

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



NCCF

**NETWORK FOR
CERTIFICATION AND
CONSERVATION OF
FORESTS**

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Acronyms

ANAB	ANSI National Accreditation Board
AYUSH	Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy
BEE	Bureau of Energy Efficiency
CAG	Certification Advisory Group
CB(s)	Certification Bodies
CDSCO	Central Drugs Standard Control Organization
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
COC	Chain of Custody
CR-I	Carbon Registry-India
DPIIT	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
EPCH	Export Promotion Council of Handicrafts
FM	Forest Management
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FSI	Forest Survey of India
FTA	Forest, Trees, and Agroforestry
GHG	Green House Gases
GMOS	Genetically Modified Organisms
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
HCSSC	Handicrafts & Carpet Sector Skill Council
HOFF	Head of Forest Forces
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICFRE	Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education
ICRAF	International Council for Research in Agroforestry
ILO	International Labour Organization
INSS	Indian National Strategy for Standardization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LULUCF	Land use, Land use change and Forestry
MOEF&CC	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
NABCB	National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies
NWFP	Non-Wood Forest Products
NWFR	Non-Wood Forest Resources
NWPC	National Working Plan Code
PA	Protected Area
PAWS	Protected Areas and Wetlands
PCCF	Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
PTB	Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
QCI	Quality Council of India
QPM	Quality Planting Material

Acronyms

R&D	Research and Development
RAT	Risk Assessment Tool
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SDG	Standard Development Group
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
STCI	Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India
TOF	Trees outside Forest
TOFI	Trees Outside Forests in India
UAF	United Accreditation Foundation
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

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Chairman's Message



It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests for 2021-22 outlining the activities and achievements during the financial year.

NCCF started its journey 6 years back as a civil society comprising of experts, industry, NGOs, and professionals with the aim of ushering certification as a tool for conservation, sustainable and scientific management of natural resources including forests and agroforestry through the development of internationally accepted India specific sustainability norms and standards for the former. This is pertinent to biodiversity preservation, combating climate change, and halting desertification. We have endeavoured to bridge the gap between policymakers and practitioners on issues of conservation through policy advocacy, consultations, and awareness-raising.

It is pertinent to mention that NCCF has developed a carbon registry and a carbon trading and tracking platform in the context of controlling greenhouse gas emissions. It may be mentioned that NCCF is a member of the IUCN and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). The UNCCD has given us observer status. This has enabled us to keep in step with the initiatives being promoted multilaterally for reversing desertification. All these initiatives would help achieve our ambitious target of enhancing forest and tree cover. NCCF's Safeboards standards is a very significant step towards reducing harmful and toxic emissions. Its Ecotourism standard is also at a very advanced stage of finalisation, which would fulfil the need for bringing in the crucial aspects of responsible travel to ecotourism destinations.

The capacity of NCCF is broad-based and multi-disciplinary, with our professional exposure encompassing government, private sector, and civil society for addressing the issues of sustainability. Realising the need to make certification accessible to smallholders and low-volume producers, so as to benefit local communities by tapping their own entrepreneurship, NCCF has constantly endeavoured to push for appropriate economics of scale.

We acknowledge the active engagement of our distinguished general body members and stakeholders in achieving NCCF's objectives and complement the Chairman Emeritus, Chairpersons, Co-chairpersons, and Members of the Standard Development Groups ably supported by the office bearers, DG, and office staff for systematically taking forward the process of Standard Development, including Carbon Registry in a time-bound manner.

We also acknowledge the support of various stakeholders including governments and their agencies towards our goals of achieving sustainability in natural resources management and in meeting emerging issues in the forestry and environment sector. There are many challenges though, but as an eminent body of experts and professionals and with the diversity of our stakeholders, we are well poised to meet them.

Avani Kumar Varma, IFS (retd)
Chairman, NCCF



Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests

NCCF came into existence in January 2015 as a registered society of experts, professionals, and stakeholders of natural resources, engaged in the development of India-specific and globally benchmarked sustainability standards, as its core working area, apart from working for policy advocacy, training, and capacity building through multi-stakeholder engagement.

NCCF is a member of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) Alliance from India, a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Global Evergreening Alliance (GEA), and has got an Observer Status with the UNCCD as a Civil Society Organization (CSO). While NCCF's application for accreditation with UNFCCC as a CSO is under consideration by UNFCCC, it has been given a "provisional admittance" for participation in COP 27 at Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022.

NCCF has developed the first ever Indian Certification Standard for Forest Management and that has been endorsed by the leading international certification organization, the PEFC, giving it global recognition. This scheme is being used by many states for forest certification. NCCF has launched its Trees outside Forests (ToF) Certification Scheme, which is the first of its kind and is currently under the process of endorsement by PEFC. NCCF has launched Safeboards Standards for certifying the products with low formaldehyde emission levels. NCCF's Certification standards for Ecotourism, Non-Wood Forest Resources, Quality Planting Material, and Protected Areas and Wetlands are at advanced stages of development.

The National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB), a constituent Board of the Quality Council of India (QCI), an autonomous national accreditation body under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), has also recognized the NCCF-PEFC FM Scheme by providing accreditation to the Certification Bodies (CBs). Under an arrangement with the NABCB, NCCF is providing provisional approval to the CBs for the NCCF-PEFC FM Scheme, w. e. f. 01 August 2021, however, NABCB will continue to provide regular accreditation to the CBs.

NCCF has developed a Carbon Registry-India (CR-I) to provide a platform for carbon tracking and trading for verified net Green House Gases emissions reductions and removals enhancement with Sustainable Development Contributions. It would offer listing and tracking facilities for projects sequestering carbon and issuance of carbon credits. CR-I will also facilitate micro-scale projects and has the potential to provide a compatible platform for small landholder farmers to avail carbon credits and get linked to the carbon markets. The Registry will help in climate change mitigation and adaptation and aims to diligently follow up with India's NDCs.

NCCF is also a consortium partner in the Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) Program, which is a joint initiative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) of the Government of India, envisioned at significantly expanding the area of Trees outside Forests (TOF) thereby, enhancing livelihoods and ecosystem services, especially carbon sequestration.

In the program, NCCF has its broad roles in steering the development and promotion of TOF and Non-timber TOF Products (NTPPs) certification schemes, a Quality Planting Material (QPM) accreditation system, co-revising building codes and procurement strategies, and amending Open General License (OGL) for the regulation of imported timber in the country.

➤ NCCFs Core Activities



➤ Objectives of NCCF

- To develop country-specific and internationally benchmarked National Certification Standards for Sustainable Forest Management, Trees outside Forests (TOF), Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFPs), Protected Areas and Wetlands (PAWs), Ecotourism, Quality Planting Material, etc.; the standards also being compatible and conforming to the national statues and legal framework.
- To develop, operate, manage and promote mechanisms, standards, procedures, and guidelines to combat climate change and its impacts thereof, reduce net greenhouse gas emissions, while achieving sustainable development.
- To provide a platform for bringing together forest-based stakeholders to promote forest and forest produce certification schemes for the long-term ecological security of forests.
- To provide a link between responsible production and responsible consumption and help the consumer to make socially and environmentally sound buying decisions.
- Promoting responsible trade in the forestry sector and offering specific considerations to the unique needs of small and family forest owners while being quality used by large landowners.
- To bridge the gap between policymakers and practitioners including entrepreneurs on issues that emerge in trade and other related aspects of forest products and services through a series of consultation meetings, awareness-raising, conferences, workshops, etc.
- To promote skill development in the forestry sector in the interest of sustainable harvesting and utilization of forest produce as also to promote economic and social welfare of the laborers, plantation workers, artisans, and workers engaged in the processing of wood, NWFPs, and manufacturing of paper, plywood, veneers, panels, furniture, forest-based handicrafts, etc.
- Policy advocacy on important emerging issues concerning the conservation of natural resources.

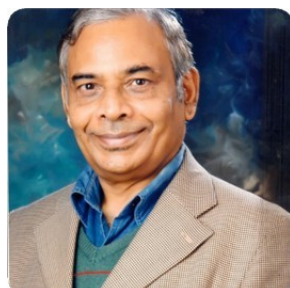
➤ Governing Body

The governing body, comprising Chairman and 12 other members, decides the overall policies and directions in carrying out NCCF's activities. The members comprise representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Export Promotion Council of Handicrafts (EPCH), Senior Retired Civil Services Officers, Professional Foresters, Private Sector, Non-governmental organisations. Ministry of Commerce and Industry has nominated the Deputy Secretary, Trade Policy Division to attend important meetings of NCCF. NCCF's Governing Body is a strong foundation having the vision of diverse stakeholders gathered on one platform.



Mr Vijai Sharma, IAS (retd), Chairman Emeritus

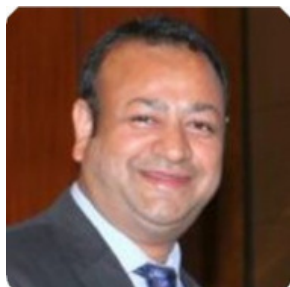
Mr Vijai Sharma, Former Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests and Former Chief Information Commissioner of India has been Chairman of NCCF from 2015 to October 2021. In the 6th Annual General Meeting of NCCF, held on 29th October 2021, NCCF appointed him Chairman Emeritus.



Mr A K Varma, Co-chairman (& Chairman)

A Member of the Indian Forest Service (1974; Karnataka), Mr Varma retired on superannuation as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of the Forest Force of Karnataka State Forest Department. He has also worked in various capacities including PCCF (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden Karnataka and has been actively involved in the field of Forest management certification and Chain of the Custody Certification process as a peer reviewer, observer, co-auditor, and lead auditor.

He is presently officiating as Chairman, NCCF and also chairing the FM and Ecotourism Standard Development Groups of NCCF.



Mr Sachin Jain, Convener – Treasurer (& Secretary)

Mr Sachin Jain is a sustainability professional with over 10 years of experience behind him in directing various projects on Forest Certification, Sustainability, Life Cycle Assessment, LEED v4 Environmental Product Declarations (EPD), Starbucks Ethical Sourcing, Resilient Floor Covering Institute (RFCI) FloorScore® certification, BIFMA level® certificate, Climate Change Adaptation, Monitoring & Evaluation, Afforestation, Ecotourism, Sustainable Housing, Fisheries, and Ecology & Biodiversity Assessments.

He is an active member of many national and international associations and think tanks, working in the area of Natural Resources Management and Sustainable Development. He is one of the founding members of NCCF and at present serving as Convener-Treasurer in the Governing Body of NCCF.



Mr P K Garg, Joint Secretary

Mr Pawan Kumar Garg, working presently with Star Paper Mills Limited, Saharanpur, U.P. as Sr. G M Commercial has vast experience of 39 years in Supply Chain Management and Commercial functions in the Paper Industry, Textiles, and FMCG Industry. He has been associated with the development of Hi-tech Clonal Nurseries and Agro-Forestry.

He has vigorously promoted Agroforestry in Western U.P. for the last 15 years and the results are quite visible and evident now. He is trained in the best management practices like TPM, TQM, Six Sigma, Gemba Kaizen, PMS, ICRM, SCM, etc., and is a member of the Indian Institute of Materials Management, Chandigarh Branch, and also a Member of IPPTA.



Dr Rajesh Rawat, Joint Treasurer

Dr Rajesh Rawat is currently the Director at EPCH. He was the first CEO of the Handicrafts & Carpet Sector Skill Council (HCSSC) from December 2013 till August 2016. He has traveled extensively across the globe and made presentations on various topics including the Strength of Indian Handicrafts; Timber legality, Wood, and wood-based livelihoods, etc. at Chatham House, London; Forest Trends, Valencia; Furniture Shows in

Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, Gift Shows in Germany, Honk Kong, Chile and many other places.



Dr Rakesh Kumar (Member)

Dr Rakesh Kumar conceptualized India's first state-of-the-art infrastructure for the Exhibition and Mart at Greater Noida. He is the key architect of several important projects in India such as the setting up of the National Centre for Design & Product Development and the creation of Handicrafts and Carpet Sector Skill Council (HCSSC) to bridge the skill gap in the handicrafts & carpet sector and provide over 2 million skilled manpower.

His contribution towards developing Jodhpur, Jaipur, Moradabad, Saharanpur as well as other pockets of our country as the hub for handicraft items is unparalleled. He has conceptualized the need for traceability requirement of Timber legality of wooden handicrafts exporters and introduced "VRIKSH" as its standard which is accepted by the UN International organisation "CITES" for 186 countries, and also initiated several innovative steps to boost this industry.

Dr Kumar is the person responsible for initiation of the world-renowned Indian Handicrafts & Gifts Fair (IHGF) in 1994, which is recognized as the 'World's largest congregation of handicrafts exhibitors under one roof' by Limca Book of World Records.

Dr Kumar has been instrumental in organising Product specific shows like Home Expo comprising- Indian Furniture & Accessories Show, Indian Furnishings, Floorings & Textiles Show and Indian Houseware & Decorative show, and Indian Fashion Jewellery & Accessories Show (IFJAS) at India Expo Centre, Greater Noida.

Dr Kumar is the key architect in setting up several important organisations in India such as National Centre for Design & Product Development(NCDPD) in New Delhi for design and product development. He is also instrumental in creation of the Handicrafts & Carpet Sector Skill Council (HCSSC) to bridge the skill gap in the handicrafts & carpet sector. He has also been the Chairman of the Indian Exhibition Industry Association(IEIA), Founder Chairman of Buying Agents Association of Indian (BAA), and founder member of the Network for Certification and Conservation of Forest (NCCF). He is the first Indian to receive the Japanese Government's JETRO' COMMENDATION AWARD' for International exposure to Japan. Dr Kumar has represented various important trade committees & boards in India & abroad.

Mr A K Bansal, Member



Mr Bansal has experience of over 43 years in all aspects of the conservation of forests, development of the forestry sector in the country including the evolution of forest policy and legal framework, and international collaborations. Has been directly involved in the evolution and implementation of national policy relating to forest conservation & management – sustainable forest management, forest certification, climate change adaptation, and mitigation – REDD+, forestry, and forest product research & education.

He has contributed to the evolution of JFM through his association with JICA assisted forestry projects in the country since 2006 and also worked as short term consultant to JICA in evolving strategic capacity development project for efficient implementation of Priority Forest Policy Agenda proposed to be implemented by MOEF&CC. A qualified International Lead Auditor for Forest Management Certification, he is currently chairing NCCF's Promotion, Communication and Advocacy Working Group, and also the Non-Wood Forest Products Certification Standard Development Group.

Dr Vinay Sharma, Member



Dr Vinay Sharma is the owner of Nupur International, which was founded in the year 1993. The organisation is now a synonym for quality for their buyers around the world. They started off with small decoratives and antique reproductions and have now climbed the ladder & evolved as a major producer & exporter of wooden handcrafted furniture from Jodhpur, both traditional as well as modern.



Mr Suneel Kumar Pandey, Member

Mr Suneel Pandey is presently Vice President-Plantation and Raw Material in ITC-PSPD and leads a multi-disciplinary team involved in Plantations, Social Forestry, Raw material Procurement, Sustainability, and Bio-diversity Conservation. As a Member of IFS , he had served as Senior Forestry Specialist in the National Mission on Bamboo Applications (NMBA) and has successfully handled different business and development initiatives in Technology Development, Enabling Systems, Policy & Programme implementation, CDM, and forest certification.

Joint Secretary (NRM), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India

Joint Secretary (NRM) is the official nominee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on the Governing Body of NCCF.

Managing Director, Haryana Forest Development Corporation Limited, Haryana Forest Department

Managing Director, Haryana Forest Development Cooperation Limited is an institutional member of the NCCF Governing Body.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Deputy Secretary (Trade Policy Division), Ministry of Commerce and Industry has been nominated to attend important meetings of NCCF.

➤ Expert Chairpersons for NCCF's Initiatives

Mr A K Bansal, IFS (retd)

Chairperson, Non-Wood Timber Produce (NWFP) standard of NCCF.



Mr Anil Jauhri (ex-CEO, NABCB)

Chairperson, Certification Advisory Group

Mr Anil Jauhri is former CEO of the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB), a constituent Board of the Quality Council of India, and national accreditation body. He has 40 years of experience in the field of quality, standards, certification and accreditation having worked earlier in the Bureau of Indian Standards, the national standards body, and the Export Inspection Council, India's official export regulator and certification body under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

He is a nationally and internationally recognized expert having worked with such international bodies as UNFCCC, UNIDO, PTB, FAO, and APO, and was invited as an expert by WTO in 2013 and 2015. He has been part of India's trade negotiations with various countries, notably with the USA as part of the Indian delegation led by the Commerce Minister in 2015 and 2017 in Washington DC. He secured a number of international equivalences for NABCB such as Product certification, Inspection, and various management systems like Food safety, Information security, Occupational Health, and Safety and Energy management systems. Besides being instrumental in supporting regulators like PNGRB, FSSAI, CDSCO, BEE, etc. he also led the development of a number of voluntary certification schemes of the Quality Council of India (QCI) notably AYUSH Mark, ICMED scheme, Yoga certification, IndGAP, India HACCP, etc. He continues to provide expertise to Ministries such as Commerce, AYUSH, Biotechnology, and the office of Principal Scientific Adviser besides being an evaluator for the International Accreditation Forum as well as Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation and Lead assessor for accreditation bodies like NABCB and ANAB and UAF in the USA.

Dr Jagdish Kishwan, IFS (retd)

Chairman & Chief Coordinator, Carbon Registry-India (CR-I) and
Chairperson, SDG, Protected Areas and Wetlands Standards (PAWs)



Dr Jagdish Kishwan, Former PCCF & HoFF, Jammu & Kashmir, DG, ICFRE and Addl. DGF (WL), MoEF&CC is the program lead for Carbon Registry-India. He has overseen and guided the Carbon Registry-India Team in program development in terms of establishing rules, requirements, procedures & guidelines and overall management.

Dr Kishwan has over 43 years of experience in the forestry sector, Climate change adaptation, research and academic assignments, forest administration and natural resource management. Dr Kishwan has worked on important assignments with the central government (MoEFCC) and state government (Jammu and Kashmir). He has been a lead negotiator for India on forestry-related agenda items including REDD+ and LULUCF in UNFCCC, Member, Expert Group of Planning Commission of India on “Low Carbon Development Strategy for India”.

Dr Kishwan is a qualified International Lead Auditor for Forest Management Certification and is also chairing the Protected Areas and Wetlands Certification Standard Development Group with NCCF.

Dr Devendra Pandey, IFS (retd)

Chairperson, SDG, Trees Outside Forest (ToF) Standard



An Indian Forest Service Officer and Former DG of the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dr Pandey has been an expert reviewer of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)- Fifth Assessment Report for Working Group II and III. He is a member of the Global Observation of Forest Cover and Land Dynamics panel (GOFC-GOLD).

Dr Pandey has previously worked with many national and international organizations of repute- United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), etc.

Mr Abhijit Ghose, IFS (retd)

Chairperson, SDG, Quality Planting Material (QPM) Standard



Mr Abhijit Ghose has a rich track of exemplary service of 40 + years in forestry including 34 years in the Indian Forest Service with experience of 5 years at the Apex level of governance in Policy Formulation, Institutional Development with the partnership of local communities, capacity building of all stakeholders, research and development in forestry, combating desertification in Thar desert of Rajasthan besides providing important consultancy services in forestry sector at National level.



Mr R R Rashmi IAS (retd)
Chairperson, SDG, Biofuel and Biomass Standard

Mr Rajani Ranjan Rashmi is a former member of the Indian Administrative Service (1983) batch. He was India's principal negotiator for climate change negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for several years and has been part of climate change policy-making in India.

As Special Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change in the Government of India, he has been closely associated with the formulation and implementation of policies relating to Climate Change, Pollution, the Montreal Protocol on ODS, and Environmental Clearances, besides being the Project Director of Green India Mission.

Currently, he is associated with the Centre for Global Environmental Research in TERI where he works on areas relating to climate change, mitigation and adaptation challenges, carbon markets, and related environmental policies and actions. He served on the Sub Committee of the Ministry of Finance on Climate Finance and has been a Member of the Technical Advisory Body of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) for recommending the use of emission units for CORSIA. He advises National Agricultural Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on international climate business and chairs the ' Biofuels and Biomass Standard Development Group of NCCF.

Mr AK Goyal, IFS (retd)
Chairperson, SDG, Safeboards Standards



Mr A K Goyal, an ex-IFS officer, superannuated from government service as Special Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, with 40 years of experience in field forestry, worked as Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC, dealing with matters related to the convention on biological diversity, wetland conservations, Ramsar convention on wetlands and information technology related matters, forest management, training of personnel, administration, and implementation of related policies, schemes, and legislations and Panchayati Raj system, field assignments as DFO and Conservator and Additional PCCF in Kerala Forest Department.

Mr Goyal chaired an Expert Committee for modifications to Biological Diversity Act and Rules. Serving as Independent Director on the Board of Andrew Yule & Company Limited, a CPSU, Member of an Expert Panel for empanelment of All India Services for appointment as Joint Secretary to GOI and Chairperson of Standards Development Group of NCCF for developing international standards on " SAFEBOARDS" for formaldehyde emissions. His areas of specialization also include law, administration, and e-governance.

➤ NCCF Secretariat

Mr A K Srivastava, IFS (retd), Director General



Mr A K Srivastava has worked as Director-General of Forests & Special Secretary, Additional Director General of Forests (Forest Conservation) and CEO, CAMPA in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Director, Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal, Joint Secretary, Government of India, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, PCCF & Chief Wildlife Warden of J&K State and Additional Commissioner (NRM) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

He had been ex-officio Chairman, National Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), ex officio Member, FAC, National Biodiversity Authority, and Animal Welfare Board of India. Mr Srivastava has been an Expert Member of the Monitoring Group, National CAMPA of MoEF&CC, and also the Chairman of Green The Earth Trust, working in the field of afforestation and environmental conservation.

Mr A M Singh, IFS (retd), Project Director, USAID-TOFI Program



Mr Arvind Madhav Singh is a retired Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer of the 1986 batch from the Assam segment of the Assam Meghalaya Cadre. Mr Singh retired from the post of Principal Chief Conservator of Forest & Head of the Forest Force (HoFF), Forest Department, Govt. of Assam (Jan 2019 – June 2021). A man of dynamic personality, he had done Masters in Geology from Lucknow University and M. Phil in Internal Strategy & Security from Chennai University.

During his illustrious service period of more than 35 years, he rendered services to many posts in Centre Government as well as in State Government, some of them are PCCF & HoFF, Assam, Chairman, Pollution Control Board, Assam, Joint Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of DoNER from 2013-2016, Inspector General of Forests (IGF) & Deputy Inspector General of Forests, (DIG) in Ministry of Environment & Forests & Climate Change (2009-2013), Govt. of India, Professor, Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun, (2003-2007); Associate Professor, Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun, (1999-2003) besides various assignments in Assam. At IGNFA, Mr Singh conducted more than 100 in-service courses for senior IFS officers and organized many theme-based training workshops.

Mr Singh had presented many papers on various contemporary issues in Commonwealth Forestry Associations, IUFRO, ITTO, World Forestry Congress, Indian Forest Congress, Global Bamboo Summit and co-authored a book on Forest Certification (Published by TERI).

Mr Singh also represented India in many International Forums such as United Nations Forum on Forestry (UNFF), FAO, World Forestry Congress, CITES, Commonwealth Forestry Associations etc. He was one of the expert members in ITTO, Yokohama, Japan representing SE Asia from 2011-13. He is also an expert in People & Forest, Sustainable Forest Management & Forest Certification at the National and International level,s and member of various committees.

Presently he is handling USAID funded project on “Trees outside Forests in India” as Project Director in NCCF and also supervising TOF Certification Scheme along with CR-I recently developed by NCCF.

Mr Varun Grover, Assistant Director



A Post Graduate Diploma in Forestry Management from the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) and a graduate in Mechanical Engineering, Mr Grover previously interned with NCCF and joined full-time in April 2017. He supervised, managed, and provided technical inputs for the standard development activities of the Standard Development Groups on FM, TOF, NWFP, PAWs, etc., and is also assisted the secretariat in various activities.

Dr Indu Dwivedi, Assistant Director



A Doctorate in Forest Biotechnology from Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, Post Graduate in Biotechnology from Amity University, Noida, and a Graduate in Life Science from Kumaun University, Nainital, Dr Indu joined NCCF in August 2019. She looked after the Research, Training and Capacity Building Division and Quality Planting Material Standard Development Group.

Ms Pratibha Singh, Assistant Director



A Masters of Business Administration from ICFAI, Ms Prathiba joined NCCF as Assistant Director, PCA Group of NCCF, and coordinated PCA Sub Working Groups. Her experience reflects in identifying the target audience and devising campaigns that engage, inform and motivate the stakeholders. She is skilled in driving various communication platforms & mediums for brand positioning, developing strategic & tactical communications.

Ms Abhilasha Guleria, Assistant Director



Almost a decade old Forestry professional with post-graduation in Wood Science and Technology from Forest Research Institute (FRI) and graduation in Forestry, Ms Abhilasha Guleria has joined NCCF since August 2020. She had the opportunity to work for Safeboards certification scheme, ToF Risk Assessment Tool development, and overseen the assessment of ToF standard by PEFC. She worked as Project Lead for the Agroforestry Policy Research Project, awarded to NCCF by ICFRE, under the guidance of Dr Devendra Pandey, Principal Investigator of the Project.

Ms Ria Antil, Senior Coordinator



M.Phil in Forest Management with specialisation in Environment Management from Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) and a graduate in Computer Science, Ms Ria joined NCCF in May 2019 as Coordinator. She coordinated Standard Development Groups for PAWS and BioFM and assisted in many secretarial activities.

Ms Neha Singh, Coordinator



Ms Neha is a Post Graduate of Natural Resource Management from Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. Previously, she worked as an Exchange Research Scholar at Smithsonian Conservation biology Institute (USA), University of Zurich (Switzerland) and Kunming Institute of Zoology (PRC). Ms Neha joined NCCF in August 2021 as a Coordinator. She is coordinating Standard Development Groups for Tress outside Forests, Non-Wood Forest Resources, Ecotourism, and assisting in many secretarial activities.

Ms Chayanika Guin, Project Associate



Ms Chayanika is a postgraduate in Environment Studies and Resource Management from TERI School of Advanced Studies (TERI University) with a graduate in Botany from University of Delhi. Ms Chayanika joined NCCF in August 2021 and looking after ICFRE Policy Research Study titled "Popularization of the Use of Wood and Wood Substitutes as Per the National Forest Policy and Modalities for Facilitating Industries for Its Optimum Utilization".

Mr Rishabh Madan, Project Associate



Mr Rishabh completed his post-graduation in Environmental Sciences from Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, and graduation in Microbiology from Amity University, Noida. Mr Rishabh joined NCCF in November 2021 and worked on the development of Trees outside Forest Standard and assisted the team in the assessment of ToF standard by PEFC. He is looking after the PEFC Chain of Custody and its operations in India, provisional recognition and accreditation of CBs, training and capacity building programs.

➤ IT and Website Support

Mr Balbinder Singh



Mr Singh has over 14 years of experience in infrastructure services, networking, vendor management and service delivery. He has previously worked with Kuoni Travel (India)/SOTC - Head OTRS (Email management System) and ACD (Call Management system) and BTSOFT Travel ERP and Server Pan India management for over 300 users.

Mr Pravin Kumar Chandra



Mr Pravin holds Master degree in Computer Applications with more than 7 years of experience in Web & Software development, using tools including visual studio, MS SQL, HTML, CSS, C#, JavaScript, Bootstraps, WordPress.

➤ Finance and HR Team

Ms Harpreet Kaur



Ms Harpreet has over 12 years of experience in Financial Management. She Joined NCCF in April 2020 as Finance support staff.

Mr Shivam Sharma, Accounts Executive



Mr Shivam has completed B.B.A and M.B.A in Banking & Finance. He has 4.5 year of experience in certification industry. He Joined NCCF in March 2021 as accounts executive.

Ms Sonia Bhargava, Manager -HR



Ms Sonia, has a Bachelor's in Arts with over 17 years of experience in client relationship management, HR, and sales. She worked as an HR Manager with NCCF since October 2020.

➤ Team Carbon Programme

Mr Richard Bright, CEO, CR-I



A seasoned IT, digital transformation leader, and environmental enthusiast with over 25 years of experience. Mr Richard, has been part of NCCF since 2019 as CEO, Carbon Registry-India with a mission to build a community of people that are passionate about solving environmental problems.

Prior to joining NCCF, he served as Director at Teleperformance, heading global software service delivery for multiple countries, and before that he held leadership positions with companies like Intelenet Global Services, Serco, Kuoni, Business Travel International, and Sita-Western Union.

He has a master's degree in computer application, is a certified Prince 2 practitioner, Cisco professional, ITSM, Robotics automation expert, and ISO 27001 LA.

Mr Aditya Barman, Project Associate



A Post-graduate in Environmental Sciences from Amity University, Noida and graduate in Environmental Sciences. Mr Aditya joined NCCF in January 2021 as an intern for Safeboards Standards and certification Scheme. He coordinated Safeboards Standards and certification Scheme and Carbon Registry-India Programme.

➤ NCCF's Multistakeholder engagement for the development of Sustainability Standards

NCCF follows a multi-stakeholder engagement approach in all its Standard Development activities.

The stakeholders are mapped taking reference from the UN Agenda 21 Stakeholder Categories, are as under:

- Business and Industry
- Women
- Children and Youth
- Indigenous People
- Non- Government Organisations
- Local Authorities
- Workers and Trade Unions
- Scientific and Technological Community
- Farmers

A large no of independent experts are also associated with the Standard Development process and as members of concerned Standard Development Group.



➤ Carbon Registry-India



Climate change is described as a change in the average global temperature caused by an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, with implications such as global warming, melting of ice-caps, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and so on. It is pertinent to impress that climate change has direct consequences for Global warming and reflects on the country's resource depletion and livelihood security.

One of the objectives of Carbon Registry- India (CR-I) is climate change mitigation and adaptation along with carbon sequestration. CR-I also aims to diligently follow up with India's NDC targets under the 2015 Paris Agreement of UNFCCC: to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 billion to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through forest and tree cover by the year 2030. CR-I focuses on reducing GHG emissions, and will contribute in achieving this objective in a holistic and sustainable way.

Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests' Carbon Registry- India (CR-I) (<https://cri.nccf.in/>) has gone live on 16th September 2021 on World Ozone Day and is now operational. It is a registry to provide listing services for Greenhouse Gas projects and provides a trading and tracking platform for the verified GHG emissions reduction and/or removals enhancement projects, issuance of net GHG emissions reduction units, approval and adoption of new quantification and monitoring methodologies, applicable to Indian territory and anywhere across the globe.

NCCF has also empanelled Validation and Verification Bodies (VVBs) with CR-I such as; Earthwood Services Private Limited (ESPL), KBS Certification Services Private Limited, Carbon Check (India) Private Limited, and 4K Earth Science Private Limited (4KES) and have also listed renowned project proponents such as Infinite Solutions and EnKing International and many more in pipeline.

CR-I has constituted an Advisory Board with members from reputed organizations such as; BEE, DGCI, NITI Aayog, CII, KBS Certification, TERI, South Pole, and many more. Further, NCCF's application for accreditation with UNFCCC as a CSO is under consideration of UNFCCC. In the meanwhile, NCCF has been given "provisional admittance" for participation in COP 27 at Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022.

➤ NCCF's Forest Management (FM) Certification Standard

NCCF has developed the first-ever Indian Certification Standard for Forest Management and that has been endorsed by the leading international certification organization, the PEFC, giving it global recognition. This scheme is being used by many states for forest certification. It is based on six themes covering 14 Principles, 59 Criteria, and 239 Indicators. The standards are India-specific and involve the key elements of existing models in India, viz the Bhopal India Process of the Indian Institute of Forest Management, the National Working Plan Code 2014, and the provisions contained in the National Forest Policy for promotion of afforestation, sustainable utilization of forest products, and growth of the forest-based industries.

NCCF's Forest Certification Scheme was launched by the then Secretary, of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), and then Director General of Forests and Special Secretary in January 2018.

Compliance with the NCCF Forest Management Standard by a Forest Management Entity ensures:

- Full conformance with all applicable laws and regulations
- Conformance with ratified ILO Conventions
- No use of WHO-banned pesticides
- Respect, and upholding of workers' rights and wages
- Health and safety issues
- Clear demarcation of land boundaries and maps
- Regular training of staff and workers
- Stakeholder engagement in management operations
- Continuous improvement in management
- Protecting important sites with recognized significance
- Unbiased independent 3rd Party monitoring and reporting to enable improvement
- Compliance with NCCF FM Standards by a forest management entity ensures:
- Measures to maintain/improve the health and vitality of forests/ToF
- Mitigation of negative impacts on the environment and society
- Adherence to social and environmental safeguards
- Traceability and tracking to verify the source of product; eliminates illegal sourcing
- Protecting forests/ToF from damaging agents (such as wildfire, diseases, and invasive species)
- Documenting and record keeping; audits and publishing findings
- No use of GMOs
- Timely payment of wages

The main goal of PEFC Endorsement was to assess whether a national forest certification system complied with PEFC requirements and sustainability benchmarks, allowing certified entities access to global markets.

Benefits of Country-Specific Certification Scheme

- The Standard is developed keeping in view the Indian context and conditions.
- Driven by national stakeholders.
- It is open, transparent, and independent.
- Local standards incorporating global best practice
- Nationally adaptive and accepted
- Internationally endorsed
- Economical (domestic auditors and other aspects)
- Promotes and facilitates national and international trade
- Integration of local needs and expectations

NABCB, a constituent Board of QCI, under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), is offering accreditation to the competent and independent certification bodies for this scheme, under a Mutually Recognition Arrangement (MRA) with the NABCB. NCCF FM Accreditation from NABCB demonstrates the competence level of the Certification Bodies (CBs) to perform FM certification audits as per internationally recognized ISO 17065 Standards and NCCF Standards. CBs are accredited based on the organizational and technical competence of an organization to conduct certification activities like auditing and report writing. To spread awareness about certification and Forest Management Certification Standard.

NCCF had earlier conducted sensitization workshops for the State Forest Departments of Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Haryana, and Uttarakhand. During the year 2020, NCCF conducted sensitization workshops for Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, and Goa State Forest Departments, and about 300 forest personnel were trained over the past three years. This not only contributed to their capacity building for taking up forest certification but also helped them strategize the forest management plans efficiently to achieve the desired goals.

U. P. Forest Corporation undertook PEFC-NCCF Forest Management Certification and got certified 41 Divisions covering 4.5 lakh hectares of forest area. UPFC has been able to sell some 7000 cubic meters of PEFC-certified timber during 2020-21, with a price premium. Many other State Forest Departments are contemplating to take up forest certification using PEFC-NCCF Standard.

➤ Synergy between Working Plan based SFM and Forest Certification NCCF's Forest Management (FM) Certification Standard

NCCF-FM standard incorporates all aspects and components of the National Working Plan Code 2014 (NWPC) in its Principles, Criteria, and Indicators. Thus, if NWPC is followed, vital objectives of SFM and certification requirements are easily met. NWPC is an important component of FM certification. Certification brings in many other components of SFM which are internationally required to be complied with in order to be qualified as a certified forest.

These additional requirements may vary from simple documentation to complex activities. The outcome is continuous improvement in forest management. NCCF-FM Certification Standard provides a tool to create a brand image through global recognition. It ensures that forest management activities are complying with internationally benchmarked forest management practices, International Laws, Treaties, and Agreements. It ensures the active engagement of stakeholders in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, incorporates components of welfare, health, and safety of people and considers other aspects of forest management like forest hydrology, biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, value addition, and exploring new products and markets. Certification helps in assessing loopholes in forest management activities and identifying scope for improvement.



➤ Trees outside Forests (TOF) Certification Standard

NCCF's Trees outside Forest Certification Scheme is the first of its kind not only in India but anywhere in the world and is under the process of endorsement by PEFC. The standard is developed by a multi-stakeholder Standard Development Group, chaired by Dr Devendra Pandey ex PCCF & HoFF, Arunachal Pradesh, and Ex-DG, FSI. The standard focuses on the certification of wood coming from non-forest lands, agroforestry, farmers' land, smallholders' plantations, block, and linear plantations and farm forestry, etc.

The report of a High-Level Expert Group on "Growing India's agricultural exports through the crop-specific, state-led plans" constituted by the XV Finance Commission reveals that around 72% of the industrial wood requirement is met from ToF, only 5% from forests and balance 23% from imports. Despite the huge production of wood, Indian producers are unable to tap global markets to fetch a competitive price for their products.

The ToF certification scheme will help the construction and other wood sector industries to include certified raw materials in their procurement policies and supply chain management. This scheme will bring much-needed recognition to the wood and timber produced by the farmers on their lands and ensure better markets and higher income for their agroforestry produce.

NCCF ToF Certification Standard is based on six themes. The Standard has 35 Criteria and 130 indicators for all types of ToF plantations viz., block plantations, non-Block plantations, and urban trees and forests (UTF).

NCCF has applied for the PEFC endorsement of ToF Standard. PEFC commenced the process of endorsement of the Trees outside Forest Certification Standard by launching an international public consultation webinar on 27th September 2021, which was followed by 60 days of Public Consultation, until 25 November 2021.



Benefits of ToF Certification

- Inclusion of small-holder farmers under Certified supply chains
- Certification mechanism to the suitability of Indian scenarios (ease of understanding and compliance to standards)
- Assured buying markets and linkage with WBIs
- Ensuring the right farm gate price for farmers
- Need for income benefits, enhancing the resilience of farmers
- Access to International markets with demand for Certified Produce
- Mechanism to Indian WBI to facilitate compliance with 'Due Diligence' of International Legislations and preparing in advance for upcoming reforms

➤ Non-Wood Forest Resources Certification Standard

NCCF is developing a certification standard for Non-Wood Forest Resources (NWFR) through a multistakeholder Standard Development Group under the Chairmanship of Mr Arun Kumar Bansal, IFS (retd), Former Addl. DG Forests, MoEF&CC.

India is the 10th most forested country in the world, with the forest and tree cover of 8,09,537 sq km (24.62% of the country's geographical area). These areas are sources of the bulk of the non-wood forest products. This standard will benefit forest dwellers and local communities for whom extraction (collection/harvest) of NWFPs is an important source of livelihood. Moreover, commercial opportunities for NWFRs are emerging and certification can help promote their marketing, ease of trade, and better price to the gatherers and cultivators and create market linkages while ensuring the sustainability of NWFRs.

Currently, NWFR Standard is at the pilot testing stage. NCCF has received 2 Eols from the certification bodies for the pilot testing of the draft NWFR Standard.



➤ Protected Areas and Wetlands Certification Standard

India is recognized as one of the mega biodiversity countries among the 17 globally identified countries. With just 2.4% of the land area, India accounts for nearly 7% of the world's recorded species (flora and fauna). The existing protected area network of 990 Protected Areas 106 National Parks, 565 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 100 Conservation Reserves, and 219 Community Reserves covers a total of 1,73,306.83 km² of the geographical area of the country which is approximately 5.27%.

NCCF has embarked on an initiative to develop a Certification Standard for Protected Areas and Wetlands (PAWs) through a multi-stakeholder Standard Development Group (SDG) under the Chairmanship of Dr Jagdish Kishwan, IFS (retd). NCCF's PAWs Certification Standard is a voluntary initiative to develop a robust and comprehensive institutional mechanism for scientific monitoring of the existing issues such as poor health of the forest areas, large areas impacted by invasive species, human-wildlife conflicts, poaching, illicit felling, encroachments, and other illegal and unauthorised activities in Protected Areas and Wetlands. Through simple, usable, and generic parameters of this certification, the monitoring mechanism could be regularly applied to a PA to assess the health, impact, and efficacy of the government funding, management practices, which of the newest government policies and directives on the functioning of the PA.



Benefits of PAWs Certification Standard

- Cost-effective and affordable, being a domestic Standard
- Ease of application and use
- Applicability to conservation areas and important biodiversity habitats beyond the network of common protected areas
- Possible multiple uses, applications, and assessments with one standard
- Suitable for assessment of conservation areas specific to the country
- Possibility of assessing viability of project proposal of a conservation area

➤ Certification standards for Nurseries and Quality Planting Material

NCCF is developing certification standards for Nurseries and Quality Planting Material (QPM) through a multi-stakeholder Standard Development Group, under the Chairmanship of Mr Abhijit Ghose, IFS (retd). Following the said Standard, woody perennials will be raised based on certain standards and can be evaluated by a third party on the basis of certain criteria and indicators as provided in the Standard. The Standard will also provide the protocols to address various risk factors. Assessment of the nurseries and the planting material, based on the Standard, will ensure the production of Quality Planting Material on a sustainable basis.

Quality Planting Material is also an essential input in creating plantations in and outside the forest for higher productivity and meeting the rising demand for timber in our country. The absence of certification standards deters investment. A certified QPM regime, therefore, is essential for the healthy and sustainable growth of the sector and for ensuring plenty of quality planting material that meets global standards. The standard will help the tree producers obtain better prices for their tree products, as well as secure markets, thereby reducing risk. It will be a win-win situation for the Nursery owner, as its products can be sold at a premium price in comparison to non-certified nurseries and certainly consumers (planters/farmers) will be benefitted from better productivity by planting QPM in their fields.

The draft Standard document was opened for public consultation from December 6, 2021, to February 3, 2022, and comments received have been addressed in the draft standard.

In a nutshell, the objectives of QPM Standard are as follows:

- To determine different criteria and indicators for establishing nurseries for the supply of cost-effective Quality Planting Materials
- To meet the quality raw material demand of wood-based industries by reducing the country's import burden and increasing the productivity and revenue of plantations.
- To encourage continued R&D support for tree improvement programs through the development of location-specific quality planting materials.



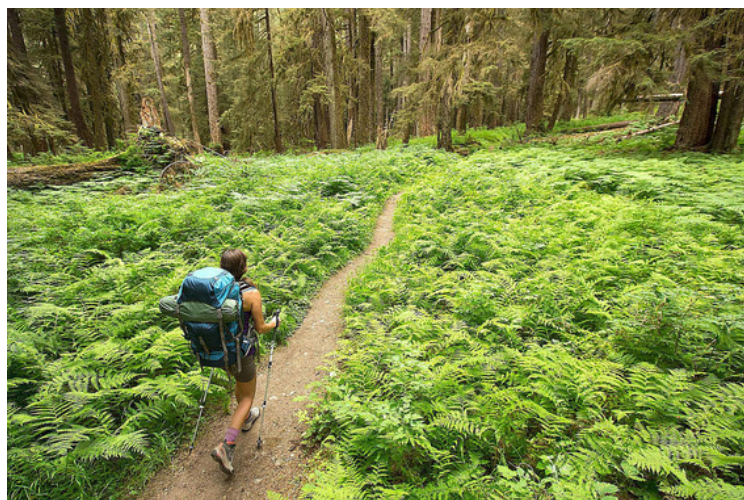
➤ Ecotourism Certification Standard

In India, the tourism sector has significant potential given its rich culture, heritage, and diversity in ecology, terrains, forest types, landscapes, places of natural beauty, and also its unparalleled biodiversity richness. Tourism is a potentially large employment generator and source of livelihood, besides being a significant source of foreign exchange. There is increasing demand, particularly from travelers and service providers, and destination management entities, to have mechanisms in place for ensuring eco-friendly travel and tourism (ecotourism). That is how the need for ecotourism certification standards has come to be recognized.

Keeping in view, the importance of responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and also sustains the well-being of the local people and the need for an ecotourism certification standard, NCCF constituted a multi-stakeholder Standard Development Group for developing the Standard, under the chairmanship of Mr A K Varma, IFS (retd), Former PCCF & HoFF, Karnataka. The Standard is intended to promote responsible tourism and improve the quality of ecotourism destination entities in the country, making them economically viable, environmentally responsible, and socially beneficial in accordance with the national policies, rules, and guidelines.

Zero Draft of Ecotourism Standard (V01), finalised in active consultation with the SDG members, following an open, transparent and consultative process, was hosted on the website for 60 days of public consultation from August 12, 2021, till October 12, 2021, as a mandatory requirement of the Standard Setting Procedure. The comments received were addressed in the draft Standard. In tune with the Standard Setting Procedure, the pilot testing of the draft Ecotourism Standard has been planned to be held in June- August 2022.

NCCF intends to get the Ecotourism Standard endorsed by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) for its international recognition and global visibility and outreach.



➤ Biofuel and Biomass Certification Standard

NCCF has embarked on an initiative to develop a Certification Standard for Biofuel and Biomass (BioFM), enabling sustainable growth of the sector and also ensuring that vital biological resources of the country are not overexploited. The Biofuel and Biomass (BioFM) Standard Development Group is chaired by Mr R R Rashmi, IAS (retd) with Dr Jagdish Kishwan, IFS (retd) as its Co-chair.

There is a thrust to significantly promote the production of biofuels and biomass energy in both public and private sectors through various initiatives like the National Policy on Biofuels, 2018 of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG). Sub-section 5.25 of the policy mandates the introduction of standards and certification for different biofuels and end-use applications. Keeping in view the current scenario and need for certification, NCCF is developing the certification scheme for biofuel and biomass.

NCCF BioFM certification scheme can fulfill the mandate of having a certification scheme for biofuels that ensures environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the sources of biomass and throughout its supply chain by demonstrating compliance with their set of requirements. A certification system will provide third-party verification and ensure that feedstock is grown and converted sustainably and thus help in creating sustainable market linkages in this sector. This will further help the government, policymakers, and other stakeholders to develop incentive-based mechanisms and dovetail with the existing schemes, policies, and plans along with further strengthening the needs and requirements of the sector.

In a nutshell, the benefits of the Standard are as follows:

- To provide for Environmentally safe, Socially acceptable, and Economically viable sources of Biofuels and Biomass.
- To help in the overall reduction in GHG emissions due to reduced dependence on fossil fuels.
- Establishing traceability and legal sourcing of the certified material.
- Promotion of improved and sustained quality and quantity of biofuels and biomass.
- Increased marketing opportunities for certified economic operators.
- Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the production, processing, and use of biofuels and other related products.



➤ Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme

Composite wood products have emerged as the most widely used and dominant building materials over the last three decades owing to their characteristics, viz; lightweight, corrosion-free, insulation, and cost-effective. The boards, however, do not provide healthy indoor air quality to the users owing to the resins and chemicals used in their production and the continuous emission of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) from their usage even after years of installation. The Standards have been developed through a Standard Development Group (SDG) constituted under the Chairpersonship of Mr A K Goyal, IFS (retd), ex-Special Secretary to the Government of India.

Pilot testing of the Draft Standards had been conducted at two composite wood manufacturing sites namely; United Timber Works, a plywood manufacturer in Yamuna Nagar, Haryana, and Balaji Action Buildwell, a Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF), Thin Medium Density Fibreboard (thin MDF) and particle board manufacturer, located at Sitarganj, Uttarakhand. With the successful completion of pilot testing, it was concluded that all requirements of the Zero Draft of the Safeboards Certification Standards were fully verifiable, except the correlation calculation factor which was to be determined post-pilot testing. For, correlation calculations, correlation values were incorporated into the Standards.

NCCF launched its “Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme” on 26th of November 2021 with the approval of its Governing Body. This scheme is focused on technical criteria and safe levels of emissions of formaldehyde from composite wood products; plywood, block boards, particle boards, and MDF, to improve indoor air quality, thus addressing human health and the environment. This will help promote exports of wooden furniture, handicraft items, wooden toys, cutleries, etc. The Certification Scheme ensures uniform technical regulations using appropriate Standards across the manufacturing units for the production of safe products intended to be sold in export and domestic markets.

NCCF's Certification Advisory Group had approved the Provisional Approval Scheme for Certification Bodies for Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme in its meeting held online on 27th of January 2022 under the chairmanship of Mr Anil Jauhri, Chairperson, CAG (ex-CEO, NABCB) and invited Certification Bodies (CBs) for seeking Provisional Approval for Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme.

➤ USAID Trees outside Forests in India Project

Scaling up Trees Outside Forests (TOF) in the right ways in India holds significant potential for bringing about multiple environmental, economic, and social benefits, thereby supporting the Government of India (GoI) to fulfill several goals and international commitments simultaneously. These include increasing forest and tree cover from 25% to 33%, sequestering 2.5 to 3 billion tons of additional carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) gases, and restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land. Yet, various policy, economic, capacity, and information-related barriers prevent this potential from fully realizing. ICRAF's Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) program, under USAID funding, is designed to address these barriers, particularly those locking in promising opportunities for TOF expansion in India.

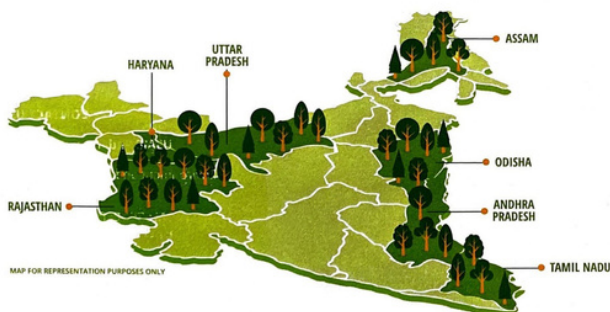
The program will be implemented in seven states jointly selected by MoEFCC and USAID. These include Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.

Three significant objectives outlined by the project are:

1. Enabling environment strengthened for TOF expansion,
2. TOF expansion economically incentivized and risks reduced and
3. Improved access to quality and actionable TOF information



Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) Program



TOFI is working to bring inclusive environmental and livelihood benefits at scale by increasing the area of tree cover outside forests through multi-stakeholder engagements in seven states- Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. It will pursue viable, inclusive and locally appropriate opportunities for scaling up the establishment of trees outside forests.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

2.8 MILLION HECTARES
OF NEW LAND UNDER TREES OUTSIDE FORESTS

420 MILLION TONNES
OF CARBON DIOXIDE EQUIVALENT (CO₂e) SEQUESTERED

13.1 MILLION PEOPLE
TO BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES

\$50 MILLION
WILL BE LEVERAGED TO BOOST THE EXPANSION OF TREES OUTSIDE FORESTS



Two Innovation Platforms (IPs) have been suggested

- Identify promising TOF expansion opportunities that can generate significant private and public benefits and
- Pull the right levers in the right ways to bring these opportunities to life.

The program is organized into three objectives:

Objective 1 - Enabling environment strengthened for TOF expansion—will focus on leveraging resources for scaling up TOF; accelerating the certification and improved regulation of locally produced and certified TOF products to boost their demand; mainstreaming Quality Planting Material (QPM) standards; and ensuring better alignment of trees outside forests-related state-level policies.

Objective 2 - TOF incentivized through reduced risks and improved economic opportunities by addressing impediments to the expansion of TOFs in ways that incentivize economic and environmental returns to households, farmers and tree growers, and other entities such as land-owning institutions. This will include, among others, increasing access to finance and insurance; promoting tree-based enterprises/value chains and providing business incubation support; demonstrating the production of quality planting materials (QPM); establishing demonstration nurseries and plantations; demonstrating and scaling direct payment schemes such as carbon credits.

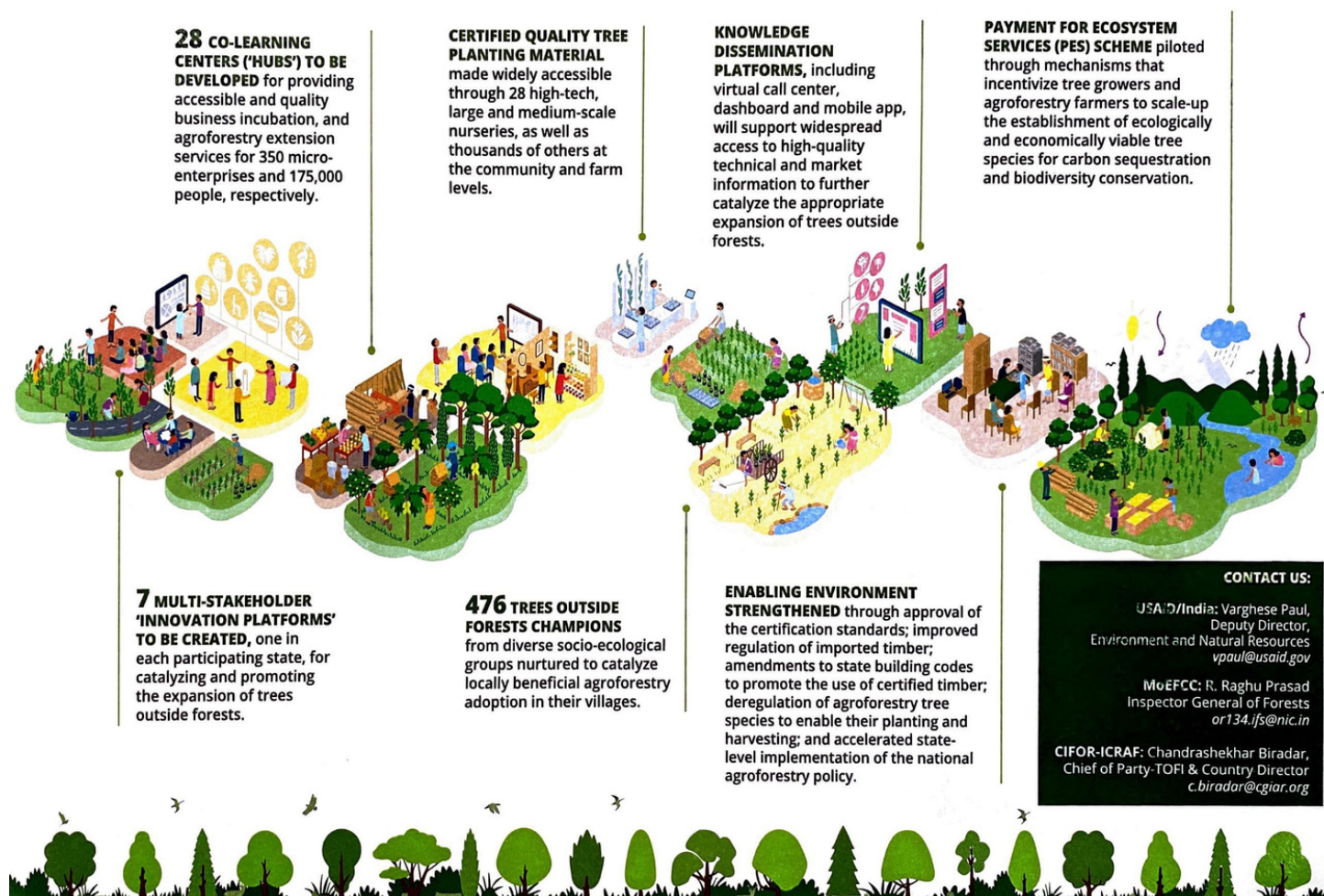
Objective 3 - Improved access to quality information—supports the achievement of the first two objectives by enhancing the delivery of TOF extension services; promoting widespread access to TOF technical and market-related information through setting up a Virtual Call Centre (VCC) and TOF Online Dashboard and promoting the widespread use of an innovative TOF App to inform technical decisions on the integration of trees into farming systems and landscapes; and, finally, carrying out solution-oriented research on topics affecting TOF expansion and/or its generation of inclusive impact in the targeted states.

NCCF has been assigned the following responsibilities:

- Fast track final approval with of TOF certification standard by PEFC;
- Stakeholder engagement on TOF certification;
- Field test certification scheme for NTTPs;
- Hold consultations to build consensus on amending OGL;
- Actions to promote TOF certification standards;
- Building codes co-revised and procurement strategies;
- QPM accreditation systems co-developed with states.
- NCCF has the potential to take on more responsibilities under TOFI.

NCCF's role in TOFI Project fully aligns with its ongoing works and policy advocacy initiatives. The project is directed by Mr A M Singh, IFS (retd), ex- PCCF & HoFF, Government of Assam. The letter of agreement between NCCF and ICRAF for the launch of TOFI was signed on 20th Feb 2022.

Proposed Key Interventions



➤ ICFRE Agroforestry Policy Research Study

The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had awarded NCCF a Policy Research Study in Agroforestry titled “Policy issues in agroforestry including market mechanisms, forward and backward linkages, regional availability, transit of forest produce, linkages with NDC targets, choice of species and utilization aspects” in August 2020. NCCF undertook the policy research study under overall guidance of Dr Devendra Pandey, IFS (retired), Former DG, FSI and ex-PCCF&HoFF, Arunachal Pradesh, as Principal Investigator of the Project. The Project Team included Dr S.K. Dhyani, Senior Agroforestry Specialist and Country Coordinator, World Agroforestry ICRAF, Mr Sachin Jain, Convener, NCCF, Mr A K Srivastava, DG, NCCF, Ms Abhilasha Guleria, Assistant Director, NCCF, Dr Indu Dwivedi, Assistant Director, NCCF, Mr Varun Grover, Assistant Director, NCCF and Ms Rishika Sharma, Coordinator. The Project was mainly anchored by Ms Abhilasha for its day-to-day work.

Terms of Reference of the Study assigned to NCCF were as under:-

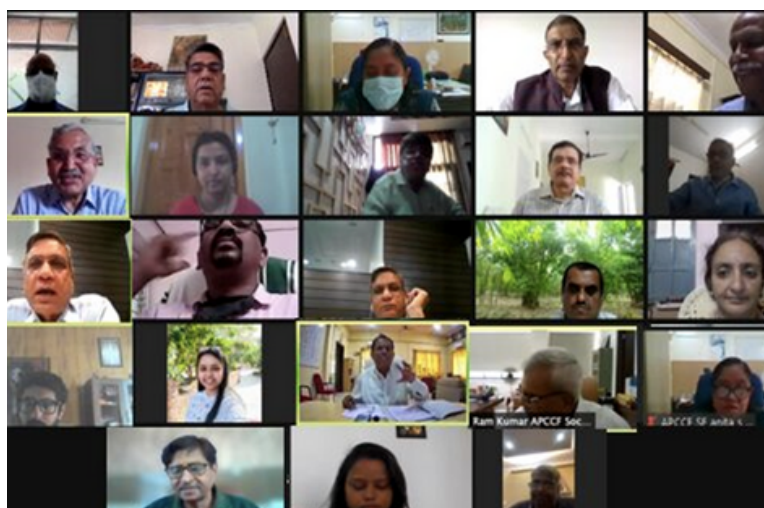
- Analyze the effectiveness of existing policy options, institutional mechanism and financial incentives available in the country for promotion of agroforestry
- Recommend a framework for involvement of financial and insurance sector in promotion of agroforestry, similar to the facilities of insurance and credit for agriculture sector from the financial institutions and an organized marketing structure
- Suggest the policy changes required in light of the impacts of climate change, REDD+, NDC targets and forest certification aspects on availability and price of timber and non-wood forest produce to bridge demand and supply gap.
- Suggest unified regulatory regimes for agroforestry produce and also recommend relaxation /removal of restrictive prescriptions with respect to harvesting, transportation, and marketing of agroforestry produce
- Develop a strategy and road-map for large-scale production and supply of genetically superior and/or certified quality planting material through collaboration between private sector (tree growers, nursery growers, and industry), research organizations and state forest departments. Also suggest a mechanism for certification of nurseries and planting material through laboratory and nursery accreditation.
- Suggest incentivizing mechanisms such as credits and Minimum Support (MSP) for extending area and productivity of trees outside forests (TOF) and also propose a detailed mechanism for fixation of MSP and its implementation.

NCCF undertook extensive exercises to identify challenges and issues in agroforestry and suggest solutions through desk review, questionnaire-based field assessment, focused group discussions and personal interviews of agroforestry experts. Project was initiated with Review of Government policies, schemes, research-based studies on agroforestry. Strategic inputs of key stakeholder categories namely, farmers, wood-based Industries and scientists through questionnaire-based survey were collected. More than 500 farmers across the country were included in the survey.

Later focused group discussions and personal interviews were also held to identify the existing challenges and potential solutions concerning the multi-aspects of agroforestry as part of the project methodology.

After identifying the challenges, the study has made the following recommendation to address them for promoting agroforestry in the country –

1. Setting up effective institutional set-up at the state and local levels,
2. Improving incentives and financial support through institutions,
3. Strengthening Marketing Mechanisms,
4. Enhancing production of Quality Planting Material & Accreditation of Nurseries,
5. Relaxation on the tree regulations existing in various States/UTs,
6. Secure land tenure and tenancy rights,
7. Simplifying the mechanism and methodologies to account for the role of Agroforestry in C-sequestration, REDD+ & NDC targets,
8. Certification of timber products from Agroforestry,
9. Promotion/incentivisation of high-value tree species in agroforestry like teak sandalwood, Red sanders,
10. Reducing import of wood,
11. Encourage Agroforestry plantations on a Catchment basis for Wood Based Industries,
12. Strengthening database of timber production from agroforestry, demand, and supply,
13. Strengthening of Extension Service, reviving the focus on extension and capacity building, and
14. Expanding agroforestry in potential wastelands and development of Agroforestry model with the complete package.



South FGD_06.07.2021



North FGD_29.06.2021

➤ ICFRE Policy Research Study – “Popularization of the Use of Wood and Wood Substitutes as Per the National Forest Policy and Modalities for Facilitating Industries for Its Optimum Utilization”

Wood, an important and versatile natural material obtained from trees, is best suited for meeting a broad range of human needs. Wood production systems – Forests and Trees outside Forest (ToF) are renewable resources that with wise management can be sustainable and almost inexhaustible. Wood alternates like cement, plastics and metals are mostly synthetic, have a huge carbon footprint embedded in energy processing, and have severe negative environmental implications as per the life cycle assessment of their products (LCA). Wood processing technologies also evolved for manufacturing usable composites from small dimension wood from fast-growing tree species. Widespread use of wood and wood-based substitutes has a positive impact on wood production, helps in carbon sequestration, and enhances the increase of forest cover.

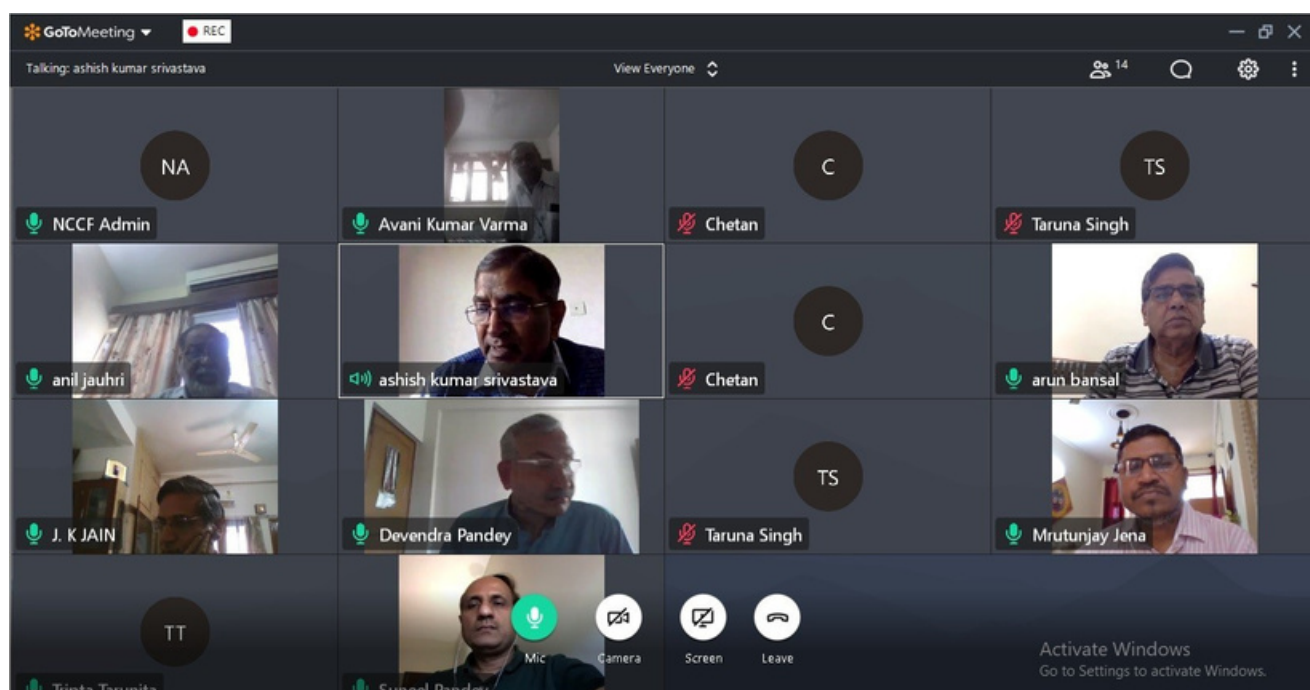
Realization of the fact that wood substitution is a positive process allowing the saving of natural forests led the Centre for Forest Policy Research, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Educations to decide for undertaking a research study with a view to aiming at the popularization of the use of wood and wood substitutes and to develop modalities for facilitating the industries for optimum utilization of wood and wood substitutes. The title of the policy research study “Popularization of the Use of Wood and Wood Substitutes as Per the National Forest Policy and Modalities for Facilitating Industries for Its Optimum Utilization” has been awarded by ICFRE to NCCF. The principal investigator of the project is Mr A K Bansal, IFS (retd) Ex-Addl. DGF, MoEF&CC; Chairperson, PCA Group NCCF & Chairperson NCCF- NWFP Standard Development Group. Other members of the project team are Mr A K Srivastava, IFS (retd), DG, NCCF(ex Addl DG/DGF, MoEF&CC); Mr Sachin Raj Jain, Convener, NCCF; Dr Indu Dwivedi, Assistant Director, NCCF; Ms Abhilasha Guleria, Assistant Director, NCCF; Ms Pratibha Kumar, Assistant Director NCCF; Ms Rishika Sharma, Coordinator, NCCF; Ms Chayanika Guin, Project Associate; The scope of the study as communicated by the ICFRE are as follows:

- Assessment of the present utilization and demand of wood and wood substitutes in the country including the analysis of earlier studies.
- Studying the factors contributing to encourage the use of wood and wood substitutes as well as factors hindering their use and to suggest remedial measures.
- Assessment and analysis of the factors promoting industries for optimum utilization of wood and wood substitutes and to suggest measures for encouraging industries and promotion of optimum utilization of wood and wood substitutes.

The policy research study had been initiated in August 2021. The initial stage of the report involved drafting the Inception Report. Drafting involved extensive desk review, understanding the wood industry dynamics, its relationship with agroforestry, EXIM situation about wood products. The categories were outlined who can be approached for the questionnaire survey and six categories were finalized namely – wood-based industries, universities and research institutes, Government Departments, Architects and Builders, NGOs and CBOs, and Farmer Producer Organisations. Stakeholders for each category were mapped. Questionnaires for each category were framed to be added to the Inception Report for review. The methodology had to be framed out as well which will be followed for conducting the study. The Inception Report was approved in January, questionnaire survey will be conducted from March to May. The FDG is scheduled to be held in June where experts and leading professionals from different stakeholder categories will be invited to discuss certain challenges faced by wood industries that have come forth from Desk Review.

➤ Assessment of Certification Bodies (CBs) for their provisional recognition to operate upon NCCF's Certification schemes

NCCF constituted a Certification Advisory Group (CAG) in March 2020 under the chairmanship of Mr Anil Jauhri, ex CEO, NABCB, to advise and facilitate activities related to Certification Standards and Schemes' developments as also to take care of the certification process, accreditation requirements, validation and verification requirements, certification body requirements and any other requirements pertaining to schemes' operation and implementation.



In August 2021, NCCF started granting provisional recognition to the CBs to operate upon NCCF's certification schemes. Provisional recognition is given to the CBs for a period of 2 years and the CBs are required to apply to NABCB and take regular accreditation within this period. The period of validity of provisional recognition of CBs can be extended by NCCF for 6 months, if there are valid reasons for the CBs, not to have obtained regular accreditation by NABCB during the period of their provisional recognition.

Three certification bodies, GICIA India Pvt. Ltd., Chhattisgarh Certification Society, India for Forestry & Agriculture (CGCERT) and Bureau Veritas India Private Limited have taken up the provisional recognition to operate upon NCCF's Forest Management Certification Standard. GICIA India Pvt. Ltd. has taken Provisional recognition for NCCF's Trees outside Forests (ToF) scheme also.

NCCF undertakes a proper assessment of the CBs with the help of qualified Assessors and Technical Experts who are chosen based on their expertise and experience. NCCF grants provisional approval to the CBs on the recommendation of the Assessment team and with the approval of the CAG.

➤ NCCF's participation in NITI Aayog's Committee on Promotion of Agroforestry and Wasteland greening in India

A Committee on Promotion of Agroforestry and Wasteland greening in India was constituted in March 2020, under the Chairpersonship of Dr Neelam Patel, Sr. Advisor (Agriculture) NITI Aayog, with NCCF as one of the Members. Mr Avani Varma, then Co-Chairman, NCCF, represented NCCF as a Member of the Task Force of NITI Aayog.

The committee comprises the following Members:

- Joint Secretary, Conservation and Survey(CS), MoEF&CC
- Director, ICAR-Central Agro-Forestry Research Centre, Jhansi
- Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education
- Dr Ravi Prabhu, Director, World Agroforestry
- Ms Seema Paul, MD, The Nature Conservancy.
- Mr Avani Kumar Varma, Co-Chairman, NCCF
- Dr J L N Sastry, CEO, National Medicinal Plant Board
- Mr O P Agarwal, CEO, World Resources Institute
- Vice Chancellor, Forest Research Institute, Dehradun
- Dr Shashi Kant Sharma, Scientist, ISRO, Ahmadabad

The group was constituted for the development of a policy framework for the "Promotion of Agroforestry and wasteland greening". NCCF has attended the meetings of the Task Force and provided inputs on various issues including "Scenario of implementation of National Agroforestry Policy 2014 and the linkages of policy and regulatory regimes and the Convergence of various schemes impacting agroforestry".

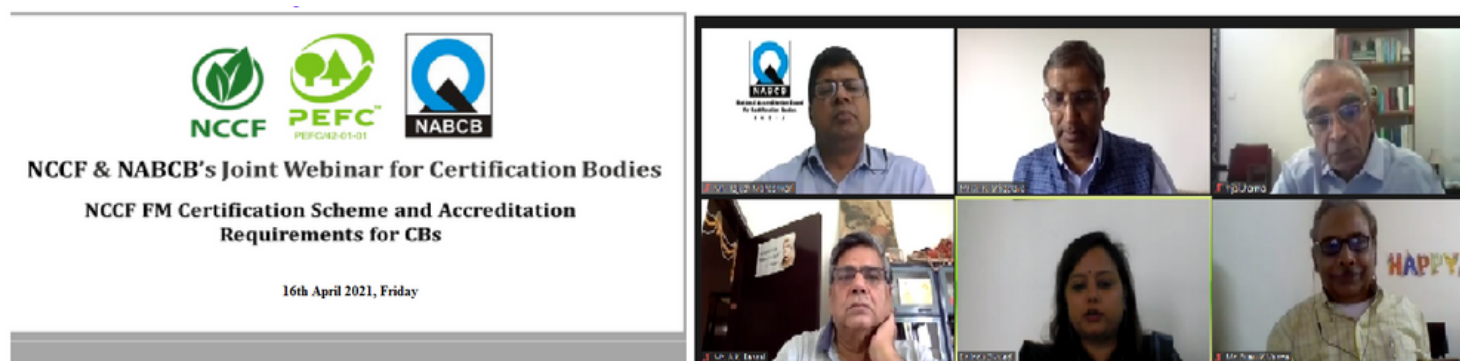
➤ Policy Advocacy and Research

NCCF is a network of experts and professionals in the fields of forestry, agroforestry, environment, climate change, biodiversity, certification, auditing, research, management, business enterprise, governance, and industry, etc. Often on important conservation issues, NCCF has played its policy advocacy role and tried to bridge the gap between policymakers and the practitioners. NCCF has also conducted desk research and stakeholder, consultation to make some concrete recommendations to the government on matters concerning certification, trees outside forests, achieving the 33% goal of forest/tree cover, meeting nationally determined contributions to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂eq through additional forest and tree cover by 2030, compensatory afforestation fund, draft national forest policy etc.

➤ Capacity Building and Training

Capacity Building and Training is an important mandate of NCCF. We have conducted sensitization workshops on certification for many state forest departments. During the year, sensitization workshops were conducted for the State Forest Departments of Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim, Karnataka, Chattisgarh, Tripura, and Uttarakhand at their headquarters.

- **Joint Webinar by NCCF and NABCB on “NCCF FM and ToF Certification Scheme, PEFC CoC Certification and Accreditation Requirements for the Certification Bodies”; 16th April 2021**



The Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) and National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) jointly organized a webinar for the certification bodies (CBs) on NCCF's Forest Management and ToF Certification Schemes, PEFC CoC Certification and accreditation requirements for CBs. 68 participants, representing leading CBs, qualified auditors, natural resource management experts, and consultants attended.

The participants appreciated that certification is an important management tool to promote the sustainability of resources. Third-party assessment, through credible CBs with trained and experienced auditors and experts, is a demonstrable evidence to ensure that we are managing our forests, ToF, and other natural resources sustainably. The participants expressed keen interest in understanding NCCF's certification schemes and business potential for CBs, PEFC CoC certification, and the requirements for provisional recognition of the CBs to conduct certification audits against these schemes.

- **NCCF & PEFC jointly organize a Webinar for The Rubber Board on the eve of World Environment Day; 4th March 2021**

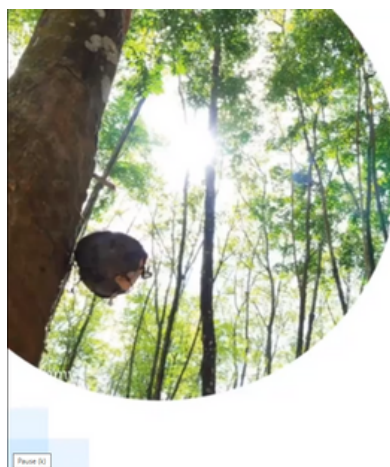
The Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) jointly with the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) organized a webinar for The Rubber Board, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India on 4th June 2021.

Mr A K Srivastava, Director General, NCCF, while welcoming the panelists and participants, mentioned that the

Indian Rubber Industry is growing at a fast pace both in terms of strength and dominance, and it is imperative that natural rubber should come from sustainable sources with demonstrable and objective evidence, like NCCF: PEFC certification of natural rubber plantations.

Mr Vijai Sharma, Chairman, NCCF in his brief remarks, expressed satisfaction that experts were discussing the sustainability measures for the natural rubber resources and rubber industry, through certification, an important management tool to promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the natural rubber.

Dr K N Raghavan, Chairman Rubber Board in his presentation "Outlook of Indian Natural Rubber Plantation Industry" emphasized The Rubber Board's goal to be self-reliant in natural rubber production by focusing on the sustainability of Indian rubber plantations through various strategies including promotion of Good Agricultural Practices for increasing Productivity in existing plantations, human resource development, integrated farming for sustainable livelihoods and enhancing the sustainability of Indian Natural Rubber plantations. He underlined the importance of the Trees Outside Forests certification scheme developed by NCCF in enhancing not only production level but also ensuring better markets and premium prices for certified products.



Towards a Sustainable and Resilient future of Natural Rubber

NCCF / PEFC Webinar
04.06.2021

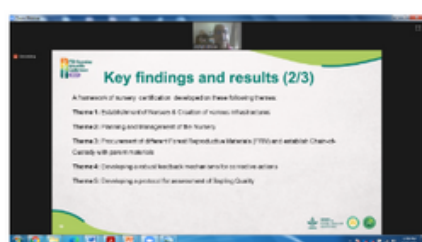
Ben Gunneberg
CEO and Secretary General of PEFC International
Richard Laity
PEFC South-East Asia Manager



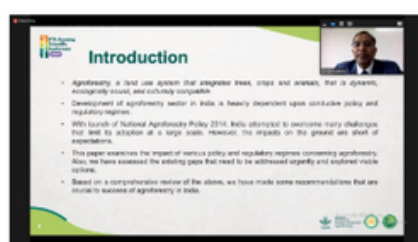
Mr Richard Laity, Project and Development Consultant, PEFC South East Asia made a comprehensive presentation on the topic “Towards a Sustainable & Resilient Future of Natural Rubber”, explaining details of the PEFC certification system as well as its chain of custody certification and their contribution in sustainable forest management and mitigating environmental and social risks. Mr A K Bansal, Chairperson PCA-WG, NCCF gave a detailed presentation on “Opportunities & Challenges in certification of Natural Rubber in India, using NCCF: PEFC Forest/ToF Certification Standards”.

Presentations were followed by a lively interaction session and which enhanced the understanding of the participants about the modalities and benefits of certification. The webinar was attended by 117 participants including Managing Directors and senior officers of SFDCs/Plantation Corporations, officers of The Rubber Board, natural rubber estate owners, representatives of the rubber industry, certification bodies, experts, and other stakeholders of natural rubber. This brought diverse stakeholders of the Rubber Industry on a common platform.

- **NCCF participated in FTA Kunming Scientific International Conference; 22nd - 24th June 2021**



“Certification of Nursery and Quality Planting Material to Accelerate Agroforestry in India” by Abhijit Ghose, Chairperson, NCCF-SDG, QPM and Dr. Indu Dwivedi.



“Conducive Policy and Regulatory Regimes are Key to Success of Agroforestry in India” by A.K.Srivastava, DG, NCCF, Varun Grover, and Rishika Sharma;

NCCF participated online in CGIAR’s Forest, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA) International Scientific Conference, held from 22 -24 June 2021. CGIAR’s FTA Research Program is the world’s largest research for development program focusing on the role of forests, trees, and agroforestry in sustainable development, food security, and climate action. It is led by CIFOR, World Agroforestry ICRAF, CATIE, CIRAD, INBAR, Biodiversity International, and Tropenbos International and also links with dozens of other scientific and development institutions.

The theme of this year’s conference is “Forests, trees, and agroforestry for diverse sustainable landscapes”, co-organized by the CGIAR Research Program on FTA and the Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the Chinese Academy of Forestry.

NCCF contributed abstracts of four papers at the conference, out of which two papers were accepted for oral presentation and two papers for poster presentation.



Sustainable Agroforestry - A boon for India

A K Bansal, Ria Antil

Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests, New Delhi- India
www.nccf.in

INTRODUCTION

- Agroforestry is a land use system that integrates trees, crops and animals in a way that is dynamic, ecologically sound and culturally compatible.
- It has a great potential to contribute to India's target of bringing 33% of geographical area under forest and tree cover and meeting the nationally determined contribution of additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tone of CO₂ equivalent by the year 2030 and towards doubling of farmers' income.
- Wood is one of the important produce coming from forests/agroforestry that are renewable natural resource.
- It also contributes in meeting the SDG goals, and our targets under biodiversity conservation and the Bonn challenge.
- In the context of ongoing global dialogues on Climate Change, use of wood products is emerging as a versatile renewable alternative to its competing non-wood products. It is therefore necessary to increase the use of wood and wood products in construction, furnishing and interiors, paper and packaging, handicrafts, agricultural implements etc.
- A High Level Expert Group constituted by the XV Finance Commission of India in its report (July 2020) mentions that in 2017 total consumption of wood was 65 million cum of which 3 million cum (about 5%) was produced from forests, around 47 Million cum (72%) was produced from plantations (mainly agroforestry systems), and balance 15 million cum (23%) was imported.

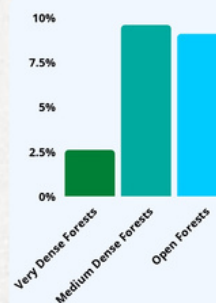
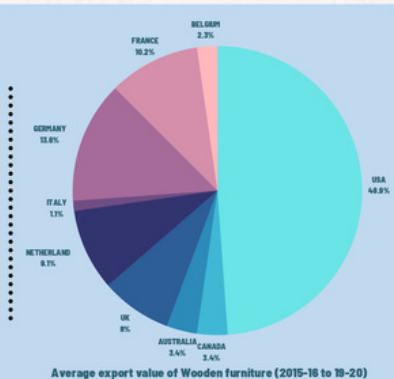


Fig. 1: Depicts the Forest Cover of India : Source : State of Forest Report, FSI 2019

Wood based Industries

- Paper industry is the organized sector, and has been promoting tree cultivation of pulp wood species by farmers under agroforestry models, including clonal plantations, extending over 125,000 ha contributing to tree cover.
- Other wood based industries are largely in the small-scale or "unorganized" sector constituting 85-90% of the total sector.
- Half of the wooden furniture made in India uses teak; 30 % is from mango, sheesham, mahogany, and cedar; and roughly 20 % from other hardwood species
- India imports small quantities of temperate hardwoods for commercial and home interiors and furniture, some of which is made for export.
- Wood based industries can immensely contribute in the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan under which GOI has planned reforms and measures for the revival and long term sustainability of MSMEs. Ministry of Commerce has identified Furniture sector as one of the focus sub-sectors under SCALE (Steering Committee for Advancing Local value-add and Export)



NEED TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGROFORESTRY

Huge potential to bridge the gap between the demand and supply of industrial wood and reducing imports.

Paper industry uses 80 % of the total requirement from farm produced wood

Large quantity import of timber and other wood products, causing drain of foreign exchange reserves.

Additional assured income to farmers and reduces vulnerability to crop failures

Agro Forestry offers tremendous opportunity for sequestering atmospheric carbon that remains locked when wood is used in manufacturing engineered wood products and reduced pressure on forests enables restoration of natural ecosystems.

Indian domestic furniture market expected to grow at annual rate of 12.9 % during the period between 2020 and 2024.

POLICIES IN INDIA TO PROMOTE AGROFORESTRY

- ▲ National Forest Policy, 1988
- ▲ National Agroforestry Policy, 2014
- ▲ Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Promotion of Agroforestry:

- Agroforestry needs to be integrated with the concept of "Grow more wood use more wood".
- Can help achieve the target of increasing forest/tree cover of India to 33%.
- Potential to sequester atmospheric carbon and mitigate the climate change effects.

Addressing Policy gaps in wood commerce:

- Productive use of degraded lands by raising plantations of suitable tree species in a mission mode It is necessary to permit/allow import of wood and wood products made only from wood sourced from certified forests.

Promote Credible Forest Certification process in India :

- The available Indian certification schemes having global recognition, shall be facilitated and promoted to enhance exports of wood products.
- The wood products industry should be encouraged to adopt voluntary certification for domestic markets by making certification as a requirement in public procurement policies.

In 2013, agroforestry was estimated to be 25.32 Mha (8.2% of TGA):
Comprising of 20 Mha in cultivated lands ; 13.0 Mha in rain fed areas and 5.32 Mha in other

Enhancing use of wood products:

- Provide positive policy push for use of wood products in key growth sectors for green/sustainable development.
- Bringing in "sustainability" in public procurement policies to promote wood products and promote environmentally responsive consumerism.
- Promote and mandate 'Green Public Purchasing' (GPP) for procurement of wood products by government departments and agencies. Thus ensuring natural resource sustainability and a shift towards a greener and resource efficient supply chain.
- Establishing specific wood processing zones around potential agro-forestry growth regions.



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
Forests, Trees and
Agroforestry





Need for a strong policy regime to drive Forest/ Trees outside Forest (ToF) certification in India

AK Srivastava, Ria Antil

Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests, New Delhi-India | www.nccf.in

Certification for Sustainability of Forests / Trees outside Forests (ToF)

- Forests cover 31% of earth's surface area and provide us with various goods and ecosystem services. Globally, India, with nearly 25 % forest and tree cover, stands at 10th position accounting for 2% of total forest cover of the world
- Forest certification, an emerging global movement, is an important tool and enabler of sustainability in forest management and
- meeting our international commitments under the SDGs, UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD. It is increasingly recognized as the demonstrable evidence for sustainable management of Forests/ToF
- Certification supports economic growth, fair trade, consumer protection, rights of tribals, health and safety of workers and livelihoods of forest communities

Forest Certification: "A voluntary process whereby an independent third party assesses quality of forest management and production against a set of requirements – standards predetermined by a certification organization" (FAO)

Environmentally
Appropriate

Economically
Viable

Socially
Beneficial

Types of Forest Certification

Forest Management Unit (FMU) certification: Process leading to issue of Certificate by an independent party, which assesses forest/ plantation against defined standards – Forest Managers, Private Owners



Chain of Custody certification (CoC) Tracking wood products from certified forest / plantations to point of sale to ensure that the product is obtained from a certified source Forest – Primary & Secondary Manufacturers- Traders- Retailers.

Global Forest Certification Schemes



- Globally: (status mid-2019)
- FSC area: 200 mha; PEFC area: 325 mha
- Area under double certification: 93 mha
- Total certified area: 432 mha
- 70,000+ CoC Certificates

NCCF- PEFC Forest Management /ToF Certification Standard

- Only available Indian Scheme of Forest Certification
- Developed by NCCF through a multi-stakeholder Standard Development Group, endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, giving it an international recognition.
- NCCF's ToF Scheme brings much-needed recognition to the wood and timber produced by the farmers on their lands and ensure better markets and higher income for their agroforestry produce. It is currently under the process of endorsement by PEFC.

Promoting Country Specific Certification Schemes in India

International Standards

- They are of Generic Nature
- They may imply higher costs (auditing, travel, logistics, etc.)

Indian Conditions

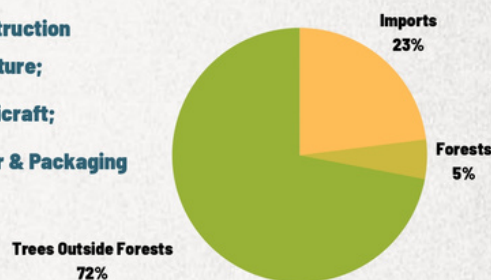
- Diverse legal and administrative frameworks of FM
- Diverse social, cultural & geographical conditions of forests in different states
- Forest diversity and variability of FM in India

Advantages of Domestic Scheme

- Driven by national stakeholders
- Promote and facilitate national and international trade
- Integration of local needs and expectations
- Pilot Tested in Indian Conditions
- Economical (e.g. domestic auditors, ease and flexibility in use)

Certification to promote industries of Wood Sector

- Construction
- Furniture;
- Handicraft;
- Paper & Packaging



Consumption of Wood

Source : High Level Expert Group Report on India's Agricultural Exports submitted to 15th Finance Commission.

In India, certification is picking up at a slow pace. To promote certification, our recommendations are:

- Mainstreaming forest certification should be on top of the sustainability agenda- globally, nationally and locally.
- Need of a strong policy guideline / legislation for forest certification.
- Voluntary schemes should influence National/ International legislations.
- Promote certification in collaboration with central ministries, state governments, industry, civil society organizations and forest-based stakeholders.
- Promote Sustainable Public Procurement by focusing on due diligence, responsible sourcing and certification in public/ private sector's procurement policies.
- Increase domestic production of wood through production forestry and agroforestry and gradually reduce imports
- "Grow More Wood and Use More Wood" is Good for Environment

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- Mill Ghosh, B. S. (2016). Impact of forest policies on timber production in India: a review. *Natural Resources Forum*
- Yadav, M., Kotwal, P.C. & Menaria, B.L. (2007). Forest certification: a tool for sustainable forest management. Bhopal, India, Indian Institute of Forest Management



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
Forests, Trees and
Agroforestry



- NCCF and PEFC jointly organize the International Auditor's Training Course on PEFC Chain of Custody Certification; 18th-19th August 2021

Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) jointly organized an online two days PEFC CoC auditor's training on 18th-19th August 2021.

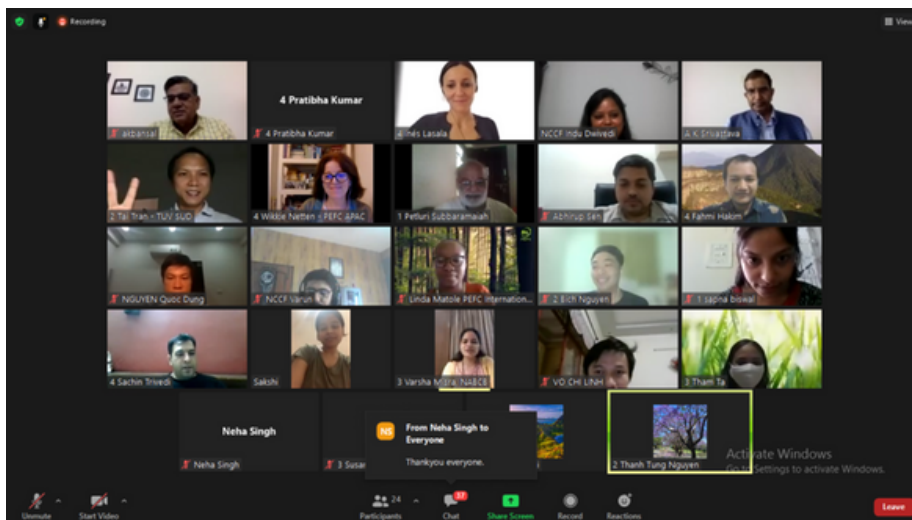
The training was attended by 30 auditors and observers representing CBs and accreditation boards from different parts of the world

including India, South Africa, Indonesia, Vietnam, Switzerland, Sweden, Czech Republic, Cambodia, Singapore and Romania. This training included subjects like "Detailed requirements under PEFC Chain of Custody of forest and tree-based products, PEFC trademark rules, Requirements for CBs operating against PEFC Chain of Custody, Accreditation requirements for AB & CBs and PEFC & CBs engagement etc".

Mr Richard Laity, Projects and Development Officer at the PEFC, South-East Asia was the master trainer of the session. His team included Ms Linda Matole, Technical Officer, PEFC, and Ms Nga Ha, PEFC SEA Coordinator. Mr A K Srivastava, Director General, NCCF, Dr Mrutunjay Jena, Director, NABCB, Mr Anil Jauhri, Chairperson, Certification Advisory Group, NCCF and Mr A K Bansal, Chairperson, PCA, and NWFR Groups of NCCF also shared their views on PEFC CoC Certification in the inaugural and closing sessions.

The comprehensive training module was a mix of presentations, and case studies, and trainees gained immensely through the examples explained during the training sessions encompassing the real scenarios in CoC certification. The trainers shared their deep knowledge of the subject and substantiated the same with their eclectic professional experience. The participants exchanged experiences and valuable feedback on the implementation of the standard.

The participants appreciated the quality of the training and expressed keen interest in attending refresher training in the future to update their knowledge and skills.



- NCCF and PEFC jointly organized the Consultation Webinar on NCCF's Trees outside Forests Certification Standard; 27th September 2021



The Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests and the Programme for the Endorsement on Forest Certification (PEFC), organized an international public consultation webinar on 27th September 2021 that commenced the process of endorsement of NCCF's Trees outside Forest Certification Standard by launching an international public consultation webinar, followed by 60 days' Public consultation until 25 November 2021.

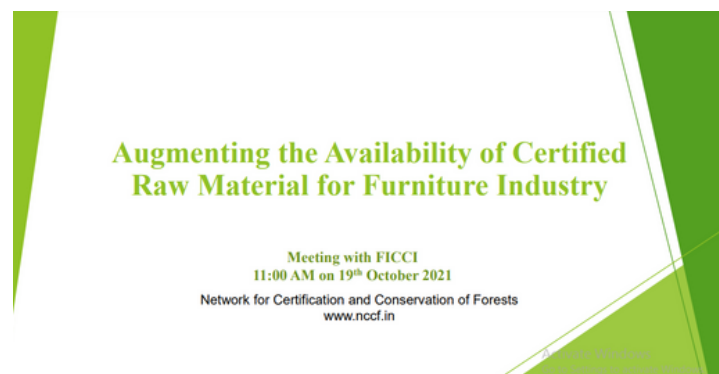
Mr Hubert Inhaizer initiated the webinar with a brief introduction about the working of PEFC and explained the endorsement process. Mr A K Srivastava, Director General, NCCF in his opening remarks, thanked the PEFC for initiating the process of endorsement and highlighted the huge potential of ToF Standard in augmenting the availability of certified raw material for the wood sector industries. Dr Devendra Pandey, Chairperson, Standard Development Group, ToF Standard presented an overview of the Standard Setting Process followed while developing the Standard and explained the unique features of the Standard, which is country-specific and internationally benchmarked.

Mr A K Bansal, Chairperson, NCCF's Promotions, Communications and Advocacy Group and the Standard Development Group, Non-Wood Forest Resources, presented the Risk Assessment Tool that has been developed to simplify and facilitate certification of trees outside forests for specific areas and single tree species within a State/Union Territory.

NCCF's ToF scheme is unique in this part of the world and its endorsement by PEFC will certainly bring much-needed recognition to the wood sector by promoting the sustainability of ToF resources, enhancing the income of the tree growers, and ensuring better markets and price premiums for the certified products.

- NCCF and FICCI jointly organized a meeting with Wood-based Industries on the Timber Policy proposed by DPIIT to MoEF&CC; 19th October 2021

NCCF and FICCI organized a meeting with the wood-based industries regarding the proposed timber policy to boost locally produced certified wood for the furniture industry. DPIIT has proposed to MoEF&CC to formulate the said policy to augment the availability of certified wood for the furniture sector. Ms Mousumi Ghose and Ms Amrita Niyogi representing FICCI's Furniture Committee attended the meeting and expressed happiness that NCCF had organized this webinar in the interest of wood-based industries. Mr A K Srivastava, Director General, NCCF in his opening remarks, gave a comprehensive presentation titled 'Augmenting the availability of certified raw material for the furniture industry in India'.



Mr Kapil Aggarwal, Group CEO of OBEETEE (exporting furniture) pointed out one of the challenges they are facing relate to the Quality and Sourcing of wood within the country. He mentioned that that most of the imported timber used by them is FSC certified but we lack specific certification in the country so more certified timber could be sourced from trees outside forest like Tea gardens in Assam and other North-eastern states.

Mr Kapil Aggarwal suggested establishing a value chain to reduce the supply chain gap. Also, reiterated that we should appoint nodal officers to influence and facilitate direct contact with the farmers as an interim step.

Mr AK Bansal, Chairman, PCA Group, NCCF suggested introducing certification to the Tea Garden owners where shade tree timber is available and that will strengthen the value chain and facilitate their harvesting for appropriate use which otherwise is being wasted and used as fuel wood.

Mr Ajay Kumar, Marino Group of Industries mentioned that the group, traditionally operating in food processing and laminates, had moved towards the furniture sector and is establishing a furniture complex (manufacturing PB, Furniture, and then MDF) in Gujarat for which 58 acres of land had been acquired from GIDC.

Mr Atul Rastogi, Lakshmi Tea has tea plantations in North-East, West Bengal, Tripura, and Assam and also in Central Africa. He mentioned that they are keen to understand how the NCCF's certification could be a substitute or parallel to FSC's certification.

Mr Sanjay Khurana, Buying Agents Association, expressed that the prime issue is wood sourcing and that imported timber is not cost-effective to compete with the international market because of high transportation and landing costs. Mr Madhusudhan Lohia supported the idea of appointing the nodal officers and asked about the next interim step as the Government of Gujarat had asked them to come to Kandala to import manufacture and eventually export the furniture which is a long process.

It was decided that NCCF and FICCI would nominate nodal persons to continue interaction with the wood-based industries, tea garden owners, and other such resource owners and evolve action plans for addressing various aspects in the complete supply/value chain.

➤ Members List

Subscriber Member

- Mr Avani Kumar Varma
- Mr JK Jain
- Mr Sachin Raj Jain
- Mr IVR Rao
- Mr Suneel Pandey
- Mr KH Devbrat
- Mr Sanjeev Agarwal
- Mr Rakesh Kumar
- Mr A K Bansal

Institutional Member

- Indian Plywood Industries Research & Training Institute (IPIRTI)
- Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Paper Ltd (TNPL)
- Indian Paper Manufacturer's Association (IPMA)
- Haryana Forest Development Corporation (HFDC)
- Hariom Education and Trainer
- Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH)
- Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS)

Ordinary Member

- ITC Ltd Sripathi Paper & Boards Pvt Ltd
- Sankalp International
- Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakal
- Sripathi Paper & Boards Pvt Ltd
- Star Paper Mills Ltd
- Printographic Packaging India Pvt Ltd
- JK Group
- Indian Art Furniture Pvt Ltd
- Kudrat Gramodhyay Sansathan
- A K Panels Pvt Ltd
- Seshasayee Paper and Boards Ltd
- Bloom Dekor Ltd
- Nupur International

Co-opted Member

- Mr A M Singh

Government Nominee Member

- Joint Secretary/ Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare
- Deputy Inspector General of Forests (SU)

➤ Members List

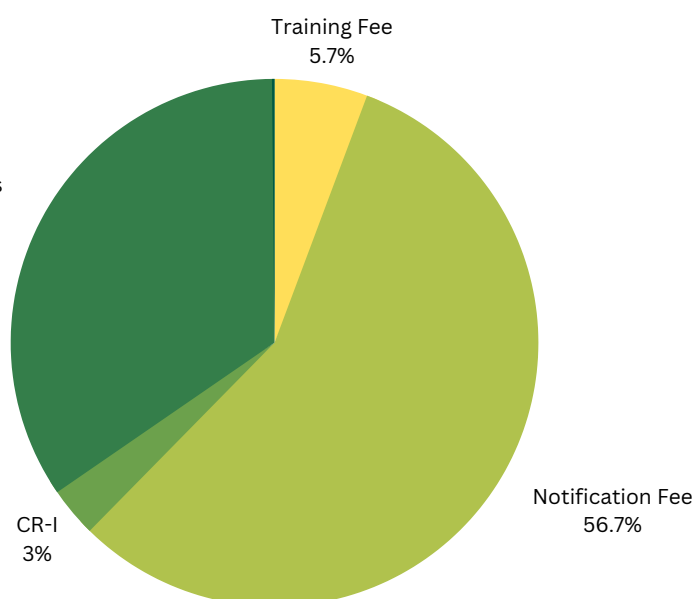
Associate Member

- Mr Ambarish Choubey
- Mr Manu Jose Mattam
- Ms Neha Channa
- Mr A K Srivastava
- Mr Ram Avtar Singh
- Mr Ranir Pal Saini
- Ms Taruna Singh
- Ms Richa Garg
- Ms Deepali Rautela
- Ms Anchal
- Ms Nidhi Rawat
- Mr Ankur Nautiyal
- Ms Sakshi Nehra
- Mr Shovans Das
- Mr Abu BakarAnsari
- Mr Mohan Chander Pandey
- Ms Teena Antil
- Ms Ritu Jain
- Mr Varun Grover
- Mr Vinod Verma
- Ms Jyotsana Sitling

➤ Financial Report (2021-22)

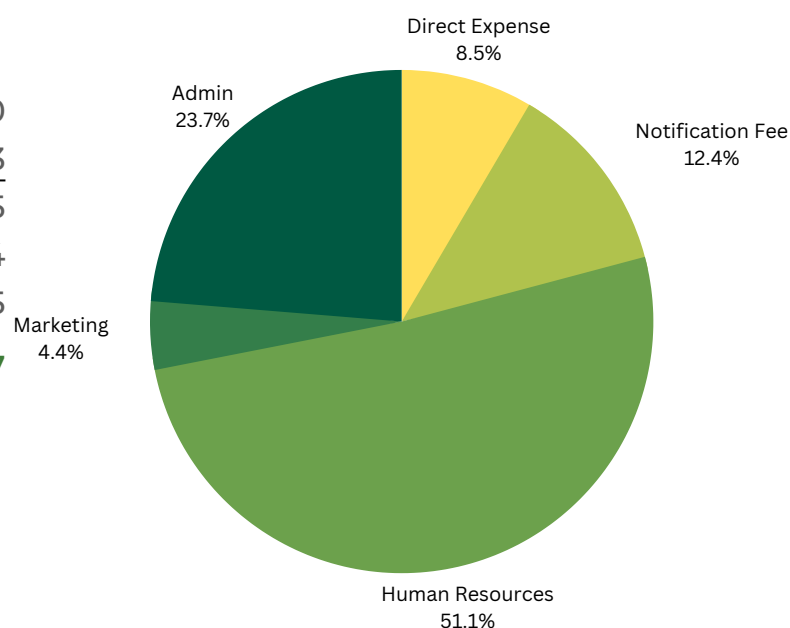
Income in INR

Membership Fee	10,000
Training Fee	411,800
Notification Fee	4,090,024
CR-I	220,000
Projects	2,486,465
Miscellaneous	1,271
Total Income	7,219,650



Expenditure in INR

Operational Expense	890,010
Notification Fee	1,303,603
Human Resources	5,369,365
Marketing	461,134
Admin	2,492,585
Total Expenditure	10,516,697



Acknowledgement

The Governing Body of NCCF thanks NCCF's s members, employees, stakeholders, civil society organizations, research and academic institutions, and international bodies for their consistent support in the advancement of the objectives of NCCF. The Governing Body also thanks the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, State Forest Departments of various states of India, scientific and academic institutions, and various government and non-government agencies for their support and cooperation. The Governing Body appreciates and values the contributions made by every member of the NCCF family and solicits their cooperation and guidance in NCCF's all future endeavors.



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