



WWF for a living planet®



HSBC Climate Partnership

Living Ganga Programme

Background

An emblem of India's rich cultural heritage, the Ganga is unarguably one of the world's major river systems. But, the river is over exploited and as a result is causing severe threat to the river ecology, livelihoods, water security and thereby to the lives of millions who are dependant on the river. Massive hydro-power development in upstream stretch of Ganga involves large scale river water diversions. Dams and barrages are being built on its course and much of the river water is siphoned off for meeting irrigation water requirements. Also partial and untreated sewage and toxic industrial effluents are dumped into it, making the river lifeless.

HSBC Climate Partnership

The HSBC Climate Partnership (HCP) is a groundbreaking, five-year partnership (2007-2011) between Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) and WWF, The Climate Group, Earthwatch Institute and Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Launched in May 2007, the HCP will:

- Help to protect four of the world's major rivers - the Amazon, Ganges, Thames, and Yangtze - from the impacts of climate change, benefitting the 450 million people who rely on them.
- Make some of the world's great cities - Hong Kong, London, Mumbai, New York and Shanghai - cleaner and greener, which the partners will promote as models for the world
- Create 'climate champions' worldwide who will undertake field research and bring back valuable knowledge and experience to their communities
- Conduct the largest ever field experiment on the world's forests to measure carbon and the effects of climate change.

The HCP is intended to support WWF-India's work on climate change across the upper Gangetic basin, focusing on river restoration, community education and engagement, business and government involvement, and biodiversity conservation projects.

WWF's work on river restoration in the past

WWF has been working towards conservation and wise management of river systems and wetlands in India for over a decade now and the areas of concern have been freshwater ecosystems, connected habitats, freshwater species and balanced use of water resources for livelihoods. More specifically, WWF has been working in the Ganga Basin through its Dolphin Conservation Programme, Wetlands Conservation Programme, Policy Initiatives and Education and Awareness Campaigns. WWF has also been working on assessing the impacts of climate change on freshwater ecosystems especially the glaciers in the Himalayas. As the impact of climate change on freshwater ecosystems is heightened, the programmatic perspective of WWF has evolved and broadened to adapt and mitigate the impact of climate change on the river and manage accordingly. With the potential impacts of global warming and climate change, river systems that are glacial fed, face increased levels of threat and subsequently the management perspectives change.

Keeping this in view, WWF has developed a programme for the iconic river Ganga called as the "Living Ganga Programme."

Living Ganga Programme (2007-2011)

The Living Ganga Programme aims to develop and implement strategies for sustainable energy and water resource management within the Ganga basin, in the face of Climate Change. Specifically, the programme will work on key sites and a critical stretch of the river of approximately 800km from Gangotri in Uttarakhand to Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh. The programme brings together components of climate adaptation, vulnerability assessment, environmental flows and water allocation coupled with pollution abatement and co-management of water flow and energy. The programme aims to establish partnership with the key stakeholders with a focus on river restoration, community education and engagement, business and government involvement, and biodiversity conservation. The programme consists of six cross cutting Components:

- Sustainable Water Management
- Climate Adaptation
- Pollution Abatement
- Water-Energy Co-management
- Sustainable Hydropower
- Communications & Business Engagement

Programme Partners

Partners that have come together to strategize and develop a comprehensive four year programme for a living Ganga include:



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