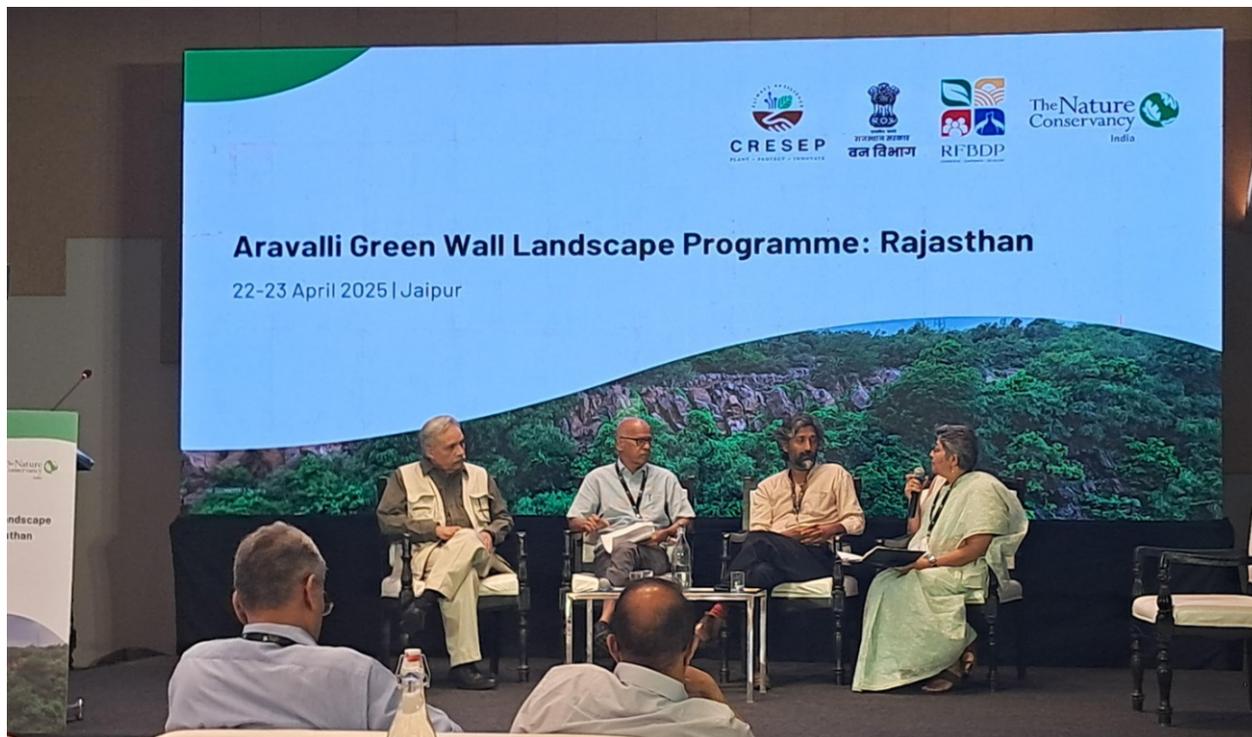


An Introduction to the Aravalli Green Wall Landscape Programme of the Government of India

#Aravalli



Ms Zeenat Niazi, Chief Advisor at the panel of Conservation of River Systems and Water Bodies of Rajasthan: Role of Urban Planning



22–23 April 2025



10:00 AM- 4:30 PM



Hyatt, Jaipur

On 22 April 2025, Development Alternatives participated in the workshop “An Introduction to the Aravalli Green Wall Landscape Programme of the Government of India”, organised by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The event brought together key stakeholders to deliberate restoration strategies for the Aravalli range—a critical ecological corridor stretching 700 km from Gujarat to Delhi—aimed at combating desertification, enhancing biodiversity, and building climate resilience.

This ambitious initiative seeks to address land degradation by creating green barriers and reducing soil erosion and desertification. It aims to promote thriving livelihoods and restore the Aravalli ecosystem through water conservation, biodiversity rejuvenation, regenerative agriculture, and sustainable urbanisation. The workshop emphasised the importance of community-led and science-based approaches, policy coherence within and across the four states, strategic partnerships,



knowledge collaboration, and adequate financial resources as necessary conditions for the programme's successful design and implementation.

Dr Swayam Prabha Das and Ms Zeenat Niazi, as core members of the team that conducted a scoping study to identify priority areas for the Aravalli Green Wall project on behalf of TNC, represented Development Alternatives at the workshop. Ms Niazi, Chief Advisor – Climate Resilience and Circular Economy, contributed as the moderator of the panel discussion “*Conservation of River Systems and Water Bodies of Rajasthan: Role of Urban Planning*”, and as a panellist in two other sessions: (a) “*Natural Climate Solutions: Knowledge Sharing from Aravalli Green Wall Landscape (AGWL) States in India*”, and (b) “*Role of Partnerships: IGOs, CSOs and NGOs.*”

Ms Zeenat Niazi, Chief Advisor at the panel of Natural Climate Solutions: Knowledge Sharing from Aravalli Green Wall (AGWL) States



The panel on “*Conservation of River Systems and Water Bodies of Rajasthan*” highlighted the urgency of integrating water conservation into urban development strategies. Panellists stressed the need to safeguard river systems and traditional water bodies to sustain the ecological balance of the Aravalli region—particularly in the face of rapid urbanisation. The rural–urban continuum was discussed in relation to the sustainable management of water resources. Traditional practices in Rajasthan, such as restoring wetlands, ponds, and surface water bodies, were cited as nature-based urban planning approaches that can reduce groundwater stress and prioritise river basin health. The importance of integrated blue–green infrastructure was emphasised as a strategy to enhance climate resilience, especially against heat and water stress. The panel called for stronger regulatory mechanisms and greater community engagement to protect the region's water systems.

The session on “*Natural Climate Solutions: Knowledge Sharing from AGWL States*” illuminated the critical role of nature-based solutions in conserving the Aravalli landscape. State representatives shared successful models and insights from conservation efforts. The discussion underscored the need to integrate traditional ecological knowledge with modern restoration techniques, promote cross-state collaboration, and develop policies prioritising natural infrastructure. Ms Niazi highlighted emerging climate-induced challenges such as heat island effects and water stress. She spoke on the importance of blue-green infrastructure, integrated water treatment, urban forests (as trees outside forests), stormwater management, and the potential of Managed Aquifer Recharge approaches in the cities and towns of the Aravalli landscape. She also elaborated on the potential for greenhouse gas savings in the building and sewage management sectors.

The session on “*Role of Partnerships: IGOs, CSOs and NGOs*” focused on the principles of collaboration—trust, transparency, and inclusion supported by clear roles and mutual respect. Ms Niazi emphasised the critical need for open and shared knowledge systems that support continuous learning and the emergence of new solutions. Both the panel and audience highlighted the value of experiential knowledge alongside data and science. The session concluded with a call for shared vision and collaborative design to foster accountability and ownership in restoration interventions.



Ms Zeenat Niazi, Chief Advisor at the panel on “Role of Partnership: IGOs, CSOs and NGOs”