



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR DESERTIFICATION CONTROL
THROUGH FLOODWATER SPREADING IN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF
IRAN**

MASOUD NEJABAT

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IRAN**

**By
MASOUD NEJABAT**

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia
in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2009





DEDICATION

**Dedicated to:
my dear family
for their moral support**



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman: Associate Professor Anuar Abd Rahim, PhD

Faculty: Agriculture

Floods and droughts have resulted accelerated land degradations in Iran. Land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas is desertification and more than 90% of Iran's area is classified as arid or semi-arid with 43% being susceptible to land degradation. Different forms of floodwater storage have been proposed as solutions that not only reduce flood damages in wet years but also decrease undesirable effects of water shortage during droughts. Floodwater spreading (FWS) is one of the most logical solution for desertification control (DEC) in Iran. FWS increases soil moisture, improves vegetation cover, and diminishes flood-related damages. The FWS requires diligent planning and as such, site selection is expected to be the foremost priority. Decision Support System (DSS) is a new approach capable of facilitating selection and planning of the most appropriate sites for FWS.

To identify the optimum diagnostic problems, updated situation and achievements of 37 FWS research stations all over Iran were investigated. Some of the stations (11 of



them) with more reliable data that represent the diversity of Iran's climate, morphological zones, and soil types were chosen. From these investigations, 21 new effective factors were defined and the data required for data-base and knowledge-base components of the DSS were gathered. In order to adopt the DSS to FWS conditions, multicriteria decision analysis (MCDA), weighted summation, and expected value methods were selected for ranking, appraising, and weighting, respectively. Validity of DECFWS, a certain DSS developed for Desertification Control through Flood Water Spreading, was tested by 1) comparing results with vegetation results of implemented scenarios at FWS research stations, and 2) comparing with results of land suitability evaluation for controlled alternatives based on USDA 2003 method. The latest version, DECFWS 3.31, was developed under Visual Basic that can help decision makers with presenting the: the most appropriate alternative for a chosen scenario, the most reasonable scenario for each alternative, the alternative with the highest benefit-to-cost ratio, the most appropriate alternative in general (for several scenarios), the irrelevant alternatives, and the uncertainty analysis in ranking. Some advantages of this DSS are: accurate assessment, targeted evaluation and ranking, rapid appraisal, low cost, ease of application, flexible to variations, helpful in presenting irrelevant alternatives, executable despite data scarcity, editable in report presenting, assessing effects score uncertainty, precision in ranking, exact in converting qualitative to quantitative data. Results of this dissertation demonstrate the ability of DSS to solve unstructured problems and yield a variety of alternatives in dry regions. It prompts soil scientists interested in land and environmental managements to become familiar with DSS and its application for sustainable managements, especially under fragile circumstances. However, more comprehensive researches on DEC and new emerging technologies (such as the one used in this thesis) are needed to help conserve the degrading land.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**SISTEM SOKONGAN KEPUTUSAN BAGI KAWALAN PENGGURUNAN
MELALUI PENYEBARAN AIR BANJIR ISLAM REPUBLIK DI IRAN**

Oleh

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Banjir dan kemarau adalah masalah utama dalam pertanian lestari dan pengurusan sumber asli di Iran, yang mana ia mempercepatkan proses degradasi tanah. Lebih daripada 90% kawasan di Iran dikelaskan sebagai gurun atau separa gurun dan 43% adalah dalam keadaan degradasi tanah yang kritikal. Menunjukkan bahawa aplikasi penyebaran air banjir (FWS) adalah penyelesaian yang paling logik untuk kawalan pengurusan (DEC) di Iran. Penyebaran air banjir meningkatkan kelembapan tanah, memperbaiki liputan tanaman dan menghapuskan masalah-masalah berkaitan dengan banjir. Rancangan ini memerlukan perancangan yang rapi dan oleh yang demikian pemilihan kawasan FWS adalah diutamakan. Kajian ini berusaha untuk menunjukkan: aplikasi sistem sokongan keputusan (DSS) boleh membawa kepada pembaikpulihan dalam DEC untuk mengoptimumkan pemilihan kawasan FWS di kawasan kering berdasarkan kepada pengurusan lestari (senario penggunaan tanah yang dikehendaki) sumber semulajadi. Untuk mengoptimumkan diagnosis masalah, keadaan keputusan dan objektif 37 stesen penyelidikan FWS sekitar Iran telah di kaji. Daripada projek FWS ini, 11 stesen yang mempunyai data yang boleh diterima



pakai untuk menggambarkan sebaran cuaca utama di Iran dan kawasan morfologi serta jenis tanah telah dipilih. Berdasarkan kepada data kajian ini, keperluan pengkalan data dan pengkalan maklumat telah ditentukan (21 faktor baru yang efektif telah ditentukan). Kajian tentang DSS yang tersedia ada (untuk rancangan penggunaan tanah dan sistem pengairan) menunjukkan kajian ini memerlukan DSS yang khusus yang berupaya menyelesaikan masalah lokasi spesifik untuk pemilihan kawasan FWS. Pelbagai kriteria analisis keputusan (MCDA), 'weighted summation', dan 'expected value methods' telah dipilih untuk 'ranking' 'appraising' dan 'weighting' bagi adaptasi kepada DSS untuk keadaan FWS. Sistem sokongan keputusan yang khusus ini telah direka dan dihasilkan untuk memperbaiki kualiti membuat keputusan dalam Kawalan Pengurusan Melalui Penyebaran Air Banjir yang dinamakan DECFWS. Kesahihan DECFWS telah diuji menggunakan data sebenar daripada stesen kajian DSS yang dikawal menggunakan dua kaedah: 1. perbandingan dengan keputusan penanaman daripada setiap senario yang telah diimplimentasikan, 2. perbandingan dengan keputusan penilaian kesesuaian tanah menggunakan kawalan alternatif berdasarkan kepada kaedah USDA 2003. DECFWS 3.31 telah dihasilkan di bawah Visual Basic bersama dengan keupayaan tambahan. Perisian ini boleh membantu pembuat keputusan mempersembahkan dengan mudah: alternatif yang paling sesuai untuk senario terpilih, senario yang paling munasabah untuk setiap alternatif, alternatif yang paling dikehendaki dalam 'benefit- to cost ratio', alternatif yang paling sesuai secara keseluruhan (untuk beberapa senario), alternatif tidak sesuai untuk FWS dan 'constraints', dan sensitiviti analisis susunan untuk nilai kesan tidak pasti. Diantara kebaikan DSS ini adalah: penilaian tepat, sasaran nilaian dan susunan, taksiran pantas, kos rendah, mudah diaplikasi, mudah diubah mengikut keadaan, membantu dalam mempersembahkan alternatif yang tidak



berkaitan, boleh menyunting laporan, menilai kesan 'score uncertainty', ketepatan dalam susunan, tepat dalam menukar data daripada kualitatif kepada kuantitatif. Keputusan tesis ini menunjukkan keupayaan DSS dalam menyelesaikan masalah pembentukan struktur di kawasan kering. Kajian yang komprehensif tentang DEC dan menggunakan teknologi baru (seperti dalam tesis ini) boleh membantu memulihara tanah (mengurangkan degradasi tanah) dan alam sekitar dengan lebih cekap.



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APPROVAL

I certify that an Examination Committee has met on July 13th 2009 to conduct the final examination of Masoud Nejabat on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Decision Support System for Desertification Control through Floodwater Spreading in Islamic Republic of Iran” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia Act 1980 and Universiti Putra Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

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Date



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	IV
ABSTRAK	VI
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IX
APPROVAL	XI
DECLARATION	XIII
LIST OF TABLES	XX
LIST OF FIGURES	XX
LIST OF APPENDICES	XXV
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	XXVI
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1-1
1.1 Problem Statement	1-7
1.2 Problem Importance	1-9
1.3 Recommended Problem Solution	1-13
1.4 Hypothesis	1-15
1.5 Objectives	1-15
1.5.1 General Objective	1-15
1.5.2 Specific Objectives	1-15
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	2-1
2.1 Desertification Control (DEC)	2-1
2.1.1 Desertification in the World	2-3
2.1.2 Nature of Desertification	2-6
2.1.3 Causes of Desertification	2-7
2.1.4 Desertification Control Approaches	2-9
2.2 Floodwater Spreading (FWS)	2-14
2.2.1 Spate Irrigation (SI)	2-15
2.2.2 Rangeland Improvement (RI)	2-21
2.2.3 Afforestation	2-25
2.2.4 Artificial Recharge of Groundwater (ARG)	2-28
2.3 Land Evaluation for Floodwater Spreading	2-30
2.3.1 Initial Methods	2-31
2.3.2 Improved Methods	2-33
2.4 Decision Support System (DSS)	2-39
2.4.1 Fundamentals of Decision Support Systems	2-41
2.4.2 Decision Support System Components	2-45
2.4.3 Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)	2-47
2.4.4 Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA)	2-53
2.4.5 Decision Support Systems for Precision Agriculture	2-62



2.4.6	Decision Support Systems for Land Management	2-64
2.4.7	Decision Support Systems for Water Resource Management	2-67
2.4.8	Decision Support Systems for Groundwater and Floodwater Management	2-69
3	MATERIALS AND METHODS	3-1
3.1	Data Requirements	3-1
3.1.1	Database	3-1
3.1.2	General Information	3-4
3.1.3	Knowledge Base	3-11
3.2	Models Requirements	3-12
3.2.1	Models for Database Management	3-12
3.2.2	Models for Knowledge-base Management	3-12
3.2.3	Models for Model-base Management	3-13
3.2.4	Models for User Interface	3-13
3.3	Special Decision Support System Design	3-14
3.3.1	Effects Tree	3-16
3.3.2	Criteria Identification	3-20
3.3.3	Standardization of Effects	3-20
3.3.4	Introducing Scenarios	3-22
3.4	Adoption to Special Condition	3-26
3.4.1	Adoption in Design	3-27
3.5	Validation Test	3-39
3.5.1	Area Selection and Field Study	3-40
3.5.2	Sampling and Sample Preparation	3-41
3.5.3	Soil Physical and Chemical Analyses	3-46
3.5.4	Land Suitability Evaluation	3-52
3.6	Decision Support System Software Creation	3-53
3.6.1	Suitable Environment for Decision Support System	3-53
3.6.2	Introducing Alternatives	3-60
3.6.3	Problem Definition	3-63
3.6.4	Identify Constraints	3-65
3.6.5	Irrelative Alternative	3-67
3.6.6	Standardization of Effects Score	3-68
3.6.7	Weighting of Effects	3-69
3.6.8	Ranking of Alternative	3-71
3.6.9	Effects Score Uncertainty	3-73
4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	4-1
4.1	Results of Collected Information and Data	4-1
4.1.1	Problem Diagnosis Improvement	4-1
4.1.2	Identification of Effects Criteria	4-2
4.2	Results of Executing the Developed Decision Support System	4-2
4.2.1	Execution of DECFWS	4-2
4.2.2	Results of Ranking	4-17
4.2.3	Results of Uncertainty Analysis	4-25



4.3	Advantages of Developed Decision Support System Software Package	4-31
4.3.1	Accuracy in Assessing	4-31
4.3.2	Targeted Evaluating and Ranking	4-31
4.3.3	Rapid Appraisal	4-32
4.3.4	Low Cost in Performance	4-32
4.3.5	Ease in Application	4-32
4.3.6	Flexible in Variation	4-33
4.3.7	Helpful in Presentation of Irrelative Alternative	4-34
4.3.8	Executable in Data Scarcity	4-34
4.3.9	Editable in Presenting Report	4-35
4.3.10	Responsible in Effects score Uncertainty	4-35
4.3.11	Precision in Ranking	4-36
4.3.12	Exactness in Converting Qualitative Data to Quantitative Data	4-36
5	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	5-1
5.1	Conclusion	5-1
5.2	Recommendation	5-4
5.2.1	To Desertification Control Researchers	5-4
5.2.2	To Floodwater Spreading Researchers	5-4
5.2.3	To Decision Support System Users	5-5
5.2.4	To Soil Scientists	5-5
	REFERENCES	236
	APPENDICES	253
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	321



LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1 Identified effective factors in FWS site selection and their resources	3-3
Table 3.2 Effects constraints, scale units, benefit or cost types (B/C), and standardization methods (SM)	3-23
Table 3.3 Adopted values for relief effect	3-30
Table 3.4 Adopted values for erosion rate effect	3-30
Table 3.5 Adopted values for erosion type effect	3-31
Table 3.6 Adopted values for fertility effect	3-31
Table 3.7 Adopted values for landslide and layer activity effect	3-31
Table 3.8 Adopted values for drainage effect	3-31
Table 3.9 Adopted values for flood damages effect	3-32
Table 3.10 Adopted values for organic matter effect	3-32
Table 3.11 Adopted values for participation effect	3-32
Table 3.12 Adopted values for ownership effect	3-32
Table 3.13 Adopted values for vegetation type effect	3-33
Table 3.14 Adopted values for texture effect	3-33
Table 3.15 Adopted values for binary effects	3-33
Table 3.16 Setting weights for Main groups through Expected value method	3-36



Table 3.17 Calculating actual weights for flood effects in selected scenario (SI)	3-38
Table 3.18 The means of Dry matter weights of samples collected for vegetation cover study kg/ha/year	3-43
Table 3.19 Selected characteristics of soil profile No. 9 (BZ4)	3-51
Table 4.1 Selected alternatives and their description	4-5
Table 4.2 Results of assigning related effects scores of alternatives	4-6
Table 4.3 Results of Standardization of effects score	4-7
Table 4.4 Setting weights for some special effects by direct method	4-10
Table 4.5 Sample of setting weights for Soil Effects by EV method	4-11
Table 4.6 Sample of setting weights for Social Effects by EV method	4-11
Table 4.7 Results of EV methods for weighting effects (SI Scenario)	4-11
Table 4.8 Scenarios ranking based on alternatives	4-16
Table 4.9 Alternatives ranking for multipurpose (combined scenario)	4-16
Table 4.10 Alternatives ranking based on best benefit cost ratio	4-17
Table 4.11 Abstracted results of the developed DSS	4-17
Table 4.12 Abstracted results of ranking by the developed DSS	4-17
Table 4.13 Soil series, land classification symbols and classes for SI scenario	4-18
Table 4.14 Land classification based on different landuse (the scenarios)	4-19
Table 4.15 Alternatives ranking based on USDA 2003 method	4-20



Table 4.16 Concordance between results of two methods of ranking	4-21
Table 4.17 Correlation between the set of results (DECFWS Ranking and USDA 2003 Ranking) for each scenario	4-21
Table 4.18 Production of different vegetation type per year in each selected part (alternative)	4-22
Table 4.19 The selected parts (alternatives) ranking based on results of vegetation yield study	4-23
Table 4.20 Alternatives ranking based on real data (result of vegetation cover studies) for each scenarios	4-23
Table 4.21 Concordance between results of two methods of ranking	4-24
Table 4.22 Complete concordance between the final results of two methods of ranking	4-24
Table 4.23 Correlation between the set of results (DECFWS method and VCS method) for each scenario	4-25
Table 4.24 Uncertainty analysis of alternatives ranking for each scenario under effects score uncertainty	4-27



LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 Global distribution of natural hazards 1993-2002	1-2
Figure 1.2 Location of I. R. Iran in arid countries	1-3
Figure 1.3 Number of occurrences of flood disaster by country, 1974-2003	1-4
Figure 1.4 Critical situation of LD in I. R. Iran	1-9
Figure 2.1. Distribution of non-polar arid lands map	2-2
Figure 2.2 Biotopes map of I. R. Iran	2-5
Figure 2.3 Mechanical and biological conservation efficiency and life time in surface sand stabilization	2-12
Figure 2.4 A. Plan of sedimentation basins with embankments and a recharge pond. B. Longitudinal cross- section of a sedimentation basin. Level-silled channel is at the upstream end, and a gap (spillway) is at the downstream end	2-16
Figure 2.5 A flood irrigated farm (cultivated barley) in Gareh Bygone FWS research station	2-19
Figure 2.6 Litter and decomposed organic matter deposition on floodwater basin in GBFWSRS	2-22
Figure 2.7 Deposition of plant materials and sediments carried by floodwater in a sedimentation basin of the GBFWSRS	2-22
Figure 2.8 Land use change during the 1984–2002 period in GBFWSRS	2-23
Figure 2.9 Increase in the forage yield in GBFWSRS	2-24
Figure 2.10 Floodwater-irrigated, 19-year old <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> Dehnh. in GBFWSRS	2-26



Figure 2.11 The ideal DSS development model	2-42
Figure 2.12 A simple analytic hierarchy process diagram	2-52
Figure 2.13 Classification of multicriteria decision problems	2-54
Figure 3.1 The map of I. R. Iran	3-5
Figure 3.2 Climatic map of I. R. Iran	3-6
Figure 3.3 I. R. Iran precipitation map (1972 – 2002)	3-6
Figure 3.4 Augmentation of flood occurrences in I. R. Iran	3-8
Figure 3.5 I. R. Iran FWS research stations	3-9
Figure 3.6 Selected FWS research stations for the study	3-10
Figure 3.7 Conceptual design of a suitable DSS for FWS site selection	3-15
Figure 3.8 Main indicators or effect groups in an effects tree	3-16
Figure 3.9 Sub indicators or sub effect groups in an effects tree	3-17
Figure 3.10 Land effects in an effects tree	3-17
Figure 3.11 Soil effects in an effects tree	3-18
Figure 3.12 Flood effects in an effects tree	3-18
Figure 3.13 Climate effects in an effects tree	3-18
Figure 3.14 Social effects in an effects tree	3-19
Figure 3.15 Groundwater effects in an effects tree	3-19



Figure 3.16 Vegetation effects in an effects tree	3-19
Figure 3.17 Flood damages effect in an effects tree	3-19
Figure 3.18 Standardization for Development feasibility by Maximum method	3-24
Figure 3.19 Standardization for Overall slope by Goal method	3-24
Figure 3.20 The general framework and algorithm of DSS	3-27
Figure 3.21 Tested weighting methods and appraisal methods per scenario for choosing the best ones for this research	3-37
Figure 3.22 Locations of GBFWRS and selected areas for validation test	3-41
Figure 3.23 The sampling of crop yield by standard plot in GBFWSRS	3-44
Figure 3.24 The reticulated wooden plot for small range plants	3-44
Figure 3.25 The marked and numbered trees in a parcel plot in GBFWSRS	3-44
Figure 3.26 Cutting some of the trees (in selected parcel) for measuring dry matter yield (stage one)	3-45
Figure 3.27 Cutting some of the trees, stage two	3-45
Figure 3.28 Location of the soil profiles (1-15) in GBFWSRS	3-47
Figure 3.29 Soil sampling from horizons of profile No. 9	3-48
Figure 3.30. Soil horizon layers in profile No. 9	3-48
Figure 3.31 One of the information sheets of DCFWS 1 database	3-56
Figure 3.32 One of the results (alternatives ranking based on scenarios) of DCFWS 1 running for a control FWS project	3-57

Figure 3.33 A part of DCFWS 2 database (effects value table)	3-58
Figure 3.34 The results of one of the query (uncertainty analysis of alternatives ranking) in DCFWS 2	3-59
Figure 3.35 The relationships of main components of DECFWS 3	3-61
Figure 3.36 Form for introducing alternatives	3-62
Figure 3.37 Generation of report for introduced alternatives	3-63
Figure 3.38 Form for problem definition	3-64
Figure 3.39 Generation report for defined problem	3-65
Figure 3.40 The circumstances of assigning related constraints to effects	3-66
Figure 3.41 Form for presenting irrelative alternatives	3-67
Figure 3.42 Generation report for irrelative alternatives	3-68
Figure 3.43 Selecting standardization methods	3-69
Figure 3.44 Form for assigning weights	3-70
Figure 3.45 Generation report for weighting effects based on scenarios	3-71
Figure 3.46 Form for presenting of ranking results	3-72
Figure 3.47 Generation report for ranking results	3-73
Figure 3.48 The circumstances of effects score uncertainty	3-75
Figure 3.49 Generation report for ranking results for effects score uncertainty	3-76
Figure 3.50 Circumstance of special DSS development for this thesis	3-78



Figure 4.1 Running DECFWS and project definition	4-3
Figure 4.2 Updating project and identifying uncertainty	4-3
Figure 4.3 Alternative definition and changing (if needed)	4-4
Figure 4.4 Assigning relevant effects score to alternatives	4-5
Figure 4.5 Checking for irrelative alternatives	4-9
Figure 4.6 Assigning weights to effect based on selected scenarios	4-10
Figure 4.7 Ranking alternatives for afforestation scenario	4-13
Figure 4.8 Graphical presentation of alternatives ranking for chosen scenario (afforestation)	4-14
Figure 4.9 Scenario (recommended landuse) ranking based on chosen alternative	4-15
Figure 4.10 Alternatives ranking based on multipurpose landuse (combined scenario)	4-15
Figure 4.11 Alternatives ranking based on selected scenario (most benefit cost ratio)	4-16
Figure 4.12 Uncertainty analysis of alternatives ranking for SI scenario under effects score uncertainty	4-29
Figure 4.13 Uncertainty analysis of scenarios ranking for alternative TQ1 under effects score uncertainty	4-30
Figure 4.14 Uncertainty analysis of alternatives ranking for multipurpose landuse (combined scenario)	4-30

