THE INSTITUTE OF
Company Secretaries of India
भारतीय कम्पनी सचिव संस्थान
IN PURSUIT OF PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE
Statutory body under an Act of Parliament
(Under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Corporate Affairs)

Vision
"To be a global leader in promoting good corporate governance"

Motto
सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर। speak the truth, pursue righteousness

Mission
"To develop high calibre professionals facilitating good corporate governance"

ESG CATALYST

Where Sustainability Meets Innovation

AN ICSI initiative towards building awareness in the ESG landscape with the professional fraternity.

Wetlands as hubs of Heritage: Where Tradition Meets Sustainability

Wetlands have long served as important centres of human settlement, spirituality, craftsmanship, and food production, sustained through generations of traditional knowledge and stewardship. From river deltas and floodplains to mangroves, peatlands, and coastal lagoons, these ecosystems function not only as rich reservoirs of biodiversity but also as cultural landscapes that reflect enduring, sustainable relationships between people and nature. Many World Heritage sites are closely tied to wetlands, where belief systems, cultural practices, and land-use traditions have evolved in harmony with water based environments.

Despite their many benefits, wetlands remain among the most vulnerable ecosystems due to pressures from development and their location at the interface of land and water.

- Environmentally, wetlands are vital for climate mitigation peatlands. Though covering just 3% of the Earth's surface, they store twice as much carbon as all global forests and they enhance climate resilience by buffering coasts from storms and floods. They also support 40% of the world's species, naturally filter water, and regulate hydrological systems.
- Socially, wetlands sustain over a billion livelihoods in agriculture, fishing, and tourism, safeguard communities through flood protection and clean water, and provide recreational, educational, and spiritual value.
- In terms of Governance, wetlands are increasingly central to corporate sustainability commitments, as companies integrate their protection into ESG reporting, risk management, regulatory compliance, and sustainable finance strategies from biodiversity credits and nature positive targets to investments in carbon rich ecosystems that offer long term environmental returns. The multiple benefits and services provided by wetlands are essential in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

PARTENERING IN ESG

ENVIRONMENTAL

Maintain Water-positive Status

SOCIAL

Social and Environment conscious investments

GOVERNANCE

Improved Labour Policies

JOIN THE ESG MOVEMENT

Opt for e-bills and digital receipts

Use community tools or repair cafes to fix broken electronics

Set up a small worm bin under sinks in balconies to turn food scraps into nutrient-rich soil

News in ESG

- **Union Budget 2026 Unveils $2.2B Carbon Capture Plan for Heavy Industries**

India's Union Budget 2026 placed a strong emphasis on climate action, with a major ₹20,000 crore ($2.2 billion) commitment over five years to scale up carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) technologies. The goal is to move CCUS from pilot projects to large scale industrial use across hard to decarbonize sectors such as power, steel, cement, refineries and chemicals. The budget also highlighted transport decarbonization, introducing measures to cut emissions in logistics and passenger mobility. Clean energy manufacturing received a boost through extended customs duty exemptions, and critical minerals were recognized as a strategic priority with duty relief for mineral processing equipment.

https://www.esgtimes.in/climate/union-budget-2026-unveils-2-2b-carbon-capture-plan-for-heavy-industries/

- **India Refocuses Climate Policy Around Development, Resilience and Energy Security**

According to the Economic Survey 2025–26 tabled in Parliament by Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, India, is recalibrating its climate strategy around development realities rather than abstract emissions targets. The Survey arguments that climate policy must prioritize human welfare, particularly for poorer and climate-vulnerable societies, and development itself should be recognized as a form of adaptation.

Adaptation Anchored in Growth: India's adaptation strategy is embedded in public investment across agriculture, water, urban infrastructure, and social systems and State Action Plans on Climate Change translate national priorities into local policy. Adaptation is not a separate climate pillar but a structural feature of India's growth model.

Energy Transition as a System Strategy: Sustained growth and rising living standards require a large expansion of affordable, reliable electricity. Renewable capacity additions alone do not guarantee dependable supply. India's approach blends renewable expansion with nuclear power, green hydrogen, battery storage, and grid stability investments.

Critical Minerals and Strategic Autonomy: Critical minerals come across as a decisive factor in the global energy transition. Lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare earths have emerged as strategic chokepoints, increasingly shaping geopolitical and economic outcomes. India's response combines domestic capability building through the National Critical Mineral Mission with international partnerships, including the Minerals Security Partnership and Indo-Pacific frameworks. This dual-track strategy reflects a broader shift toward supply chain security as an energy policy priority.

Nuclear Reform: In December 2025, India enacted the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Act, opening nuclear plant operations, equipment manufacturing, and research to private sector participation. The reform marks a structural change in India's low-carbon baseload strategy.

Carbon Markets: India is also advancing its Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, launched in

June 2023. Built on the Perform, Achieve and Trade framework, the scheme combines mandatory compliance with voluntary offsets, allowing non-obligated entities to generate carbon credits through emissions reduction and removal projects.

Behavioural Change: Mission LiFE, introduced at COP26, integrates behavioural change into India's Nationally Determined Contributions. The Survey describes it as the behavioural foundation of India's climate policy, reshaping consumption patterns rather than operating as a standalone initiative.

Climate Finance: Around 80 percent of global climate finance is domestically sourced, reflecting persistent structural bias in international financial systems.

Markets, Governance, and Global Stakes: India's climate finance ecosystem is supported by specialised institutions, enhanced disclosure frameworks, and expanding bond markets. Sovereign green bond issuance reached ₹72,697 crore cumulatively since FY23, with municipal green bonds emerging as a tool for urban climate investment.

Strong governance frameworks are essential to ensure climate finance supports growth without undermining macroeconomic stability. India's development-centred climate strategy offers a counterpoint to transition models that prioritise speed over system resilience, with implications extending well beyond its borders.

https://esgnews.com/india-refocuses-climate-policy-around-development-resilience-and-energy-security/

- **US Exits Paris Agreement Again, Leaving Global Climate Governance Without Its Largest Economy**

United States has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement for the second time, completing a year long process that also includes an unprecedented move to exit the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), marking a sweeping retreat from global climate governance. Despite U.S. disengagement, global clean energy momentum continues to accelerate. Worldwide investment in low carbon energy now exceeds fossil fuel spending, and renewables accounted for over 90% of new power capacity added last year, driven largely by rapid solar and wind expansion. Meanwhile, China increasingly dominates major clean technology supply chains, including solar manufacturing, electric vehicles, and grid infrastructure reinforcing global growth in these sectors even in the absence of U.S. policy alignment.

https://esgnews.com/us-exits-paris-agreement-again-leaving-global-climate-governance-without-its-largest-economy/

- **GHG Protocol Sets 1st Global Standards for Land-Sector Carbon Accounting**

The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol has released its first global standard for companies to account for land sector emissions and carbon dioxide removals. The new Land Sector and Removals Standard establishes rules for measuring emissions from agricultural land use

and for reporting both natural and technological CO_2 removals. Companies may include these removals in their Scope 1 and Scope 3 inventories if they meet specific safeguards. Reporting removals is optional under this voluntary standard. The standard will take effect January 1, 2027.

https://www.esgtimes.in/climate/carbon/ghg-protocol-sets-1st-global-standards-for-land-sector-carbon-accounting/

We hope that the above information provided in the ESG Catalyst will be useful for professionals and inspire them to adopt ESG practices. Your suggestions and inputs on ESG Catalyst may be shared by email at **esgsb@icsi.edu.**