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**Impact Assessment of Project- Environment Sustainability:
Adoption of Public Green Belt & Maintenance**

DLF Cyber City Developers Limited

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Executive Summary

Project title	Environment Sustainability - Adoption of Public Green Belt & Maintenance
Implementing partner	DLF Foundation
Project overview	<p>DLF Foundation, in collaboration with the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), undertook an initiative to adopt, develop, and maintain public green belts across key urban corridors in Gurugram. Prior assessments by GMDA had revealed that several green belts along major public roads were either non-existent or in a severely degraded condition, resulting in discontinuous green cover and reduced ecological value within the city landscape.</p> <p>Responding to this need, the project focused on establishing structured plantations within designated public green belt areas to restore ecological balance and enhance environmental sustainability in the urban context. Through systematic plantation activities, sustained maintenance efforts, and close coordination with GMDA, the initiative aimed to create uniform, well-maintained green stretches across Gurugram’s major road networks.</p>
Project commencement	FY 2020-21
Contribution amount	INR 1.03 Cr. ¹
Project closure	FY 2023-24
Project Location	Plantation in Sector 75/75A, 76/77, Gurugram
Direct Beneficiaries	General public residing in the intervention area
Problem statement	<p>Gurugram, like many urban cities, faces challenges related to environmental sustainability, particularly in terms of its green spaces. The rapid urbanization has led to the reduction of natural greenery, contributing to air pollution, climate change, and loss of biodiversity.</p> <p>The project aimed at plantation and greening drives in public spaces in several sectors of Gurugram. The Project involved adoption of green belts for plantation in partnership with the Government.</p>
SDG alignment	

¹ Details shared by DLF Foundation

Summary of Findings

A comprehensive account of Deloitte's observations and results from the impact assessment study of the DLF Foundation's supported projects within the OECD DAC framework parameters.

Parameter	Rationale	Score
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of plantations within designated green belt areas was well aligned with the environmental and social needs identified in the project context. By contributing to the restoration of natural habitats and the improvement of air quality, the intervention directly addressed priority community needs related to environmental degradation and limited access to healthy public spaces. 	
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project demonstrated strong internal and external coherence by aligning its activities with the priorities, policies, and mandates of urban governance institutions. By collaborating closely with GMDA and other local government stakeholders, the intervention ensured consistency with existing urban planning frameworks, environmental regulations, and city-level sustainability strategies. Furthermore, the project complemented broader environmental and urban development efforts by transforming underutilized pathways, curbsides, road dividers, and junction points into functional green belts that contributed to Gurugram's ecological network. 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project demonstrated strong alignment between its planned objectives and the outcomes achieved. The initiative encompassed development work along the road corridors dividing Sectors 75/75A, 76/77, and the outer peripheral road of Sector 76, wherein approximately 2,03,430 sqm of public green belt across both sides and the central verge were adopted and developed. The green belt included the plantation and maintenance of 8,08,505 trees and shrubs, which collectively enhanced ecological conditions, improved environmental quality, and strengthened urban resilience. These results reflected effective delivery of activities, efficient use of resources, and meaningful environmental impact. 	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program delivered a high-efficiency solution by meeting and surpassing every ecological and social target set for Gurugram. Data-driven land-use planning identified the most suitable sites for green interventions and continued maintenance kept the green infrastructure healthy and functional. 	
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact assessment among stakeholders of the DLF Foundation's green belt development initiative in Gurugram indicated the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All respondents (100%) reported a marked improvement in their surrounding environment, noting the creation of cleaner and greener public spaces. All respondents (100%) indicated increased awareness of the link between environmental conditions and personal health. 	

- A majority (90%) observed that the plantations significantly enhanced the visual quality of roadside stretches and open areas.

Sustainability

- The sustainability of the initiative is underscored by the project’s multi-year commitment, institutional collaboration, and demonstrated environmental improvements.
- Alignment with GMDA’s urban greening priorities reinforces institutional sustainability. Stakeholder perceptions of improved environmental quality, enhanced awareness, and microclimate benefit further contribute to the long-term sustainability of green belt development in the urban context.



Recommendations

The assessment study has highlighted opportunity areas to enhance the grant's effectiveness and maximize impact. These are tabulated as recommendations below:

Recommendations	Description
Promoting Awareness and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct community workshops, tree-planting events, and educational programs to raise awareness about the importance of green belts. • Collaborate with local educational institutions for volunteer initiatives, environmental sensitization, and events to engage young citizens in sustainability efforts.
Leverage Technology for Smart Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the use of smart technologies to optimize water usage, energy consumption, and maintenance efficiency. • Usage of advanced technology to track the location coverage and monitor the plant health and growth
Foster Partnerships for Cross-Industry Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen relationships with government, local businesses, and environmental organizations for continued support and resources.

Pictures taken before and after the intervention in Sector 75/75A, 76/77, Gurugram



Source: DLF Foundation

Approach and Methodology

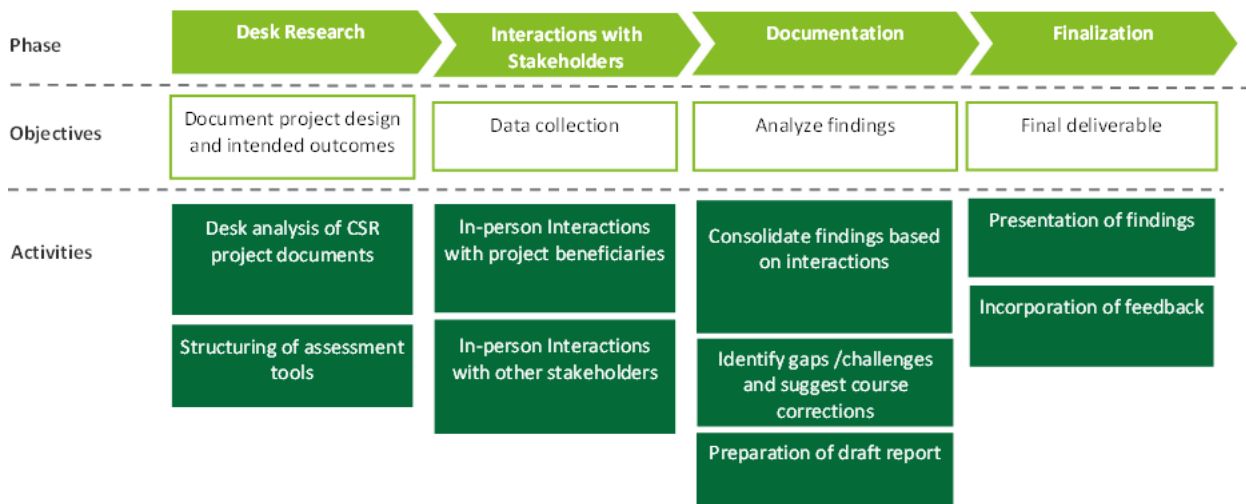
Deloitte used a mixed research design to conduct the assessment, with research questions framed along the Development Assistance Committee (OECD, 1991) principles. The data collection tools sought to collect information from project documents, stakeholders and beneficiaries around key indicators adapted from the UNDP’s Results Based Management framework. The assessment involved an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data using primary and secondary data sources.

The results-based framework was deployed to determine the project-specific inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes/impact customized as per the project execution model and in consultation with implementing partners and available documentation. Data for the assessment was collected to answer the following research questions:

- Are the CSR initiatives either relevant to the community’s needs/aspirations or aligned with the developmental priorities of the region?
- What were the intended or planned outcomes of the initiatives? Are the program’s results in line with the anticipated outcomes?
- How have the CSR initiatives impacted beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders? Explore changes in the physical, economic, and socio-cultural environments.
- How do the beneficiaries and other stakeholders perceive the CSR initiatives undertaken?
- Are the activities ensuring long-term solutions to the developmental issues of the region? What elements have been built into the project design that will ensure sustainability of results?
- Has there been a disruption in impact due to remote program execution? Are there any potential strategies that could be deployed to combat this disruption?

Report Development Approach

The impact assessment of the CSR initiatives was executed in a phased manner. The four main phases are outlined below.



Common Results Framework

The Common Results Indicators developed along UNDP’s Results Based Framework for monitoring were used as the basis for the programmatic review. Both primary and secondary project related data were reviewed to gain a holistic understanding of the implementation model and outcomes.

Inputs	Processes	Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant utilized Project staff deployed Capacity building and training to staff Partnership with partner organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness generation Identification of landscapes Government approvals Landscape Design development with Horticulture experts Vendor Finalization Plantation activities Maintenance of the plants and shrubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of acres reached through green covers No. of trees planted No. of waste management activities conducted No. of dustbins installed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced biodiversity Improved air quality and climate regulation Increased green spaces Enhanced local environmental health Improved environmental sustainability

Desk-based Research

In addition to the stakeholder interactions through Key Informant Interviews with the Project staff as well as the DLF Foundation management, the following project related documents were reviewed:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between DLF Foundation and GMDA
 - Sector 75/75A, 76/77
- Document on CSR Projects FY 2023-24 for Impact Assessment – DCCDL Ltd

Stakeholder Mapping

A stakeholder mapping exercise, based on the desk review, was conducted to identify the range of interactions that would be required to document multiple perspectives about impact. The documentation of multi-stakeholder interactions was critical to validating findings through triangulation. The stakeholder mapping for the Greening Cities project is presented below:

Primary stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadside Vendors Pedestrians Security Guards Shop owners 	Secondary stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project implementation staff
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Sampling Plan

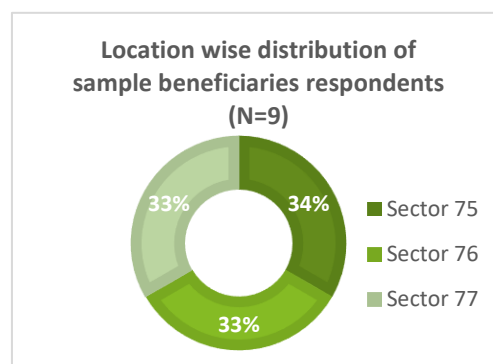
A multi-stage mixed methodology was adopted to identify the sample of respondents for the study. The final set of the respondents, given the wide spread of beneficiaries across locations, was selected purposively. A snapshot of the sample covered is given below:

Project location	Sample covered	Type of sampling
• Gurugram - Public Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Guards-3 • Vendor staff- 6 • Programme management and staff- 5 	• Purposive
Stakeholder type	Sample covered	Type of sampling
• Security Guards (3)	• Public Green Belt Sector 75: 3	• Purposive
• Vendor staff (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Green Belt Sector 76: 3 • Public Green Belt Sector 77: 3 	• Purposive
• Programme management staff	• Gurugram: 5	• Purposive

A sample of beneficiaries including program staff was selected for the purpose of the assessment. Location-wise distribution for the 9 beneficiary respondents given in the graph.

Study Tools

A range of participatory tools were customized to meet the objectives of the assessment. The table below presents a snapshot of the tools used during various stakeholder interactions during the assessment.

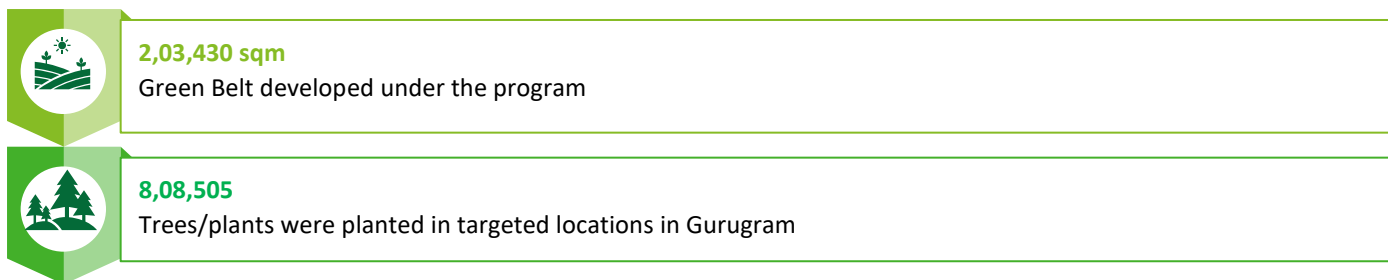


Stakeholder	Key points covered	Study tools employed
Direct beneficiaries/ respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of support provided • Feedback on the project • Perceived social impact (green spaces, increased, awareness on environment, increases better air quality) 	FGD, survey, case study
Indirect beneficiaries/ respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the project • Perception of impact • Gap areas and needs that could be potentially bridged by CSR support 	KII, survey, FGD
Project management/ field team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program implementation • Program monitoring 	KII, FGD

Limitations

Access to respondents with accurate recall factors is a significant challenge for greening projects in a public space.

Project Coverage

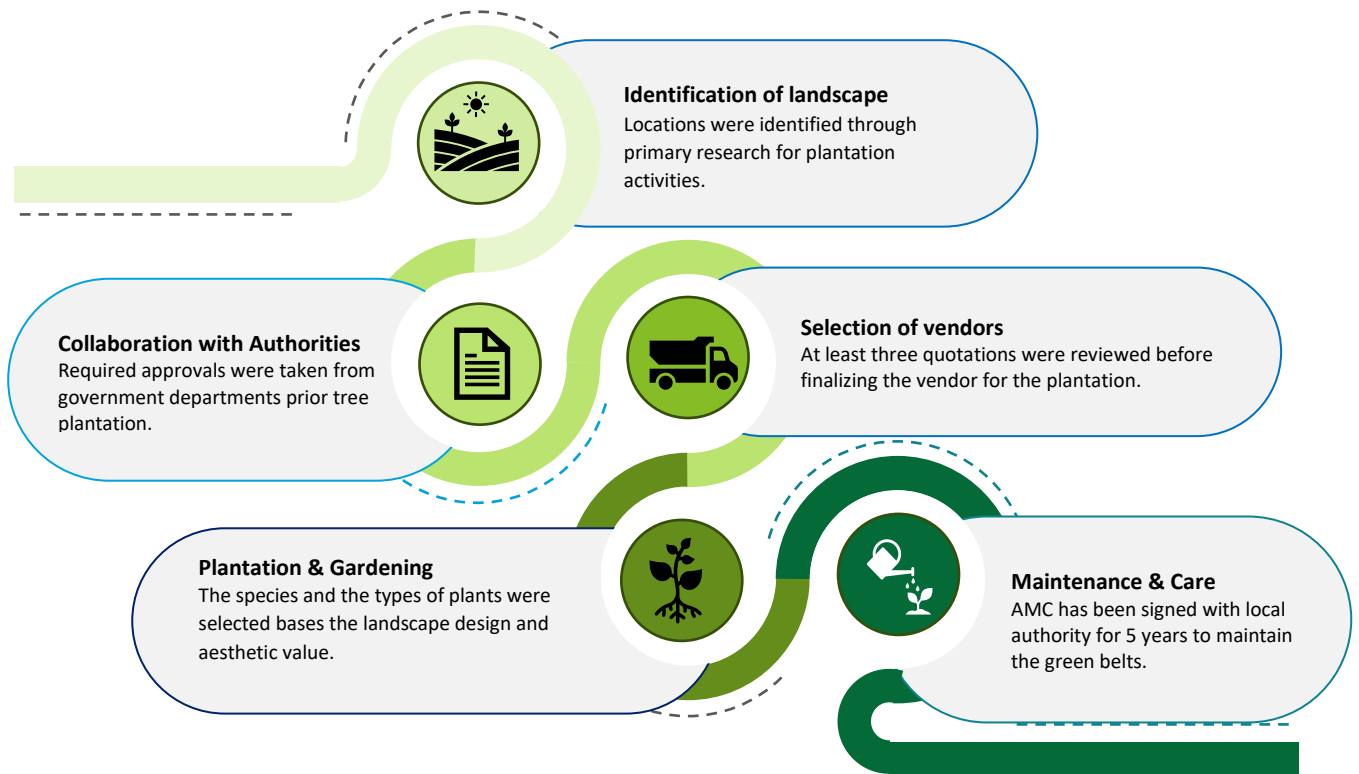


Description of Intended Public Beneficiaries

- **Residents:** Residents living near the developed areas who accessed enhanced green spaces, such as tree-lined streets, which contributed to their physical and mental well-being.
- **Local Businesses:** Businesses near green spaces, such as cafes, shops, and markets, potentially benefited from increased customer foot traffic.

Project Model

The collaboration between DLF Foundation and the GMDA is an important step in transforming Gurugram into a more sustainable, greener city. By developing green belts across major public roads, the project contributed to environmental health and enriched the lives of the public by creating better, healthier, and more aesthetically pleasing spaces.



Inputs

Awareness Generation:

- Communication channels such as print media, social media platforms, public events, etc.
- Marketing materials such as brochures, websites and advertisements.
- Public relations team for outreach.

Identification of Landscapes:

- Survey tools leveraging GPS and mapping software, such as Google map.
- Geographic and environmental data test/survey reports for soil quality, climate, and topography.

Government Approvals:

- Documentation required for approval (plans, proposals, environmental impact assessments).
- Government liaison or legal expert for navigating approval processes.

Landscape Design Development with Horticulture Experts:

- In continuation of previous year, same design software such as AutoCAD, SketchUp etc. was used for optimal landscape planning being a proven design platform.
- Horticulturists or landscape architects for expertise.

Vendor Finalization:

- List of potential vendors for plant supply, tools, and landscaping services.
- Contract templates and agreements.

Plantation Activities:

- Plants, seeds, shrubs, and trees for planting.
- Labor for planting (landscapers, gardeners, etc.) in selected areas/sites.
- Gardening tools such as shovels and irrigation system.
- Fencing, water tanks, civil work for dividers.

Maintenance of Plants and Shrubs:

- Maintenance tools such as watering systems, pruning shears and input fertilizers.
- Maintenance team for ongoing care.
- Deployment of security team.

Process**Awareness Generation:**

- Launched awareness campaigns via media, social media, and community outreach.
- Held public events or informational sessions to inform the community about the project.
- Collected feedback to understand local needs and concerns about the landscape project.

Identification of Landscapes:

- Performed site assessments using surveys and geographic tools.
- Identified areas that needed landscaping and assessed the environmental and community impact.
- Created a list of preferred locations based on ecological, aesthetic, and functional criteria.

Government Approvals:

- Prepared and submitted required documentation to obtain necessary government approvals.
- Ensured compliance with local laws, environmental regulations, and urban planning standards.
- Followed up with government authorities to resolve any issues and obtain final approvals.

Landscape Design Development with Horticulture Experts:

- Collaborated with landscape designers and horticulturists to create the landscape design.
- Considered factors such as local climate, water conservation, soil conditions, and aesthetic preferences.
- Finalized the design and ensured it aligned with the project's sustainability and functional goals.

Vendor Finalization:

- Issued a request for proposals (RFP) to select vendors for planting, landscaping services, and materials.
- Evaluated vendors based on experience, capability, pricing, and quality of plants or services.
- Finalized contracts and established timelines for the landscaping activities.

Plantation Activities:

- Began planting activities according to the finalized design and seasonal schedule.
- Ensured proper soil preparation and planting techniques for healthy growth.
- Installed irrigation systems or other necessary infrastructure for plant care.
- Civil work was completed for dividers in the green belt area.
- Fencing and grills were installed for the protection of the plants.

Maintenance of Plants and Shrubs:

- Implemented a maintenance schedule that included watering, weeding, pruning, and fertilization.
- Regularly assessed plant health and adjusted care as needed (e.g., pest management, disease control).
- Ensured that the landscape remained visually appealing and functional for the long term.
- Security team appointed at various locations to supervise and safeguard the fences installed in the green belt.

Strategic Differentiators



Priority for eco-friendly practices with native plants, water-efficient systems, and low-carbon design to reduce environmental impact.



Spatial design that served diverse functions from recreation to wellness, social gatherings and other activities engaging community use.



Offers a blueprint that can be replicated in other regions or urban spaces, promoting broader impact.



Developed in collaboration with horticulturists and environmental specialists, ensuring cutting-edge, science-backed landscaping techniques.

Impact created through DLF Foundation’s CSR grant

An analysis of survey responses and the content analysis of narratives recorded during field interactions with multiple sample stakeholders including pedestrians, street vendors and DLF Foundation’s program & management staff are presented below. The impact discussed is specific to the model used in the delivery of interventions.

Key Findings

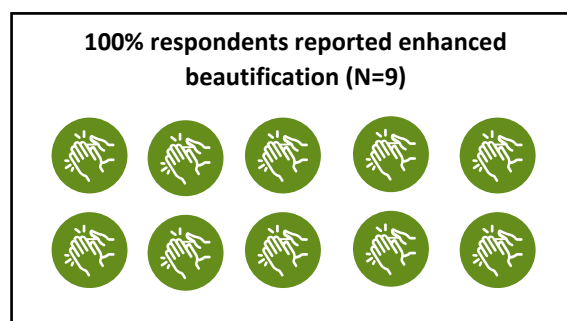
Increased Green Cover in Adopted Areas ²

Through its ongoing partnership with the GMDA, the DLF Foundation has significantly strengthened Gurugram’s green infrastructure by adopting and revitalizing degraded or non-existent green belts along major public roads. In FY 2023–24, the Foundation brought 2,03,430 sqm of green belt under development across the key stretch in Sectors 75/75 and 76/77. Extensive earthwork, fencing, and plantation activities have resulted in the planting of 8,08,505 trees and shrubs, improving air quality, enhancing biodiversity, and contributing to a more sustainable urban ecosystem. These efforts directly advance UN SDGs 3, 11, and 15, as well as the Green India Mission’s Sub-Mission 3, demonstrating the Foundation’s strong commitment to building a greener, healthier, and more resilient Gurugram. Findings from FGDs and KIIs also indicated that extensive earthwork, fencing, and plantation activities have markedly enhanced the city’s environmental landscape.

#	Project	Area (Sqm) FY 2023-24	No. of Trees	No. of Shrubs	Total
1	Adoption of Public Greenbelts & Maintenance, Sector 75/75A, 76/77, Gurugram	2,03,430	5,355	8,03,150	8,08,505

Beautification through Greenery

All beneficiaries surveyed (100%) reported a substantial transformation in the visual and physical character of their surroundings. Areas that were previously barren, dusty, and largely neglected have been converted into vibrant green stretches with well-maintained plantations. Respondents highlighted that these revitalized spaces now offer a more pleasant environment for walking, improved aesthetic appeal, and a greater sense of safety particularly for children who use these pathways and open areas.



The creation of continuous green cover has not only enhanced the attractiveness of the locality but has also contributed to fostering a cleaner, and improved surroundings.

Enhanced Environmental Landscape and Well-Being

The DLF Foundation’s green belt development initiative in Gurugram has meaningfully advanced the city’s environmental landscape. Through systematic plantation and sustained maintenance, the project has contributed to improved air quality, reduced dust levels, and the expansion of urban green cover. These improvements have positively influenced the daily experiences of residents and commuters.

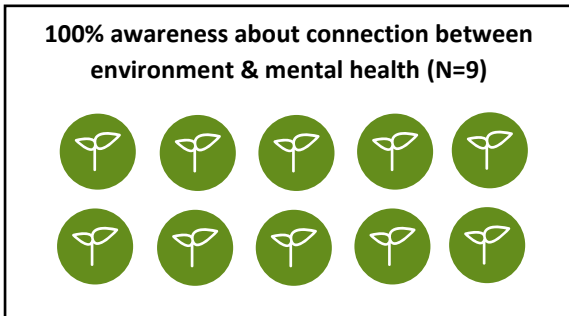
“Since the plants have come up, the dust doesn’t blow into my shop anymore. Customers also say the area looks cleaner and more welcoming.” - Local vendor.

² CSR projects FY 2023-24 for Impact Assessment (as shared by DLF Foundation).

“I stand on duty for long hours, and the greenery along this stretch makes a big difference. It’s cooler, cleaner, and much more pleasant to work here now compared to before. – *Security Guard*.”

As indicated through stakeholder feedback, the greener environment has supported better well-being by creating more comfortable, aesthetically pleasing, and health-enhancing public spaces.

Increased Environmental Awareness



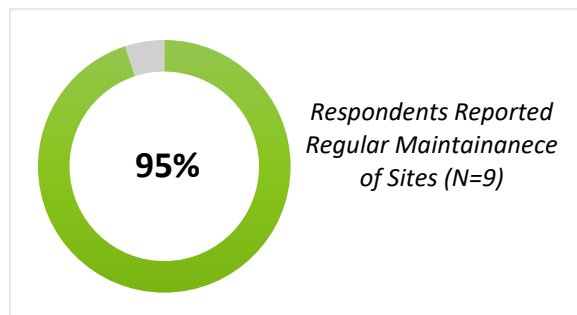
The project contributed significantly to strengthening environmental consciousness among community members living and commuting in the intervention areas. **All beneficiaries surveyed (100%)** reported an increased understanding of the direct link between environmental conditions and their personal health. Respondents noted that the presence of cleaner, greener surroundings reinforced their awareness of how vegetation influences air quality, dust levels, and overall well-being. This heightened awareness reflects a key behavioural outcome of the

initiative, demonstrating that the intervention has not only improved physical spaces but also shaped more informed community perspectives on environmental health.

Collectively, these outcomes indicate that the project has played a meaningful role in promoting environmental awareness while simultaneously enriching the ecological landscape, fostering a more environmentally conscious and biodiversity-supportive urban community.

Diversification and Maintenance of Green Belts

The project’s emphasis on diversifying plantation types and ensuring consistent maintenance has contributed notably to the environmental and visual enhancement of the intervention sites. The project has demonstrated strong commitment to regular maintenance **as reported by 95% respondents**. The green belts are consistently cared for through timely watering and ongoing efforts by designated staff to ensure plant health. This regular upkeep has played a critical role in sustaining the vitality of the plantations,



minimizing plant loss, and ensuring that the ecological and aesthetic gains achieved through plantation activities are preserved over time. Together, these efforts highlight the project’s focus on creating durable, ecologically beneficial, and visually appealing green belts that continue to deliver value well beyond initial implementation.

Challenges in Maintenance

- A persistent concern has been the repeated damage to the barricades or the protective fencing around the plantations, largely caused by accidents, construction and livestock. These incidents weakened the protective measures intended to shield newly planted saplings and flowerbeds.
- Repairing these damaged protective installations generally takes one to two months, during which the security of the green areas remains partially compromised.
- To tackle issues like grazing and accidents the team has appointed traffic marshals and security booths with security guards. The project appears to follow a vendor-led maintenance model, with dedicated teams responsible for plant care, monitoring survival rates, and responding to on-ground requirements across different sectors. This shows that the team has consistently demonstrated strong commitment by promptly taking actions. This ensures that the long-term environmental benefits of the initiative remain uninterrupted.

Stories from Field

Stakeholder Quotes

“It feels rejuvenating to look at the greenery around me, it’s like having a fresh gulp of air when I step out.”

- Roshan, Pedestrian, Sector 74, Gurugram

“The area is filled with colorful flowers which makes it aesthetically good looking and creates a safe and preferable area to take a stroll.”

- Ritika, Pedestrian, Sector 77, Gurugram

Case Study

Case Study: Enhancing Aesthetic Appeal and Walkability Through Green Belts

Ritika, a resident who frequently walks through the green belt near her neighborhood, has witnessed a remarkable improvement in the area’s appearance and its usability. Previously, the stretch lacked visual vibrancy and felt largely uninviting for pedestrians. Since the plantation of diverse shrubs and flowering plants, however, space has undergone a visible transformation. Today, the pathway is lined with colorful flowers and well-maintained greenery, creating an attractive and uplifting environment. Ritika shares that the enhanced aesthetic appeal has made the area far more enjoyable and encourages her to take regular strolls. She notes that “the area is filled with colorful flowers which makes it aesthetically good looking and creates a safe and preferable area to take a stroll.”

Greenery not only beautifies the surroundings but also contributes to a sense of safety and comfort for pedestrians. The improved visual quality, coupled with consistent maintenance, has turned the once-unremarkable stretch into a preferred public space that supports both well-being and daily mobility.

Conclusion and Way Forward

This SWOT analysis highlights the project's strong community involvement, sustainability efforts, and expert-driven design, while noting challenges such as cost, complexity, and external risks and environmental changes.

Strengths

- Sustainability focus: Emphasizes eco-friendly practices such as diversified plants, water-efficient irrigation, and energy-saving technologies enhance environmental sustainability.
- Expert advisory: Collaborates with top-tier horticulturists, and environmental scientists to ensure high-quality and scientifically backed ecological solutions.
- Improvement of barren areas: Green belts increase city's overall aesthetic appeal by turning earlier barren and dusty area into lush green spaces.

Weaknesses

- Maintenance approach: While designed for sustainability, the project may still require "predictive maintenance" monitoring approach to ensure long-term health and functionality.

Opportunities

- Scaling and expansion: The initiative has the potential to act as a reference model for other cities and regions, it can be replicated and expanded across other urban or rural settings.
- Collaborative opportunities: Possibilities to work with government agencies, environmental groups, and private-sector partners, which could help secure additional financial support and resources.
- Integrating RWH into water management: RWH systems can be integrated with the overall water management system which can eventually be used for watering these plants.
- Growing need for Green Spaces: As awareness of environmental sustainability and the mental-health advantages of natural environments increases, the demand for thoughtfully designed public green areas continues to rise.

Threats

- Damage due to constructions and grazing cattle: Barricades and grills around plants are vulnerable to damage due to grazing cattle. Sometimes constructions also happened in the same plot which could affect the saplings and flowerbeds.
- Weather hazards: In recent years, escalating climate-related stresses like intense heat, unpredictable rainfall patterns and extended dry spells may affect the plant vitality and growth.

Glimpses from the Field

As observed during Deloitte field visit for the impact assessment study



Sector 75, Gurugram



Sector 73, Gurugram



Sector 75, Gurugram

The green cover established under project as observed during the Deloitte field visit



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