

Large Area Certification Scheme

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In News: The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare recently announced that around 14,491 hectares of land in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been certified as organic. This is the first large contiguous territory to be certified under the government scheme.

About Large Area Certification Scheme

- To exploit these potential areas, the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched a unique fast certification programme called “Large Area Certification” (LAC) under its flagship scheme, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY).
- Farmers do not have to wait 2-3 years for organic certified products because LAC is a fast and cost-effective certification process.
- Each village in the region is considered a cluster/group under LAC.
- The documentation is straightforward and is updated on a village-by-village basis.
- All farmers with farmland and livestock must conform to the standard specifications and are licenced en masse after being tested, eliminating the need for a conversion time.

The following are some of the advantages of LAC

- To qualify as organic, areas with a history of using chemical inputs must go through a transition phase of at least 2-3 years, according to organic production standards.
- Farmers must follow traditional organic agriculture practises and keep their farms under the certification

process throughout this period.

- These farms can be certified as organic after 2-3 years if they are completed successfully. The certification process also necessitates extensive documentation and periodic certification authority verification.
- In contrast, the criteria for LAC are straightforward, and the region can be certified almost immediately.