



SECTOR SPECIFIC REPORT

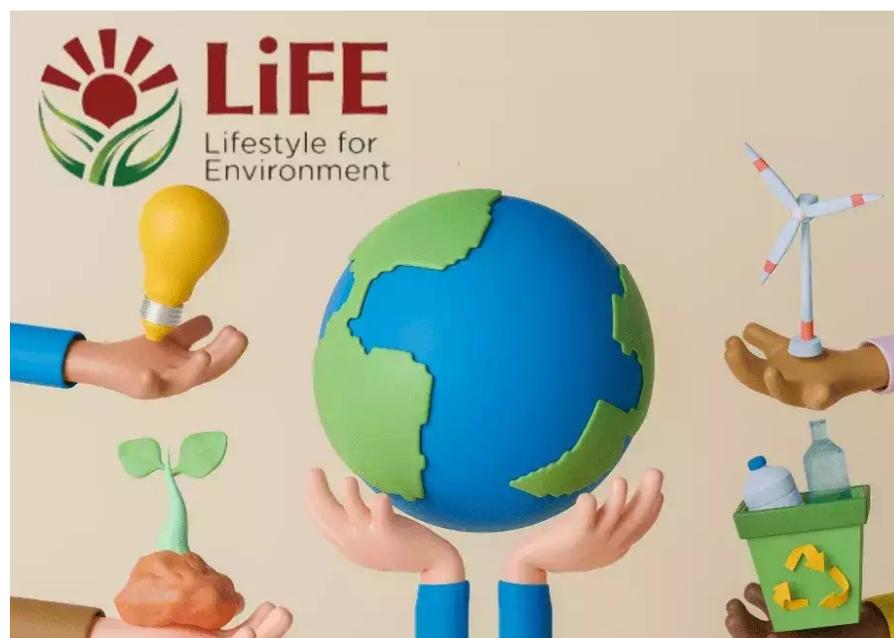
FOREST & ENVIRONMENT

- Government of India Notifies Ecomark Rules in line with the 'LiFE Mission'
- The Red Panda Conservation Program Became a Finalist in the 2024 WAZA Conservation & Environment Sustainability Awards
- Forest Survey of India Released ISFR 2023 Report
- National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, 2023 Addressing Sustainable Management of Forests and Natural Resources
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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA NOTIFIES ECOMARK RULES IN LINE WITH THE 'LIFE MISSION'

The Government of India, on 26 September 2024, notified new Ecomark rules as part of its mission to promote sustainable consumption under the 'Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) Mission.' These guidelines are aligned with the objective of encouraging citizens to adopt environment-friendly habits and reduce their carbon footprints, a goal in sync with India's commitments to achieving sustainable development.



Source: <https://government.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/policy/centre-notifies-ecomark-rules-under-lifestyle-for-environment-initiative/113938087>

The “Ecomark” label, awarded to products meeting stringent environmental criteria, incentivizes industries to adopt sustainable practices in manufacturing, packaging, and disposal. By setting standards across diverse product categories, Ecomark aims to reshape the market toward more environmentally conscious choices.



Source: <https://certificationinindia.com/eco-mark-scheme-bureau-of-indian-standards/>

KEY NOTIFIED ECOMARK RULES

Products with Ecomark must be sustainable and eco-friendly.

Specific certification criteria include environmental impact and energy efficiency.

Manufacturers must take responsibility for a product's full lifecycle.

Ecomark products require transparent labeling on sustainability attributes.

Hazardous substances in certified products are restricted.

Eco-innovations are incentivized for waste and resource reduction.

Public awareness campaigns promote Ecomark-labeled products.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is overseeing Ecomark implementation in collaboration with various industry stakeholders to ensure the labels' credibility and to facilitate consumer awareness. The labels are awarded based on a product's life-cycle impact, covering its raw material usage, production process, energy consumption, waste generation, and potential to be reused or recycled.

With Ecomark, India is joining other nations in establishing eco-labeling as a tool for environmentally responsible consumerism, following the example of countries in the **European Union, Japan, and the United States.** By encouraging the domestic market to shift towards eco-labeled goods, India is not only working toward environmental sustainability but also creating opportunities for green jobs and industries to thrive.



Source: <https://theinvestorsbook.com/eco-labelling.html>

According to various government sources, the Ecomark initiative aims to raise awareness about sustainable consumer behaviour, empowering citizens and businesses to make informed choices. This initiative not only contributes to environmental protection but also enhances India's global position as a leader in sustainability and green policy innovation, aligning with the nation's broader goals under international climate agreements. These steps mark significant progress in India's ongoing transition to a sustainable economy, making environmentally responsible products more accessible and attractive to the average consumer.



THE RED PANDA CONSERVATION PROGRAM BECAME A FINALIST IN THE 2024 WAZA CONSERVATION & ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

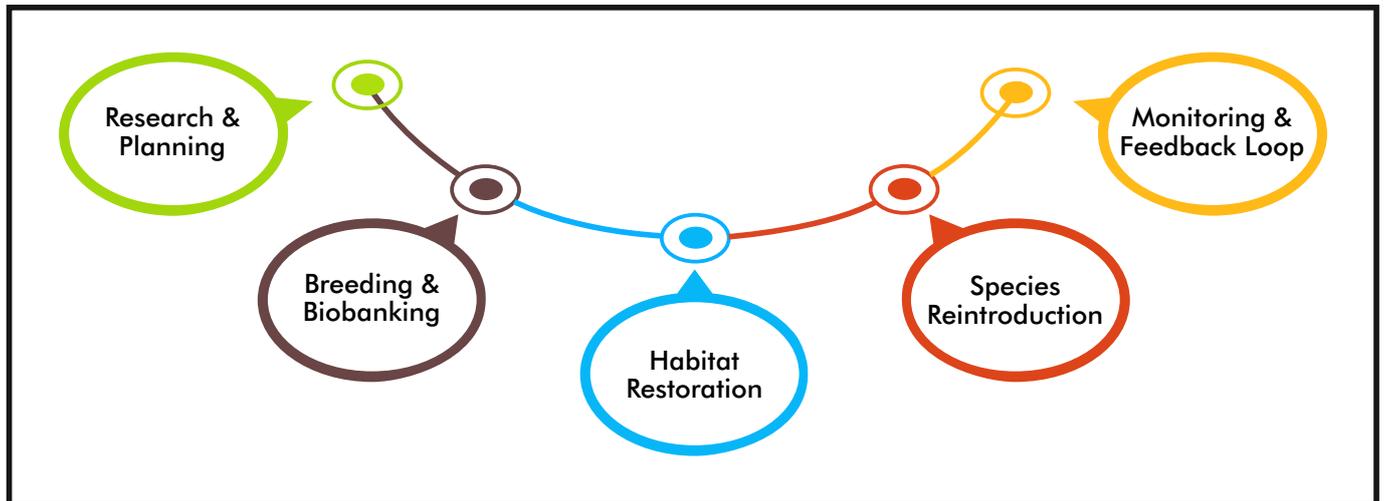
The Red Panda Conservation Breeding and Augmentation Program has given a proud moment to the country on the global stage. **This year the Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (PNHZA) in Darjeeling has become a finalist for the prestigious 2024 World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) Conservation & Environment Sustainability Awards.**



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=2062982>

This recognition highlights the significant efforts made by PNHZP in conserving the endangered **red panda**, a species native to the **Eastern Himalayas**, often called a **“living fossil”** due to its **unique evolutionary lineage**.

MAJOR STEP UNDER ONGOING CONSERVATION EFFORTS



The program has focussed on breeding, habitat restoration, and the reintroduction of red pandas into the wild, particularly in the Singalila National Park (SNP), a biodiversity hotspot in West Bengal. **PNHZP successfully released 9 captive-breed red pandas which include seven females and two males red pandas into their native habitat in the last two years i.e. between 2022 to 2024.** This initiative has seen remarkable success, with three of the released females giving birth to five cubs in the wild. This showcases the positive adaptation and a promising boost to the species' population in its natural environment.



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=2062982>

The program's success lies in its collaborative approach, partnering with the West Bengal Wildlife Wing, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB). These institutions offered critical support in genetic research, habitat assessment, and post-release monitoring. The zoo's Biobanking and Genetic Resource Facility also played a vital role by preserving biological samples like gametes, tissues, and DNA, aiding the conservation of genetic diversity for future breeding efforts.



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=2062982>

WAZA's recognition underscores the program's success and shines a global spotlight on India's commitment to wildlife conservation. The final winners of the award are supposed to be announced at the 79th WAZA Annual Conference which is going to be held in Sydney, Australia. The selection itself has set a benchmark for future conservation efforts, emphasizing the role of scientific research, community support, and habitat restoration in protecting endangered species like the red panda in India.

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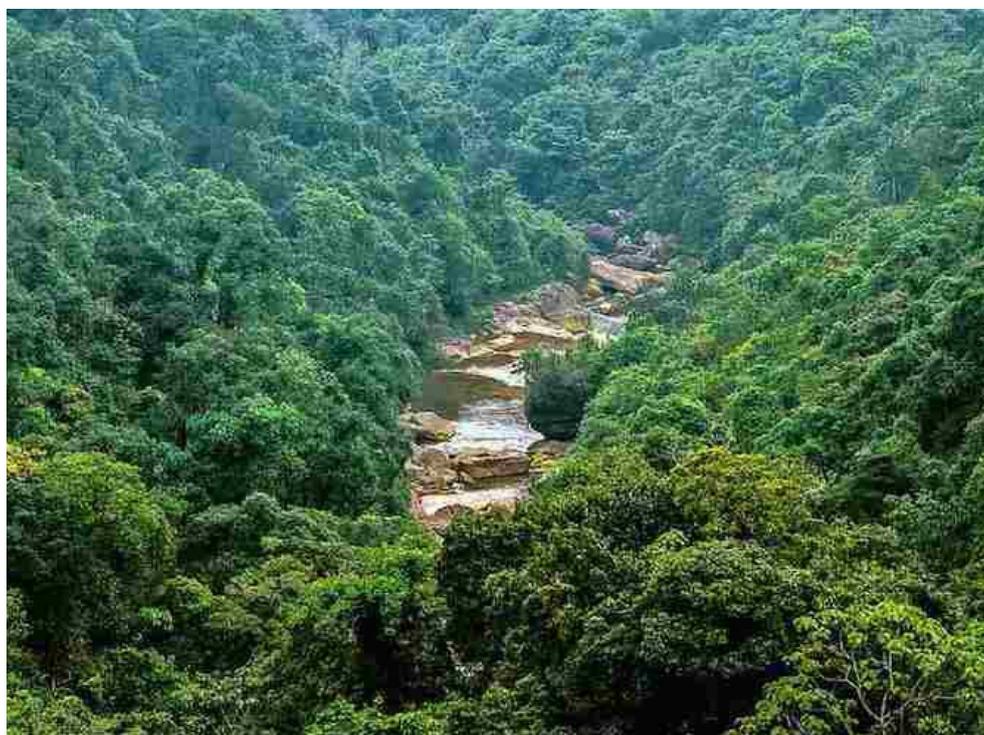
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FOREST SURVEY OF INDIA RELEASED ISFR 2023 REPORT

The Forest Survey of India (FSI) recently released its India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, offering critical insights into India's forest cover, health, and carbon stock. **Published every two years, the ISFR serves as an essential resource for formulating environmental policies and forest management strategies.**



Source: <https://www.gktoday.in/india-state-of-forest-report-isfr2023-report/>

**FOREST COVER
MONITORING AND
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Forest Area Assessment

Carbon Stock Calculation

Policy Recommendations

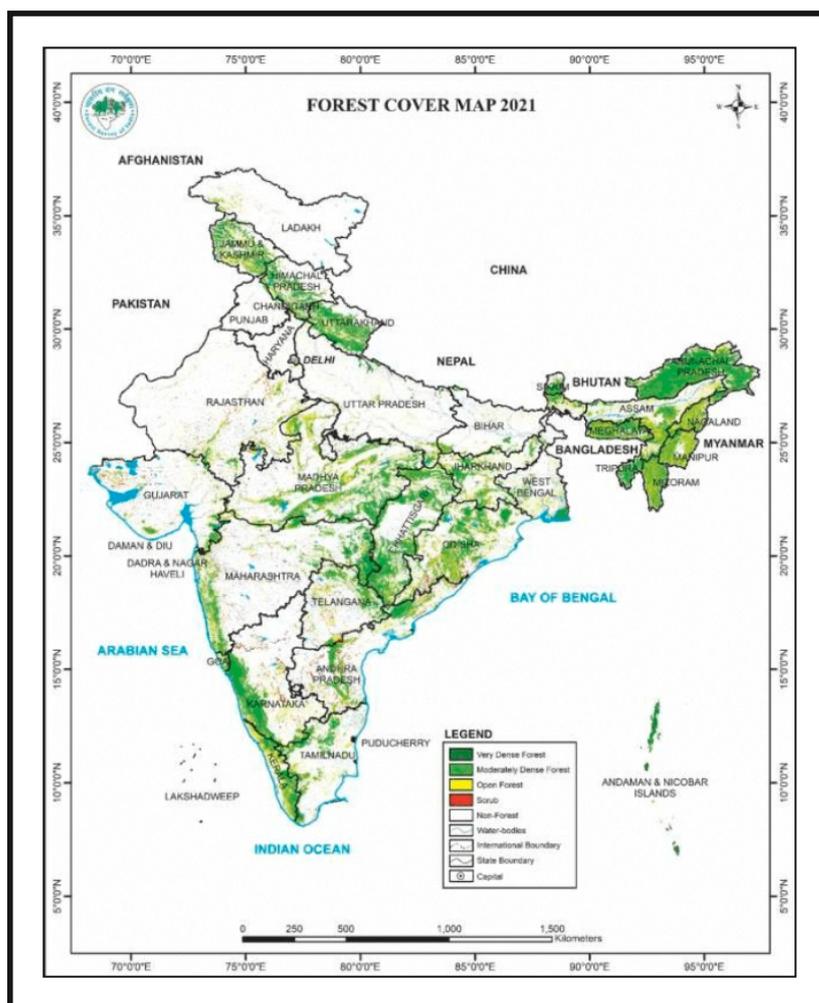
Implementation of Conservation Measures

Annual Monitoring

The report highlights India's progress in managing its forest resources, especially concerning its climate goals. **It provides a comprehensive analysis of forest area, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration, integral to national climate action efforts.**

This edition of ISFR was delayed, marking only the second delay in its history, potentially due to issues surrounding forest classification and evolving forest conservation policies, including the amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act 2023. There are concerns regarding inconsistencies in forest data, with environmentalists questioning the accuracy of satellite-based measurements and the classification of certain areas.

The ISFR 2021, which was the last report, showed a slight increase in India's forest cover to 713,789 square kilometres, though some experts argue that this data may not fully reflect the status of natural forests, given the growth in plantations and monoculture areas.



Source: <https://sigmaearth.com/rise-in-indias-forest-tree-cover-isfr-report/>

KEY FINDINGS FROM ISFR 2021

The total forest and tree cover in India assessed as 80.9 million hectare that is near about 25% of the geographical area of the country.

From previous year of assessment i.e. 2019, an increase of 2261 square km in the total forest and tree cover has been assessed.

Out of this total, 1540 square km increase has been observed in India's forest cover only.

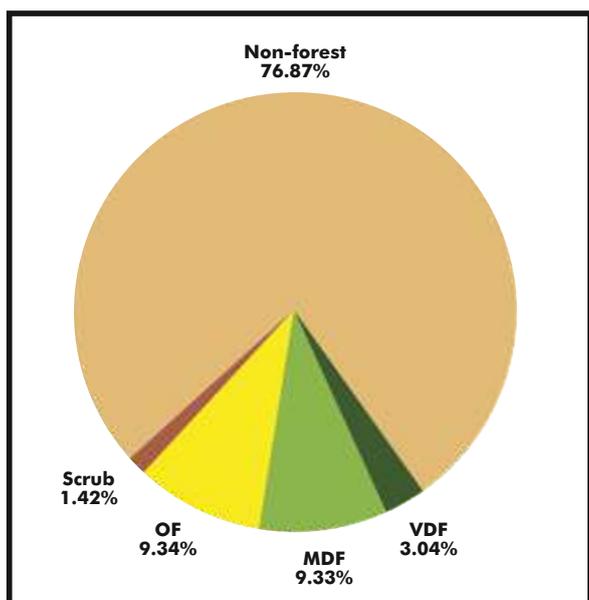
17 Indian states/ UTs has above 33% of their total geographical area under forest cover

Five states/ UTs with more than 75% Forest Cover are: Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya

Total carbon stock in India's Forest is assessed around 7204 million tonnes with an increase of 79.4 million tonnes carbon stock in comparison to previous assessment year i.e. 2019

The 2021 assessment report included special thematic information on forest cover such as hill, tribal districts, and north eastern region.

FOREST COVER OF INDIA IN 2021 ASSESSMENT



Source: <https://fsi.nic.in/isfr-2021/chapter-2.pdf>

Deforestation remains a significant concern, with much of the loss attributed to infrastructure development, mining, and urbanization. The 2023 report aims to address these issues by adhering to new standards for transparency, including the online publication of State Expert Committee reports.

This aligns with the government's efforts to improve forest governance, especially following the Supreme Court's directive to enhance public accountability regarding forest classification. These steps are expected to play a crucial role in shaping the country's long-term environmental policies. The findings of ISFR 2023 will likely influence key policy decisions at both the national and state levels, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that supports development while safeguarding India's valuable forest ecosystems.



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, 2023 ADDRESSING SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

India unveiled the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification in 2023. **This initiative focuses on the sustainable management of forests and natural resources and aims to address Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought.** It aligns with the nation's broader Environmental Sustainability Goals under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

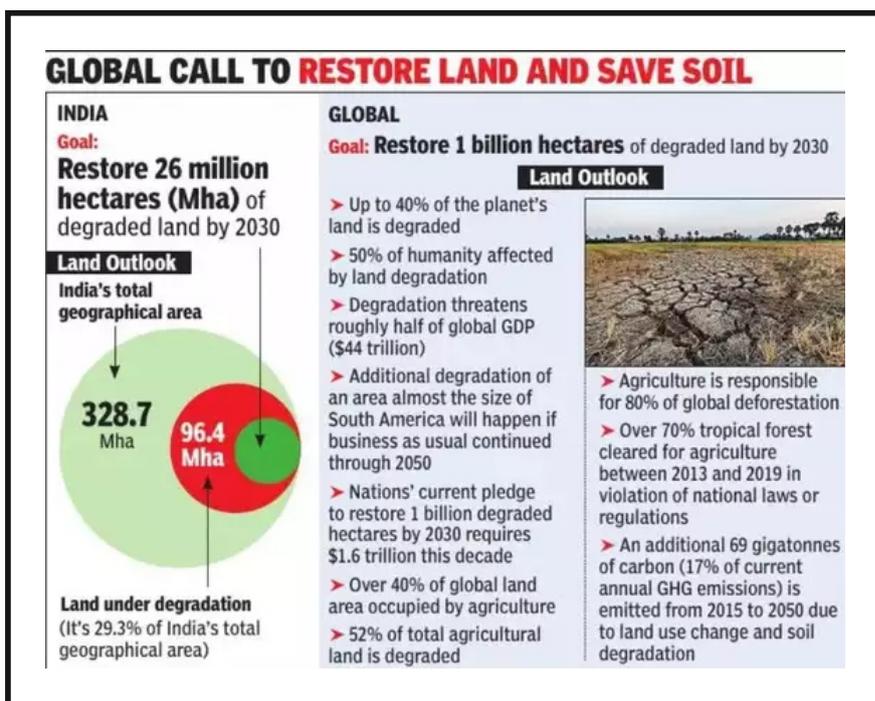


Source: <https://www.fortuneindia.com/macro/95-of-indias-land-degraded-368-drought-prone-unccd/114559>

It aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 15, which focuses on land restoration and biodiversity conservation. India's focus on these initiatives is critical, as approximately 29% of its land area has faced degradation, impacting agriculture, water resources, and biodiversity.

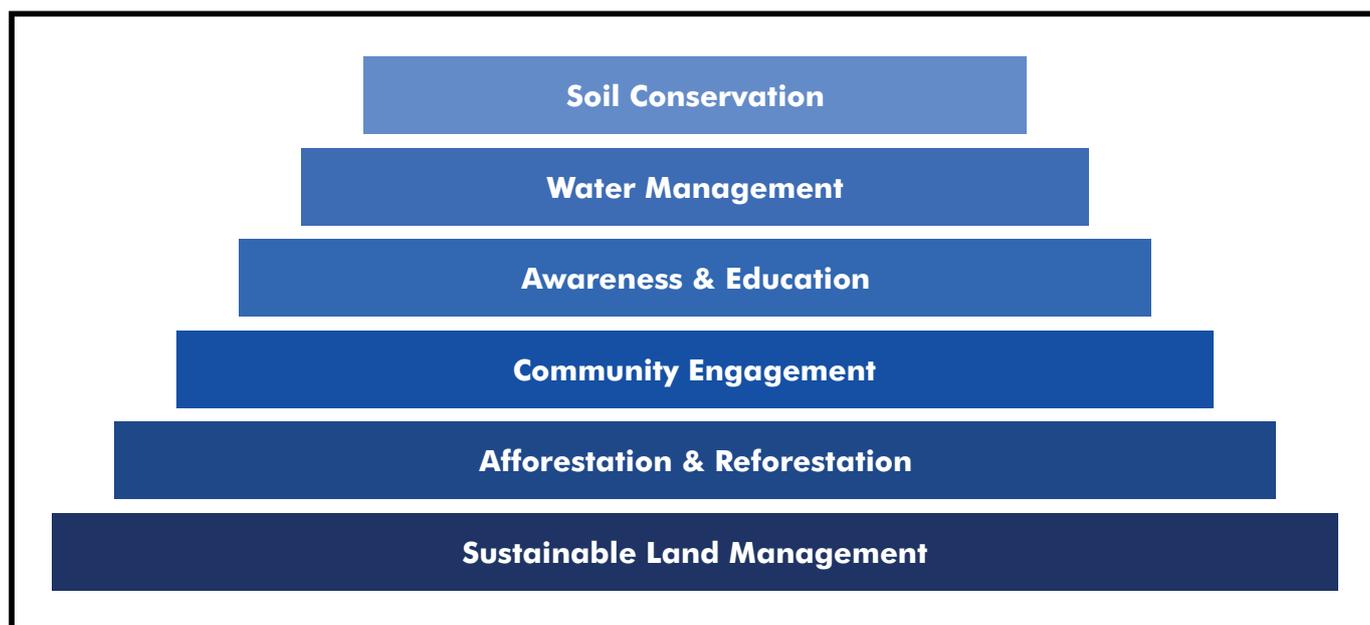
The 2023 action plan adopts innovative techniques like remote sensing for land use mapping and artificial intelligence for data analysis.

Sustainable forest management lies at the core, with afforestation programs designed to restore degraded lands while increasing green cover. Prominent government initiatives, such as the Green India Mission and Harit Bharat Abhiyan, complement these efforts by promoting large-scale tree plantations.



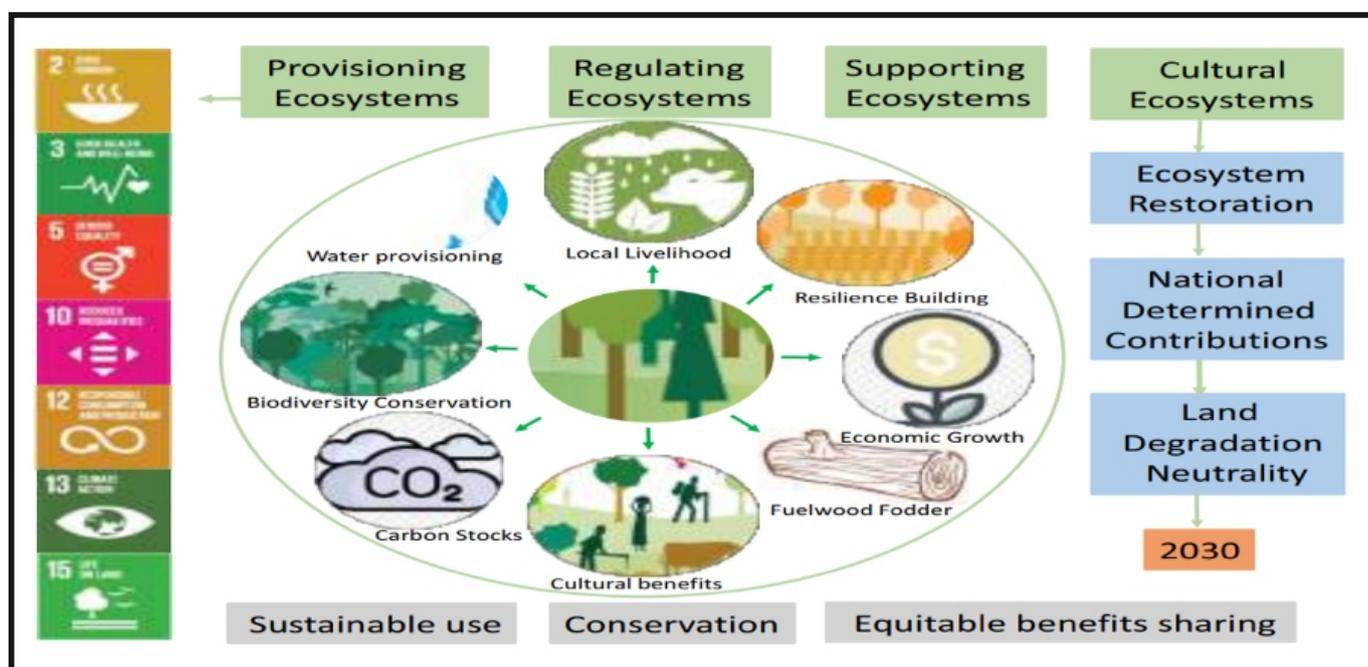
Source: <https://www.drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-editorials/27-02-2024>

STEPS INVOLVED IN COMBATING DESERTIFICATION IN INDIA



To strengthen grassroots participation, the plan involves community-based programs that educate locals on sustainable land practices, aligning with the LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) movement, which emphasizes environmentally conscious behaviour. Collaborating with stakeholders across sectors, including private firms, NGOs, and local authorities, **the plan aims to enhance resilience and adaptation strategies, addressing both ecological and socio-economic aspects of desertification.**

INTER-RELATION AMONG UN SDG'S, NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDC'S), AND LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY (LDN)



Source: <https://icfre.gov.in/publication/publication51.pdf>

The National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, 2023, highlights India's strategic course in sustainable resource management. It aims to combat land degradation while securing biodiversity. Building resilience and promoting sustainable practices serves as a critical blueprint for achieving **India's goal of land degradation neutrality by 2030**, setting a model for other nations facing similar challenges

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PROGRESS OF GREEN INDIA MISSION

The Green India Mission (GIM), an initiative under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), has made significant strides in advancing forest conservation and increasing tree cover across India. **As of 2023, the mission is working toward its target of increasing forest and tree cover by 10 million hectares, including both forest and non-forest lands.**

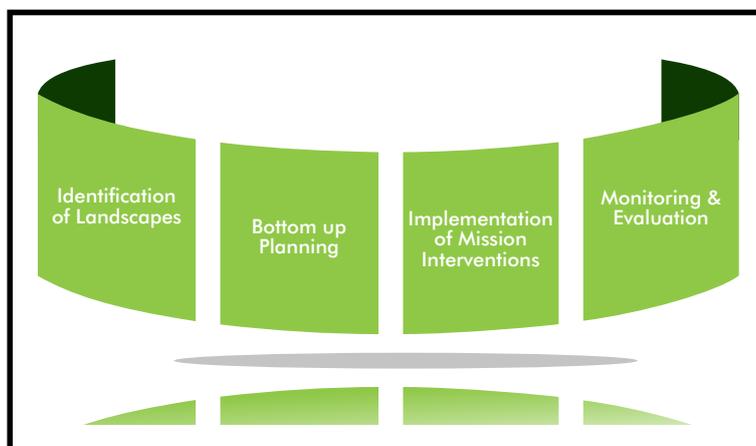
This target is crucial for enhancing the **quality of existing forests and boosting the ecological services they provide, such as Carbon Sequestration, Water Conservation, and Biodiversity Preservation.**



Source: https://jkforest.gov.in/assets/pdf/gim/GIM_Mission-Documents-1.pdf

The mission's success relies on the active participation of various states. Due to this, **GIM has facilitated eco-restoration on over 155,130 hectares, allocating Rs. 909.82 Crores to 17 states and one union territory. Specific examples include 464.20 hectares in Maharashtra's Palghar District for plantation activities.** However, the state of Telangana has not yet submitted its plan, resulting in no allocated funds for the region, delaying its participation in the mission's implementation.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM GREEN INDIA MISSION (GIM)



STATE/UT-WISE FUNDING DETAILS UNDER GIM BETWEEN 2019-20 TO 2023-24 (RS. IN CRORES)

S.NO.	State/ UT	Funds Allocated/Disbursed	Funds Utilized
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2.02	2.74
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	34.71	10.56
3.	Chhattisgarh	12.91	11.38
4.	Haryana	17.15	16.82
5.	Himachal Pradesh	17.09	6.55
6.	Jammu & Kashmir	32.22	31.70
7.	Karnataka	14.27	13.56
8.	Kerala	16.32	15.74
9.	Madhya Pradesh	75.49	88.92
10.	Maharashtra	0.00	1.78
11.	Manipur	35.19	26.28
12.	Mizoram	107.96	86.83
13.	Odisha	79.00	74.91
14.	Punjab	14.62	9.38
15.	Sikkim	27.16	27.16
16.	Uttarakhand	122.22	113.31
17.	West Bengal	10.95	10.18
18.	Uttar Pradesh	5.43	0.00
	Total	624.71	547.82

Note: Fund Utilized also include the expenditure incurred from the release prior to FY2019-20

Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2038296>

The mission encompasses several sub-components, including enhancing forest quality, ecosystem restoration, increasing urban tree cover, and promoting agroforestry. It also focuses on addressing climate change through both adaptation and mitigation strategies, ensuring that the benefits of afforestation are sustainable for local communities. In addition, the mission supports green jobs in rural areas and encourages biodiversity conservation through innovative methods such as the integration of local communities in afforestation efforts.



The progress of the mission has been evaluated by the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog, which recommended its continuation based on positive findings regarding the mission's relevance, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. While the mission has encountered some delays, its integrated approach towards ecosystem restoration and community involvement is expected to play a crucial role in India's climate change mitigation strategies.



EMINENT INSIGHT



“ In today's time and age, the importance of forests has captured public imagination and a global understanding is slowly emerging that in order to survive, mankind has to ensure the sustainable use of forests and tree resources. The National Forest Policy and other legislations prescribe the pathway of forest conservation and management for meeting the people's need. Rapid progress on the economic front necessitates scientific balancing of the development needs with the requirements of conservation and ecological security of the nation. ”

Shri Bhupender Yadav
Union Minister of Environment,
Forest and Climate Change
Government of India

RESOURCES

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