

**Proposal for providing support to Scheme Operating Agency (SoA)
to establish a dedicated Cell to operate and manage the
Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS)**



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

Submitted to



National Authority CAMPA

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Government of India

Submitted by



Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal

Background

India adopted the principles of Sustainable Forest Management and developed the National set of 8 Criteria and 37 Indicators on Sustainable Management of Forests from the Bhopal – India Process. These Criteria and Indicators were incorporated in National Working Plan Code 2023 and thus, the Indian Forest Management Standard was developed as an integral part of the National Working Plan Code 2023. Subsequently, this resulted in the formation of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) to provide market incentives to those forest divisions, which effectively implement the criteria and the appropriate indicators, thus exhibiting responsible forest management practices.

Forest certification is regarded as an environmental label/ECOMARK for sustainable forest management practices. Consequently, the Green Credit Program (GCP), administered by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), provides the opportunity to earn Green Credits for additional activities. These activities include afforestation, water harvesting, conservation and restoration efforts, as well as the production of timber as a sustainable construction and infrastructure development material.

The criteria, indicators, and verifiers developed for the Indian Forest Management Standard are primarily adopted from the Bhopal-India process, which is one of the 11 internationally accepted frameworks of criteria and indicators approach to sustainable forest management. Therefore, the forest certification received by the forest divisions or plantations, agroforestry/Tree Outside Forests (TOF) using this standard as adopted by IFWCS is in sync with any internationally recognized certification system while being relevant in the Indian context.

The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) is the national forest certification scheme of India and is designed to promote sustainable forest management and sustainable management of Trees outside Forests in the country. IFWCS envisages providing market incentives to those forest divisions and plantation areas, which effectively implement the criteria and the indicators of Indian Forest Management Standard (IFMS) as contained in the National Working Plan Code 2023 and the Standards

for Trees outside Forests and thus exhibit responsible forest management and agroforestry practices in their operations.

IFWCS is applicable across the country, both in forest areas and Trees outside Forests (TOF) plantations on government, private, agroforestry and other lands. The certification is applicable for both timber and non-timber forest produce (NTFP). The certification may be recognized by various regulatory authorities but in no way is intended to serve as legal advice on compliance with any law, regulation or requirement. A forest division or ToF area or any other entity, which applies for the certification under IFWCS, shall be assessed by approved Certification Body on their conformity to the requirements of this scheme.

The certification scheme may be of utility 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.

The IFWCS Guidelines document issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change vide F. No. 3-19/2022-SU dated 6th December 2023 sets out the key requirements, governance structure, institutional arrangement and various processes and procedures related to forest certification under IFWCS.

The present proposal is for providing support to Scheme Operating Agency (SoA) to establish a dedicated Cell to operate and manage the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) and to meet out the initial expenditure required for carrying out the above activities and roll out the scheme successfully on ground.

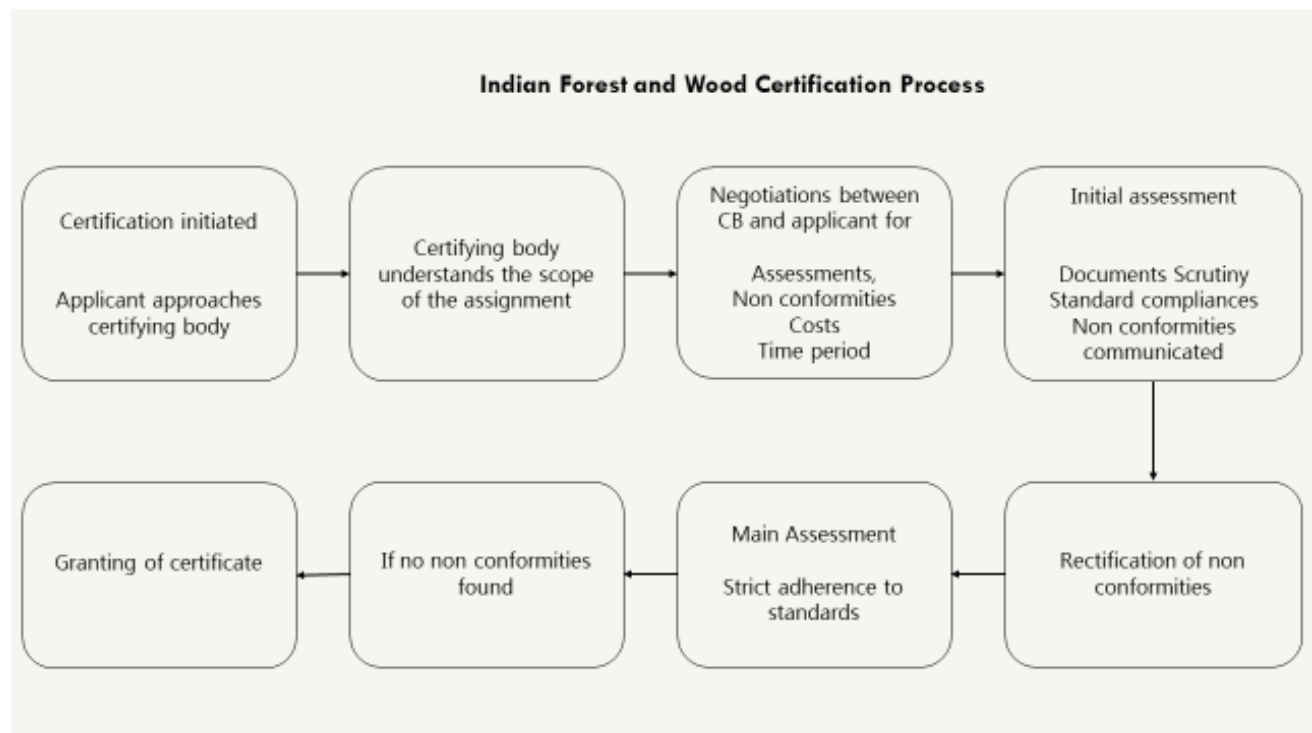
Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM)

IIFM has established itself as a knowledge leader in plantation programme evaluation by partnering with various states including Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra for third party evaluation of CAMPA plantation activities. IIFM has reviewed and evaluated afforestation schemes for diverse agencies such as CAMPA, National Thermal Power Corporation, National Mission for Clean Ganga, State Forest departments etc. IIFM in 2016 developed a comprehensive evaluation manual for compensatory

Functions of Scheme Operating Agency (SOA)

- i) The Scheme Operating Agency shall be responsible for overall management of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme under the guidance of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council.
- ii) The SOA will be responsible for supporting and facilitating the process of standard development by the standard adoption committee, certification process and procedures through expert group/committee, and accreditation of CBs by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB).
- iii) The SOA would be tasked with overseeing the assessment and issuance of certifications through NABCB-accredited certification bodies.
- iv) The Scheme Operating Agency (SOA) on the recommendation of an NABCB-accredited Certification Body will issue permission for certification mark/logo use.
- v) Levying annual fees and charges for scheme operation as approved by the IFWCC.

Certification Process



The Certification process involve the following

- Application for Certification
- Application Requirements
- Application Fee (Non-Refundable)
- Information in Public Domain
- Query Response
- Declaration of Antecedents/Crucial Information
- Pre-Review of Application
- Registration of Application
- Re-Application
- Certification Assessment / Audit Procedure
- Grant of Certification
- Chain of Custody (CoC) Certification
- Dispute Resolution Procedures

The IFWCS Operating Cell

The Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal, the Scheme Operating Agency (SoA), of IFWCS is proposed to establish a cell/management unit to operate and manage the Scheme as per the guidelines approved by the competent authority at the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

The Cell will comprise of CEO who reports to the Director, IIFM on matters related to the administration and functioning of the cell and all matters related to the entire business of IFWCS.

The CEO will be assisted by four professionals and technical experts at the level of Managers for handling activities such as Standard Development, Accreditation of Certification bodies and Certificate Management, Marketing, Communication and Client Management, IT (Web Portal Management, Online database management, preparation of datasets), General Administration and finance. Identified faculty members and staff of the institute will also support the team.

It is essential to prepare the application formats and the web portal for online process of certification. Further, outreach activities have to be conducted as the scheme needs to be popularized and taken to the beneficiaries namely State Forest Department, Forest Development Corporations, Wood based industries, other institutions, farming communities and others who are in the business of tree cultivation.

Budget Requirement

To establish the cell and to meet out the initial expenditure required for carrying out the above activities and roll out the scheme successfully on ground, the proposed budget is detailed below.

Sl. No.	Particulars	Amount
1	Salaries and remuneration for CEO and Managers	24,00,000
2	Salaries/remuneration for Managers	54,00,000
3	Web portal and IT	40,00,000
4	Office Expenses	7,00,000
5	Travel	10,00,000
6	Contingencies @2%	2,70,000
		1,37,70,000