

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of VrukshSharad+ (VS+) at “Parvotsav – Passing the Legacy”

First time in India, software to measure “Carbon Absorption and Sequestration”

Mumbai – Nov 2010: Climate change and the environment have become critical issues for governments, corporate organisations, academicians and common people. Logic and intuition tells us the value of trees as a means to combat the many ills that are prevalent in our ecology. However solutions that are based on hard facts have the best chances of success. Technology has always been one way to ensure documented data that allows for vital decision making especially in the complex field of carbon sequestration.

Carbon sequestration is a process by which trees store carbon as a final product. The ability of carbon sequestration by different species plays a very critical role in managing the carbon influx in the environment thus it is very important to study carbon sequestration process and capacity of trees in an ecosystem. Vrukshsharad+ (VS+), a proprietary software on tree inventory management and carbon sequestration has been a flagship project of Terracon Ecotech Pvt. Ltd. that provides critical tools to calculate carbon absorption and sequestration rates for each species based on study instituted by Terracon in collaboration with Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli. The Software was launched at “Parvotsav – Passing the Legacy” on 25th November on the occasion of the 75th birthday of eminent ecologist, Prof. Sharad Chaphekar, after whom it was also named in recognition of his contribution to the ecology field.

“Parvotsav” an exhibition of Prof. Chaphekar’s work was showcased based on four central themes – Vegetation studies, Urban-Industrial ecosystem – Air pollution, Water pollution and Land degradation. Alongside the exhibition was a conference that also provided an interesting platform for various scientists, the government and corporate sector interested in carbon sequestration studies to come together, brainstorm and crystallize upon efficient methodologies and models that can be used to measure /estimate carbon sequestration and absorption rates of different species of trees commonly grown in tropical India.

Prof. Madhoolika Agarwal, eminent Scientist from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, inaugurated the session by giving an overall picture about status of carbon dioxide in the environment, its impact and mitigation possibilities. Dr. Agarwal also summarized various carbon sequestration estimation models, allometric equations and scientific studies across tropical region.

Dr. Sanjay Bhawe, from Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli, along with his colleague Mr. Ajay Rane explained about the work carried on in collaboration with Terracon Ecotech Pvt. Ltd, “This project is one of its kinds where carbon absorption rate, canopy cover and other structural parameters will be used to measure carbon sequestration capacity and rate of trees.” Mr. Rane explained about various steps followed in this experiment and also discussed about the model that would be used to estimate carbon sequestration.

Other speakers included Prof. Venkat Gunale from University of Pune who stressed upon various carbon sequestration projects carried on by his research students in the university campus and Prof. B. L. Chavan from Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University presented his work upon carbon sequestration on trees in the university campus and in the City of Aurangabad. He explored various

models and provided information about the simplified models used by him and his co-workers for the research work. Prof. Chavan further explained limitations of tree specific carbon estimations and presented possibilities of estimating carbon sequestration in leaf-litter, soil, roots, herbs and shrubs.

Overall the session on carbon sequestration covered several research works on carbon sequestration and corresponding model giving a brief idea of pros and cons associated with models and methodologies. The Q & A session made the subject come alive raising several points that may only be answered with time and more research work. As with all scientific discourse, the session concluded with a question over quantification of carbon sequestration capacity of a forest ecosystem. A topic that remains an open debate – an essential driver of exploration and development!

Prof. Prafulla Soni, Scientist & Head of Ecology & Environment, Forest Research Institute (FRI), Dehradun, accentuated on ecological imbalance prevailing worldwide and the importance of Environmental Intervention as an effective CSR tool for bringing social change. She also remarked that India's forest cover is only 22% and that it is not enough to sequester and recycle carbon considering the industrialization and human population.

Dr. Ramesh Madav, Managing Director, Terracon Ecotech Pvt. Ltd, talked about the contributions of Prof. Sharad Chaphekar in the field of ecology. He further noted that while development is critical, it is important to undertake environmental conservation to balance the ecosystem.

About VrukshSharad+ (VS+):

Vrukshsharad+ (VS+) is a proprietary software application that has added features viz. carbon sequestration rates and the results based on carbon absorption studies. VS+ is a user friendly, tree inventory software that captures and retrieves floral data from GPS device, provides quick search results and analytical tools. This is totally customized GIS / GPS based software with the feature of plotting floral points on its latitude / longitude position. It gives the flexibility to perform tree related analysis and research at the click of a button. VS+ is an endeavour to support tree inventory studies and bring ecological bias into greenbelt planning and effective mitigation measures.

About Terracon Ecotech Pvt Ltd:

Terracon Ecotech Pvt. Ltd. is India's only ecology based turnkey solution Provider Company. Ecological services offered at the practice, amongst others, include; advice/design of sustainable development schemes, biodiversity studies, tree inventory, greenbelt design and development, landfill management, environmental impact assessment, biomass estimation and carbon sequestration studies, design/implementation of mitigation schemes, habitat creation and ecological restoration.

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