

Proposed Activities for EIS Development in 1998/99

Institutional Development

1. Formalization of EIS information user community
2. Establish institutional home for Malawi EIS
3. Production, updating and dissemination of EIS databases
4. Improve data infrastructure

Technical Development

1. Develop database architecture for information sharing i.e. prepare meta-databases
2. Continue development of national level spatial reference data sets
Biophysical assessments
 - 1:250K topographic maps
 - 1:250K land cover maps derived from satellite images
 - 1:250K land use maps derived from satellite images
 - 1:250K digital soils, agro-climatic zones and present land use maps from the Land Resources and Evaluation Project (DLREP)
 - 7.6 and 1Km NDVI time series analysis
 - 1km NDVI vegetation mapping
3. Development of sub-national spatial data sets
Biophysical, social and institutional assessments
 - 1:50K topographic maps
 - Completion of methodology for rapid assessment of social explanations of environmental change
4. Continue development of national level non-spatial data sets
 - Environmental projects inventory
 - Environmental indicator development
 - Input into area sample frame soil and water conservation parameters, programme impact monitoring
 - Develop “levels of explanation” of environmental change for three NEAP issues; deforestation, soil degradation and water resources depletion and degradation
 - Development of environmental histories for environmental sensitive areas
 - Data users needs assessment
5. Develop documentation capabilities
 - National and sub-national inventories of publications, statistics and maps
 - Directory of Malawi Environmental Information Resources
 - Bibliography of environmental information on Malawi
 - Develop Environmental Awareness Products
 - Production of *Shire River Situation Analysis report(s)*
 - Production of quarterly *EIS Newsletter*
 - Improve Resource Sharing
 - Accessions and Current Contents Lists Bulletins
 - Trial SDI Literature Search Service
 - Assistance in the production of DSOERs or NSOER
6. Application development; Shire River Basin
 - Social analysis for environmentally sensitive areas
 - Develop framework for assessment of institutional arrangements for community based management of natural resources
 - Link historical change with current landuse (links to environmental research)
 - Use of predictive models for environmental change
7. Capacity building
 - Short course in MS Access
 - Short course in database management
 - Analysis and report writing for technicians
 - Application development for the digital land resources evaluation project

Notes¹

“Given the high cost of poor information management and the threat that it poses to sustainable development, the time has come to address a new policy need, which is directed at the management and utilization of environmental information.” P. 48

“EIS development faces the challenge of getting the community of its EIS partners to recognize their mutual interest and to work towards a greater synergy of their respective efforts. Meeting this challenge requires that EIS projects: 1) address the needs of the broad constituency of all potential users; 2) promote cross sectoral linkages and sharing of existing data; 3) prioritize measures required to make existing activities more coherent.” P. 48

“The availability of core data sets is an absolute prerequisite to EIS implementation. Until an adequate environmental information infrastructure is completed EIS projects should contribute to its construction.” P. 52

Improving decision-making processes through applications

“The operational objective of EIS is to increase the quality, efficiency, and accountability of decision-making processes through applications that systematically use environmental information. EIS should always target their support at specific environmental management processes.” p. 54

¹ *Environmental Information Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Prevost, Y., and Gilruth, P.