



# **UCR Rainwater (RoU) Standard**

**UCR Wetland Guidance Document (India)**

**30/03/2023**

**Ver 01**

## Background:

Wherever land meets water, life abounds. Wetlands exist in every corner of this beautiful planet and are the arteries and veins of the landscape. Wetlands support critical ecosystems and biodiversity. **40 percent** of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands.

Wetlands are rich in nature and vital to human life. They are crucial to agriculture and fisheries. They act as water sources, purifiers and protect our shores. Wetlands are the planet's greatest natural carbon stores.

To date, nearly **90 percent** of the world's wetlands have been degraded or lost. We are losing wetlands three times faster than forests. There is an urgency to raise global awareness on wetlands to arrest and reverse their rapid loss and encourage actions to restore and conserve these vital ecosystems.

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a great opportunity for all of us to rethink and change how humans impact the environment - and a chance to restore vital ecosystems like wetlands. Through activating all the relevant players from the general public to key stakeholders, UCR is **mobilizing an entire generation** for wetland restoration.

For natural environments such as wetlands, it's been observed that water quality and availability are impacted by a series of environmental stressors, including increasing urbanization, agricultural expansion and deforestation.

**The UCR RoU Standard is one such bold action towards** taking part in wetland restoration efforts in India and worldwide. Promoting wise use and good management practices for wetland protection via the generation and trade of UCR RoUs is key to the success of wetland restoration.

The latest data indicate a loss of 85 per cent of wetlands over the past 300 years, with rivers, lakes and reservoirs witnessing rapid change, due to many factors, of which the most profound is climate change (UN 2022b). Transboundary waters covered by operational arrangements have increased, yet “only 25 per cent of countries have more than 90 per cent of their transboundary waters covered by operational arrangements” (UN 2022b). Globally, 56 per cent of household wastewater was safely treated, leaving significant quantities of untreated wastewater discharged into water bodies causing eutrophication (UN-Habitat and WHO 2021). 35% of the world's wetlands have disappeared in the last 50 years - a rate of loss three times faster than deforestation. Yet, wetlands are critically important ecosystems that contribute to biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, freshwater availability, world economies and more.

The current status of water resources highlights the need for improved water resources management, including state and non-state wetland protection. Recognizing, measuring and expressing water's worth, and incorporating it into decision-making, are fundamental to achieving sustainable and equitable water resources management and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A wetland is a land area that is saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally. Inland wetlands include marshes, peatlands, lakes, rivers, floodplains, and swamps. Human-made non-state wetlands on private land are also approved under this UCR standard.

The goal of UCR on wetlands is aimed at reversing their rapid loss and encouraging actions to conserve and/or restore them.

Wetlands deliver essential services for humans, from filtering our water supply and providing water, to protecting us from storms and floods, sustaining biodiversity and storing carbon.

### UCR RoU Eligibility for wetlands



**Image 1**

Many international conventions were developed and adopted over the years to promote conservation and cooperation in relation to freshwater resources, including ecosystems such as wetlands. One critical convention is the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971). India currently has 75 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 1,326,677 hectares.

**UCR RoU Wetland Projects can be on a private property (non-state controlled) or could find mention in the Annotated List of Wetlands of India as below:**

[https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp\\_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-India.pdf?1680160935](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-India.pdf?1680160935)

The selected **state** wetland project must find mention among the Ramsar Sites to be eligible into the UCR RoU program. Kindly visit: <https://www.ramsar.org/wetland/india> for more information prior to developing your wetland project for the UCR RoU Program.

All non-state (private) wetland projects must adhere to elements of the wetland restoration best practices as highlighted in Image 1.