

Large scale ecological restorations - the opportunities created by the challenges of scaling up

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The current scenario, with respect to the climate crisis, demands large-scale reforestation projects as one of the mitigating strategies. Unfortunately, many of the projects currently underway are either planting trees in the wrong places or planting inappropriate species. The reasons for this are a mix of ignorance, lack of appropriate biotic resources and outdated policies that fail to appreciate the role of natural ecosystems. Each one of these challenges presents an opportunity to guide our work in the appropriate direction to remedy the situation. Through the consultancy work of Auroville Botanical Gardens in South India, we have been engaged with government and industry, undertaking large-scale projects with respect to both restoration and environmental planning. Although there is still a long way to go and there are seemingly impossible hurdles to overcome, we have had some remarkable successes and unexpectedly interesting outcomes. The talk will cover some of these projects and show how multiple small steps and meaningful collaborations can lead to significant improvements in outcomes.