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Alexander Austin

Information Systems for the North East

Contribution to post-conflict development

INTEGRATED FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME
TRINCOMALEE

42 Huskison Street
31000 Trincomalee
Sri Lanka

phone 026-22023
22687
fax 026-22296
e-mail ifsp@lanka.net
internet www.ifsp-srilanka.org

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About the Author

Alexander Austin is Associate Researcher for the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Germany. He received his BSc.Econ. in Philosophy and Social Anthropology from Swansea University and his MA in Peace and Conflict Resolution from Bradford University. He has worked for various NGOs in the field of conflict management as well as provided training for government officials in conflict transformation. His special areas of focus are strategic planning in conflict regions, peace and conflict impact assessment, early warning and monitoring.

contact.austin@web.de

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Acronyms

DS	Divisional Secretariat
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GN	Grama Niladari
GS	Grama Sewaka
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Development Cooperation)
IFSP	Integrated Food Security Programme
IIRM	Institute for Information Resource Management
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
JRP	Jaffna Rehabilitation Project
MIS	Management Information System
MoRe	Monitoring – Reporting – Impacts (MoRe Impact database)
NECORD	North East Community Restoration and Development Project
NEP	North East Province
NEPC	North Eastern Provincial Council
NEPIS	North East Province Information System
PPS	Provincial Planning Secretariat
RRAN	Rehabilitation and Resettlement Authority of the North
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

The present context is ripe for a discussion and development of an information system. Sri Lanka is in the process of moving towards a stable peace and this has resulted in a tremendous focus by the international donors as well as the Government of Sri Lanka to rebuild the NorthEast. To address these challenges, two donor conferences were conducted/are underway and further the eLanka initiative was launched by the prime minister. All of these initiatives concern the rapid and accurate disbursement of funds, the ability to track the projects both in terms of financial and impact monitoring.

However, there is an opportunity to place the specific focus of this consultancy directly within these developments. IFSP, especially with its spatial data base could contribute to assist the NorthEast Provincial Council and their planning unit to move towards the aims outlined on the ministerial level. Through training and the establishment of an Institute of Information Resource Management, IFSP can play a complimentary role by creating greater capacity through the proposed two new positions (technical and training officers), providing training at the provincial level in database management, providing IT equipment and the provision of hard copies of maps to all actors including donors, government officials and NGOs.

The three databases reviewed in this consultancy, RRAN, IFSP & NECORD, although different in content, can work synergistically together. If RRAN, a database for the Vavuniya district, chooses to explore further districts, then the IFSP is well positioned for information and data-source sharing. NECORD on the other hand, with its focus on project management and tracking, can play a crucial advisory role to both donors as well as agencies in the need for monitoring implementation.

The second area of this consultancy reviewed the possibilities for a new information system within the NEPC. The underlying assumption taken in the choice of approach is that the present challenges must be addressed before any work begins, or even continues, on information systems. Three workshops were held with the aims to: isolate the vision for an information system, identify current challenges and then to use these to formulate lessons learned and best practices, and finally to find and articulate constructive ways forward to address these challenges.

The role of an information system can be best assessed if the role is understood as essentially a component and expression of the management structure. Any rough framework describing the most important influences on the information system should therefore highlight six fundamental areas: training (computer literacy & awareness), data collection, capacity, hardware & software, lack of a clear strategy, and structural issues.

This framework allows for the exploration of the interrelationships of the six components under various scenarios. If, for example, computer training is seen as the best starting point to improve decision making through providing training on the provincial level, it must be realized that any efforts in this direction will unfortunately remain unsuccessful, while there is a continual transfer of personnel, or while there are still limitations in data collection.

Ways in which these challenges were then explored through a meta plan workshop. The findings can be summarised as follows: Track I actors need greater 'computer awareness'. It was felt that there was a lack of understanding about both the potential as well as the limitations of information systems. There was strong emphasis placed upon the lack of using already existing computer skills by the Track I of Track II and III.

Track II actors are in need of a higher level of computer skills ranging from database reprogramming as well as database management. For the Track III actors, although crucial in the information systems, there is a need for a higher level of computer skills but not as demanding as the former level. This was expressed through data entry and the need for wider and not deeper training in computer usage.

Cross cutting these issues, was the requirement for cross-level communication. The grass root actors felt that the top level management neither understood the challenges nor articulated their goals clearly. The middle management recommended that it would be of good utility to hold monthly meetings for the sole purpose of information exchange.

The final area addressed concerned the transfer of the IFSP into an IIRM. Four possible scenarios concerning the future and transfer of IFSP were identified:

- to be transformed within the NEPC as an Institute for Information Resource Management

- to pare off the sub-structures within the IFSP into self contained units, such as the engineering section
- to transfer relevant information to appropriate partners
- to cease activities as climate has changed into a post-conflict setting

Within the context of information systems, IFSP has a wealth of knowledge and, what is more, 'produced knowledge'. Both in the form of village data sheets (profile of war affectedness, social deprivation and food deficit) as well as the maps, this knowledge can play a crucial role in the planning and decision making process of various organisations and bodies.

This report is intended for a variety of readers which means that some sections are relevant for one reader while the others not. The report is written for IFSP, GTZ, NEPC, planners, and those people currently engaged in developing information systems.

I. Introduction

consultancy background

This consultancy was conducted over a period of two and a half weeks with three organised workshops & participation in a fourth. It is based on a literature review of the three previous consultancies as well as interviews and meetings with various actors. The focus of the work arose out of an expressed desire on behalf of the NEPC to establish a GIS system as well as this potentially being a transfer vehicle for the IFSP within the context of an Institute for Information Resource Management (IIRM).

background

From initial notes formulated in Germany, this consultancy was identified as the first step of three main stages (*see appendix*). The first phase, characterised by 'forming, storming and norming' aimed to take stock, review aims and ensure ownership. The second stage, 'performing' aimed at the technical building of the system as well as providing training. The third stage, 'reforming', aimed towards the review of objectives based on the prototype system and then to reform and rebuild a more durable system. Further within this phase, any questions of ownership were to be resolved.

aims

This consultancy aims to:

- Review database management outside the NEPC and consider areas of synergy
- Support database management in the NEPC
- conceptualise data base management and information systems
- develop ToRs for two positions, identify training centres and potential candidates for training
- identify next steps
- ensure transfer and ownership are secured within NEPC

guiding notions

These were guided by three central notions:

- Any information system will not be sustainable or utilized unless the end user is integrated into the process and therefore empowered to build the system for themselves (ownership)
- Not to duplicate work between projects, activities and target groups
- A database will be of little use unless it is updated frequently or rather integrated into the routine working structures

- previous IT consultancies* There have been three previous consultancies: (a) in 1999 (Krimmel), in 2000 (Prum), which aimed at establishing a monitoring system within the IFSP. This resulted in the building of a Monitoring Review (MoRe) database. The second consultancy, aimed at reviewing the establishment of an IS for the North East Province. This was conducted by Buenning 2000, and (c) Schenk in 2002.
- previous stocktaking* The most relevant for the stock taking is Christine Schenk's work, conducted between 30 January to 22 March 2002, aimed to:
- assess the state-of-the-art in IFSP focusing on spatial and thematic data
 - reviewing existing spatial data and maps
 - aggregating new datasets and linking GIS and with more impact
 - conducting a training in GIS and database management
 - supporting the partner institution Provincial Planning Secretariat (PPS – NEP) in aggregating spatial raster data sets
 - reviewing database management approaches in selected projects
- navigation* The next section of this report will review the developments that are occurring within and external to Sri Lanka concerning both information systems and technology as well as the current discussions on international donor assistance. The third section will provide an overview of the three main GTZ databases in the NorthEast. The fourth section will outline the vision, challenges and ways forward for information systems within the NEPC. Before making some tentative recommendations, the penultimate section will review the possibilities of an Institute for Information Resource Management.
- limitations* The weight of this paper has focused on the Provincial level and has not explicitly address the levels of District and DS Division. Although there were discussions at this level, due to the time frame, it was not possible to explore them in depth. This, however, does not imply that the DS Divisional Level is devoid of any need, if anything, it is more in demand for good computers, programing and training than at the Provincial Level. It was also not possible to review any other database, such as the UNHCR, WFP or UNDP both of which seem to be extremely promising.
- terms and usage* Within this paper, various terms will be used: information system will be used to denote any flow and retention of information, database will be used to specifically refer to database programs. Track I will be taken to mean the top-level leadership, while Track II denotes the mid-level and Track III the grassroots

leadership. Further, hierarchical denominations are: Village Level, Grama Niladari / Grama Sewaka (Sinhala / Tamil name for designation of government appointed village heads) Level – cluster of certain villages (2-3) government defined – criteria of number of population 250 families, Divisional Secretariat Level – government defined – criteria, District Level – Trincomalee, Province Level – 9 provinces (Eastern Province / Northern and Eastern Provinces).

II. Context Analysis

The NorthEast of Sri Lanka has been the bloody stage for the playing out of the twenty-year conflict that has cost more than sixty thousand lives. The curtain has fallen, and violence has significantly decreased in the region. Whether this will remain the case or whether there can be a positive move towards a more durable and sustainable peace will depend very much upon the on-going peace talks.

Two and a half crucial events are underway in Sri Lanka that are of relevance to this specific discussion on information systems: eLanka, Oslo donor conference, and the planned Tokyo conference (next year).

eLanka **eLanka**, the initiative of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, aims to bridge the digital divide in Sri Lanka. Broadly, it will aim to “take computing and the Internet to all sections of Sri Lankan Society ...[t]o harness Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as a lever for economic and social development, and to link all parts of the country inclusive of isolated rural areas to economic activity....ICT would be a prominent feature in ensuring development...”¹ It is planned that eLanka will focus on all areas of ICT such as, the industry at large, capacity building, building national information infrastructure and developing ICT human resources and e-government.²

3 central challenges At first glance, this appears to be an extremely visionary approach and it still remains an open question whether there is the capacity in the first instance to move beyond the vision. The initiative has identified three central challenges: human resources (for which an institute will be established), coordination within and between ministries, and resources.

ICT agency A central mechanism will be the creation of an ICT agency for an initial legislated period of five years. This agency is planned to be established in June 2003 and

will be chaired by the prime minister who will appoint a Chief Information Officer position in each ministry.

costs

It has been estimated that the costs required by eLanka will in excess of \$381 million.³ Already several donors have been approached in transforming this vision into reality; both World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have already pledged their support.

*triangulation
with India &
Malaysia*

In addition, India and Sri Lanka will shortly sign a bilateral agreement that will focus on developing the e-Lanka initiative. Malinda Moragoda has pointed out that "India's expertise in developing grassroots-level technology in ICT will be invaluable to us"⁴. As proposed by Japan, this has been triangulated with the support of Malaysia.

*info tech. &
development*

What has information technology to do with **Oslo** and **Tokyo**? During the past years there has been an unequal distribution of resources, which in turn has lead to many social difficulties. G.L. Peiris, in reference to eLanka, has stated that the main feature is "...to provide a fair distribution of resources without restricting it to Colombo and suburbs."⁵ He has pointed out that "...reforms will be introduced to the administrative structure of the Board of Investment the main body in the implementation process of development activities of this country..."⁶

White Paper,

The White Paper aims to breach this problem by the establishment of a *National Operations Room*. eLanka, will be placed centre stage within this NOR. The aims of the NOR as outlined in the paper are to "...provide a means by which government officials as well as international donor agencies can monitor the implementation of projects and programs."⁷

Oslo & Tokyo

The two donor meetings on reconstruction lead to the potential of massive investment from donors. It was preceded by a White Paper that outlined priority areas: housing, infrastructure development, road, irrigation systems, schools, community development and women and children. The main aim is to set mechanisms "...which could cut across some of the bureaucratic delays and problems which would ensure that these resources would be converted very swiftly into a peace dividend".⁸ It is clear that it is too early in the former conference that 'big cash' flows will result; the meeting will be political in nature. The Tokyo conference will focus to a much larger extent on the question of resources. The flow will be dependent upon the continuation of the peace process.

*poor aid
utilisation*

However, there are two interrelated fundamental problems: the effective utilisation of aid and the mechanisms required to achieve this. In the very frank White Paper, the GoSL has openly raised that "...Sri Lanka does not have a good reputation for efficient and timely implementation of donor assistance. Unfortunately, this reputation is well deserved. The Prime Minister is taking steps to fundamentally change the ways in which donor assistance will be utilized."⁹

The central problem is not a question of obtaining aid – successive governments have already celebrated obtaining the commitments – it is rather that the country has been unable to utilise that commitment (the one exception may be the Accelerated Mahaweli project). In short, it is not a requirement for more aid that handicaps present endeavours but rather there is a need for greater institutional capacity and efficiency in the disbursement and administration of projects.¹⁰

As John Cooney, country director of the ADB, has stated, "The problem is not so much the money but getting it spent". Additionally, donors have made clear that "...launching projects swiftly is as much part of the battle as getting donors to open their wallets".¹¹ In the second workshop of this consultancy, frustration was expressed about good ideas remaining on the table and not progressing into practise.

*poor
implementation
mechanisms*

This is not to say that Sri Lanka does not need greater finance but rather there is a paramount need for the mechanisms to work fluidly "Besides showing positive outcomes in the peace process...Sri Lanka needs to be in a position to meaningfully and efficiently utilise all the funding which comes its way. "

*linking aid to
management
training*

It is now that strong consideration should be given among the donors to support the relevant government agencies in managing the current projects (finance and tracking) and making sure that if an increase in funding is to occur, that there is at least sufficient infrastructure to deal with the supply. There is a clear need for management training – "ADB's Cooney said an absence of project management skills and awkward procedures mean that a project that should take five years to implement takes seven or eight years in Sri Lanka."¹² Any aid that is granted must be directly linked to both project management skills but also project tracking skills and this means training as well as knowledge of information systems.

2 components
of information
systems

Information systems should focus on two central areas: (a) project tracking (concerning finance and implementation), and (b) being able to identify potentials and needs which villages or districts require what funding in which sectors. For the latter, it is necessary to have a clear overview of the state of the region such as poverty profiles of the key villages that require assistance or even basic accurate maps.

necessity of
impact
assessment

Arthur C. Clarke stated recently to the participants of the 3rd International training course on “electronic systems and its application in the new ICT domain”, that “***the true worth of everything needs to be measured against how it will impact on people in all levels . . . even in the remotest areas***”.¹³

There is not only a slight opening in the window of opportunity but also a paramount need to link the macro level developments with the micro level capacity to understand the on-the-ground situation. It is crucial to remain realistic, even the simplest tracking of finance and projects without even considering the impact monitoring remains a monumental task.

Key Note Summary

- ELanka, the new initiative of the prime minister aims bring e-governance to Sri Lanka and, through the *National Operations Room*, provide a means by which government officials as well as international donor agencies can monitor the implementation of projects and programmes.
- The White Paper outlines the vision to which could cut across some of the bureaucratic delays and problems which would ensure that these resources would be converted very swiftly into a peace dividend.
- Oslo is political in nature and will not result in large donor pledges
- Tokyo, planned for the middle of next year, will be a larger conference and be closely tied to the pledging of financial commitment for the rebuilding of the NorthEast as well as the country as a whole.

III. Stocktaking

At present in Sri Lanka, resulting from both the initiative as well as the donors’ desire to address the historical poor use of aid, there is a renaissance in the interest concerning databases. These range widely from the land distribution attempts of the government to the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a “who, what, where” database.

This section will review the three main databases of the GTZ in the NorthEast: the Integrated Food Security Programme (IFSP), North East Community Restoration and Development Project (NECORD), Rehabilitation and Resettlement Authority of the North (RRAN).

III.1 Integrated Food Security Programme (IFSP)¹⁴

(Adapted from: www.ifsp-srilanka.org)

The aim of the IFSP database is to monitor the impact of its activities. It operates on a systematised procession of information along the core indicators.¹⁵

impact monitoring

IFSP has created a comprehensive database for activity and impact monitoring. All information is processed in a systematic format with the aim to screen the result indicators. The database supports planning and impact assessment vis-à-vis the project planning matrix. It provides recommendations for decision makers on public investment. IFSP's database supports the implementation of the 3R Framework at provincial and district level.

virtual structure

The system is organised in a way that repetition and loss of data are avoided and the time to retrieve data is reduced. At the same time, the system is easy to use and would fit into the official information system. The IFSP database has three dimensions [taken from www.ifsp-srilanka.org]:

- The prime database (MoRe Impact) provides basic information for all 582 villages in Trincomalee district, which includes a resource profile, socio-economic conditions and vulnerability/poverty.
- The 'master database' provides information about the physical and financial progress of the four major results IFSP is supporting, viz. i) village infrastructure development, ii) promotion of health and nutrition, ii) promotion of services and iv) institutional support.
- A quasi-spatial database which uses Arc View allows to create thematic maps, e.g. administrative map of the district, vulnerability profile, location of IFSP projects, demographic change etc. The maps provide visual support of what is happening on the ground and thereby help decision makers to plan for district development. The master database and the spatial database are linked to the prime database. Here, the government village code is the key parameter. Reports can be produced for village development in physical and financial terms or as maps for either each village, GN Division, DS Division or on an aggregate level for the district.

<i>technical construction</i>	On the technical level, the system is comprised of six core databases: MoRe Impact, MoRe Base Data, MoRe Data (these combine to form the MoRe Impact database), master database, and thematic database. See appendix technical organigramme.
<i>phase I results</i>	The first phase of IFSP used six results: i) infrastructure development, (improving the production / village infrastructure, applying food for work/food for asset), ii) improving health and nutrition, iii) promoting services (plant production, animal production and fisheries), iv) enhancing financial services, v) promoting self-employment generation (incl. entrepreneurialism), vi) institution and community strengthening (incl. community mobilisation).
<i>phase II shift</i>	The second phase has four results: i) promoting of production and village infrastructure, ii) improving village health care and nutrition, iii) promoting services for market led integration, iv) capacity building. This move resulted from the PPR mission of August 2000 that recommended that there were too many indicators – the second phase indicators are critical point. This means that it is possible to come to the direct conclusion that people have benefited.
<i>village data sheets</i>	<p>The information refers to 582 villages which has been collected through questionnaires. This covers general village information (number of houses etc.), vulnerability (widows, orphans displacement, dry rations), living conditions (housing), employment situation (land owner tenant cultivator, fisher etc.) Water and sanitation (availability and quality of wells and toilets), education facilities (availability of schools and pre-schools), health services (availability of clinics and mobile health services), support services (through government, NGOs, INGOs), general impression of the village.</p> <p>“The village data sheet is designed to be used by government institutions as well as NGOs. The main purpose is to be able to compare the poverty and vulnerability level of villages within the Trincomalee district. Villages of poverty code 5 and 4 can be considered in need for poverty alleviation programmes. Villages of poverty code 3 to 1 are generally better-off but still to be considered for programmes according to their specific needs.” (<i>Village Data Sheets, TP10</i>).</p>
<i>spatial datasets</i>	The data sheets are in Arc View which are converted into maps and contain: lines (Roads of Trincomalee District and neighbouring Districts rivers, bridges, ferry network), point (village coordinates of Trincomalee District 120 villages

geo-referenced out of 582 and primarily processed in MoRe Impact, health facilities of Trincomalee District (partial) tourist sides of Trincomalee District),) **polygon** – country, provinces of Sri Lanka, Districts of Sri Lanka, DS Divisions Secretariat and GN Divisions of DS Divisions of the district (on the base of GN / GS Divisions) Grama Niladari Divisions (partial – ca. 1997, 1:50,000 as base map) soil map of NEP, land use map of the Survey Department.

III.2 North East Community Restoration and Development Project (NECORD)¹⁶

The project is part of the Government's overall relief and rehabilitation programme for the North and East and will coordinate closely with projects and programmes financed by the Government and other international and domestic agencies. It aims to improve the living conditions and well-being of communities that have been affected by the conflict. The project has two broad components: large scale anchor sub-projects, and smaller scale community level sub-projects

main aim and end-user

The main focus of the database is to provide financial and physical tracking of activities. It was developed by Dr. Hahn from Arcotraz, Germany in mid-2002. The aim is to support the management of the expected 1,500 sub-projects to be implemented and it is to be used by the district level, provincial level and third party organisations to assess, monitor and steer sub-projects progress in the field

content

Within the evolving Management Information System (MIS) of NECORD there are three main components: the monitoring of sub-projects (project tracking), financial monitoring, and contract follow-up. The program features sub-project list display, each of which is further subdivided into five data entry windows (profile, description, contracting, budget plan, monitoring)

1. Monitoring of sub-projects (project tracking)

- registration of proposals and approved sub-projects
- follow up on physical implementation
- tracking of current project status
- automated indication of implementation delays

2. Financial Monitoring

- capturing budget allocation and composition

- follow-up on expenditure amounts and patterns
- forecasting of expenditures
- analysing expenditures but districts, sectors, categories, etc.
- expenditure over- and under- runs

3. Contractor follow-up

- registration and classification of executing agencies
- controlling instalment payments
- assessing performance of contractors.

The tracking system is built in MS Access operating Visual Basic for Applications VBA and can run on isolated computers or within a network with Windows 98/2000/NT/ME. At present, it has just finished the pilot phase with 53 projects and will now move into a fully-fledged system. A full list of data entry fields can be seen in [Appendix](#).

III.3 Rehabilitation and Resettlement Authority of the North (RRAN)¹⁷

<i>aim</i>	RRAN is designing a prototype information system for planning and monitoring of rehabilitation and reconstruction projects in the north (Jaffna and the Wannu). Within this goal, it further aims to train the staff of partner organisations. It is the first attempt to anchor an information system within the structure of the partner institution, the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement (MRRR, earlier institutions RRAN) itself including hardware, software, data as well as training embedded in a GTZ financed project which is the Jaffna Rehabilitation Project, JRP.
<i>content & maps</i>	The RRAN system which is presently in progress comprises a range of data at the village level including: demographics, land use, income and employment, housing, sanitary facilities, water supply, IDPs, displacement and resettlement, transport, communications, roads, tanks, electricity schemes. The digitised sheet maps (1:50,000) for Vavuniya contains: roads, streams and railway as well as administrative boundaries (DS & GN level), villages, tanks, schools and health institutions coded to be linked to the database
<i>identification of data needs</i>	The project has had several activities beginning with identifying the data needs. This was conducted through discussions with planners as well as through

questionnaires. Second with the isolation of the data content with specific focus on the data already available. This was followed by data entry including the importing of already existing data as well as scanning in the maps. Finally, the staff of partner organizations were trained in the principles of databases, including data extraction and there is also a planned training in map production.

outputs & maps The system aims to provide a variety of outputs including simple statistical summaries of the data, custom answers to simple and complex questions, and, if continued, time series. All of these will be available in a visualized map format.

challenges The challenges faced in the establishment of RRAN are worthy to note as they bear direct relevance on this consultancy. Any attempt to build a system would be well advised to address these areas. The challenges of RRAN can be summarized as follows: lack of focus and clearly defined objectives, large data volume, difficult communication and data transfer Colombo-Vavuniya, insufficient quality of the data, complexity of the system, fluctuation of staff, lack of user interface and data production process in this form not yet institutionalised.

Expansion of the system to other districts

1. Explore possibilities for redefining users and objectives of the system
2. Modification of the data content
3. Responsibility for data collection, data entry and maintenance of the system
4. Further development of the system
5. Financial and Personnel Resources
6. Explore cooperation with other institutions or organisations

RRAN's Final Recommendations

1. Explore possibility of cooperation with NEPC and data sharing with IDP databases
2. Explore possibilities for cooperation with other present and would be stakeholders, e.g., IFSP, NECORD, NEIAP, Survey Department of Sri Lanka, Bureau of Census and Statistics, WFP et al

Keynote Summary

IFSP's database and base information system focus on Trincomalee and has comprised information at the village level concerning poverty/vulnerability profiles. The core information is used to produce thematic maps such as administrative borders, vulnerability profiles, location of projects as well as demographic changes. It is further used for planning and impact monitoring.

NECORD's database does not focus on impact but is a management tool or rather a Management Information System (MIS). It was custom built to monitor the construction based 'anchor projects' including the tracking of planning for construction, physical implementation and financial disbursement.

RRAN, similar to IFSP, focuses on the village level and the production of digitalised maps but differs insofar as the focus is on the Vavuniya District. It is at present reviewing the possible next steps ranging from redefining objectives and end users to expanding to other districts. This data base is an important attempt to anchor information systems in partner institutions, which is at present quite a unique approach. World wide experiences within GTZ (see also Geo-Information Systems, GTZ, late 80ies) show the difficulties to institutionalise information systems.

III.4 Recommendations

General

Greater linkage to the Track I developments – There is a need to connect and engage directly with eLanka as well as considerations for implications arising from the two donor conferences (Oslo & Tokyo).

Consider the various discussions for the restructuring of the NorthEast – The future structure of the NorthEast remains unclear. Although, it is not possible to build a system for the hypothetical plans, these plans will nevertheless impact upon any design of an information system

Exercise caution about solely a Colombo based system – It is the redevelopment and reconstruction of the NorthEast, such systems should be near the recipients of the information. Second, the provincial atmosphere is extremely different from the Colombo atmosphere in relation to the current peace process.

Interlinkage between all levels of society – It is paramount, not to think solely of the provincial or ministerial or grassroots level. These tracks are highly intertwined and any system should aim to create synergy and integrate all levels, albeit in different but complementary systems.

Identify key initiatives on databases – At present, there are numerous attempts to build a variety of databases. These range from the UNDP's who, what, where, to UNHCR's focus on IDPs and WFP's VAM addressing food-for-work for IDPs. Although these systems should not be integrated into a meta-database, there is a strong need to create greater synergy and complementarity between these systems.

IFSP Recommendations

Increase synergy with RRAN – RRAN has made some sterling steps forward in their endeavour. There are various overlaps between IFSP and RRAN; caution should be exercised in ensuring that there is no duplication of work and there must be an increase in information exchange.

Guidance towards RRAN – At present the system in MRRR is to a certain extent operational and it is envisaged to be transferred to other districts. For this step a follow-up consultancy is planned for January/February 2003 by JRP. The GIS unit of RRAN is in exchange with the planning unit to harmonise needs and to respond to the emerging post-conflict situation. However, the system is still a long way from completion and a realistic operational status. Further support should be provided to RRAN to answer the predominant question of what would be the use of the system.

Create a loose mechanism within GTZ – all three projects have their individual worth and can benefit from the experience of the others. For example, if RRAN will pursue training, then it would be advisable for the IFSP to discuss a joint training initiative. Although for different end-users, cooperation could be forged concerning the discussion of content, hiring of external trainers and computer expertise.

Maintain awareness of on-going initiatives external to the GTZ – there is a mushrooming both of the desire for information systems as well as the initiation of activities. Mutually beneficial relationships should be forged where possible with these initiatives.

IV. North East Provincial Council

NEPC background & structure

The NorthEast Provincial Council (NEPC) was conceived during the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord in 1987 and established in 1989. It was under considerable controversy that the NEPC was created. The structure and power sharing within the NEPC still remains a critical issue. This has been and will continually be discussed in the ongoing peace talks.

vision

Within the NEPC, there is a commendable vision. In the short term, it will aim to anticipate resettlement claims, service facilitation, provide capacity building, and improve infrastructure. These activities will focus on five different levels: individual (improve livelihood), family, community (linkage development), regional, and private sector (support the development of new business sector). The role of the information system will play a crucial stepping-stone towards the attainment of this vision

previous IT & databases

The consideration of an information/database system is not new within the NEPC. Over the past ten years, there have been various attempts to establish such a system as well as computer awareness and literacy. In 1994, a small training unit was established with the aim to provide basic skills in computers. With the exception of this training unit, these initiatives have stumbled due to the limitations of technology (speed of computers and modems) as well as structural challenges (man-power and management problems) faced in the work. These issues will be raised later.

NEPIS

In 1993, the Planning Division of the Ministry of Finance and Planning (NEP) proposed a NEPIS (North East Province Information System) framework. This was to cover sector information such as social, agriculture, fisheries, industrial, land use, as well as provincial, district and divisional profiles, database and operations rooms.

division level database

The NEP Divisional Level Database was developed in 1994. Although this database was tested it never came into operation. It was planned to be used by the District Planning Secretariat officers. The data collection was aimed to be conducted through questionnaires in cooperation with Divisional Secretariats (to be checked and authorised by Planning Secretariat)

*operations
room*

The NEPC began to build an Operational Information System for day-to-day management purpose and policy making (Operations Room). This failed due to the constraints placed upon the initiative through the ongoing conflict environment.

IV.1 Approach

*aim of
workshops
(workshop II)*

Within the consultancy three workshops were held with the aims to: isolate the vision for an information system, identify current challenges and then to use these to formulate lessons learned and best practices, and finally to find and articulate constructive ways forward to address these challenges.

The underlying assumption is that, unless these challenges can be identified and dealt with, there will be little utility in building a new system that may fall foul to these same issues. The second assumption is 'ownership', namely that the participants of the workshop must formulate for themselves the requirements and needs of the information system and thereby to articulate a shared vision of ways forward.

There are five main steps to establishing a new system each building upon the previous step. First it is necessary to identify the current problems and if this can be attained then, second, a problem solving exercise is used. If no mechanisms can be found, then it is necessary to return to the articulation of the problem. Only when the present difficulties can be addressed is it of utility to begin the articulation of a new system.

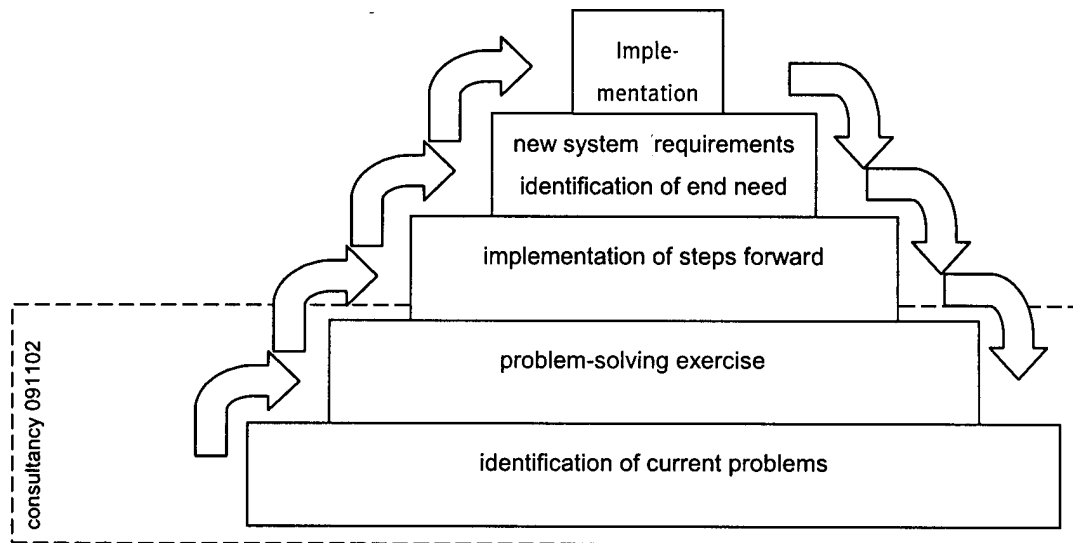


Figure 1: Methodology of Workshop Series

IV.2 Workshop II – Challenges, Lessons Learned & Best Practices

The following truism is false; the right information at the right time to the right person will lead to the right action. It is easy to fall into the assumption that all that is required is good and more information, as well as providing the sources. It is also implied that once in possession of this information, the target group will only then begin to be able to make sound planning decisions and reassess their views accordingly. In a similar vein, many initiatives believe that new and better information technology systems will automatically generate good decision-making. Perhaps, such systems are only best at appealing to those who already have computer skills and in this light it will remain a sermon to the converted.

*information
vector
components*

There are further challenges that must be addressed before any work begins, or even continues, on information systems. The potential role of an information system can be best assessed if its role is understood as essentially a component and expression of the management structure. Any rough framework describing the most important influences on the information system should therefore highlight six fundamental areas: i) training (computer literacy & awareness), ii) data collection, iii) capacity, iv) hardware & software, v) clear strategy, and vi) structural issues.

Within this model, the information system must be seen as a vector, the direction of which is determined by the strength of each of the six individual components. A weakness in one factor can be only partially compensated for by the strength of another. In short, no element can exert its full weight if the others are lacking or flawed.

unified approach

This framework allows for the exploration of the interrelationships of the six components under various scenarios. If, for example, computer training is seen as the best starting point to improve decision making through providing training on the provincial level, it must be realized that any efforts in this direction will unfortunately remain unsuccessful, while there is a continual transfer of personnel, or while there are still limitations in data collection.

current challenges

There are high expectations placed in the role of information and database systems. The underlying assumption with the strong focus on present databases and the challenges that are currently experienced by the staff of the NEPC is that unless these can be identified, articulated and addressed, then any attempt to build a new system will run into the same stumbling blocks. These challenges with the present databases are (which inter alia address the six fundamental issues) : i) training, ii) hardware, iii) data collection, iv) design, v) structural issues, vi) data presentation, vii) networking.

training

There is a lack of computer knowledge - This ranges from basic data entry skills (getting the completed questionnaires into electronic form from hard copies) to the more advanced database re-programming (redesigning the output forms).

No mechanism for in-department trainings - Within the departments there are scarce resources for in-house trainings in computer technology. This was identified as a crucial issue.

Minimal mechanisms for project planning management - There is a lack of any training capacity at all levels in creating planning activities, writing proposal and establishing communication and networking. The Provincial Management Development and Training Department has not yet been maximised.

data collection

Time in collecting and entering the data - Computer literacy and lack of training for the mid and low-level managers (data entry) make it difficult to get the information in time. This results in a limitation in planning ahead as the 'ahead' comes before the data required to plan. For example, information for displaced persons comes from the level of the GA and there is a continual delay.

Inaccurate data for planning – There are difficulties in getting the correct data which results in inaccurate databases. This occurs from data entry staff not being familiar with the programmes, their use or the purpose of the information. Consequently, data is accidentally deleted or distorted.

Inaccurate data through lack of clarity – Data collectors are uncertain about the end use or purpose of the data that they collect.

capacity & duplication of effort

No advanced database programming - Often, when funding comes from two sources, two different financial reports are required. At present, current databases have not been reprogrammed to automatically generate the different reports although the source information is the same.

No data manipulation – In the road sector, once a month, twenty-five pages are sent to the ministerial level. As they contain endless lists of figures, they are rarely read. There is no manipulation of the data to create keynote summaries or end visualisation.

hardware & software

Lack of facilities

networking

There is no networking – There is no linkage between the peripherals and centre. All information becomes centralised and there is little cross-level, reflexive information transfer.

design

Forms are complicated - The officers and recipients of questionnaires, through the complexity of the forms, do not understand what is required. Additionally, some indicators are extremely complicated to calculate.

lack of a clear strategy

Management needs are unclear – It is unclear what would be/are the requirements of the management in prioritising and classifying the data.

There is little information, hardware & experience exchange - The training of officers remains a trickle down approach and the same applies to computer hardware.

structural issues

There is no clear mechanism to monitor and track funds.

There is a difficulty in moving a good-idea project beyond the discussion table – There is frustration that although time and energy are invested into the planning, the proposal stays on the table due to financial constraints & political tensions.

<i>computer literacy</i>	<i>An absence of knowledge in the higher management of the potential of computers</i> - The planning directors have poor computer literacy. The Director must have knowledge to be able to get the reports from the computer.
<i>technical</i>	<i>Limitations of the software program</i> – Although MS Access is sufficient at the moment, if there is to be an expansion of information, for example records for employees of NEPC (50,000), then a more appropriate database program is required such as MySQL.

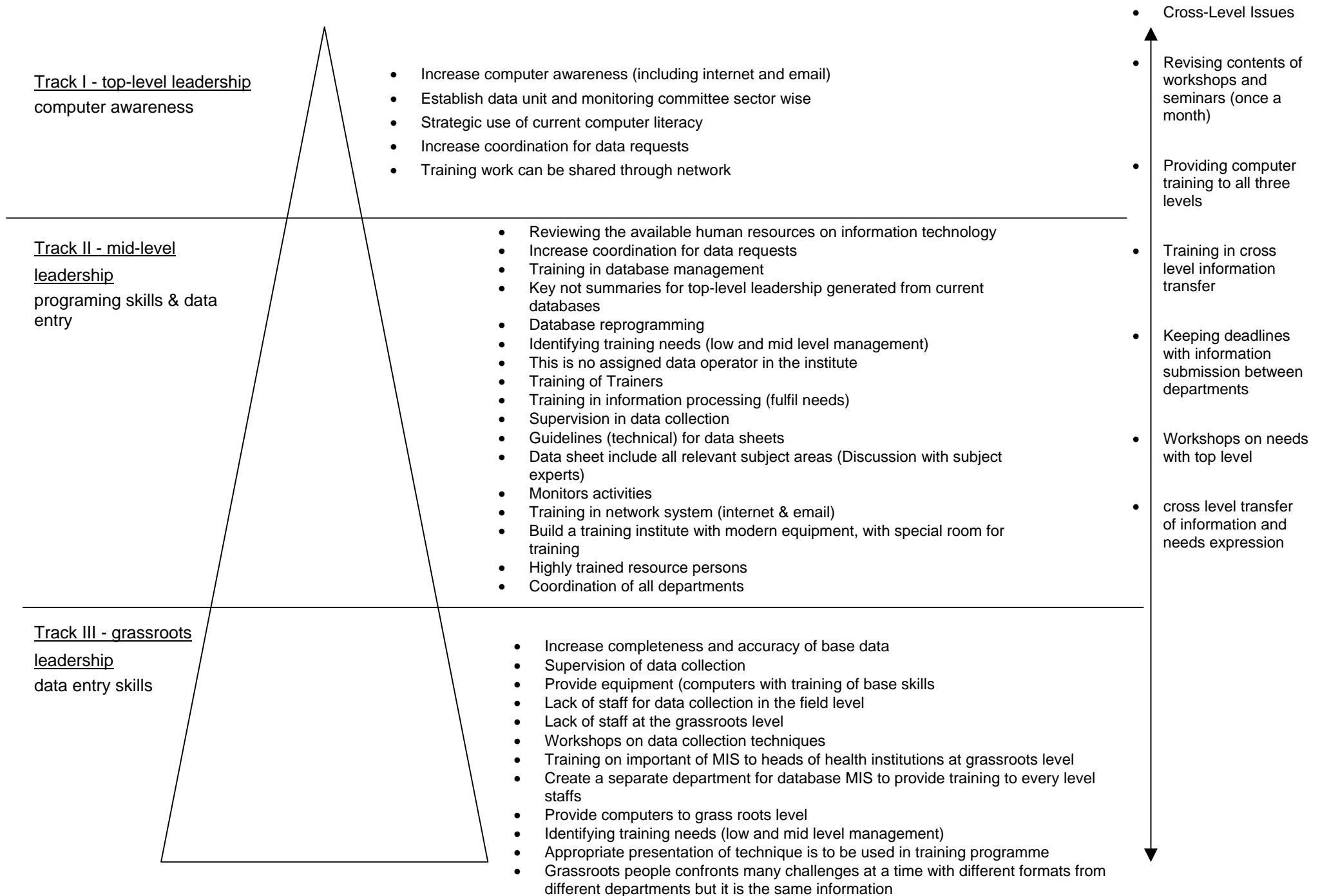
IV.3 Workshop III - Identified Ways Forward

The third workshop focused on how these issues could be addressed. The challenges were isolated into the different tracks in order to realistically view what could be done at which level. Figure 2 outlines the major findings of the workshop.

The findings can be summarised as follows: Track I actors need greater 'computer awareness'. It was felt that there was a lack of understanding about both the potential as well as the limitations of information systems. There was strong emphasis placed upon the lack of using already existing computer skills by the Track I of Track II and III.

Track II actors are in need of a higher level of computer skills ranging from database reprogramming as well as database management. For the Track III actors, although crucial in the information systems, there is also a need for a higher level of computer skills but not as demanding as the former level. This was expressed through data entry and the need for wider and not deeper training in computer usage.

Cross cutting these issues, was the requirement for cross-level communication. The grass root actors felt that the top level management neither understood the challenges nor were their goals clearly articulated. The middle management recommended that it would be of good utility to hold monthly meetings for the sole purpose of information exchange.



IV.4 Practical Issues – Training, Personnel, and ToRs

Further within this consultancy, there was a requirement to (a) review the initial terms of reference for two positions, (b) identify potential candidates for training in information technology and (c) identify information technology training capacities.

Two positions will be made available by the IFSP. Given the challenges outlined above, it is paramount that both of these positions do not focus solely on information technology.

Concerning the ToR (**see Annex**), and with respect to the above challenges, it is necessary to have two positions with extremely clear and different portfolios. Within the setting of the NEPC and the current challenges that the personnel face in their daily work, it is not just a question of technical ability, but rather address structural difficulties with cross-level communication, data entry understanding etc.

The first position, in order to address the structural difficulties, should be more 'people orientated'. He/She should be capable of communicating on all tracks both in identifying further problems as well as guiding participants to find their own solutions. It would also be advisable that he/she has a clear understanding, and preferably experience, in organisational management.

In addition, the skills required for hard-core database reprogramming are of a different set to those required for training and what is more, explaining what are in essence complex technical concepts to laypersons. This is applicable to training data entry as well as explaining the technical limitations to senior management. The inverse is also true, it is crucial that the on-the-ground difficulties are teased out of the users and explained to the technical candidate why these challenges are so valid. The road to hell is paved with good technical ideas.

Table 1: IT Training for Personnel of NEP Institutions

	Name/Designation	Highest Education	Institution	Tasks	Computer Knowledge	IT-Knowledge	Training Needs	Own Interest/Aspiration
1	Mariadas, J.A. Asst. Director	BSc (Maths) Dip. In Education	M/Education	PMIS Sectoral Database Sectoral Atlas HRIS	MS Office Software Programming in VB and Access Arc View (GIS)	Database Development Programming in VB	Web Page Design Java Programming	Software Development
2	Fayis, A.S.M. Asst. Director	BCom (Hons) CIMA Stage II	Pro.Planning Secretariat	Prov.Statistical Hand Book preparation	MS Office Software Adobe Page Maker Corel Draw Adobe Photo Deluxe	Fair knowledge in Database development	Arc View (GIS) Programming in Java	Software Development
3	Arulanantham, P.Ms Planning & Programming Officer	BCom	M/Health	PMIS Sectoral Database Sectoral Atlas	MS Office Software	Fair knowledge in Database development	Arc View (GIS) Database Development	not expressed
4	Johnpillai, V.I.G. Planning &	BSc Bot, Zoo, Che)	M/Health	Progress reporting in MS Access	MS Office Software	Fair knowledge in Query & Reports	Arc View (GIS) Database	d.o.

	Programming Officer					creation	Development	
5	Sunthararajah, T. Development Assistant	BSc (Maths, Phy) Reading MSc in Computer Science	M/Agriculture	PMIS Sectoral Database HRIS	MS Office Software Programming in VB and Java	System Analysis & Design Database Development	Web based application Development	Software Development
6	Satkunarajah, K. Clerk	GCE A/L (P.maths, A.maths, Phy, Chem.)	M/Rehabilitation	Sectoral Database PMIS, HRIS	MS Office Software Programming in VB	Fair knowledge in Database development	Database Development Programming in VB	not expressed
7	Kanenthira, S. Clerk	GCE A/L	M/Prov. Public Admin.	HRIS Sectoral Database	MS Office Software Programming in Java	-	Database Development Programming in VB	d.o.
8	Sivapiragasam, B. Asst. Director	BSc (Maths) 2 Diplomas & 2 Cert. Courses in Computer. Subjects PG Dip. In SNLDP	Pro.Planning Secretariat	PMIS Sectoral Database Sectoral Atlas HRIS Web site of NEP	MS Office Software Arc View and Arc Info Net Object Fusion	Fair knowledge in data base development Data Communication	Database development Data communication GIS Applications Network Administration	Database & Network administration

Table 2: Training Centres for IT and GIS

No	Institute	Area	Specific Content	Timeframe	Contact	Level
1	Emso Ltd. (provider of software in GIS)	GIS	ArcView and ArcInfo	3 or 5 Days	Mr. Thillai Nadarajah 447385, 433415	Custom Built training
2	Geography Department (University of Colombo)	GIS	ArcInfo		Mr. Manawadu 500458	
3	Singapore Informatics	IT (no GIS)	Database Development, Web Designing, Oracle, Programming in VB , C++ etc. , Networking	3 – 4 months	Ms. Laksitha 564796	Certificate level Degree Level
4	APTEC	IT (no GIS)	Database Development, Web Designing, Oracle, Programming in VB , C++ etc. , Networking		Mr. Arshad 075-519900 075-519901	Custom Built training
5	IDM (private company)	IT (no GIS)	Database Development, Web Designing, Oracle, Programming in VB , C++ etc. , Networking	3 – 6 months	Chinthica Wijekulasooriya 01-507580 01-507586	Custom built training Diploma
6	Keels Institute	IT (no GIS)	Database Development, Web Designing, Oracle, Programming in VB , C++ etc. , Networking	3 – 6 months [Adjustable to suit requirements]	Mr. Somesh 01-555800 01-555803	Diploma Level
7	Institute of Computer Technology (University of Colombo)	IT, (no GIS)	Database Development, Web Designing, Oracle, Programming	3 - 4 months	Wendy 074 724019 Prasanth Fernando 01-581245	Certificate Custom Built Programme

			in VB , C++ etc. , Networking			
8	DMS Software Technologies	Programming (no GIS)	Oracle Developer [Full] Oracle DBA	3 months	Chandana Jayasinghe 01-696648, 01-673973	Oracle Certificate from Oracle Corporation USA
9	NIIT	IT [Introducing GIS in Trincomalee NIIT Centre will be considered in Colombo Office]	Database Development, Web Designing, Oracle, Programming in VB , C++ etc. , Networking	Can be decided based on participants' requirements	Mrs. Gajendran 026- 27767	Degree Level and Certificate , Diploma levels

Note:

List of institutions is indicative; there may be other competent Sri Lankan IT institutions that need to be addressed for 'tailor made' training.

Recommendations

NEPC

Clarify the planning needs – It is still unclear for which question, the data is aimed to assist in answering. Tremendous effort should be placed on joint goal/purpose articulation, only then can the design of a database occur and the criteria in data selection be set.

Encourage in-department training in IT – This could be achieved through training of Trainers. Once in two month, in-house, informal training for the office staff could also be conducted.

Create awareness among the data collectors – To prevent misunderstandings and inaccurate data, training must be provided in the purpose of the data collection to the data collectors. The staff must know the purpose of the data collection and context of why this information is vital.

Provide training in database re-programming – There is a need to re-programme current databases to produce different outputs from the same information as well as automated key note summaries.

Bottom-up as well as top-down strategies are required – To overcome the challenges of 'trickle down' that becomes arid before reaching the bottom, a reflexive approach is required in information exchange, hardware and experience.

Enhance computer awareness among the management level

Free-up time of the mid-level management – At present, the mid-level management is overburdened with everyday tasks to focus on information systems. If an information system is to be seen to have a vital role in the NEPC, the capacity of this level must be enhanced. This could be possible only by re-adjusting the assignment to mid level management staff so that more focus is placed on an information system.

Mechanisms of institutional learning must be established – The training of staff will only be as successful as long as they stay in their current positions. Transfer of people means the transfer of knowledge. A mechanism needs to be developed where either trained people are only rotated after a longer period, or

where there is a transfer of that knowledge to the next person. This could be achieved by insisting on an overlap period, or increasing the overlap period between staff transfers.

Increase strategic use of current expertise and knowledge – The current experiences and knowledge in information technology must be increased. There must be a better utilisation of the experiences already gained.

Review approaches that integrate within eLanka - This vision is highly complementary with the eLanka initiative and should be supported. Greater synergy should be reviewed between the vision and eLanka.

Joint articulation of goals – There is still no joint articulation of goals concerning the GIS system. Steps should be taken to assist the NEPC formulate this. The methodology used through the three workshops should be continued.

Negotiate definitions of success – Once visions have been clarified, they must be woven into a shared goal of success. This can be attained through 'action evaluation'.

Initiate steps to reform the current databases – Within the two new positions, the technical officer should work closely with the departments in implementing the identified ways forward.

V. Information Resource Management

Currently, there are two on-going discussions. First, the establishment of an IIRM within the NEPC and second, the establishment of a commission for information resource management. The latter is pioneered by RRAN and will operate on the ministerial level (see Appendix). The former is still in the inception phase and aims at the provincial level.

This discussion about the establishment of an Institute of Information Resource Management (IIRM) must come within the larger issue of the transfer of the IFSP. What happens to IFSP in one years time? It is both a crucial as well as a delicate issue. Although the broader question does not strictly fall within this

consultancy, I strongly urge that the topic is taken further and as soon as possible.

There are various possible scenarios concerning the future and transfer of IFSP:

- to be transformed within the NEPC as an Institute for Information Resource Management
- to pare off the sub-structures within the IFSP into self contained units, such as the engineering section, the community mobilisation unit or the monitoring unit
- to transfer relevant information to appropriate partners
- to cease activities as climate has changed into a post-conflict setting

Within the context of information systems, IFSP has a wealth of knowledge and, what is more, 'produced knowledge'. Both in the form of village data-sheets as well as the maps and, even more important, the personalised know-how and capacities. This knowledge could play a crucial role in the planning and decision making process of various organisations and bodies.

Recommendations

Initiate discussions about the potential mandate of the IIRM – A clear mandate and list of activities should be formulated. This must take into consideration, areas of activities, distribution of tasks, services, and phased transfer of ownership for the next year from the IFSP to NEPC.

Hardcopies should be made available to all parties - The hard and software, and training is not available to deal with the scope of information. Consequently, the IIRM can act as a service provider of key information in the form of hard copies of maps.

Light weight organisational structure – All plans for grand schemes should be a good guide, but initially, the IIRM should be extremely light weight and have a streamline bureaucratic structure

Consideration given to the other data available – RRAN has a accumulated experience in the Vavuniya district, at least an inclusion of RRAN staff should be included into the discussions of establishment at best a loose cooperation should

be forged.

Involve key top level stakeholders – Even it is simply supplying information about the activities, it is paramount to include top-level stakeholders from the conception of the IIRM. Funding is secured only for one year and it is necessary, that if the IIRM serves.

Search for synergy with the Provincial Planning Department and District Planning Secretariats as well as RRAN and other stakeholders for establishing information resources management.

Engage IFSP staff in open discussions about the transfer – Questions of transfer and the ending of projects causes concern about the future of jobs and security. Transparent and open discussions about the concepts and stages can progress a long way to alleviate the fears.

Focus on utilising already existing data within IFSP – In conjunction with the light weight structure, the IIRM should begin with using the data and knowledge already collected within the IFSP. Considerations towards new areas and new systems can only be addressed in the longer-term when there is more certainty about the status of an IIRM, i.e. what happens after the first year after establishing the IIRM concerning finance.

Direct linkage with decision-making and planning process - A database or information system can only be as effective as the decision-making and planning process. If there is hope to improve the IS status, then there must be a parallel effort to link this directly with project management training.

VI. Next Steps

VI.1 Short Term

Task	Actor
Launch ToRs and précis for IT specialists to be recruited on www.nepc.lk and www.ifsp-srilanka.org	NEPC and IFSP

Selection of candidates for training and technical officers	NEPC
Organise training centre	NEPC
Selection of candidates for training	NEPC
TRANSFER of IFSP	
Begin open discussions about the transfer of IFSP	IFSP staff as well as separately with the NEPC
Formulate mandate of IIRM (action evaluation)	NEPC & IFSP
Establish IIRM (decree of Chief Secretary NEP and Secretary Ministry of Eastern Development)	Obtain formal status
TRACKING	
Track e-Lanka and search for synergy	IFSP
Get in contact with Mr Ken Balendra and Mr R.S. Jayaratna of eLanka with the aim of information exchange as well as for mandate of IIRM	PD IFSP and TL IFSP-GTZ
Maintain an understanding with RRAN for good information exchange	IFSP

VI.2 Mid-term

The mid-term goals are those identified in the ToRs of the technical and training officer.

Training Officer (IT Specialist 1)

General

- To work closely with the database and information system officer in discussing and outlining the problems with current database systems. To supervise a compromise between on-the-ground problems and the possibilities for realistic technical solutions.
- Establishment of institutional arrangements for the development of GIS and GIS Units in sectoral ministries and key institutions

Stocktaking and Review of Current Systems

- Assess the skills and capacity of existing staff (data entry staff, data base operators and executive staff) and identify the training needs in specialised areas
- Assessing the skills and capacity of personnel involved in GIS in sectoral ministries and department

- Identification of training needs and areas in GIS for training the staff in sectoral ministries and departments

Data Entry

- Assess the forms and questionnaires used in data entry for repetition, clarity and user-friendliness, and if necessary redesign forms for simplicity and maximum time efficiency.

Training

- Provide training and clarification of data entry at the grassroots level
- Conduction / organising training programmes, workshops and seminars for the NEPC staff

Coordination

- Establish an effective data communication system to facilitate data transfer from district and divisional offices to provincial ministries and departments
- Coordinate with sectoral ministries and departments for the implementing arrangements of the database development and administration to achieve objectives of the MIS in the NEPC
- Establishment of institutional arrangements for the development of IT in sectoral ministries key institutions and departments
- Facilitate the networking of sectors with facilities for maintenance and access by sector agencies via data communication system if the need arises

Organisational Management

- Review strategies for creating a multiplying effect for the transfer of IT knowledge
- Assess structural changes necessary in creating institutional learning

Database and Information System Officer (Technical Position, IT Specialist 2)**General**

- To work under the technical training officer to discuss innovative approaches to information management and to implement into the technology the recommendations

Stocktaking & Assessment

- Screening of existing GIS work in sectoral ministries and departments of the NEPC for further improvements
- Identification of hardware & software needs for the development of the GIS in NEPC
- Screening of present data sources and databases – listing and scrutinizing all databases available in sector institutions and project offices, its use, maintenance, administration and integration.

- Analyse of data sources of respective institutions and projects involved in development of the NEPC. This includes data collections procedures, sources of qualitative and quantitative data.
- Assess the existing hardware & software specifications and other IT infrastructure facilities for standardisation
- Review of methodologies of database performances, applications and user friendliness

Data Entry

- Review methods of data entry to enhance speed, efficiency and quality in obtaining base data

Building

- Development of systems and procedures for utilising the GIS for sectoral planning and monitoring
- Development of GIS based system capable of giving answers for simple and complex questions using simple and multiple criteria for planning of programmes and projects
- Development and integration of GIS based system into the monitoring and evaluation systems for ongoing and future programmes and projects
- Development of systems and procedures for the utilisation of databases
- Development of computer based monitoring and evaluation system for ongoing and future programmes and projects
- Design concise “end-reports” for the current databases. For example, in the road sector, the end quarterly report comprises of twenty five pages of numbers which are time consuming to review

VI.3 Long Term

Phase III should aim to:

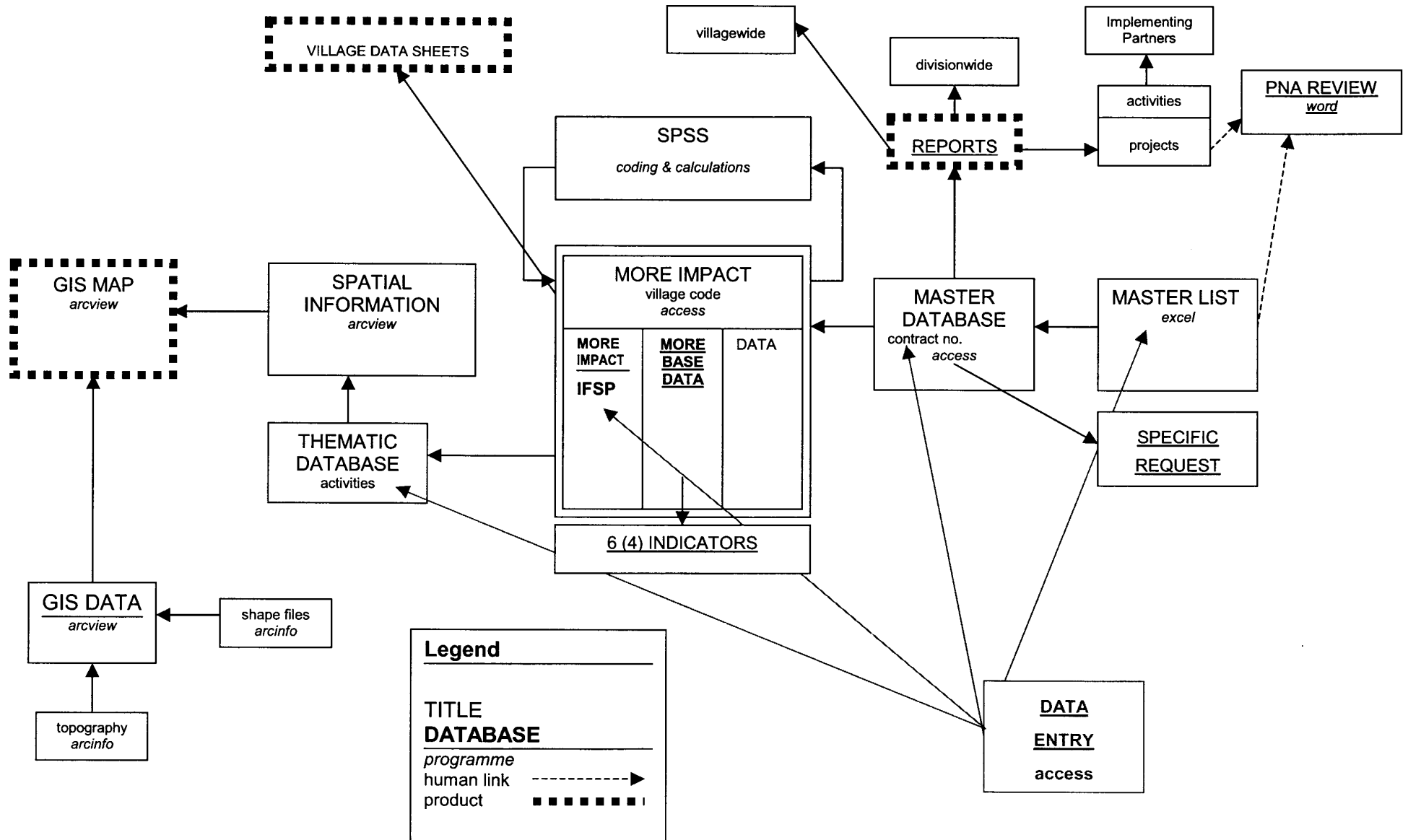
- **Review objects** based on the experiences gathered (what works and what does not)
- **Complete transfer to NEPC** (if not already done)
- **Isolate further funding requirements and sources** for the IIRM
- **Build a robust information system** based on the experiences and move from light weight structure of IIRM.
- **Enhance self-renewal of objectives**
- **Identify missing training requirements**
- **Transfer all data sources**
- **Shift knowledge from individuals to the institution in charge**

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www.ifsp-srilanka.org

IFSP TECHNICAL ORGANIGRAMME



VI.4 Workshop I - Brainstorming and Goal Setting

Workshop I

NEPC & IFSP Information Systems and Database Brainstorming and Goal Setting

11 November 2002

NEPC, Trincomalee

I.1 Agenda

1. **Terms of Reference** (*duties and requirements – background on the participants*),
2. **Stock Taking** (*What Information do you already have? What information is being used at which level (provincial, district, divisional and local governance planning), Which technical format is being used?*)
3. **Vision of NEPC and integrating information systems**, (*five levels - individual, family, community, regional & private sector - over short and medium term*)
4. **Requirements of the database**, (*capacity, information source, training, hard- & software, updating*)
5. **Challenges** (*missing information, time in updating, compatibility of technical systems, spoilers, etc.*)
6. **Training Centres** (*what is offered where? individual training or course training*)

I.2 Participants

1. Mr. S. Rangarajah (Chief Secretary)
2. V.S. Swaminathan (Deputy Chief Secretary, Planning)
3. M. Sinnathurai (Director of Planning)
4. Alexander Austin (IFSP)
5. K. Muralithas (Clerk)
6. S. Yoharajan (Clerk)
7. P.Suhirthan (Development Asst.)
8. F. Johnson (Asst. Director)
9. T. Viswarupan (Asst. Director)
10. G.H. Wijnja (Dev. Specialist)
11. A.R. Marina (Asst. RO)
12. A.S.M. Fayis (Asst. Director)
13. B. Sivapiragasam (Asst. Director)

VI.5 Workshop II - Comments from Workshop with NEP Participants

Comments from Workshop with NEP Participants

18 November 2002

Major Problems with present databases

Training

In our department there is a lack of computer knowledge people. People must be trained. Training in technology (which trainings). And software.

Our resources department should have an ability to train. Com. Tech.

New person – we are in management information system at the head office. The difficulties would be getting the data . For displaced persons we get that from the GA and there is a delay in getting the information

There are two departments that come under the ministry, in both there is a lack of technical knowledge. We are also having databases, funds are coming from the lion ministry (eastern development) so they expected us to send a separate report. In the northeast provincial district we must send different format reports.

Computer literacy training fro the mid and low-level managers (data entry), supply of technical items. Intranet connection. Get information in time.

No skilled officers

the training capacity must have each level Computer literacy, in some subject matters (such as creating planning activities, writing proposal and communication with other communities). To solve this problem we need to increase the training capacity and need a new training facilities. I feel that in the NE province. With the current training system, We have not maximised the training.

Hardware soft ware

Lack of facilities

Data Collection

Education we are developing an 'accu package'.

Database system. Main problem is trained staff. The data needs to collect the data from the field. We get the stats. From them. And we plan the development from them. We will not get the correct data in the correct time.

Preventative as well as curative data. From this we identify the needs. Present database not accurate as not possible to collect and communicate all the information due to staff shortages. The problem is getting the information in time.

We have staff who collect the information staff. Additional staff and training from the staff in the collection of data. The DPDA at the institutional level as well as the local. The staff must know the purpose of the data collection and context of why this information is vital. We need computers and email facilities. These should link between the peripheral and centre.

In the education sector we have we have different levels, presently we get the information from the hardcopies. We cannot get the information in time. They do not have the computer facilities, we need networking from the educational sector (this is a large ministry). Capital is 500million. Time in data entry from hard copies would be good to have direct input into the system and therefore bypass.

Our ministry has seven departments, So we have to collect data from these departments which takes times

Forms are complicated. Sometimes the officers do not understand what is required. Some indicators are very complicated to calculate i.e. data gathering.

Mostly we are working in the information era. When implementing the human resources database – Most of the officers are unaware of the problem. They cannot enter the data quickly. Sometimes the data is deleted or distorted through ignorance

Collecting data in planning for the next year. We need to give to the ministry. The problem is that we cannot get the correct information at the correct time. It

Design

We must to define the needs from the management (purpose building) It should not just be a collection of data. Some information they need once in a year while other is one in six months. We need to define the planning needs more clearly. Then the training of officers (this must not be trickle down but bottom up) the

same applies to computer hardware. There should also be quick transfer of information between the officers. If we had a network, then the ministry could also have the direct access.

Structural Issues

There is no normalcy, houses are destroyed. As a result there is not tax as there is no house. This is the destruction of the infrastructure revenue. If I get training then the format would be sorted out. We then can prepare annual accounts through the administrative actors.

Different forms with the same information, i.e. Redundant. These are the problems must be address through uniformity. We have big plans but not finance – but these are distrust that . We should not be asked to prepare the planned and it should not remain on the table and implemented. .The moralities of the senior management. Their activities may encourage the staff. I.e. they do not approach the other staff. They make comments do this do that . And this leads to discouragement in the staff. And why should we work there. Senior level management must be more tam orientation. Otherwise info system .

Why does the proposal stay on the table. Lack of finance. In my ministry, difference in financing between the departments.

Within the NEPC. Mostly we are finding the problem is training, and unskilled people. Most of the plan we are preparing a number of plans but not implementing as the political interference comes into conflict the with the departmental level. This is a problem in the northeast province.

There are no electricity in many of these areas. IT will take some time to build the infrastructure in terms of technical capacity.

At the divisional level there is not technical knowledge and as the information must come from the base level there is no mechanism for processing this information.

I am from the road sector. My department 1000 roads so we need to categorise each district. We have coded road names and we take 250 roads per year per year for improvements. Allocation for month and at the moment These reports go to for or give sectors. And no one looks at this because it is 20-25 pages just in financial numbers. This should be visualised graphically. Key summaries. I

would like to know each and every activities, and how this can be monitored.
The end visualisation.

Data presentation

I am from the road sector - Every month I send 25 papers to ministerial level but they do not go through this. But if they get a graphical bottom line. No data manipulation. NEED DATABASE DEVELOPMENT. Tracking system development from NECORD> EMAIL would be good. AA – Do top-level government have top-level emails? Most ministries have email access. No Internet but email.

I am from the road sector. My department 1000 roads so we need to categorise each district. We have coded road names and we take 250 roads per year for improvements. Allocation for month and at the moment These reports go to for or give sectors. And no one looks at this because it is 20-25 pages just in financial numbers. This should be visualised graphically. Key summaries. I would like to know each and every activities, and how this can be monitored. .
The end visualisation .

Networking

We have no computers with two Acs, it would be good to have it linked with head office. We also have the training problem at the local level. This must be developed. This can be regarding the report. Concerning the audit there is the ac

Network. - Lease line need web application development. Intranet.

There is not network connection between the databases. We should have a lease line. We need a lease line which is extremely expensive 15,000 rupees. If you want to establish a network within the NEPC. If you want to build up the IT unit.

Should the databases be connected to the different databases. Some are connected awhile others are connected.

What is the advantage of linking these databases. ANS for the planning we need to have all the information. E.g. for the environment database, we need to have accesses to several cross cutting information, e.g. databases.

Information must be centralised. To make one decision then we must have several information.

Then a good network system. All the people on the staff should be trainee in IT. Then they can achieve the goals.

(multipliers AA?".

Other

The IT vacancies are not filled which means that the work cannot be completed.

Getting the information from the division from the base line. The problem is no assigned officers to collect data. If we say the NEPC. Technically the information is not viable. We want to implement a larger database management that can handle larger information such as a sql database. (e.g. 50,000 employees).

Lack of technical skills. No competent staff. No technical knowledge.

2 Ministry of education we have about 30 departments and we have no experience in data entry. Nowadays we are training the people. Entering the data and lack of skills. Sectoral database (HRASS School database, office database (ministry and database). It is now working progress. See schools

1,987 schools (a quarter of all schools in Sri Lanka) each has a questionnaire. This is a problem, there are one to two zonal offices but they are not trained in Access.

Present problem with databases. The planning directors don't have computer literacy. It is important to train the director to see the computer advantages.

Director must have knowledge to be able to get the reports from the computer. Train the zonal directors.

Stocktaking

Road Sector - Collecting data in planning for the next year. We need to give to the ministry. The problem is that we cannot get the correct information at the correct time. It

Access

Serial number

Description of work

Total estimated cost

Allocation (money that we have for the year)
Expenditure last month (would like to add kilometres)
Expenditure for this month
Total expenditure
Liabilities (what we predict for the next month)
Physical code

EDUCATION SECTOR

1,987 schools (a quarter of all schools in Sri Lanka) each has a questionnaire.
This is a problem, there are one to two zonal offices but they are not trained in

Most databases are in Access

These people will be trained in access data entry and maintenance. These people will be trained through the planning centre. At the Zonal level there are three computers and there are 24 zones. These zones have monitors.

1. Development activities. We do not have an database only project progress reviews. We want and monitoring and evaluation database. We allocate funds but do not know where it goes. We need to have trained programmers and separate computers. 5The Rehab fund will increase. Project tracking. PSD provincial specific development plan 250 million pa, General education project 500,million. Secondary education modernised programme Education deployment programme. Class programme.

Future Vision

Identify problems and needs in training programme, computer supplies, network connection. Present status (what are we doing)

First thing is a full facility in database unit. At present there are four sectors and there

Capability staff at the ground level.

Information system at ministerial and provincial department.

Computer facilities at local level.

Before training there must computers. Must be hand in hand.

Participants

Mr. S. Suntharalingam (Assistant Director)
Ministry of Education
NEP - Trincomalee

Mr. V. Sounthararajan (Assistant Director)
Ministry of Education
NEP - Trincomalee

Eng. A.E.S. Rajendra (Director, Road Development Department)
Green Road, Trincomalee
026 22878
pdrdd@sl.lk

Dr. Mrs. J. Suntharalingham (M.O. Planning)
PDHS' Office
NEP - Trincomalee

Miss P. Arulanandam (PPO)
Ministry of Health
NEP - Trincomalee

Mr. J.J.C. Phelician (Assistant Director Planning)
Ministry of Agriculture
NEP - Trincomalee

T. Sunthararajah (Development Assistant)
Ministry of Agriculture
NEP - Trincomalee

K. Paramashivan (Development Officer)
Ministry of Provincial Public Administration
NEP - Trincomalee
026 24029

S. Geethanjali (Clerk)
Ministry of Rehabilitation & Reconstruction
NEP - Trincomalee
026 22136

T. Nageshwaran (Assistant Commissioner of Local Governance)
Local Government Department
NEP - Trincomalee
026 20075

VI.6 Workshop III – Steps Forward

Workshop on Information System

20 November 2002

9.30 – 12.00 NEPC

Agenda

9.30 Introduction

9.40 Steps forward – What steps are necessary to address the challenges

10.20 Prioritising the Steps – within the framework of 2 staff

10.50 Break

11.00 **Working Group I** – What would the mandate be of an Institute for Information Resource Management.

- Which focus should it have?
- On what level should it operate?
- Which activities should it engage in?

Working Group II – What would be the advantages or disadvantages are there in transforming the IFSP into the NEPC?

Reporting Back

11.45 Wrap-up

Steps forward following the problem clusters**Cross-level issues**

- Revising contents of workshops and seminars (once a month)
- Providing computer training to all three levels
- Training in cross-level information transfer
- Keeping deadlines with information submission between departments
- Workshops on needs with top level

Top-level leadership

- Need past and future information
- Increase computer awareness (including internet and email)
- Establish data unit and monitoring committee sector wise
- Strategic use of current computer literacy
- Increase coordination for data requests
- Training work can be shared through network

Mid-level leadership

- Reviewing the available human resources on information technology
- Increase coordination for data requests
- Training in database management
- Key not summaries for top-level leadership generated from current databases
- Database reprogramming
- Identifying training needs (low and mid level management)
- This is no assigned data operator in the institute
- Training of Trainers
- Training in information processing (fulfil needs)
- Supervision in data collection
- Standard and simple format (data collection)
- Guidelines (technical) for data sheets
- Data sheet include all relevant subject areas (Discussion with subject experts)
- Monitors activities
- Training in network system (internet & email)
- Build a training institute with modern equipment, with special room for training
- Highly trained resource persons
- Coordination of all departments

Training in basic information technology

Grassroots level

Increase completeness and accuracy of base data

Supervision of data collection

Provide equipment (computers with training of base skills)

Lack of staff for data collection in the field level

Lack of staff at the grassroots level

Workshops on data collection techniques

Training on important of MIS to heads of health institutions at grassroots level

Create a separate department for database MIS to provide training to every level staffs

Provide computers to grass roots level

Identifying training needs (low and mid level management)

Appropriate presentation of technique is to be used in training programme

Grassroots people confronts many challenges at a time with different formats from different departments but it is the same information

IIRM

Problem

Delay in information collection

Ways forward

Easier decision-making process

Sector planning

Protection from delays

Efficient use of resources

Data to divisional level

Time saved

Establish in NE province

Priorities current problems

Improvement services equal an improvement in satisfaction

Reduce processing time

Reduce work

Coordinate with other institutions

Providing uniformity

Innovative approach

Cross-level information exchange

Identify the what data needs and prepare the Annual data Plan and fixed the data period (Example, student data Jan 2003)

Guiding Notions

No data collection (but training)

No preparation of data sheets

It is crucial to understand and make transparent ‘who are engaged and employed’

Head of department must be included into the process of building

Participants

S. Suntharalingam (Assistant Director – Ministry of Education)

V. Sounthararajan (Assistant Director – Ministry of Education)

A. Jeyaranchini (Planning & Programme Officer – Ministry of Health)

P. Arulanandam (Planning & Programme Officer – Ministry of Health)

V.E.G. Johnpillai (Planning & Programme Officer – Ministry of Health)

S. Geethanjali (Clerk – Ministry of Rehabilitation)

A.S.M. Fayis (Assistant Director – Programme Planning Office)

S. Muraltidaran (Development Assistant – Ministry of Provincial Public Administration)

K. Paramashivan (Development Assistant – Ministry of Provincial Public Administration)

T. Sunthararajan (Development Assistant – Ministry of Agriculture)

B. Sivapiragasam (Assistant Director Panning – Planning Secretariat)

VI.7 Précis - Information Technology Vacancies

The NEPC (North East Provincial Council) is looking for candidates to fill the following two positions in the field of information management:

Technical Training Officer (senior)

Database & Information System's Officer (technical position)

The Technical Training Officer is expected to supervise and technically contribute to the revision and building of an information system within the NEPC. The candidate is expected to identify current gaps in skills and training, and from this to design innovative training workshops that address the needs of the NEPC staff. He/She should further integrate mechanisms of institutional learning during the process.

The Database & Information System Officer is expected to work closely with the Technical Training Officer by identifying challenges with current databases and technically implementing recommendations for the improvement of database management into a working information system.

Both candidates are expected to have five years of experience in information management and information technology respectively. These positions will be on a contract basis for an initial period of one year.

For full details please visit www.nepc.lk or www.ifsp-srilanka.org or contact the following address:

NEPC
Provincial Planning Department
Innerharbour Road
31000Trincomalee
e-mail: neplan@slt.lk

IFSP
Integrated Food Security Programme Trincomalee (IFSP)
42 Huskison Street
31000 Trincomalee
e-mail: ifspsl@sri.lanka.net

VI.8 Terms of Reference - Technical Training Officer (senior)

Introduction

The NEPC has been endeavouring to develop a Provincial Management Information System (PMIS) which comprises database management programmes with the operating system MS Access as well as GIS utilities. Such information system will be used for planning activities and monitoring purposes. The system will be used to get answers for simple as well as complex questions with the help of simple and multiple criteria for the propose of planning activities. The intermediate and final results can be presented in forms of maps as well as tables etc.

Other sector agencies have not developed sector databases and maps due to various constrains viz: inability of the NEPC administration to engage presently available officers with computer knowledge exclusively for developing PMIS and related works, lack of in-depth training and know how among officers with regard to database development and intensive applications of GIS and lack of IT personnel.

The project office that manages foreign funded projects must also develop databases for specific purposes. These databases are used for getting the village level information in relation to vulnerability and poverty position, information on internally displaced persons and for tracking the progress of activities in respect of each project

To date, all databases and maps have been developed in isolation and the key question is how can synergy and complementarity be created and nurtured between these systems to ensure coherency and maximisation of current efforts.

The final challenge facing the work of the NEPC concerns the standard, level and, what is more, loss of information technology skills and training. Despite previous efforts to train personnel, due to the transfer of individuals, there is a drain upon the skilled staff competent to work at both the data entry level as well as database programming level.

Profile

- Intermediate experience in regional planning
- Superior interpersonal skills in working with a wide spectrum or persons
- Intermediate knowledge of computer hard and software (including MS Windows, Office)

- Basic understanding in the use of GIS systems (including ArcView and ArcInfo)
- Good understanding in the use of database management (preferably MS Access)
- Intermediate ability in database programming (such as Visual Basic, SQL)
- Ability to train and supervise mid- and high-level officials
- Excellent knowledge of written and spoken English
- Concise communication skills as well as clear presentational style
- Firm knowledge in organisational management
- Motivated and optimistic character, open minded, and capable to work closely within teams.
- Formidable analytical and problem-solving skills

Qualifications

- Five or more years experience in information management
- Background knowledge or working experience in regional planning
- Bachelors level degree, preferred Masters level, in information management or equivalent
- Specific training and background in organisational management
- Extensive and proven ability in organisational management
- Experience of team leadership

Proposed Activities

General

- To work closely with the database and information office in discussing and outlining the problems with current database systems. To supervise a compromise between on-the-ground problems and the possibilities for realistic technical solutions.
- Prepare and discuss a draft for a comprehensive information system, interlinking the sector databases and GIS.
- Outline the framework for query building content wise
- Prepare and discuss a draft for a comprehensive information system, interlinking the sector databases and GIS.
- Outline the framework for query building content wise
- Establishment of institutional arrangements for the development of GIS and GIS Units in sectoral ministries and key institutions

Stocktaking and Review of Current Systems

- Assess the skills and capacity of existing staff (data entry staff, data base operators and executive staff) and identify the training needs in specialised areas
- Assessing the skills and capacity of personnel involved in GIS in sectoral ministries and department
- Identification of training needs and areas in GIS for training the staff in sectoral ministries and departments

Data Entry

- Assess the forms and questionnaires used in data entry for repetition, clarity and user-friendliness, and if necessary redesign forms for simplicity and maximum time efficiency.

Training

- Provide training and clarification of data entry at the grassroots level
- Conduction / organising training programmes, workshops and seminars for the NEPC staff

Coordination

- Establish an effective data communication system to facilitate data transfer from district and divisional offices to provincial ministries and departments
- Coordinate with sectoral ministries and departments for the implementing arrangements of the database development and administration to achieve objectives of the MIS in the NEPC.
- Establishment of institutional arrangements for the development of IT in sectoral ministries key institutions and departments.
- Facilitate the networking of sectors with facilities for maintenance and access by sector agencies via data communication system if the need arises

Organisational Management

- Review strategies for creating a multiplying effect for the transfer of IT knowledge
- Assess structural changes necessary in creating institutional learning

Period of Engagement

The period of engagement will be of one year from the data of acceptance. This may be extended further depending upon the candidate's performance and contextual necessity.

Expected Output

- Trained staff capable of developing and managing databases with applications of GIS
- Effective usages of Provincial Management Information System

- Mechanism for preventing the loss of trained IT knowledge
- Thorough documentation on experiences and lessons learned.

Work Plan and Schedule

The proposed position will be available on a contractual basis for an initial period of one year. A work programme and schedule the subjects outlined above should be submitted to the NEPC no later than one month after the contract begins. Any additional efforts, which may emerge during the implementation of the agreement, must be mutually agreed upon between the employee and the NEPC.

Contact

Provincial Planning Secretariat, NEP

Innerharbour Road

31000 Trincomalee

Phone:26-22382,24013;

e-mail: neplan@slt.lk

VI.9 Terms of Reference – Database & Information System Officer

Introduction

The NEPC has been endeavouring to develop a Provincial Management Information System (PMIS) which comprises database management programmes with operating system MS Access as well as GIS utilities. Such information system will be used for planning activities and monitoring purposes. This system will be used to get answers for simple as well as complex questions with the help of simple and multiple criteria for the propose of planning activities. The intermediate and final results can be presented in forms of maps as well as tables etc.

Other sector agencies have not developed sector databases and maps due to various constrains viz: inability of the NEPC administration to engage presently available officers with computer knowledge exclusively for developing PMIS and related works, lack of in-depth training and know how among officers with regard to database development and intensive applications of GIS and lack of IT personnel.

The project office that manages foreign funded projects must also develop databases for specific purposes. These databases are used for getting the village level information in relation to vulnerability and poverty position, information on internally displaced persons and for tracking the progress of activities in respect of each project

To date, all databases and maps have been developed in isolation and the key question is how can synergy and complementarity be created and nurtured between these systems to ensure coherency and maximisation of current efforts.

The final challenge facing the work of the NEPC concerns the standard, level and, what is more, loss of information technology skills and training. Despite previous efforts to train personnel, due to the transfer of individuals, there is a drain upon the skilled staff competent to work at both the data entry level as well as database programming level.

Profile

- Profound experience in data base management especially MS Access
- Advanced ability in database programming (such as Visual Basic, Oracle etc.
Profound experience in data base management especially MS Access
- Advanced ability in database programming (such as Visual Basic, Oracle etc.)
- Ability to train and supervise mid-level officials
- Skills in facilitating medium sized workshops
- Good knowledge of written and spoken English
- Prepared to travel within the province

- Ability to work with multidisciplinary teams and institutions
- Prepared to engage in creative and innovative approaches required for the reforming or building databases

Qualifications

- Three to five years experience in computer science
- Bachelors level degree, preferred Masters level, in computer science, information technology or equivalent
- Preference will be given to those candidates who also have experience in training

Proposed Activities**General**

- Implement ideas for comprehensive information system
- Build queries for analysis
- Link databases with GIS
- Prepare maps with analysis results
- To work under the technical training officer to discuss innovative approaches to information management and to implement into the technology the recommendations

Stocktaking & Assessment

- Screening of existing GIS work in sectoral ministries and departments of the NEPC for further improvements
- Identification of hardware & software needs for the development of the GIS in NEPC
- Screening of present data sources and databases – listing and scrutinizing all databases available in sector institutions and project offices, its use, maintenance, administration and integration.
- Analyse of data sources of respective institutions and projects involved in development of the NEPC. This includes data collections procedures, sources of qualitative and quantitative data.
- Assess the existing hardware & software specifications and other IT infrastructure facilities for standardisation
- Review of methodologies of database performances, applications and user friendliness.

Data Entry

- Review methods of data entry to enhance speed, efficiency and quality in obtaining base data

Building

- Development of systems and procedures for utilising the GIS for sectoral planning and monitoring

- Development of GIS based system capable of giving answers for simple and complex questions using simple and multiple criteria for planning of programmes and projects
- Development and integration of GIS based system into the monitoring and evaluation systems for ongoing and future programmes and projects
- Development of systems and procedures for the utilisation of databases
- Development of computer based monitoring and evaluation system for ongoing and future programmes and projects
- Design concise “end-reports” for the current databases, e.g. combining quantitative with qualitative steps of analysis

Period of Engagement

The period of engagement will be of one year from the date of acceptance. This may be extended further depending upon the candidate’s performance and contextual necessity.

Expected Output

- Trained staff capable of developing and managing databases with applications of GIS
- Efficient databases and monitoring system
- Effective usages of Provincial Management Information System
- Mechanism for preventing the loss of trained IT knowledge
- Thorough documentation on experiences and lessons learned.

Work Plan and Schedule

The proposed position will be available on a contractual basis for an initial period of one year. A work programme and schedule the subjects outlined above should be submitted to the NEPC no later than one month after the contract begins. Any additional efforts, which may emerge during the implementation of the agreement, must be mutually agreed upon between the employee and the NEPC.

Contact

Provincial Planning Secretariat, NEP

Inner Harbour Road

31000 Trincomalee

Phone:26-22382,24013;

e-mail: neplan@slt.lk

VI.10 Minutes - NECORD

Minutes with Mr. Ingo Guhr, GTZ Advisor to NECORD

Appendix II – NECORD (Data Entry Fields)

III.1 Profile,

Characteristics – sector, category, implementing agency

Location – District, DS-division, GN-division, village, area (clear / uncleared)

Status – active/rejected/suspended/or abandoned.

Planning Dates(contract) – start date, completion date, end of sub-project

Sub Project Stages – proposed date, approval PPCC, approval ADB, bid announcement, bid closing date, bid evaluation report, tender board approval, contract awarded, contract signed, work started, work completed, end of sub-project.

I.2 Description

Description and Scope

Rational and Justification

Remarks

Expected Beneficiaries – ethnic group (total number, % female)

Implementing Agency – agency, details, responsible person, phone, fax, email

Executing Agency – agency, details, responsible person, phone, fax, email

Environmental Assessment – A,B,C, and n/a

A: serious case, B: mid case, C: mild case

What is this coding for environmental assessment?

I.3.1 Contracting – Executing Agency

Name of Contractor

Contract signed

Total amount of contract

Contract No.

Planned sub-project – start date, completion date, end of sub-project

Contractor (tab) – type of contractor, ICTAD registration number, ICTAD Grade,

Contact (responsible person, address, bank, bank account no, phone, fax, email)

I.3.2 Contracting – Physical Targets

Main activities,

expected delivery date / completion date,
reflects % of works

I.3.3 Contracting – Financial Targets

Payments requests
Expected date of payment request
Expected amount
Reflects % of total amount

I.4.1 Budget Plan – Budget

Contract Amount – base cost (proposal, actual)
Contingency
Complementary Costs - preparation cost, supervision cost, other costs

I.4.2 Budget Plan – Financing Plan

Source, Proposed Amount, &, Actual Amount, %

I.5.1 Monitoring – Physical Progress

Main activity/milestone, expected date of completion/delivery, new data of completion/deliver, expected progress/target in %, actual progress in %, FLAG, activity/milestone completed/delivered, achieved/updated on

I.5.2 Monitoring – Financial Progress Contract

Occasion, justified amount, tax, date of payment, amount actually paid, financial progress in %

I.5.3 Monitoring – Financial Progress Complementary Costs

Cost category, reason of payment, date of payment, amount actually paid, financial progress in %

I.5.4 Monitoring – Major Problems

Problem, date observed, date resolved, action required

Description, Contracting (Executing Agency, Physical Targets, Financial Targets), Budget Plan (Budget, Financial Plan), Monitoring (Physical Progress, Financial Progress/contracted, Financial Progress/complementary cost, major problems)

VI.11 Committee for Database Planning

Comments on a Committee for Database Planning

20.30 15 November 2002

Participants – Andrea v. Sarnowski, Andrew Ross, Christine Schenk, Alexander Austin

Three core issues were discussed: (a) prevention of duplication of work and information exchange, (b) core issues that may play a role for the committee, (c) step forward in general.

I. Prevention of Duplication of Work

For the purpose of keeping up communication, we came to the conclusion that we should “cc” any relevant documents or communications to the smaller group.

Andrew	rossa@unhcr.ch
Andrea	andrea.v.sarnowski@geogr.uni-giessen.de
Christine	chschenk@sri.lanka.net
Mr. Halbach	gtzjrp@mega.lk

In this light, last night I had a discussion with a gentleman (Muttukrishna Sarvananthan) currently engaged on a mission for the UNDP. He mentioned to me that the UNDP is already engaged, or has already formed, a who/what/where database. Unfortunately, he could not tell me more than it is being undertaken by ‘Joe’ at the HQ in Colombo.

II. Key Issues

1. Potential Target Groups of Database (including levels)
2. Content
3. Structural Challenges
4. Ownership & Participation (capacity building)
5. Stocktaking
6. Structure of the Committee
7. Next Stages - three scenarios

II.1 Some Comments

1. Potential Target Groups of Database (including levels)
 - i. Donor Agencies (who/what/where database)
 - ii. Ministerial Level

- iii. Provincial Level
- iv. NGOs
- 2. Content – (youth, IDPs, housing, infrastructure development, roads, irrigation systems, hospitals, schools, community development, and women and children affected by the war, poverty)
- 3. Structural Challenges
 - i. transfer of people between positions resulting in the loss of specific training/knowledge. How is it possible to create the institutional learning?)
 - ii. capacity being moved from partial to exclusive focus of employees
 - iii. training
 - iv. technical infrastructure
- 4. Ownership & Participation (capacity building)
- 5. Stocktaking – should occur after the identification of needs and target group with the intention not to present all the data which in turn could be conducive to desirable.
- 6. Structure of the Committee
- 7. Next Stages - three scenarios - Reflect upon the changing political environment and the various implications that it may result in for the work of the Committee. This should potentially address three issues. First, the **proposed White Paper** (which will identify the country's development) and the Oslo Conference (25th November). At present, the aims outlined in the paper are to:
 - i. utilise the funds rapidly,
 - ii. priority to be given to: housing, infrastructure development, roads, irrigation systems, hospitals, schools, community development, and women and children affected by the war.
 - iii. cut across the bureaucratic delays and problems which would ensure that these resources would be converted very swiftly into a peace dividend.

This **Donor Conference** will be followed by a larger Donor Conference in Tokyo.

Second, although the consequences of the **JTF and proposed Interim Administration** are still a long way from any certainty. The committee should reflect upon how such a system would be affected by, as well as contribute to, the various proposed structures with special reference to both the JTF and the 'inter-Interim Administration'.

Third, how should the results of the Committee be position within the **Triple R framework**. The framework forms the basis of hum ass in the NE. See problems on Colombo-based. The JTF will be the political authority that will steer the relief and rehabilitation programme. The mandate as such is extremely wide

III. Steps Forward

Terms of Reference

Next Meeting

Meeting in one month with minister

IV. Some Initial Thought

Build the database backwards - Unless it can be ascertain what is required, i.e. how will the data be used or, moreover, what problem this information should contribute to solve. There will be little utility in progressing forward if one is to hope for more than a nice, neat graphic database.

IV.1 Province-based versus Colombo-based

1. There is criticism that officials recount, that they are more often called for meeting in Colombo rather than presiding at meetings and ensuring efficiency at the office.
2. There is a lack of coordination between the Provincial Administration is depleted of resources.
3. By focusing on a Colombo-based information system, how far is one supporting the existing administrative system: a system which could be considered obsolete and dysfunctional
4. There are current discussions and tensions between Colombo-base and Province-based. Especially in terms of peace and next steps forward. In the South, the people are already moving forward to the next stages of the peace process, while in the North and East, people are still suffering under the tail end of conflict. (restrictions on fishing, movement of ferries – detours, land issues)

IV.2 Interim Administration and JTF

What could the future IA look like – various discussions have shown that some people feel that it will be an extension of the current government. On the other

hand, the LTTE are strongly arguing that a system must be developed that better serves its peoples.

IV.3 Window of opportunity

At the moment, I do see a window of opportunity on all levels. This window is that there is not only the elusive desire but also the practical work currently underway. On the provincial level, the NEPC has expressed a strong interest in developing an information system and already has various databases. On the ministerial level, there is, albeit, a token openness to discuss the various options. On the international political level, there will be two large high profile donor conferences (Oslo & Tokyo) to discuss the rebuilding efforts required for the NorthEast.

V. Open Questions

1. Should the commission be restricted to the discussion of the outcome of RRAN or be extended to an inclusive approach to other actors/initiatives (UNDP, UNHCR, IFSP etc.?)
2. Who are the spoilers?
3. How would the information system look like with the current dual power?
4. What does it mean for the information system if the IA is constitutionally unviable through the confines of the 13th Amendment.

VI.12 Terms of Reference

Information Systems Development and Conflict Impact Assessment

Terms of Reference for Short-term Expert Mr. Alexander Austin

Conflict and Vulnerability: Stabilising Livelihoods through Nutrition and Food Security

Conflict and war for almost 20 years have resulted in an alarming degree of malnutrition and impoverishment in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Approximately 80% of the population in the North East Province (NEP) fall under the poverty line. The village infrastructure and the production base are destroyed or functioning at lowest levels. Basic social facilities are inappropriate. The severely restricted local economy prevents the reintegration of individuals and communities. People depend to a large extent on state welfare. Vulnerability is the result of the war. Even after the cease fire agreement of February 2002 (Memorandum of Understanding, MOU between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE) little main-stream development took place. Projects like IFSP Trincomalee continue as important partners towards development and social integration of war affected communities.

Government has undertaken commendable efforts to establish planning for development at provincial, district and divisional levels during the past years. Recently, the 3R-Framework and the poverty reduction strategy were adopted as national policies for the reintegration of the north and east. Medium- and longer-term planning for development at provincial and district level would require the establishment of information systems that allow to determine opportunities, priorities and targets for public investment. At the same time, data base management and information systems development need to be directed towards conflict impact assessment. Reconciliation as one of the main objectives of the 3R-Framework requires active community participation, reflection of impacts of interventions into livelihoods and consequences of decision making on public investment for social integration of war affected communities. IFSP Trincomalee has been addressing these challenges since 1998 through a participatory intervention for developing the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and through capacity building at various levels.

2. Information Systems in NEP

Information systems available in NEP – or rather approaches towards IS – are applied more or less exclusively for planning, monitoring and evaluation of

projects, e.g. NEPC, IFSP, JRP, NEIAP, NECORD, RRAN. A more integrative approach for IS by relating health and nutrition data with village livelihoods information, thereby contributing to a combined vulnerability-poverty-resource profile and impact assessment could be finalized also in the context of development activities in the NEP Projects cooperate with partner institutions including the Planning Unit of NEPC.

Altogether, the standard of information systems development in the public administration of the Northern and Eastern Provinces is rather low. There is hardly any relation to conflict impact assessment. Capacities for planning and guiding reconstruction, rehabilitation, reintegration, reconciliation and human resources management in a post-conflict situation are extremely limited.

3. Tasks

3.1 Information Systems

The consultant is to actively contribute to the preparatory steps for a mission to review and advise on DB management and information systems for NEPC:

1. Prepare a 'road map' for review and assessment of data base development/management and information systems available outside NEPC and/or presently developed by various institutions and projects in Sri Lanka with relevance to the north and east.
2. Support IFSP management and senior decision makers of NEPC as well as cooperating partners, e.g. RRAN, JRP, NECORD, NGOs to establish a professional team, join in meetings and working sessions/communication/workshops with partners and projects, draft TOR for team members, prepare schedules for the review and contribute to a format for assessing databases and i-systems.
3. Assist in conceptualising the approach of the review of data sources and data base management as spelled out in the overall TOR with the aim to ensure that the guiding principles of the mission, which are i) stock taking, ii) assessment, iii) transfer, iv) ownership are achieved.
4. Prepare a comprehensive documentation.

3.2 Conflict Impact Assessment

The Sri Lankan - German Development Cooperation promotes poverty and conflict transformation (PACT) as a key area. IFSP Trincomalee and neighbouring projects have been active in conceptualising and practising the principles of conflict impact assessment. The context of the 3-R Framework requires IFSP to specifically address peace-conflict impact assessment to better

address the policy context and, even more important, to support war affected and vulnerable communities.

The consultant is to disseminate his specific Know-how on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) to IFSP and partner institutions. Conflict analysis has been an integral activity of IFSP since late 1998. The coaching of IFSP professional staff is one of the key activities which are supporting the integration of war affected communities into local and regional markets. The application of participatory methods, community mobilisation and the livelihoods systems approach are core activities of IFSP. Impact assessment partly basing on quantitative as well as qualitative approaches to be incorporated into project management and its monitoring following the considerations of the Do-No-Harm Approach. The consultant is to address the following tasks:

1. Discuss and assess approaches on PCIA in Sri Lanka with selected institutions and discussion partners.
2. Identify main areas of impacts of Peace and Conflict in Trincomalee District and find criteria referring to the coping strategies and their change in the context of a transforming conflict situation.
3. Support IFSP management in conducting workshops/working sessions with staff on conflict impact assessment, thereby making use of the comprehensive know-how available and at the same time, initiate 'new thoughts and concepts'.
4. Document the outcome of conflict impact assessment according to the format proposed by PACT.

Proposed schedule

The consultant is expected to work with IFSP management and staff as well as with partner staff and decision makers for a period of up to weeks in November 2002. He is expected to extensively document the results of his assignment.

Database Management

Phasing	Tasks	Days
Reconnaissance mission on planning in the NEP	Review frame work planning in the NEP with partner institutions and NECORD, RRAN, JRP, IFSP	2
Reconnaissance mission on data base systems	Review existing database systems working in the NEP	3
	Discuss possibilities for combined systems Prepare workshop session	1
Workshop session	Conduct workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss frame work planning - Develop indicators - Develop milestones for future planning systems 	1
Conceptualisation and start implementation	Propose on conceptualisation of database systems Select implementing organisation and qualified staff	4
	Preparation of report Conduct a presentation (optional)	3

Conflict Impact Assessment and PCIA

Phasing	Tasks	Days
Reconnaissance mission	Review the existing approaches on PCIA used in selected institutions in Sri Lanka, discuss approaches with discussion partners	2
	Identify the main areas of impact and define the context of vulnerability with IFSP management	2
Knowledge management	Prepare presentation	1
	Prepare concept notes	2

The time schedule is tentative and can be adapted if required.

Consultant - Alex Austin

VI.13 Time plan

- Saturday 9** **Arrival in Trincomalee**
- Sunday 10** **Meeting with NEPC to discuss Vision of NEPC and the role of the information system (insert names)**
- Monday 11** **Review of current databases and previous consultancies, conceptualise the schedule for the next stages and design of consultancy**
- Workshop “Information Systems & Database – Brainstorming & Goal Setting” with NEPC to discuss: Terms of Reference (**duties and requirements – background on the participants**), Stock Taking (**What Information do you already have? What information is being used at which level (provincial, district, divisional and local governance planning), Which technical format is being used?**), Vision of NEPC and integrating information systems, (**five levels - individual, family, community, regional & private sector - over short and medium term**), Requirements of the database, (**capacity, information source, training, hard- & software, updating**)
- Challenges (**missing information, time in updating, compatibility of technical systems, spoilers, etc.**), Training Centres (**what is offered where? individual training or course training**)
- Tuesday 12** **Meeting with S. Srimanobhavan to discuss the present content and state of the IFSP information system. Stocktaking of IFSP data.**
- Meeting with WebMaster of IFSP to review current state and development of Internet site.**
- Wednesday 13** **Meeting with Mr. Siva concerning ways forward, collection of ideas and workshop on 20th**
- Thursday 14** **Travel to Colombo for RRAN Presentation**
- RRAN Presentation
- Friday 15** **Informal meeting and preparation for Commission on Information Resource Management**
- Saturday 16** **Travel Back to Trincomalee**
- Sunday 17** **Recommendations and initial thoughts and minute writing for CIRM**

- Monday 18** Workshop on identifying the needs of the NEPC. Meeting with Mr. Guhr to discuss the present state of their database tracking as well as PCIA
- Tuesday 19** Terms of Reference and Précis for the two positions. Identification of Training Centres, Identification of participants for training.
- Wednesday 20** Workshop with NEPC concerning constructive ways to address the challenges in their database work and the mandate for an IIRM
Meeting with the GA and Mr Pugendran and District Level staff
- Thursday 21** Revision of Terms of Reference and Précis. Meeting with NIIT concerning training. Meeting with Rohini concerning information systems.
- Friday 22** Meeting with NEPC to discuss the structure, content, and design of their website. Travel to Kandy for PCIA workshop. Workshop with resource persons on two studies “GTZ – PCIA Study Southern Project” & “Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment on the GTZ funded project Vocational Training for Women and Youth in the Central Province”
General introductions.
- Saturday 23** Workshop
- Sunday 24** Workshop
- Monday 25** Return to Trincomalee. Preliminary review of findings for Information system
- Tuesday 26** Meeting with Mr. Siva to discuss the CVs of the training participants- NIIT – continued meeting about the training of engineers as well as the potential role for the NIIT in training the NEPC.
- Wednesday 27** Workshop on IFSP and conflict transformation. Second meeting with Mr Pugendran. Writing “project x”
- Thursday 28** Meeting with Christina Schenk to review the “project x”. Writing main report
- Friday 29** Writing Main Report. Meeting with Mr. Siva to discuss finding.
- Saturday 30** Return to Colombo

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- ¹ “eSri Lanka gets on the road”, in *Financial Times on Sunday* 24/11/02
- ² “eSri Lanka gets on the road”, in *Financial Times on Sunday* 24/11/02
- ³ “US\$ 381m needed for eLanka rollout” in *Financial Times on Sunday* 01/12/02
- ⁴ “India, Lanka in IT initiative”, in *Daily News*, 25/11/02
- ⁵ “Policies formulated to bridge digital gal: GL”, in *Daily News*, 25/11/02
- ⁶ “Policies formulated to bridge digital gap: GL”, in *Daily News*, 25/11/02
- ⁷ *Oslo Donor’s Conference – Meeting Immediate Needs, Government of Sri Lanka, obtained at www.peaceinsrilanka.org on 02/12/02*
- ⁸ “White Paper for Oslo donor parley”, in *Daily News*, 15/11/02
- ⁹ *Oslo Donor’s Conference – Meeting Immediate Needs, Government of Sri Lanka, obtained at www.peaceinsrilanka.org on 02/12/02*
- ¹⁰ “Reconstruction aid from Oslo”, in *Sunday Times*, 24/11/02
- ¹¹ “Donors say proper aid use key to rebuild Lanka”, in *Daily News*, 23/11/02
- ¹² “Donors say proper aid use key to rebuild Lanka”, in *Daily News*, 23/11/02
- ¹³ 3rd International training course on “electronic systems and its applications in the new ICT domain”, in *The Island Sunday*, 24/11/02
- ¹⁴ Source – www.ifsp-srilanka.org
- ¹⁵ These indicators are 1.1 Infrastructure Measures, 1.2 Food for Work, 2.1 Health & Sanitation, 2.2 Nutrition, 3.1 Extension in Plant Production, 3.2 Extension in Animal Production, Fisheries, 4/5 Employment / Financial Services, 6. Institutional Strengthening & Social Mobilisation
- ¹⁶ Source: Arcotrass *North-Eastern Community Restoration and Development Project – Proposal for Technical Assistance* February 2002,
- ¹⁷ Source: Andrea von Sarnowski, 2002 *Development of an Information System for Planning and Monitoring of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Projects in Vavuniya as a Pilot District* Power Point Presentation 14/11/02