

CHAPTER – III

REFORM MEASURES AND POLICY INITIATIVES

The Ministry of Environment & Forest has taken a number of reform measures and policy initiatives in order to improve upon the intermediate output and final outcomes in areas such public private partnership, alternate delivery mechanism, social and gender empowerment process, greater decentralization and transparency. The Ministry is currently implementing 22 thematic plan Schemes with an approved plan outlay of Rs. 2200.00 crores for the Annual Plan 2010-11.

3.1. POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

3.1.1. National Action Plan on Climate Change

As a part of national voluntary actions to address climate change related concerns, India had released its National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) on 30th June 2008. The Action Plan outlines our strategy to adapt to climate change and enhance the ecological sustainability of our development path. It recognizes that climate change is a global challenge and that it should be successfully overcome through a globally collaborative and cooperative effort based on the basis of the principle of equity. The Action Plan suggests that long term convergence of per capita GHG emissions is the only equitable basis for a global agreement to tackle climate change. The Action Plan assures the international community that India's per capita GHG emissions would not exceed the per capita GHG emissions of developed countries, despite India's development imperatives.

Eight National Missions (National Solar Mission, National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency, National Mission on Sustainable Habitat, National Water Mission, National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, National Mission for a Green India, National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture and National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change), representing a multi-pronged, long term and integrated approach, form the core of the National Action Plan. While two missions stand approved, others are at various stages of approval as of now. The National Solar Mission has been launched on 11th January, 2010, and the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency is likely to be launched in April 2010. Remaining Mission documents are at final stages of approval by the Prime Minister's Council on climate change. The Ministry will play a coordinating and implementing role after the Missions are finalized. Besides these missions, the NAPCC also outlines 24 other major initiatives aimed at promoting technologies and actions that will have substantial benefits in terms of addressing climate change.

Among new initiatives, it is proposed to set up a National Climate Centre to provide advisory and technical support services to the Ministry in the areas of climate change modelling, NATCOM, negotiations and other technical works. Capacity building in CDM for corporate, private and state sectors is also proposed to enable access to larger number of projects by these sectors. Recognizing significant impacts of climate change at regional and state level, a time bound programme for preparation of state level Action Plans on climate change consistent with NAPCC is also proposed. This would enable the communities and ecosystems to adopt climate change effectively thus facilitating smooth and successful implementation of the NAPCC.

3.1.2. National Biodiversity Action Plan

Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms and ecological complexes of which they are part, including diversity within and between species and ecosystems. It has direct consumptive value in food, agriculture, medicine and industry. Towards its conservation, a National Biodiversity Action Plan, consistent with the National Environment Policy 2006 was released in November 2008. The Plan identifies

major threats and constraints facing biodiversity and lists out action points for addressing/conserving the same.

The activities in the Plan include short, medium and long term targets for the conservation of biodiversity. Since the goal of conservation of biodiversity can be achieved only with the cooperation of all concerned through implementation of on-going schemes and new initiatives, the Ministry has requested all concerned agencies to forward periodically progress of activities implemented by them to facilitate regular monitoring of implementation of the Action Plan. Given the importance and relevance of the issue, the year 2010 has been declared as the International Year of Biodiversity. India proposes to organise the Conference of Parties of the Biodiversity Convention in the year 2012.

3.1.3. Environmental release of Bt. Brinjal

The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in a meeting held on 14.10.2009 concluded that Bt Brinjal is safe for environmental release taking into consideration the findings of the review by three high level technical Committees namely; the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) and two Expert Committees constituted by the GEAC in 2006 and 2009. The GEAC decided to forward the recommendations and report of the Expert Committee (EC-II) on the safety and efficacy of Bt brinjal event EEI to the Government for taking a final view.

Issues involved in commercialization of Bt brinjal include health issues, loss of biodiversity, dependence on MNCs for seeds, loss of indigenous varieties through contamination of gene pool, sustainability of the technology, consumer choice and labelling, adequacy of regulatory process etc. The Ministry had invited comments from all stakeholders up to 31.12.2009 on the report of EC-II. Subsequently the Ministry had decided to organize public consultations at seven locations (mainly brinjal growing areas) before a final view on the matter is taken. Public consultations at Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Chandigarh, Hyderabad and Bangalore were completed during January –February 2010. The Ministry has also invited comments from about 40 Scientists on the EC-II report as well as views of the State Governments. Meanwhile, the Government has imposed a moratorium on commercialization of Bt brinjal till such time independent scientific studies establish, to the satisfaction of both the public and professionals, the safety of the product from the point of view of its long term impact on human health and environment, including the rich genetic wealth existing in brinjal in the country.

3.1.4. Revised National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) 2009

The Government has revised in 2009 the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and limits for 12 pollutants have been notified. Area classification based on land use has been done away with so that there are uniform ambient air quality norms for residential and industrial areas. The revised standards are based on global best practices, local Indian conditions and are in keeping with advancements in technology and research. These new generation of ambient air quality standards, providing legal framework for the control of air pollution and the protection of public health, would serve as bench mark for proactive environmental planning and effective control of air pollution.

3.1.5 Setting up of National Green Tribunal

The Law Commission in its 186th Report had, *inter-alia*, recommended establishment of 'Environment Court' in each State, consisting of Judicial and Scientific experts in the field of environment for dealing with environmental disputes besides having appellate jurisdiction in respect of appeals under the various Pollution Control Laws. The Commission has also recommended repeal of the National Environment Tribunal Act, 1995 and the National Environment Appellate Authority Act, 1997. After examining the Report and discussing the modalities in several consultation meetings, the Ministry of Environment & Forests has decided to implement the recommendations of Law Commission with some modifications. Accordingly, a draft National Green Tribunal (NGT) Bill was formulated and examined in consultation with the Ministry of Law and Justice.

The NGT shall have the original jurisdiction as well as appellate jurisdiction to adjudicate the environmental disputes of civil nature relating to protection of environment and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal rights relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property. The appeal against the order of NGT shall lie with the Hon'ble Supreme Court. After due consultations, the NGT Bill 2009 was introduced in the Parliament in July, 2009. The NGT Bill was considered by the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests. The recommendations of the Committee, made in their report of 24th November, 2009, have been incorporated in the draft bill under consideration of the Parliament.

3.1.6. Coastal Zone Management

The coastal environment plays a vital role in the Nation's economy. The Indian coastline harbours productive habitats and rich biodiversity all along the 7500 km stretch, including the oceanic islands of A&N and Lakshadweep.

The Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. M. S. Swaminathan, constituted to review the comments received on the draft Coastal Management Zone 2008, in its Report dated 16th July, 2009 at para 7.4 had recommended an immediate study to be undertaken to examine the cumulative impacts of port projects on the coastline, pending which there should be a moratorium on expansion of existing ports and initiation of new projects. A study was therefore assigned to the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) for identifying the coastal stretches with regard to erosion/accretion.

Based on the report of the Expert Committee, Ministry issued an OM detailing policy for undertaking development with regard to ports and harbour. The policy stipulates (i) Expansion of existing ports and harbours, jetties etc., within their notified port limits shall be undertaken subject to the condition that the hydro-dynamic studies indicate that the expansion activities of the existing port do not have significant impact to the shoreline abutting the project and has no significant impact on the ecologically sensitive areas along the stretch; (ii) New projects to be located in the identified sites shall be subjected to Comprehensive Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), based on a minimum of 3 seasons data, and EIA Report prepared based on actual field measurements, appropriate modelling studies etc; (iii) With regard to the hotspots stretches viz. those areas which are prone for high erosion above 1 meter per year (identified by the concerned Central/State Government agencies), locations identified within 10 km on either side of the eco-sensitive areas categorized as CRZ-I(i) and water bodies with high bio-diversity, shall not be considered for locating ports and harbours. However, fishing jetties/embarkation facilities for local communities could be set-up with EIA as per Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006; and (iv) With regard to Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands, the port and harbour projects shall be undertaken in accordance with CRZ Notification, 1991 and approved Coastal Zone Management Plans. The port projects of more than 5 Million Tones per annum in these islands which are to be located in these islands, shall be subjected to Comprehensive EIA including physical and mathematical modelling and ground verification.

Institute for Ocean Management (IOM), Chennai and ICMAM shall identify the shoreline changes at micro level and map them in at least 1:25000 scale maps. A decision with regard to specific conditions is likely to be taken by October, 2010. Subsequently, a National Policy in this regard shall be drawn up.

3.1.7. Amendment to EIA 2006 Notification

The re-engineered Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification was issued in September, 2006 for mandating prior environmental clearance of certain categories of projects and activities. The Notification covers various stages of environmental appraisal, public consultation, and categorization of projects into 'A' and 'B' for their appraisal at Central and State level respectively. Based on the experience gained in implementation of the EIA Notification, 2006 and to further streamlining the process, the EIA Notification, 2006 has been amended on 1st December, 2009. The amendments made *inter-alia* include: (i) Decision of State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority to be taken by majority, (ii) Coal mine projects with lease area up to 150 ha will now be appraised by the State Level Environment Impact

Assessment Authority as against earlier limit of less than 50 ha, (iii) Biomass based power plants up to 15 MW have been exempted from EIA Notification, (iv) Inclusion of breakwater and dredging (v) Information regarding grant of environmental clearance along with stipulated conditions to be put in public domain for Category 'A' projects.

3.1.8. Hazardous Wastes (Management, Handling and Trans boundary Movement) Rules, 2008

To regulate management of Hazardous Wastes generated within the country as well as to regulate export/import of such wastes, the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989 were notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. New Rules titled 'Hazardous Wastes (Management, Handling and Trans boundary Movement) Rules, 2008' have been notified superseding the earlier regulation. Recycling of e-waste and the requirement of registration for recyclers of e-waste has been included under these Rules. A national strategy on hazardous wastes is being prepared to facilitate implementation of the hazardous waste management and different aspects of the National Environment Policy 2006, and to fulfil obligations under the Basel Convention on Trans boundary movement of hazardous wastes, including their minimization, environmentally sound management and active promotion of transfer and use of cleaner technologies.

3.1.9. Amendment to 'Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000

The Ministry has amended the 'Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 to make them more stringent. This includes the setting up of a 'National Noise Monitoring Network' across various cities.

3.1.10. Draft Plastics (Manufacture, Usage and Waste Management) Rules, 2009

A draft Notification on Plastics (Manufacture, Usage and Waste Management) Rules 2009 was issued on 17th September 2009, calling for objections and suggestions to the proposed amendments. The salient features of the proposed amendment include enhanced minimum prescribed thickness and size for carry bags and ban on manufacture, stocking, distributing or selling non-recyclable laminated plastic/metallic pouches, multilayered packaging and other non-recyclable plastics.

3.1.11. Pollution Index for Major Industrial Clusters

The Ministry and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have brought out a report on "Comprehensive Environmental Assessment of Industrial Clusters" and identified the industrial clusters as polluted based on a Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index (CEPI). The index captures various health related dimensions of environment including air, water and land. As per the survey, carried out in 88 major/prominent industrial clusters in the country, 43 industrial areas/clusters are identified as highly polluted. The assessment would serve as a basis for enhanced and urgent action, especially in those clusters that are critically polluted.

3.1.12. Revamped River Conservation Strategy - Setting up of NGRBA

The Central Government has given Ganga the status of a 'National River' and has constituted a 'National Ganga River Basin Authority' (NGRBA) through issue of a Notification under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 20.02.2009. The NGRBA is an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority for the Ganga River. The Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister and has as its members, the Union Ministers concerned, the Chief Ministers of the States through which Ganga flows, viz., Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, among others. The Authority has both regulatory and developmental functions and will take measures for effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga, adopting river basin as the unit of planning. Under the provisions of the Authority, a Corpus Fund is to be provided by the Central Government to the Authority to implement its work programme.

First tranche of Rs.500 crore has been provided in the budget allocation of 2010-11. The Authority in its first meeting in October 2009 decided that under Mission Clean Ganga it would be ensured that by 2020 no untreated municipal sewage and industrial effluents flow into Ganga.

3.1.13. National Environment Protection Authority (NEPA)

In parallel to the National Green Tribunal Bill, an exercise has been initiated to conceptualize and constitute an Environment Protection Authority in the country. This initiative recognizes the thinness of the current environmental management system and corresponding weaknesses in implementation. The current field level organizational framework under the Central and State Pollution Control Boards are inadequate for handling the environmental challenges posed by the growth in industry, infrastructure and transportation sectors. The proposal is in conceptual stage and aims at strengthening enforcement and monitoring of compliance of environmental statutes and to improve environmental planning and management.

A concept note on NEPA was uploaded on the Ministry's website and large number of suggestions has been received from various stakeholders. As part of the consultation process, a meeting was conducted on 26th November, 2009 in New Delhi in which representatives of State Governments, State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees, Central Pollution Control Board and line Ministries participated.

The proposed NEPA will be an independent statutory body with the basic mandate of effective enforcement of environmental laws. It is envisaged that the NEPA shall have specialists from the areas of physical sciences, life sciences, engineering, law, environmental economics, public health and environmental planning and management. This will adequately equip the authority for taking various measures for protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environmental pollution. The NEPA should assume the national stewardship of enforcement and compliance.

3.1.14. Compensatory Afforestation Management & Planning Authorities - CAMPA

The Supreme Court, vide its order dated 29th October, 2002 in I.A. No 566 in Writ Petition Civil No. 202/1995, had directed creation of a Compensatory Afforestation Fund in which all monies received from user agencies towards compensatory afforestation, penal compensatory afforestation, Net Present Value, Catchment Treatment Plan, etc. shall be deposited. The Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) was approved by the Union Cabinet in March, 2008 with a proviso to frame legislation constituting a Compensatory Afforestation Fund. A Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2008, introduced in Lok Sabha on 5th May, 2008, was passed by the Lok Sabha and referred to the Standing Committee of Parliament on Science & Technology & Forests. The Standing Committee, however, recommended that the Bill be withdrawn. The Bill finally could not be passed by the Rajya Sabha and lapsed with the constitution of new Lok Sabha.

To resolve the deadlock of CAMPA, it was decided to create State Level CAMPAs after intensive consultations with states and based on model guidelines for State level CAMPAs. The State CAMPAs thus provide an integrated framework for utilization of multiple sources of funding and activities relating to afforestation and would work through JFMCs. By the end of January, 2010 in pursuance of the guidelines issued by the Government of India for establishment of state CAMPAs, 22 States/UTs have operationalised their accounts. Out of the received amounts of approximately 13,000 crore in the ad hoc CAMPA, the State CAMPAs have so far been allocated approximately Rs.730 crores.

3.1.15. Amendments to Wild Life Protection Act, 1972

In order to regulate the import and export of wild plants and animals so as to ensure that international trade does not result in the extinction of any species of wildlife and also to give effect in India

to the provisions contained in CITES, it is proposed to introduce a new Chapter V B in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Along with the introduction of the a new Chapter, and considering the large scale poaching and clandestine trade in the wild life produce, it has been further decided to bring comprehensive amendments in the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972. A draft Bill & a Note for the Cabinet suggesting various measures have been submitted to the Ministry of Law & Justice for vetting.

3.2. SECTORAL REFORM MEASURES

3.2.1. Pollution Abatement

The World Bank Aided Project on *Capacity Building for Industrial Pollution Management* aims at providing comprehensive framework for investments in remediation of legacy sites which pose significant hazard to communities and meet the criteria of a public good. The project has three components: (i) Strengthening of Environmental Institutions: Building capacity for addressing pollution remediation at State level; (ii) Investments in Priority Remediation and Environmental Improvements; and (iii) Project Management. Based on the feasibility studies completed, the process of negotiations with the World Bank for agreement for funding for remediation and rehabilitation works for identified sites in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal on pilot basis is under progress. The objective of the project is to establish a national programme for remediation and rehabilitation of four identified polluted sites in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal on a pilot basis. The project has been submitted for CCEA approval.

A comprehensive regulatory framework has been put in place for hazardous substances management in the country. During 2010-11, attention would be focused on improving implementation of these regulations. Amendments are proposed to the Bio-Medical Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1998 and Recycled Plastics Manufacture & Usage Rules, 1999. Ministry also proposes to issue amendments to the *Battery Management & Handling Rules*, 2001 and would consider drafting separate rules for *E-waste management and handling Rules*.

A Committee has been constituted to evolve a roadmap for proper *management of wastes* in the country. The Committee addressed issues such as Municipal solid waste, plastic waste, e-waste, Bio-Medical wastes etc. The report of the Committee is under finalization. An action plan will be developed thereafter which is expected to be completed in 2010-11.

Given the stipulation in National Environment Policy, 2006, Ministry intends to take the initiative to set up a mechanism to network technology research institutions in the country, public and private, for cooperation in technology research & development and adaptation, information, and evaluation of *clean technologies*. It will create a database of such technologies, and promote dissemination of new technologies developed in India and Abroad. An international *technology conference on climate change* is planned to be held in 2010-11. India's participation in CDM will be further promoted through approvals of Host Country Projects in various sectors.

3.2.2. Environmental Conservation

The National Environmental Policy (NEP) 2006, while defining the basic principles of environmental conservation and management, emphasizes need for priority allocation of societal resources for conservation of Entities of Incomparable Value (EIVs). The Entities of Incomparable Values (EIVs) are sites containing unique natural or man-made entities, (living and/or non-living), that provide critical life support environmental services and/or are essential for the well-being, broadly conceived, of a large number of people of present and future generations.

Government has taken several measures to protect and conserve some of the such ecologically rich and sensitive areas, which are currently covered through the Protected Areas (PA) network and deriving power under diverse legal instruments, but the provisions of extant legal instruments do not fully cover certain EIVs such as Natural Heritage Sites, areas surrounding Core Zones of Biosphere Reserves, National Parks and Sanctuaries, man-made monuments, coral reefs, mangroves, sacred groves and other ecologically or environmentally sensitive areas, etc. It has, therefore, become necessary to set up a

harmonized system for *management of the diverse EIVs* under the Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1986.

Recognizing the numerous ecological services provided by wetlands, NEP 2006 has emphasized on the need for setting up of a *legally enforceable regulatory mechanism* for the identified *wetlands* and development of a national inventory of such wetlands. Regulatory framework for conservation of wetlands was accordingly prepared and was put up on Ministry's website to obtain comments of all concerned and state Governments. After incorporating all the relevant comments, the draft Regulatory Framework has been finalized and has been sent to the Ministry of Law and Justice for vetting. Thereafter, it will be notified under the Environment Protection Act 1986.

Under *biosphere reserves* scheme, states have been advised to prepare long term perspective plan for five years for such Reserves after comprehensive analysis of their issues. In order to facilitate effective rescue and rehabilitation of endemic rare plants, Lead Gardens are being promoted in each phyto-geographic zones of the country. Nine such lead gardens have already been supported for implementation of their facilities.

It is proposed to establish the *Western Ghats Ecological Authority'* under the Environment Protection Act. This Authority shall be tasked with the demarcation of the areas within the Western Ghats which need to be notified as ecologically sensitive. The Authority will make recommendations for the conservation and protection of the Western Ghats, following a consultation process involving the six concerned states.

The problem of pollution in major rivers has constantly engaged the attention of the Government. An overview of the present status of the institutional efforts indicates that concerted and focused efforts are required to achieve the goal of restoration of the water quality of rivers to acceptable standards. This task requires involvement of all stakeholders including Central and State Governments and general public at large. Government is working on a *revamped strategy for river conservation* evolving a strategy towards a holistic approach in this regard, involving infrastructure development and redesigning of institutional arrangements.

Towards implementation of this strategy, all NGRBA states have been requested to formulate and submit DPRs for projects in critically polluted hotspots and major towns in Ganga and major tributaries. Institutional mechanism, fast tracking sanction and approval of projects, has been set up. The process of selection of independent consultants for preparing a comprehensive Ganga river basin management plan has been initiated. To have better coordination and implementation of the conservation activities at the state level, Empowered State River Conservation Authorities have been notified for West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh. Tripartite MOAs have been finalized in consultation with states to be signed among state governments/Urban Local Bodies /Implementing Agencies for improved implementation as well as Operations & maintenance of pollution abatement projects.

3.2.3. Environment Education, Information and Research

The flagship programmes under environmental education and awareness include the *National Environment Awareness Campaign* (NEAC) and the *National Green Corps* (NGC) Programme which are implemented all over the country in a decentralized mode. The NEAC is launched all over the country every year on an agreed environmental theme in which more than 10,000 organisations including central and state govt. departments, education institutions, NGOs and other voluntary agencies participate. National Green Corps Programme is a knowledge-based programme in which knowledge empowered teacher-in-charge of Eco-clubs transmits awareness to children through various activities. The NGC Programme involves more than 1,00,000 Eco-Clubs across the country to carry out its mandate.

State of Environment (SoE) Reporting Process would be extended to metro city level and district level in phased manner. The preparation of SOE Report at the metro city level has been initiated with taking up the work for Hyderabad – Secunderabad metro cities of Andhra Pradesh. The SoE Reports and

other SOE Products, including State of Environment Atlas, Video CD and photo catalogue would be prepared and released to all the States/Union Territories twice in Five Year period coinciding with beginning and Mid Term Review of a Five Year Plan. A National State of the Environment Report will also be updated/released in 2010-11. Ministry will also bring out an Annual Report to the People on Environment in 2010-11.

The *National Museum of Natural History*, which imparts non-formal environmental education, plans to set up two new regional museums of natural history in the Western and North Eastern regions during the 11th Five Year Plan. Construction of the building for the Regional Museum of Natural History at Sawai Madhopur (Rajasthan), which would focus on the theme of hot desert ecosystems, is progressing well. For the Regional Museum of Natural History at Gangtok (Sikkim), land has been transferred to NMNH by the state Government. This museum will showcase the rich biodiversity of the country's North Eastern Region.

In the area of *environmental research*, new initiatives for 2010-11 include institution of National Environmental Sciences Fellows programme, institution of Mahatma Gandhi Chair on Ecology and Environment, collaborative research programme with CSIR, and setting up of a specialized National Environmental Institute to undertake capacity building, research, consultancy and advocacy activities to support the Ministry and other central and state organizations in achieving their environmental mandates and goals.

3.2.4. Forestry

The *National Forest Policy* 1988 stipulates that 33% of the geographical area of the country should be under tree/forest cover. According to the 10th Five Year Plan of the Planning Commission, a target of 25% by 2007 and 33% by 2012 was stipulated. Efforts are being made to bring more area under tree/forest cover by taking afforestation on degraded wastelands. The recently held 11th Five Year Plan (FYP) Mid-Term Appraisal exercise has recommended afforestation/reforestation of 10 MHa by 2012, implying 2.0 MHa be afforested in 2009-10 and 2.5 MHa/year in the remaining two years of the Plan. The remaining 6 MHa to be taken up with additional resources as part of Greening India.

Efforts are being made to enhance community participation through a new scheme of *Afforestation through PRIs* (Panchayat Van Yojana) to undertake afforestation on various categories of vacant public land involving PRIs. The objective of the scheme would be to bring all unutilized /underutilized non-forest village lands under tree cover with village institutions having full decision making authority on its management, use of products for value addition or otherwise, and rights over the benefits generated. The scheme would be dovetailed with other rural development schemes intended to conserve, develop, and optimally utilize land and water resources.

Decentralization of forest management involving local people in regeneration and management of degraded forests would continue to be the focus of development assistance to States and UTs. To this end, National Afforestation Programme (NAP) has been further strengthened, supporting development of forest-based small and micro enterprises and capacity building. A new state Plan Scheme entitled "Accelerated programme of Restoration and Regeneration of Forest Cover" has been introduced during 2009-10 by providing additional central assistance.

Ministry has prepared and submitted to the PM's Council for Climate Change a draft mission document for the *National Mission on Green India*. The Green India project will be the world's largest afforestation project covering six million hectares of degraded forestland. When approved, it will utilise the resources identified for National Afforestation Programmes (NAP), Compensatory Afforestation, and other related programmes. Ministry has also sought and achieved convergence of the proposed Mission/programme with the national programme of NREGA, implemented by the MoRD. The convergence of the two programmes will enhance the impact of the programmes on sustainable livelihood options for the communities and help achieve the objectives of adaptation in the context of climate change.

The *Integrated Forest Management* scheme aims at providing a holistic approach to protection of existing forests by assisting states in building capacity and basic infrastructure for forest management. Following an evaluation of the scheme, the scope of the scheme was enhanced to include the following components, with the scheme being re-designated as Intensification of Forest Management:

- ❖ Conservation and restoration of unique vegetation & Ecosystems
- ❖ Protection and conservation of Sacred Groves
- ❖ Control and eradication of forest invasive species
- ❖ Preparedness for meeting challenges of Bamboo flowering and improving management of bamboo forests

The new components have become operational from 2009-10 and would be strengthened in 2010-11.

Forest Certification has emerged as a market-driven mechanism in support of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). Certification initiatives rely on consumers exercising purchasing choice in favour of products labelled as originating from forests certified as being sustainably managed. Certification and Eco-labelling are the new mantras to enhance the product positioning for a premium price on one hand and ensuring better forest management practices on the other hand.

The Ministry has constituted a National Working Group/Governing Body to frame the policy guidelines for forest certification for timber and Non-timber forest products. Three Committees were constituted to prepare a road map and the necessary criteria and processes for the development of National Certification mechanism in the country, which were subsequently, merged into single committee namely the 'National Forest Certification Committee' for the development of Certification Criteria, Certification Process and Accreditation Criteria & Process towards Forest Certification of timber, Non-timber Forest Products. It has also been proposed to constitute an independent Forest Certification Council.

National Forest Certification Committee, in consultation with various stakeholders, is in the process of preparing a road map for operationalising the certification process. The long term strategy involves defining the structure of the National Forest Certification Council including its framework, composition, terms of reference, setting of standards, process for chain of custody and procedures for accreditation. The short term goal for 2010-11 involves formulating policy and guidelines on Forest Certification which can be circulated to all the States and UTs to deal with the issue till long term strategy is put in place.

In order to operationalise certification process in forestry, Criteria & Indicators of sustainable forest management developed by IIFM (Bhopal-India Process) would need to be approved & notified in 2010-11 after getting endorsed by an International Certification Agencies (like FSC and PEFC). To strengthen the database on forestry sector, the Ministry plans to collect, compile and disseminate forestry statistics by strengthening mechanism at ICFRE in 2010-11.

3.2.5. Wildlife Management

National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016), envisages time bound completion of various Action Points. Given the need to effectively implement the action plan, a Monitoring Committee oversees the progress in its implementation. The Action Plan envisages the following important issues of wildlife conservation:

- Recovery of critically endangered species
- Relocation of villages from Protected Areas.
- Creation of more Protected Areas.
- Improvement of degraded habitats.
- Recruitment and position of frontline staff

As per Section 2 (b) of the Scheduled Tribes & Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, 'Critical Wildlife Habitat' means such areas of National Parks and Sanctuaries that are required to be kept as inviolate for the purposes of wildlife conservation as determined and notified by the Ministry of Environment & Forests after open process of consultation by an Expert Committee. *Delineation of Critical Wildlife Habitats* is to be done by states on a case to case basis, based on scientific and objective criteria.

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, set up to protect wildlife in the country, complements the efforts of state governments who are the primary enforcers of the Wildlife (protection) Act, 1972, and other enforcement agencies. To keep a tab on the *Wild Life Crime, a Special Coordination Committee (SPCC)* has been constituted to take effective measures in curbing the Wild Life crimes. The committee comprise the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and representatives from the CBI, IB, Coast Guard, Assam Rifles, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, SSB, CISF, BSF, NCB, BCAS, Railway Board and Ministry of Defence. This comprehensive representation allows for new opportunities of inter-agency cooperation and coordination to more effectively address every aspect related to wildlife crime. In its first meeting on 5th February 2010, the Committee decided to share data base on wild life crime, appoint nodal officer on wild life crime in each agency, capacity building, enhancing cooperation at grass root level and strengthening the prosecution mechanism etc.

The flagship scheme of *Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats* provides financial and technical assistance to states/UT Governments for the conservation and management of National Parks and Sanctuaries. The enhanced scope of the scheme enables support to conservation and community reserves, protecting wildlife outside protected areas, and recovery programmes for critically endangered species and habitats. Recovery programme launched in 2009-10 includes for the *Sangai* (Manipur Dear) in Manipur and for the Nilgiri Tahr and *Edible Nest Swiftlets* in Tamil Nadu and Andaman & Nicobar Islands respectively.

Many major steps have been taken on the *tiger* front. The momentum set by the Tiger Task Force has been carried forward and new initiatives have been taken to further intensify the efforts for saving tigers. The guidelines of the Special Tiger Protection Force have been revised to provide scope for involving local people in protection. A tripartite MOU linked to fund flows has been executed with all the 17 tiger states for ensuring reciprocal commitments. A rapid assessment of tiger reserves has been done which would be followed by an intensive independent assessment. Special crack teams were sent to tiger reserves affected by left wing extremism and low population of tiger and its prey. A customized online database relating to tiger mortality has been developed in collaboration with the TRAFFIC-India and tiger mortality figures are available in the public domain. The second round of the all India tiger estimation, using the refined methodology, is currently underway.

3.3. CONSTRUCTION OF INDIRA PARYAVARAN BHAWAN

The construction of a new exclusive Office building of the Ministry of Environment & Forests has begun at Aliganj (Jorbagh), New Delhi. It is proposed to construct an environment friendly green building which will be generating its own electrical power from solar energy. It is proposed to construct the building as green building and using green technology which will be a trend setter in the country. The proposed building will inspire confidence in people at large to follow green technology, use of non-conventional energy and materials which will bring a great relief to the environment & ecology as a whole and result into huge savings, avoid degradation of mother nature and conserve life in long run.

3.4. ORGANIZATIONAL BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING

The capacities of the existing compliance and enforcement mechanism including the Central and the State Pollution Control Boards and the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) Regional Offices need to be enhanced. Side by side, the capabilities of forest and wildlife administration, which is largely at the level of the State Government, also need to be increased, including enhancing mobility, upgrading communications, database management and exchange of information.

3.5. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND E-GOVERNANCE

The Ministry of Environment & Forest has embarked on a comprehensive exercise to implement an e-Governance project titled 'ENVISION' with the objective of applying principles of Good Governance to the management of, and regulation of use of environmental resources. This is an outcome based initiative that seeks to bring about a quantum improvement in operational efficiencies of the Ministry as reflected in the National Environmental Policy, 2006. The project comprises of three stages namely conceptualisation, project development and System Integration & Project Implementation. The Initiatives towards timely implementation of IT and e-governance project in 2010-11 *inter alia* include appointment of Stage III consultant for the project, organization of IT Training, setting up of Quality Assurance Group and Programme Monitoring Unit in the Ministry, implementation of Security Policy, setting up Data Center (DC) and Disaster Recovery (DR) sites for the project, development of MIS, procurement of hardware and software, and digitization of records of the Ministry.

A newly designed and updated web site of the ministry, <http://moef.gov.in>, has been launched. The new website is user friendly, ensures easy and updated access of information, includes a number of progressive features, and has been developed in consultation with various stakeholders.

3.6. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Schemes/projects of the ministry are monitored regularly in Headquarters and by on the spot field visits by officials. Senior officers visit the states regularly and monitor progress of schemes/programmes through the mechanism of nodal officers under which each state/UT has been assigned a senior officer as its nodal officer for such regular interaction with state/UT. Monitoring process, *inter alia*, include mandatory audit of accounts of grantee organization, submission of audited utilization certificates, expenditure statement and a progress report on the activities conducted by the grantee organization besides field visits by officers of the Ministry. While NRCD has a detailed MIS system for monitoring in place, research projects are monitored/ reviewed by the concerned Expert Review Committees. Regional offices of the Ministry also review/monitor and follow up on various issues/programmes in the environment, forestry and wildlife sectors.

Under forestry, a multi level monitoring and evaluation system of projects is being pursued under NAP. This includes intensive review of projects at the state and central levels by the State Level Coordination Committee and National Level Coordination Committee, independent concurrent evaluation by implementing agencies, independent concurrent evaluation for selected projects at national level and monitoring of area coverage and survival percentage of FDAs by agency like FSI.

The adoption of e-governance has also aided in good management and regulation of environmental resources. The adoption of Electronic Clearance of funds for various schemes is an important improvement for ensuring a quick and faster disbursement of funds, as also to serve as a means of preventive vigilance in respect of these schemes.