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Presently, he holds the prestigious position of Literature Secretary at CASFOS, Coimbatore, where he combines his literary inclination with technical understanding to promote knowledge sharing among officer trainees. His academic curiosity and dedication to clarity and precision are evident in this work, “An Overview about IFWCS”, which reflects his commitment to disseminating technical knowledge in a simple and structured manner.



An overview about Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) - “PRAMAAN”

(Program for Recognition and Accreditation of Sustainable Management Practices for Agroforestry and Natural Forestry Resources)

Alok Ranjan Hota



**CENTRAL ACADEMY FOR STATE FOREST SERVICE
COIMBATORE**

2025



Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme
PRAMAAN
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India



M. Management/ Working Plan/एम. प्रबंधन/कार्ययोजना:	Yes/हाँ ☐
	No/नहीं ☐
N. Identified Risk and Mitigation Measures/एन. पहचाने गए जोखिम और शमन उपाय:	Yes/हाँ ☐
	No/नहीं ☐

Affirmation: पुष्टि:

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FOREWORD

Forests are the green lifelines of our planet. They provide us with clean air, water, food, and countless materials that sustain our daily lives. In India, forests are also deeply connected to our culture, traditions, and communities. Managing these forests responsibly is not only an environmental need but also a moral and economic responsibility.

This book, “An Overview of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (PRAMAAN)”, presents a comprehensive account of the scheme's principles, structure, and operational guidelines. It aims to inform forest managers, policymakers, researchers, industry stakeholders, and civil society about the certification process, standards, and institutional mechanisms that underpin PRAMAAN.

I hope that this book will serve as a valuable resource for all those working towards the conservation and sustainable utilization of our nation's forest resources, ensuring that the wealth of our forests continues to benefit the present and future generations.

V. Thirunavukarasu, IFS
APCCF & Principal,
CASFOS, Coimbatore



PREFACE

Forests are among the most vital natural resources on Earth, supporting ecological balance, biodiversity conservation, and the livelihoods of millions. In India, sustainable forest management has long been integral to the nation's environmental and developmental policies. To strengthen this commitment and align with global best practices, the **Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS)** – branded as “**PRAMAAN**” – has been established.

This book, “An Overview of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (PRAMAAN)”, is designed to help readers understand the concept, structure, and importance of forest and wood certification in India. It explains the key components of PRAMAAN in simple terms, highlighting how certification benefits forest managers, entrepreneurs, local communities, and the environment.

The goal of this publication is to build awareness and capacity among forestry professionals, and stakeholders so that they can actively participate in promoting sustainable forestry. By adopting responsible forest management practices, we can ensure that India's rich forest heritage continues to thrive for generations to come.

-Alok Hota

ACF Trainee SFS 2023-25 Batch
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I am profoundly grateful to the Principal, CASFOS, Coimbatore, Shri V. Thirunavukarasu, IFS, and Course Director, Dr. C. Vidhyasagar, IFS, for their guidance, encouragement, and motivation in undertaking meaningful work in my area of interest.

I also express my appreciation to all the faculty of CASFOS, Coimbatore, for shaping my professional perspective and fostering a focused inclination toward my chosen field.

I am grateful to the staff and my colleagues at the Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS), Coimbatore, for their constant encouragement and guidance throughout this journey.

With regards
- Alok Hota



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India after adopting the principles of Sustainable Forest Management, has developed a National set of 8 Criteria, 69 Indicators and 253 verifiers on Sustainable Management of Natural Forests and 5 Criteria, 22 Indicators and 78 Verifiers on Trees Outside Forests Management Standard under the Bhopal - India Process. It was Launched as per the Gazette of India Notification No. 3-19/2022-SU dated 12 December 2023. It uses National Working Plan Code (NWPC) 2023 based on sustainable forest management for formulating the IFWCS-PRAMAAN scheme.

This Scheme will be governed by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (IFWCC) under the Additional Director General of Forest.

This was pilot tested in 26 forest divisions spread across 12 states of the country over a span of 12 years (2001-2013) by IIFM, Bhopal. IIFM Bhopal is the scheme operating agency.

The IIFM, Bhopal Centre for Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification will act as the Secretariat.

Accreditation of Certifying bodies will be done by Quality Council of India and the National Accreditation board for Certifying Bodies.

The Indian Forest Management Standard (IFMS) has been developed and made an integral part of the National Working Plan Code 2023. The IFMS evaluates and monitors the parameters to assess the progress towards achieving sustainable forest management in the Country.

After being the National Working Plan Code (NWPC) 2023 revised and the Indian Forest Management Standard (IFMS) right in place, the next step towards sustainable management of Forest is to develop an Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme.

The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) envisages to provide market incentives to the forest divisions and plantation areas where effective implementation of the criteria and the indicators of the Indian Forest Management Standard (IFMS) as contained in the National Working Plan Code 2023 is followed and maintained.

IFWCS is applicable across the country to both Forest areas and Trees Outside Forests (TOF) plantations on government, private, agroforestry and other lands also the certification scheme extends to both timber and non-timber forest produce (NTFP) for the sustainable management.

The certification may be set as a rule for forest management but it is not binding to the rule of law, or it may not be quoted to serve a legal notice.

The certification scheme may be implemented to the Forest Management Unit or forest divisions or corporations or wood-based industries, tree growers, timber or NTFP traders, saw millers, exporters/importers of wood-based and NTFP-based products, and other end-user Industries.

This document contains the requirements of three types of certifications namely:

- 1) Forest Management certification or (FM) certification – It is the certification of Recorded Forest Areas that have an approved working plan/working scheme prepared in accordance with the NWPC 2023.
- 2) Trees outside Forests Management certification or (ToF) Management certification – It is the certification of Trees outside Forest areas to the effect that such areas have an appropriate management plan/working plan/working scheme and their management practices. Trees outside Forests have significance of all three components of sustainability viz. economic, environmental and social, including the supply chain.
- 3) Chain of Custody certification or (CoC) certification – It is the certification of unbroken path taken by products (such as timber or NTFP) from the forests, or trees outside forests to the point where the product is sold with an IFWCS claim and/or it is converted into a finished product (such as paper, furniture, handicraft, wood panels, herbal products) that are IFWCS labelled in compliance to IFWCS CoC standards.

IFWCS-PRAMAAN intends to

- 1 Make certification cost effective
- 2 Reduce the time frame
- 3 Make Indian standards globally acceptable
- 4 Bring certification amongst TOF farmers and tree growers

5 Promote the procedure for group certification

IFMS (Indian Forest Management System): 8 Criteria, 69 Indicators, 253 Verifiers

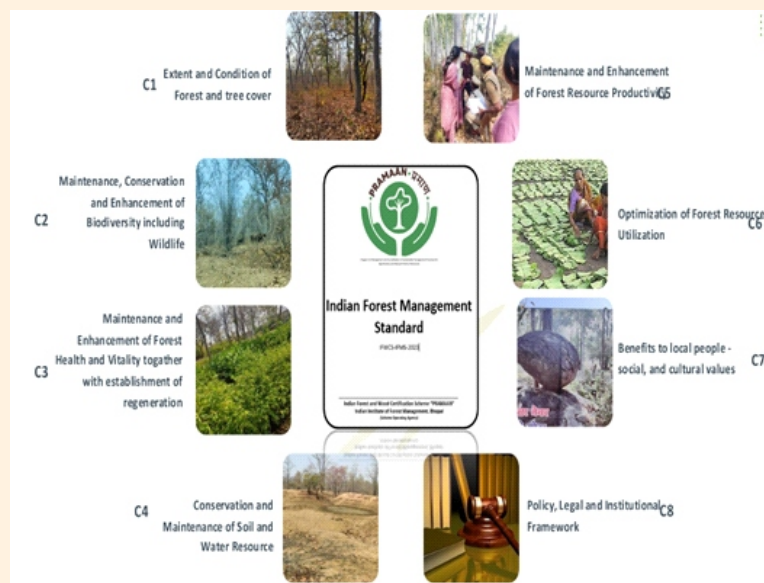


Fig. 1. Indian Forest Management System

Criteria 1: Extent and condition of forest and tree cover

Indicator

- 1.1: Area of forests under different legal status (Reserved Forests/Protected Forests/ Unclassed Forests/ Village Forests and any other forests)
- 1.2: Area of different forest types Indicator
- 1.3: Change in the category of forest cover Indicator
- 1.4: Area of different working circles Indicator

- 1.5: Area of the Trees Outside Forests (TOF) Indicator
- 1.6: Details of the area of forests diverted under the FCA Indicator
- 1.7: Details of forest land where rights are given under the FRA Indicator
- 1.8: Details of forest land under encroachments Indicator
- 1.9: Demarcation of boundaries Indicator
- 1.10: Details of any other factors affecting the existence of forests such as illegal mining, dumping of mining waste, etc.

Criteria 2: Maintenance, Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity

Indicator

- 2.1: Adjoining Protected Areas Indicator
- 2.2: Species diversity Indicator
- 2.3: Details of any species-specific conservation programmes Indicator
- 2.4: Details of species prone to over-exploitation Indicator
- 2.5: Details of unique/special habitats and high conservation value areas Indicator
- 2.6: Details of diverse ecosystems such as grasslands, meadows, wetlands, mangroves, marine, deserts, etc.
- 2.7: Details of threats and challenges to vulnerable flora and fauna

Criteria3: Maintenance and Enhancement of Forest Health and Vitality

Indicator

- 3.1: Status of regeneration of the principal species and its associates Indicator
- 3.2: Details of areas affected by forest fire Indicator
- 3.3: Area affected by natural factors such as floods, landslides and windstorms etc. Indicator
- 3.4: Area affected by and protected from grazing Indicator
- 3.5: Area infested with invasive alien species Indicator
- 3.6: Details of the incidence of pest and diseases Indicator
- 3.7: Forest degradation due to pollution Indicator
- 3.8: Other drivers of forest degradation

Criteria4: Conservation and Maintenance of Soil and Water Resource

Indicator

- 4.1: Inventory of water bodies and sources Indicator
- 4.2: Area treated under soil and water conservation measures
- 4.3: Monitoring of groundwater
- 4.4: Identification of areas vulnerable to erosion and prescription for suitable treatment
- 4.5: Mapping of riparian zones for special management prescriptions

- 4.6: Monitoring of streams, lakes, wetlands, ponds and other water bodies in forested catchments

Criteria5: Maintenance and Enhancement of Forest Resource Productivity

Indicator

- 5.1: Estimation of the growing stock of wood Indicator
- 5.2: Estimation of current annual increment and mean annual increment of the forest crop Indicator
- 5.3: Assessment of forest structure Indicator
- 5.4: Estimation of Basal Area (BA) and the number of stems per unit area Indicator
- 5.5: Estimation of carbon stock of the forests
- 5.6: Area taken up for eco-restoration, rehabilitation and reclamation
- 5.7: Area taken up for improved productivity through forest plantation
- 5.8: Area taken up for tending operation and other operations
- 5.9: Analysis of species composition

Criteria6: Optimisation of Forest Resource Utilisation

Indicator

- 6.1: Agriculture customs and requirements of the local people

- 6.2: Listing of important Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs)
- 6.3: Details of non-destructive/sustainable harvesting of resources
- 6.4: Demand and supply of timber and NTFPs
- 6.5: Low impact harvesting
- 6.6: Recorded removal of timber, firewood, grasses, fodder, bamboos, NTFPs etc.
- 6.7: Valuation of the forest resources
- 6.8: Forest enterprises
- 6.9: Access and benefit sharing

Criteria 7: Benefits to Local People - Social, and Cultural Values

Indicator

- 7.1: Details of employment generated
- 7.2: Use of traditional Knowledge and listing of knowledge holders
- 7.3: Sacred groves and other cultural values
- 7.4: Details of social customs on forests and forestry practices
- 7.5: Ecotourism sites and activities
- 7.6: Identification of rights and concessions of the local communities (other than the FRA)
- 7.7: Ecosystem services and benefits

Criteria 8: Policy, Legal and Institutional Framework

Indicator

- 8.1: Existing policy and legal instruments governing the forest management
- 8.2: Role of panchayats or any locally elected bodies in the district/council areas in forest management
- 8.3: Participatory Forest management
- 8.4: Details of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)
- 8.5: Forest, biodiversity and wildlife related offences
- 8.6: Financial outlay
- 8.7: Human resource
- 8.8: Gender aspects
- 8.9: Labour welfare
- 8.10: Environmental awareness and education
- 8.11: Infrastructural support
- 8.12: Research and development
- 8.13: Existence of monitoring mechanism

TOFMS (Trees Outside Forest Management System):

5 Criteria, 22 Indicators, 76 Verifiers



Fig. 2. Trees Outside Forest Management System

Criteria 1: Maintenance and increase in the extent of the area under ToF

Indicator 1.1: Extent of tree plantation/agroforestry

Verifiers

- i. Documentation of land use/land cover
- ii. Plantation Journal

Indicator 1.2: Extent of utility of ToF

Verifiers

- i. Percentage of output from ToF used for commercial and non-commercial purposes
- ii. Monetary value of the products used for commercial purposes.
- iii. Percentage of raw material demand of the forest-based industries in the region met from ToF

Criteria 2: Maintenance, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystem services through ToF

Indicator 2.1: Species diversity in ToF

Indicator 2.2: Protected area network and ToF

Verifiers

- i. Establishment of wildlife corridors and development of wildlife habitats through plantations.
- ii. List of species conserved by developing corridors for the protected area network

Indicator 2.3: Effectiveness of ToF in soil and water conservation

Verifiers

- i. Total area identified and demarcated for the protection of soil and water conservation
- ii. Number of physical and biological measures/structures for soil and moisture conservation in tree plantations
- iii. Documentation of the impacts of plantations on surface and ground water in the watershed
- iv. Enhancement in natural regeneration and growth of the saplings in plantations
- v. Improvement in land capability
- vi. Riparian zones (area adjacent to rivers/wetland) are identified, defined and protected before harvesting

- vii. Reduced impact logging mechanisms are devised

Indicator 2.4: Ecological restoration and rejuvenation of degraded and denuded land using ToF

Verifiers

- i. Wasteland map with the extent and intensity of degradation or denudation
- ii. Land capability classification
- iii. Soil health status
- iv. Methods for managing culturable and non-culturable wastelands

Indicator 2.5: Potential carbon stock mapping

Verifier

- i. Documents on growing stock (volume, biomass etc.)
- ii. Document on tree and soil carbon stock assessment

Criteria 3: Conservation, maintenance and enhancement of the productivity and vitality of ToF

Indicators 3.1: Survival and growth of planted species

Verifiers

- i. Plantation register with records of survival and growth statistics of different planted species at periodic intervals
- ii. Re-planting of saplings in successive years
- iii. Annual growth parameter monitoring report including data on Current Annual Increment and

Mean Annual Increment, growing stock and other growth parameters.

Indicator 3.2: Extent and nature of damage to ToF

Verifiers

- i. Type and extent of diseases and pest infestations
- ii. Records on the frequency of natural calamities and area damaged
- iii. Integrated pest and disease management to minimise tree damage and mortality
- iv. Weed management practices to reduce weed competition promoting early canopy closure

Indicator 3.3: Rotation period of the tree species

Verifiers

- i. Long-term projections, strategies and plans for enhancing production
- ii. Harvesting plan as per the rotation period fixed at the time of planting the tree or deviation,

Indicator 3.4: Regeneration status of planted species

Verifiers

- i. Natural regeneration assessment reports
- ii. Practices for promoting assisted/natural regeneration

Indicator 3.5: Harvesting of trees Harvesting of trees in a phased manner and as per plan may facilitate the management of plantations in perpetuity

Verifiers

- i. Percentage area harvested for which pre-

- harvesting surveys have been conducted and a harvesting proposal prepared with an estimation of level of sustainable harvest for each species
- ii. Documentation of age v/s volume of harvested trees
- iii. Cost estimation of the harvest plan is as per the guidelines

Indicator 3.6: Existence and application of site-specific technologies for enhancing productivity.

Verifiers

- i. Report of potential productivity of the site from reputed R&D and management institutions, NGOs, accredited consultants
- ii. Document showing the chronological list of activities for the use of appropriate technologies in site selection, species selection, seed collection, nursery techniques, plantation and its maintenance
- iii. Records of use of local resources and the use of indigenous knowledge in raising plantations

Indicator 3.7: Greater reliance on eco-friendly methods for raising and management of ToF

Verifiers

- i. Installed renewable energy equipment
- ii. Extent of energy saved
- iii. Extent of use of organic manures/biocontrol agents (compared to total quantity of chemical fertilisers used, if any)

- iv. Available facility for on-site production of vermicompost
- v. Integrated pest management

Indicator 3.8: Optimisation of use, value addition and enhancing marketing opportunities of produce from ToF

Verifiers

- i. Existence and application of local processing and utilization of tree produce
- ii. An Effective purchase and supply mechanism with availability of online platforms
- iii. Market intelligence to assist in timely disposal of products
- iv. Diversifying the mix of commercial products derived from the forest plantation

Criteria 4: Socio-economic and cultural benefits of ToF

Indicator 4.1: Economic and sociocultural benefits generated for local communities

Verifiers

- i. Records on fruits, fuelwood, fodder etc. used by the local community
- ii. Records on the employment of local workers in plantations
- iii. Labour rules are implemented, and labour rights are protected
- iv. No child labour is involved in plantation activities

- v. Health and safety measures for employees in plantations including health insurance, suitable gears (helmet, hand gloves etc.), availability of a first-aid kit, maintenance of up-to-date safety records in compliance with all applicable laws and/or regulations
- vi. Cultural values such as recreation, religious worship and tourism are maintained.

Indicator 4.2: Social Impact Assessment (SIA)

Verifiers

- i. Social Impact Assessment report
- ii. Focus Group Discussion report

Criteria 5: Adequacy of policy, legal provisions and guiding documents for the establishment of trees outside the forest

Indicator 5.1: Adherence to the legal framework for establishment of trees outside the forest for production, conservation, and socio-cultural needs

Verifiers

- i. Land ownership documents land lease rules/legal agreement with farmers in case of a company seeking certification on behalf of farmers or a group of farmers.
- ii. Registration of plantation with the concerned authority as required by the relevant State Acts and Policies
- iii. Documents on policy/legal requirements regarding tree plantation, harvest and transport

consistent with the national objectives and the direction of the apex court, if any are available.

- iv. List of tree species that require a licence/ permission for cultivation, harvest and sales
- v. Felling and transit rules of the reach state
- vi. Applicable rules/legal provisions for the disposal/ selling of trees in the open market through timber depots

Indicator 5.2: Availability of a comprehensive management plan with clear objectives and guidelines

Verifiers

- i. Copy of duly approved management plan/micro-plan with guidelines for silvicultural operations (including sustainable harvesting/collection practices) for wood and non-wood produce
- ii. Plantation journal with details and timeline of silvicultural operations, with deviation,

Indicator 5.3: Institutional framework for research, development and best practices,

Verifiers

- i. Availability of the best package of practices for raising and management of the plantation.
- ii. Research & Development Plan of institutions
- iii. Availability of adequately trained manpower with the growers or concerned institutes
- iv. Transfer of technology (lab to land) mechanism

Indicators 5.4: Guidelines to identify, incorporate,

retain, and encourage the adoption of native multipurpose species in ToF

Verifiers

- i. People's Biodiversity Register from the concerned local body
- ii. Register of the number of native and endemic plants retained/adopted
- iii. Guidelines for retention and management of native species

Indicator 5.5: Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanism

Verifiers

- i. Written M&E Mechanism
- ii. Periodic M&E reports
- iii. Compliance with the feedback received
- iv. Complaint/ suggestion register

Accreditation body - It is a national agency / board responsible for accreditation of certification bodies to undertake audit or assessment of organisations seeking certification of their management practices against a pre-determined certification standard.

Auditing - It is the process of assessment or verification of forest management practices of an entity against the requirements of IFWCS Forest Management, ToF Management or CoC standard by an accredited Certification Body.

Certification Body (CB) - It means an entity approved by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council to undertake an audit or assessment of organizations seeking certification of their management practices against a predetermined certification standard of IFWCS.

Client - It is an entity such as a forest division, forest department or forest corporation an Individual, farmers' organization or a business organization at any stage of the wood / NTFP value chain that seeks to receive IFWCS certification.

Criteria - These are the aspects of forest management that is considered important and by which sustainable forest

management may be assessed. A criterion is accompanied by a set of related indicators that describe a state or situation, which should be met to comply with sustainable forest management.

Forest Management Unit (FMU) - It is a clearly defined forest area, managed to a set of explicit objectives and according to a long-term management plan. A FMU can be a forest division, plantation division, a protected area such as a national park or wildlife sanctuary, an individual private plantation plot/area, a group of private plantation plots/areas, or a community owned/managed forest area etc.;

Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (IFWCC) - It means Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council.

Indicators - It means a qualitative, quantitative or descriptive attribute that, when measured or monitored periodically, indicates, the direction of change in a criterion.

Intended situation - It describes the expected outcome with respect to the indicator in the context of the forest division;

SOA - Scheme Operating Agency

Standard - It is the Indian Forest Management Standard (IFMS) as contained in the NWPC 2023 and the standard for sustainable management of Trees Outside Forest areas in India as developed by IFWCS and as and when revised under the scheme;

Trees outside Forests (ToF) - It means trees growing outside recorded and notified forests, in the 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;

Verifiers - These are the data or information needed for assessing an Indicator. They define the specific details that would show whether an indicator is establishing the sustainability of forest. The verifiers are checked against a baseline, average value, published standard value, or collective wisdom of stakeholders.

IFWCS : Governing Structures

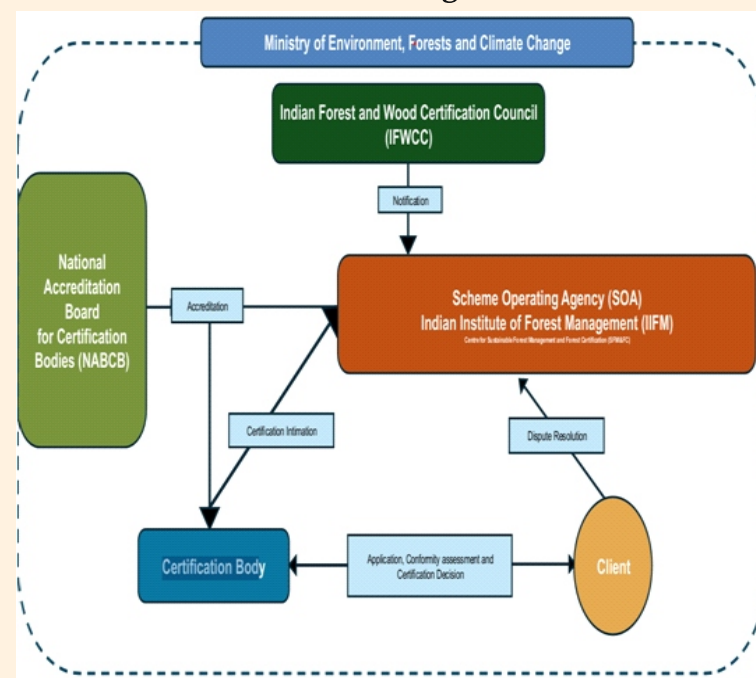


Fig. 3. Governing Structure of IFWCS

Chapter 3 Background

India has adopted the idea of Sustainable Forest Management, which means taking care of forests in a way that meets today's needs without harming them for the future. To support this, India developed a set of rules called Criteria, Indicators, and Verifiers through a process known as the Bhopal-India Process.

These rules were later included in the National Working Plan Code 2023, which guides how forests should be managed across the country. From this, the Indian Forest Management Standard was created.

To encourage forest divisions that follow these good practices, India launched the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS). This scheme gives market rewards or benefits to those who manage forests responsibly, using the approved standards.

Forest certification under this system acts like an eco-label (similar to ECOMARK), showing that the forest is managed in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way.

In addition, the Green Credit Program (GCP), run by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), gives Green Credits for doing extra work like

planting more trees, saving water, protecting and restoring forests, or producing eco-friendly timber for buildings and infrastructure.

The standards used in India's forest certification system are mostly based on the Bhopal-India Process, which is one of the 11 internationally recognized systems for sustainable forest management (as noted by Castañeda, 2000 and Linser, 2018).

This means that forests or plantations certified under the IFWCS – including agroforestry or Trees Outside Forests (ToF) – are recognized as being managed to global sustainability standards, while still being tailored for India's local conditions.

Chapter 4 Integration of Forest Certification within the NWPC 2023

The NWPC 2023 provides a framework evolved into a national forest certification program (featuring a set of criteria and indicators along with verifiers), for monitoring, assessment, and reporting on the implementation of Working Plan prescriptions.

Notably, i) clause 4.3 (The SFDs may...each of indicator) recommends that SFDs conduct management effectiveness evaluations based on the Indian Forest Management Standard (Annexure - II of NWPC 2023); and

ii) clause 4.4 (To be in...implementation of WP) emphasizes aligning with international mechanisms of SFM, the IFMS enables SFDs, WPOs, and DFOs to measure the effectiveness of forest management practices.

In order to ensure seamless coordination with forest-based industries, timber traders, and other stakeholders to promote market linkages for certified forest products, SFDs through the selection of forest divisions or working plan units that are suitable for certification, engages with Gram Sabhas/ Village Forest Management Committees to ensure compliance with the FRA, 2006, and its guidelines.

Chapter 5 Institutional arrangements for IFWCS

The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) is managed by a group called the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (IFWCC).

The IFWCC is in charge of:

- ▼ Using the Indian Forest Management Standard (IFMS) for forests and a separate ToF Management Standard for trees outside forests. These standards help ensure forests and trees are managed in a sustainable way.
- ▼ Approving independent organizations to carry out certifications, but only if they are officially accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB).
- ▼ Laying out the steps for certification that forest managers, plantation divisions, and other stakeholders need to follow.
- ▼ Setting the rules for how audits should be done by certification bodies. These audits are part of giving certifications for:
 - Forest Management (FM)
 - Trees Outside Forests (ToF)
 - Chain of Custody (CoC)

The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (IFWCC) will have the following composition

I.	Additional Director General of Forests	Chairman
ii.	Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education or representative	Member
iii.	Director General, Forest Survey of India, Dehradun	Member
iv.	Inspector General of Forests (Survey and Utilization)	Member
v.	Inspector General of Forests (National Afforestation and Eco Development Board)	Member
vi.	Inspector General of Forests (Forest Policy)	Member
vii.	Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare	Member
viii.	Representative of Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Member
ix.	Representatives from three State Forest Departments (SFDs)	Members
x.	Representatives from three Forest Development Corporations (FDCs)	Members
xi.	Representative of Quality Council of India	Members
xii.	Two representatives from wood-based industries/associations	Members
xiii.	Director- Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM)	Members

The Council may also co-opt experts or individuals in the relevant field

The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) would be governed by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (IFWCC) and operated by the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) as the designated Scheme Operating Agency (SOA).

The IIFM shall establish a dedicated Scheme Operating Cell consisting of professionals and experts to operate and manage the IFWCS under the overall guidance of IFWCC.

Chapter 6 Functions of IFWCS's Institutions

The IFWCC is responsible for managing and overseeing the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS). Its key roles include:

- ▼ Managing the entire certification scheme – making sure it runs smoothly and according to rules.
- ▼ Approving certification standards – including:
 - Forest Management (FM)
 - Trees Outside Forests (ToF)
 - Chain of Custody (CoC)
- ▼ Setting up expert committees – to give advice and suggestions on standards, certification procedures, and processes.
- ▼ Approving how the certification process works – for FM, ToF, and CoC certifications.
- ▼ Approving certification bodies (CBs) – that have the right knowledge and skills in sustainable forest and ToF management, and that meet ISO standards like ISO 17065.
- ▼ Overseeing certification and renewals – making sure certified forest areas, ToF, and CoC continue to meet the standards. Also manages how the

IFWCS logo/trademark is used by certificate holders.

- ▼ Checking compliance – reviewing whether certification bodies are following the rules. If not, IFWCC can suspend or cancel their approval.

Role of the Scheme Operating Agency (SOA)

The SOA helps run the IFWCS on a day-to-day basis, under the guidance of the IFWCC. Its key tasks are:

- ▼ Managing all operations of the certification scheme.
- ▼ Supporting the creation and updating of standards through expert committees.
- ▼ Coordinating with the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) for certification and accreditation matters.
- ▼ Collecting annual fees and charges, as approved by IFWCC.

Role of the Accreditation Body: NABCB

The National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) is the official body that approves (or accredits) certification agencies in India. It is part of the Quality Council of India (QCI).

Under IFWCS, NABCB is responsible for:

- ▼ Accrediting Certification Bodies (CBs) according to:
 - IFWCS requirements

- International ISO standards
- International Accreditation Forum guidelines
- ▼ Ensuring that the auditors working with CBs are qualified and experienced in:
 - Forest Management certification
 - Trees Outside Forests (ToF) certification
 - Chain of Custody (CoC) certification

Role of the Certification Body (CB)

CBs are independent organizations that carry out certification for Forest Management, ToF and CoC.

Chapter 7 Standard setting process

The standard setting process is governed by key principles involving stakeholder consultation, periodic review, improvement, accountability and transparency.

The standard setting procedures shall be independent from the certification or accreditation processes, and shall be done by the IFWCC based on the recommendations of a standard adoption committee following a multi-stakeholder consultation process.

The Indian Forest Management Standard (IFMS) as contained in the NWPC 2023 shall be the basis for finalizing the Forest Management (FM) certification standard for forest divisions/plantation divisions/plantations in the country.

The standard adoption committee will recommend changes/refinements to the standard, any based on the multi-stakeholder consultation.

Chain of custody certification standard for forest divisions/plantation divisions/plantations and ToF areas including agroforestry. The standard adoption committee will recommend changes/refinements to the standard, if any based on the multi-stakeholder consultation.

Chain of custody certification can be implemented as an individual or multi-site certification, which is approach to

cover the certification of groups of small independent enterprises and farmers.

The certification standards shall be periodically reviewed at an interval not exceeding 5 years in light of new scientific knowledge and practical experience to ensure continuous improvement.

Chapter 8 Certification Process

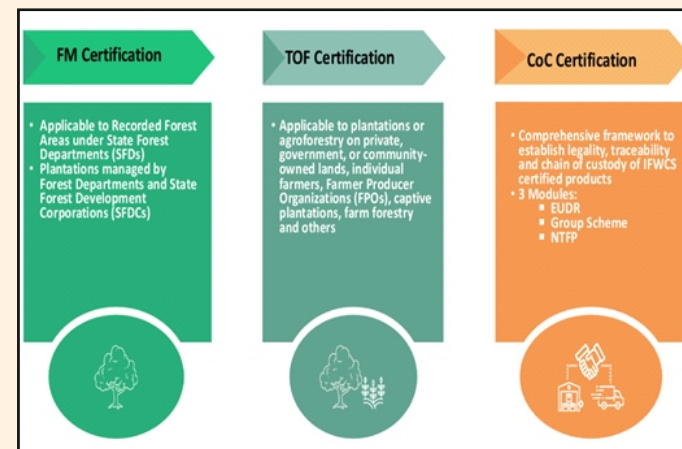


Fig. 4 IFWCS Certification process

The IFWCS certification process includes:

- ▼ Applicant identification
- ▼ Submission of application
- ▼ Certification audits and evaluations
- ▼ Grant of certification

Who Can Apply?

Forest Certification

- ▼ **Applicants:** State/UT Forest Departments managing government or community-owned forest

Trees Outside Forests (ToF) Certification

- ▼ **Applicants:** Individual farmers, groups of farmers, institutions, or industries owning plantations/ agroforestry/ farm forestry lands

Chain of Custody (CoC) Certification

- ▼ **Applicants:** Forest custodians, manufacturers, exporters, importers, or any company involved in timber/NTFP value chain using certified materials.

General Requirement for all organization/ candidate

- ▼ All applicants must:
 - Comply with IFWCS standards.
 - Ensure that operations meet certification criteria.
 - Follow laid-down procedures and practices.

Application Process

Submitting an application

- ▼ Entities must apply to an **IFWCS-approved Certification Body (CB)**.
- ▼ Must include:
 - Completed application form
 - Management/working plan
 - Supporting documents

Application Fee

- ▼ Non-refundable

- ▼ Fee structure defined by the Scheme Operating Agency (SOA) with IFWCC approval.

Certification Fee

- ▼ Based on the scope of certification.
- ▼ Monitored by IFWCC/SOA to prevent unreasonable charges.

Annual CB Accreditation Fee

- ▼ CBs pay an annual fee to SOA for their accreditation.

Public Information

- ▼ CBs and SOA must publish accurate, updated information about the certification process on their websites.

Response to Queries

- ▼ CBs must respond to applicant queries within 7 days.

Declaration of Background

- ▼ Applicants must disclose any past legal proceedings or revoked certifications.
- ▼ Failure to disclose can lead to application rejection or cancellation.

Application Pre-review

- ▼ CB reviews application within 10 days for completeness.
- ▼ Expert auditor evaluates the application

Application Registration

- ▼ Complete applications are assigned a unique ID and acknowledged in writing.

Re-Application

- ▼ Treated as a new application.
- ▼ Must include explanation of previous non-compliance and corrections made.

Certification Audit Procedure

Initial Assessment

- ▼ CB audits submitted documents and conducts field verification.

Evaluation Criteria

- ▼ Compliance is assessed based on IFWCS standards and on-site evaluations.

Field Assessments

- ▼ Conducted in two phases:
 - **Pre-Assessment:** Checks document readiness and compliance.
 - **Main Assessment:** Verifies practices, documentation, and stakeholder interactions.

Stakeholder Engagement

- ▼ Assessment teams may engage with:
 - Forest staff
 - Community members

- Farmers and FPOs
- Local institutions

Communication & Grievance

- ▼ Applicants must be informed of auditor team and schedule in advance.
- ▼ Disputes or grievances can be escalated to SOA if not resolved by CB.

Timing of Assessment

- ▼ Should align with critical forestry/value chain activities.
- ▼ Timing can be mutually agreed upon by applicant and CB.

Grant of Certification

Validity

- ▼ Certification is valid for 5 years.
- ▼ Annual surveillance audits are mandatory.

Use of Logo/Trademark

- ▼ Entities may use the IFWCS certification logo after approval and fee payment.
- ▼ Ownership verified by CB and approved by SOA.

Scope of Certification

- ▼ Certification is granted only after full compliance.
- ▼ Conditional certification is not allowed, except for minor non-conformities.
- ▼ Certificate must define:

- Product types
- Bio-resource area and trail
- Certification scope and limits

Certificate Issuance

- ▼ Includes:
 - Certified area names and IDs
 - Products and processes certified
 - Certification criteria
 - Validity period
 - Entity details

Chain of Custody (CoC)

- ▼ Both Forest Management (FM) and CoC certifications must be obtained to label products as certified.
- ▼ CoC ensures traceability from forest to product.

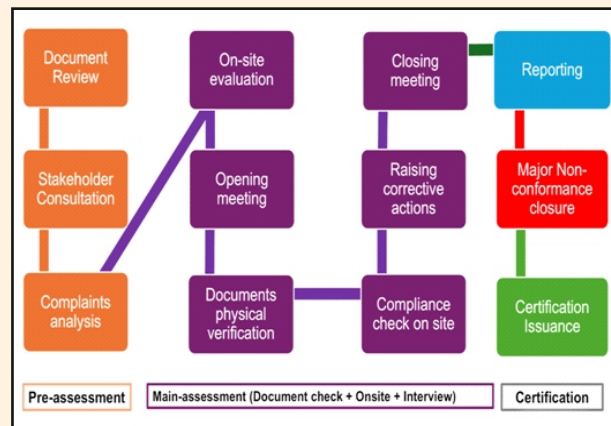


Fig. 5 Overall Certification Process

IFWCS Value Proposition for different stakeholders

1. Forest owners/growers
2. Industries & Corporates
3. Government & Policy makers
4. Consumers & Developers



Fig. 6. IFWCS Value Proposition stakeholders



Fig. 7. IFWCS- PRAMAAN Web portal

Chapter 9

Applicable products under IFWCS

The list of Applicable Products under IFWCS classifies products under using the Harmonized System (HS) Codes from 40 Chapters of 15 sections of the Indian Trade classification (ITC) Harmonised System (HS) based Export policy issued by the DGFT:

3 main categories of products are there as follows: -

Category 1 – Wood-based Products Logs, poles, sawn timber, veneers, plywood, wood chips, Furniture, handicrafts, flooring, doors, panels, paper, packaging and others

3 main categories		Sections	Chapters	
Category 1 – Wood-based Products		08	14	
Logs, poles, sawn timber, veneers, plywood, wood chips, Furniture, handicrafts, flooring, doors, panels, paper, packaging and others				
Category 2 – Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)		09	25	
Bamboo, cane, honey, gums, resins, medicinal plants and other minor forest products				
Category 3 – EUDR commodities and derived products		05	08	
Cattle, Cocoa, Coffee, Palm Oil, Rubber, Soya, and Wood				

Fig. 7. Three Main Products under IFWCS

Category 2 – Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) Bamboo, cane, honey, gums, resins, medicinal plants and other minor forest products

Category 3 – EUDR commodities and derived products Cattle, Cocoa, Coffee, Palm Oil, Rubber, Soya, and Woo

Chapter 10

How Disputes Are Handled

Setting Up a committee

The IFWCC (Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council) will create a special group called the **Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC)**. This group will help solve problems or disagreements related to forest certification.

What the Committee Will Look Into

The committee will handle disputes about:

- ▼ The work of certification bodies (the groups that give certifications)
- ▼ Giving out forest certificates like Forest Management, Trees Outside Forests (ToF), and Chain of Custody (CoC)
- ▼ Use of the IFWCS logo or mark on products
- ▼ Any other issues related to the Indian Forest and Wood Certification System

Chapter 11

Making Changes to the Certification System

Updating the System

- ▼ To keep improving the certification system, the IFWCC can:
- ▼ Change or improve the standards and rules
- ▼ Update the certification process
- ▼ Make changes to how certification bodies are approved
- ▼ Do anything else needed to make the system better

A transition period, not exceeding 12 months, as decided by the IFWCC, will be permitted for all new certifications and recertifications when such changes to

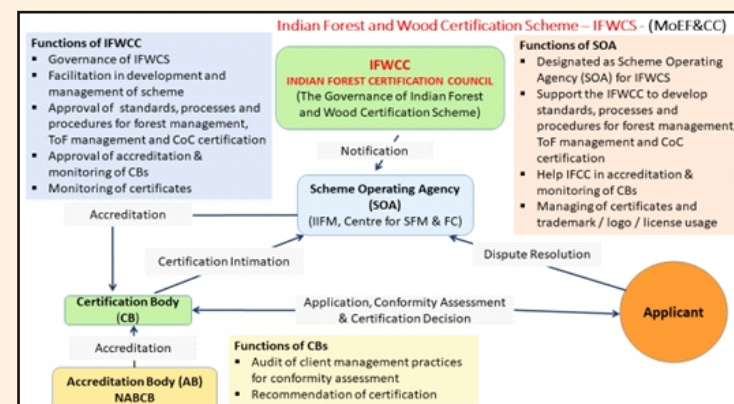


Fig.8. Overview of Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS)

IFWCS, such as standard, compliance requirements, certification process, procedure, certification bodies (CB) accreditation, etc. are made. The modifications must be in place for certificates issued prior to the end of the transition period by the time of the subsequent certificate holder surveillance audit.

Reference

- 1) IIFM visit
- 2) PRAMAAN website
- 3) NWPC 2023



Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme
PRAMAAN
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India



Application Form for IFWCS Certification

आईएफडब्ल्यूसीएस प्रमाणन के लिए आवेदन पत्र

(Application details shall be filled in English. Please select as many options as applicable from multiple options.) (आवेदन विवरण अंग्रेजी में भर जाना चाहिए। कृपया अनेक विकल्पों में से जितने विकल्प लागू हों, उतने चुनें।)

A. Client Information: / ए. ग्राहक जानकारी:

Client name: ग्राहक नाम...

Client legal status (Private/Public Ownership): ग्राहक की कानूनी स्थिति (निजी/सार्वजनिक स्वामित्व)...

Address: पता...

City: शहर...

PIN Code: पिन कोड...

State: राज्य...

Phone number: फोन नंबर...

Email address: ईमेल पता...

Contact Person: संपर्क व्यक्ति...

Phone number: फोन नंबर...

B. Client Activity: बी. ग्राहक गतिविधि:

i. Forest division/वन प्रभाग	☐	ii. Forest corporation/वन निगम	☐
iii. Individual farmer/Tree grower/व्यक्तिगत किसान/वृक्ष उत्पादक	☐	iv. FPO/एफपीओ	☐
v. Saw miller/आरामिलर	☐	vi. Manufacturer/निर्माता	☐
vii. Domestic trader/घरेलू व्यापारी	☐	viii. Exporter/निर्यातक	☐
ix. Importer/आयातक	☐	x. Others/अन्य	☐

C. Employees Details (associated with core activities)/सी. कर्मचारियों का विवरण (मुख्य गतिविधियों से संबंधित):

i. Permanent employees/स्थायी कर्मचारी	...
ii. Contractual employees/संविदा कर्मचारी	...

D. Annual Turnover (INR)/

E. डी. वार्षिक कारोबार (आईएनआर):

F. Scope for Certification/एफ. प्रमाणन का दायरा:

i. Forest Management (FM)/वन प्रबंधन (एफएम)	☐
ii. Trees Outside Forest (TOF) Management/वन से बाहर वृक्ष (टीओएफ) प्रबंधन	☐
iii. Chain of Custody (CoC)/कस्टडी की श्रृंखला (सीओसी)	☐

G. In case of FM Certification, furnish:

Program for Recognition and Accreditation of Sustainable Management Practices for Agroforestry and Natural Forestry Resources (PRAMAAN)
Centre for Sustainable Forest Management & Forest Certification (SFM&FC), Indian Institute of Forest Management (Scheme Operating Agency)
Bhopal - 462003 (M.P.) INDIA Email: pramaan@iifmbhopal@edu.in Website: www.iifm.ac.in



i. Total forest area (in ha) under jurisdiction/अधिकारक्षेत्रकेअंतर्गतकुलवनक्षेत्र (हेक्टेयरमें)	...
ii. Forest area to be certified (in ha) /प्रमाणितकियाजानेवालावनक्षेत्र (हेक्टेयरमें)	...
iii. Number of Forest Ranges in the division/संभागमेंवनरेंजोंकीसंख्या	...
iv. Number of Joint Forest Management Committees/संयुक्तवनप्रबंधनसमितियोंकीसंख्या	...
v. Number of Village Forest Committee/ग्रामवनसमितिकीसंख्या	...
vi. Additional information (if any)/अतिरिक्तजानकारी (यदि कोई हो)	...

H. In case of TOF Certification, furnish/जी. एकएमप्रमाणणीकरणकेमामलेमें, प्रस्तुतकरें:

i. ToF/Plantation/Farm area (in ha)/टीओएफ/वृक्षारोपण/कृषिक्षेत्र (हेक्टेयरमें)	...
ii. Field khasra / Land record number/खेतखसरा/भूमिअभिलेखक्रमांक	...
iii. Crop/Tree species with variety/विभिन्नताकेसाथफसल/वृक्षप्रजातियाँ	...
iv. Additional information (if any)/अतिरिक्तजानकारी (यदि कोई हो)	...

I. Type of Certification/ल. प्रमाणनकाप्रकार:

i. Single site certification/एकलसाइटप्रमाणन	☐
ii. Multi-site certification/बहु-साइटप्रमाणन	☐ Number of sites ² : /साइटोंकीसंख्या
iii. Group certification/समूहप्रमाणन	☐ Number of group members ³ /समूहसदस्योंकीसंख्या ::

J. Outsourcing Details/जे. आउटसोर्सिंगविवरण:

i. No outsourcing or subcontracting involved/ इसमेंकोईआउटसोर्सिंगयाउपढेकाशामिलनहींहै	☐
ii. Outsourcing or subcontracting involved ⁴ / आउटसोर्सिंगयाउपढेकाशामिलहै	☐

Program for Recognition and Accreditation of Sustainable Management Practices for Agroforestry and Natural Forestry Resources

¹ Provide details of management unit and area under the scope of certification/

प्रमाणनकेद्वारेमेंप्रबंधनइकाईऔरक्षेत्रकाविवरणप्रदानकरें

² Provide list of multiple sites (management structure and other information) if any, separately/ यदि कोई हो तो एक अधिक साइटों की सूची (प्रबंधन संरचना और अन्य जानकारी) अलग से प्रदान करें

³ Provide list of participating group members, management structure and other information separately/ भाग लेने वाले समूह के सदस्यों की सूची, प्रबंधन संरचना और अन्य जानकारी अलग से प्रदान करें

⁴ Provide details of the outsourcing or subcontracting activity separately/ आउटसोर्सिंग या उपढेकागतिविधिकाविवरण अलग से प्रदान करें



a. The site is only used to store finished and labelled products. इस साइट का उपयोग केवल तैयार और लेबल वाले उत्पादों को संग्रहीत करने के लिए किया जाता है।	☐
b. All or some of the outsourced or subcontracted activities (except transportation) are performed at the same premise/location. / आउटसोर्सिंग या उप-अनुबंधित सभी या कुछ गतिविधियाँ (परिवहन को छोड़कर) एक ही परिसर/स्थान पर की जाती हैं।	☐
c. All or some of the outsourced or subcontracted activities are not performed at the same premise/location ⁵ / आउटसोर्सिंग या उप-अनुबंधित सभी या कुछ गतिविधियाँ एक ही परिसर/स्थान पर नहीं की जाती हैं।	☐

K. Previous Certification Details (If applicable)/पूर्वप्रमाणनविवरण (यदि लागू हो):

FM ☐	TOF ☐	COC ☐
i. Type of certification (Single/ Multi-site/ Group)/प्रमाणनकाप्रकार (एकल/बहु-साइट/समूह)	...	...
ii. Certification number/प्रमाणनसंख्या	...	...
iii. Current status of certification (Valid/Suspended/Terminated/Withdrawal)/प्रमाणनकीवर्तमानस्थिति (वैध/निर्लंबित/समाप्त/वापसलियागया)	...	...
iv. Period of certification/प्रमाणनकीअवधि	...	...
v. Any other information/v. कोई अन्य जानकारी	...	...

L. Any Other Certification (if applicable)/एल. कोई अन्य प्रमाणन (यदि लागू हो):

i. Name of certification/प्रमाणनकानाम	...
ii. Certification number/प्रमाणनसंख्या	...
iii. Current status of certification (Valid/Suspended/Terminated/Withdrawal)/प्रमाणनकीवर्तमानस्थिति (वैध/निर्लंबित/समाप्त/वापसलियागया)	...
iv. Period of certification/प्रमाणनकीअवधि	...
v. Any other information/v. कोई अन्य जानकारी	...

⁵ Provide details of the premise / location (s) of outsourced or subcontracted activities/ आउटसोर्सिंग या उप-अनुबंधित गतिविधियों के परिसर / स्थान का विवरण प्रदान करें