

## India Unveils Strategy to Increase Forest Cover

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India on Thursday released its 'National REDD+ Strategy', one of the key tools to fulfil the country's commitment of increasing forest cover in a time-bound manner under the Paris Agreement on climate change. The national strategy, comprising a list of multiple ongoing and proposed actions on the ground to create additional carbon sink by increasing green cover, will soon be communicated to the UN body on climate change. These commitments are part of the country's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC. The REDD+ ("Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation" and conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries) aims to achieve climate change mitigation by incentivising forest conservation. "The strategy builds upon existing

national circumstances which have been updated in line with India's National Action Plan on Climate Change, Green India Mission and India's NDC to UNFCCC," said environment minister Harsh Vardhan in his preface to the 62-page strategy paper. Elaborating on various actions to achieve its green goal, the paper also highlighted the



government's flagship 'Ujjwala Yojana' of providing free LPG connections to 50 million poor women which may help in cutting use of more polluting fossil fuels like kerosene and fuel biomass (that comes from cutting forest). In a section of new initiatives for enhancement of 'forest carbon stocks', the strategy listed plantation exercise on 83,946 sq km of diverse forest areas in next five years under its river Ganga Rejuvenation programme, forestry interventions for other major river catchment areas and plantation along highways as key interventions. Touching on its plan to finance all these activities, the paper mentioned the CAMPA fund of over Rs 50,000 crore which will mainly be used by states to undertake afforestation and related activities. It also made references to external sources of funding in case of deficit. "The deficit in finance to meet the NDC commitment on REDD+ implementation will be sourced through funding from Green Climate Fund (GCF) under the UNFCCC mechanism," said the paper adding that the budget deficit on this count will be estimated separately and communicated to the UN body in due course of time.

Source:- <https://weather.com/en-IN/india/news/news/2018-08-31-forest-cover-policy>