



EARTH5R

FREE GUIDE

EARTH5R GUIDES · NO. 02

Employee Volunteering Guide

How CSR heads build employee volunteering that lasts beyond the photo. Built from ten years of Earth5R programmes with companies, partner NGOs and communities across India.

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Most volunteering days are forgotten by Friday. This guide is about the ones that are not.

Every year, thousands of employees across India spend a morning on a beach, in a park or at a school. The photographs are wonderful. A month later, the beach looks the same and nobody remembers who organised it.

Earth5R has run volunteering programmes with companies since 2014: river cleanups in Pune, beach cleanups in Mumbai, lake audits at Powai, tree planting, upcycling workshops in settlements and zero waste events. Some ran for one morning. One ran every Sunday for six years.

This guide puts what we learned in one place. It is written for the people who plan and approve employee volunteering: CSR heads, HR and engagement teams, sustainability leads and the partner NGOs who deliver the work.

How to use it

Chapters 1 to 3 explain why programmes fade, where India stands and the rules that fix it. Chapters 4 to 8 show those rules working, on our projects and at India's leading reporters. Chapters 9 to 16 are the tools: a model policy, formats, steps, a plan, a run sheet, indicators and a checklist, with free Word and Excel templates.

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A note on numbers. Earth5R figures come from our published case studies and project records on earth5r.org. Emissions figures are avoided emissions, estimated with stated factors. None of them are carbon credits. Figures for other companies in Chapters 6 and 7 come from their own published reports.

Why most volunteering days fade

The problem is rarely the employees. It is how the day is designed: as an event to be photographed, rather than a habit to be built.

Corporate volunteering usually takes one shape. A large group, one site, matching T-shirts, a morning of work and a post on social media. It is easy to approve and easy to report. It is also easy to forget.

Four ways a volunteering day fails

- **No before.** Nobody surveyed the site, sought municipal permission or planned where the waste goes. The day starts with confusion.
- **No learning.** Employees pick up litter without understanding where it came from, so nothing changes in how they live or work.
- **No after.** Nobody owns the site. The waste returns in weeks, and next year the company picks a different beach.
- **No record.** Hours, weights and outcomes were never logged, so the CSR report says "employees participated" and little else.



Juhu beach before a corporate cleanup, Mumbai, 2016. The waste on any beach is the end of a long chain that starts in homes and shops.

Why this matters to a company. Volunteering is one of the few CSR activities employees experience first hand. A programme that visibly works builds pride and retention. One that visibly does not can make staff more cynical about the company's sustainability claims, not less.

The good news is that the fix is not a bigger budget. It is a different design. The rest of this guide shows what that looks like.

Employee volunteering by numbers

02

What India's largest companies disclose and offer today, and how they compare with global benchmarks.

EARTH5R · EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING IN INDIA

Most companies volunteer. Few measure it.

Only a quarter of India's top companies report how many employees volunteer.

41%

of Indians volunteered time in the past month (CAF World Giving Index 2024)

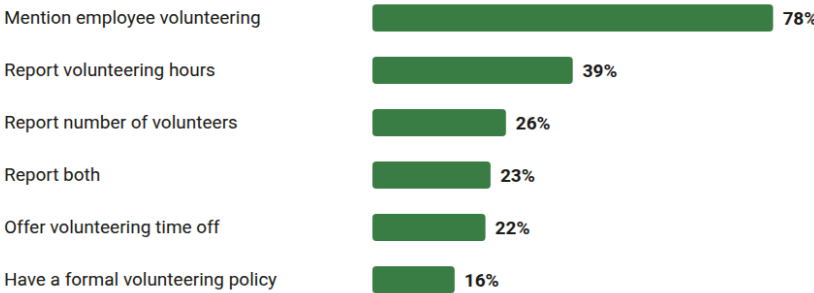
22%

median employee participation at India's 100 top companies

1 hour

median volunteering per employee per year at those companies

India's 100 top companies: what they disclose and offer



India Welfare Trust, Volunteering in 100 Top Companies in India, August 2023 (based on public disclosures). CAF World Giving Index 2024.

The gap is the opportunity: most companies volunteer, few measure it, and fewer give employees time. A company that does all three stands out.

Earth5R · Employee Volunteering Guide (Guides No. 02)

earth5r.org/guides/employee-volunteering-guide

Benchmark	Figure	Source
Median employee participation, India's 100 top companies	22% (33% at US companies)	India Welfare Trust, 2023
Average employee participation, global companies	25%; median 1.8 hours per employee	CECP, Giving in Numbers 2025
Employees who say volunteering matters when deciding to stay or join	87%	Deloitte survey, June 2024
Young people registered on MY Bharat, the government volunteering portal	2.19 crore (June 2026)	PIB, 13 June 2026
National Service Scheme volunteers	About 40 lakh	PIB, 6 October 2025

India Welfare Trust, Volunteering in 100 Top Companies in India (August 2023), based on public disclosures; CAF World Giving Index 2024; CECP Giving in Numbers 2025 (covers FY2024, mainly US companies); Deloitte workplace volunteering survey (2024).

Five design rules

What separates the programmes that lasted from the ones that did not, across ten years of Earth5R work with companies and partner NGOs.

1

Train before anyone touches waste.

Start every session with a short briefing on segregation, safety and where the material will go. On Juhu beach in 2016, employees were introduced to circular economy and to Coffee Dolls, Earth5R's livelihood project for women in slums, before they picked up a single bag. People who understand the chain act differently afterwards.

2

Choose rhythm over scale.

A small, fixed commitment kept for years beats a large one made once. On the Mula Mutha in Pune, two hours every Sunday for six years removed 112 tonnes of waste from the river.

3

Adopt a site, not an event.

Return to the same stretch of river, beach, lake shore or neighbourhood. Ownership builds local relationships, lets you see change over time and gives employees a place they can call theirs.

4

Measure every session.

Weight and type of waste, hours, trees planted, households reached. Volunteers can log data and geotag their work on the Earth5R app during the session, so the record is built as the work happens.

5

Connect it to people who stay.

Give the segregated waste to local waste pickers, work alongside a partner NGO already trusted in the area, and hand the site to community leaders. The employees go home. The programme should not.



Rule 1 in practice: a briefing on waste segregation and circular economy before a beach cleanup, Juhu, Mumbai, 2016.

Six years of Sundays

The Mula Mutha River, Pune. Employee volunteers from a corporate partner and local citizens, two hours every Sunday.

112 t

waste collected from the river

25,000

volunteer hours

151 t

CO₂e avoided (estimate)

₹5.61 lakh

circular economy value created

How it grew

Year	Milestone
1	Kick-off with 40 volunteers; art activities built in from the start
3	Over 30 tonnes of waste collected; the community starts to own it
5	₹4 lakh generated; 100 tonnes of waste diverted
6	150.52 tonnes of CO ₂ e avoided; sustained community engagement

Why employees kept coming

- **Small and fixed:** two hours, same day, same river.
- **Personal:** about 9 kg of waste collected per volunteer, so everyone could see their own result.
- **Enjoyable:** sports and art alongside the work, so it felt like a community event.
- **Recognised:** highlighted under UNESCO's Green Citizens programme and covered in the media.

CO₂e estimated at 1.34 t per tonne of mixed waste recycled, Earth5R's project-derived factor.



Employee volunteers at the Mula Mutha cleanup, Pune, 2016.



An Earth5R volunteer team leader working alongside employees on the riverbank.

The lesson for CSR heads. The programme's biggest asset was not a budget line. It was a calendar slot that employees and citizens could plan their lives around, protected for six years.

A beach morning done right

Juhu beach, Mumbai, on International Coastal Cleanup Day in 2016, the morning after the Ganesh immersion festival.

37

employees from a technology company

2.5 hrs

9:00 to 11:30 am

4

teams, each with its own stretch of beach

1

briefing before, one debrief after

After the immersion festival, Juhu beach can be mistaken for a dumping ground. The company's team joined Earth5R volunteers, including Saurabh Gupta, Earth5R's founder, to clean it.

The morning followed a simple shape that we still use:

01 Brief first

An introduction to waste management and circular economy, including Earth5R's Coffee Dolls project, which gives women in slums a livelihood from upcycled material.

02 Split and assign

Four teams, each responsible for a marked portion of the beach, so no stretch was missed and no team overlapped.

03 Work and invite

It poured and it was humid. Volunteers kept going and encouraged people on the beach to join in.

04 Debrief

The session closed with employees sharing their experience and feedback with the Earth5R team.



Employee volunteers at work, Juhu beach, 2016.



Seven years later, on the same beach: employee volunteers from an international airline segregating what they collected, 2023.

What made it work. The briefing turned a cleanup into a lesson about where waste comes from. The team structure made the morning efficient. The debrief turned it into something people talked about afterwards. And segregating on site, as the 2023 team did, means the waste goes to recycling instead of back to landfill.

Beyond the cleanup

Cleanups are the most common format, but not the only one. Some of Earth5R's most lasting volunteer work left something built, planted or learned behind.



A Swiss corporate volunteer team with benches and desks made from recycled plastic for a municipal school, Mumbai, 2024.

Build something that stays

Waste becomes furniture, and a school gets desks. Employees see the full loop, from collected plastic to a product children use every day.



Volunteers geotagging newly planted trees on the Earth5R app, Mumbai, 2023.

Plant, and prove it

Every sapling is geotagged and photographed on the Earth5R app, so survival can be checked later. A plantation without a record is a claim. A plantation with one is evidence.



Used event banners collected for upcycling after a zero waste corporate event, Mumbai.

Make your own event zero waste

At a corporate event in Mumbai, Earth5R volunteers set up reusable exhibition panels and sent bottles, food waste and banners for recycling and upcycling afterwards. The office is a site too.



Volunteers and a woman making paper bags at home, Mumbai, 2016.

Teach a skill, share a livelihood

Upcycling workshops with women in settlements, making paper bags or dolls from fabric scraps, turn waste into income. Employees bring skills; residents bring the enterprise.

What leading companies report

Four listed Indian companies that TERRA places in its Above Average band, and what their own reports say about employee volunteering.

Why these companies

TERRA, Earth5R's ESG intelligence platform, scores listed Indian companies on what they disclose and what can be checked against data from the ground. Every company in this chapter sits in TERRA's **Above Average** band overall.

TERRA does not score volunteering on its own. So we read each company's latest BRSR, integrated, ESG and sustainability reports to see how it runs and reports employee volunteering. We chose them for the quality of their disclosure. None of them is an Earth5R partner.

What the reports show. We reviewed eight companies in TERRA's Above Average band. Four publish volunteering numbers: volunteers, hours and, in the best cases, events, beneficiaries or hours per employee. The other four describe volunteering in words only. Even strong ESG performers under-report it. That is a gap, and an opening: a company that measures volunteering well stands out.

Company	Programme	Latest reported	Where it is reported
Infosys	InfyCares platform; Gracious Giving, Infosys Foundation	84,975 employees, 2,62,000+ hours, 1,837 events, 1,65,000+ beneficiaries (FY2025-26)	ESG Report, communities section
Tata Steel	Tata Volunteering Weeks, with the Tata Steel Foundation	16,505 employees, 1,90,522 hours, 4.40 hours per capita, 454 social issues (FY2024-25)	Integrated Report and ESG factsheet; volunteer KPIs externally assured
Persistent Systems	Individual Social Responsibility (ISR), Persistent Foundation	9,577 volunteers, 11,507 hours, 31 events with clients (FY2024-25)	ESG Report; BRSR
HCLTech	Power of One, HCLFoundation	7,739 employees, 33,229 hours in India (FY2024-25)	Sustainability Report, communities section

Tata Steel: three years of growth, reported the same way each year

	FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25
Employee volunteers	3,659	7,063	16,505
Volunteering hours	18,494	70,628	1,90,522

Figures as published in each company's own reports (see sources in Chapter 8). Earth5R has not independently verified them. Company names belong to their owners, and their inclusion implies no partnership or endorsement. TERRA bands reflect each company's overall ESG assessment, not volunteering alone.

Ten best practices from the leaders

What the strongest reporters do, in their own words. Each practice can be copied by a company of any size.

1

Run volunteering on one platform.

Infosys uses InfyCares, which its FY2025-26 report describes as "a platform that simplifies discovery, coordination, and engagement". One place to find opportunities, sign up and log hours is what makes numbers like 84,975 participants and 1,837 events possible to count at all.

Infosys ESG Report 2025-26.

2

Point volunteers at the foundation's priorities.

Infosys Foundation's Gracious Giving lets employees "dedicate time and skills toward clearly defined social priorities". HCLTech calls Power of One "the cornerstone of the HCLFoundation's work". Hindustan Unilever links employee volunteering to Prabhat, its community programme around its sites. Volunteering then adds to CSR programmes instead of running alongside them.

Infosys ESG Report 2025-26; HCLTech Sustainability Report FY26; HUL Integrated Annual Report 2025-26.

3

Protect time for it.

At Persistent Systems, "employees can work four hours on CSR activities once per financial year". A written allowance, however small, tells managers that volunteering is work the company values, not a favour.

Persistent ESG Report FY2024-25.

4

Measure depth, not just headcount.

Tata Steel reports hours per employee (4.40 in FY2024-25) and the number of social issues addressed (454), alongside volunteers and hours. Per-capita hours show whether participation is broad or carried by a few.

Tata Steel Integrated Report 2024-25.

5

Get the numbers assured.

In Tata Steel's FY2024-25 ESG factsheet, the rows for employee volunteers and volunteering hours are marked as KPIs assured by Price Waterhouse & Co Chartered Accountants LLP. Assured data carries weight with boards, investors and BRSR readers.

Tata Steel ESG Factsheet 2024-25.

Ten best practices from the leaders

6

Create a volunteering season.

Tata Steel runs Tata Volunteering Weeks "from March through September to encourage mass participation". A season gives the calendar a rhythm and gives teams a shared moment to aim for, on top of year-round work.

Tata Steel, Employee Volunteerism careers page.

7

Let employees lead locally.

HCLTech has "employee-led CSR Councils in 25 countries" that "lead grassroots initiatives, ensuring local relevance". Ashok Leyland reports that employee volunteering "has been strengthened through a formal policy framework". Structure and ownership keep programmes alive when the head office is busy.

HCLTech Sustainability Report FY25; Ashok Leyland Annual Report 2025-26.

8

Offer skills, not only hands.

HCLTech volunteers ran Python training sessions for people with disabilities, using the skills they use at work every day. Skills-based volunteering is often worth more to a partner NGO than a day of general labour.

HCLTech Sustainability Report FY25.

9

Combine time and money.

HCLTech's Power of One is "an employee volunteering and payroll giving program". Persistent's ISR programme facilitates "contributions of time, skills and resources via structured volunteering, payroll giving and collaborative initiatives with clients". Employees who cannot attend can still take part.

HCLTech Sustainability Report FY26; Persistent ESG Report FY2025-26.

10

Volunteer with your clients.

Persistent ran 31 volunteering events with clients in FY2024-25, including tree planting and school kit assembly. Shared volunteering deepens client relationships and doubles the hands on the ground.

Persistent ESG Report FY2024-25.

Sources. Infosys ESG Report 2025-26 · Tata Steel Integrated Report 2024-25 · Tata Steel ESG Factsheet 2024-25 · Tata Steel employee volunteerism · Persistent ESG Report 2025 · HCLTech Sustainability Report FY25 · HCLTech Sustainability Report FY26 · Persistent ESG Report 2026 · HUL Integrated Annual Report 2025-26 · Ashok Leyland Annual Report 2025-26. Want to see how your company scores? [Explore TERRA](#).

A model volunteering policy

Only 16% of India's 100 top companies have a formal volunteering policy. Here is one you can adapt. The editable version is a free Word download.

1. Purpose. [Company] encourages employees to give their time and skills to communities and the environment. This policy explains how volunteering is supported, organised safely, measured and reported.

2. Scope. All [permanent employees / employees and contract staff] in [locations]. [Families may join designated family-friendly activities.]

3. Approach. Adopt sites, not events. Train before work. Measure every session. Work with trusted partner NGOs. Offer skills, not only hands.

4. Volunteering time. Up to [X hours / X days] of paid working time per year for approved volunteering, with [manager approval] at least [5] working days ahead. Volunteering outside work hours is recognised but not compensated. [Optional social sabbatical of up to X months.]

5. Eligible activities. [Adopted-site cleanups, waste audits, geotagged planting, school and community education, upcycling and livelihood workshops, circular builds, skills-based volunteering.] Not eligible: political or religious promotion, or activities for the company's commercial benefit.

6. Safety and conduct. A trained lead per [10 to 15] volunteers and a named first-aider. Protective gear for all. Nobody enters water without gear and a trained lead. Partner safeguarding policies apply, especially with children and vulnerable people. Photographs only with consent.

7. Measurement and reporting. For every session: volunteers, hours, location, activity and outputs. Reported [quarterly] to employees and [annually] in sustainability reporting: participation rate, hours per employee, repeat volunteers and outcomes. Employee time is not counted as CSR expenditure.

8. Recognition. [Certificates, annual awards, team recognition.] Volunteering is voluntary; no one is disadvantaged for not taking part.

9. Roles. The [CSR] team plans, selects partners, manages safety and reports. Volunteering champions promote activities locally. Managers approve time. Leadership takes part visibly and reviews results [twice a year].

10. Review. Reviewed every year by [HR and CSR]. Approved by [authority] on [date].

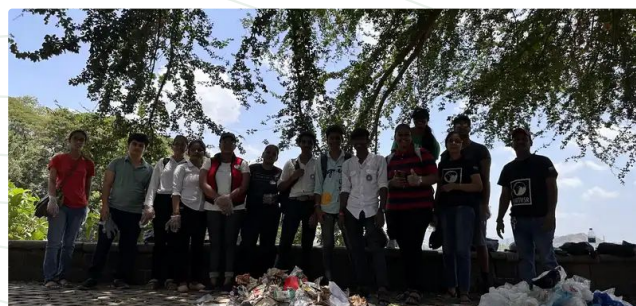
Why write it down? A policy turns volunteering from a favour into an entitlement. India Welfare Trust found only 22% of the 100 top companies offer volunteering time off, against 66% in the US. A few protected hours a year are the single easiest step up.

Choosing a format

Match the format to what you want to change: a place, a habit, a community or your own operations.

Format	Time per session	Best for	Measure
Adopted-site cleanup river, lake, beach or park	2 hours, weekly or monthly	Visible local change, team bonding, long-term ownership	Kg by waste type, hours, share sent to recycling
Waste audit sort and count what was collected	1 extra hour after a cleanup	Understanding where waste comes from; data for reports	Items by type and brand, weight
Tree planting with geotagging	Half a day, plus survival checks	Green cover with evidence	Saplings planted, geotags, survival rate at 6 and 12 months
Upcycling and livelihood workshop	2 to 3 hours	Skills sharing, women's income, social impact	Participants, products made, income earned
School or community education	1 to 2 hours	Behaviour change at home, reaching families	Sessions held, people reached, follow-up actions
Circular build recycled-plastic furniture, compost units	A day, plus planning	A lasting asset for a school or community	Kg of plastic used, items delivered, users
Zero waste office or event	Ongoing, with a launch day	Changing your own operations	Waste diverted from landfill, single-use items avoided
Skills-based volunteering data, design, finance, communications	A few hours a month	Strengthening partner NGOs	Deliverables completed, NGO feedback

A simple rule. Offer one anchor format on a fixed rhythm, such as a monthly cleanup at an adopted site, and two or three occasional formats around it. Too many one-off options spread people thin.



A waste audit at Powai Lake: every item sorted and counted, 2023.

Ten steps to launch a programme

The order matters. Most programmes that struggle skipped one of the first four steps.

01 Decide what you want to change

A place, a habit, a community or your operations. Write it in one sentence. Everything else follows from it.

02 Pick a partner NGO already trusted locally

Earth5R works with partner NGOs who know the site and the community. Check their CSR-1 registration if CSR funds are involved.

03 Adopt a site and take a baseline

Walk it, photograph it and do a first waste audit before anyone volunteers. Without a baseline, your results are an opinion.

04 Secure permission

Meet the municipal ward office, the school principal or the housing society early. Access is granted, not bought.

05 Set the rhythm

Fix a day and time, weekly or monthly, for at least a year. Put it in the company calendar.

06 Plan where every output goes

Recyclers for plastic and metal, composting for organic waste, local waste pickers for saleable material, safe disposal for hazardous items.

07 Train team leaders

One trained lead for every 10 to 15 volunteers, responsible for safety, briefing and data.

08 Make signing up easy

Create a company group on the Earth5R app so employees can join events, log hours and see their impact.

09 Log every session

Weights, types, hours and photographs, captured on site, not reconstructed later.

10 Report back to employees

Share the numbers and photographs every quarter. People keep coming when they can see the curve rising.



Volunteers downloading the Earth5R app to log data at a lake cleanup, Mumbai, 2023.

A year-one plan

A sample calendar built around one adopted site, with occasional formats timed to days employees already notice.

Month	Anchor: adopted site	Around it
Month 1	Baseline survey and first waste audit with a small core team	Recruit and train team leaders
Month 2	First open session; set the recurring slot	Launch the company group on the Earth5R app
Month 3	Monthly session	Waste audit after the session; share the first numbers
Month 4	Monthly session	If this month includes World Environment Day (5 June): a larger open event at the same site
Month 5	Monthly session	Monsoon planting drive with geotagging
Month 6	Monthly session	Half-year report to employees and the CSR committee
Month 7	Monthly session	International Coastal Cleanup Day (September) for coastal sites
Month 8	Monthly session	Upcycling or livelihood workshop with the partner NGO
Month 9	Monthly session	Plantation survival check
Month 10	Monthly session	Zero waste festival season at the office
Month 11	Monthly session	Skills-based volunteering for the partner NGO
Month 12	Repeat audit and compare with the baseline	Annual report; recognise the most regular volunteers

Budget it as a programme, not an event. Plan for the partner NGO's time, safety gear, logistics, recycling and transport, data and reporting, and recognition for volunteers. Spread across twelve sessions, this usually costs less per result than one large event.

Running the day

A run sheet for a two-and-a-half-hour session, and the safety basics that are never optional.

Run sheet

Time	What happens
-30 min	Leads arrive, mark zones, lay out gear and first aid
0:00	Sign-in on the app or a sheet
0:05	Briefing: why this site, where waste comes from, safety rules, where each fraction goes
0:20	Teams go to their zones with a trained lead
1:30	Return; segregate by type on sheets
1:50	Weigh, count and photograph; log on the app
2:10	Hand over material to recyclers or waste pickers
2:20	Debrief: what we saw, what surprised us, one thing to change at home or at work
2:30	Sign-out; group photograph

Safety, always

- ☐ Gloves, grabbers and closed shoes for everyone
- ☐ Safety vests near roads and water
- ☐ A first-aid kit and a named first-aider
- ☐ Nobody enters the water without protective gear and a trained lead
- ☐ Sharps, glass and medical waste handled only by trained people
- ☐ Drinking water, shade and a weather plan
- ☐ An emergency contact list and the nearest hospital noted



Segregating collected waste into wet and dry bins, Mumbai.

Measuring and reporting

"Employees participated" is not a result. Decide what you will measure before the first session.

Metric	How to capture it	How often
Volunteers and volunteer hours	App check-in and check-out, or a sign-in sheet	Every session
Repeat volunteers	Share of volunteers who came three or more times	Quarterly
Waste collected, by type (kg)	Weighed on site after segregation	Every session
Waste sent to recycling or composting (kg)	Recycler receipts	Monthly
Trees planted and surviving	Geotagged photographs on the app; survival checks	At planting, 6 and 12 months
People reached or trained	Attendance records with location	Every session
Income generated for community members (₹)	Payment records from the partner NGO	Monthly
Change at the site	Fixed-point photographs against the baseline	Quarterly

Emission factors we use

Plastic recycled	1.5 t CO ₂ e per t
Mixed waste recycled	1.34 t CO ₂ e per t
Food waste composted	2.5 t CO ₂ e per t

Earth5R's project-derived factors. Always report these as estimated avoided emissions with the factor stated, never as credits.

Where it goes in your reporting

- **CSR annual report:** the underlying project, if it is a Schedule VII activity delivered through an eligible implementing agency.
- **BRSR Principle 6** (environment) and **Principle 8** (inclusive development): supporting evidence of initiatives and beneficiaries.
- **Sustainability and HR reports:** participation, repeat volunteers and outcomes, with photographs.

See [Earth5R ESG and BRSR reporting services](#).

An indicator bank for employee volunteering

Report three kinds of number: who took part, what they did, and what changed. Most companies stop at the first.

Level	Indicator	How to calculate or capture it
Participation	Participation rate	Unique volunteers ÷ employees in scope
	Hours per employee	Total volunteer hours ÷ employees in scope
	Repeat volunteers	Share of volunteers attending three or more sessions a year
	Reach across the company	Participation by location, function, grade and gender
Activity	Sessions held, by format	Session log
	Skills-based hours	Hours given to partner NGOs using professional skills
	Client and family participation	Sessions with clients or families; people involved
Outcome	Waste collected and share recycled	Weighed by type on site; recycler receipts
	Saplings planted and surviving	Geotagged at planting; checked at 6 and 12 months
	People reached and change reported	Attendance; short follow-up survey
	Change at the adopted site	Fixed-point photographs against the baseline
Employee	Pride and engagement	Question in the annual engagement survey
	Retention of volunteers	Attrition of volunteers compared with non-volunteers

Keep it in one place. Earth5R's free Employee Volunteering Tracker (Excel) calculates participation rate, hours per employee and repeat volunteers from a simple session log.

Questions people ask

The questions CSR heads, managers and employees most often raise when a programme starts.

Does employee volunteering count as CSR spend?

No. MCA's CSR FAQs (General Circular 14/2021, FAQ 3.18) say that "involvement of employees in CSR projects of a company cannot be monetized", while adding that companies "should be encouraged to involve their employees in CSR activities". Money spent on an eligible Schedule VII project through a registered implementing agency can count; the value of employee time cannot.

How many volunteers do we need?

Fewer than you think. Forty people started the Mula Mutha programme. A core of regulars matters more than a large first turnout.

Weekday or weekend?

Offer both if you can. Weekend slots suit citizens and families; a few weekday slots in work time signal that the company values the work.

What if it rains?

Have a weather plan, but do not cancel lightly. On Juhu beach it poured, and the volunteers were fully satisfied with the outcome. Stop only when safety requires it.

Can families and children join?

Yes, for suitable formats such as tree planting and workshops, with a named adult responsible for each child and no child near water or sharp waste.

How do we keep people coming back?

A fixed slot, a personal number (kilograms collected, trees planted), something enjoyable alongside the work, and regular recognition. Report results back every quarter.

What does the partner NGO do?

They know the site and the community, hold permissions, arrange recyclers and waste pickers, and keep the work going between sessions. Earth5R brings companies and partner NGOs together and handles design, data and reporting.

How do we avoid it looking like a photo opportunity?

Publish the numbers and the baseline alongside the photographs, go back to the same site, and let the community speak about the change.

Checklist for CSR heads

Ten questions to ask of any volunteering programme before you approve it. If the answers are vague, the results will be too.

- ☐ **What will be different in a year**, and how will we know? Is there a written baseline?
- ☐ **Is there an adopted site** we will return to, rather than a new venue each time?
- ☐ **Is the rhythm fixed** in the company calendar for at least twelve months?
- ☐ **Which partner NGO is involved**, is it trusted locally, and is it registered to receive CSR funds?
- ☐ **Is permission in writing** from the municipal ward, school or society?
- ☐ **Does every session start with a briefing** and end with a debrief?
- ☐ **Where does every output go?** Named recyclers, composting, waste pickers and safe disposal.
- ☐ **What is the safety plan**, and who is the trained lead for each group?
- ☐ **How will results be verified?** Weights, receipts, geotagged photographs and app logs.
- ☐ **Who keeps it going between sessions**, and after our programme ends?

Planning an employee volunteering programme? Earth5R designs, runs and measures volunteering programmes with companies and partner NGOs in 144 Indian cities, from river and beach cleanups to plantations and livelihood workshops. [See Earth5R CSR and ESG projects.](#)

Glossary of volunteering terms

Adopted site. A river stretch, beach, lake shore, school or neighbourhood a company returns to on a fixed rhythm.

Baseline. A dated record of a site before volunteering starts, such as photographs and a first waste audit.

BRSR. Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report, required by SEBI for the top 1,000 listed companies.

Employee volunteering. Time employees give to community or environmental causes, organised or supported by their employer.

Family volunteering. Activities designed so employees' families can take part safely.

Geotagging. Recording the GPS location of an activity or sapling, so it can be checked later.

Hours per employee. Total volunteer hours divided by the number of employees in scope.

Matching grant. A company donation that matches the time or money an employee gives to a cause.

MY Bharat. The Government of India's youth volunteering portal, also used by the National Service Scheme.

Participation rate. Unique volunteers divided by employees in scope.

Payroll giving. Employees donating to causes directly from their salary, often combined with volunteering.

Pro bono. Professional services given free, such as legal, finance or design work for a partner NGO.

Repeat volunteer. An employee who takes part three or more times a year.

Skills-based volunteering. Volunteering that uses an employee's professional skills.

Social sabbatical. Extended leave, often months, to work with a social organisation.

Volunteering time off. Paid working time an employer allows for volunteering.

Waste audit. Sorting and counting collected waste by type, weight and sometimes brand.

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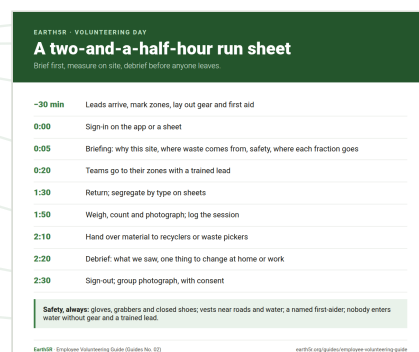
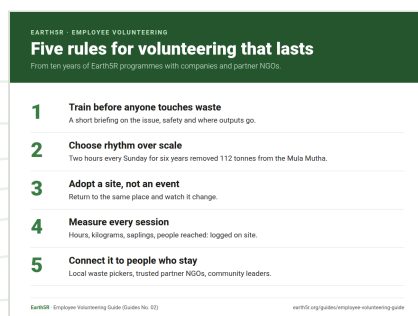
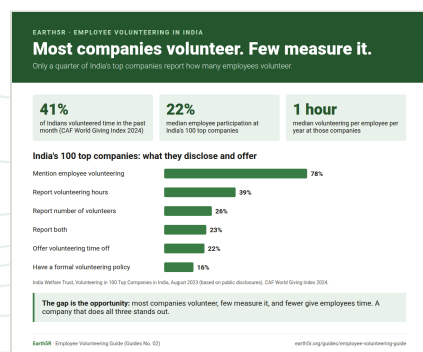
Resource	What it is	Download
Employee Volunteering Policy (Word)	A ten-section policy with fill-in brackets: time off, eligible activities, safety, measurement, recognition, roles	earth5r.org/guides/employee-volunteering-guide
Employee Volunteering Tracker (Excel)	Session log, dashboard with participation rate and hours per employee, volunteer list, run sheet	Same page
Infographic: volunteering in India by numbers	What India's 100 top companies disclose and offer	Same page, with embed code
Infographic: five rules for volunteering that lasts	The design rules from Chapter 3	Same page, with embed code
Infographic: volunteering day run sheet	A two-and-a-half-hour session, with safety basics	Same page, with embed code

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Employees, citizens and the places they adopted



Employee volunteers with the morning's collection, Juhu beach, 2023.



Clearing litter around a riverside bin on the Mula Mutha, Pune, 2016.



The Earth5R team and student volunteers at Powai Lake, 2023.



A sustainability workshop in a Mumbai office, 2023. The office is a site too.



A moment of fun during a corporate beach cleanup at Juhu, 2016.



Employee volunteers on the Mula Mutha riverbank, Pune, 2016.

More photographs of Earth5R's CSR work with partner NGOs: earth5r.org/csr-ngo-work-gallery. All photographs © Earth5R.



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