

<b>(vii)</b>	<b>The particulars of any arrangement that exists for consultation with or representation by the members of the public in relation to formulation of its policy or implementation thereof;</b>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1. Conservation of Sacred Groves</b></p> <p>The scheme is implemented by the Social Forestry Wing as per the guidelines issued vide G.O. (Rt) No. 485/16/F&amp;WLD dated 24.12.2016. The concerned Assistant Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry) shortlists five applicants from each district and places them before the State Level Expert Committee. The Committee scrutinises, evaluates, and recommends eligible</p>

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sacred groves for financial support.

The selection of sacred groves is carried out in accordance with the decisions of a nine-member State Level Expert Committee comprising:

- Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
- Chairperson, Social Forestry
- Director, KFRI
- Director, JNTBGRI
- Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)
- One Environmentalist
- One Subject Expert
- President, Travancore Devaswom Board
- President, Malabar Devaswom Board
- President, AyyappaSevaSangham

as stipulated in the guidelines issued in the above Government Order. After the selection process, an agreement will be signed between the owner/trust of sacred groves and the Assistant Conservator of Forests concerned, on producing relevant documents to prove the ownership of the sacred groves. 10% of the total project cost, subject to a maximum of Rs. 25000/- is released as 1st instalment. Subsequent instalment shall be made as when required by the beneficiary on production of vouchers and records for the completed works.

### **2. Mangrove Conservation**

A monetary incentive is given to individuals as per the guidelines in recognition of their valuable contribution in maintaining existing mangroves, preventing destruction, and ensuring the continued provision of ecosystem services.

A District-Level Committee—comprising the Assistant Conservator of Forests (Chairman), a representative of the District Panchayat, a representative of a research institution, and a representative of a reputed NGO—scrutinises, evaluates, and selects eligible mangrove areas for support under the scheme. The District Committee finalises the extent of the mangrove area to be supported and determines the amount of incentive to be paid to the owner.

### **3. Vanamitra Awards**

The *Vanamithra Award* is presented to selected individuals or institutions from each district in recognition of their exemplary contributions to biodiversity conservation outside forest areas. Only one award is given per district, consisting of a monetary incentive and a certificate.

The selection is carried out by a State Level Expert Committee comprising

the following members:

- Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry) – **Chairman**
- One representative from KFRI
- One representative from JNTBGRI
- Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)
- One Environmentalist

Applications for consideration are invited by the respective Assistant Conservators of Forests (Social Forestry) of each district from individuals, educational institutions, NGOs, farmers, and other eligible stakeholders.

#### 4. Tree banking scheme

As per Government Order G.O(Rt) No. 137/2025/F&WLD dated 29.03.2025 government had accorded Administrative Sanction for the implementation of Scheme named "Tree Banking Scheme". The concept of the tree banking scheme involves planting trees in land under private ownership to offset carbon emissions and thereby promote environmental sustainability, as also to increase the supply of timber in local market. This scheme is routed in a multi-pronged approach wherein state can reach the target of carbon neutrality in long run, achieve self-sufficiency in timber production by encouraging farmers to take up tree cultivation and ensuring additional returns and revenue to the farmers.

The tree species included in the scheme are 1.Sandal, 2.Teak, 3.Mahagony, 4.Anjili, 5.Plavu, 6.Kumbil, 7.Karimaruthu, 8.Thambakam 9.Venthekku. 10.Veetty. The list can be modified from time to time based on market and other requirements by government.

Those who are interested to plant a minimum of 10 seedlings of the above species in their own land will be eligible for incentivisation under this scheme. Interested tree farmers can register the scheme under Social Forestry Wing of Kerala Forest Department. The incentives proposed are as follow :

A	10-100 plants	:	Rs 30 per plant/year
B	101-250 plants	:	Rs 25 per plant/year
C	251 to 500 plants	:	Rs 20 per plant/year
D	501 to 750 Plants	:	Rs15 per plant/year
E	751-1000 Plants	:	Rs10 per plant/year

Incentive amount will be disbursed from the end of the third year of planting on an annual basis. And this shall continue upto 15 years, which is the active

<p>growing phase of the planted tree seedlings, subsequent establishment for yield of fruit &amp; timber and resultant carbon assimilation.</p>
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