and the systemic support needed to unlock their full potential as climate leaders. The insights will contribute to a shared roadmap for strengthening local governance in Odisha's climate and ecological context.