



NATIONAL CEPA STRATEGY FOR WETLANDS OF INDIA



COMMUNICATION, CAPACITY BUILDING, EDUCATION,
PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA)

Published by

Wetlands Division, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)

Technical Support

The document has been prepared under the Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection project (Indo-German Biodiversity Programme) with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH under International Climate Initiative (IKI).

Technical Contributions

The strategy document has been made possible with active support of Knowledge Partner Network, including, but not limited to, Wetlands International South Asia (WISA), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-India), National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Environment Planning and Coordination Organisation (EPCO), Sâlim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), Chilika Development Authority (CDA), Gujarat Ecological Education & Research Foundation (GEER), Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM), Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and the Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP).

The CEPA strategy is based on the learnings from the CEPA activities implemented as part of the project by GIZ through various agencies – Centre for Environment Education (CEE) in Madhya Pradesh with support from Environmental Planning & Coordination Organisation (EPCO); Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) in Uttar Pradesh and Seeds Technical Service (STS) in Jammu & Kashmir. Learnings from assignments with Action for Protection of Wild Animals (APOWA) in Odisha, Waste Warriors in Himachal Pradesh, Eco-Society India in Tamil Nadu and Centre for Media Studies (CMS) across India also contributed to this compilation. The implementation of these activities have been possible due to continuous support of site managers, State Wetland Authorities and Line Departments.

Compilation Team

Dr Motipalli Ramesh, Mr Pankaj Verma, Mr Chandan Singh – Wetlands Division, MoEF&CC;
Ravindra Singh, Kirtiman Awasthi, Shambhavi Krishna, Kunal Bharat, Yaiphaba Akoijam, Suddhabrata C., Utkarsh Lal, Tanbir Azmi – GIZ, and Vidushi Pant (Consultant)

Design & Layout

Aspire Design

Cover page – Divit Kushwaha (GIZ)

Photo credits

As specified against each photograph

New Delhi, 2025



NATIONAL CEPA STRATEGY FOR WETLANDS OF INDIA

Communication, Capacity building, Education,
Participation and Awareness (CEPA)



मंत्री
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन
भारत सरकार



सत्यमेव जयते

भूपेन्द्र यादव
BHUPENDER YADAV



MINISTER
ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



MESSAGE

Wetlands are among the most productive and complex ecosystems on Earth, sustaining biodiversity, securing livelihoods, and enhancing resilience to climate change. The Ramsar Convention recognises that the success of wetlands conservation depends not only on appropriate ecological planning, but also on meaningful engagement of all stakeholders. As a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention, the Government of India has consistently recognised the importance of engaging people in the wise use and conservation of wetlands through Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA).

'National CEPA Strategy for Wetlands of India' is a significant step in aligning national action with global commitments, and in strengthening our collective efforts towards conserving our wetlands, our Amrit Dharohar. The Strategy provides a roadmap to engage citizens, educators, researchers, Government departments, civil society, and the private sector in wetland-related actions at all levels. It embodies the Ministry's commitment to 'Sahbhagita', a whole-of-society approach to wetlands conservation and management. As a result of concerted efforts of MoEF&CC and the State Governments, number of Ramsar Sites has increased substantially, from 26 in 2014 to 93 in 2025 and two Wetland Cities of India namely, Udaipur in Rajasthan and Indore in Madhya Pradesh have been accredited under the Ramsar Convention.

The 'National CEPA Strategy for Wetlands of India' is timely and strategic as it serves the need for a consolidated strategy at a national scale that can help ensure people's participation for sustained wetland conservation by learning from and scaling up the various successful initiatives by MoEF&CC, State Wetlands Authorities and Knowledge Partners. Aligned with the Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Mission LiFE - 'Lifestyle for Environment', this strategy reinforces India's commitment to promoting citizen-led actions that encourage sustainable living and environmental stewardship. I congratulate the Wetlands Division for the developing this strategy and hope that it will result in further meaningful engagements.

(Bhupender Yadav)



सत्यमेव जयते

कीर्तवर्धन सिंह
KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH

राज्य मंत्री
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन
विदेश मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार
MINISTER OF STATE
ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



Message

India is home to a rich variety of wetlands, ranging from mangroves and estuaries to oxbow lakes and salt flats, providing crucial ecological, cultural, and economic services. These ecosystems, besides providing habitat for birds and other wildlife, regulating water flows, resisting floods and droughts, play a crucial role in sustaining livelihoods, especially of vulnerable and marginalised communities. It is estimated that at least 6% of India's total population relies directly on wetlands for their livelihoods. Our efforts in this regard have yielded results such as, increase in the number of Ramsar Sites from 26 in 2014 to 93 in 2025, and accreditation of two Wetland Cities in the country namely, Indore in Madhya Pradesh and Udaipur in Rajasthan under the Ramsar Convention.

I am pleased to present the 'National CEPA Strategy for Wetlands of India' that aligns with the Ramsar Convention's Resolution XIV.8 on Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA). This strategy has been developed based on the learnings from pilot CEPA implementation under the IKI supported Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection Project implemented by GIZ. It aims to foster multi-stakeholder participation and awareness about the critical role of wetlands and drive collective action for their conservation. This strategy will facilitate wise use of wetlands, contributing to national and global goals like the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Biodiversity Targets outlined under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The launch of this Strategy is both timely and significant. During the recent Ramsar COP15 held in Zimbabwe, the resolution proposed by India on "Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles for the Wise Use of Wetlands" was adopted with an overwhelming support, marking an important milestone in global wetland conservation efforts. In consonance with this development, the "National CEPA Strategy for Wetlands of India" reflects the Ministry's vision of Sahbhagita, a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach and embodies the core ethos of Mission LiFE, which aims to catalyse individual, community, and institutional actions towards safeguarding critical ecosystem services.

I extend my appreciation to all the knowledge partners, institutions, and practitioners who have contributed to shaping this strategy. I am confident that this document will play a vital role in advancing inclusive, community-led approaches to wetlands conservation and management in India and will serve as a significant step towards translating the vision of sustainable development into action on the ground.

(Kirti Vardhan Singh)

कार्यालय : 5वां तल, आकाश विंग, इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, जोर बाग रोड, नई दिल्ली-110003, दूरभाष: 011-20819418, 011-20819421, फैक्स: 011-20819207, ई-मेल : mos.kvs@gov.in

Office : 5th Floor, Aakash Wing, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh Road, New Delhi-110003, Tel.: 011-20819418, 011-20819421, Fax : 011-20819207, E-mail : mos.kvs@gov.in

कार्यालय : कमरा नं.141, साउथ ब्लॉक, नई दिल्ली-110001, दूरभाष: 011-23011141, 23014070, 23794337, फैक्स : 011-23011425, ई-मेल : mos.kvs@gov.in

Office : Room No. 141, South Block, New Delhi-110001, Tel. : 011-23011141, 23014070, 23794337, Fax : 011-23011425, E-mail : mos.kvs@gov.in

निवास : 23, बी.आर. मेहता लेन, नई दिल्ली-110001, दूरभाष: 011-23782979

Residence : 23, B.R. Mehta Lane, New Delhi-110001, Tel.: 011-23782979



तन्मय कुमार
TANMAY KUMAR



FOREWORD



सचिव
भारत सरकार
पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST
AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Wetlands are dynamic ecosystems that serve as natural infrastructure supporting water security, regulating micro-climates, sustaining biodiversity, and offering critical ecosystem services that underpin human well-being. Wetland resources are widely used by the local communities for their sustenance and economic well-being, with over a billion people worldwide relying directly on wetlands for their livelihoods. Therefore, the need for strategic and targeted communication and engagement with citizens for conserving wetlands has been recognized by the Ramsar Convention as well through its programme on Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA).

The Government of India accords high priority to the conservation and integrated management of wetlands, drawing strength from the country's longstanding tradition of environmental stewardship reflected in its policies, legislations, and regulatory frameworks. Initiatives such as the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA), the Save Wetlands Campaign, and the Amrit Dharohar initiative exemplify this commitment. Over the past 11 years, India has expanded its network of Ramsar Sites substantially to 93 (from 26 in 2014) and got accredited its two Wetland Cities namely, Indore in Madhya Pradesh and Udaipur in Rajasthan under the Ramsar Convention. The adoption of India's resolution on "*Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles for the Wise Use of Wetlands*" at Ramsar COP15 in Zimbabwe further reinforces this dedication. These efforts are closely aligned with the goals of the revised National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2024–2030) and contribute directly to India's commitments under global frameworks such as the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In this context, the formulation of the 'National CEPA Strategy for Wetlands of India' represents a significant step forward towards operationalising participatory and inclusive wetland governance. In line with the Ramsar Resolution XIV.8 and India's Sahbhagita approach, the CEPA Strategy is designed to catalyse multi-stakeholder engagement, foster behavioural change, and institutionalise capacity building as core elements of wetland conservation. It promotes citizen-led actions through focused outreach, and nature education. In doing so, it not only strengthens wetlands governance but also supports the ethos of Mission LiFE.

Informed by the learnings of site level implementation, this strategy has been prepared through collaborative engagement with knowledge partners, civil society, site managers, and State Wetlands Authorities, and reflects a shared commitment to strengthening the knowledge, capacity, and participation landscape around wetlands in India. I congratulate the Wetlands Division, and all involved in developing this strategy. I am sure that this document will serve as a practical guide for inclusive, evidence-based, and community-led wetlands conservation and management.

(Tanmay Kumar)

Place: New Delhi

Dated: October 28, 2025

इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, जोर बाग रोड़, नई दिल्ली-110 003 फोन : (011)-2081-9408, 2081-9308, फैक्स : (011)-2081-9238

INDIRA PARYAVARAN BHAWAN, JOR BAGH ROAD, NEW DELHI-110 003, PH. : 011-2081-9408, 2081-9308, FAX : 011-2081-9238

E-mail : secy-moef@nic.in, Website : moef.gov.in



वेद प्रकाश मिश्रा, आई.आर.एस
संयुक्त सचिव
Ved Prakash Mishra, IRS
JOINT SECRETARY



सत्यमेव जयते



भारत सरकार
पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST
& CLIMATE CHANGE

Preface from Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest
and Climate Change

Covering approximately 4.8 percent of total geographical area of the country, wetlands support a rich diversity of plant and animal life while sustaining the livelihoods of millions of people. Therefore, people's participation is essential to ensure sustained wetland conservation. Globally, it is now well recognized that inclusive and participatory approaches to wetland management are key to maintaining the ecological integrity and long-term sustainability of these ecosystems.

Over the past decade, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has strengthened its commitment to wetlands through multiple initiatives resulting in increase in the number of Ramsar Sites (from 26 in 2014 to 93 in 2025). Further, India for the first time has got accredited two Wetland Cities namely, Indore and Udaipur under the Ramsar Convention. The *Save Wetlands Campaign*, implemented across the country, has also highlighted a model of community-driven conservation, celebrating and rejuvenating wetlands as shared natural heritage. The adoption of India's draft resolution on "*Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles for the Wise Use of Wetlands*" at Ramsar COP15 in Zimbabwe stands as an important milestone reaffirming India's leadership in global wetland conservation efforts.

The 'National CEPA Strategy for Wetlands of India' has been developed as a comprehensive framework to mainstream people's participation in wetland conservation and wise use across the country. It provides a direction for enhancing awareness, communication, and community engagement by building upon the successful initiatives of the MoEF&CC, State Wetland Authorities, and Knowledge Partners. Aligned with the Ramsar Convention's New CEPA Approach, the strategy seeks to ensure closer integration of CEPA activities with the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) and other related programmes. The sheer participatory approach of developing this strategy reflects the ethos it seeks to promote.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the knowledge partners, experts, government and non-government institutions, practitioners and Site managers for their valuable inputs for developing this document. The 'National CEPA Strategy for Wetlands of India', developed by the Wetlands Division, MoEF&CC jointly with IKI-Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection Project implemented by GIZ will serve as both a guiding framework and a catalyst for strengthening whole-of-society engagement in wetland conservation across the country.

(Ved Prakash Mishra)

Place: New Delhi
Dated October 29, 2025

कमरा नं.232, द्वितीय तल, अग्नि ब्लॉक, इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, जोर बाग रोड़, नई दिल्ली-110003
दूरभाष : 011-20819359, ईमेल : mishra.vp@gov.in

Room No. 232, 2nd Floor, Agni Block, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh Road, New Delhi-110003
Tel.: 011-20819359, E-mail : mishra.vp@gov.in

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Need for CEPA Strategy	
1.2 Purpose of the document	

2. Vision & Mission	5
--------------------------------	----------

3. CEPA Concepts and Principles	7
3.1 Four pillars of CEPA Strategy	
3.2 Cross-cutting and Guiding Principles for the CEPA Strategy	

4. Scales of Interventions	11
4.1 National	
4.2 State	
4.3 District	
4.4 Site	

5. Target Groups and Stakeholders	15
Civil Society & Community-based Organisations	
Government at all levels	
Education sector and learning institutes	
Businesses	

6. Indicative actions under CEPA for proposed prioritised groups	17
---	-----------

7. Enabling institutional framework	33
--	-----------

Annexure 1 - Guidance for Developing State and Site level CEPA strategies	35
Annexure 2 - Proposed CEPA Actions at National Scale	37

1

Introduction

Wetlands are among the most productive environments on Earth, offering a wide range of ecosystem services such as food, water, and fiber production, water purification, flood moderation, erosion control, and climate regulation. In addition to their ecological importance, many wetlands hold cultural significance. Despite their vital role, wetlands are at risk of degradation and loss due to human-driven land use changes and climate change. Wetland resources are widely used by the local communities for their sustenance and economic well-being, with over a billion people worldwide relying directly on wetlands for their livelihoods.





It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures.

Article 51-A (g), Indian Constitution

The Government of India accords high priority to wetland conservation and their integrated management. Wetland conservation draws strength from India's rich legacy of environmental conservation enshrined in various policies, legislations and regulatory regimes. The **Indian Constitution** encapsulates this spirit, notably in its **Article 51-A (g)** stating that "it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures."

The **National Environment Policy** of 2006 makes explicit recognition of wetlands as 'freshwater resources', and emphasizes integration of conservation and wise use of wetlands into river basin management involving all relevant stakeholders. The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** introduced a scheme for the conservation of wetlands in the Seventh Five Year Plan, currently known as the **National Plan**

for **Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA)**, to enable the State Governments to develop and implement management plans for prioritised wetlands.

Wetland conservation and wise management also has the potential in helping us achieve global and national goals on biodiversity and climate. Wetlands figure conspicuously in India's commitment under the various Conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). As of October 2025, India has designated 93 wetlands as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). Additionally, Indore in Madhya Pradesh and Udaipur in Rajasthan have been accorded the status of Wetland Cities by the **Ramsar Convention**.

India recently updated its **National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (2024-2030)**. It is aligned with the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF)** and is supporting the global goal of conserving at least 30% of the world's land and marine ecosystems by 2030, addressing climate and environmental challenges through restoration of degraded ecosystems like forests, wetlands, and rivers.

With less than five years to go, we are at a crucial crossroad moment.

The institutional framework for implementation of the **Central Asian Flyway** initiative, wherein nearly 30 range countries collaborate for the conservation of migratory species, is in the advanced stages of finalisation, with India hosting the Flyway Coordinating office.

People's participation is essential to ensure sustained wetland conservation. In fact, wetlands have been managed as a community resource since time immemorial and local people have been actively involved in managing them. Today, it is globally accepted that an inclusive and participatory approach to wetland management can be a major factor in the sustenance of these ecosystems. *An active and informed engagement of stakeholders, including local people and communities, promoting a collective sense of stewardship that considers diverse voices and views, across ages and genders, is not only important, it is sine qua non.*

This also aligns with some key National Biodiversity Targets (NBT) namely:

- ▲ **NBT 20** - Capacity Development, Technology and Scientific Cooperation),
- ▲ **NBT 21** - Communication, Awareness, and Knowledge Management
- ▲ **NBT 22** - Equitable and Effective Participation in Decision Making
- ▲ **NBT 23** - Gender Equality in Decision Making and Implementation

The need for strategic and targeted communication and engagement with citizens for conserving wetlands has been recognised by the Ramsar Convention as well through its programme on Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation, and Awareness, henceforth referred to as 'CEPA'. The overarching goal of this programme is **“people taking action for the wise use of wetlands”**.

What is CEPA (for wetlands)?

Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) for wetlands is a systematic approach that supports effective wetland management by empowering individuals and communities through inclusive engagement, knowledge sharing, and capacity building. CEPA brings together tools such as education, public awareness, participatory dialogue, and social learning to promote informed decision-making and encourage sustainable practices. It facilitates collaboration among diverse stakeholders, strengthens networks and partnerships, and supports continuous learning and adaptation. As a change management process, CEPA plays a critical role in enabling coordinated and sustained action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

1.1 Need for CEPA Strategy

India recognises CEPA as the cornerstone of wetland conservation. With an endorsement of a ‘whole-of-society’ approach to conservation, a participatory architecture for wetland conservation has been elaborated in Mission Sahbhagita. The Save Wetlands Campaign, implemented during 2023-24, showcased a blueprint of a people’s movement to celebrate, revive, and rejuvenate wetlands. Some wetlands have interpretation centres established to promote a better understanding and appreciation of wetlands values and functions. State Wetlands Authorities, Site Managers, and Knowledge Partners have also been organising awareness programs, educational events, outreach programs and consultations. Trainings and Orientations have also been conducted for site managers and implanting agencies by state and national authorities.

However, to date, these activities have been implemented in an ad-hoc manner, thus significantly curtailing their overall impact on the behaviour and attitudes of communities and stakeholders. To address this gap, a National CEPA Wetland Strategy is deemed necessary.

The CEPA Programme of Ramsar Convention:

- ▲ Encourages Contracting Parties to enhance CEPA impacts through the CEPA focal points (Govt. & NGO)
- ▲ Focuses on reduced set of high-priority activities directly linked to the Strategic Plan
- ▲ Focuses on building Networks and Partnerships
- ▲ Encourages development and implementation of national and local wetland CEPA programmes and action plans

A consolidated strategy at a national scale can help ensure people’s participation for sustained wetland conservation by learning from and scaling up the various successful initiatives by MoEF&CC, State Wetlands Authorities and Knowledge Partners. It can help align the global commitments to the Indian context, streamlining a practical approach reflecting diverse interests and tailored to local context, culture and traditions.



1.2 Purpose of the document

The current document outlines India’s National Wetlands CEPA Strategy. This document has been prepared in alignment with the Ramsar Convention’s New CEPA Approach (adopted as a Resolution XIV.8, The new CEPA approach) and seeks to promote a closer alignment of CEPA activities with the NPCA and other relevant programmes, thus making CEPA more strategic, integrated and effective.

The strategy also recognises the need for building and sustaining networks and partnerships to support wetland conservation and achieve mainstreaming of wetlands in development plans and programmes at all levels. The experience of developing and implementing State’s Wetlands CEPA Plans and consultations with State Wetlands Authorities, Knowledge Partners and other stakeholders have been the basis of the development of this document.

It is envisioned as a ‘how-to’ document for government departments, officials and other agencies or actors working on wetland conservation in India including wetland management practitioners, NGOs, Community-Based Organisations, Civil Society Organisations, Private Sector, Academic Institutes and more.

2

Vision and Mission





VISION

A network of healthy wetlands which contribute to human well-being through their diverse ecosystem services as well as sustain diversity and populations of wetland-dependent species.



MISSION

To strengthen affirmative collective actions for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, driven by the active participation of all relevant stakeholders through cross-sectoral development programs and planning at all levels.



VALUES

Communication: That is inclusive and participatory

Capacity Building, Education: That is stakeholder-specific and technically sound

Participation: By and for whole-of-society

Awareness: That is engaging and innovative

2.1 Objectives of CEPA Strategy

- a) Foster citizen engagement at all levels in wetlands conservation
- b) Promote wetland positive behaviour among citizens
- c) Ensure that the diverse voices are amplified and integrated in conservation actions
- d) Facilitate the development of effective capacity at all levels to promote wetlands conservation and wise use

3

CEPA Concepts and Principles

3.1 Four pillars of CEPA Strategy

CEPA strategy is based on four major pillars, namely communication, capacity building, education, participation, and awareness. It encompasses a wide range of social tools that can facilitate dialogue, information sharing, participatory governance, and

learning among different stakeholders in the context of wetland conservation. For effective implementation of CEPA activities, it is crucial to develop a common understanding of the four pillars.





COMMUNICATION

WHAT Exchange of information, knowledge, and skills about the conservation and wise use of wetlands, fostering a dialogue between various stakeholders and implementing agencies.

WHY It facilitates informed decisions, promotes cooperation and collaboration by listening to the concerns and explaining decision-making process through dialogues, tools and media.

- HOW**
- Understanding the audience and tailoring messages to their specific needs and contexts builds trust and fosters effective communication.
 - Clear and straightforward language, free from unnecessary jargon, enhances understanding and accessibility.
 - Less is often more but accuracy is key. Conciseness ensures key messages are retained and messages are supported by credible evidence.
 - Varied communication methods to maintain engagement and meet diverse audience preferences and relatable examples to enhance impact.
 - Providing opportunities for feedback and listening actively to stakeholders strengthens relationships and improves communication outcomes.
 - Trust and patience are essential, as meaningful dialogue often takes time to yield results.



CAPACITY BUILDING & EDUCATION

WHAT Formal and informal interventions, including trainings and courses, for enhancing resources and knowledge.

WHY Empowering stakeholders with the necessary skills, attitudes, and behaviour to make informed decisions and take effective action for the wise use and management of wetlands.

- HOW**
- Capacity building should be inclusive, recognizing that people learn in different ways and require a variety of approaches to meet their needs.
 - Creating a conducive learning environment, with interactive and participatory activities, enhances the effectiveness of capacity development.
 - It is important to connect new information to existing knowledge, helping learners grasp the broader significance of the information.
 - Feedback mechanisms should be integral to the process, ensuring that efforts are refined and aligned with participant needs over time.



PARTICIPATION

WHAT Active involvement of stakeholders in developing, implementing and evaluating strategies and actions undertaken for the wise use of wetlands. This can range from participation by consultation, participation for incentives, self-mobilization, among others.

WHY To develop a sense of ownership among various stakeholders, enable them to understand their responsibilities, and encourage them to act.

HOW

- Legal, policy, and institutional systems should be strengthened to enable meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- Indigenous Peoples and local communities, with their cultural, spiritual, and historical ties to wetlands, should be actively involved in decision-making processes.
- Traditional knowledge should complement scientific insights to develop sustainable management practices that balance ecological and human well-being.
- Participation helps build awareness, knowledge, and skills, creating a foundation for long-term conservation success.



AWARENESS

WHAT Includes steps undertaken to assist people in becoming more aware about wetlands, their importance, associated threats and challenges, and potential solutions.

WHY Acts as the first step towards appreciating the values and ecosystem services of wetlands, identifying the roles and responsibilities and initiating a journey towards wise use of wetlands.

HOW

- Raising awareness requires moving beyond simply providing information. Campaigns should inspire action by addressing core beliefs and fostering a sense of shared purpose.
- Specific and focused efforts often achieve the greatest impact.
- Providing incentives and creating enabling environments are essential to sustaining behavioral change.
- Planning, monitoring, and evaluating awareness initiatives ensure that they remain relevant and effective.
- Progression from knowledge to action involves fostering desire, building skills, and reinforcing optimism among target groups, supported by resources and regular encouragement to maintain momentum.

3.2 Guiding Principles for the CEPA Strategy

The CEPA Strategy is based on a ‘whole of society’ approach for conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with primary stakeholders and local communities at the forefront. While the preceding section outlines principles specific to each CEPA pillar, the following cross-cutting principles guide the overall design and implementation of CEPA strategies across scales and sectors.

The approach is built around the following key cross-cutting principles:



CEPA is mainstreamed in wetlands conservation actions at all levels and within all sectors

Wetlands conservation entails working with a range of sectors and stakeholders to ensure that wetland features are conserved and full range of biodiversity and ecosystem services values are embedded in various development plans, programmes, and investments. CEPA is intended to be an instrument for supporting mainstreaming and integrated within the suite of conservation action implemented by various actors.



Understanding and appreciation of wetlands is promoted through a broad range of awareness generation and behavioural change measures

CEPA shall make effective use of behavioural tools and a variety of communication channels to promote a holistic understanding and appreciation of wetlands and their role in food, water, and climate security and maintaining biodiversity. Wetland communication infrastructures and site and state-specific CEPA programmes would form an integral element of the interventions aimed at awareness generation.



Collaborations and partnerships are fostered in all relevant aspects of wetlands conservation

Collaborative efforts between the Government, private sector, civil society, research and academia are crucial for achieving holistic wetlands conservation. The CEPA strategy shall provide a suite of instruments and an enabling environment for participatory approach for wetlands conservation and wise use.



Wetland conservation is enabled by the participation and inclusion of all sections of society with specific focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups

It is recognised that effective participation requires inclusion of all sectors of society, including inter-alia, taking into account gender and social equity considerations. The CEPA strategy thus enable an inclusive and effective participation to support wetland conservation actions.



CEPA strategies are continually adapted and improved on the basis of systematic and strategic monitoring and evaluation, and integration in decision making

To ensure that the CEPA strategy remains relevant to the ever changing societal and environmental dynamics and development context, implementation shall include systematic monitoring and evaluation to support mid-course correction.

4 Scales of Interventions

The CEPA strategy for wetland conservation is not limited to being a communication tool but includes the broader perspective of mainstreaming wetland management across sectors and among different stakeholders. This strategy can operate at different levels—national, state,

district, and site, with each playing an important role in ensuring the overall effectiveness of the strategy. The four levels are not mutually exclusive and should be interconnected through different feedback loops and contributions.



4.1 National

At the national level, the CEPA approach is often broad and focuses on crafting and revising policies, providing institutional support, raising mass awareness through media engagement, and integrating wetland conservation into the vocabulary and actions of stakeholders. It provides mechanisms that enable sectoral collaborations and multi-stakeholder participation in wetland conservation and management.

At the national level, education efforts are often focused on formal education systems, outreach programs, and media campaigns. These initiatives are designed to inform the public about the significance of wetlands and their conservation. They can include several activities such as integrating wetland education into school and college curricula, developing training modules or online resources for teachers and educators, conducting nationwide media campaigns, and organising national level exhibitions or events on wetlands.

Community participation could be promoted through special events, activities, and media coverage focused on wetlands during thematic days, such as World Wetlands Day, World Environment Day, and World Water Day.



4.2 State

At the state level, the goals and actions of the CEPA approach must be streamlined based on regional contexts. They must cater to both generic awareness about wetlands as well as specific local challenges faced by the state's wetlands and dependent communities, such as land use change, pollution, spread of invasive species, and lack of sustainable livelihood alternatives.

For a more efficient and target approach, a state-level CEPA strategy can be developed, which involves specifying clearly defined and measurable CEPA objectives and identifying a set of activities, tools, and products that can be used to achieve these objectives. [Section 8](#) of this handbook provides guidance that can be used to develop a state-level CEPA strategy.

State governments can partner with regional media outlets, local NGOs, and other stakeholders to produce





specific knowledge products that are relevant for the communities. Educational activities at this level can target schools, community groups, and local decision-makers. These may include actions such as initiating media campaigns in the vernacular language for wetland conservation in the state, integrating wetlands into state-level meetings of relevant sectors, and capacity building and training sessions for the officials of the state forest department.

Engaging the community through outreach programs and workshops, particularly in areas near wetlands, can raise awareness and encourage

local participation in conservation efforts. Similarly, sharing and acknowledging success stories of Wetland Champions from the state can galvanise the local community to act. Enhancing capacity-building programs for site managers and various state departments on need and processes of stakeholder engagement should also be considered.

4.3 District

The district level serves as a critical operational tier for translating state-level CEPA strategies into coordinated on-ground action. This level is particularly important for ensuring convergence between different line departments, facilitating localised implementation, and institutionalising stakeholder participation.

Several states have constituted District level Wetland Committees (DWCs) which have a key role to play in driving wetland management and CEPA-related activities. Usually Chaired by the District Collector / Deputy Commissioner, these committees include representation from key departments such as Forest, Revenue, Fisheries, Agriculture,





© GEAG / GIZ

Education, and Rural Development. This multi-sectoral composition enables DWCs to act as convergence platforms for effective, district-specific CEPA implementation.

Under initiatives like the Save Wetlands Campaign, DWCs have demonstrated their potential for coordinated action. They were instrumental in conducting decentralised ground-truthing of wetlands, ensuring data accuracy and legitimacy by involving multiple departments in field verification, boundary demarcation, and validation of wetland status.

Strengthening district-level coordination mechanisms and empowering them to plan and implement CEPA activities can significantly enhance the reach, responsiveness, and effectiveness of wetland conservation efforts.

4.4 Site

At the site level, the strategy must be more specific and participatory. The initiatives can directly engage both people and communities living near wetlands or those reliant on wetland resources as well as visitors and tourists. Educational and capacity building initiatives at the site level can be highly experiential such as organizing workshops on sustainable farming and fishing practices, setting up model farms or demonstration plots, upskilling local artisans and craftspeople dependent on wetland resources, and training youth in storytelling, filmmaking, or eco-tourism.



© Karwaan Films / GIZ

The community must also be involved in decision-making processes, such as creating wetland-specific conservation or monitoring plans, which can help develop a sense of connection with wetlands. Community-led events such as wetland clean-ups or cultural events can be promoted to engage the local population in conservation activities.

Additionally, school-based student stewardship programs can encourage youth to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the wetlands. Visitors should be able to directly engage with the wetland through guided tours, interactive exhibits, or educational programs.

5

Target Groups and Stakeholders

Effective CEPA strategies for wetland conservation in India must engage a diverse set of stakeholders across levels and sectors. The groups outlined in this section represent key actors who are directly or indirectly connected to wetland ecosystems. **While not an exhaustive list, this section offers a framework, aligned with the Ramsar CEPA Handbook, to help identify and prioritise stakeholder groups when designing CEPA actions.**

These stakeholders can be categorised as primary and secondary, based on their interest, influence, and power to support wetland conservation and sustainable management. **The following groups should also be further refined and expanded based on site- or state-specific contexts, ensuring that engagement strategies are inclusive, locally relevant, and action-oriented.**





Civil Society & Community-based Organisations

- ▲ **Local communities** living near wetlands, pastoralists, and other residents who interact regularly with wetland resources.
- ▲ **Fishing communities** and existing Fisher Cooperatives / *Matsya Jeevi Samiti* as well as seasonal fishers.
- ▲ **Farmers and agricultural groups** such as Farmer Producer Organisations, Water Users Associations, etc.
- ▲ **Eco-Development Committees & Community-based Ecotourism.**
- ▲ **Women-led CBOs** and platforms such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs), *Mahila Mandals*, and women-led cooperatives.
- ▲ **Boat operators** and ferry service providers, especially relevant in floodplain, deltaic, and riverine wetlands where these groups rely on wetlands for transport and income.
- ▲ **Tourists and visitors** to wetlands for leisure, pilgrimage, or education, whose behaviour directly impacts wetland health.



Government at all levels

- ▲ **Line departments at district and state levels** with mandates related to water, environment, forests, fisheries, animal husbandry, agriculture, education, and rural development.
- ▲ **Multi-stakeholder coordination and decision-making platforms** such as State Wetlands Authorities (SWAs) and District Wetland Committees (DWCs).
- ▲ **Wetland site managers** and staff responsible for the implementation of management plans.
- ▲ **Judiciary** and Amicus Curiae appointed in wetlands-related cases.
- ▲ **Elected Representatives** - Members of Parliament, State Assemblies and local governing bodies.

Education sector and learning institutes

- ▲ **Schools, colleges, and universities** engaged in formal and informal environmental education.
- ▲ **Media training institutes** and communication schools that can foster environmental journalism and advocacy.
- ▲ **Curriculum development authorities** such as NCERT, SCERTs, and state boards.
- ▲ **Wetland interpretation centers** that provide experiential learning and site-specific engagement.



Businesses

- ▲ **Tourism and hospitality sector**, including tour operators, hotels, nature guides, homestay owners, food vendors, and souvenir makers working around wetland areas.
- ▲ **Media professionals** including journalists, broadcasters, local content creators, and influencers.
- ▲ **Private sector companies** with nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks, or opportunities related to wetlands.
- ▲ **Businesses with supply chains linked to wetland** products and services (e.g., fisheries, reeds,

6

Indicative actions under CEPA for proposed prioritised groups



Civil Society & Community-Based Organisations

Local Communities living near wetlands

As people directly dependent on the wetland for its resources (like drinking water, water for irrigation, food), and with traditional and cultural associations to the wetland, the communities dependent on the wetland have direct stake in the wise use of wetlands. Further, overextraction of wetland resources or the introduction of pollutants from the nearby settlements is detrimental to wetland health. Hence, their engagement through CEPA is paramount.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Create and distribute a range of learning & remembrance materials such as story books, painting books, calendars, using local stories and practices associated with wetlands.
				Develop / update People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR) with focus on wetland biological resources, associated knowledge and practices . A community's record of diverse wetland resources, their uses, practices and trends through a PBR can play a vital role in transfer of traditional knowledge between generations as well as Access & Benefit Sharing contract with non-local users.
				Create murals at community centres depicting local history and biodiversity of wetland involving local artists preferably from within the community.
				Support communities in taking up regular clean – up activities around the wetland, encouraging composting of biodegradable waste, promoting zero waste model villages and monitoring waste management.
				Conduct door-to-door campaigns led by local volunteers, Wetland Mitras or Eco Development Committee members, where they inform residents about the environmental impact of improper waste disposal and unsustainable land use.
				Use local media such as radio, community newsletters, puppet shows and <i>nukkad nataks</i> to regularly share information about the importance of wetlands, ongoing conservation efforts, and how communities can contribute.



Fishing Communities

Fishing communities' livelihoods directly depend upon health of wetland. They are among the most vulnerable, dependent communities affected negatively due to wetland degradation. But they can also potentially contribute to challenges such as overfishing, and the introduction of exotic and invasive species with unintended consequences.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Develop illustrated guides on sustainable fishing and impacts of invasive species.
				Hold seasonal dialogues between fishing groups and local authorities.
				Conduct training on sustainable gear and catch limits through Fisheries Dept. and Fisher Cooperatives / <i>Matsya Jeevi Samiti</i>
				Engage fishers in participatory monitoring of fish species, population, aquatic flora, bird diversity and populations, invasive species, as well as suspicious behavior of bird or animal species that could be infected with a transferable disease.
				Develop value chains to create new livelihood opportunities for women.





© GIZ

Farmers and Agricultural Groups

Farmers, especially small and marginal ones, depend upon wetlands for irrigation. They also depend upon grass and other fodder species associated with wetlands for buffaloes, cattle and sheep. They can negatively influence the ecological health of wetlands through use of synthetic fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Provide training on organic farming techniques, soil management, and pest control, while linking with resultant benefits to wetland ecosystem and its values.
				Set up model organic farms for practical learning and resources to farmers transitioning to organic practices.
				Organise kisan melas that focus on wetland conservation and sustainable farming techniques, bringing in external experts as speakers.
				Engage farmers in joint conservation projects , such as wetland restoration efforts, wetland-friendly farming pilot programs, or joint monitoring of water quality and biodiversity.
				Promote agroforestry , which integrates trees and shrubs into agricultural landscapes to enhance biodiversity and sustainability.
				Establish Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs where consumers support local farmers in exchange for fresh produce, fostering a connection between farmers and the community.

Women-led CBOs and platforms

Women play key roles in water and resource management but often lack direct influence over decisions. The degradation of wetlands significantly impacts women through challenges that affect their livelihoods and well-being. It directly impacts their livelihood, food security, health, and nutrition.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Strengthen women's participation - Ensure women's active involvement in wetlands management committees and decision-making processes. Platforms like SHGs, Panchayats, Anganwadi workers and Mahila Mandals can support with such engagement.
				Develop value chains around wetland-based products to create new livelihood opportunities for women .
				Implement women-led community-based conservation programs to restore the wetland's biodiversity and ecological health using women's traditional knowledge to conserve wetland's resources.
				Create women wetland protector groups that would keep records of the wetland's resources and flora & fauna as well as raise awareness of the need for wetland's conservation.
				Exposure or Training of SHGs on livelihood enhancement through eco-tourism, establishing vending carts, shops, etc.





© Prasanth / GIZ

Eco-Development Committees & Community-based Ecotourism

Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) and community ecotourism initiatives can act as stewards of sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. Their location-specific knowledge, when paired with proper capacity building, allows them to balance visitor access, local income, and ecosystem protection. These platforms offer immense potential for promoting responsible tourism and conservation awareness.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Establishing relevant committees for sustained collaboration and engagement by involving diverse stakeholders, these committees will not only promote awareness and community involvement but also serve as vital links between departments.
				Developing eco-guide skills among local youth can naturally align with biodiversity conservation by including knowledge of local flora and fauna.
				Hospitality and kitchen training for communities living near wetlands of tourism value to encourage sustainable homestays and eco-village development.
				Set up volunteer programs where local youth, Wetland Mitras and NGOs can participate in activities like tree planting, wetland cleanup drives, and bird counting (during the migratory season).

Boat Operators and Ferry Services

Boatmen and ferry operators depend directly on wetland connectivity and water depth. Their movement patterns and visitor interactions can influence waste disposal, bird disturbance, and shoreline erosion. With proper orientation, these individuals can become on-ground custodians and educators.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Conduct safety and ecological awareness sessions for boat operators.
				Create interpretive materials for passengers about the wetland's biodiversity.
				Involve operators in waste monitoring and reporting mechanisms.





Tourists and Visitors

Tourists bring in capital and can enhance economic conditions of wetland dependent communities. But they put pressure on local resources and infrastructure. Through inappropriate waste management and lack of concern, they can have a negative impact on wetland and biodiversity.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Establish Wetland Interpretation Centers that can provide information on the wetland through exhibits, nature trails, training, and other resource material.
				Install clear, engaging, and bilingual information boards (signage) at key locations within and around the wetland, educating visitors about the biodiversity, habitats, regulations, and conservation goals.
				Develop and maintain bird watching trails , provide relevant informational signage and guided tours to attract bird enthusiasts and educate the public on local bird species.
				Promote wetland's unique values, such as wetland-based products or cultural values and practices.
				Develop and maintain sustainable tourism infrastructure without compromising ecological integrity, keeping in mind accessibility, hazard risks and safety of tourists as well as residents.
				Support and enhance homestay operations, handicrafts, nature guides, local hotels and eateries, rickshaw and boatpersons, souvenir-makers, and Vocal4Local initiatives.

Government at all Levels

Line departments and multi-stakeholder platforms

Line departments at district level are an important implementation link. For example, the Land Records dept conduct land surveys, prepares classification maps (e.g., agricultural, residential, industrial) which are important for monitoring changes in land-uses. Fisheries and Agriculture Departments play a role in promoting safe and sustainable practices that have a direct impact on wetlands. The Education Department helps promote nature conservation initiatives through extant programs. CEPA for these line departments, and for District-level Wetland Committees, can help streamline efforts at district scale, thus supporting wider reach, effective planning and impactful implementation of wetlands management.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Building technical competency through orientations, field visits, visual materials and case studies to better understand wetland ecosystems and their role in their management.
				Training in community engagement and facilitation skills to support participatory planning and engagement processes.
				Supporting development of awareness material, planning tools and training kits for DWC.
				Training on preparation of Brief Documents and Health Cards of prioritised wetlands in the district.
				Gender sensitisation trainings to be conducted for government departments and community organizations to stress upon women empowerment, women leadership, importance of equal participation & equal rights of women, women's inevitable role in wetlands management, etc.





Wetland Site Managers

Site managers and staff are at the frontline of wetland conservation and are tasked with implementing management plans, coordinating monitoring activities, and facilitating local engagement. Their capacity to incorporate CEPA in daily functions can shape long-term outcomes for wetland health. Building their skills in participatory methods, communications, and behavioural insights is vital.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Support with coordinating wetland celebration days involving schools, women's groups, and civil society.
				Train in community facilitation, CEPA planning, behavioural tools and participatory approaches for mapping wetland health and usage trends.
				Building technical competency on preparing wetland health cards periodically and maintain public info boards to share trends with the community and key stakeholders.
				Support with developing local CEPA action plans tailored to wetland-specific values and threats.

Judiciary and Amicus Curiae

Judicial stakeholders and appointed amici curiae play a critical role in upholding environmental law and ensuring enforcement of wetland protections. Their support can raise the accountability of wetland governance mechanisms and catalyse timely action.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Hold awareness sessions on ecological roles of wetlands.
				Develop simple briefs on site-specific issues and good practices, particularly on wetlands related topics under judicial review.

Elected Representatives

Members of Parliament, State Assemblies, and local governing bodies are influential champions for integrating wetlands into broader development agendas. They can facilitate resource mobilisation, policy attention, and visibility for CEPA efforts.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Share region-specific wetland profiles with elected leaders.
				Facilitate exposure visits to model wetland projects.
				Encourage local championing of awareness campaigns.



Education Sector and Learning Institutions

Schools and Universities; Curriculum Authorities

School and college students are the current and future stewards of ecosystems and so play an important role in ensuring wise use, conservation of wetlands. They can also play a major role in transforming communities.

Curriculum development bodies influence national and state-level education frameworks. Integrating wetlands into formal content ensures sustained awareness and relevance across generations.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				National Green Corps and Eco-Clubs as well as initiatives of agencies like the National Museum of Natural History, EIACP, and more can help in creating sustained infrastructure of youth volunteers for participating in wetland protection efforts.
				Young Innovators Program – encouraging creative ideas for wetland conservation by providing necessary handholding and financial assistance to youth for establishing model Community Oriented Enterprises.
				Student-lead awareness campaigns in village/neighborhood.
				Engage students in citizen science projects where they can contribute to collecting periodic data on water quality, species diversity, etc. of nearby wetlands.
				Organise regular field trips to the wetlands to give students hands-on learning experiences about the wetland ecosystem.
				Create a Wetland Corner (Wetland Learning Centre) in the school dedicated to wetland news, facts, conservation tips, photos, motivational slogans, informative wall art and so on.
				Embed wetlands into environmental studies and science textbooks.



Media and Media Training Institutes

Media plays an important role in public perception and awareness on environmental issues. They have an essential role in enhancing awareness and visibility of wetlands as part of the overall environmental coverage. And institutions training journalists, filmmakers, and digital content creators hold a unique position in shaping public narratives on wetlands.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Sensitising media students on wetland related topics; establish eco-media clubs to engage media in environmental storytelling and advocacy.
				Celebrate World Wetlands Day with dedicated coverage.
				Announcing significant milestones, events, and achievements in wetland conservation with press releases .
				Broadcasting documentaries, news segments, and educational programs on wetland conservation.
				Radio airing programs, interviews, and announcements related to wetland conservation in local languages.
				Articles - Publishing in-depth articles in newspapers, magazines, and online platforms.



Wetland Interpretation Centres

These centres are key venues for outreach, education, and cultural engagement. They provide multisensory learning experiences to diverse audiences, including tourists, students, and local communities.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Develop interactive exhibits and multimedia shows.
				Organise school and community learning sessions.



Businesses

Tourism and Hospitality Sector

This sector benefits economically from wetland aesthetics and biodiversity. At the same time, tourism infrastructure and practices can disrupt ecosystems. Engaging businesses in promoting sustainable tourism practices is a strategic opportunity for CEPA.

As the link between tourists and the sites, the tour operators can support by adopting sustainable approaches and practices in their business.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Build capacities of staff on eco-tourism principles and wetland ecology.
				Encourage and enable to use local eco-friendly materials and reduce plastic use.
				Collaborate in visitor education and signage.

Private Sector Companies

Companies with direct or indirect dependencies on wetlands—whether through water use, supply chains, or land use—can influence wetland health. Their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives offer pathways for CEPA collaboration.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Invite to sponsor awareness events such as World Wetlands Day or local eco-fairs, and contribute to CEPA content and infrastructure development.
				Provide avenues to partner with wetland managers and authorities to co-create signage, exhibits, or interpretation content.
				Facilitate employee volunteering for local wetland clean-up, restoration, or education campaigns.
				Build capacities to integrate wetlands in ESG and CSR programs.





© Sudhabrata / GIZ

Businesses with Wetland-linked Value Chains

From fisher cooperatives to reed harvesters, many small and large businesses rely on wetland-derived resources. These include enterprises engaged in fisheries, handicrafts, water-based transport, lotus farming, medicinal plants, and more. Because of their close connection to local ecology and culture, these businesses are uniquely positioned to promote sustainable wetland use and drive economic incentives for conservation. These businesses can become models of circular economy practices when supported through CEPA.

C	E	P	A	Indicative actions
				Provide training for artisans and producers on sustainable resource use and waste reduction.
				Collaborate with conservation groups to certify eco-friendly practices and promote local products.
				Support fair trade and sustainable harvesting initiatives.
				Highlight wetlands in product branding and storytelling.

7

Enabling institutional framework

Agency	Role in implementing CEPA strategy
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) – Wetlands Division	Steering and Guidance on National CEPA Strategy rollout and integrating CEPA for wetlands across different scales and mandates.
National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), MoEF&CC	Wider outreach involving the school students across the states and UTs of the country as seen in their widespread outreach in the Save Wetlands Campaign.
State Wetlands Authorities and Line Departments of the State Government	Implementing CEPA activities in respective states through strategies customised for state-specific challenges and needs and providing guidance to site managers and District Wetland Committees, NGOs.
National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)	Developing outreach material on wetlands in multiple Indian languages for various age groups/ target groups and dissemination through established channels of communication.
Ministry of Tourism (MoT)	Implementing CEPA rollout in wetland tourist sites and Promote revenue-generating activities like eco-tourism.
Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)	Supporting in rollout of CEPA actions through livelihood generation and social protection schemes such as NRLM and MGNREGA .
Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS)	Implementing CEPA in riverine wetlands, and in Amrit Sarovar.
Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST)	Supporting capacity building for wetland health monitoring at different scales through a dedicated network of research institutions, grants and courses .

Agency	Role in implementing CEPA strategy
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare	Through Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) network, they play an important role in dissemination sustainable and writing friendly agricultural practices.
Central and State Universities	Supporting site managers, wetland authorities and local communities in CEPA for wetlands through involvement of students for surveys, monitoring research, traditional knowledge compilation and awareness campaigns.
Department of Fisheries	Through promotion of sustainable fishing practices (timing, mesh size, ban periods), guidance on permit regulations in certain wetlands.
CEPA approach for Wetlands is also aligned to various overarching initiatives like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Mission LiFE	

- ▲ **Interdepartmental and inter-ministerial** collaboration is **key for successful rollout** of the CEPA strategy.
- ▲ **Implementation** support at state and site levels would be possible only through active participation of the **wetland authorities, line departments and site managers**.
- ▲ The **knowledge partner network*** will play a major role in bridging the mandates of the various ministries and departments and proposing and platforms and opportunities for collaboration.
- ▲ The **human, technical and financial resources** needed for the implementation and monitoring of the strategy will require not only the extant scheme convergence but also **private sector commitment** - to support development of CEPA material for learning and dissemination, capacity building of various enablers, human resources through volunteers for wetlands, and [l]edging resources by adopting wetlands along with the communities.

*The Knowledge Partner Network includes, but is not limited to Wetlands International South Asia (WISA), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-India), National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Environment Planning and Coordination Organisation (EPCO), Sálim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), Chilika Development Authority (CDA), Gujarat Ecological Education & Research Foundation (GEER), Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM), Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and the Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP).

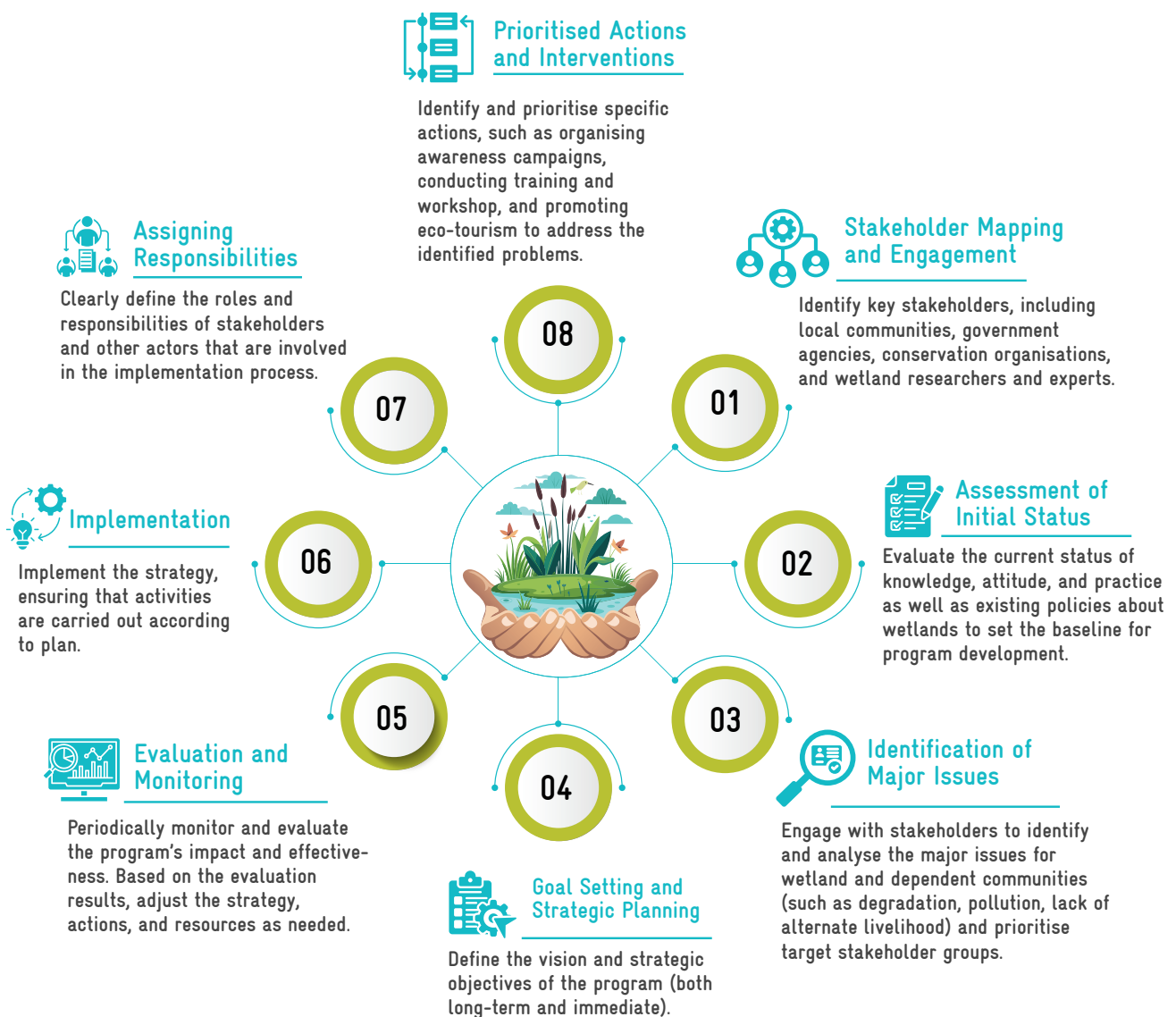
Annexure 1

Guidance for Developing State, District and Site level CEPA action plans

The national strategy proposes indicative actions, actors and processes. To make this implementable, it is essential that action plans are developed, agreed, implemented and monitored.

A state/district or site level CEPA strategy can help dovetail the efforts taken by wetland-specific actors and enhance stakeholder coordination and citizen engagement.

Some indicative questions that should be answered in the CPEA Action Plans are as follows:



Who?

Who are the local and/or dependent communities and how do they perceive the wetland(s) in terms of their value and significance? Do they obtain cultural, economic, ecological, and recreational values from the wetland(s)?

Are all the departments and stakeholders that are 'using' the wetland, involved in its integrated management - from planning, implementation to monitoring?

Are the roles of marginalised groups, women and youth taken into consideration?

Which stakeholders are most impacted by wetland(s) destruction and loss and should therefore be prioritised for CEPA strategy?

What

What are the major threats to the wetland(s)? How do these vary in scale and severity?

What are the CEPA approaches that can help in addressing these threats or help reduce their impacts?

Which specific actions should be prioritised to immediately address the threats?

Are there previous examples of approaches that worked in the state? What were the enablers?

How?

Is CEPA part of a funded management plan for the site?

Who is responsible for implementing prioritised CEPA activities at the site/in the state?

Which government and non-government bodies can fund and/or operationalise the strategy? How can cross-sectoral collaboration be ensured?

What mechanisms can be adopted to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation to further improve the effectiveness of CEPA activities?



Annexure 2

Proposed CEPA Actions at National Scale

To be spearheaded by MoEF&CC with State Wetland Authorities, Site Managers and Knowledge Partners

Short-term (within 1 year)

- Disseminating National CEPA Strategy
- Guidance to States on developing CEPA Action Plans
- Key line ministries and departments identified for potential CEPA collaboration; preliminary communications initiated.
- Collating and disseminating case studies and success stories
- To-do list for Wetland Mitras available
- e-learning on Wetlands on iGoT Karmayogi platform for decision makers

Medium-term (within 2.5 years)

- Capacity development programme initiated for all administrative stakeholders including site managers of the Ramsar Sites and other identified wetlands.
- Integration of a revised Wetlands Training Curriculum in Forest Officers' Training Programmes
- Intent notes for collaboration circulated with relevant line ministries and departments and potential collaboration areas mapped through consultations.
- Model demonstration pilots incorporating CEPA, supported by case studies launched at Ramsar Sites at least in four regions.
- Wetland material for schools, colleges available in regional languages
- Guidance developed for Minimum Content and Design Requirements for Interpretation Centre Development at Ramsar Sites

Long-term (within 5 years)

- Resources, Operational Plan and Actors for CEPA implementation made part of the Central Scheme/ National Programme for Wetlands
- Multi-stakeholder engagement is mandated in Integrated management planning and incorporated in the existing plans, guided by examples.
- SOPs for inter-ministerial collaboration on CEPA activities developed, endorsed, and circulated to relevant ministries to facilitate coordinated implementation
- At least one Model Ramsar Site established in each region (Northern, Western, Central, Southern, Eastern and North-Eastern) showcasing CEPA best practices through integrated livelihood initiatives, active Wetland Mitra networks, and community-led eco-tourism.
- At least 1 Model Interpretation Centre each in Northern, Central Southern, Western, Eastern and North-Eastern region
- Role of CEPA focal points at national, regional/state levels laid down

