1st quarter brainstorming session for Southern region ENVIS Centre
Jointly organized by
Sahyadri: ENVIS Centre on Western Ghats Biodiversity and Ecology,
Centre for Ecological Sciences. Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore,
ENVIS Centre on Medicinal Plants, FRLHT-TDU and State ENVIS Centre, EMPRI, Bangalore
20th May 2016,
Venue: CCE lecture Hall (next to Nesara Restaurant), IISc Campus, Malleshwaram
Time: 9 am to 6.00 pm
Details at
http://wgbis.ces.iisc.ernet.in/biodiversity/messages/brainstorming-20may2016/index.htm

Session 1: **Major achievements of the ENVIS Centers for last five years to get a broad overview of the strengths**

Session 2: Development of ENVIS INDIA Vision Document pertaining to ENVIS network and each ENVIS Centers for the 10 years i.e. till 2025.

1) *Enlarging the scope of ENVIS activities including self-sustenance*
2) *Development of dissemination strategies for the network and centres*

Session 3: Group activity:

1. **Constantly improve/ upgrade technologies and strengthen/modify/ the existing ENVIS Scheme, activities:** *Any suggestion for further improvement in the restructured/under developed ENVIS website. Pursing Newer ideas and technologies: Inclusion of GIS/Geo Spatial tools/ Bharat in prioritized ENVIS Databases.*

2. **ENVIS Centers and decision support system/policy making of the Ministry.**

Session 4:

1) Capacity building Internship/ Training programs under ENVIS.
2) Change in existing evaluation criteria /format.

- Project proposals on similar themes-Region wise- Inter – centre relationship must be encouraged through various events and joint programmes.

3) HR and Administrations related(Any change in designation of ENVIS Staff)
4) Mandate of Host Institution and mandate of ENVIS Cente
5) Common title and subtitles for all ENVIS newsletters (Hard copy/ e-version).

MINUTES OF FIRST QUARTER BRAINSTORMING SESSION FOR SOUTHERN REGION ENVIS CENTRES HELD AT IISC, BANGALORE
20 MAY 2016

Inaugural session: Mr. Abhay Kumar**,** Mr. Amit Vashishta, Ms. Suma, Dr. S N Prasad (Member, Advisory Committee, ENVIS Centre at IISc), Dr T V Ramachandra

Dr. T V Ramachandra, Co-ordinator, ENVIS centre on Western Ghats Biodiversity and ecology welcomed the gathering and gave a brief overview of ENVIS programme at IISc. Mr. Abhay Kumar outlined the goals of ENVIS programme and the challenges ahead. Mr. Amit Vashista discussed the purpose of brain storming session. Dr. S N Prasad discussed the strategies to be adopted for effective information dissemination, while sharing his experiences while he was co-ordinating ENVIS centre at SACON. Dr. Suma proposed the vote of thanks.

Major Highlights of 20th May, Brainstorming Session at IISc, Bangalore:

i. Archival of ALL ENVIS publications in e form at centralized portal – PARYAVARAN GATE/ **ENVIRONMENT GATE** (similar to Research Gate - https://www.researchgate.net/) Development of an exclusive website by the ministry exclusively for promoting information, articles and research papers of all ENVIS Centres.

ii. **Allocation of funds (block grant) from CAMPA - Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority and mandatory CSR funds allocation (at least 5% of CSR funds) to ENVIS programme as many organisations are benefitted due to the information available under ENVIS programme (aided in decision making – environmental clearances, etc.. This would ensure sustenance of the programme – path towards self-sustenance of the programme at the Ministry.**

iii. to migrate from MIS to GIS (spatial information system) and to explore alternate system for providing important data to all the stakeholders without any accessibility issues.

iv. Restructuring of ENVIS Website with greater flexibility and user friendly

v. **Database collection/preparation/integration at panchayat level/village level to understand state of environment (and to comply with Biodiversity Act, 2002).**
   a. **Preparation of common schema for data abstraction**.
   b. **Traditional knowledge documentation**.
   c. **Valuation of ecosystem goods and services (select case studies)**
   d. Access and benefit sharing – evolving strategy through interaction with all stakeholders

vi. **Incorporating database on traditional knowledge/information**.

vii. Assured financial support to ensure the continuity of staff (with the current approach, staff leave ENVIS at the end of the year, which affects the quality and continuity)

viii. Each centres NEWSLETTER to be different (no need of common format, title) as the diversity helps in effective information dissemination - Name of the newsletter to be distinct for each centre.

ix. Explore the mechanism to integrate with the global enevironmental information system portals such as INFOTERRA - The International Environmental Information

System, UNEP EIS - the Global Resource Information Database *(GRID)* and similar global initiatives.

A. DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIS INDIA VISION DOCUMENT PERTAINING TO ENVIS NETWORK AND EACH ENVIS CENTERS FOR THE 10 YEARS I.E. TILL 2025.

A. Enlarging the scope of ENVIS activities including self-sustenance:

x. Networking with the ENVIS Centres and synergies for continuous improvments.
xi. Graduate from database projects to awareness to responsive action projects
xii. There is an urgent need to move from MIS to GIS (spatial information system) and to explore alternate system for providing important data to all the stakeholders without any accessibility issues
xiii. Use of newer technologies to reach out –Open Source softwares.
xiv. Establishment of data centre at the Focal point (ENVIS Sect) for environmental data.
xv. The ENVIS Centre must involve or engage various stakeholders in the enrichment of the portal
xvi. Exploring collaboration with reputed institutes both at national and international levels including important web portals which uses open sources IBP India, etc…..
xvii. State of Environment Report should not be outsourced to other states and should be prepared through interactions with the local experts and memebers from ENVIS thematic centres.
xviii. For State centres, Panchayats must be made the unit or parameter for data collection instead of districts.
xix. Incorporating Traditional information and knowledge practiced or followed in the respective states in the ENVIS Website through granting additional project support.
xx. ENVIS Portal to host CSR advertisements
xxi. Explore the mechanism to integrate with the global eneviornmental information system portals such as INFOTERRA - The International Environmental Information System, UNEP EIS - the Global Resource Information Database *(GRID)* and similar global initiatives.
xxii. Allocation of funds from CAMPA - Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority and mandatory CSR funds to ENVIS programme as many organisations are benefitted due to ENVIS programme (aided in decision making – environmental clearances, etc..

B. *Development of dissemination strategies for the network and centres*

i. Organizing workshops at each centre / zone wise on a regular basis for assessing the needs of various stakeholders.
ii. Archival of ALL ENVIS publications in e form at centralized portal – ENVIRONMENT GATE (similar to Research Gate - https://www.researchgate.net/) Development of an exclusive website by the ministry exclusively for promoting information, articles and research papers of all ENVIS Centres.

iii. ENVIS advertisements can be provided through social media to create awareness/ Information and broadcasting ministry too (Radio, community radios, FM, science communication channels, museums, channels)
iv. Crowd sourcing for effective data collection.
v. Development of ENVIS wiki for wider publicity
vi. Connect HRD and Education ministry: Include it in NCERT, Sarva Shikshana Abiyan Books back cover
vii. Connect to all the major libraries by sending propaganda materials.
viii. Connect to important websites/portals
ix. Ministry must take steps to include ENVIS Centres website links in various other Central and State government websites.
x. ENVIS centres must reach out to students, teachers and teacher trainees by targeting their programmes like science competitions etc.
xi. ENVIS team members can be part of teaching faculty especially in enviromnetal studies and awareness programmes.
xii. Permanent stalls/display units in the Ministry and at known public science places (Museums, planetariums, National parks, Metro stations, *etc*).
xiii. Link to National Science Congress

B. CONSTANTLY IMPROVE/ UPGRADE TECHNOLOGIES AND STRENGTHEN/MODIFY/ THE EXISTING ENVIS SCHEME, ACTIVITIES: ANY SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IN THE RESTRUCTURED/UNDER DEVELOPED ENVIS WEBSITE. PURSING NEWER IDEAS AND TECHNOLOGIES: INCLUSION OF GIS/GEO SPATIAL TOOLS/ BHARAT IN PRIORITIZED ENVIS DATABASES.

NIC related:

i. Restructuring of ENVIS Website with greater flexibility
ii. The design of a website makes the first impression on any brand. The present view of ENVIS website appears to be more static. Hence in order to have a dynamic website, our ENVIS website should be completely restructured
iii. Regular upgrading and news update in website's domain will promote for a user friendly and interactive platform. Each ENVIS Centre should be given the individual right of accession to add and manage their own web contents. This will save an enormous amount of time and also facilitate a smooth functioning of networking and information dissemination services.
iv. While updating data at centralized server the frequent "Server Error" problem needs to be rectified.
v. Login problem in CMS based websites should be recovered and make it user friendly.
vi. Difficulty to upload images with large size.

vii.   ISBIT modules, **data should be on common platform/format after the source (line departments)**.
viii.   **Database collection/preparation/integration at panchayat level/village level to understand state of environment**.
      a.   **Preparation of common schema for data abstraction**.
      b.   **Traditional knowledge documentation**.
ix.   **Incorporating database on traditional knowledge/information**.
x.   Link/database to meteorological and other related information.
xi.   Collaborative efforts to be made with respect to various domains using appropriate technologies and programs.

Application of GIS technology, Bhuvan and issues:

i.   The Geospatial tools those provided now (Bhuvan, Bharat Maps) need to be upgraded.
ii.   Moreover, the ENVIS Centre faces a huge delay for getting the information updated using the present Geospatial tools. This may be due to less manpower or some other reasons and we request that this issue should be solved.
iii.   Enhanced training programs/workshops shall be conducted for the ENVIS staffs for better understanding and utilization of the GIS/Geospatial tools.
iv.   Use other open sources tools including Bharat maps, GIS

C.   ENVIS CENTERS AND DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM/POLICY MAKING OF THE MINISTRY.

i.   To cater to the data/information needs at National and also at international levels.
ii.   To setup ENVIS portal of SAARC nations (collaborative initiative)
iii.   To be a quick decision support system by connecting all centres in a common platform highlighting the uniqueness of the archived information.
iv.   Collaborated with international bodies like EU/IUCN, INFOTERRA, GRID, EIS, etc.
v.   Wide publicity and dissemination of information among all ministries, Policy and decision makers to be made aware of the vast knowledge and information repository and where to look for. Example: IISC, Coastal region, EMPRI, FRLHT…..
vi.   Archival of All ENVIS publications and storing it in e-form in the centralized library. Online envis publications like other journals and publication browsers
vii.   Highlight important databases on "spotlight" sections for application
viii.   Write science articles, reviews, current researches etc.
ix.   Connect HRD and Education ministry: Include it in NCERT, Sarva Shikshana Abiyan Books back cover
x.   Identify experts in ENVIS India network from different centres and have an Advisory Group whose can provide timely advise thus help in decision making
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D. COMMON TITLE AND SUBTITLES FOR ALL ENVIS NEWSLETTERS (HARD COPY/ E-VERSION).

i. Each centres NEWSLETTER to be different (no need of common format, title) as the diversity helps in effective information dissemination - Name of the newsletter to be distinct for each centre.
ii. Limited hard copies of news letter and maximized effort towards e-dissemination - electronic newsletters must be brought out by centres to avoid cutting trees.
iii. Hardcopies are to be dispatched to Ministry and govt officials.
iv. ISSN number for each publication – newsletters, etc.
v.

E. Analyzing The Pros And Cons Of Both The Scenarios: Current System And Project Mode

i. We like to continue and function with the current system of recurring grant instead of a project-based funding. This is a program and not a project. If we do this, the network will break.

- Inter centre collaborations through various events, joint programmes and evolving synergies towards an effective information dissemination.

F. HR AND ADMINISTRATIONS RELATED:

ii. Job security: The major obstacle in ENVIS programme is that research personnel working for a long year of service could not be assured of safe and permanent employment with reasonable financial support. There is a need to increase their pay scale and allowances to reduce attrition.
iii. In spite of the agony, the ENVIS personnel continue to serve as the programme is evaluated on performance based every year.
iv. Research fellowships must be offered by MoEF&CC to attract young and talented students and research scholars.
v. Development of Training calendar by the Ministry for building the capacities of the ENVIS Staff members.
vi. Staff designation to be as per the norms of the respective implementing institutions.
vii. Designation of staff can also be changed from Program Officer (Environment al officer, specialist/Scientist), Information Officer (Information Specialist) and Information Assistant (System Administrator). This has to be in tune with the norms of the respective host instituitons. Recommended 30% hike in salary of ENVIS staff would be appreciable.
The salary could be preferably on running pay scale mode with yearly increment. That should include basic pay, HRA and other allowances. We propose the following

maximum pay for each category by following the pay scale mode (including all the allowances)

- o Co-Coordinator cum Scientist D Rs. 45,000/-
- o Website Application developer/ Programme officer Rs. 35,000/-
- o Information officer   Rs. 30,000/-
- o System analyst   Rs. 25,000/-

viii. Flexibility in changing "Head of Accounts" is necessary to minimize administrative hurdles.

G. CAPACITY BUILDING INTERNSHIP/ TRAINING PROGRAMS UNDER ENVIS.

i. Development of Training calendar by the Ministry for building the capacities of the ENVIS Staff members.

ii. More funds could be allotted for thematic centre's to conduct training and awareness programs. On need training program required for the staff based on request from ENVIS Coordinator to be encouraged and supported by providing additional support.

iii. **Providing grant for conducting research related to the thematic area**. This would enable us to collect primary data. Post graduate students and research scholars will be assigned for a specific topic, pertaining to the thematic area, to collect the primary data locally and it would be published under the umbrella of ENVIS. Through this young minds can be attracted towards research

iv. Encourage ENVIS staff to take up small grant project for publishing their research work in popular journals in the name of ENVIS

H. PROJECT PROPOSALS ON SIMILAR THEMES-REGION WISE-

i. Inter – centre relationship must be encouraged through various events and joint programmes.

ii. Incorporating Traditional information and knowledge practiced or followed in the respective states in the ENVIS Website through granting additional project support.

I. CHANGE OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

i. Do not mix up State and thematic evaluations.

ii. Based on the achievements against the annual plan and deliverables the ENVIS Centers may be evaluated

iii. Guideline to be defined which takes care of qualitative outputs and not just the hits/ visitors/ uploads.

iv. At least one Subject expert must be present in the evaluation team for a group.

v. Prior to evaluation, evaluators have to be oriented towards the ENVIS mandate, role of host institution, why these centres are chosen to be part of the network, what is their role and role of an evaluator.

CONCLUDING SESSION: Suggestions emerged during the concluding session, wherein each participant took part in the discussion

1. ENVIS centers to network with the users/agencies/forums/media/science-writers etc to effectively communicate/disseminate information.
2. Making ENVIS centers webpages easily accessible to the users online, by requesting ISRO, NRSC, etc to add hyperlinks.
3. Bringing articles into regional language, identifying state centers to translate articles to regional language.
4. Integration of several themes at Ministry level as packages so that ENVIS centers can take up the work.
5. Status to traditional knowledge needs to be given.
6. Supporting various boards such as Bio diversity board, MOEFCC, CRZ, etc.
7. Synergy to be put in use.
8. Use of open source software's/tools rather than propriety tools.
9. Preparing metadata for the database.
10. Keep publishing data, as it can be used by the research groups/ministries that help in decision support.
11. Archive the publications.
12. Facebook/Social media shall not be compulsory.
13. Solution for evaluation
    a. Clear cut agenda and target to ENVIS centers such as minimum publications, events, etc.
    b. Subject expert shall be at least one the evaluator in the committee.
    c. NIC should be more efficient.
    d. Committee member should be from ENVIS in order to deliberate the team about ENVIS, role, objective, etc.
14. NIC to prepare protocol for obtaining information from ENVIS.
15. National Brain storming sessions (involving select representatives of Regional level brain-storming sessions) before finalizing the ENVIS Vision Document

Participants Details ENVIS Quarterly Brainstorming session 20th May 2016, IISc, Bangalore

Sl.no	Name	Designation	Institute	Signature
1.	Mr. Abhay Kumar	Economic Advisor	**ENVIS INDIA**	
2.	Mr. Amit Vashishta	Deputy Director	**ENVIS INDIA**	
3.	Dr Kamalakshan Kokkal	Joint Director & ENVIS Coordinator	KSCSTE ENVIS Centre, Sasthra Bhavan, Kerala State Council for Science Technology & Environment (KSCSTE), Pattom, Trivandrum 695004	
4.	Dr Sindhu C Unni	Senior Programme Officer		
5.	Smt. Fathima Zahra	Programme Assistant		

6.	G Sivasubramanian	IT Assistant	DSTE (PPCC) ENVIS Centre, 3rd floor, PHB Building, Anna nagar, Puducherry	
7.	V.N. Mutharaian	Programme Officer	Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, PB No. 1061, Forest Campus, RS Puram P.O. Coimbatore - 641002	
8.	T. Vamadevan	Information Officer		
9.	Dr. Goldin Quadros	Senior Scientist	Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology & Natural History (SACON), Dr Goldin Quadros, Senior Scientist - Wetland Ecology Department, Annaikatti Post. Coimbatore 641108,	
10.	Dr. S. Manokaran	Programme Officer	CAS in Marine Biology (CASMB) – ENVIS Centre, Annamalai University, Parangipettai, Tamilnadu	
11.	B. Senthilkumar	IT Assistant		
12.	Dr.P.Sudhakar	ENVIS Co-ordinator	CPREEC ENVIS Centre, No.1 Eldams Road, Alwarpet, Chennai -17	
13.	Ms.B.Tirumala	Programme Officer		
14.	Dr.Judith D.Silva	Program Officer	Institute for Ocean Management, Coastal Zone Management and Coastal Shelter Belt, Anna University, Chennai.	
15.	T. Abinaya	Information Officer		
16.	S. Sathya	Information Assistant		
17.	Mr. D. Siva Arun	Programme Assistant	DZmarcus UM ENVIS centre, Dept. of Zoology, University of Madras, Chennai	
18.	Dr. V. Krishnakumar	Programme Officer cum Scientist D		
19.	Dr. M. Srinivasa Rao	Scientist - Center Co-ordinator	IICT-Envis centre on Bioinformatics vector control, Hyderabad	
20.	Mr. Prabhakar Reddy	IT Assistant		
21.	Ms Indira Devi	Program Assistantt	ENVIS Centre, Dept of Environment, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Chennai - 15	
22.	Dr. Muthukumar	Programme Officer		

23.	Dr. M. Suneela	ENVIS Co-ordinator	EPTRI ENVIS centre on "State of Environment and Related Issues", , Andhra Pradesh (SoE & RI)	
24.	Ms. M. Prashanthi	Program officer		
25.	Dr. K. Jyothi ,	Program officer	EPTRI ENVIS centre on "Ecology of Eastern Ghats" 91/4, Gachibowli, Hyderabad - 500032	
26.	Mr. Ravishankar S	Program Officer	CPREEC	
27.	Mr. Suma T S	ENVIS Coordinator	FRLHT, Bengaluru	
28.	Ms. Nisha Shetty	Program Officer	EMPRI, Bengaluru	
29.	Ms. Soujanya	Information Officer	EMPRI, Bengaluru	
30.	Ms TARA N M	Project Assistant, Web Design	ENVIS, IISc, Bengaluru	
31.	Ms. Sincy V	Project asst.	ENVIS, IISc, Bengaluru	
32.	Ms. Asulabha	Project asst.	ENVIS, IISc, Bengaluru	
33.	Dr. S N Prasad		Members, Advisory Committee, Sahyadri: ENVIS Centre on Western Ghats Biodiversity and Ecology, CES, IISc	
34.	Dr. M D Suabsh Chandran			
35.	Dr. Harish R Bhat			

36.	Dr. B S Somashekar	Members, Advisory Committee, FRLHT	
37.	Dr. T V Ramachandra	ENVIS Convener, CES, IISc	IISc, Bengaluru