

Initiative spotlight: India hybrid timber houses



LESSONS LEARNT:

- In a nascent industry like biobased construction in India, careful consideration of its progression is essential. In India, the majority of timber is imported at a high cost. Hastily embracing the use of timber would limit accessibility to only high-end consumers.
- CSFEP can be a catalyst for change by working with organizations to influence their existing portfolios to be more climate- smart
- Influencing perceptions needs teams on the ground who understand the local context and have the community's trust

CONTEXT

- In July 2020, India lifted a 25-year ban on using timber for constructing public buildings
- As India begins to explore timber-based construction, there is a **significant opportunity to start scalable initiatives** that take advantage of the country's size and potential for scale

CSFEP'S APPROACH AND ROLE

- CSFEP supported the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat ([AKAH](#)) to **build hybrid houses in Gujarat**, where AKAH was already working with a climate-vulnerable community
- **AKAH led the construction of 4 demonstration homes and outreach** to change consumer views on timber-based housing

CSFEP'S ROLE

- **As a technical partner**, CSFEP conducted research, sourcing studies, safeguards assessments using the [Safeguards Checklist](#), carbon assessments using the [3S Framework](#), and influenced the final house design
- CSFEP **co-funded the demonstration homes and community outreach strategy**

- CSFEP also **connected AKAH to leading partners** in the country to help guide the project's implementation

IMPACT

- AKAH built more houses and is **scaling beyond the project**. The initiative's success also **prompted AKAH to consider timber-based construction in their programs in other regions**
- The 3S Framework **influenced AKAH's timber sourcing choices** for their upcoming housing project by revealing variations in carbon outcomes among different local forests

- CSFEP contributed to the **R&D of timber use among low-income consumers**, a segment overlooked in favour of the ecotourism and luxury construction markets, by helping to answer questions about what catering to the segment can look like
- The initiative constructed **homes residents wanted to live in by addressing consumer** perceptions

of wood as non-aspirational. Additionally, it gradually began **shifting consumer perceptions** toward a more positive view of wood