**Champions of Conservation Awarded the Habitats Trust Grants 2019**

Grants amounting to Rs. 84 Lakhs awarded across four categories

**November 15 2019, Noida:** The Habitats Trust, founded by Roshni Nadar Malhotra, CEO of HCL Corporation, today announced the recipients of The Habitats Trust Grants 2019. The Habitats Trust Grants is an annual initiative aimed at securing India’s natural wealth by bridging the resource gap for conservationists doing important work on ground.

**Winners for The Habitats Trust Grants 2019 are:**

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| **Grant Category** | **About the Category** | **Grant received** | **Grant Winner** | **About the winner** |
| **The Strategic Partnership Grant** | This will reach out to mid to large sized field-work oriented organisations to create a two-way partnership for the common cause of conservation.  | Rs. 25 lakhs | Aaranyak | Working to secure and recover Manas grasslands in Assam and its threatened species |
| **The Lesser-known Habitats Grant** | This Grant aims to secure and regenerate the overlooked and unaddressed habitats of the country that are in urgent need of conservation attention. | Rs. 20 lakhs | Costal Impact | Coral transplantation aids for preservation of coral patches off Goa |
| **The Lesser-known Species Grant** | This grant aims to support organizations working to secure a future for our lesser-known endangered species, which receive less attention compared to ‘glamour’ species such as tigers, leopards, elephants and rhinos.  | Rs. 15 lakhs | Metastring Foundation | Citizen-based conservation of the Malabar Tree Toad (Pedostibes tuberculosus) |
| **The Conservation Hero Grant** | Across the country there are grassroots conservationists working dedicatedly with little or no support, to protect our biodiversity. The work they do in their individual capacity has a huge positive impact on conservation in the country. This grant aims to recognize these conservation heroes and provide them a platform to expand their activities and garner further support for their work.  | Rs. 10 lakhs | Neethi Mahesh | Riparian Habitat Conservation along the Cauvery River, Coorg District |

Congratulating the winners, **Ms.** **Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Founder & Trustee, The Habitats Trust** said, *“Every conservationist who applied for The Habitats Trust Grants is engaged in doing crucial work towards protecting our natural habitats and species. Each of them is deserving of support and it wasn’t easy for us to choose the final recipients. Since every applicant goes through a rigorous screening process to make it to the list of finalists, we felt it was important to capture their work. The Habitats Trust Grants Compendium is an effort in this direction and it can be used by other individuals and organization looking to support projects in this field.”*

The Grants’ recipients were selected through a rigorous three-stage process that considered the expected impact, relevance, scalability of the project, the applicants’ capacity to deliver as well as sustainability of their proposed work with a duration of approximately a year. The Trust received 860 registrations this year and chose 13 finalists from that pool after conducting field visits and due diligence by an external auditor.

The four recipients were chosen from the 13 finalists by an eminent jury that included **Dr. M. K. Ranjitsinh**, Conservationist, Wildlife Expert and the prime architect of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972—the first central legislation on wildlife conservation in India; **Bahar Dutt**, Conservationist and Journalist; **Brian Heath** – CEO for the Mara Conservancy, Kenya and **Shikhar Malhotra,** Vice Chairman of HCL Healthcare and Trustee of The Habitats Trust.

While The Habitats Trust awarded full financial grants to one recipient in each category, other finalists were also awarded 10 percent of the grant amount in their respective categories, to ensure that their efforts and work is recognized.

The 2018 edition of The Habitats Trust Grants awarded a total of Rs. 60 Lakhs across three categories. The winners, selected from an array of 700 registrations, included - The Foundation of Ecological Security (awarded Rs 25 lakhs under the Strategic Partnership Grant); ReefWatch Marine Conservation (Rs. 15 lakhs in the Lesser-known Habitats category) and Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra (awarded Rs. 10 lakhs for the Lesser-known Species Grant).

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**About The Habitats Trust**

Founded in 2018 by Roshni Nadar Malhotra, the CEO of HCL Corporation and Trustee of the Shiv Nadar Foundation, and Shikhar Malhotra, the Vice Chairman of HCL Healthcare and Trustee, Shiv Nadar Foundation, The Habitats Trust is working towards protecting natural habitats and their indigenous species through strategic partnerships, focused on-ground efforts, engaging technology for conservation and conservation awareness generation. The Trust envisions a world where our natural habitats are secured for future generations, and humans live in harmony with the wildlife that share our planet.

**About The Habitats Trust Grants**

India is a megadiverse country, with only 2.4% of the world's land area, it accounts for 7% - 8% of all recorded species, including over 45,000 species of plants and 91,000 species of animals. Four of the 34 globally identified biodiversity hotspots: The Himalayas, the Western Ghats, the North-East, and the Nicobar Islands, are found in India. However, rampant habitat loss and fragmentation, increasing biotic pressures on forests, and poaching and the illegal wildlife trade in species, pose a grave threat to India’s biodiversity. In 2018, the annual Grants was conceptualised to recognize, and support committed conservationists who have dedicated their lives to securing the country’s vibrant flora and fauna.

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