

NEWSLETTER



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IBBI HIGHLIGHTS:

- Initiated by Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) & hosted by the CII Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development
- Over 55 Business Signatories and 13 Stakeholder members from various institutions and development organisations are part of the initiative
- [Check out India Wetland Coalition webpage here](#)



Feature Report

Rising Awareness: The Global Recognition of Wetlands as Vital Ecosystems in Need of Protection and Restoration

According to Ramsar Convention, wetland is a land area that is saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally. Ramsar Convention is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. At present there are 172 countries as contracting parties to the Convention. India is home to a wide variety and a myriad number of wetlands. The country became a party to the Ramsar Convention on 1st February 1982 and since then designated 75 wetlands covering an area of 13,26,677 hectares under the List of Wetlands of International Importance. Presently, India stands first in South Asia and third in Asia in terms of number of designated sites.



The 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP14), held in China's Wuhan and Switzerland's Geneva, concluded with 21 resolutions. The COP14 theme, "**Wetland Actions for People and Nature**" recognizes the need to invest in protecting wetlands from further loss by putting people at the centre of restoration and management. Important outcomes of the COP14 were the Wuhan Declaration as well as the Global Strategic Framework for Wetland Conservation 2025-2030. COP14 committed to promote the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in wetland management, including adding a new award category on Indigenous Peoples' Conservation and Wise Use.

Conservation and restoration of wetlands were also part of **Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 in Montreal**, where inland water and coastal ecosystems were included in the text of the **Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** agreed to by about 195 countries to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

The **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** also calls for protection and revival of ecosystems around the world for the benefit of people and nature. It aims to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals. Only with healthy ecosystems, such as wetlands, we can enhance people's livelihoods, mitigate climate change, and halt the loss of biodiversity.

World Wetlands Day is observed on 2nd February every year worldwide to commemorate the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in 1971. India is a party to the Convention since 1982 and has so far declared 75 wetlands as Ramsar sites covering 23 states and Union Territories.

The 2023 theme for World Wetlands Day is 'Wetland Restoration' which highlights the urgent need to prioritize wetland restoration. It is a call on an entire generation to take proactive action for wetlands, by investing financial, human, and political capital to save the wetlands from disappearing and to revive and restore those that have been degraded.

Shri Bhupender Yadav, Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change launched the 'Save Wetlands Campaign' in the presence of Chief Minister of Goa on World Wetlands Day which is celebrated annually on the 2nd of February. The campaign is structured around a "whole of society" approach, promoting affirmative actions for wetlands conservation at all levels of society. In addition, the government has introduced the MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes) program to facilitate mangrove plantation along India's coastline and on salt pan lands, operating through convergence between MGNREGS, Campa Fund, and other sources. The Amrit Dharohar scheme is another initiative aimed at encouraging the wise use of wetlands, enhancing biodiversity, carbon stock, eco-tourism opportunities, and income generation for local communities. These efforts demonstrate the government's commitment to wetland conservation and highlight the importance of collective action to safeguard these critical ecosystems.

**World
Wetlands Day**
2 February 2023



**It's time for
wetland restoration**



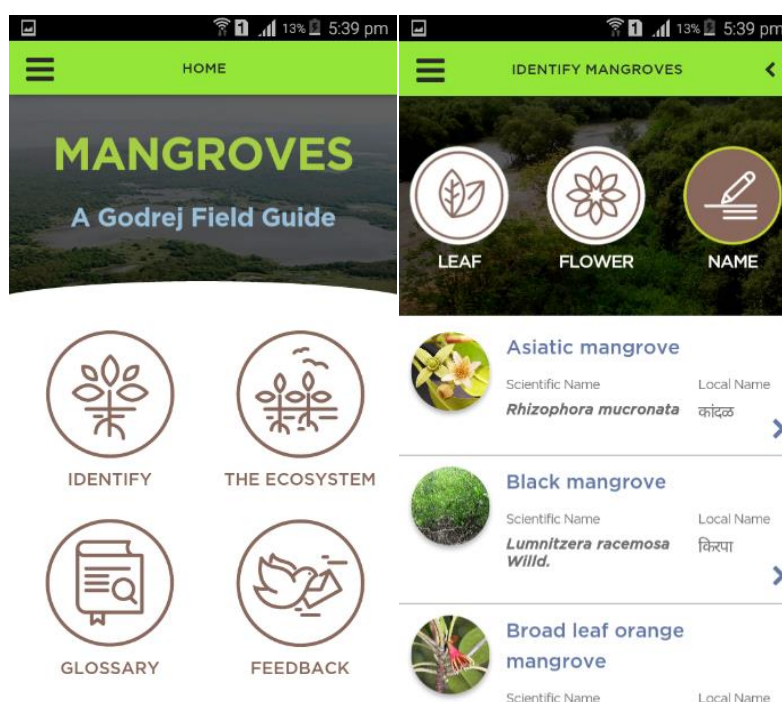
**CII-ITC Centre of Excellence
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Business action on Wetland Conservation

Mangroves: Field Guide by Godrej & Boyce's



Mangroves mobile app by Godrej & Boyce is the first app in Asia for mangrove ecosystems. The app allows users to identify 67 true mangrove and mangrove associate species through images and scientific information. It has a section on the mangrove ecosystem which provides information on mangrove distribution, adaptations, biodiversity, threats, legal status, and role of stakeholders in conservation. The app is available in 10 Indian languages, as well as English, French, and Spanish, and has been downloaded by thousands of users across 128 countries. The app has been selected as a 'Global Solution' on PANORAMA website developed by international conservation organizations.

Ravandoor Cascade Development by ITC

Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into agricultural production and providing alternative options to unsustainable agricultural practices helped ITC in safeguarding its agricultural supply chain as well as in enhancing its brand reputation. As a first step towards sustainability, ITC conducted a biodiversity risk and opportunity assessment in the Ravandoor catchment area to analyse the causes of reduction in agriculture production. The study identified two areas for immediate intervention: conservation of soil & water. The Ravandoor cascade has a total of 13 tanks and many other farm ponds. Due to continuous siltation over the years, the water-holding capacity of



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these tanks has been considerably diminished, resulting in less storage of water. Through ITC's desiltation project, all tanks in the cascade were restored and the silt was applied in farmlands.

Mangrove Restoration by in Dharamtar Creek by JSW

The Dharamtar Creek is formed by the flow of River Amba, with uniform depth in the range of 10 m, and has a moderate cover of mangroves with mud flats and low-lying, marshy areas on its sides. The Creek supports major fisheries of True-Fin fishes and Shell fishes, mainly molluscs and crustaceans. Heightened anthropogenic activities such as coastal development, conversion into paddy fields and aquaculture ponds, as well as dumping of domestic sewage has resulted in depletion of the mangrove's habitat and impeded its ability to provide ecological services. Considering these factors as well as the current port operation and future expansion, the role mangroves play in sustaining the creek is even more crucial. Taking cognisance of future operational modalities of the port and various impacts of anthropogenic activities, a mangrove restoration plan was developed in consultation with local stakeholders to mitigate impacts of the port, factor in adaptation measures for future climate change impacts, and control intrusion of salt water into the agricultural lands.



Policy Update

Regulatory Framework for Wetland Conservation

The Government of India accords high significance to wetland conservation and seeks to mainstream its full range of values at all levels of developmental planning and decision-making.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has notified [Wetlands \(Conservation and Management\) Rules, 2017](#) under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 as the regulatory framework for conservation and management of wetlands in India. [Guidelines have also been released by MoEFCC for implementing these rules.](#) These rules empower states to identify, delineate wetlands and wetland complexes and notify them. The comprehensive list of notified wetlands in States/UTs can be obtained through specific State Wetland Authority (SWA) and their websites.

The provisions of Wetlands Rules apply to:

- a) Wetlands designated by the Government of India to the List of Wetlands of International Importance under the provisions of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention).
- b) Wetlands notified under the rules by the Central Government, State Government and UT Administration.

The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 Activities prohibited within the wetlands	Conversion for non-wetland uses including encroachment of any kind
	Setting up of any industry and expansion of existing industries
	Manufacture or handling or storage or disposal of construction and demolition waste; hazardous substances; electronic waste
	Solid waste dumping
	Discharge of untreated wastes and effluents from industries, cities, towns, villages and other human settlements
	Any construction of a permanent nature except for boat jetties within fifty metres from the mean high flood level observed in the past ten years calculated from the date of commencement of these rules
	Poaching

Permission for carrying out any activity included within the list of prohibited activities within a notified wetland can only be given by the MoEFCC. A specific request needs to be made by the State Government based on the recommendation of Wetlands Authority

Some recent significant judgements related to wetland conservation:

1. [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\): All Wetlands Above 2.25 Ha to Receive Protection Under Rule 4 of Wetlands Rules, March 2022](#)
2. [“Get bulldozers ready”: Tamil Nadu High Court on waterbodies encroachments, March 2021](#)
3. [Rajasthan High Court stays work on mega solar project in Sambhar, November 2021](#)
4. [Gujarat High Court: ‘Cannot allot water body land even if it is dry’, July 2021](#)
5. [‘Water bodies cannot be diverted for industries’: Supreme Court, November 2019](#)

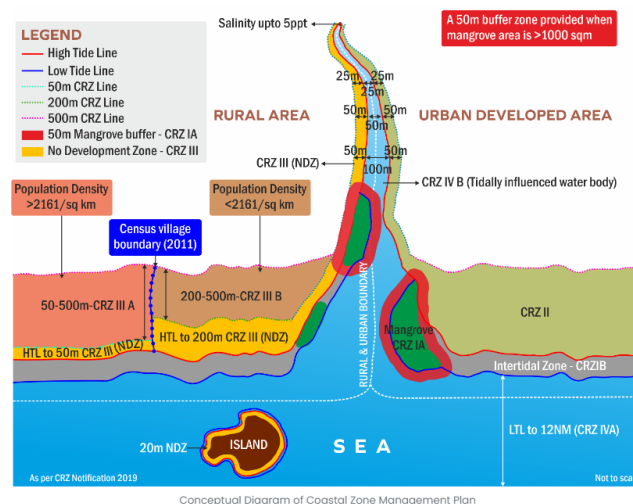
Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019

[Coastal Regulation Zone \(CRZ\) Notification, 2019](#) was released by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to conserve and protect the unique environment of coastal stretches and marine areas, to provide livelihood security to local communities and to promote sustainable development based on scientific principles taking into account the dangers of natural hazards, sea level rise due to global warming. The regulations divide the coastal zone into four categories: CRZ-I (ecologically sensitive areas), CRZ-II (built-up areas), CRZ-III (rural areas), and CRZ-IV (water areas). The regulations also specify the no-development zone, permissible activities, and clearance procedures for different categories.

Salient Features of CRZ Regulations, 2019:

Floor Space Index Norms: The regulations allow for floor space index (FSI) or floor area ratio (FAR) norms as per the current norms of the respective state or union territory for CRZ-II and III areas.

Tourism infrastructure permitted in coastal areas: The regulations permit temporary tourism facilities such as shacks, toilet blocks, changing rooms, drinking water facilities subject to certain conditions and approvals.



Streamlining of CRZ Clearances: The procedure for CRZ clearances has been streamlined. Now, the only such projects which are located in the CRZ-I (Ecologically Sensitive Areas) and CRZ IV (area covered between Low Tide Line and 12 Nautical Miles seaward) will be dealt with for CRZ clearance by the Ministry. The powers for clearances with respect to CRZ-II and III have been delegated at the State level.

No Development Zone of 20 meters for all Islands: For islands close to the main land coast and for all Backwater Islands in the mainland, No Development Zone of 20 meters has been stipulated in wake of space limitations and unique geography of such regions.

Pollution abatement: To address pollution in Coastal areas, the treatment facilities have been made permissible in CRZ-I B area subject to necessary safeguards.

Critically Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCA): Sundarban region of West Bengal and other ecologically sensitive areas identified as under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 such as Gulf of Khambat and Gulf of Kutchh in Gujarat, Achra-Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, Karwar and Coondapur in Karnataka, Vembanad in Kerala, Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu, Bhitarkanika in Odisha and Krishna in Andhra Pradesh are treated as Critical Vulnerable Coastal Areas. These Critical Vulnerable Coastal Areas will be managed with the involvement of coastal communities including fisher folk.

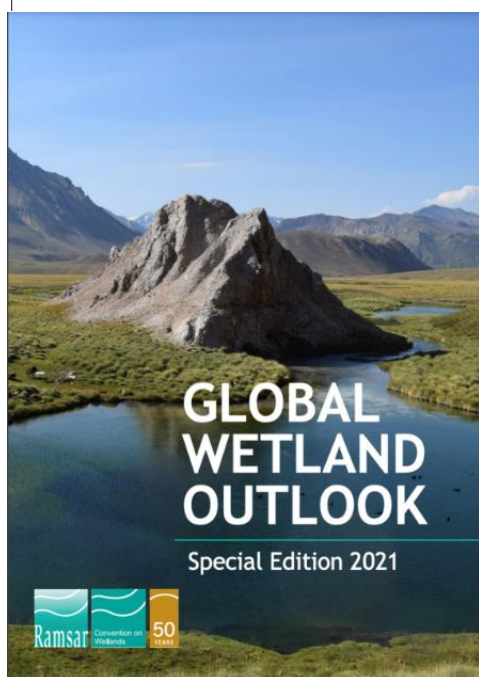
The regulations provide for a robust mechanism for monitoring and enforcement through the National Coastal Mission under the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change. The regulations also mandate that all Coastal Zone Management Plans be periodically reviewed and updated every five years.

Key Reports



Managing Climate Risks in Wetlands: A Practitioner's Guide provides a practical approach to integrating climate change risks and adaptation options into the management of wetlands in India. The guide sets out a simple and flexible process with supporting tools that can accommodate varying inputs of scientific evidence, expert judgement, and community knowledge and experience.

[Click here to read more](#)



The Global Wetland Outlook: Special Edition 2021 was prepared on the occasion of the Convention's 50th anniversary. Drawing on more than 30 major global and regional assessments and other recent scientific findings, it describes the pandemic and its implications; trends in wetlands since 2018; lessons for wetland wise use and protection; and how the Convention on Wetlands can be leveraged to address challenges facing wetlands.

[Click here to read more](#)



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Events

1st State level Workshop on Wetland Valuation, Measuring Benefits, Reporting, and Monitoring Framework

The 1st State level workshop on Wetland Valuation, Measuring Benefits, Reporting and Monitoring Framework was organised on 24th March 2023 by CESD under the initiative, India Wetland Coalition, in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The objective of workshop was to discuss and develop modalities for wetland conservation and multistakeholder partnerships, measuring benefits and developing a business specific reporting and monitoring framework for wetland conservation.

Mr. Sujit Kumar Bajpayee, Joint Secretary, MoEFCC delivered the keynote address and highlighted the need of wetland conservation and its linkages with different global commitments on biodiversity conservation. Mr. Adarsh Reddy, DFO, Mangrove Cell, Maharashtra presented the efforts of Mangrove Cell to build awareness, livelihood creation, and eco-tourism. Over 30 participants from industry and stakeholder organisations attended the workshop.

Key learnings

- Prioritising existing wetlands for conservation through local stakeholder partnership
- Developing a framework for measuring wetlands' benefits in terms of impact created w.r.t biodiversity conserved, water security, vulnerability reduction due to floods and drought resilience.
- Documenting best practices and research on wetlands and ecosystem-based approaches
- Linking wetlands conservation with biodiversity commitments of businesses along with providing training to senior management on ecosystem-based solutions
- Policy mechanism to transfer nature & biodiversity benefits to businesses for contributing to biodiversity protection, ecosystem restoration, carbon storage, and water conservation.



Inviting Application for 18th CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2023

We are pleased to inform you that the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development is inviting Application of Intent for the **18th CII-ITC Sustainability Awards, 2023**.

The CII-ITC Sustainability Awards were instituted in 2006, to recognise and reward excellence in businesses that are seeking ways to be more sustainable and inclusive in their activities, to support the most significant contributions and encourage the leaders of this revolution.

INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR 18th CII-ITC SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS 2023

Companies can apply in the following Award Categories:

1. CORPORATE EXCELLENCE
2. DOMAIN EXCELLENCE
 - a. Environment Management
 - b. Corporate Social Responsibility
 - c. Biodiversity

Specific questionnaires developed for Manufacturing, Service and MSME sectors

Last date to submit Application of Intent along with fee: 29 April
Last date to Submit filled application: 9, June



To know more, reach out to us at sustainabilityawards@cii.in

