

Role of Information and Communication Technology in Environment Management

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is a general term referring to its application in various fields including environmental sustainability. ICTs offer strong management tool for quick and user friendly coordination among and within institutions, countries in various sectors of economy. Environment comprising of various sectors of economy is highly cross sectoral and would therefore need increased coordination among various sectors for informed and timely decisions. ICT has gained more attention in the current era of social media and increased use of smart technologies by the users. Apart from awareness and coordination, ICT is used to identify measure, verify, track and evaluate data regarding environment indicators. Trends in environmental performance are analyzed to find out root causes of environment pollution. ICT can usefully be used provided a data base of environmental indicators is established and regularly monitored using various digital technology tools like Geographical Information System (GIS).

Sharing of information regarding environment and natural resources is essential for decision making and follow-up actions by various stakeholders. Citizens would also like to know the state of environment in a country, province or region and this could easily be done by using ICT. Citizens and stakeholders response on the state of environment could also be obtained and analyzed by the environment managers and policy planners for improvements using ICT. Now a days ICT offer online interactive dialog among stakeholders and social media is an open ended platform for the promotion of interactive dialog on various issues of environment. Video conferencing facility has greatly reduced the cost of transportation etc. in connecting people for any meeting, conference or even training from remote places. In addition ICT play a much greater role in early warning and preparedness in the event of environmental disaster in any part of the country or region and can help save lives and property from destruction.

The role of ICT in environment management gains more importance at regional and global level for coordinating environmental and disaster management issues at faster speed. To harness the benefits of ICT, the South Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) has recently launched a modest but very effective ICT initiative. The ICT unit of SACEP is being further improved and strengthened for making it an effective tool for an enhanced coordination and awareness raising among the SACEP member countries, institutions and professionals. To reach to general masses and youth, social media tools and dedicated blogs are being developed for crossing environmental information and news for the benefit of users.

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