

Towards a National Geographic Information Infrastructure: Overcoming Impediments to the Development of SDI in Nepal

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SUMMARY

The importance of geographic information system as an information base for planning and spatial analysis has been recognized in the national plan documents in Nepal since long. Many organizations use GIS, and there are many qualified and trained GIS professionals in the country. GIS is highlighted prominently in many University level education and other professional training courses. There is a distinct government programme dedicated to the development of a geographic information infrastructure in the country. Fundamental spatial database is existing and available to the users. But experience has shown that many enterprise GISes have emerged and failed. Development of spatial data infrastructure in the country is not taking the full direction as desired. In this paper obstacles to the harmonization of SDIs in Nepal are analyzed and the importance of a policy framework for the institutionalization of the National Geographic Information Infrastructure is emphasized.

Several past national five-year plan documents have been studied to look into the national focus on GII. Status of few prominent GIS projects has been analyzed to look in to the goals, objectives, functioning and their sustainability. The curriculum and content of few University level education and vendor level training courses have been explored. It has been found that there is a prominent disparity between the national focus on GII and how GIS projects are functioning. In many cases sustainability strategy are missing. GIS education is directed with more focus on GIS as a tool rather that as a system or an information infrastructure.

In conclusion, it was found that the GIS projects have failed because they were not designed as part of a greater GII initiative. Importance of a National Geoinformation Policy has been felt and the progress in its realization is highlighted.