



SDI-Africa Newsletter

The Spatial Data Infrastructure - Africa (SDI-Africa) is a free, electronic newsletter for people interested in Geographic Information System (GIS), remote sensing and data management in Africa. Published monthly since May 2002, it raises awareness and provide useful information to strengthen SDI efforts and support synchronization of regional activities.

The Newsletter is prepared for the [GSDI Association](#) by the [Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development \(RCMRD\)](#) in Nairobi, Kenya.



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The [Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development \(RCMRD\)](#) implements projects on behalf of its member States and development partners.

The centre builds capacity in surveying and mapping, remote sensing, geographic information systems, and natural resources assessment and management. It has been active in SDI in Africa through

contributions to the [African Geodetic Reference Frame \(AFREF\)](#) and [SERVIR-Africa](#), a regional visualization and monitoring system initiative. Other regional groups promoting SDI in Africa are [ECA/CODIST-Geo](#), [RCMRD/SERVIR](#), [RECTAS](#), [AARSE](#), [EIS-AFRICA](#), [SDI-EA](#) and [MadMappers](#)



Announce your news or information

Feel free to submit to us any news or information related to GIS, remote sensing, and spatial data infrastructure that you would like to highlight. Please send us websites, workshop/conference summary, events, research article or practical GIS/remote sensing application and implementation materials in your area, profession, organization or country. Kindly send them by the 25th of each month to the Editor, Gordon Ojwang' - gojwang@rcmr.org or sdiafrica@rcmr.org. We would be happy to include your news in the newsletter.

This would be interesting to a colleague

PLEASE share this newsletter with anyone who may find the information useful and suggest they subscribe themselves. You can visit the [GSDI](#) website: Newsletter back issues - <http://www.gsdi.org/newsletters.php>. You can join the GSDI Association at <http://www.gsdi.org/joinGSDI>.

Enjoy Reading - the SDI-Africa team



Support and Contributions to this Issue

Thanks to the [Global Spatial Data Infrastructure \(GSDI\)](#) Association; Hussein Farah, RCMRD (Kenya); Kate Lance, GSDI listserv moderator (USA); Karen Levoleger, kadaster (Netherlands) GEO Secretariat (Switzerland) for their contribution to this issue of the newsletter.

SDI News, Links, Papers, Presentations

Progress on loss-and-damage and tech transfer at COP19



The UN climate talks in Warsaw, Poland made progress in several areas including the contentious issue of loss-and-damage as well as the opening of the [Climate Technology Centre and Network](#), which can now respond to requests from developing countries for advice and assistance on the transfer of [technology](#). "As nations put in the foundations, walls and ceiling of a new, wide-ranging and universal climate agreement, the Climate Technology Centre and Network represents a further building block towards that low-carbon future," UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP executive-director Achim Steiner



said in a press release (21 November 2014). "This facility will make a substantive contribution to accelerating the use of existing and new technologies that can improve the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in developing countries who are dealing with the impacts of climate change on a daily basis," he added.

The conference also agreed to establish an international mechanism to provide the most-vulnerable populations with better protection against the loss and damage caused by extreme weather events and the slow onset events such as rising sea levels, with detailed work on the so-called Warsaw mechanism expected to start next year. "Unless developed countries reduce their emissions significantly, the burden on the poor, vulnerable countries will further increase, leading to more loss and damage."

A recent report by UN University's Institute of Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) put a human face on the highly discussed mechanism on loss and damage by highlighting the constraints people face due to climate-change induced extreme weather events. "The current levels of adaptation and mitigation efforts are insufficient, so we need to act with urgency to address the aftermath of powerful floods, typhoons, droughts and other extreme weather events," says Koko Warner, lead author of the study and the head of the Environmental Migration, Social Vulnerability, and Adaptation Section at UNU-EHS. "The national and international mechanism that will hopefully be in place soon also shouldn't forget the local needs".

The report explores the impacts of floods and droughts in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Micronesia, Mozambique, and Nepal, documenting losses despite communities' attempts at adaptation. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) already includes provisions and processes to deal with and support adaptation, but not damages beyond adaptation.

Experts say a mechanism on loss and damage is important for those countries that are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. Loss and damage "is a genuine problem area" that has been overlooked so far "and simply needs to be addressed, because it will not be resolved by itself, but will only get worse", says Michiel Schaeffer, loss and damage expert at Climate Analytics, a climate science and policy research organisation in Germany.

The discussions have stirred the long dispute between rich and poor countries regarding the responsibility for compensation for the climate-induced weather events. "Unless developed countries reduce their emissions significantly, the burden on the poor, vulnerable countries will further increase, leading to more loss and damage," says Prakash Mathema, chairperson of the Least Developing Countries group at the UN climate talks, which has been pushing for the adoption of the mechanism. [SciDev.Net's Global Edition originally published this article.](#)

[African Union set to get tougher on cybercrime](#)



The African Union may soon approve a convention to improve cyber security. When African Union (AU) heads of state meet for their summit in January 2014, they expect to vote a draft on cyber security convention, which aims to protect their nations from cyber attacks on institutions and protect people from cyber crimes.

The Draft Convention on the Confidence and Security in Cyberspace due to be discussed at the summit in Ethiopia (24-31 January 2014) would set a common cyber security framework for the continent. The US National Security Agency (NSA)

scandal and the revelations about Internet-based international spying have fostered a sense of urgency to improve cybersecurity in Africa, says Robert Njathika, a researcher at Strathmore Law School's Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law in Kenya.

The draft convention includes sections on electronic commerce, personal data protection, cybercrime with a special focus on racism, xenophobia and child pornography, and national cybersecurity. The AU draft convention also encourages member states to promote cybersecurity education for IT professionals and to add offences for hacking computer systems to their criminal codes.

Africa has IT professionals but lacks well-trained cybersecurity experts. For example, levels of understanding and education in cybersecurity issues among Nigerian law-enforcement agents are not up to the standard of a country of 180 million people. "Cyberspace has become the centre of gravity as far as national security is concerned. A country without cyber warriors, without a national cybersecurity centre, is like a nation in the 1940s in Europe without national soldiers. There are cyber professionals but they are not groomed, motivated, and mobilized in a way that will make them become national assets," Njathika explains. Egypt, the leader in cyber security in the region, could help other African countries to train the experts in cybersecurity. Egypt has years of experience teaching cybersecurity experts from other African countries and "very open" to



continuing, he says. "Kenya has very good IT professionals, but most of them would need a three-year training in cybersecurity to become very good in this field," he explains. [Link to draft convention.](#)

Lightning detection promises improved storm forecasts



An alternative to costly radar-based weather services could soon be operational in developing nations, to help them detect severe storms more cheaply and quickly.

The technology, which uses lightning detection to forecast when and where storms will strike, has already proven successful in demonstration projects in Brazil, Guinea and India. Next year, Earth Networks - one of the companies at the forefront of the technology - will conduct further trials in Haiti.

As more developing nations increase their numbers of mobile phone masts, which are ideal locations for mounting the lightning sensors on,

the proportion of countries using the technology looks set to increase, according to the US company.

Lightning detection costs a fraction of traditional Doppler radars, which can cost tens of millions of dollars for broad regional coverage. It also collects data faster and, by monitoring precipitation, can be used to assess the likelihood of floods and drought. According to Finnish company Vaisala, which has more than 100 lightning detection stations located in the United States, when lightning is detected the data can be delivered in less than two minutes.

Vaisala's Total Lightning system detects the electromagnetic signals given off when lightning strikes the earth's surface. Information on the location, time, and strength of each strike, and on whether it is positively or negatively charged is then processed and communicated to users of the technology. Earth Networks also uses cloud computing capabilities and algorithms to provide automated alerts for thunderstorms, tornadoes and other forms of severe weather, which can be configured for mobile phones.

This year they "picked what should be one of the hardest countries to do this - Guinea - and it's working tremendously well," says Marshall. Guinea is part of the world's stormiest area, but has no meteorological radar to track storms. In September, a dozen people died because of severe weather, including five from lightning in the Koundara Prefecture in Northwest Guinea.

Mamadou Lamine Bah, director of Guinea's National Directorate of Meteorology (NDM) says, "After evaluating this technology for three months, we could follow the formation of the most dangerous weather events in Guinea". "The results from the demonstration project are very satisfactory," he adds. "Data from these [lightning detection] stations would fill the gaps encountered in the collection and exchange of data on the regional and international level."

According to Bah, the network of meteorological observation stations within Guinea does not meet international standards, because of a lack of equipment and inadequately qualified staff. "Guinea and other African countries need alert systems and high-performance tools and personnel for their meteorological services," he says.

According to Marshall, "based on what countries around the world are seeing happening now in Guinea we are receiving a lot of interest in the technology". However, at this time he is unable to disclose which countries have expressed an interest.

Earth Networks' lightning detection systems started out principally in the United States; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the US Air Force all use the data from its lightning network and technology. The company's global sensors currently process 33,000 transactions per second, approximately 2.8 billion a day - spiking up to five billion or more during severe weather events - and more than 85 billion a month.

Drones begin to show their development promise



Drones could be used to deliver medicines and protect vulnerable people, but major hurdles remain. Drones have acquired a bad name for unleashing sudden death from the air. Their recent use by the US military to kill foreign as well as US citizens suspected of terrorism has stirred a major debate on their governance. Nevertheless, there are increasing signs that unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) could bring development instead of destruction.

Enthusiasts argue that drones could be used to [deliver medicines and vaccines](#), establish mobile [communication networks](#) in the wake of [natural disasters](#), combat wildlife poaching, and provide early alerts for emerging conflicts.



There are advanced plans to use drones for humanitarian and aid work, but they are costly to develop, require expertise and raise ethical concerns. The UN is working on a governance framework for drones, while commercial efforts push on. The charity WWF, for example, plans to make use of 'conservation drones'. "In the first phase, WWF will test aerial surveillance technologies equipped with sensors to detect poachers and direct enforcement efforts," says Crawford Allan. This work is possible through a US\$5 million grant from Google's Global Impact Awards scheme, which will allow WWF to test in advance, but easily replicable technologies in vulnerable sites in Asia and African wildlife parks. Aerial survey systems combined with animal tagging technologies and ranger patrols guided by analytical software to will provide surveillance to detect and deter poaching. "This umbrella technology combined with on-the-ground training of rangers on the front lines of conservation is critical in the fight against poachers and illegal wildlife trade". In a separate initiative last year, WWF tested basic aerial surveillance technology to monitor animals and illegal activities in Nepal's Chitwan National Park.

Similarly, there are plans to use drones in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil "to identify deforested areas, environmental violations, illegal fisheries, and irregularly burned crops". Camera-equipped drones can give an operator a continuous bird's-eye view of what is happening on the ground, but in this case, the drone will take and store photographs that can be analysed after it has returned to base.

However, high costs, lack of expertise and unresolved safety and ethical considerations hampers drone development. Some of the equipment needed for drone manufacture has to be imported, while safety is another factor that has to be taken into account: guaranteeing that crashes remain a rare event and, of even greater importance especially in big cities, ensuring that drones do not interfere with conventional air traffic. Eduardo Cabral, professor at USP's Unmanned Vehicle Laboratory, says that drones are still unable to communicate with ground-based air traffic control.

Fears of state surveillance of individuals and communities or 'spies in the sky', and of blurred lines between civilian and military operations also constrain drone development. Some proponents argue that drones can be modified to undertake activities such as surveillance of drug trafficking. As the crop-spraying drone is electric, "it emits no noise, which could be useful in police operations".

Fears about drones' potential military use affect many countries participation in international arms control treaties, which might treat them as possible carriers of chemical weapons. That is one of the reasons why a drone project is often restricted through importation of key elements and testing of prototypes. Military sensitivities are particularly acute when it comes to using drones for humanitarian work or for peaceful operations in conflict zones.

The UN has been considering employing drones for its 'stabilization mission' in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Kieran Dwyer, spokesperson for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations says that the aim would be to use the technology to map the movements of armed parties in eastern parts of the country to help keep civilians out of harm's way.

The UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is developing a framework governing drone aviation across nations. Jack Chow, former US ambassador on HIV and AIDS and a professor of global health diplomacy at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College, USA says that using drones simply to carry emergency goods from one base to a receiving base, with all parties consenting and cooperating might minimize ethical concerns. Nevertheless, "specialized, pioneering uses of drones mixing civilian functions in conflict zones would need to be formulated carefully", "In general, the importance of ensuring that any international regulatory system carefully separates drone technology into military and civilian uses".

Debate over the pros and cons of drones' for peaceful use continues, with proponents backing their potential and critics believing that any advantage in providing information or delivering aid supplies does not outweigh the risks. Meanwhile, the technology's development continues, driven partly by commercial and governmental organizations who see potential in the peaceful operations of UAVs, but mostly by militaries keen on weapons that are effective on the battlefield but do not endanger lives on their own side. Read more...

Nigeria: Kano gov't earmarks N700m for GIS in 2014

The Kano State Government says it will spend N700 million (~US\$4.4 million) to boost its Geographic Information system (KANGIS) in 2014. The Commissioner for Planning and Budget, Alhaji Yusuf Danbatta, made the disclosure at a news briefing in Kano on December 27, 2013. He said that the state government had fixed Jan. 2, 2014 for the take-off of the re-certification of landed properties in the state. Danbatta urged landowners to take proper advantage of the re-certification process to secure and protect their properties.

See also KANGIS set to build new Kano (April 10, 2013), <http://peoplesdailyng.com/kangis-set-to-build-new-kano/>. Kwankwaso commissions KANGIS complex (May 26, 2013), <http://kano.gov.ng/new/index.php/12-news/311-kwankwaso-commissions-kangis-complex>.



Kano state governor, Rabi'u Kwankwaso has commissioned the ultra modern office complex of the state Geographic Information System, KANGIS, constructed at the cost of about N283 million (~US\$1.8 million). Performing the function, Gov. Kwankwaso described the initiative as a significant watershed in land administration in the state, which will serve as a bank for updated data on land record, aerial/satellite images, engineering drawing, and related geographical information.

[In South Sudan, WFP puts girls on the map at GIS day at school](#)



Every year, the world marks the important role of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in our everyday lives by organizing educational events aimed at raising awareness of this little-known discipline. In South Sudan, WFP used the celebration at the end of November 2013 to encourage girls to learn more about geography but also, more generally, to stay in school, and pursue their studies.

On a hot Thursday morning at Mayo Girls Primary School in Juba, pupils gathered for a new take on geography, presented by experts who are acutely aware of the important role this discipline has in a country like South Sudan. To mark GIS Day, the World

Food Programme (WFP) and the Logistics Cluster, with the support of ESRI, and in partnership with the country's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology organized a presentation on how GIS affects daily lives. "This day is not just about maps and geographical locations," said Nadika Senadheera, GIS officer for WFP South Sudan. "This is an awareness programme about geography and how you can get involved with it, and then what you can do with it," she added.

Students heard how WFP relies heavily on GIS to identify accessibility constraints and to map its activities throughout South Sudan, a large country with poor infrastructure and significant humanitarian needs after decades of conflict.

Senadheera and her colleagues used presentations and quiz to explain how a sound knowledge of geography and GIS enables people to locate places; produce and read maps; learn about other people and climatic conditions; and understand how the world works. "If you master geography, you will know when it's the right time for planting crops, and this will lead to abundant food supply," Kenyang Cirr Dut, director of the school feeding department at the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, told the pupils.

Since 1999, GIS Day has been marked through grassroots educational events, which allow GIS users to reach out to schools, businesses and the public and explain what they do, and how they do it. For example, GIS are key components in producing maps used by humanitarian agencies all over the world. In South Sudan, WFP also used GIS Day to encourage girls to take an interest in geography, but also, more broadly, to pursue their studies.

Through its Food for Education activities - school meals and take-home rations for girls - WFP seeks to support government efforts to improve enrolment and attendance rates among girls, and reduce gender disparity in schools.

WFP also runs a 'Girls' Incentive' scheme to encourage girls to attend classes regularly. Under the scheme, food rations is offered to girls from grades 3-8 who attend classes for at least 20 out of 22 days in a school calendar month in states identified as having the lowest rates of enrolment for girls in primary schools. The food serves as an incentive to parents, who generally send boys to school while keeping girls at home to carry out chores. Girls are also often married early so that the family can benefit from the bride price or dowry paid by the groom. See:

<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://www.wfp.org/stories/south-sudan-wfp-puts-girls-map-gis-day-school>.

[Kenya National ICT master plan stakeholders meeting](#)

The ICT Authority held a meeting on 17th December 2013 with members of Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) to validate the National ICT Master Plan. The meeting sought to collate input from KEPSA members as key stakeholders in development of the master plan. The Ministry of Information Communication and Technology has developed the five-year plan detailing the Government of Kenya's ICT led strategic plan in line with the Goals of Vision 2030. The plan aims at positioning Kenya as a global ICT hub and leveraging on ICT as an engine of growth and a tool to enhancing the quality of life.

In response to the presentation, KEPSA members proposed the following as some of the areas for consideration in the master plan development:



1. Need for inclusion of the national spatial plan and spatial data as well as the land information center as part of the master plan
 2. Need for Inter-ministerial data sharing to reduce cost of doing business in the country
 3. Inclusion of integrated E-land system
 4. Need to clearly spell out the incentives to the private sector
 5. Need to consider technology neutrality and advancement
 6. Consideration of minority groups in the country
 7. Consideration of input from all the relevant stakeholders
 8. Need to develop a responsibility matrix to ensure implementation of the recommendations of the plan
 9. Provision of clear timelines of implementation of the projects
 10. Consideration of an M & E component in the plan
 11. Consideration of consumer protection in terms of service delivery in the ICT sector , and
 12. Need to clearly stipulate the sources of funds including donors
- There will be another meeting for further consultation before finalization of the Master Plan, which is expected complete in February 2014 and launched in April 2014.

Kenya's New Lands' Data Centre

The Ministry of Lands will set up a geospatial data centre to make national geographic information available to Kenyans. The open data initiative will help investors and other stakeholders get accurate and reliable information on location of land, ownership, administrative boundaries, and features on and beneath the land. In a speech read by Lands PS Mariamuel Maawy during the re-launch of a one-stop data centre, Lands Secretary Charity Ngilu said the government is committed to set up a geospatial data centre. She said poor economic growth and poverty are key challenges in sustaining a geospatial data centre. Ngilu said lack of clear policy guidelines has made individuals duplicate information by collecting already existing data. She said the Lands Ministry has already marked Nairobi and Lamu digitally.

Regional Centre for Mapping and Regional Development director general Dr Hussein Farah said the initiative will enable sharing of information that is held by different data collection agencies. This will save on time and resources and avoid duplication of data. "KNSDI will create awareness on who has specific data and the year the data was collected," Farah said. He said KNSDI will ensure that data received from collecting agents and other stakeholders meet the required standards. The need for a central data centre was first initiated in 2001 but failed to kick off until 2010 when KNSDI got a budget. KNSDI works with other stakeholders including the Survey of Kenya, Metrological Department, physical planning department, Central Bureau of Statistics, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture, and Technology, among others. Lack of a legal framework has scared away private data collectors who feel they will be exploited and risk losing patents if they submit information to KNSDI.

Tanzania Sensitivity Atlas (TanSEA)

The long-term goals of the Tanzania Sensitivity Atlas (TanSEA) project are to establish a comprehensive and accurate coastal GIS data system for Tanzania, for oil spill contingency planning and research. It may also be used for education, as promotional material and for use by other institutions in Tanzania that require detailed geo-referenced data on the coastal zone. Exploration drilling for oil and gas along the Tanzania coast is occurring in waters between 300-3,000 m deep, 10-100 km offshore. Tanzania authorities require oil and gas exploration companies to have an oil spill contingency plan whilst conducting drilling offshore. Geographic Information System ("GIS") maps showing sensitivity of the coastline are a vital component in the development of oil spill contingency planning and management. Contact website: <http://tansea.org>.

Remote sensing and GIS training course at ICRISAT - Ethiopia



With the aim of creating awareness among a multidisciplinary team of researchers in the use of Geographical Information Systems and remote sensing and also on integrating multidisciplinary information, a training program was held at the ICRISAT office in Addis Ababa on 16 -20 December 2013.

Participating in the training on 'Introduction to applications of remote sensing and Geographical Information Systems (GIS)' were 18 participants from Nairobi, Malawi, and different research stations of the Ethiopian Institute of Agriculture

Research (EIAR). They were given handson training in the use of ArcGIS 10.0 and taken on a ground data collection training trip to the ICRISAT study site at Adulala watershed, 90 km from Addis Ababa.



The training stressed on the value of spatial information and giving a spatial dimension to data collected by scientists. Case studies were presented. Emphasis was laid on using remote sensing imagery for crop dominance mapping and using time series data to identify land use and changes in land use over a period of time. Spatial modeling using multiple sources of spatial information, especially the inclusion of socio-economic factors to identify suitable sites for interventions and watershed prioritization was demonstrated. Dr Murali Krishna Gumma and Mr Irshad Ahmed of ICRISAT conducted the activity, which was undertaken as part of the CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems.

Partners trained in Statistical Analysis System in Nigeria



In its quest to empower its research partners with in-depth knowledge of the Statistical Analysis System (SAS), ICRISAT and International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) organized a training course that brought together 26 scientists and researchers from different institutions of learning, and research centres.

ICRISAT facilitated the participation of 16 participants from the Centre for Dryland Agriculture, Bayero University, Kano; the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Lake Chad Research Institute, Maiduguri, Institute of Agricultural Research, Samaru; and ICRISAT Nigeria. The SAS software was installed on each participant's computer to ensure ease of learning.

The resource persons for the training were from the Biometric unit/Capacity Development Office, IITA, Ibadan. The activity was undertaken from 16-20 December 2013.

Biodiversity Day at GEO-X "From observation to decision", on Tuesday, 14th Jan 2014, 9:00-16:45, taking place at the GEO-X Plenary, CIG Room 2 (entrance floor), in Geneva.



The Swiss Government, with the help of the Swiss Biodiversity Forum, is organizing this Biodiversity Special Event in the frame of the 10th GEO Plenary meeting and Ministerial Summit in Geneva, to raise awareness of the importance of the biodiversity and ecosystem services activities in GEO (Global Earth Observation).

The programme offers talks on Biodiversity Observation Networks at all scales, on how to use spatial data for ecosystem assessments, and provides case studies on how to connect different user needs with biodiversity and ecosystem observations. Moreover, there will be a poster presentation of different biodiversity observation projects in Switzerland in the Swiss Pavillon, and a panel discussion on „How to improve biodiversity information and use it for decision making“.

The event is open to the public. Registration is free of charge. Please register until 10 January 2014 at: <http://www.biodiversity.ch/e/events/geo-x/>.

Training of trainers in the use of Earth Observation tools for water quality assessment, 17-21 February 2014, Nairobi, Kenya

WaterCap with collaboration from RCMRD, Tiger Africa and Kenya Water Institute with the support of Cap-Net UNDP will be organising 'Training of Trainers (TOT) in the use of Earth Observation Tools for Water Quality Assessment' from 17 to 21 of February 2014. The training will be held at the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) at Nairobi, Kenya. This course aims at training of trainers in the determination of useful water quality parameters for large water bodies from the radiance measured by satellite-based sensors.

The training will be a combination of short lectures, practical exercises, groupwork, and discussion. The training will be conducted in English and is supported with training material set on water quality and practical exercises and case studies, structured to incorporate participants' relevant experience and lessons application to their local context.

Apply:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1VMuhHyQs_rmLqShygMj4GhdVmR_CdeKfPPN4C9g68p8/viewform.

Deadline for applications is 8 January 2014 and open only to applicants from the African region.

For more information, contact: Eric K Wamiti at ewamiti@yahoo.com, tell: 0722477771 or Lorna Nyaga at lorna.nyaga@watercap.org, tell: 0727725253.



[3rd International conference on the use of space technology for water management](#), 1-4 April 2014, Rabat, Morocco

The Conference is hosted by the Royal Center for Remote Sensing (CRTS) on behalf of the Government of Morocco, and co-sponsored by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology (ISNET). The Conference is planned for a total of 100-150 decision-makers, technical experts, researchers, and educators drawn from international, regional, national, and local institutions, academic institutions, multi-lateral and bi-lateral development agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private industry will take place on 1-4 April 2014 in Rabat, Morocco. Experts and professionals from both space-related and water management institutions will provide an opportunity for exchange of experiences and strengthen networks and partnerships to increase the use of space technology-based solutions for water resources management.

Financial support to defray the cost of travel (a round trip air ticket - mostly economic fare) and/or room and board expenses for the duration of the conference will be offered to a number of selected participants within the limited financial resources available. However, not all participants can be funded due to limited availability of financial support and participants are strongly encouraged to find additional source of sponsorship. The deadline for applications is 20 January 2014.

Practical SDI implementation materials from within and outside of Africa

[UNOSAT presence in Africa is key to success in the region](#)



The demand for UNOSAT courses has constantly grown in recent years mainly due to the practical type of training provided and the careful crafting of each course using data and methodologies adapted to each group of national beneficiaries.

After establishing a presence in Asia, hosted at ESCAP in Bangkok, UNOSAT has confirmed its commitment to serving African countries by establishing a presence in Nairobi. The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) hosts the office in a partnership context that UNITAR sees as strategic in the years to come.

Sharon Rusu, the Head of the UNISDR Regional Office for Africa, says, "In Africa, where disaster losses mount yearly, partnering with UNOSAT has its advantages. Offering specialist training and technical support, UNOSAT fills an important niche in the geospatial community through practical satellite analysis and GIS solutions. UNISDR supports UNOSAT in its mission to bring the force of its geospatial expertise to risk-sensitive disaster management in a changing climate".

UNITAR and UNISDR consider that the current space-sharing arrangement with UNOSAT at the UNISDR Regional Offices for Africa offers co-benefits in mutual learning, risk knowledge transfer and networking. UNITAR Director of Research, Technology Applications, and Knowledge Systems Francesco Pisano says, "Disaster Risk Reduction is a strategic element in several global agendas being pushed at the UN. We see the partnership with UNISDR and its stakeholders as a strategic area for the next 10 years. Other UNITAR programmes will follow UNOSAT in developing DRR contents".

UNOSAT coordinates its cooperation programme with IGAD and its member states from Nairobi, and plans to expand its DRR capacity development programme further in the coming years. Roshni Dave is the UNOSAT expert based in Nairobi. "The cooperation with IGAD is important for the Horn of Africa because it gives countries technical capacity to benefit from geospatial technology. Countries in this region are very hands-on and it is impressive to see how regional cooperation and information sharing contribute to the use of geospatial technologies for disaster risk reduction". Talking about the future challenge for UNOSAT in the region, Roshni said, "We need more partnerships between government agencies, meteorological departments, and academia to strengthen the application of GIS and remote sensing tools and methodologies. Establishing a regional geo-database could be a good initiative in the near future".

UNOSAT helps keep track of IDPs amid South Sudan clashes



25 December 2013, Geneva, Switzerland - As the security and humanitarian crisis in South Sudan deteriorates, UNOSAT is analyzing satellite imagery yielding complementary information on the situation of thousands of people displaced by the mounting violence, reinforcing the admonition by the UN Secretary-General to those responsible for the violence: "[They should know the world is watching](#)"

UNOSAT has initially turned its attention to the presence and movement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the vicinity of UN compounds. "We look for IDPs and signs of destruction of civilian infrastructure in



urban areas affected by armed violence,” says Lars Bromley of UNOSAT. The team is working on imagery purchased from vendors and additional commercial imagery received thanks to a long-standing collaboration with the Humanitarian Information Unit of the US State Department.

In at least one of the [UNOSAT maps](#), IDPs are visible inside one of the UNMISS bases near Juba Airport. Another map shows how IDPs have chosen to locate their camp next to a UNMISS base in an attempt to seek protection from violence. UNOSAT Manager Einar Bjorgo says “We are also providing information and imagery to our UN colleagues in the Secretariat who are mandated to support UNMISS in the field. I have received a direct request from the UN Cartographic Section of the UN Department of Field Support and I am very pleased we can assist them”.

GIS Tools, Software, Data

[RCMRD Data Dissemination](#)

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) has a large landsat data archive, dating back to 1972 for all African countries. It is also a reseller agent in Africa for the Digital Globe - QuickBird and WorldView 1/2 high-resolution satellite imagery, and supplies data from GeoEye (GeoEye 1/2, IKONOS & Orbview imagery), SPOT image (SPOT 2.5m, SPOT 5m & SPOT 10m), USGS (Landsat MSS, Landsat TM & Landsat ETM+) amongst other active and passive satellite image products and datasets for Africa. These datasets are available at subsidized rates. Other low-resolution imagery datasets available include 90m SRTM, NOAA, MERIS, MODIS, scanned maps, and vector data for Africa.

The center in collaboration with European Space Agency (ESA) and EUMESAT has established a facility for direct satellite reception for MERIS, MODIS, NOAA, and EUMESAT Meteosat Second Generation (MSG) data. These datasets amongst other services can be accessed online via: <http://www.rcmrd.org/geonetwork> or via email to [remotesensing\(at\)rcmrd.org](mailto:remotesensing(at)rcmrd.org). Further information, please visit website: www.rcmrd.org.

Training Opportunities

Have you signed up to receive [SDI-Africa Newsletter](#) notices? It only takes a minute, and then the GSDI Association can notify you when a new issue of the SDI-Africa newsletter is available, plus alert you to particular GSDI announcements (like a call for GSDI grants, or a call for papers for a GSDI conference).

The GSDI Association also hosts an [SDI-Africa E-mail Discussion List](#) with intermittent news and announcements of opportunities (this discussion list is separate from the SDI-Africa Newsletter list).

- The [SDI-Africa E-mail Discussion List](#) is open and available to anyone to read on the web. To submit messages or to receive submitted comments or notices by e-mail, one first must register.
- To see the collection of prior postings to the list, visit the [SDI-Africa E-mail Discussion List Archives](#).
- To post a message to the list, send an email to sdi-africa@lists.gsdi.org.

[Training Course: GIS and Remote sensing in Land cover and land use change analysis](#), Sportsview Hotel Kasarani, Nairobi, 27-30 January 2014

Land use and land cover change has become a central component in current strategies for managing natural resources and monitoring environmental changes. The advancement in the concept of vegetation mapping has greatly increased research on land use and land cover change thus providing an accurate evaluation of the spread and health of the world's forest, grassland, and agricultural resources has become an important priority. Remote Sensing (RS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) provide new tools for advanced ecosystem management. The collection of remotely sensed data facilitates the synoptic analyses of Earth - system function, patterning, and change at local, regional, and global scales over time.

Participants will therefore acquire hands-on skills in use of Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing as a tool to capture, store, analyze, manage, and visualize land cover/use change and analysis.

The training workshop will discuss the application of GIS and Remote Sensing under the following themes:

- Module 1: Introduction and definitions of key concepts - Introduction to GIS and Remote sensing in Land cover, land use change analysis, Introduction to GIS software, Planning for a GIS system installation, Working with a GIS software, Introduction to GPS, GPS data collection, GPS data download
- Module 2: GIS Data management - Data sources in GIS for Land cover, land use change analysis, Data Acquisition, Working with a GIS software, Gathering data using mobile phones, Working with data from different sources, Geodatabase creation, Integrating GPS data into GIS



- Module 3: Change detection mapping - Module 4: Pre-classification of Digital Image processing, Radiometric and atmospheric correction, Temporal normalization, Geo-coding and geo-referencing, Transformation, Thermal bands for use in land cover classification,
- Module 5: Land use/cover classification - Signature development, Supervised Classification, Unsupervised Classification, Accuracy assessment, Case studies for use of GIS and Remote Sensing in land cover/use change.

The instructor led trainings are delivered using a blended learning approach and comprises of presentations, guided sessions of practical exercise, web based tutorials and group work. Facilitators are seasoned industry experts with years of experience, working as professional and trainers in these fields. All facilitation and course materials will be offered in English. The participants should be reasonably proficient in English.

Upon successful completion of this training, participants will be issued with an Indepth Research Services (IRES) certificate. To apply, kindly [register online](#) before 13 January 2014. For more details contact: The Training Officer - Training and Research Department, Indepth Research Services; Email: Training@indepthresearch.org. Mob: +254 715 077 817; Tel: 020 211 3814.

ESRI Technical Certification

ESRI has set the industry standard for GIS technology and is now establishing benchmark standards for individuals who use Esri software with the recently launched Esri Technical Certification Program. The ESRI Technical Certification Program recognizes qualified individuals who are proficient in best practices for using Esri software certification is awarded in different areas of expertise at both Associate and Professional level. The program is open to ESRI users worldwide and consists of 13 certifications recognizing expertise in desktop, developer, or enterprise use of ArcGIS. Users achieve certification by successfully completing computer-based examinations offered in more than 5,000 testing locations in 165 countries. Users are able to test for five certifications. Establishing an industry recognized benchmark of expertise in using ESRI software will:

- Improve success with GIS by creating a community of professionals proficient in using ESRI software.
- Help organizations maximize their investment in ESRI products by employing a workforce certified in using best practices.
- Create professional development opportunities.
- Provide an opportunity for individuals, partners, consultants, and other organizations to distinguish themselves among their peers.
- Assist hiring organizations in assessing candidate skills and abilities.
- Workplace experience, combined with GIS education and ESRI training courses, is the best preparation.

ESRI Technical Certification web site lists specific skills assessed in each exam, as well as training courses that aid in acquiring and improving these skills. [Read more](#).

ESRI South Africa full spectrum of GIS courses: January and February, 2014



The course covers GIS theory and functionality: The desktop products (ArcView, ArcEditor, and ArcInfo; Server products (ArcGIS server and ArcSDE); Programming to enable customization of the product, ArcGIS extensions, as well as Introductory and advanced courses in ERDAS Imagine Remote Sensing Software'. Various training venues are available at Esri South Africa, for further information contact: 011 238 6300 or [Email the training team](#)

ESRI Eastern Africa GIS and remote sensing courses

ESRI Eastern Africa is now offering update courses to conform to improvements in ArcGIS 10 and ENVI 4.8, conducted with skilled and experienced instructors together with conducive and state-of-the-art training facilities. Courses offered in the following tracks: fundamentals of ArcGIS desktop; data and map production; geoprocessing and analysis; enterprise GIS; multi-user geodatabases; and remote sensing.

Request for training arrangement for clients on site for 12-16 students. [Download](#) the course catalogue and current class schedule. To register visit: <http://esrietraining.cloudapp.net/>. For more information, contact: training@esri.co.ke, Phone: +254 20 2713630/1/2 or visit the offices on 3rd floor, KUSCCO Centre, Kilimanjaro Avenue, Upper Hill, Nairobi, Kenya.

University of Twente - Faculty of Geo-Information and Earth Observation (ITC): 2014 courses



Apply online for courses starting in the academic year 2013-2014. Browse by programme (degree, diploma, and certificate), course domain (disaster management, earth sciences, geoinformatics, governance, land administration, natural resources, urban planning, and water



resources or location in the course finder at www.itc.nl/CourseFinder. For printed copy of the study brochure, email: (alumni@itc.nl).

Short-courses offered by RECTAS, Ile-Ife, Nigeria



The Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (RECTAS) is offering a number of three-week courses. Note that RECTAS is able to package and deliver customised training for interested organisations. These could be either advanced or other certificate programs. Please contact: info@rectas.org or thontteh@rectas.org.

Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) Training Programme



Geo-informational Courses (the courses last between one week to three months, and offered throughout the year):

- Introduction to Remote Sensing & Image Processing
- Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Introduction to Global Positioning Systems (GPS)
- Application of Remote Sensing & GIS in natural resources management
- Application of Remote Sensing & GIS in Early Warning Systems for Food Security
- Application of RS & GIS in Disaster Risk Management
- Geospatial database development and management for use in planning process and decision making
- Principles of Digital Cartography
- Application of GPS technology in resource surveys and mapping
- Integrated Water Management
- Application of GIS in poverty mapping, health care & good governance
- Land Information Management Systems
- Service and Repair of Survey equipment

Information Technology Courses (targeted at school leavers, corporate organizations, and public).

Academic Programs

- Bridging Certificate in Mathematics
- Certificate and Diploma in Information Technology

Short Programs

- Foundation Course Graphics Application & Web Design
- Database Management
- Software Application Development
- Networking & Infrastructure Development
- PC Maintenance

Corporate Courses

- Information Systems for Management
- Computer Aided Financial Management
- Computerized Registry Management
- Management Information Systems for Monitoring and Evaluation
- Integrated Computer Training for Managers
- Database Design and Management
- Computer Based Auditing
- Computerized Records Management for Lawyers
- Analysis and Design of Information Systems
- Advanced Computer Applications for Executive Secretaries
- Basic Programming Skills

The center also offers tailor-made courses to suit specific needs of corporate clients. Courses also conducted at location of the client's convenience.

Funding Opportunities, Awards, Support

TWAS and TWAS-Celso Furtado 2014 Prizes

The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) for the advancement of science in developing countries is seeking nominations for TWAS 2014 Prizes and TWAS-Celso Furtado 2014 Prizes. The deadline for nominations is 28 February 2014.



The TWAS 2014 Prizes will be awarded in recognition of an outstanding contribution to knowledge in the following eight fields of science: Agricultural Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Mathematics, Medical Sciences, and Physics.

Candidates must meet at least one of the following qualifications:

1. Scientific research achievement of outstanding significance for the development of scientific thought.
2. Outstanding contribution to the application of Science and Technology to industry or to human well-being in a developing country.

Candidates for the TWAS-Celso Furtado Prize in Social Sciences must meet the following criterion: have made an outstanding contribution in both understanding and addressing social sciences disciplines such as economics, political sciences, and sociology. In either cases candidates must be individual scientists who have been working and living in a developing country for at least ten years immediately prior to their nomination.

Further details on eligibility criteria and submission procedure are available online at <http://twas.ictp.it/prog/prizes/twas-prizes> and <http://twas.ictp.it/prog/prizes/celso-furtado-prize>.

[International Competition for Science Journalists](#)

Win the opportunity to attend and cover the Kavli Prize Award Ceremony in Oslo, Norway, 8–11 September 2014. Be one of up to five journalists to win a scholarship and get the opportunity to attend the [Kavli Prize](#). Meet and exchange with the winners of the Kavli Prize awarded in astrophysics, nanoscience and neuroscience.

Take part in all the events during the Kavli Prize week in Oslo, Norway, 8–11 September 2014. Get front row seats at the Award ceremony in presence of HM King Harald V. The scientific program will include the laureates' lectures as well as popular science lectures by some of the world's leading science communicators.

The scholarships cover the costs of transportation from your own country and your stay in Oslo.

Entry Guidelines:

The World Federation of Science Journalists oversees the competition and is solely responsible for the selection of the winning journalists. The jury, a sub-committee of the WFSJ Board, will select the five journalists based on submitted work.

Candidates are asked to submit three articles or audio or video productions on astrophysics, nanoscience or neuroscience in the language of origin, and a one-page essay in English describing why they should be selected and what they will do if they win the competition.

Applications - including the applicant's CV, coordinates and identification pages of the passport - should be sent electronically to Kavli Prize Competition (Title of your message) WFSJ, Email: info@wfsj.org, Tel.: +1 819 770-0776, www.wfsj.org. Applications must be received not later than 31 January 2014. Winners will be announced at the AAAS Annual Meeting in Chicago in February 2014.

[Call for Applications: Nature Travel Grant Scheme for Journalists](#)

EuroScience has launched a call for the Nature Travel Grant Scheme for journalists to attend the ESOF2014 meeting that will take place in Copenhagen, 21-26 June 2014. The call is open to journalists irrespective of their gender, age, nationality, place of residence and media (paper, radio, TV, web).

Created by EuroScience, the biennial ESOF - EuroScience Open Forum - meeting is the largest pan-European general science meeting dedicated to scientific research and innovation. At ESOF meetings leading scientists, researchers, young researchers, journalists, business people, entrepreneurs and innovators, policy makers, science and technology communicators and the general public from all over the world discuss new discoveries and debate the direction that research is taking in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. Application deadline: 1 February 2014.

[Action for Nature - Young Eco-Hero Awards 2014](#)

This program honors the work of young people between the ages of 8 and 16 who have completed successful projects in environmental advocacy, environmental health, research, or protection of the natural world. The selected individuals are awarded a cash prize and certificate, as well as public recognition. The annual competition is open internationally. The application deadline is 31 January 2014.

[Australia Awards for Africa - Scholarships and Fellowships 2014](#)

Australia Awards funds qualified African candidates for Masters Studies in Australia in subjects of agriculture and food security; health; natural resource management; public policy; and water and sanitation. Additionally, the program offers short-term fellowships for professional training in Africa and/or Australia in agriculture,



mining, and several other thematic areas. Application deadlines are 13 December 2013 for the master's scholarships, and 17 January 2014 for the professional fellowships.

Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University - Women's Leadership 2014

The Global Change Leaders Program aims to build the leadership capacities of women from developing countries who work in themes of community development related agriculture, environment, health, education, rights of girls and women, and other subject areas. The program provides successful candidates with a seven-week intensive course in Canada followed by mentoring opportunities in their home countries. The application deadline is 17 January 2014.

National Geographic Society - Buffett Awards for Conservation Leadership 2014

The National Geographic Society (USA) welcomes nominations for the 2014 Buffett Awards in Conservation Leadership. There is one award for Latin America, and another for Africa. The awards honor the unsung heroes of conservation by celebrating the recipient's achievements, and by supporting ongoing work in conserving nature or culture. Each recipient receives a one-time grant of US\$25 thousand to support ongoing work. The deadline for nominations is 15 January 2014.

Employment Opportunities

Roster GIS Specialists, Uganda

Geo Gecko is a GIS Consulting Firm based with offices in Kampala, Uganda and Dublin, Ireland. Geo Gecko is seeking GIS Specialists to join their roster. They will recruit consultants from this pool on a project basis. Applicants must be based in East or the Horn of Africa. They are looking for individuals who are highly skilled and excited about the possibilities of GIS and new technologies in Africa.

The primary responsibility will be to support the application and continued expansion of the firm's GIS activities across our business sectors: Humanitarian and development, Logistics, Infrastructure, Project management, and Hazard analysis

Requirement:

- Appropriate Masters Degree or a high level of relevant experience.
- High level proficiency in the ESRI ArcGIS or OS suites

Desired Skills:

- Associated tools and software, such as databases, Adobe Illustrator & Photo-shop
- Geo Stat analysis, Network analysis, spatial analysis, city mapping using public sources, micro-mapping and imagery analysis etc.
- GIS trainings
- Cartography
- An understanding of the practicalities of implementing GIS projects in the region.
- An understanding of the various data sources specific to the region.
- Web mapping (e.g. Arc GIS online, MapBox, Carto DB, Geo Commons)
- Business intelligence software, such as Tableau

To apply, please email a CV, cover letter and a sample of your work (if possible) to ugandan.data@gmail.com. Include a note on your current and future availability. State 'GIS Consultant' only in the subject line. Closing date: 31 Jan 2014.

MIS/GIS Specialist - USAID/Tanzania M&E Services (Tanzanian citizenship required)

The QED Group, LLC is a full-service international development firm that provides practical solutions to social problems through sound analysis, proven management techniques, and creative implementation. The QED Group is seeking an MIS/GIS Specialist for anticipated work on the three-year M&E Services for USAID/Tanzania. The goal of this project is to provide USAID/Tanzania substantive support with the collection of qualitative, quantitative, and analytical information to assist in assessing and evaluating the newly developed Country Development Cooperation Strategy's (CDCS) development hypothesis through performance monitoring and reporting, annual evaluations of project achievements, and assessments of geographic or sectoral impacts across the Mission's portfolio of projects in health, natural resource management, democracy & governance, and education.

Duties and responsibilities:

- Work with USAID/Tanzania to develop systems to ensure the quality of data and ensure its entry into the new M&E, mapping, and reporting systems.



- Coordinate with country office staff and evaluation teams to collect all field data (survey and GIS data, etc.) and ensure its entry into MIS;
- Provide technical assistance, including the design and integration of the spatial database.
- Identify existing databases and determine how best the information can be displayed using GIS.
- Liaise with implementing partners to collect their GIS data in a usable format.
- Meet with technical office staff as needed to define data needs and project requirements and perform spatial analysis using data from the project and data obtained from Iraq's demographic and socio-economic survey.
- Support communication, and monitoring/evaluation initiatives with GIS information.
- Integrate GIS, performance management, field monitors reporting and projects operational databases to generate tabular and cartographic output for analysis

Key Qualifications:

- Tanzanian citizenship required;
- Bachelor's degree in ICT, Management Information Systems (MIS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), or related field;
- At least five (5) years of experience in international development with specialized knowledge in information management, database design, and IT systems;
- Several years of experience with GIS data entry, manipulation, and presentation, as well as a familiarity with web-based interfaces in addition to more traditional PC network based systems.
- Thorough knowledge of ArcGIS and database management;
- Demonstrated ability to create and/or manage a large, secure database with multiple parties providing information into that database using diverse means of data input;
- Demonstrated ability to compile and present the results of surveys in English to Mission, Embassy, and Government of Tanzania (GoT) personnel;
- Experience with USAID-funded programs and familiarity with USAID policies and regulations highly preferred;
- Knowledge of U.S. government information management protocols, as well as relevant USAID regulations and procedures, as well as experience on USAID-funded programs highly preferred;
- Good technical training and troubleshooting skills;
- Ability to work on a team or independently, prioritize tasks, and make recommendations at key decision points;
- Fluency in English and proven ability to communicate quickly, clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, including technical documentation is required.

To apply to this position please follow the application instructions, submit your current resume and cover letter, complete and submit the attached 1420 biodata sheet, and complete and submit the attached Voluntary Self-ID Form. Accessibility Notice: If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the employment process due to a physical or mental disability, please send an email to Recruitment@QEDGroupLLC.com. Application closing date: 31 March 2014.

[Accountant position in IFPRI, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia \(closing 21 January 2014\)](#)

IFPRI is one of the international agricultural research institutes organized under the CGIAR Consortium. The mandate of IFPRI is to identify and analyze alternative national and international strategies and policies for meeting world food needs in ways that conserve the natural resource base, with emphasis on low income and on the poorer groups in the countries. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) seeks to hire Accountant for its Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) Division in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The primary responsibility of the Accountant will be to prepare IFPRI-ESARO budgets, facilitates payments at training events and for staff travel, prepares financial reports, handles petty cash and record expenditures. Minimum Requirements: BA Degree in Accounting, At least five (5) years practical experience with a reputable organization, ACCA completion is a benefit

Applicants should send a cover letter, resume, relevant documents and testimonials, and the names and addresses (including telephone and email) of three referees knowledgeable about the candidate's professional qualifications and work experience to the Human Resources Office, ILRI, P.O. Box 5689, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Telephone: (251-11)-617-20-00; Fax: (251-11)-646-46-45. Closing date is January 21, 2014. To find more about IFPRI, visit our website at <http://www.ifpri.org>. Qualified women are particularly encouraged to apply.



Senior Programme Officer for Madagascar (TRAFFIC)

TRAFFIC is currently advertising for the role of Senior Programme Officer based in Madagascar for an 18 month fixed term contract. The role holder will be responsible specifically for implementation of TRAFFIC's timber and reptile trade component of the WWF programme "Preserving Madagascar's Natural Resources" supported by USAID. Further information please see website: www.traffic.org/job-opportunities/. Deadline for this vacancy is 20 January 2014.

Other

'Suspect' journals take scientists for a ride



Under pressure to publish to advance their careers, many scientists, especially in developing countries, risk falling prey to a growing number of substandard and unethical journals that adopt dubious and dishonest practices to turn a quick profit.

Writing in Nature in September 2013, Jeffrey Beall, a library expert at the University of Colorado, Denver, in the United States, who monitors 'suspect' journals on his Scholarly Open Access blog, says some publishers exploit the [open access](#) model by asking authors to pay to

appear in journals "of questionable and downright low quality". While open access journals are a boon to developing country researchers and research libraries, the predators and poor-quality publications "are just under everybody's radar", Kenneth Foster, a professor of bioengineering at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States claims that what he calls "predatory journals" are "dishonest and lack transparency. They aim to dupe researchers, especially those inexperienced in scholarly communication." Many of these journals will accept almost any article as long as the author pays the fee.

He began to take a close interest in such journals in India, together with the country's Society for Scientific Values (SSV), an independent science plagiarism watchdog in New Delhi after his own research was plagiarized and misused. Scientists usually learn of suspect journals after their work has been plagiarized in them, or when they have been named as members of journals' editorial boards without their knowledge or permission.

The journals that cause particular concern charge authors for publishing their article without providing high quality peer review or editing, so that plagiarized, recycled or false research is not weeded out. Often they have "important sounding names", notes Foster, typically starting with 'International', 'British' or 'American' to gain prestige whether or not they really have such links.

There is no internationally accepted term to describe these journals. After all, substandard or bogus research occasionally appears in prestigious journals, despite their strong emphasis on peer review. Moreover, "even subscription journals have 'bottom-feeders' that do little or no peer review", points out Stevan Harnad, professor of cognitive science at the universities of Québec in Canada and Southampton in the United Kingdom. But whatever the term - substandard, suspect, bogus or predatory - the journals employ unethical practices.

Some substandard journals "have genuine-sounding editorial boards but closer scrutiny may reveal that they are not experts in the field served by the journal", says Ivan Oransky, co-founder of Retraction Watch, a blog that tracks retractions from scientific journals arising from misconduct.

Rather than adding to the body of knowledge, "it is just a business," says India's SSV president Kasturi Chopra.

Young researchers in developing countries can be easy prey. The pressure to publish has risen dramatically because career advancement depends on it - publications can embellish a job application. Nigeria's National Universities Commission (NUC) insists that lecturers publish in foreign academic journals to become professors, says Farooq Kperogi, a communications academic at Kennesaw State University, Georgia, United States, who has written in Nigerian newspapers about questionable journals. A few years ago, an NUC survey found that 23 per cent of articles in a sample of Nigerian academics' CVs had been published in substandard journals based in Nigeria and abroad. Although the NUC did not define substandard, it pointed to a journal in which some 90 per cent of articles in every issue authored by the faculty from one university, with a "few from friends" in other universities to "create the semblance of spread".

These journals can demand high payments for speedy publication of material without proper review and editing, and may include the names of prominent international academics without their knowledge. When alerted, the academics "were horrified to find their names had been used".



Meanwhile in Africa, university librarians are involved in the struggle to maintain quality. "We stick to the core journals with obvious quality levels," says Nasra Gathoni, president of the Association for Health Information and Libraries in Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya. "In our situation, we always try to involve the faculty. They can advise us about quality in their disciplines."

Around the world, the need for regulation, particularly on a national level, is widely recognized. However, journals cannot shut down based on a few suspicions. If they have an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), they are legal. "There are real intellectual freedom issues". Some researchers say it is risky to rely on email alerts from concerned academics. Ethical publications may inadvertently, or maliciously, be included on such lists. Read more... [Link to article in Nature](#)

Items newly added to this listing of events since the last SDI-Africa issue are marked ***NEW***

Conferences, Events		
Date	Location	Event
January 2014		
14-15 January 2014 * NEW *	Zurich, Switzerland	International Conference on e-Government (ICEG 2014)
15-16 January 2014	Geneva, Switzerland	10th plenary session of GEO . The session documents available on the GEO site: ftp://ftp.earthobservations.org/GEO-X/
February 2014		
10-14 February 2014	Delhi, India	World Congress on Agroforestry 2014 (WCA2014)
24-25 February 2014 * NEW *	Accra, Ghana	Ghana Geospatial Forum
25-28 February 2014	Freising, Germany	Geoinformatics for Tropical Ecosystems - Tools for conservation and management"
March 2014		
17-21 March 2014 * NEW *	Tunis, Tunisia	3rd Geospatial Conference in Tunis (GCT): Building geospatial bridges for the sustained development of North Africa
19-20 March 2014 * NEW *	Dubai, UAE	ICRS 2014: International Conference on Remote Sensing
19-21 March 2014 * NEW *	Berlin, Germany	2014 Global Land Project Open Science Meeting - Land Transformations: Between Global Challenges and Local Realities
Barcelona, Spain * NEW *	23-27 March 2014	6th International Conference on Advanced Geographic Information Systems, Applications, and Services (GEOProcessing 2014)
24-25 March 2014 * NEW *	Algiers, Algeria	1st International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies for Disaster Management (ICT-DM 2014)
April 2014		
1-4 April 2014 * NEW *	Rabat, Morocco	3rd International Conference on the Use of Space Technology for Water Management
7-10 April 2014 * NEW *	Paphos, Cyprus	2nd International Conference on Remote Sensing and Geoinformation of Environment (RSCy 2014) . Abstract deadline: 24 January 2014.
18-21 April 2014 * NEW *	University Park, Pennsylvania USA	International ISCRAM (Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management) Conference 2014: Empowering Citizens and Communities through Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management



23-24 April 2014 * NEW *	Suez Canal University, Ismailia, Egypt	4th International Conference of Botany and Microbiological Sciences
May 2014		
3 May 2014 * NEW *	To be confirmed	Intergraph Southern Africa User Group Meeting 2014
5-9 May 2014 * NEW *	CICG, Geneva, Switzerland	Geospatial World Forum
6-8 May 2014 * NEW *	Cape Town, South Africa	Esri African User Conference
6-9 May 2014 * NEW *	Mauritius	IST-Africa 2014 Conference
21-23 May 2014 * NEW *	Krems, Austria	International Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government 2014 (CeDEM14)
21-23 May 2014 * NEW *	Thessaloniki, Greece	5th International Conference on Geographic Object-Based Image Analysis (GEOBIA 2014)
25-30 May 2014	Cancun, Mexico	46th GEF Council Meeting and GEF Assembly Contact: secretariat@thegef.org
27 May 2014 * NEW *	Hamburg, Germany	Call for Abstracts: International conference: Urban Regions under Change (URC 2014)
June 2014		
2-4 June 2014 * NEW *	Paris, France	Global Space Applications Conference (GLAC)
8-14 June 2014	Jeju ICC, Korea	20th World Congress of Soil Science (WCSS)
15-21 June 2014	Riviera, Bulgaria	5th Jubilee International Conference on Cartography & GIS & Seminar with EU cooperation on Early Warning and Disaster/Crisis Management
30 June -3 July 2014 * NEW *	Guimaraes, Portugal	9th International Conference on Geographical Analysis, Urban Modeling, Spatial Statistics (GEOG-AND-MOD 14) Abstract Deadline: 10 February 2014
July 2014		
1-7 July 2014 * NEW *	Cape Town, South Africa	AfricaGEO 2014 Conference & Exhibition
12-15 July 2014 * NEW *	San Diego, California USA	2014 Esri 3D Mapping Forum
13-18 July 2014 * NEW *	Quebec, Canada	IEEE International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium (IGARSS) 2014 & 35th Canadian Symposium on Remote Sensing (CSRS)
14-18 July 2014 * NEW *	San Diego, California USA	Esri International User Conference
14-19 July, 2014 * UPDATED *	Nairobi, Kenya	7th Conference of the African Association of Women in Geosciences (AAWG): Earth Sciences and Climate Change: Challenges to Development in Africa
August 2014		
6-8 August 2014 * NEW *	Nairobi, Kenya	International Workshop on Open Data for Science and Sustainability in Developing Countries (ODDC) Abstract deadline: 1 February 2014
19-21 August 2014 * NEW *	Lagos, Nigeria	Africa Geospatial Forum (formerly known as Map Africa conference)
September 2014		
1-3 September 2014 * NEW *	Gaborone, Botswana	5th IASTED African Conference on Environment and Water Resource Management (AfricaEWRM 2014) Abstract deadline: 1 April 2014
October 2014		



22-24 October 2014 <i>* NEW *</i>	Mombasa, Kenya	Esri Eastern Africa User Conference
27-31 October 2014 <i>* NEW *</i>	Cape Town, South Africa	African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) Conference 2014
November 2014		
December		
2015	Durban, South Africa	14th World Forestry Congress for South Africa
19-20 May 2015 <i>* NEW *</i>	Paris, France	International Conference on Geographic Information Systems (IGIS 2015) Abstract deadline: <u>31 December 2014</u>
23-28 August 2015 <i>* NEW *</i>	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	27th International Cartographic Conference
1-31 August 2016	Cape Town, South Africa	35th International Geological Congress

Please mention SDI-Africa as a source of information in correspondence about items in this issue.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to SDI-Africa, please do so online at <http://lists.gsdi.org/mailman/listinfo/sdi-africa> and follow the steps provided.

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Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI) Association
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