

INTRODUCTION

- Lakes, ponds and tanks act as groundwater recharge zones. They control flooding, and are home to unique biodiversity. In India, 97 per cent of these waterbodies are in rural areas.
- Encroachment on a waterbody as well as its catchments and feeder channels, and pollution through dumping of wastewater from households, municipal sewage and industrial effluents into the waterbody have been primarily responsible for the death of numerous lakes and ponds in the country.
- It has been recognised that the loss of waterbodies is closely linked to the absence of an institutional framework, mapping and database. In an effort to rectify this, the government published the first-ever census of waterbodies in the country in 2023.
- Waterbodies are now getting a new lease of life owing to government-initiated programmes, schemes and projects for their revival; CSR interventions, community actions and public-private partnerships are also playing a role.
- This compendium focuses only on lakes, ponds and tanks used by communities. Around 250 waterbodies—created and/or restored under 26 government programmes and schemes—have been reviewed in four distinct ecological regions of India. The compendium is a documentation and celebration of these revival case studies, of what has worked, what hasn't, and what more can be done.