

Press Release from Forest Training Institute,
Forest & Environment Department,
Government of Sikkim

Forest Training Institute, Bulbuley, Sikkim Launches Three-Day “Field to Map: Hands-on Geospatial Training on GPS & GIS Software” from 7th to 9th September 2026

GANGTOK, SIKKIM (September 7, 2026) The Forest Training Institute (FTI), Bulbuley in collaboration with Balipara Foundation, Assam, India has officially commenced a three-day residential training programme aimed at enhancing the capacity of the forest frontline staffs. The intensive capacity-building programme is tailored for Forest Frontline staff of Forest and Environment Department, Government of Sikkim for Biodiversity Monitoring and Management.

The inaugural session was chaired by Chief Guest Shri Tshering Pintso Bhutia, SFS (Director, FTI, Bulbuley) Forest and Environment Department, Government of Sikkim. The launch event also saw the prominent presence of Resource Persons/Expert from Balipara Foundation Dr. Bidyut Sarania (Programme Lead, Research and Development) Balipara Foundation, Dr. Pulakeswar Basumatary (Wildlife Researcher), Mr. Debajit Deka (GIS Assistant), Shri Tenzing Norbu Bhutia, SFS (Joint Director/Course Coordinator), Shri Anup J Baniya, SFS (Deputy Director), alongside FTI staff and the participants.

Speaking at the inauguration, Shri Tshering Pintso Bhutia welcome the Resource Persons and participants. He highlighted the importance of the technology in today’s world used for conservation, Monitoring and Management of Biodiversity and Natural Resources. He urges all the participants to take part actively and get maximum out of this training.

Over the course of three days (7th to 9th September 2026), the residential training will focus on capacity building of forest frontline staff in:

- Practical skills in GPS handling and field data collection
- Data transfer, spatial data visualization, and evaluation using Google Earth Pro and QGIS
- Enhanced capacity for critical decision-making through real-time monitoring of forests and biodiversity using geospatial tools

Forest frontline staff are essential to protecting ecosystems, yet they often face challenges in accurately documenting threats such as poaching or illegal logging. Traditional methods—handwritten notes and sketch maps—lack precision and consistency. Geospatial tools like GIS and GPS offer a proven solution by converting field observations into accurate, map-based data. Coordinates, tracks, and mapped habitat polygons help visualize and communicate on ground realities effectively to managers and policymakers.

The "Field to Map" workshop was designed to bridge this gap—equipping forest staff with practical skills in GPS handling, data transfer, and basic mapping using Google Earth and QGIS, translating their field expertise into digital, decision-support outputs for informed forest management and conservation.