

Exchange of information

Written by Zarin Khan

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November 19, 2016 - The development and fine-tuning of application of Geographic Information Systems for Pacific Island countries will be an important component of the Pacific Islands GIS/RS Conference 2016.

A geographic information system (GIS) is a computer system for capturing, storing, checking, and displaying data related to positions on Earth's surface.

GIS can show many different kinds of data on one map. This enables people to more easily see, analyse, and understand patterns and relationships.

Scheduled from November 28 to December 2, the conference will host 20 Pacific Island countries, scientists, satellite data companies and software companies to an exchange of information.

And Dr Wolf Forstreuter, head of SPC's GIS/Remote Sensing Unit says the conference will give Pacific Island participants the chance to discuss GIS in the Pacific context.

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"Application of GIS and remote sensing works well in the United States and in Europe but needs adaptation for the Pacific," he said.

He explained in the Pacific GIS also had marine applications and could also be used for accurate demarcation of land and also when searching for minerals and monitoring forest degradation.

"In the Pacific, we also need data that is atmospherically corrected because you have more moisture in the air compared to United States or Europe.

"Because you are in the middle of the ocean, a little hill creates cloud cover and you see this when you are outside how in Suva you have 50-100m elevation and you have cloud building."

Dr Forstreuter said another important session would include the Open Sourcing of GIS software.

"Open source software is replacing propriety GIS software and it's essential Pacific Island countries often have difficulties to maintain software.

"It's very expensive and we have a development where open source software can do exactly the same like propriety software and we are promoting this to keep sustainability in Pacific Island countries.

"A big part of the conference is the introduction of new satellite image data and satellites where we here at SPC are the hub of the Pacific."

The conference is being organised by USP, SPC and the Department of Lands with GIS software companies also contributing significantly.

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"Many companies are interested because there is no other area where they can address so many users. And that's why companies are paying for the conference.

"SPC contributes, USP contributes, Lands Department contributes to the conference but the main contribution comes from companies who use this as a hub to get to service Pacific Island countries."

Vuibau, T. (2016, November 19). Exchange of Information. The FijiTimes, p. 45. Retrieved from <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=378995>