

India-US launched Trees Outside Forests (TOF) in India Initiative

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In news- Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, the Government of India and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the launch of a new program, "Trees Outside Forests in India.

About TOF initiative-

- The new USD 25 million programme seeks to bring together farmers, companies, and private institutions in India to rapidly expand tree coverage outside of traditional forests by 28 lakh hectares.
- Through agroforestry, or integrating trees into farming systems, the program seeks to improve the resilience of farming systems while increasing the income of farmers.
- The program also **uses innovative financing models and leverage India's private sector to promote tree-based enterprises**, helping to create sustainable markets and improve rural economies and livelihoods, with the potential to benefit more than 13 million people.
- **Implemented by a consortium led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF), the program will be implemented in seven states** including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.
- USAID's forestry activities in India support important priorities of the US and Indian governments, contributing to the Forestry Pillar of the Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue in support of the US-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership.

Note:

- Trees Outside Forest (TOF) are found in diverse formations in the rural and urban landscapes in the country like small woodlots, block plantations, trees along linear features such as roads, canals, bunds, etc. and scattered trees on farmlands, agricultural lands, homesteads, community lands and urban areas.
- India's State of Forest Report 2021 released January 13, 2022 shows that there is a rising trend in India's growing stock, along with a rise in forest and tree cover by 2,261 square kilometres (sq km). Most of this spike has been due to an increase in area under Trees Outside Forests (TOFs).