ESTONIAN ENVIRONMENT
IN FORMATION CENTRE

Estonian Environment Information Centre (EEIC) was established in 1989 as an Information Centre for Environmental Exploitation. The regulation of 10th of December 1992 of the Minister of Environment gave the Centre its present name and status of state organisation administered by the Ministry of Environment.

The main information-related tasks of the centre are to collect, process and publish environmental information. The technical unit administers objects under the administration of the Ministry of Environment by organising construction and maintenance works.

MISSION
– to provide reliable environmental information for everybody

The collection and analysis of data related to Estonian nature, environmental status and factors influencing that and providing access to reliable environmental information for decision-makers, the public and other interested parties and to promote environmental awareness among citizens.

VISION
– to become the leading centre for reliable environmental information in Estonia

Due to the growing importance of environmental issues and their relations to other areas the centre has set an objective, in addition to the collection and analysis of environmental data, to make reliable, relevant and needed environmental information available to target groups. Environmental awareness of Estonian people has increased constantly during the last 10 years; this calls for continuous improvement of offered services by using the newest technology.

AREA OF ACTIVITY

Our main task is to collect, analyse and publish information on Estonian nature, environmental status and factors influencing that and to disseminate trusted environmental information among Estonian decision-makers, to domestic and foreign public and organisations. The tasks are allocated to different bureaus based on areas.

The data is collected to environmental register, the web-based systems for that are:

Estonian Nature Infosystem (EELIS) - http://eelis.ic.envir.ee/ or www.eelis.ee
Information System of Environmental Permits (KLIS) - http://klis.envir.ee/
Information System of Air Pollution Sources (OSIS) - https://osis.keskkonnainfo.ee/
Fisheries Infosystem (KALA) - http://kala.envir.ee/
Waste Data Management System (JATS) - https://jats.keskkonnainfo.ee
Information System for Water Use (VEKA) - in process

The Environmental Register is an electronic database including data on Estonian nature and environment and connecting the data in time and space. Differently from other state registers, the main essence of environmental data is its practically total public availability. The officials carrying out their functions have a restricted access to the data in the Environmental Register in case:
- the data is in process;
- the publication of data will endanger safety in the society, cause environmental damage or prohibited disturbance of individuals of protected species in their habitats;
- the data includes or deals with classified information of business, industrial or intellectual property;
- the publication of data is prohibited by law;
- the one submitting data has certified that the data is incorrect.

Why do we need the Environmental register?

It is necessary for integrated assessment of the state of environment, i.e. to process together the data that traditionally has been kept separated. This enables the decision-makers to make right decision quickly and to take into account different environmental components, also to assess trends etc.

Source data from Enterprises Environmental Services Ministry of Environment →DATA→ *Environmental register Data control and retention Use of data on official purposes* →DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS→ *Publication of data (Internet, booklets etc)*

Only data in the environmental register can be used publicly. Data that has not been entered into the environmental register cannot be used in international information exchange and in plannings and development plans etc. Natural resources that have not been entered into the environmental register cannot be authorised for use and pollution and waste permits cannot be issued based on data not entered into the environmental register. The data consist of word-numeral information and location information.

Updating of data in the register is mainly done in regional environmental authorities and state authorities; in some areas also in enterprises where due to specific tasks the data is generated.

At the moment the environmental register is not completely public, but the above-mentioned information systems that include data from differet areas work.

The Estonian Environment Information Centre administers the following:
- State Water Cadastre
- State Packaging Register
- Estonian Greenhouse Gas Emission Trading Registry
- Database of Wildlife Objects
- Registry of Products of Concern (since 2006)
- Registry of Enterprises using substances depleting the ozone layer and fluorinated greenhouse gases
In addition, we issue the European eco-label, we are the coordinators for national environmental monitoring and keep records of relevant Estonian enterprises participating in the European Union Eco-management and Audit Scheme EMAS.

In 1997-2005 our technical unit has managed the constuction of the following sites:

OÜ Eesti Geoloogiakeskus increment core storages in Keila
Naissaare Nature Park main building
Soomaa Nature Park main building
Matsalu Nature Park main building
Loona Visitor's centre in the Vilsandi Nature Park
Endla Nature Protection Area's main building
Emajõe-Suursoo Nature Protection Area's main building
Administrative centre in the Lahemaa Nature Park
Office building in the Viidumäe Nature Protection Area
Tornimäe watchtower and parking area in the Karula Nature Park
Bulding for Ida-Virumaa Environmental authority
Kabli bird ringing house and bird watchtower in Nigula Nature Protection Area
Administrative building in Kõrvemaa landscape Protection Area
Salinômme harbour dock in Hiiumaa Islet Landscape Protection Area
Metal roofings in Vaivara hazardous waste management centre
Insulation of tanks for liquids received in the Tallinn hazardous waste management centre and fencing
Administrative building for the Lääne-Virumaa Environmental authority

HOW DO WE MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

Everybody has the right to receive environmental information, the wish does not have to be reasoned. Information will be passed on to a person as soon as possible and in an agreed form. Environmental information is free of charge. Until now the environmental information has been made available to the public mainly in two ways: passive informing as a response to communications and other queries and active informing via web-pages, publications, media etc.
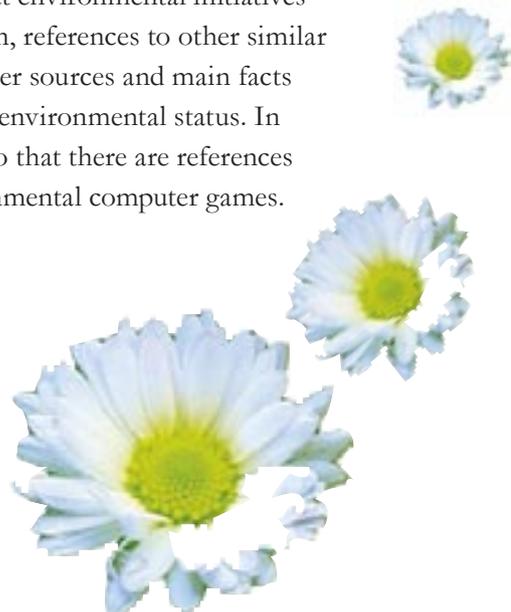
Making environmental information available to the public is not an unlimited process, but has to take into account the protection of natural environment. The followed principle is that the public interest in making information available to the public can be compared with the interest in rejecting the release of information. For example, information that could endanger a protected area or protected species or its habitats and natural sites is not public.

Web-page – www.keskkonnainfo.ee

There is information from almost all classical environmental areas on our homepage, e.g. water, waste, air, nature protection. In connection with every area there are links to most important legal acts and information in the form of reports and other outputs, in addition to that there are also reporting forms for enterprises.

Enterprises form a separate target group as they are mainly responsible for environmental reporting and issuing EMAS cerificates and eco-labels use permits. When in reports the enterprises will notify about the pollutants emitted into air annually, waste generation and treatment and use of water, then environmental management schemes are measures to limit the excess use of natural resources and related pollution.

The aim of the children's corner is to promote environmental awareness among children and their teachers (parents, teachers etc.). Materials in the children's corner are for different age groups, therefore children in pre-school age as well as in high school can receive environmental information from the webpage, also teachers in pre-schools and schools can get information there. You can find information passed to us about environmental initiatives of children, references to other similar pages, other sources and main facts about the environmental status. In addition to that there are references to environmental computer games.

Publications

Since 1994 we have annually issued water, air and waste publications, based on reports from enterprises sent to and checked by environmental authorities. The publications characterise environmental status in the reporting period and are, among other things, a good basis for necessary steps to decision-makers, i.e. for application of measures.

In 1988–1998 we compiled and published annual environmental review "Environment" with assistance from performers of national monitoring programme. The publication was issued in Estonian and English.

In 1994–1996 we published 3 successive reviews "Environmental monitoring". It is an annual report of Estonian national environmental monitoring that reflects environmental changes and tries to identify problems that either need quick implementation of measures or further investigations. The latest annual report on monitoring was also published in English.

In 2000 we published an environmental review „Estonian environmental status at the threshold of the XXI century".

Several publication can be read in electronic format on our homepage.

Library

Our library database includes exchange information from nearly 4000 professional documents. We obtain materials mainly from catalogues of publishing houses and bookshops, but we also receive donations and exchange materials. Majority of publications are single copies and can be reviewed-read only on-the-spot.

There are lot of serial publications, collected articles, project reports, also environmental reviews, conference proceedings and information booklets in our library. In addition to that we have a video collection and special stand for new literature.
Literature has been categorised by topics, the main topics are:
national and international environmental reviews,
environmental monitoring, incl. reports on environmental monitoring,
geological information systems,
environmental policy,
nature protection,
biological diversity,
climate,
air,
waste,
water,
environmental legislation.

There are mainly materials of interest to students and environmental specialists in the library who need the materials in their everyday work, studies or scientific research.

COOPERATION

The closest cooperation takes place with the Ministry of Environment, with authorities under the Ministry of Environment and with all 15 county environmental authorities. The main form of cooperation with the latter is annual environmental reporting. Also the Statistics Board, responsible performers of the national environmental monitoring programme and several others are our important cooperation partners.

In Europe one of our main long-term cooperation partners has been European Environment Agency (EEA). The cooperation started in 1994 and in 2002 Estonia became a member of the EEA. The Estonian Environment Information Centre is a national focal point of the EEA. Five European Topic Centres (ETC) belong to the EEA, every Topic Centre is formed of international consortium. Estonia is represented by the Environment Information Centre in waste, as well as in nature and biological diversity topic centres. In relation to ETC/Terrestrial Environment the Estonian Environment Information Centre has participated in the development of all-European land cover database.

Among other things our institution also fulfills the tasks of a national contact point for Clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

PROJECTS

The following recent cooperation projects could be mentioned:

Viru–Peipsi water management plan project.

Estonian-Dutch cooperation project for the implementation of the European Union water policy.

Estonian-Danish cooperation project for the development of waste reporting information system (JATS). As a result, a regulated work environment for assessing generated and treated and imported-exported waste amounts was developed.

Nature GIS. As a result, a thematic geological information network of European protected areas was developed.

Estonian-Finnish-Latvian cooperation project ENVIFACILITATE, that focuses on finding and promoting means to facilitate the availability and innovative use of environmental spatial data.

Phare project "Initiation of nature monitoring system based on geological information in Estonia". During the project a unified system for nature monitoring was started in Estonia.

UNEP project "Initiation of information system for the convention on biological diversity in Estonia". During the project a web-based information portal for national and international information exchange on biological diversity was developed.

"Flying fish Lope – an environmentally friendly friend of children", a project aimed at raising environmental awareness of children aged 3–8.

Estonian-Dutch piltot project on EMAS (European Environmental Management and Auditing Scheme) implementation in Estonia.

More detailed information on the projects can be found at www.keskkonnainfo.ee

MAIN FACTS FROM OUR HISTORY

In 1989 we published the first environmental review.
In 1990–1991 the first international project in cooperation with Australian Quensland environmental authority's spacial data production unit "Sunmap" was carried out.
In 1997 the state packaging register was created.
In 1997 a PHARE project aimed at better use of data from environmental monitoring started.
In 1998 an environmental review based on environmental indicators was compiled and published on the Internet.
In 1999 the Estonian Nature Infosystem was launched.
In 2001 the Information System of Environmental Permits was implemented.
In 2002 the Waste Data Management System was launched.
In 2002 Viru-Peipsi water management project was developed in the framework of the EU programme Life-Environment in cooperation of experts from the Estonian Environment Information Centre, France and the European Union.
In 2004 the Fisheries Infosystem was launched.
In 2004 Information System on Air Pollution Sources was launched.
In 2005 we became the national coordinator for environmental monitoring.