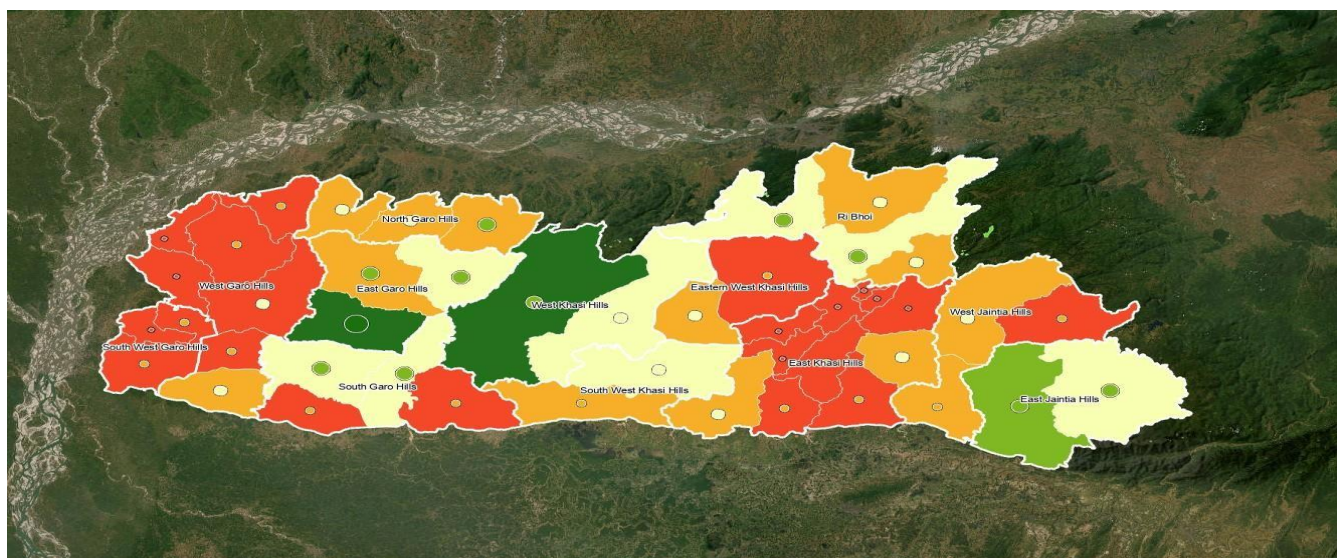


GREEN⁺

MEGHALAYA

Grassroot Level Response towards
Ecosystem Enhancement and
Nurturing Meghalaya



GUIDELINES

February 2025



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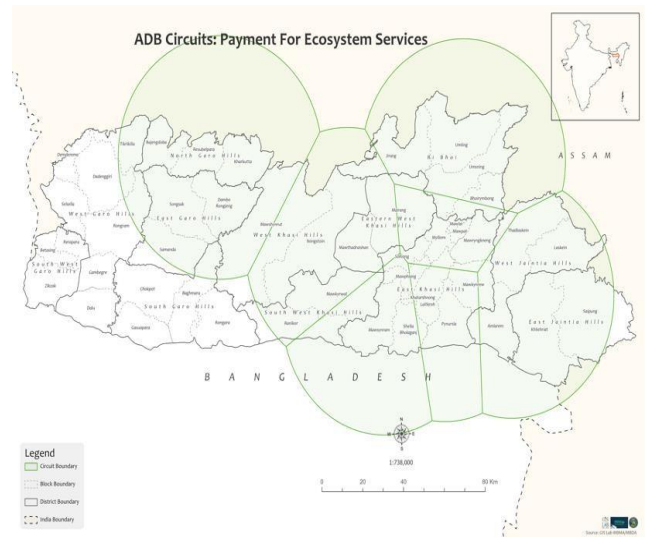
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The GREEN (Grassroots-level Response towards Ecosystem Enhancement and Nurturing) Meghalaya scheme is a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme to reward communities, clans, or individuals who commit to conserve and protect natural forests for at least 30 years. It is a response to the growing need for sustainable forest management and to safeguard Meghalaya’s natural ecosystems by encouraging grassroots-level involvement in forest conservation.

1.2 Building on the success and demand seen in the first phase of the GREEN Meghalaya scheme launched in 2022, where more than 3,000 beneficiaries owning more than 51,000 hectares of natural forest have benefitted, the Government of Meghalaya is now expanding the scheme in its commitment towards ensuring long-term ecological balance, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience.

1.3 The new “GREEN Meghalaya+” scheme now comes with a higher reward for both existing and new beneficiaries, a lower threshold for participation and more opportunities for additional financial rewards.

1.4 Under this project, the proposed area to be covered under the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) model, following the existing guidelines and implementation framework (of GREEN Meghalaya+) across the 13 Blocks, is approximately 25,000 hectares. The primary objective of this initiative is to promote environmental conservation while ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas. Given the significance of tourism sites within the region, the PES approach will be instrumental in safeguarding these locations by incentivizing conservation efforts and sustainable land-use practices among local communities and stakeholders.



The designated target area for PES implementation will span approximately 50 kilometres around the tourism sites (within the confines of the boundary of Meghalaya). This coverage will encompass a diverse range of landscapes, including forests, watersheds, and other

2. WHAT'S NEW IN GREEN MEGHALAYA⁺?

TABLE 1: Difference between GREEN MEGHALAYA AND GREEN MEGHALAYA +

Sl.No	Particular	GREEN MEGHALAYA	GREEN MEGHALAYA +
1	Minimum eligible forest area for participation	2 Hectares	1 Hectare
2	Maximum reward per hectare per year*	Upto Rs. 15,000	Upto Rs. 20,000
3	Base reward amount per hectare per year*	Upto Rs. 8,000	Upto Rs.10,000
4	Special conditions being considered*	(a) Dense forest or traditionally recognized Sacred Grove or has Living Root Bridge or is in eco-sensitive zones around protected areas or wildlife corridors Upto Rs. 2,000	(a) Dense forest Upto Rs. 5,000 (b) Eco-sensitive zones (ESZ) around Wildlife Sanctuaries/ National Parks, Sacred Grove, Living Root Bridges, Elephant Corridors, and Forests have tourism potential sites such as waterfalls and caves. Upto Rs.5,000
5	Are there any terms and conditions on how the funds can be used?	Yes, funds must be used only for prescribed activities	No, funds can be used at the discretion of the beneficiaries

2.1 The rewards will be given for a total period of 5 years.

2.2 MBMA will make efforts and facilitate linkage with Carbon Markets to enable continued financing beyond 5 years.

3. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

3.1 To promote greater equity, rewards will be disbursed only after obtaining community consent. The community will need to provide bank account details, and whenever possible, these should be joint accounts. Beneficiaries must ensure that benefits are distributed fairly among all stakeholders.

3.2 The reward money provided can be used for anything at the discretion of the beneficiaries. To ensure that the benefits of **GREEN Meghalaya+** continue to be received in the future, beneficiaries are encouraged to allocate a portion of these funds for the maintenance and restoration of their forests so that it continues to provide ecosystem services and rewards to the beneficiaries and future generations. Some of the suggested activities are given on the next page.

3.3 Beneficiaries are encouraged to apply for other available schemes such as CM Elevate, Van Dhan Yojana, and FOCUS, which support forest-dependent communities with alternative livelihoods, and help reduce the pressure on forests.

3.4 The reward money, under no circumstances, should be used for prohibited activities under “Permissible and Prohibited Activities” of this guideline or for any other purposes detrimental to the environment such as mining & quarrying, industrial development, and conversion to commercial plantation amongst others.

3.5 Any changes in the area or other benefits after the initial fund transactions will be reflected and adjusted in the subsequent years.

REWARDS:

1) Financial support for Community/Clan Forest is as follows:

For the first 50 Hectares:	As per the amounts indicated above
For the next 50 Hectares:	50% of the amounts indicated above
Any additional hectares above 100 Hectares:	25% of the amounts indicated above

2) Financial support for Individual Forest is as follows:

For the first 25 Hectares:	As per the amounts indicated above
For the next 25 Hectares:	50% of the amounts indicated above
Any additional hectares above 50 Hectares:	25% of the amounts indicated above

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 4.1 Application forms can be obtained from any staff of MBMA or can be downloaded from the following **QR code**.
- 4.2 The application forms are to be submitted directly to the concerned Regional In-Charge or GFA as listed in Annex: 2.
- 4.3 All applications will be screened and site verification and ground truthing will be conducted by VCFs and facilitated by the GREEN Field Associates.
- 4.4 **False applications will summarily be rejected and may face legal action.**
- 4.5 The decision on the eligibility of the applicants will solely lie with MBMA.



5. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES UNDER GREEN MEGHALAYA⁺

Table 2: The following is a list of suggested activities that beneficiaries could take up to ensure their forests continue to be conserved and yield long-term benefits.

Suggested area	Suggested activities
Natural Resource Management	<p>Forest conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demarcation of forest boundary ● Land preparation for gap-filling plantation ● Forest protection activities ● Forest fire prevention and control activities ● Assisted Natural Regeneration ● Nursery – creation and maintenance ● Gap Filling ● Fencing ● Preparation of Forest Management Plan <p>Soil and water conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contour trenches ● Check dam

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multipurpose reservoir ● Plantation in catchment areas ● Gully plugs ● Gabion wall ● Swale ● Rainwater harvesting ● Greywater recycling
Community structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community Hall ● Footpaths ● Improvement of schools ● structures for supply of drinking water to surrounding villages ● Solar street lights ● Solar water pumps ● Public Dustbins
Livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eco-tourism ● Composting ● Nursery ● Any forest based sustainable livelihoods

6. STATUS ON THE OWNERSHIP OF THE FOREST

6.1 There will be no change in the status of ownership of the forest/land.

6.2 The applicants can check for the result whether their applications are eligible or not for the scheme from the public domain/website (www.mbma.org.in). If the applicant has any queries, they can share feedback or objections with the concerned GREEN Field Associates (GFA) or to any office of MBMA (Block or District) which is to be addressed to the following address:

General Manager
MBMA (GREEN Meghalaya)
RDL Building, Springside, Jingkieng Nongthymmai,
Shillong,
Meghalaya 793014

7. PERMISSIBLE AND PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Table 3: 7.1 A list of permissible and restricted activities:

Permissible Activities:	Prohibited Activities:
Collection of minor forest produce for household use (Firewood, medicinal plants, and herbs, fruits, mushrooms, honey, and other produce that is not timber).	Grazing
Eco tourism which does not involve concrete construction or physical alteration of the forest landscape.	Felling of trees
Water collection for local consumption.	Mining
	Jhumming or Agricultural activities

Construction of water harvesting structures for the supply of drinking water to surrounding villages.	Hunting or physical alteration of the forest landscape
	Introduction of exotic or invasive
	Construction of permanent structure except those activities that are listed in Table 2 and in permissible activities.
	Any other activities that lead to the Diversion of the forest into non-forest activity

7.2 The beneficiaries are required to refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) which can be made available to them from their respective GFAs or they can directly download from the website www.mbma.org.in which explains and, also provides further details on this Scheme.

7.3 Non-eligible forests – Any forest land that has availed afforestation schemes such as MegLIFE plantations, Govt. projects/schemes on afforestation, carbon credit schemes not recognized by MBMA, or similar schemes in connection to the proposed forest.

7.4 In the case of Land Disputes- Reporting for Land Disputes can be done within 1 month of Fund Transfer or before finalizing of Funds. You can report to the GREEN Field Associate of your respective Block. The lists of beneficiaries are published on the website of MBMA.

8. SELECTION PROCESS

8.1 In case proposals received exceeds the funds allocated under this scheme, then priority for financial support will be as follow:

- 1) Village and Community Forests meeting criteria in Table 1, point 4.
- 2) Village and Community Forests other than those meeting 1st Priority.
- 3) Individual Forests meeting criteria in Table 1, point 4.

4) Individual Forests other than those in 5th Priority.

In the event that there is a limitation in the availability of funds, priority will be given to those applications coming from community-based ownership. This approach ensures that resources are directed toward initiatives that are collectively managed and have a greater potential for long-term sustainability. Community-led projects often demonstrate stronger local engagement, stewardship, and equitable benefits, making them a preferred choice when funds are constrained.

9. MEASUREMENT, REPORTING AND VERIFICATION

9.1 A Measurement, Reporting & Verification (MRV) process will be carried out annually to ascertain eligibility for reward.

9.2 The MRV scoring will be based on the observations of the activities carried out by the beneficiaries and will also determine the beneficiaries' next payment for the succeeding years. The criteria for the next payment are:

SCORING range (in percentage)	Fund
Above 90%	100%
Between 80% to 90%	90%
Between 70% to 80%	80%
Below 70%	0% (Not eligible to receive the payment)

9.3 However, it may be noted that there is a grievance mechanism, in case the beneficiary feels that the scoring is incorrect or wrong.

9.4 A dashboard has been created by MBMA to monitor day-to-day tree felling, incidences of forest fires etc.

9.5 The payment percentage is derived from the total amount of funds the beneficiary received from 1st year.

Note: MRV is conducted annually before the release of the funds.

10. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

10.1 Documents to be submitted to be eligible for the scheme:

**The following documents are required to be submitted to enroll in GREEN Meghalaya+:
Application Form**

- 10.1.1 Identity Proof (EPIC Card)
- 10.1.2 Address proof (EPIC Card)
- 10.1.3 Proof of Ownership (see below)
- 10.1.4 Bank Details (Joint Account in case of Community Category) – it would be advisable if a separate Bank Account is opened for the Scheme.
- 10.1.5 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- 10.1.6 Resolution passed by community members

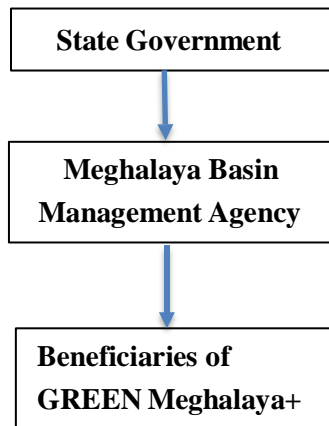
10.2 Documents to be submitted as proof of ownership:

Any of the following documents can be submitted:

- 10.2.1 No Objection Certificate from Syiem/Nokma/Dorbar/Sordars
- 10.2.2 Patta
- 10.2.3 Land registration certificate issued by the Government
- 10.2.4 Sale Deed
- 10.2.5 Gift Deed
- 10.2.6 Deed of Declaration
- 10.2.7 Power of Attorney
- 10.2.8 Consideration to Sale
- 10.2.9 Lease Deed
- 10.2.10 Undertaking from the village authority.

11. ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND FUND FLOWS

11.1 Fund Flows



Fund Approval and Distribution Process under GREEN Meghalaya⁺:

1. Approval and Fund Allocation by State Government:

- The State Government approves the funding for the GREEN Meghalaya+ program based on project proposals and requirements.

2. Funds Processed by Meghalaya Basin Management Agency:

- Once approved, the Meghalaya Basin Management processes the allocated funds, ensuring compliance with financial guidelines and regulations.

3. Transfer of Funds to Beneficiaries:

- After processing, the allocated funds are transferred to the beneficiaries of the GREEN Meghalaya+ directly Via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

11.2 Accounting Policies

1. The Meghalaya Basin Management Agency (MBMA) will engage the services of Chartered Accountant (CA) to oversee financial monitoring and provide critical fiduciary inputs aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in financial management. The CA will play a key role in ensuring that all financial transactions adhere to established guidelines, regulatory requirements, and best practices in public finance management.
2. Additionally, the Chartered Accountant will be responsible on the flow of funds to ensure that disbursements are systematic, timely, and aligned with project objectives. This will include tracking expenditures, verifying financial records, and assessing compliance with
3. financial reporting standards. Regular audits and financial reviews conducted by the CA will help in identifying and addressing any discrepancies, thereby strengthening financial discipline within the project.
4. However, it is to be noted that since the funds to the beneficiaries are untied, it will be challenging for the CA to check on the utilisation at the beneficiary level, however, a random audit on the records of the beneficiaries to ensure that the funds are not used for restricted activities of GREEN Meghalaya.
5. Random financial audits will be conducted annually on a sample basis among the beneficiaries of this scheme. The primary goal of this exercise is to ensure that the allocated funds are being utilized effectively and in alignment with the intended purpose of the project. These audits will help identify any discrepancies, assess compliance with financial guidelines, and ensure transparency in fund usage. Additionally, the audits will serve as a preventive measure against mismanagement or misuse of resources, thereby safeguarding the long-term sustainability of the initiative. By verifying that the funds are not being used in ways that are detrimental to the objectives of the project, this process will reinforce accountability and strengthen community trust in the scheme.

12. APPROVAL MECHANISM

To ensure a structured and transparent financial approval process, a multi-tiered mechanism will be followed. The approval workflow will involve multiple levels of validation and authorization, ensuring accountability and adherence to project guidelines.

Application Vetting by District Project Management Units (DPMUs)

- Applications submitted by beneficiaries will be received at the District Project Management Unit (DPMU).
- The technical teams at the DPMU will review and evaluate the applications based on the project guidelines, ensuring eligibility, feasibility, and compliance with the objectives of the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) initiative.
- Any discrepancies or missing information will be addressed at this stage before forwarding the vetted applications for further validation.

Validation by State Project Management Unit (SPMU)

- Once the DPMU completes its assessment, the applications are sent to the State Project Management Unit (SPMU) for further validation.
- The SPMU will cross-verify the findings of the DPMU, ensuring consistency and adherence to the project's financial and operational framework.
- After thorough validation, the SPMU will determine the actual amount to be released to each beneficiary under the project.

Costing Review by Executive Director and General Manager of MBMA

- The Executive Director and General Manager of MBMA will review the cost estimations provided by the SPMU.
- They will compile the financial requirements and prepare a formal proposal for fund allocation.

Approval by the Governing Council of MBMA

- The Governing Council of MBMA, chaired by the Chief Secretary, Government of Meghalaya, will be the final approving authority for the release of funds.

- The Executive Director and General Manager will present the proposed expenditure to the Governing Council for review and approval.
- Once approved, the funds will be disbursed accordingly, ensuring a systematic and transparent financial flow.

For any other queries or grievance, may contact the following:

e-mail: meghalayagreen2023@gmail.com

Phone or WhatsApp No.: [+916909319889](tel:+916909319889)

Annexure: 1

CONTACT DETAILS OF REGIONAL INCHARGE:

SI No.	Name	Region	Email ID	Contact No.
1	Salnang K Sangma	Garo Region	sksangma19@gmail.com	700529969 1
2	John Kearney Wanniang	Khasi & Jaintia Region	kear84@gmail.com	986212552 6

CONTACT DETAILS OF GREEN FIELD ASSOCIATE:

KHASI-JAINTIA REGION:

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