

Hackathon 2.0: Ministry of Tribal Affairs Advances Development of National FRA Digital Platform with All SIH Finalist Teams

MoTA Becomes First Ministry to Engage All SIH Finalists in Post-Hackathon Development of National FRA Digital Platform

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 06 JAN 2026 8:47PM by PIB Delhi

New Delhi | January 6, 2026: The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) organised Hackathon 2.0 – a two-day National Workshop on FRA Digital Platform Development from 5–6 January 2026 at the National Tribal Research Institute (NTRI), New Delhi, bringing together innovation, field insights, and governance priorities to advance the development of a unified national digital platform for effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.



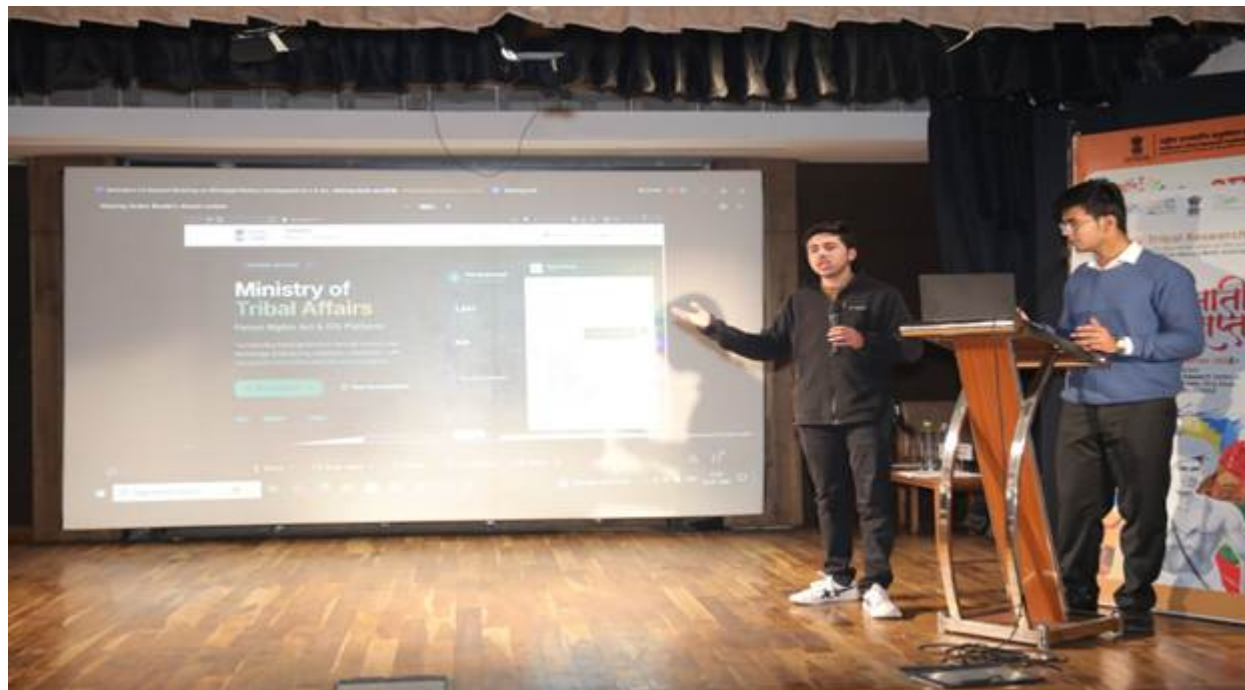
The workshop convened all five finalist teams of Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2025, along with MoTA officials and technical experts from IIT Delhi and NIC, to refine, integrate, and finalise the functional design and system architecture of the proposed national FRA Digital Platform. The collaborative exercise focused on harmonising multiple innovative solutions into a single, scalable, and claimant-centric digital ecosystem.

The proposed platform comprises key components, including:

- AI-powered digital archives for structured and searchable FRA records
- FRA Atlas for spatial visualisation and real-time monitoring

- Claimant-centric chatbot for information access and grievance support
- Decision Support System (DSS) to enable evidence-based policymaking

The concluding session on 6 January 2026 featured a live demonstration of the integrated FRA Digital Platform, showcasing its potential to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in FRA implementation. All five participating teams were felicitated and awarded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in recognition of their contributions.



Addressing the participants, Smt. Ranjana Chopra, Secretary, Tribal Affairs, underscored the broader development vision behind the initiative, noting that “the success of such initiatives lies not in degrees or certificates, but in the creativity applied to solving real problems on the ground.” She further highlighted that “land ownership under FRA not only provides legal rights, but also dignity, legitimacy, and livelihood opportunities, forming a crucial pathway to breaking generational poverty.”

Shri Anant Prakash Pandey, Joint Secretary, Tribal Affairs, emphasized the importance of citizen-centric design, stating that “the platform should answer all questions from the perspective of the claimant.” Shri Yogesh Brahmarkar, Innovation Director, Ministry of Education, highlighted the scale of SIH 2025, which received 72,165 ideas across 271 problem statements from 80 Ministries/Departments and 8 State Governments, and lauded MoTA’s approach of integrating all finalist solutions into a single platform as a model for innovation-led governance aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat.

The national workshop was preceded by a two-day field visit (2–3 January 2026) to FRA-implemented villages in Surgana and Igatpuri blocks of Nashik district, Maharashtra. During the visit, the student teams interacted with Forest Rights Committees (FRCs) and Community Forest Rights Management Committees (CFRMCs) to understand ground-level challenges, validate field data, and ensure that the digital solutions are firmly anchored in claimant-level realities.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has become the first Ministry in the Government of India to formally engage all finalist teams of the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2025 – Software Edition in a structured post-hackathon implementation programme. MoTA had participated in SIH 2025 with a problem statement focused on the development of an AI-powered FRA Atlas and a WebGIS-based Decision Support System (DSS) for integrated FRA monitoring. The initiative aimed to leverage technology for data-driven governance, transparency, and participatory implementation of forest rights, while strengthening collaboration between government, academia, and tribal communities. From over 390 innovative solutions

submitted on the SIH portal, five top-performing teams were shortlisted. In a first-of-its-kind approach, MoTA decided to engage all five finalists, rather than only the winning team, to collaboratively co-develop a unified, end-to-end national FRA Digital Platform.

This post-SIH engagement reflects MoTA's commitment to translating policy initiatives on FRA digitisation into field-validated, technology-driven solutions. Further work will be undertaken over the next two months to finalise and refine the unified national digital architecture. By bridging policy, technology, and grassroots realities, the initiative reinforces the Government's resolve to promote inclusive growth, transparency, and participatory governance, in line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat, with tribal communities as equal partners in national development.

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