

SECTOR SPECIFIC REPORT

(Environment)



Policies Covered In The Edition

International Big Cat Alliance
for the Conservation of Big Cats
Harbouring the Planet Earth

Efforts by MOEFCC to Protect
Eco-Sensitive Zones in India

MISTHI Scheme to Promote
Conservation of Mangroves to
Address Climate Change

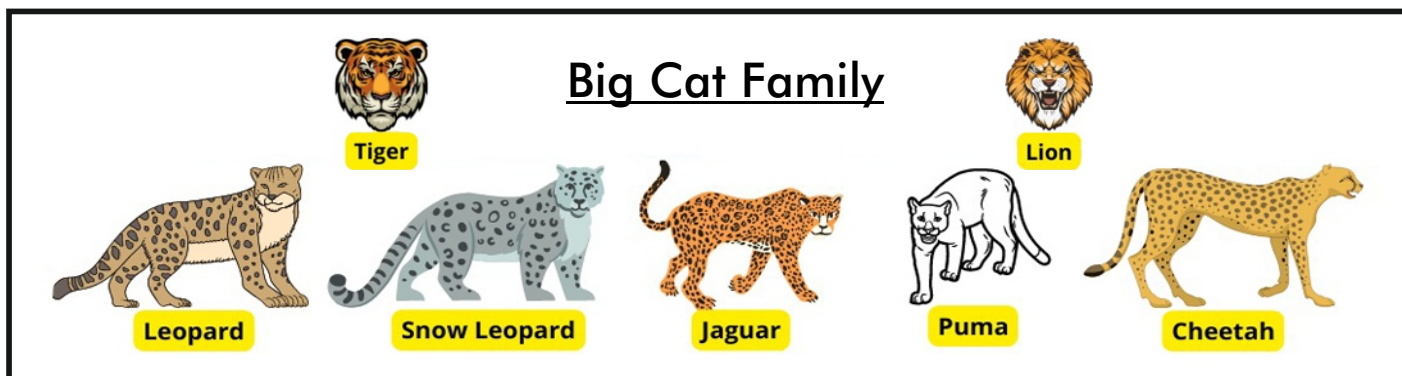
Climate Sustainability Under
India's G20 Presidency

Parivesh Portal to Enhance Ease of
Doing Business through Automatic
Environmental Clearance Grant
Process

Eminent's Insight

International Big Cat Alliance for the Conservation of Big Cats Harbours the Planet Earth

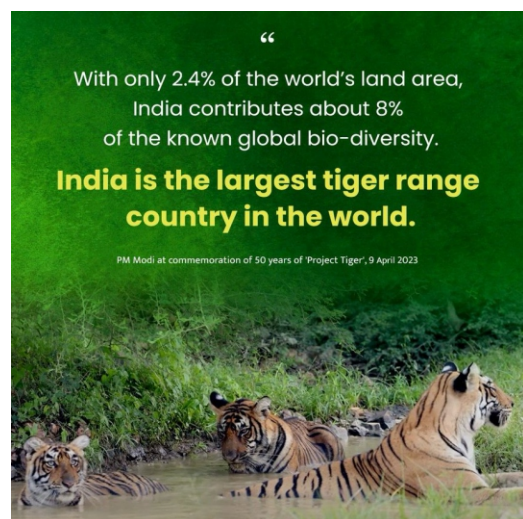
The 50th commemoration ceremony of India's Project Tiger witnessed the **launch of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) by the Prime Minister of India on 9th April 2023** at Mysuru Karnataka. It will mobilize support for the conservation and protection of seven big cats named Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.



Source: <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2023/04/11/tiger-census-2022-and-international-big-cat-alliance/>

India, based on its vast experience in the conservation of big cats like Lions, Snow Leopards, Leopards, and the recent inter-continent translocation experience of an extinct big cat family member Cheetah to back to its natural habitat has led to the launch of this alliance. The restoration of their habitats will play a pivotal role in the conservation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity on planet Earth and help in answering various questions about climate change such as food and water security along with the sustainability of forest communities.

In terms of Tiger Population, **India is home to 75% of the world's total population of tigers.** With coordinated efforts and scientific monitoring methods in the last few years, **the country has achieved the target of doubling the tiger population under 'Project Tiger', 4 years ahead of its deadline** i.e. in 2018 in place of 2022. This shows India's fulfilling commitment towards wildlife protection and its belief to establish coexistence between ecology and economy for universal prosperity.



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseframePage.aspx?PRID=1915055>

Quick Facts About India's Project Tiger as on 2022

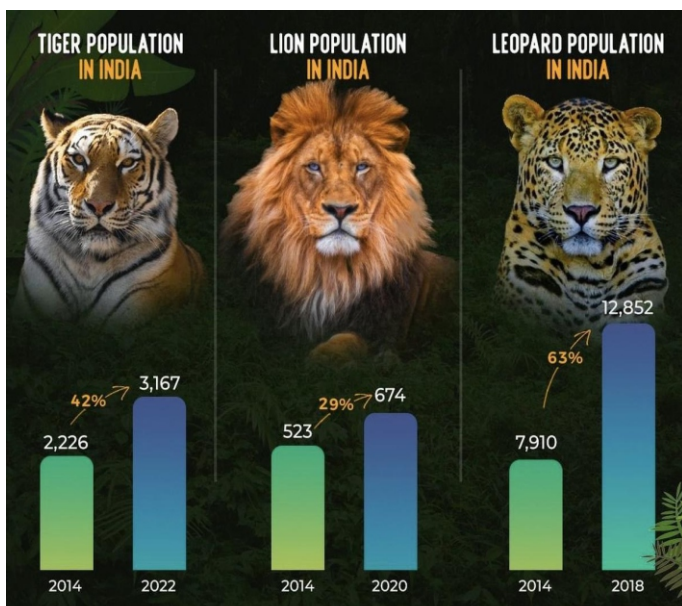
| Tiger Population | Growth Rate between 2018-2022 | Region of Significant Increase | Best Maintained Tiger Reserve |
|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3167 | 6.7% | Shivalik Hills & Gangatic Plains | Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala |

Now the alliance will bring this enriched experience to be shared with other 97 range countries and make global efforts to address the rising challenges of climate change. **India's proposal of IBCA with the initial support of US\$ 100 million for the first five years** has been welcomed by the global fraternity working for Big Cat Family conservation and protection. This will attract global cooperation in rallying the technical and financial resources, primarily important for the safe existence of big cats to protect wildlife and human existence.

Features of IBCA

| |
|---|
| A Mega Global Alliance Proposed by India to Work towards the Protection and Conservation of the Big Cat Family |
| Total Grant Assistance of US\$ 100 Million by India for Five Years |
| The 97 'Range' Countries which have Natural habitats of any of these Big Cats, can be a Member of this International Alliance |
| The Alliance will have a Secretariat and General Assembly with a Term of 5 Years Consisting of All Member Countries |
| A Council has also been Elected by the General Assembly consisting of Seven to Fifteen Member Countries |
| It will Work as a Central Platform to Spread Information Regarding Awareness about Big Cat Family, Research & Development, Resource Repository, Capacity Building, Benchmark Practices, etc |

The alliance will take the responsibility to address the global concerns regarding poaching and illegal wildlife trade while sharing individual experiences in the areas of capacity building and training, along with Research & development among member countries to save the big cat family from extinction and make the ecosystem safe and healthy to live.

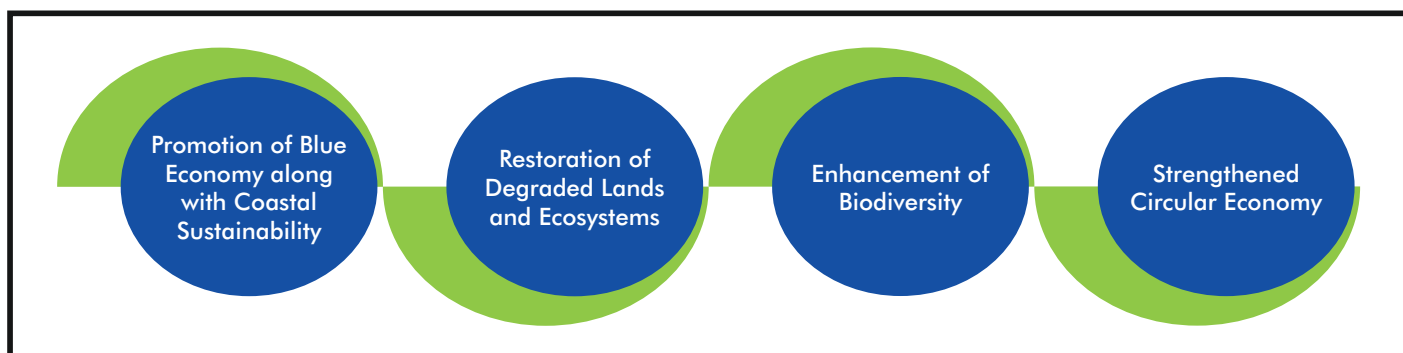


In this regard, community involvement through raising awareness will provide a leading solution for the conservation of big cats along with technical resources. The effective implementation of IBCA provisions under an established framework and governance structure will work for the shining future of this global alliance where the big cats population will continue to thrive to support coexistence.

Climate Sustainability Under India's G20 Presidency

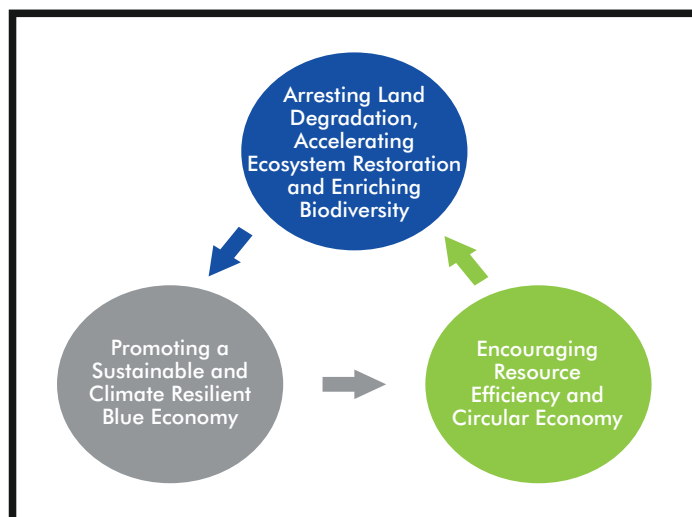
The deepening crisis of sustainable development with the continuously rising temperature of the earth even 20 years after the historical 2002, UN Summit is a big global challenge. India's G20 Presidency brought a fresh outlook on climate sustainability talks to lead the global landscape with its major initiatives in the area such as LiFE Mission. The Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy, Ambitious updated NDC, and realization of 'Green Growth' through the Union Budget 2023-24 are testimony to India's extensive deliberations of its vision towards a sustainable future of mankind while changing the fundamental mind set of global geopolitics in the new normal world.

Major Goals Identified Under Climate Sustainability



India in this scenario, emerging as a leader of the multilateral world in which economic development goes hand in hand with environmental sustainability. It is becoming the global voice to develop strategies for tackling the issues related to climate change, environment protection, biodiversity conservation, along with sustainable development through a coordinated consensus-based approach. The various meetings of the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) under India's G20 Presidency are taking place with a focus on environmental sustainability and Climate resilience at the core.

Priority Issues of ECSWG



Under this, the ECSWG Ocean Track is prioritizing accelerating efforts in land and water resource efficiency, ocean health, and ecosystem restoration through addressing land degradation, biodiversity losses, and promotion of a sustainable blue economy along with encouragement to the circular economy.



Deliverables of Ocean Track under ECSWG

| Arresting Land Degradation, Accelerating Ecosystem Restoration and Enriching Biodiversity | Promoting a Sustainable and Climate Resilient Blue Economy | Encouraging Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address Land Degradation and Work towards Restoring Ecosystems and Increasing Biodiversity • Promotion of Sustainable Use of Land and Water Resources • Focus on Financing Mechanisms and Frontier Technologies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing Marine Litter for a Sustainable Blue Economy • Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning • Conservation of Marine Ecosystems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Sustainable Production and Consumption Practices through Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Strategies, including the Use of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Systems • Advancement of Circular Economy Principles |

The presidency has also given India a global platform to showcase its continuous efforts to restore its diverse ecology and biodiversity. This has also provided the country an opportunity to share its best practices in the field of ecological restoration and climate sustainability as a source of the great performance of the country in relevant SDGs. It brings hope for other countries to accelerate their fight against climate change and find a sustainable path for development to address the shared global challenge.

ECSWG Delegates Experiencing India's Forest Ecosystem






India's Long-term Low-Carbon Development Strategy

ELEMENTS OF INDIA'S LONG-TERM LOW-EMISSIONS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- Low carbon development of electricity systems consistent with development.
- Develop an integrated, efficient, inclusive low-carbon transport system.
- Promote adaptation in urban design, energy and material-efficiency in buildings, and sustainable urbanisation.
- Promote economy-wide decoupling of growth from emissions and development of an efficient, innovative low-emission industrial system.
- CO₂ removal and related engineering solutions.
- Enhancing Forest and vegetation cover consistent with socio-economic and ecological considerations.
- Economic and financial aspects of low-carbon development.



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1898304>

Thus, **India's G20 Presidency at present, promises an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative approach to tackle climate challenges** and find the way forward for global sustainable growth. The efforts to induce behavioral change at the core are going to deliver long-term benefits in the areas like sustainable consumption to make it a mass movement to establish a sustainable environment across the world.

Efforts by MOEFCC to Protect Eco-Sensitive Zones in India

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) allows the extension of the ESZ area up to 10km distance around protected areas, National parks, and Wildlife sanctuaries to manage and protect biodiversity. But to accommodate the rising developmental needs, the government allows construction under strict guidelines in these regions. Recently, the Supreme Court has also lifted the ban to allow developmental activities around the 1 km of these ecologically sensitive areas where the draft or any final notification regarding such activities is already issued by the authorities.



Source: <https://www.focusglobalreporter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Picture1.jpg>

The purpose of Eco-sensitive zones is to create a shock absorber space to protect against ecological damage in the protected areas by managing the activities around the areas by minimizing the impact of urbanization and other developmental activities. ESZs help in the protection of rare species and flora and fauna from extinction and prevent the destruction of habitat for endangered species. It helps in addressing forest depletion and also acts as a buffer zone from areas of high protection to areas requiring lesser protection.

Objectives to Protect Eco-Sensitive Zones

Protection of Rare and Endemic Flora and Fauna from Extinction

Prevent Habitat Destruction for Endangered Species

Act as a Transition Zone from Areas of High Protection to Areas involving Lesser protection

Helps in Minimizing Forest Depletion and Man-animal Conflicts

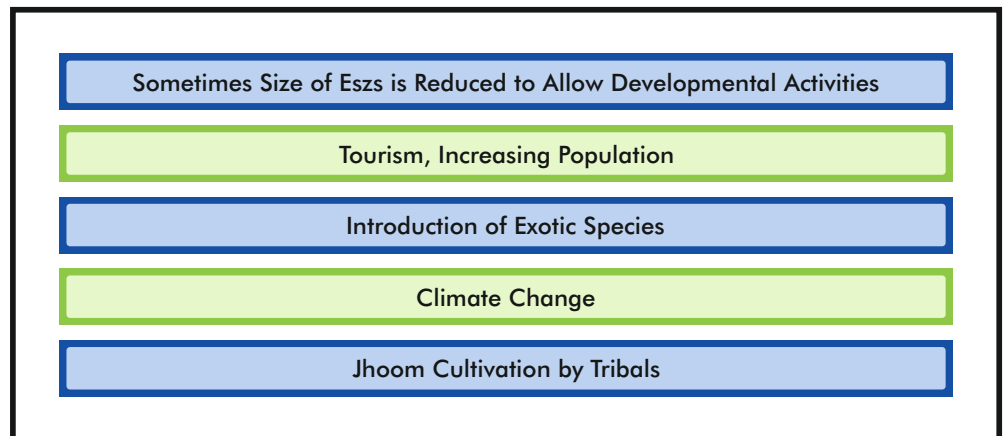
To protect the eco-sensitive zone government prohibited many activities around ESZ areas where people are not allowed to set up any pollution (air, water, soil, noise) causing industries to save these ecologically fragile areas.

Government-prohibited Activities to Prevent ESZs



While protecting ESZ the government faces several issues for regional developmental activities, increasing population also leads to the encroachment of buffer areas including a rise unexotic species as they disturb the ecological balance of existing flora and fauna of the region.

Challenges To Eco-Sensitive Zones



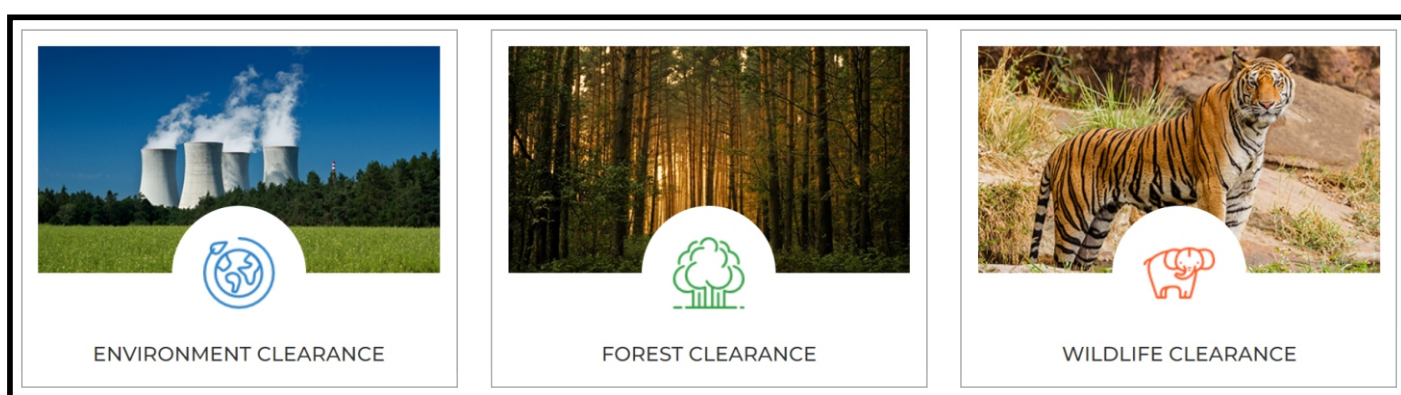
While considering the protection of ESZs, there is a need to strike a balance of environmental policies at the local level and find an alternative to generate livelihood opportunities for successful conservation initiatives. Over time, the buffer zones around these protected areas are shrinking and leading to disturbance of the natural balance for the coexistence of future generations.



Parivesh Portal to Enhance Ease of Doing Business through Automatic Environmental Clearance Grant Process

To ensure more transparency and accountability in the forests, environment, and wildlife clearance process, the MoEFCC has launched PARIVESH (Pro-Active & Responsive Facilitation By Interactive Virtuous & Environmental Single-Window Hub) Portal. This web-based, role-based single window workflow application system has **brought down the average time involved in the clearance process of such approvals at the central level to 70 days in 2022 in comparison to 150 days in 2019.**

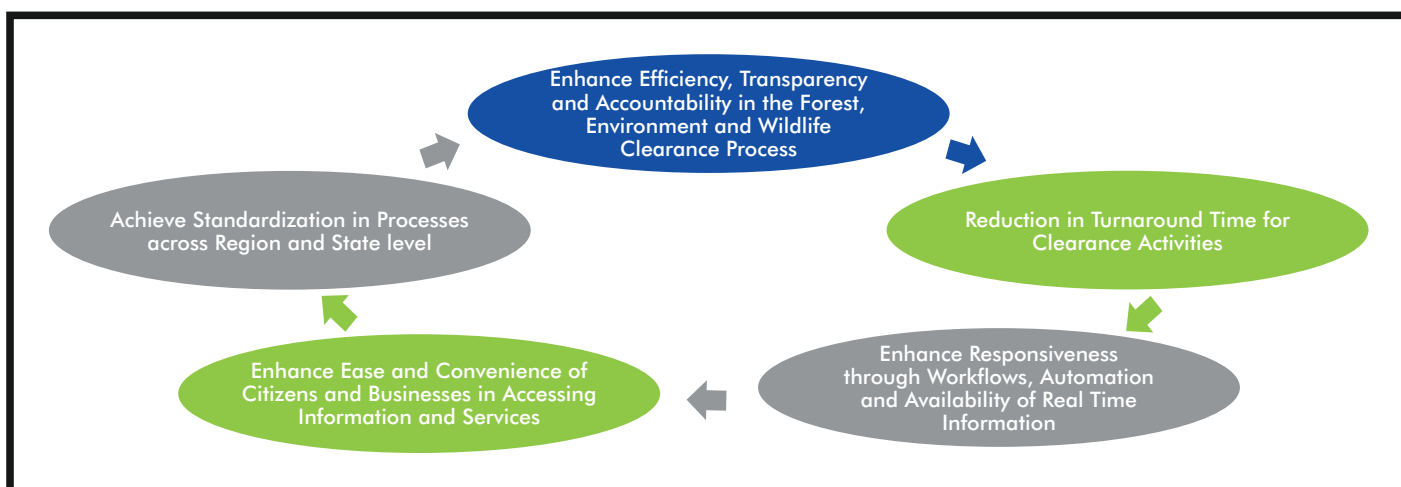
Approval Categories in PARIVESH Portal



Source: <https://parivesh.nic.in/>

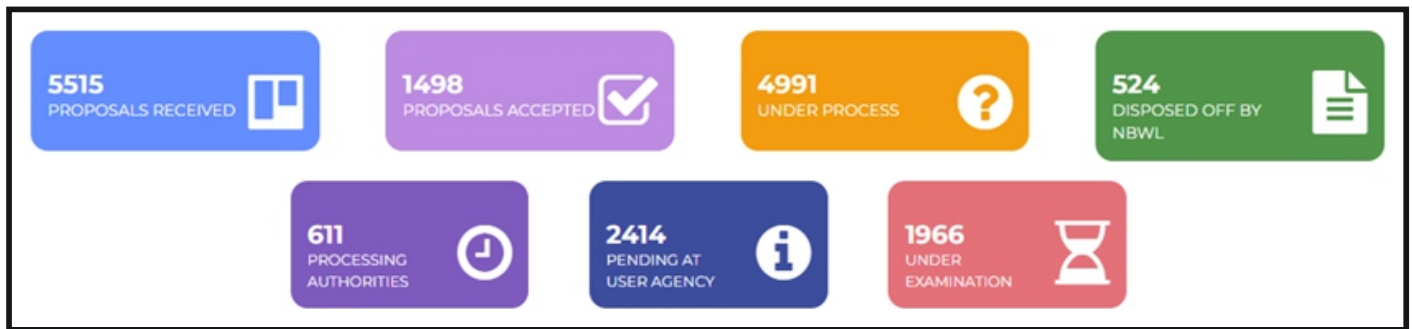
The portal entertains online submission and monitoring of the proposals submitted by the proponents for seeking environment, forest, wildlife, and CRZ (Coastal Regulations Zone) clearance from central, state, and district-level authorities.

Objectives Of PARIVESH Portal



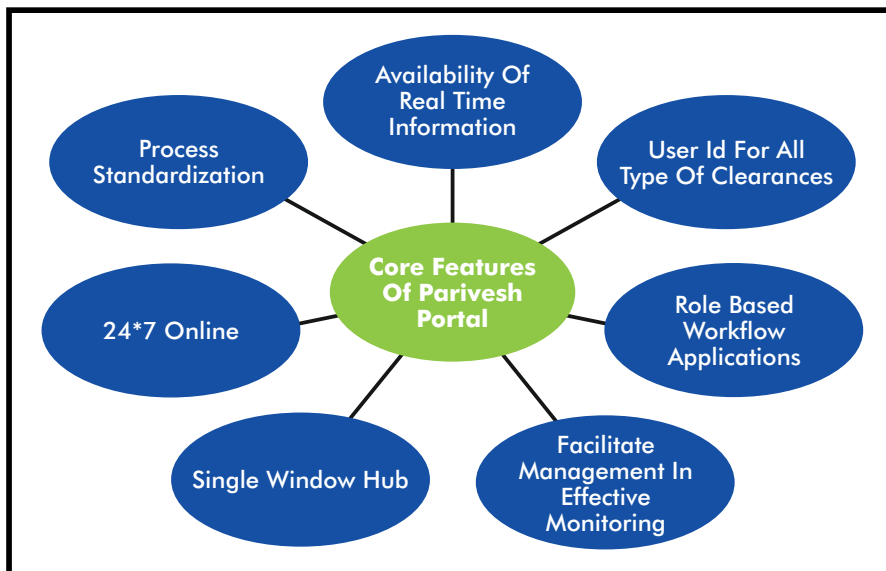
This is improving improve e-governance in the domain and helps in enhancing the ease of doing business around these ecologically sensitive areas with effective monitoring facilities.

Proposal Status Report at PARIVESH Portal



Source: <https://parivesh.nic.in/>

In this portal, a unique ID is provided for all clearances that help proponents or users to submit proposals for clearances under a standardized process to gradually shift the complete process into digital mode.



It automates the entire tracking of proposals i.e. new, editing, and updating including the display of the status for the respective proposals at each stage based on the Geographic Information System (GIS) facility. The portal provides automatic alerts via SMS and emails to the concerned authorities to check the delays in the clearance process including the tracking options available for project proponents and citizens.

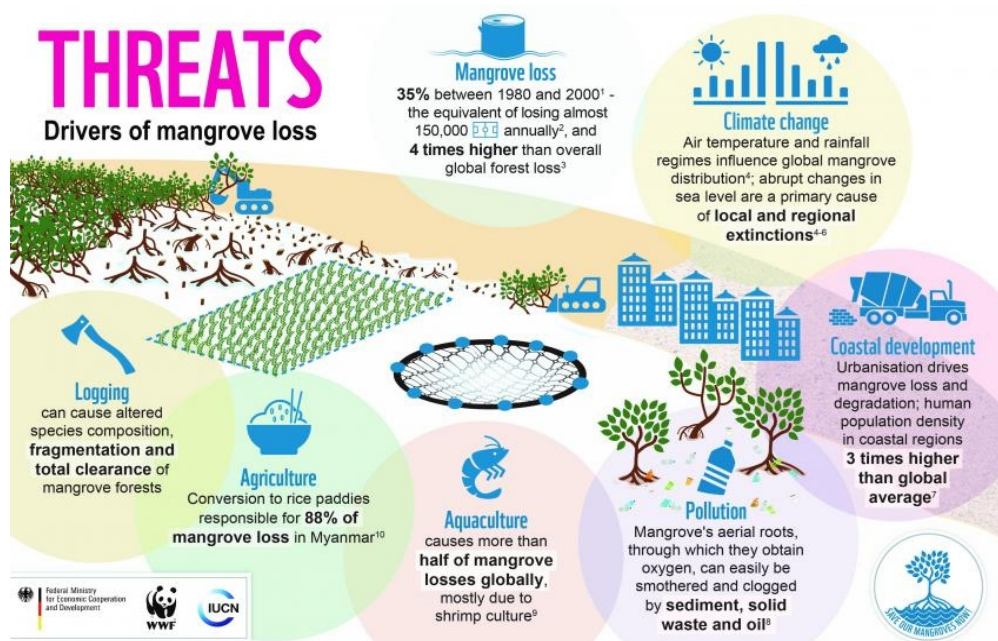
As the PARIVESH portal will enable sustainable development through e-governance while improving the overall efficiency and performance of the approval process. To achieve the goals with increased transparency and efficiency in the green clearance process, there is a need for providing better access to



information to keep the citizens aware to play an active role in determining the future of the environment, forest, and wildlife in the country.

MISTHI Scheme to Promote Conservation of Mangroves to Address Climate Change

The Government of India has introduced a new **MISTHI (Mangrove Initiative For Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Income)** scheme under Union Budget 2023-24 to conserve the Mangrove system in India. One of the most productive ecosystems in India, Mangroves are at present in a threatened stage due to various factors.



To combat these threats and to conserve the ecosystem, the scheme will help to cover the Mangrove plantation along India's coastline and saltpan lands with target-intensive afforestation. The conservation of Mangroves will also play a crucial role in mitigating the effect of climate change, preventing coastal erosion, and sustaining local livelihood.

Source: http://ilearncana.com/iLearnCana_%40dm%2Fkc%2Fckeditor%2Fkfinder%2Fupload%2Fimages%2Fimage-20201009144143-10.png

Objectives of MISTHI Scheme

Increase the Mangrove Cover along the Coastline and on Salt pan Lands in India, with a Particular focus on the Sunderban delta and the Hoogly Estuary in the West Bengal

Promote Community-based Mangrove Plantation and Restoration Activities, Involving Local Communities and NGO's in the Plantation and Maintenance of Mangrove Forests.

Improve the Ecological Resilience of Coastal Ecosystem by Protecting against Erosion and Sea level Rise

Enhance the Biodiversity of the Mangrove Ecosystem and Conserve Threatened and Endangered species

Generate Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities for Local Communities, such as Crab Farming and Honey Production

The scheme involves the active participation of local communities in mangrove plantation and conservation activities through the formation of a **Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC)** comprising local villagers, NGOs, and the forest department. This will help in identifying suitable sites for the plantation and also ensure proper maintenance of the mangroves.

This will bring a major impact on the socio-economic conditions of the local communities by providing sources of income to the people engaging in mangrove plantations and the promotion of eco-tourism along with the sale of mangrove-based products. The increasing mangrove forests in coastal areas will reduce the damage caused by natural disasters and helps the quick recovery of the affected communities.

Government Strategy For Implementation Of MISTHI Scheme



Impacts of MISTHI Scheme

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Improvement in the Socio-economic Condition of Local communities | Increase in the Number of Mangrove Forests | Mitigation of the Impact of Natural Disasters |
|--|--|---|

The success of this scheme will depend on the strategy of addressing various challenges to ensure the sustainability of the scheme. The key plans should also include enhancing the technical and entrepreneurial skills of people involved in mangrove plantations. Besides this, capacity-building activities will also play a pivotal role in achieving the objectives of the scheme while maintaining the sustainability of the coastal ecosystem for the future.



Eminent's Insight

India has emerged as a ray of hope in the global efforts to tackle the menace of climate change. Today, India has made its mark as a trusted partner for the welfare of mankind. The world once used to see India as a challenge to climate change because of its huge population. Today the situation has changed. Today our country is emerging as the leader of climate justice and is a big force against a formidable crisis. India is moving ahead with a lofty global vision like the founding of International Solar Alliance for realizing the vision of One Sun, One World, One Grid and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure initiative. India has established itself as the top 10 countries of the world in the Climate Change Performance Index.

Shri Narendra Damodardas Modi
Prime Minister of India



Resources

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