

MALAWI ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING PROGRAM

Memorandum

To: Ron Eastman and James Toledano
From: W. Kent Burger and Mesheck Kapilla
CC: Stuart Marsh
Chuck Hutchinson
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Date: August 8, 2000
Re: **Institutional Assessment and EIS Strategy Review**

Sorry it has taken us awhile to respond. As you can anticipate there is little we can do on matters of scheduling without briefing Ralph. He has been away from the country for the last three weeks.

Institutional Assessment

- 1) It is not clear what will be the role of USAID in providing technical support to the development of the EIS after April 1999. One scenario is that they will indicate that the World Bank is supporting this and that there is no need for AID to continue with it. If that is the case, it is probably important to find a means to provide continuing technical assistance through the World Bank after our project winds up. A justification for a request from the Government is being prepared for technical assistance through the Bank to have someone come in prior to our departure so that there can be a better understanding of the status of EIS development and possible commitment of future technical support. On the institutional side, it would seem Yves Prevost is a suitable person to request.
- 2) Clearly identifying the decision making process, the necessary or core decision support tools and how to strengthen linkages within the government, research organisations, private sector and NGO community are of a priority. Regarding the proposed schedule for James, we will have to have support from Ralph to try to meet with members of the NCE and TCE. The TCE sub-committee chairmen and the chairman would probably be appropriate. I understand the sub-committees have not been very active during the last year, probably over remuneration issues. The Chairman has only attended one out of the first seven meetings, and I believe one activity during the next TCE meeting will be to replace him. We will try to get a meeting with the Chairman of the NCE, Ralph is the Secretary and the Dr. Sambo from UNIMA who is the vice Chairman. A TCE meeting is proposed for the 19th of November. We will try to get an EIS presentation of the Middle Shire assessment scheduled.

EIS Strategy Assessment Report - The outline of the report is good. We should find a way to limit the dizzying number of circles before presenting this to too many people. Some thoughts on the four themes of EIS development based on the feedback received from the agencies and our discussions.

Environmental data infrastructure - with the limited guidance or demonstrated leadership of any single agency in assuming responsibility for the development of the EIS, a distributed GIS and databases may be the most pragmatic approach to take. This will require the implementation of digital standards and documentation through the metadata, and a description of the capability and capacity of the organisations involved in data generation and development. It is not clear if additional technical assistance will be required after April 1999 to achieve this.

Environmental analysis - It is important to assess the roles and capability of the task force through the production of documents on the middle Shire. Completion of analysis by technical agencies may remain problematic. There were promising results from the work presented at the seminar on soil

erosion this week and through the use of small grants. With the demise of AID/APRU (AEPRI) linkage, it is not clear how best to link with research institutions.

Decision support - It is clear that the agencies need to articulate their requirement for a core set of decision support tools. A brief list and update on the status of development follows;

Digital LREP - there is a good possibility that all data layers will be digital within a year.

E/NRM database - as a means to support state of the environment reporting, the database has potential for providing a background on available sources of data and indicators.

FEWS/VAM (NSO) - we attempted to move both the EIS and FEWS into one building, but this failed to materialize. AID is concerned about the sustainability of FEWS in its current setting at Ag. Statistics. We hope to meet with AID and FEWS in the next few weeks to discuss building a stronger linkage between the EIS and FEWS.

SLEMSA - after the digital LREP, a digital SLEMSA with updates based on landcover from the NDVI receiver may be a powerful decision support tool for conservation planning.

NDVI - coarse 1Km data to produce an annual national assessment of at least one early and late wet season and dry season landcover would contribute significantly in assessing woodland conversion issues. In addition, it could be used with SLEMSA as the only to variables in the equation which change are cover and farming practices. The GEF project is purchasing a new receiver through NRI and there is discussion of placing it in Lilongwe at the Forestry Department who would seem to be able to put it to greater use than the Fisheries Department. NRI should be coming to Malawi sometime in the next month. We proposed meeting the Directors of Forestry and Fisheries to discuss this.

Area Sample Frame - it appears the World Bank and FAO will support this in something more than the piecemeal approach that has evolved to date. It is doubtful that this will commence anytime soon. Development of key vector layers (streams, roads and administrative boundaries) could facilitate automating the area sample frame construction process.

If the current approach is to build a national EIS, then at some time consideration of incorporation of urban and economic issues must be made. It is not clear what decision support tools are necessary for this but, the National Economic Council should be consulted.

EIS oversight activities - In the absence of strong agency oversight capabilities, the GIS professional society may play a critical role in insuring technical backstopping to EIS development. Some mechanism needs to be developed to strengthen institutional linkages, there may be more opportunities than previously envisioned for the professional society if it can draw from the research, NGO, government and private sectors.

We are proposing to start to wrap-up the Shire Assessment during November so that a review and assessment can be made during an EIS Task Force meeting scheduled for November 20th. In addition, progress is being made on completing a data users needs assessment during November and December largely as part of EAD's input into the EIS. This will be discussed at the meeting as well. The provisional agenda topics for the November 20 meeting are: Development of a Professional society, Middle Shire Report, Data User Needs Assessment, Administration of sub-contracts and discussion of agencies workplans to facilitate UA/CU backstopping.