

**REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO REFINE A STRATEGY  
TOWARDS BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL EIS IN MALAWI**

***Introduction***

The development of the Environmental Information System (EIS) in Malawi is in the initial stage of creating awareness about the potential and benefits of having a coordinated structure to collect, analyze, and disseminate environmental information for effective decision-making. The process of developing a national EIS has taken a step-by-step approach, aiming to demonstrate how the system can respond to the demands of the use of information.

USAID has supported the development of Malawi's EIS through the provision of technical assistance through Clark Labs at Clark University and the Arizona Remote Sensing Center at the University of Arizona. In-country support has been provided with support from the Environmental Management Project funded by the World Bank.

***Current Situation***

The Department of Environmental Affairs initiated the development of EIS in Malawi, using the assessment of causes of siltation in the Middle Shire River as the basis for the development of a prototype EIS. Six Government Departments are cooperating in data collection and analysis to provide information for this area. Experiences gained from the prototype phase will lead to developing a national EIS.

An important result from this learning phase is the creation of pockets of expertise in a number of agencies, capable of using Geographic Information System (GIS), Remote Sensing, and Data Base Management Systems (DBMS). Activities of these agencies have raised the level of awareness among data users about the role that EIS can play in decision-making.

A second result is that given the complexity of environmental information, no single agency can meet the needs of all potential users, or become the sole custodian of all environmental information. The current status of EIS in Malawi, therefore, is that of a distributed GIS in which data sets are constructed and hosted by institutions with appropriate statutory mandates.

With the achievements to date of several national and regional spatial data sets, institutional issues are now rising concerning how data should be owned, archived, documented and shared. The small group of individuals from six agencies, while working well together on issues within their own technical expertise, lack a clear strategy of how to expand the inter-disciplinary approach to other sectors. This potentially will lead to duplication of effort and an inefficient implementation of the achievements in developing Malawi's data standards, metadata and archiving protocols by organizations outside the original EIS Team working on the prototype EIS.

***Input Required***

Recently USAID presented a modification to the program agreement which had provided technical assistance to the development of the EIS. Little specific mention was made to assistance for articulation of the future direction of the EIS. There is a possibility of USAID dropping support to environmental monitoring and further EIS development through a shift in focus to be articulated during the development of their new Country Strategy Program (CSP). Any continuation of the work to date will then depend on a clear articulation of how to proceed through the development of a Project Implementation Plan (PIP) to be funded during the next financial planning cycle with the World Bank.

As part of the USAID supported participant training at the Arizona Remote Sensing Center in June of 1998, four members of the EIS Team received exposure to the *Enterprise GIS* concepts of GIS implementation. Technical assistance is being requested through the EIS Team Leader to evaluate the current situation in Malawi and assist the EIS Team Leader and Task Force to develop a strategy for the continued development of the EIS. Specific input is required to address:

- Institutional issues of data ownership and accessibility.
- Assess options to strengthen the individual agencies ability to implement the concepts of an enterprise GIS in the absence of a strong central coordination and oversight mechanism within individual agencies or a coordinating body.
- Propose options for improving the coordination and oversight function of the EIS.
- Articulation of how to address issues affecting the environment based on findings from the data user needs assessment workshop.

***Outputs***

- Report summarizing findings, issues and an evaluation of options available to the current and future EIS partners.
- Input into a project implementation plan to be prepared by the EIS Team Leader for funding through the Environmental Management Project.

***Proposed Schedule***

March 22<sup>nd</sup> through April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999.

Itinerary and scheduling to be coordinated by the EIS Team Leader.

Proposed meetings: Principal Secretary Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs, the Directors of LRCD, Forestry, Surveys and Environmental Affairs; World Bank, USAID; FEWS and Rural Development Center.

One day sessions with the Technical Officers from: LRCD, Forestry, Surveys and Environmental Affairs.

Prior to arrival in Malawi, it is recommended that the consultant meets with individuals from the Arizona Remote Sensing Center who have worked previously in Malawi or assisted with the June 1998 Participant Training Program.

***DRAFT***

***Funding***

Funding for this short term consultancy will be through the University of Arizona / Clark University Cooperative Agreement.