



1st Conference Announcement

The focus of the event will be on sharing experiences and defining good practices for making geographic information technologies and systems (GIT&S) available to less-favoured groups in society. The event will enhance the capacities of under represented groups in managing and communicating spatial information in the contexts of:

- asserting ancestral land and resource rights and entitlements;
- supporting collaborative planning and management of lands and natural resources;
- promoting equity in terms of ethnicity, culture, gender, environmental justice, hazard mitigation, etc;
- managing and ameliorating conflicts amongst and between local community groups, and between communities and higher-level authorities or economic forces; and
- supporting cultural heritage preservation and identity building among indigenous peoples and rural communities.

Participatory GIS (PGIS) is the result of a spontaneous merger of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methods with GIT&S and builds on using combinations of geo-spatial information management tools ranging from sketch maps, Participatory 3D Models (P3DM), aerial photographs, satellite imagery, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to compose peoples' spatial knowledge in the forms of virtual or physical, 2 or 3 dimensional maps used as interactive vehicles for spatial learning, discussion, information exchange, analysis, advocacy and decision making.

The conference will focus on developing and sharing experiences and knowledge of PGIS practice. The meeting will lay the foundation for the establishment of communities of practice, regional networks, and resource centres for promoting PGIS good practice. The following outcomes are expected from the conference:

- identification of enabling conditions for PGIS practice to function effectively;
- development of suitable strategies for establishing such conditions in places where none exists;
- outlining guidelines for sound PGIS practice under different socio-political contexts; and
- identifying communication channels and facilities (e.g. regional networks) for supporting dissemination and wider adoption of sound PGIS practice.

The conference will bring together people with extensive practical experience in PGIS and community mapping in developing countries and First Nations. The experts will include PGIS practitioners and community mappers operating out of such working environments as: academic and research institutions, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and government agencies. High-level policy makers and community representatives will also attend and contribute to the discussions.

More information on the event and guidelines for contributors can be found at <http://pgis2005.cta.int>

Conference organisers: Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA); International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), GIS for Developing Countries (GISDECO) Network, International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) – Regional Centre for Africa; West Virginia University, Office of International Programs.

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