

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Environmental Information System (ENVIS)

Environment management plays an important role in effecting a balance between the demands and resources available. In this regard, environmental information plays a very vital role in not only in formulation of environmental management policies, but also for decision-making processes.

Realizing the need of such information, the Ministry set up an Environmental Information System (ENVIS) as a plan programme and as a comprehensive network in environmental information collection, collation, storage, retrieval and dissemination to varying users, which include decision-makers, researchers, academicians, policy planners, research scientists, etc. ENVIS has been conceived as a distributed information network with the subject-specific centres to carryout the mandates and to provide the relevant and timely information to all concerned. Association of the various State Governments/UTs was also felt necessary in promoting the ENVIS network to cover a wide range of disciplines of subjects and the cooperation of the various State/UT Governments. Keeping this in view, the network was expanded gradually with the involvement of thematic subject-areas and State Government departments to make it more comprehensive.

ENVIS network at present, consists of a chain of 72 subject-specific and State related Centres, called ENVIS Centres and are located in the notable organizations/institutions throughout the country. The Focal Point of ENVIS is located in the Ministry and coordinates the activities of all the ENVIS network partners to make ENVIS a web-enabled comprehensive information system. The list of ENVIS network partners is given at Annexure-VII. The network continued its information-related activities, database development, publication of requisite information packages through newsletters, abstracts, etc. and the Query-Response-Services during the year both in electronic and print form.

Major activities carried out by the ENVIS Focal Point in the Ministry are as follows:

- ❑ Website of the Ministry (URL: <http://envfor.nic.in>) developed earlier by ENVIS Focal Point is continuously updated during the year. The website has also been linked with the various Divisions



Fig 76. Homepage of Ministry's website (<http://envfor.nic.in>)

of the Ministry in order to have up-to-date information on the subject concerned. Besides, the website is also regularly providing information on the new updates of the Ministry from time to time with the objective of disseminating such information to all concerned. Information has also been arranged in various heads which include current events, clearances, legislation, Parliament matters, treaties/conventions, funding schemes, etc. The website recorded approximately 10 lakh hits per month which reflects the usage of website by various national and international users. Figure-77 depicts hits during the month of February 2005. An analysis of the hits of the website by various countries is also depicted in Figure-78.



Fig 77. Web hits of Ministry's website for the month of February, 2005

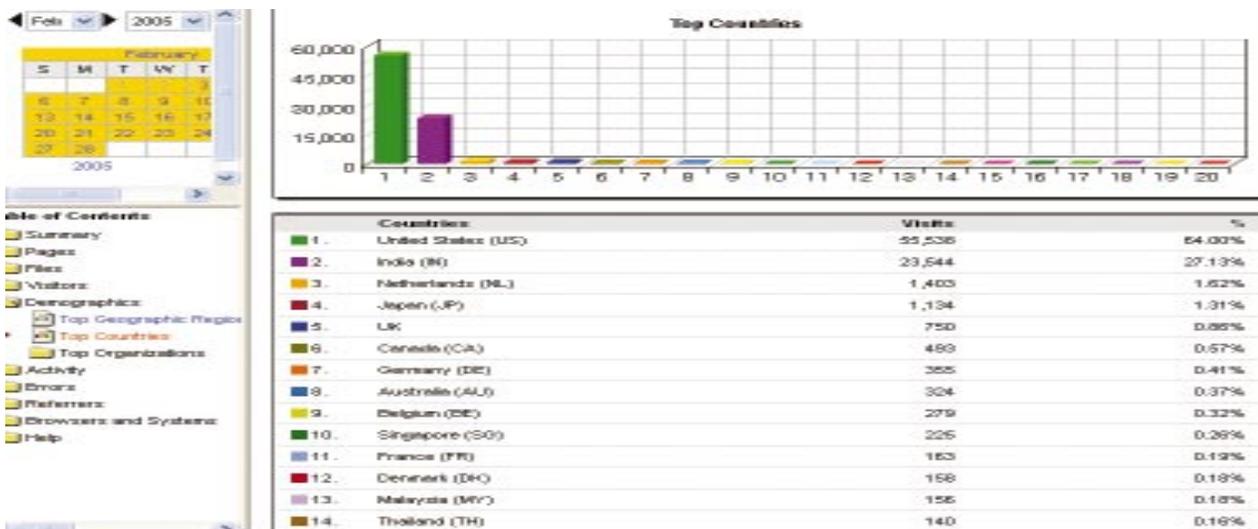


Fig 78. Country-wise web hits of Ministry's website for the month of February, 2005

- The ENVIS focal point responded to approximately 500 queries and the ENVIS network partners about 14000 queries during the year. Efforts were made by the network to provide substantive information as far as possible in responding the queries to users. Wherever information was not readily available, the network provided 'Referral Services' to the concerned users. The major subject-areas on which the queries were responded to pertained to environmental laws, waste management, notifications, environmental education and awareness, air and water pollution, genset standards, conservation, etc.
- The ENVIS Focal Point implemented the World Bank assisted Environment Management Capacity Building Technical Assistance Project (EMCBTAP) of the ENVIS sub-component which aimed at strengthening the ENVIS scheme of the Ministry by encompassing various subject-oriented thematic



nodes and State nodes for association in the ENVIS network. The project has successfully been implemented by increasing the ambit of ENVIS for incorporation of new thematic areas and subject-nodes for network development.

- ❑ The ENVIS nodes created under EMCBTAP have now been converted into ENVIS Centres through a revised SFC of the ENVIS Scheme in order to provide catalytic support to all the existing ENVIS Centres to continue their activities in the relevant field.
- ❑ The Scientific Advisory Committee of ENVIS under the chairmanship of Secretary (E&F) reviewed the functions of all the ENVIS network partners and suggested corrected means to strengthen the activities in their respective fields for proper functioning of the ENVIS Scheme.
- ❑ A portal of ENVIS at <http://www.envis.nic.in>, launched earlier under EMCBTAP and connecting all the ENVIS network partners was regularly updated by the ENVIS Focal Point. The portal acts as a catalyst for inter-Centre interaction and for information on several broad categories of subject related

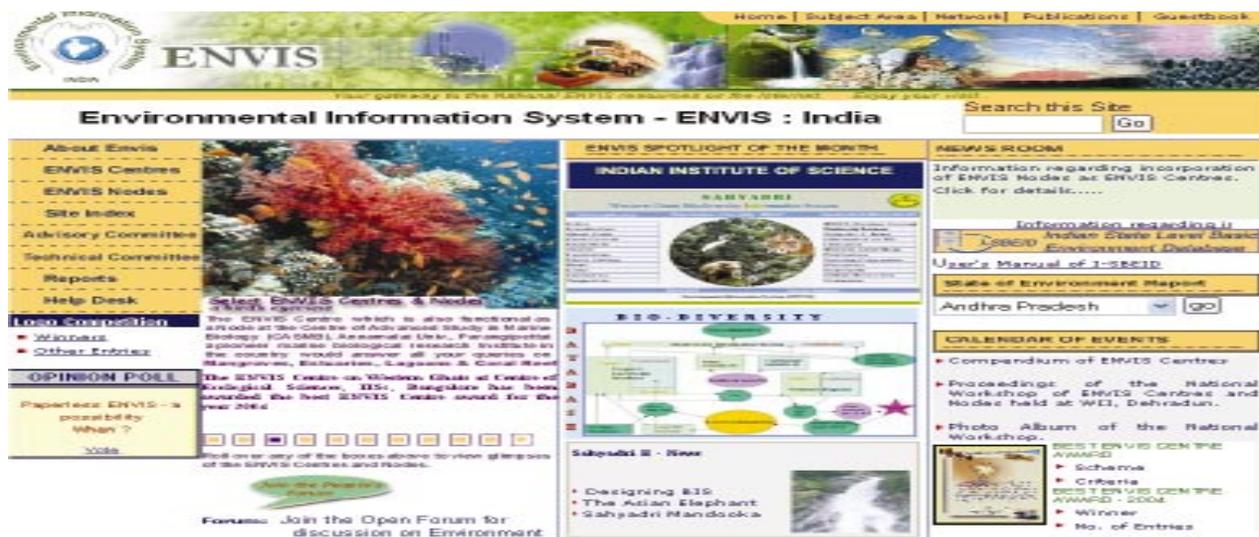


Fig 79. Homepage of the ENVIS website (<http://www.envis.nic.in>)

to environment under which the Centres have been grouped. The websites of all the ENVIS network partners could be directly accessed from the homepage of the portal information on major events, activities and current updates of the entire network. The portal also links to other ENVIS related sites like DELNET, INSDOC, BTISNET, etc.

- ❑ The ENVIS Focal Point also organized a National Workshop in June, 2004 in Dehradun to evaluate the functions and activities of various ENVIS network partners. Apart from providing guidelines on several issues, the network partners were instructed to develop their databases in a more comprehensive way along with the homepage with a linkage to the Ministry's website in order to access the information in the respective fields by all concerned. The "Best ENVIS Centre" award to Indian Institute of Science was also awarded during the National Workshop. It was also decided that the "Best ENVIS Centre" award will be conferred in every two years by the Ministry.
- ❑ ENVIS Focal Point continued to publish 'Paryavaran Abstracts', reporting information on environmental research in Indian context during the year. About 350 national and international environment related journals are referred to for compilation of the relevant abstracts. The abstracts are arranged under major categories like air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, environmental management, ecology, health and toxicology, forestry, wildlife, etc. The journal was distributed to about more than 3000 users throughout the country. All issues of the journal are also available on the Ministry's website.
- ❑ Four issues of ENVIRONEWS, a quarterly newsletter, was published by the focal point with the objective of disseminating information on important policies, programmes, legislations, amendments to the existing Acts, new sanctioned projects and other important decisions taken by the Ministry from

time to time to a wide cross-section of the society including administrators, policy makers, planners, scientists, environmentalists, students, NGOs, voluntary bodies and the general public.

- ❑ Like every year, ENVIS Focal Point coordinated and published the Annual Report (2003-2004) of the Ministry and got it distributed to various Central and State Government departments, professional institutions, universities, research organizations, embassies/high commissions of India abroad and those of various countries in New Delhi, NGOs, Voluntary bodies and the concerned general public in order to disseminate the information package containing the activities of the Ministry during 2003-04. The CDs of the report were also prepared and distributed to the interested users. The contents of the Annual Report is also available in the website of the Ministry.
- ❑ The ENVIS has been representing the Ministry in various Committees of the Government, especially those constituted by Ministry of Programme Implementation and Statistics. It also provided necessary information for publication of Compendium of Environmental Statistics, report on Millennium Development Goal, etc., periodically. The entire information package of the Ministry was also provided to Ministry of Information & Broadcasting for publication of their annual reference, namely, India Reference Annual.
- ❑ ENVIS also continued to function as a National Focal Point of the Global Information Network, INFOTERA of UNEP, and provided the necessary inputs from the Ministry as and when required. It also functioned as a Regional Service Centre (RSC) of INFOTERRA for South Asia Sub-Region Countries of INFOTERRA network and provided the information package as requested by them.
- ❑ ENVIS maintained a close liaison with various national information systems like Bio-Technological Information System (BTIS), Delhi Library Network (DELNET), etc., for exchange of environmental information and to avoid duplication of efforts in the field of environment and related areas.

Activities of the other ENVIS network partners

- ❑ All the network partners of ENVIS continued their activities in their thematic areas and in their State subject-areas during the year with the objective of collection, collation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information to all concerned.
- ❑ The network partners also published various information packages in the print form like newsletters, pamphlets, booklets, etc., for dissemination of information to the users.
- ❑ Most of the partners also developed their home-pages and websites to enable the users for accession of information electronically. The network partners in all, responded to a total number of 13,771 queries out of which, 12,622 were national and 151 international and provided substantial information to the users as far as possible.

Information and Facilitation Counter (IFC)

As per the directives of the Government, the Ministry set up an Information and Facilitation Counter in the ground floor outside the security zone of the Ministry's premises in order to provide information to all concerned and especially to various voluntary agencies, non-governmental organizations and such other bodies who are in need of special descriptive information of the Ministry from time to time. The ENVIS catered the needs of IFC and coordinated its day to day functions, which is a single window clearance of information and acts as an interface between the public and the Ministry. All printed information package published by the Ministry were also distributed through IFC to the users regularly.

Information Repository (Library)

The Library in the Ministry acts as an information repository of the ENVIS to enable the Ministry to disseminate information in the field of environment and its associated areas through print form. ENVIS Focal Point coordinated various activities of the library in the Ministry. It has a collection of over 25,000 books and technical reports, proceedings, etc., in its holding. Besides, the library also subscribed more than 70 national/international journals covering diverse areas of environment with an objective of providing of back-up support to ENVIS and the Ministry in the concerned area.

Apart from the technical books and journals, the library also procured a wide range of general books both in English and Hindi and provided to the officials for their use. Research scholars from various organizations, institutions and other professional organizations visited library for information required by them from time to time. The library also developed an electronic inventory by classifying the records as per 'thesaurus' for online accession to the users electronically.

UPDATES 2004-2005



- The ENVIS network consists of a Focal Point in the Ministry and 72 network partners at present on thematic subject-area and State related subjects located in various potential institutions/organizations, State/UT Government Departments throughout the country.
- The network responded to a total number of more than 14000 queries on various subjects related to environment and its associated fields and provided substantive information to the users.
- All the thematic area nodes and State subject-area nodes set up under World Bank supported EMCBTAP are now included in the ENVIS network as ENVIS Centres through a revised SFC in order to provide catalytic support to these network partners.
- The 'Best Envis Centre' award was conferred to the ENVIS Centre at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore during the year.
- The Ministry's website recorded approximately 10 lakh hits per month during the year which reflects the usage of website by various national and international users.
- Four issues of "Paryavaran Abstracts" a quarterly journal reporting environmental research in Indian context of, "ENVIRONNEWS", a quarterly newsletter disseminating information on various issues and policies taken by the Ministry, and the Annual Report (2003-04) of the Ministry were published.
- The library records were computerized to provide online access to the users.