

emapsite Wins Malawi School Mapping Contract



The international consultancy section of emapsite, a UK mapping services provider, has won a major government contract in Malawi, Africa. The company's international division will deliver a nationwide data capture and GIS project to help with the planning of schools across the country's 34 education districts.

The 10-month contract has been awarded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and involves the linking of GIS resources with education data such as catchment areas, enrolments, learner-teacher ratios and classroom sizes.

Justin Saunders, international director of emapsite, will personally supervise the work from the company's Malawi project office. He said that there have been huge advances in the

quality of Malawi's education system in recent years. The government now requires more GIS-based analysis and planning to help consolidate its data and strengthen its capacity to meet the educational needs of today's children and tomorrow's workforce.

Reporting to the Ministry's Inspectorate of Planning, the emapsite team will first review previous mapping and database information before carrying out a pilot survey of three districts in the capital Lilongwe.

Learnings from the pilot will then be rolled out across the country with recommendations made on the most appropriate systems and software for ongoing school mapping at central and district levels. As well as schools, the institutions to be analysed include teacher training colleges, other technical and vocational training centres, university buildings, adult literacy centres and pre-primary facilities.

Saunders, who has engaged two Malawian consultants to help with the work, added that the project will help with decisions on the location of future schools and the resources to be allocated to them. Besides technical advice, emapsite will be training Malawi officials in data collection and database techniques, making them able to continue to map, analyse and set budgets for their education infrastructure and provision.

The project is part of a wider initiative called PIEQM (Project to Improve Education Quality in Malawi) which is funded through the Malawi government and a range of international partners. They include the World Bank, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and various foreign government bodies such as the UK's Department for International Development.

Malawi has a population of around 15 million and with a geographic area of 118,000 sq km is just over nine tenths of the size of England.

The emapsite international division also supports a branch company Emapsite Middle East operating from offices in Riyadh and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The company handles consultancy, training and technical contracts with government and business clients.

As well as GIS, the emapsite international division offers related geomatics tools and technologies, needs assessments, systems analysis and functional requirements for GIS applications. Services range from data collection and geocoding through to database integration and spatial analysis. Specialisms include environmental monitoring and urban and infrastructure planning.