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India Launches First-Ever Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems

18 August 2026 ·

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India Launches First-Ever Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems

18 August 2026 · 1 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

India launched its first comprehensive “Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONES)” at UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on August 17, 2026, reported August 18, 2026.

What the Guide Covers

Produced by **ATREE (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment)** with the **IUCN, CoE-SLM, ICFRE**, and **ISRO’s Space Applications Centre**, the guide classifies **24 ecosystem types** across India, spanning grasslands, savannas, scrublands, rocky plateaus, ravines, and coastal ecosystems. It covers **pastoralism, fire ecology, and carbon sequestration** within these non-forest landscapes.

Why This Matters

Open Natural Ecosystems have historically received far less conservation attention than forests, despite supporting distinct biodiversity and pastoralist livelihoods, and are sometimes miscategorised as “wastelands” for afforestation, a practice that can actually damage native grassland ecology. A dedicated national classification guide is a step toward recognising these ecosystems on their own terms.

UPSC Relevance

Open Natural Ecosystems are a frequently under-tested but exam-relevant category distinct from forests, and UNCCD COP is a recurring Prelims theme around desertification and land degradation neutrality. A useful Mains angle is examining India’s approach to biodiversity conservation beyond protected forest cover, including community and pastoralist linkages to land management.

 FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA**GUIDE TO GRASSLANDS AND OPEN NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS:**

Launched: August 17, 2026, at UNCCD COP17, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Lead organisation: ATREE, with IUCN, CoE-SLM, ICFRE, ISRO-SAC

Ecosystem types classified: 24

Covers: pastoralism, fire ecology, carbon sequestration

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

India's first-of-its-kind national guide specifically on Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs)

Sources: *PIB, GKToday, ATREE*

Source: India Launches First-Ever Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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