

Appendix 4

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EIS-AFRICA	
A NETWORK FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION IN AFRICA	
ENGLISH VERSION	VERSION FRANCAISE
<p>The <i>Library Journal</i>, a publication of the American Library Association, awarded the Africa Environmental Outlook (or AEO – available online at http://www.unep.org/aeo), with the prestigious Notable Government Documents Award (see http://www.un.org/Pubs/whatsnew/ala03.htm , which provides a list of UN publications thus awarded). This news should serve to encourage those of us working in Africa for wider accessibility of readily useable, quality information, which serves as the basis for products such as the AEO, along with providing the foundation for informed decision-making and planning, from community to continental scale.</p> <p>Work towards the 5th Africa GIS meeting, to be held in November 2003 in Dakar, Senegal, is ongoing. A detailed programme for Africa GIS '03 is being drafted, seeking to structure the sessions which will accommodate the more than 70 abstracts and workshop proposals received, in a way which will be most beneficial to attendees. We would like to acknowledge support received from UNECA for Africa GIS '03, provided through an MOU with EIS-AFRICA, as well remind readers that there is still the possibility of participating in the exhibition associated with the foremost regular GIS meeting in Africa, as well as other sponsorship opportunities.</p> <p>In the previous issue of EIS News, attention was drawn to a survey (see EIS-AFRICA's home page, www.eis-africa.org), to identify activities which would most help those in Africa working to develop and implement geographic data standards, in order to facilitate wider use and reuse of geographic information. Responses have been coming in steadily. To those who have responded so far: thank you very much for your efforts. To those who have not yet responded: please help - by providing your insights and sharing your experiences!</p> <p>Dr Liz Gavin</p>	
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NATIONAL SPATIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE UNDER WAY FOR ZIMBABWE

In April 2003 a multi-stakeholder meeting was held at the SADC Regional Remote Sensing Unit (RRSU) in Harare. The main objectives of the meeting included reviewing the status of spatial data issues in Zimbabwe, to facilitate dialogue between different interest groups and to chart a sustainable way forward. Sectors represented include academic, private sector, government and non-governmental organisations.

A need to coordinate spatial data initiatives within different interested organisations was identified and it was agreed that metadata issues in the country required marketing to all relevant players, especially policy makers in order to attract the necessary support and ensure that metadata activities are integrated into organisational tasks. This could be done through events such as the SADC GIS Expo or through national GIS seminars. To maintain the momentum, it was agreed to hold regular meetings to review progress and, a Zimbabwe Preliminary Metadata Working Group, composed of institutions represented at the meeting was set up. Terms of reference for the working group were formulated through consensus.

During a second meeting at the end of May 2003, it was acknowledged that metadata issues were just part of a broader initiative needed for the country, a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The NSDI would be made up of smaller units that include a Standards Working Group, which could be spearheaded by The Surveyor General's Department, a Metadata Working Group and, a group looking at Clearing House issues in general. Calls were also made for an information policy to be put in place so that the infrastructure initiative receives government backing. A proposal was made to organize for a national GIS seminar at the end of October 2003 and members were encouraged to propose themes for the event.

Submitted by Stanley Mubako, Southern African Research and Documentation Centre Musokotwane Environment Resource Centre for Southern Africa (SARDC-IMERCSA)

THE 16TH MEETING OF ISO'S TECHNICAL COMMITTEE FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, ISO TC211

The 16th meeting of the ISO technical committee, ISO/TC 211, addressing the standardization of geographic information was held in Switzerland from 19-23 May 2003. Fifteen countries were represented at the meetings of working groups, project teams and editing committees, as well as various liaison organisations, including FIG, ICA and ISPRS. South Africa remains the only African country active in the committee.

Most of the original work items of the technical committee have now been completed, with several already available through the ISO store (see <http://www.iso.org/iso/en/prods-services/ISOstore/store.html>, and search for "geographic information"). With a view to the necessary shift in focus from standard development only, to the implementation of standards, ISO/TC211's web site is to undergo redevelopment, primarily to serve users and potential users of its standards, rather than the standard developers only. It is hoped, for instance, that it will be possible to provide open source tools through the web site, which can assist in the implementation of standards.

FAO was accepted formally as an ISO/TC211 liaison to TC211 (only countries, represented through their national standards body, can be full members) during the meeting. This could pave the way for the Land Cover Classification Scheme (LCCS) (see <http://www.lccs-info.org>), currently the standard which has been adopted by both FAO and UNEP, and has already been used extensively (in the Africover project, for example), to become an ISO standard.

CSIR/SAC EXPERT MEETING ON THE USE OF LOW TO MEDIUM RESOLUTION SATELLITE SENSORS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The Satellite Application Centre of the CSIR hosted a meeting of experts from countries in Southern Africa, to address the use of low to medium resolution satellite sensors in disaster monitoring. The meeting, held from 5-6 June 2003 in Pretoria, South Africa, was sponsored by the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and built on the United Nations Regional Workshop held in Addis Ababa on the use of space technology for disaster management for Africa in July 2002.

Participants from government departments and agencies, as well as universities, in Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe exchanged information about existing and planned projects relating to the use

of space technology for disaster management and mitigation. Amongst the challenges raised by attendees were access to information, and the dissemination of information. Several people pointed out that the information infrastructure needed for disaster management overlaps with that needed for natural resource management and sustainable development. Ideas for pilot projects were debated and refined in small groups.

It is planned to hold similar expert meetings in Nigeria and Senegal. The workshop report will be available from <http://www.osa.unvienna.org/SAP/stdm/index.html> in due course.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO AFRICAN SPATIAL DATA THROUGH THE EMIS PROJECT

The Environmental Monitoring and Information System (EMIS) project is currently assisting agencies holding African spatial data to improve discovery and access of their data holdings, by virtue of helping them establish data dissemination mechanisms such as on-line data catalogs (Clearinghouse nodes), Internet Map Servers, and spatial data inventories. A website will soon facilitate access to some of these data and data references, as well as to other sources of African data. The EMIS project receives funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), it is coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) EROS Data Center, and receives support from

seven participating African institutions. For more information please contact Eric van Praag at vanpraag@usgs.gov or Larry Tieszen at tieszen@usgs.gov
Submitted by Erik van Praag, EROS Data Centre

BACKCHAT FROM EARTHWIRE AFRICA

There has been a wide variety of topics in the environmental news this month, highlighting some successes and some warnings about management of our resources. Starting with the positive, Gauteng Provincial Administration has taken bold steps towards improving the Province's air quality. The Premier, Mbhazima Shilowa announced the conversion of 210 official vehicles to run on liquid petroleum gas (LPG) which is a much cleaner fuel (News 24; Engineering News, SABC online). He said: "If this project works it will not only benefit the government but the environment will be saved." And challenged other organisations and individuals to follow his lead.

Also on a good note, Tanzania has received a big boost for its water supply and sanitation programme, though a joint funding operation between local authorities and the European Union. The programme is aimed at reducing poverty by improving access to reliable, affordable and safe water supply, and includes the rehabilitation and upgrading of existing systems, treatment and distribution, and the installation of water meters (Engineering News).

Africa's oil reserves are proving to be both a blessing and a curse; comprising 8% of world reserves, Africa's oil is attracting increasing attention from the US and other countries wishing to find an alternative to the Middle East. This could be worth \$200 billion in revenues to African states over the next 10 years, but there are fears that it will also spark further conflict, corruption and environmental degradation (Mail & Guardian).

Lastly, the unpredictable weather continues to play havoc with southern Africa; The Western Cape Province in South Africa is besieged by the worst drought in 10 years, and it is estimated that 50% of the wheat crop will fail (Independent online). Whilst further north heavy rains have fallen and now stagnant water is posing a health risk to communities, for example in the Caprivi (The Namibian).

- *Submitted by Anna Ballance, GRID-Arendal*

UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

- 23rd Annual ESRI International User Conference, 7 – 11 July 2003, San Diego, California. For more information, see: <http://www.esri.com/uc>. Please take special notice of the African User Group Meeting, which will take place on Tuesday, July 8, 2003, from 5:30-7:00 PM. This meeting is designed specifically for African Users to gather and share their ideas, plans, opportunities and goals for the upcoming year, and is also a prime opportunity to network with various African colleagues. The Sustainable Development

- and Humanitarian Affairs Special Interest Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 9, 2003, at 6:00 p.m. This meeting is for users specifically involved in the Sustainable Development and/or Humanitarian Affairs arena. Dozie Ezigbalike from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa will be a speaker on one of the SDI panels. For further information, see <http://www.eis-africa>.
- Global Mapping Forum 2003, Okinawa, Japan. For more information, see <http://www.iscgm.org/> or e-mail sec@iscgm.org.
 - Cambridge Conference for National Mapping Organisations. Theme: National Mapping – shaping the future. By invitation. 20 – 25 July 2003. Contact via www.cambridgeconference2003.com.
 - The Vespucci Initiative for the Advancement of Geographic Information Science announces the 1st annual Summer School on Geographic Information Science, Florence, Italy from 28 July 2003 – 9 August 2003. For more information, see http://www.eis-africa.org/events_upcoming.
 - 21st International Cartographic Conference and 12th General Assembly of the ICA in Durban, South Africa, 10 – 16 August 2003. For further information, see http://www.eis-africa.org/events_upcoming. Booking for [pre-conference workshops](#) must be made before 31 May 2003. The organisers have arranged for a discount for teachers. This is subject to them presenting a letter from their headmasters as proof that they are teachers. For more information see <http://www.nsif.org.za/> and click on “News.”
 - Southern Africa Fire Network (SAFNet) meeting, Kruger National Park, South Africa, 17 – 23 August 2003. The theme of the workshop will be “The Use of Remote Sensing to Support Fire Management in Southern Africa.” For more information, contact Diane Davies at ddavies@hermes.geog.umd.edu.
 - International Civil Engineering Conference on Sustainable Development in the 21st Century, 12 – 16 August, Nairobi, Kenya. For further information, see <http://www.jkuat.ac.ke/other/ce2003/default.htm>
 - 5th World Congress on Protected Areas, 8 – 17 September 2003, Durban, South Africa. See <http://wcpa.iucn.org/wpc/wpc.html>
 - 3rd Symposium on Digital Earth, 21 – 25 September 2003, Brno, Czech Republic. More information is available on <http://digitalearth03.geogr.muni.cz>
 - International Coelacanth Conference, October 2003, East London, South Africa. For more information see <http://www.saiab.ru.ac.za/coelacanth/tamino/JLB/HTMLCollection/HTML/conference.htm>
 - The National Spatial Information Framework will be hosting its 5th Anniversary in Pretoria, South Africa, on 13 and 14 October 2003. On day one, the NSIF will host a session on African Spatial Information perspectives. They are hoping to have speakers from SADC, Namibia and leading South African spatial information champions. On day two they will launch their new website and the SA Metadata draft and capturing tool. The day will culminate in an awards ceremony to those individuals and organizations that have been championing SDI in South Africa. For more information, see <http://www.nsif.org.za>.
 - Global Change and Regional Sustainability in South Africa, Cape Town, 27 – 29 October 2003. The South African Scientific Committee on Global Change (SASCGC) announces a national level symposium on the implications of important drivers of global change for the national and regional sustainability of human and ecological systems in South Africa. The symposium is supported by the National Research Foundation, and initiated and endorsed by ICSU. Full details about the themes, symposium venue, accommodation options, costs, registration forms and submissions deadlines and background information are at <http://www.nrf.ac.za/saeon/globalchange/saglobal.htm>
 - GDIN2003, the Sixth Annual Conference of the Global Disaster Information Network, 4 – 7 November 2003, Washington DC. For further information, see: http://www.eis-africa.org/events_upcoming.htm
 - AFRICA GIS '03, “Meeting the information needs for NEPAD”, 4 - 8 November 2003, Dakar, Senegal, see http://www.eis-africa.org/events_africaGIS.htm
 - 2nd FIG Regional Conference and 3rd National Surveying Day: Urban-Rural Interrelationship for Sustainable Environment, 2 – 5 December 2003, Marrakech, Morocco. For up-to-date information on the conference, see www.fig.net/figtree/morocco.

LINKS TO USEFUL SITES

- A searchable database on geographic information resources: <http://www.fao.org/geonetwork>.
- The UNDP, through its new Development Policy Journal has just published a series of articles on core aspects of the Millenium Development Goals. Given the policy importance of many of the issues raised in the articles to southern African debates and policies about poverty, SARPAN has, with permission of the UNDP in New York, published the entire edition on their website. They have posted the large PDG file in a very accessible form: each of the 12 articles can be downloaded separately. The articles range over gender, HIV, environment and a range of other sectoral and policy issues. See <http://www.sarpan.org.za>.
- Oxford University Press has set up a programme wherein scholars from developing nations are eligible for free or greatly discounted electronic access to a large number of professional journals. Complete information is available at <http://www3.oup.co.uk/jnls/devel/>.

If you know of a site in Africa, which is providing environmental information, please let us know so that we can include it in the list above.

JULY NEWSLETTER

Any contributions, which are welcomed, must reach us by 15 July 2003. Contributions can be sent to eisafrica@csir.co.za.

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