Ecological Informatics Applications in Water Management

6-7 November 2002

't Pand, Ghent University
Onderbergen
B-9000 Gent

Abstract book

Peter Goethals & Niels De Pauw

Decision support systems for water management: solutions evolving with the problems, needs and knowledge

<u>Guy Engelen</u> & Hedwig van Delden

Research Institute for Knowledge Systems bv, Papenstraat 8, 6200 AL Maastricht, The Netherlands, Tel. 31-43-388.33.22, Fax. 31-43-325.31.55, http://www.riks.nl

Decision Support Systems are rapidly gaining interest among planners and policy makers responsible for the management of complex environmental and socio-economic systems such as rivers, watersheds, coastal zones, etc. In contrast only few DSS are currently used to prepare actual policies or management plans. This is not a surprise given the complexity and the interlinked nature of the domains that need to be represented in the DSS. Researchers are far from having the perfect models, tools and data that are the kernel of the ultimate DSS. Moreover, in order to deploy a DSS as a usable and effective instrument for policy makers it is important that it matches their perceptions, experiences and operational procedures and that it enhances their current policy practices. Thus, it is good practice to develop DSS systems as a collaborative effort involving end-users, scientists, domain specialists and technicians. But these are often worlds apart. In this presentation we will share some experiences gathered in the development of DSS systems for water related issues. We will depart from the EcoVisie prototype and show possibilities for its enhancement on the basis of other DSS's that we have developed. The lessons learned in these projects will be shared.