



GOVERNMENT POLICY REPORT

JANUARY 2024 EDITION



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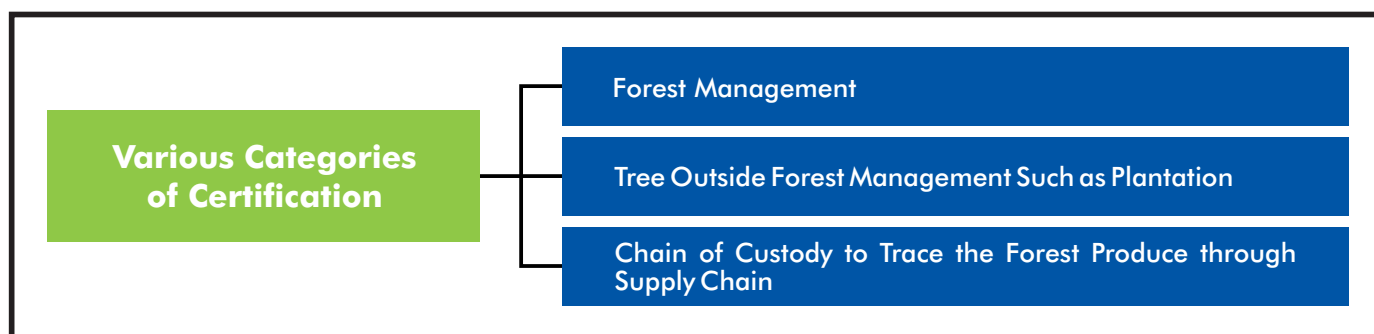
CULTURE & HERITAGE

01

SUSTAINABILITY

Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme Launched for Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management and Agroforestry

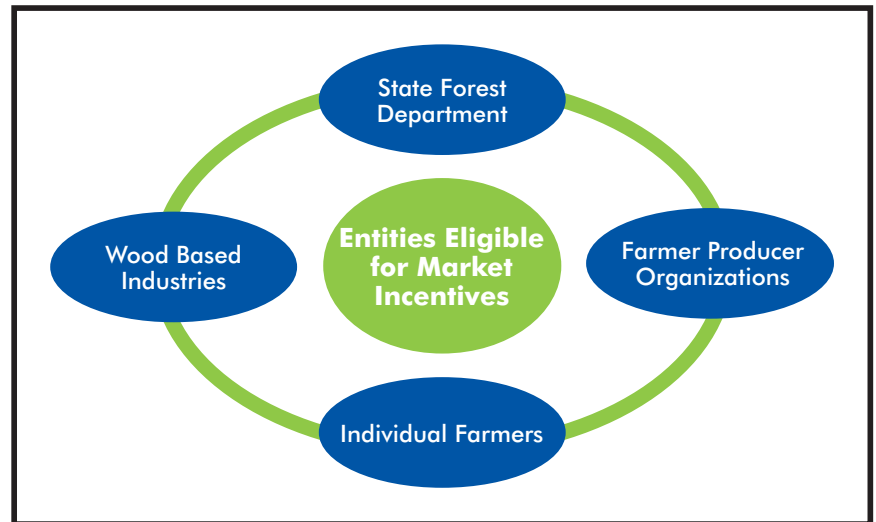
To give a boost to the sustainable management of India's forests and agroforestry, a new Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme has been launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC). **The scheme has the provision of awarding voluntary third-party certification under the implementing agency, the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal.**



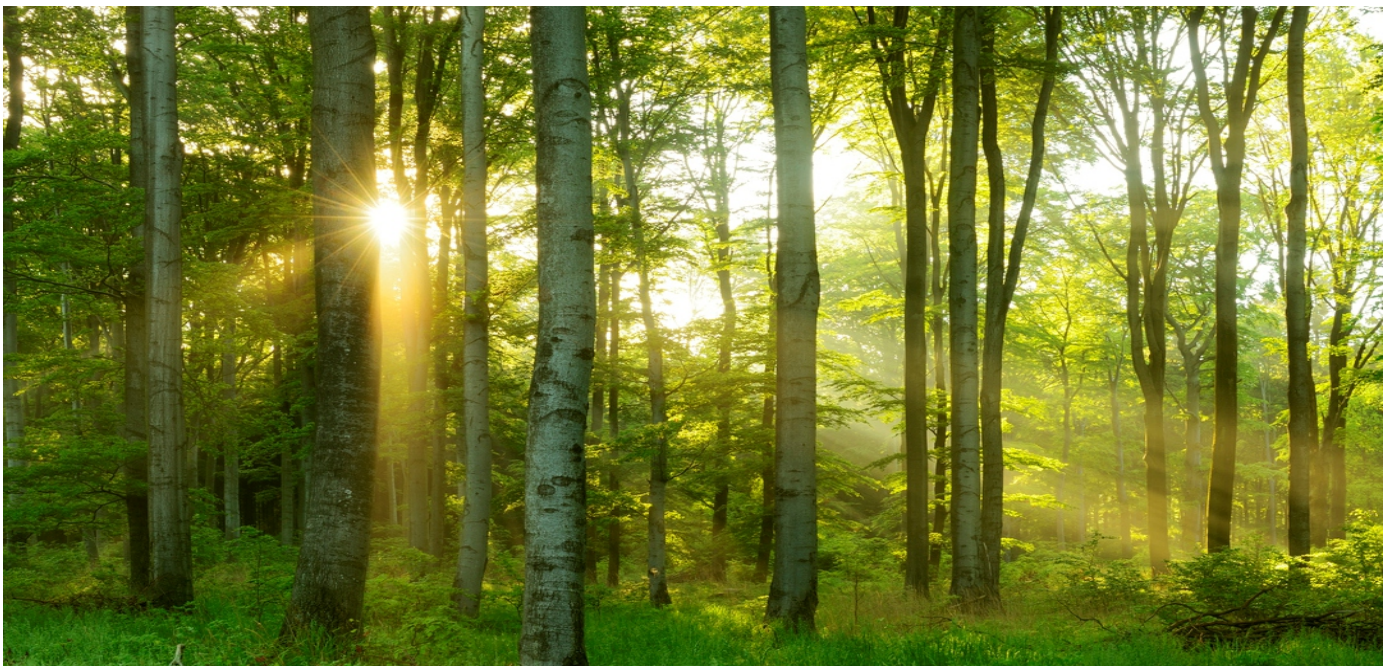
The scheme will be rolled out under the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council, which will run as a multi stakeholder advisory body through its eminent members. **The certification bodies will get the accreditation through the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies under the aegis of the Quality Council of India.**

List of Stakeholders Representing Council	Representative of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare
	Representative from Ministry of Commerce and Industry
	Representative of State Forest Departments
	Representative of Forest Development Corporations
	Members from Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education and Other Eminent Institutions
	Member from Forest Survey of India
	Member from Quality Council of India
	Member from Indian Institute of Forest Management
	Representatives from Wood-based Industries

These certification bodies will perform third-party audits based on prescribed standards for the certification in various categories. There is a provision of market-based incentives under the scheme to carry out forest management and best agroforestry practices responsibly. **It will be equally applicable to timber as well as non-timber forest products** to provide comprehensive coverage under the scheme.



The scheme will actively address the deforestation issue and contribute further increase in forest and tree cover to support sustainable development at the core. **For the first time, a separate standard for 'Tree Outside Forests' has been introduced** besides the Forest Management Certification as per the Indian Forest Management Standards under the National Working Plan Code 2023 launched by the GoI in early 2023.



Source: <https://fsi.nic.in/introduction>

Now the scheme will be capable of recording the trees that are growing outside the forest which means in any farmland of a farmer, group of farmers, plantation area on any private land of institutions, organizations, industries, block plantations, urban as well as rural forestry systems including trees on hedges and bunds, agroforestry, silvo-pastoralism. This will surely engage the stakeholders in the value chain with more trust and transparency to achieve sustainable management of Indian forests and wood-based products. Over time this will also significantly contribute to the success of green initiatives launched by the GOI such as the National Working Plan Code 2023, Green Credit Program, etc.

02

STRATEGIC RESOURCES

The First Tranche of Critical and Strategic Mineral Block is Launched under the MMDR Amendment Act 2023

To attain self-reliance and strengthen the supply chain of critical and strategic minerals paramount to national security and economic development simultaneously, the Government of India has launched the auction of 20 blocks of critical and strategic minerals in the first tranche. To make the way for this the GoI has amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR) in 2023. The amendment has inserted 24 identified critical and strategically important minerals into Part D of the Schedule-I of the original MMDR Act, 1957 to make the total tally to 30 such minerals.



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseSelfFramePage.aspx?PRID=1991445>

The Government of India has also conferred the power of auction of these mineral blocks under the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023. The scarcity of these minerals can lead to challenges to the growth of various strategically important sectors of the Indian economy along with putting security threats to the national sovereignty. The future economic development in this technological era is heavily dependent on critical minerals such as lithium, graphite, cobalt, etc including rare earth elements (REE) and thus achieving self-reliance in this domain is necessary.

Risk Associated with Critical Minerals Supply

Economic Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitutability Index • Economic Disruption Potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GVA Multiplier Score • Cross Cutting Index
Supply Related Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Import Reliance and Self Sufficiency • Weighted Mineral Concentration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Life Recycling Rates • Substitutability Index

The move will strengthen the supply chain of these minerals besides supporting the clean energy transition for the country by achieving the target of 50% of cumulative installed power capacity by 2030 through increased demands of electric vehicles, growth in battery storage systems, etc. **The royalty rates for these critical minerals have also been rationalized by the GOI** to increase the interest of stakeholders in auctions.

Royalty Rates for Different Critical Minerals

S No	Name of Critical Mineral	Royalty Rate (In %)
1.	Platinum Group of Metals (PGM)	4%
2.	Molybdenum	7.5%
3.	Glauconite and Potash	2.5%
4.	Lithium	3%
5.	Niobium	3%
6.	Rare Earth Elements	1%

To attract the private sector, recently, the Ministry of Mines has also conducted a road show that will help to disseminate additional information on these critically important minerals for the economic and strategic growth of the country. As these minerals play a critical role in manufacturing, electronics, technology, and other strategically important sectors ensuring resilience is a priority.

List of Import Sources for Critical Mineral Supply in India

Sl. No.	Critical Mineral	Percentage (2020)	Major Import Source (2020)
1.	Lithium	100%	Chile, Russia, China, Ireland, Belgium
2.	Cobalt	100%	China, Belgium, Netherlands, US, Japan
3.	Nickel	100%	Sweden, China, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines
4.	Vanadium	100%	Kuwait, Germany, South Africa, Brazil, Thailand
5.	Niobium	100%	Brazil, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Indonesia
6.	Germanium	100%	China, South Africa, Australia, France, US
7.	Rhenium	100%	Russia, UK, Netherlands, South Africa, China
8.	Beryllium	100%	Russia, UK, Netherlands, South Africa, China
9.	Tantalum	100%	Australia, Indonesia, South Africa, Malaysia, US
10.	Strontium	100%	China, US, Russia, Estonia, Slovenia
11.	Zirconium (zircon)	80%	Australia, Indonesia, South Africa, Malaysia, US
12.	Graphite (natural)	60%	China, Madagascar, Mozambique, Vietnam, Tanzania
13.	Manganese	50%	South Africa, Gabon, Australia, Brazil, China
14.	Chromium	2.5%	South Africa, Mozambique, Oman, Switzerland, Turkey
15.	Silicon	<1%	China, Malaysia, Norway, Bhutan, Netherlands

Sources: <https://mines.gov.in/admin/storage/app/uploads/649d4212cceb01688027666.pdf>

The critical mineral blocks are spread across eight Indian states and possess the treasure of around 6% of the global rare earth reserve. Thus, with a significant amendment in legislation and active policy support, India is trying to increase its share in global exploration of RRE from a mere 1% with the help of the Geological Survey of India (GSI) to explore new reserves. This will encourage the active participation of private players in the extraction to strengthen the global supply chain and make India an active key player while ensuring continuous supply of these minerals for nation's uninterrupted energy security and economic growth.

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03 INFRASTRUCTURE

Industrial Corridor Development Programme' Received US\$ 250 Million Financial Support from Asian Development Bank

Recently, a US\$ 250 million policy-based loan has been injected from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to further support the Industrial Corridor Development Plan (Subprogram 2) of the Government of India. The program aims to establish India as a manufacturing hub by increasing its competitiveness and giving more strength to the domestic supply chain through effective linkages in regional as well as global supply chains that can result in an increased number of livelihood opportunities and jobs.

This will prove to be a success as subprogram 1 of this policy development has also incurred a loan of US\$ 250 million in 2021. The transport and logistic development plan under the project will reinforce quality infrastructure in the country that will prove to be business-friendly and support skill development to guide economic development at the core.

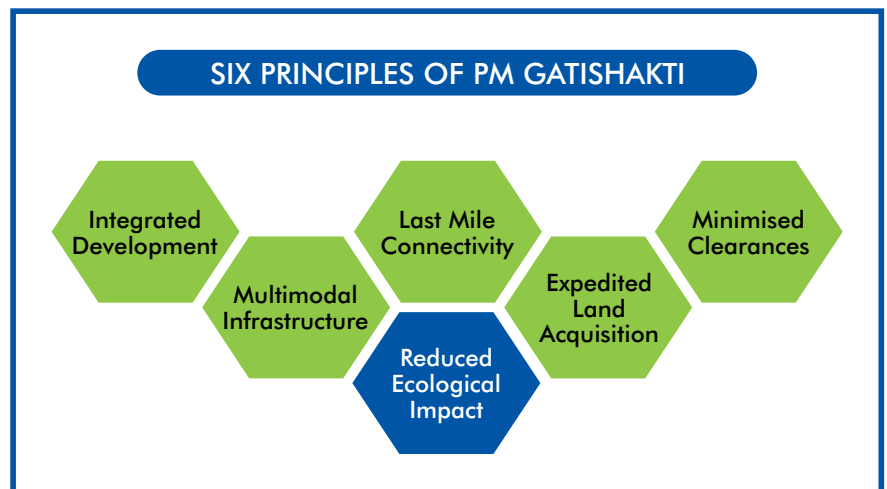


Source: <https://www.nicdc.in/index.php>



Source: <https://www.nicdc.in/index.php/nicdc-media/gallery/item/488-2nd-meeting-of-apex-monitoring-authority-2.html>

This will support the world-class multi modal logistics infrastructure development under the Prime Minister Gati Shakti Master Plan. This will also check gender equality in the Indian manufacturing sector and will offer training and up skilling of workers in these industrial corridors to provide them with better job opportunities in areas like agribusiness, electronics, textiles, pharmaceuticals, food, and beverages, machinery, etc.



Source: <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2023/apr/doc2023427188001.pdf>

Under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme, in the first phase, 11 industrial corridors have been developed which have been receiving continuous support from ADB since its launch in 2016. In 2020 the program received more strength with the development of industrial economic clusters that have attracted the interest of investors in the growth of infrastructure and manufacturing facilities.



Source: <https://www.nicdc.in/index.php/nicdc-media/gallery/item/349-shendra-bidkin-industrial-area-aurangabad-2.html>

The implementation of the second sub programme will work on developing alternative financing solutions for sustainable industrial infrastructure development in India such as green finance. It will improve industrial safety standards and make environmental and climate change, an integral part of the industrial cluster development to attract investors and increase the ease of doing business in the country by streamlining the clearance procedures in the logistics processes through digitization.

04 HEALTHCARE

Launch of 'MedTech Mitra' to Empower Innovators in Advanced Healthcare Sector

To transform the healthcare landscape of India in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the 'MedTech Mitra' platform on 25th December 2023. The initiative is a strategic move that can empower innovators and advance healthcare solutions in the country by providing them with needed hand-holding to shape their research and knowledge in the domain. The platform will also help the innovators receive regulatory approvals to give support to young talents in medical and advanced healthcare.



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=1990222>

The initiative is providing a comprehensive approach to the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 with the encouragement of the Indian healthcare sectors an integral part of its holistic growth story. Through this, the medical device sector will receive essential support. **It will also keep a check on India's import dependence in the MedTech sector which now accounts for approximately 80%.**

The initiative will boost the growth of MedTech Research and facilitate the indigenous development of quality MedTech devices and diagnostics in the country at affordable prices. **It will help the industry to grow to its full potential and touch the mark of US\$ 50 billion by 2030 by effectively reducing imports.**



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseframePage.aspx?PRID=1990222>

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Objectives of MedTech Mitra

- To Support and Collaborate with Technology Innovators and Startups in the Medical Technology Sector
- To Harness Innovation in the Sector to Enhance Healthcare Delivery and Address Healthcare Challenges
- To Help Young Talents of India in Shaping their Research Idea and Getting Required Regulatory Approvals
- To Promote Innovation in the Health Sector and Improve India's Healthcare Services
- Facilitate Indigenous Development of Affordable, Quality MedTech Devices and Diagnostics to Reduce Import Dependence

The technological development in areas like Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Nano Technology, and Virtual Reality, the medical device sector has marked new potential. To cater to the same, the PLI scheme along with increasing investment trends to develop medical drug parks with the help of MedTech research policy and research incentive scheme will open new avenues for the growth of this sector.

Thus, to lead this change to the growth paradigm, the government has shown its commitment to support innovators and entrepreneurs in the domain to bring out cost-effective technologies that can revolutionize the Indian healthcare sector with quality, and precision. It will prepare the Indian medical device industry to lead the global market to prove its excellence and become self-reliant in the area over time



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1949859>



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05

CULTURE & HERITAGE

UNESCO Declared 'Garba of Gujarat' as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

The 2023 has been incredible for India in terms of achieving global recognition from UNESCO. India has once again celebrated yet another inclusion of India's popular folk dance Garba as the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity at the year's end during the 18th session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Botswana. It is the 15th inscription from India on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity which is a group of a total of 700 entries from worldwide that includes Yoga, Calligraphy, etc.



Source: <https://india.un.org/en/255203-garba-joins-unesco-list-intangible-cultural-heritage>

Garba is a traditional folk dance of Gujarat which is a ritualistic and devotional dance to celebrate the Navratri festival every year. In those nine days, Garba takes place within homes, courtyards, public spaces, streets, and large open grounds of the state making it a regional community celebration event.



Source: <https://india.un.org/en/255203-garba-joins-unesco-list-intangible-cultural-heritage>

The global recognition ensures the viability of this tradition and inspires the coming generations especially the young ones to continue the practice while learning the knowledge and skills associated with this traditional art form.



Source: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/garba-gujarat-inscribed-unesco-representative-list-intangible-cultural-heritage-humanity>

This is an integral and unique component of Gujarat's culture and is also popular in other parts of the country and among Indian diaspora communities. Practicing Garba fosters social and gender equality while discouraging socioeconomic disparities and rigid social structures present in the community by increasing harmony among individuals and strengthening community bonds.



Source: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/garba-gujarat-inscribed-unesco-representative-list-intangible-cultural-heritage-humanity>

The recognition will enhance the viability of this traditional folk dance of Gujarat at the global level while safeguarding this cultural heritage and its know-how. This time, the other inscriptions included under the list along with Garba are Rickshaw and Rickshaw Painting (Dhaka, Bangladesh), Folk Music Festival Junkanoo (Bahamas), and Opera-Singing from Italy among others in the two crucial list categories named Representative List and Urgent Safeguarding List based on needs of raising awareness about its importance and significance and to ensure its survival respectively.



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