



Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme

For Prelims: Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme, Conservation, Forest Resources, Deforestation, [Green Credit Program \(GCP\)](#) and **Ecomark Scheme**

For Mains: Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme, Forest Resource, Conservation

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched the **Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS)**, offering **voluntary third-party certification** designed to promote sustainable forest management and agroforestry in the country.

What is the Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS)?

▪ Objective:

- IFWCS aims to offer an **alternative to private foreign certification agencies** that have been operating in India. It seeks to ensure greater integrity, transparency, and credibility in certifying sustainable forest management and wood-based products.

▪ Certification Scope:

- The scheme covers **three main areas for certification:**
 - Sustainable forest management.
 - Sustainable management of trees outside forests (like plantations).
 - Chain of custody, which guarantees the traceability of forest products throughout their supply chain, ensuring ethical sourcing and handling.

▪ Nodal Agencies:

- The scheme will be overseen by the **Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council**, which will act as a multistakeholder advisory body.
- **Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal** will act as the scheme operating agency and will be responsible for overall management of the Scheme.
- The **National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies under the [Quality Council of India](#)** will accredit the certification bodies which will carry out independent audits and assess adherence of various entities on the standards prescribed under the scheme.

▪ Trees Outside Forests Standard:

- A separate Trees Outside Forests Standard is **now introduced** as a part of the Scheme.
 - 'Trees outside Forests' means trees growing outside recorded and notified forests, in farm lands of an individual farmers or group of small farmers or plantation area on private land of institutions and industries, etc. and include all **trees on the hedges and bunds, trees in different models of agroforestry, silvo-pastoralism, urban and rural forestry** systems and block plantations.

▪ Benefits:

- The certification is expected to enhance trust and transparency in processes related to **forest management and wood-based products.**

- The IFWCS can provide **market incentives to various entities** that adhere to **responsible forest management** and agroforestry practices in their operations.
- This includes state forest departments, individual farmers, or **Farmer Producer Organizations** engaged in **agroforestry and farm forestry**, as well as other wood-based industries in the value chain.
- **Global Context:**
 - The launch of IFWCS aligns with global efforts to address deforestation concerns. The scheme's objective resonates with the pledge made by over 100 countries at the **Glasgow climate change conference in 2021** to halt and reverse **Deforestation** by 2030.

What are the Other Recent Announcements Related to Forest Management?

- **National Working Plan Code 2023:**
 - The MoEFCC has released the “National Working Plan Code-2023” for scientific management of forests and evolving new approaches in July 2023.
 - National Working Plan Code which **was first adopted in 2004** with a subsequent amendment in 2014 brought uniformity and acted as the guiding principle for the preparation of the working plan **for scientific management of different forest divisions of our country.**
 - The “**Indian Forest Management Standard (IFMS)**” which is a part of this code, takes into account the diverse forest ecosystem in our country, while trying to bring in uniformity in management.
- **Green Credit Program (GCP) and Ecomark Scheme:**
 - The MoEFCC under **LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment' movement)**, has introduced the GCP and the Ecomark Scheme in October 2023.
 - **GCP** is an innovative market-based mechanism designed **to incentivize voluntary environmental actions** across diverse sectors, by various stakeholders like individuals, communities, private sector industries. The **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) serves as the GCP Administrator**, responsible for program implementation, management, monitoring, and operation.
 - **Ecomark Scheme** provides accreditation and labelling for household and consumer products that **meet specific environmental criteria** while maintaining quality standards as per Indian norms.
 - The **Central Pollution Control Board** administers the Ecomark Scheme in partnership with **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**, which is the national body for standards and certification.