

## **Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for achieving Sustainable Forest Management: A case study from India**

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Over the years, the significance of Sustainable forest management to ensure continuous availability of forest goods and services and also environmental stability and restoration of ecological balance has been felt. During the Earth summit (1992) at Rio, the concept of sustainability got highlighted and experts adopted the first global policy on Sustainable forest management. Since then many International Processes related to sustainable forest management were developed i.e. *ITTO initiative*(1992), *African Timber Organisation* (1993), *Pan European Forest Process* (1993), *Montreal Process* (1995), *Tarapoto Proposal* (1995), *Dry Zone Africa Proposal* (1995), the *Near East Proposal*(1996),the *Lepaterique Process of Central America* (1997), *Dry Zone Asia Initiative* (1999).

The processes focused on methods to monitor, assess and report the direction of change towards sustainable forest management through the Criteria and Indicator (C&I) based approach. In India the Criteria-Indicator approach for sustainable forest management was launched through Bhopal-India process (1999) under the aegis of Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM, Bhopal).The Indian initiative has developed a national set of 8 criteria and 37 indicators. These Criteria and Indicators are being field tested in various states of India. The C&I are periodically monitored to assess the direction of change towards or away from sustainable forest management.

The present case study focuses on the importance and need of Criteria and Indicators approach for monitoring sustainability of forests in the Indian context. The conditions for operationalizing the Criteria and Indicators approach is being incorporated into the forest management planning and practices in India. The lessons learnt from pilot testing of C&I and its implementation are being expanded in various forest types of the country, to reflect practical impact on ground over the period of time.