



UN  
2023 WATER  
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK  
22-24  
MARCH  
2023

## UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

### *PPP model for rainwater harvesting and enhancing native biodiversity – Use cases from India*

Thursday, 23 March 2023, New York

Organized by: HCL Foundation, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) and Government Agencies

**TWO PAGE MAXIMUM**

#### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

Water is an important natural resource for the sustenance of various life forms on Earth including humans. Water - the lifeblood – is therefore, crucial for ‘Sustainable Development’. However, water ecosystems have been under severe pressure due to anthropogenic activities and climate crisis; affecting the native ecology and biodiversity they support. To address such a problem would require innovative and collaborative approach and sustainable solutions that can be scaled up.

The side event brought in different stakeholders who are united for water action and are making the world water positive through partnership and convergence model. The side event was focused on how rejuvenation of the terrestrial aquatic ecosystems are bringing back the native biodiversity and creating resilience for the climate as well as for the local community. It highlighted some of the use cases (success stories) from India. The cross-sectional partnership highlighted the holistic approach of bringing together government agencies, corporates, research institutions, academia and grass-root organizations to bring in every relevant stakeholder and necessary know-how. It brought home that the success of these interventions in water conservation lies in recognizing community as a key stakeholder with community mobilizers selected from within the community.

#### **Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the [Water Action Agenda database](#))**

At HCL Foundation, we are focusing on restoring water ecosystems and enhancing native biodiversity through the rejuvenation and conservation of water structures. Through a portfolio of interventions, we

have been able to harvest ~36 billion liters of water within a span of 3 years. All these interventions address the 'Triple Bottom Line' and are environmentally friendly, economically viable, and socially acceptable.

We are fully committed to the journey of conserving natural water resources.

Link to the report: <https://www.hclfoundation.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/water-flipbook/index.html>

### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

Some of the key issues discussed during the side-event were as follows:

- The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India has a major role to play; however, the difficulty in measuring the impact is affecting the funds mobilization towards water conservation.
- It is important to harness the cross cutting nature of water to achieve 2030 Agenda. The mapping of co-benefits derived from a project focused on particular SDG, is often neglected.
- It is required to prioritize conservation of freshwater ecosystems in India, which is one of the world's most vulnerable regions to climate change.
- The Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in water sector can be leveraged by overcoming barriers like:
  1. Lack of business cases
  2. Lack of conditions for governance by institutional and policy support
  3. Social reluctance for PPP
  4. Higher Transaction cost to prepare a robust PPP project
- It is important to enhance native biodiversity in the urban areas, by addressing the degradation of urban blue-green spaces and enabling access to Nature within our cities.

### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

Some of the key recommendations for action are as follows:

- With less than 5% of CSR investment in environment sector, there is a huge potential to tap in to funding of corporates which can be diverted towards research and development in water sector, investments in Innovation and to trust and support experiments in new designs and models which has the potential to scale up.
- Responsible consumption & lifestyle changes built on partnerships at all levels are crucial; and also inter-ministerial and inter-sectorial synergy is critical for accelerating goals for achieving 2030 agenda.
- Focus should be towards facilitating action (*Conservation Visioning, Open Knowledge Collective and Applied Conservation Research*) and also demonstrate action (*Conservation Action Planning, Water Fund Mechanism and on Ground conservation efforts e.g. wetlands, rivers, springs etc.*)
- A framework is required to be formulated to utilize public resource support over a long term, efficiency gains, maximize domestic commercial capital resources and institutional support i.e., World Bank, Asian Development Bank, etc.
- Long Term Urban Ecological Observatory (LTUEO) in Bengaluru can help to experiment with Nature-based Solutions, to monitor and restore urban biodiversity. Urban planners need to integrate and develop green spaces within city master plan and educate urban residents about the natural history & heritage of biodiversity in their cities. Also, it is the need of the hour to learn ways and means of living in harmony with them and also help foster them for the sustainable growth of our cities.