



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**DEVELOPMENT OF A SPATIAL DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM
FOR LAND USE PLANNING**

ELSADIG ABDALLA ALJACK

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**DEVELOPMENT OF A SPATIAL DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM
FOR LAND USE PLANNING**

**By
ELSADIG ABDALLA ALJACK**

**Thesis Submitted In Fulfilment of the Requirement
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Engineering
Universiti Putra Malaysia**

August 2001



To my beloved father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife and son

***I dedicate this work with great love and appreciation for their kindness,
encouragement and strong support***



Abstract of thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ELSADIG ABDALLA ALJACK

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Chairman : Dr. Ir. Mohamed Daud

Faculty : Engineering

Land use planning and management have an obvious spatial dimension where complex models and methods of assessment are used. The use of information technologies and spatial concepts promise many benefits to planners and decision-makers in the land use planning process. However, current land use planning systems lack flexibility in accommodating changes of land use parameters. This prevents decision makers from generating alternate land use scenarios. This research aims to develop a flexible Spatial Decision Support System for Land use Planning (SDSS-LP). The SDSS-LP development lifecycle methodology consists of five phases, namely, planning, analysis, design, implementation and testing phases. SDSS-LP was developed in the modules by using ArcView programming language Avenue and dialog designer extension. The system modules are categorized into three subsystems



i.e. database management, analysis and modeling. The system permits decision-makers to view and access its own planning domain database without any constraints. Next, SDSS-LP also helps the decision-makers to manipulate and analyze spatial and attribute data so as to be able to decide on significant suitability factors. These factors will facilitate the production of alternative allocation maps that can be used to represent different planning scenario. Thus, the SDSS-LP is valuable software that can be used within the land use planning process.



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

**PEMBANGUNAN SISTEM SOKONGAN MEMBUAT KEPUTUSAN
SPATIAL BAGI PERANCANGAN GUNATANAH**

Oleh

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Pengurusan dan perancangan guna tanah mempunyai lokasi dimensi yang nyata dan menggunakan model yang kompleks serta kaedah penilaian. Penggunaan teknologi maklumat dan konsep lokasi yang menjanjikan banyak manfaat kepada perancang dan pembuat keputusan dalam proses perancangan guna tanah. Bagaimanapun, sistem perancangan guna tanah masa kini kurang stabil dalam pertukaran kerja bagi parameter guna tanah. Ini menghalang pembuat keputusan dari menghasilkan senario penggunaan tanah yang berulang-ulang. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk membina satu system sokongan keputusan lokasi (Spatial Decision Support System) bagi Perancangan Guna Tanah (SDSS-LP). Pembinaan SDSS-LP terdiri daripada lima fasa, iaitu perancangan, analisis, rekabentuk, pelaksanaan dan fasa percubaan. SDSS-LP direka dalam bentuk modul dengan menggunakan program



ArcView bahasa Avenue (Avenue Language) dan penghubung rekaan dialog (dialog designer extension). Modul sistem ini dikategorikan kepada tiga subsistem, iaitu pengurusan pengkalan data, analisis dan model subsistem. Sistem ini membenarkan pembuat keputusan untuk melihat dan menggunakan perancangan aktiviti pengkalan data tersendiri tanpa sebarang had. SDSS-LP juga membantu pembuat keputusan untuk mengurus dan menafsir lokasi dan menentukan data yang akan digunakan, oleh itu ia boleh menyediakan satu faktor keputusan bermakna yang bersesuaian. Faktor ini akan memudahkan penghasilan pilihan pembahagian peta dimana ianya boleh digunakan untuk menunjukkan senario guna tanah yang berbeza. Jadi SDSS-LP boleh menjadi alatan komputer (software) yang bernilai, dimana ia boleh digunakan dalam proses perancangan guna tanah.



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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 1st August 2001 to conduct the final examination of Elsadig Abdalla Aljack on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Development of a Spatial Decision Support System for Land use Planning” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian 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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
APPROVAL SHEETS	ix
DECLARATION FORM	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xviii
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	
Background	1
Problem Statement	3
Motivation	6
Research Goal And Objective	7
Scope Of The Research	10
Topics Not Included In This Research	11
Major Results	12
Organization Of Remaining Chapters	12
II LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	14
Land Use Planning Process	15
Early Use Of Computers In Planning	18
Geographical Information System	20
Spatial Decision Support System	23
Multi Criteria Evaluation	30
Land Suitability And Allocation	32
ArcView And Avenue Applications	36
III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
Introduction	40
SDSS-LP Development Method	40
Phase 1: Planning	43
Phase 2: Analysis	44
Phase 3: Design	44
Phase 4: Implementation	47
Phase 5: Testing	51
Methods For Suitability And Allocation	52



Preparing Spatial Database Inventory	57
Study Area	58
Steps Of Data Inventory Preparation	58
Inventory Development Tools	63
IV SDSS-LP DEVELOPMENT	
Introduction	64
SDSS-LP Requirement Definition	64
SDS-LP Modules Architectural	66
Database Management Subsystem	66
Analysis Subsystem	67
Modeling Subsystem	68
SDSS-LP Main Window	70
Development of SDSS-LP Modules	72
Layout Module (1.1.1)	72
Histogram Module (1.1.2)	73
Attribute Data Module (1.1.3)	76
Query Module (1.2.1)	79
Selected features Module (1.2.2)	82
Boolean Filtering Module (1.2.3)	85
Themes Relation Module (1.2.4)	89
MaxMin Module (2.1.1)	93
Mode Module (2.1.2)	96
Linear Regression Module (2.1.3)	99
Mathematical operations Module (2.1.4)	102
Reclassify Module (2.2.1)	106
Assign Module (2.2.2)	110
Overlay Module (2.2.3)	113
Weight and Rate Module (3.1.1)	116
Suitability Module (3.1.2)	120
Suitability Ranking Module (3.1.3)	124
Single Allocation Module (3.2.1)	128
Multi-Allocation Module (3.2.2)	132
SDSS-LP User Interface	136
SDSS-LP Security	136
MSC Spatial Database Inventory Development Result	138
V TESTING AND VALIDATION	
Introduction	141
Scripts Testing	142
Modules Testing	146
User Interface Testing	154
System Testing (Verification)	154
Acceptance Testing (Validation)	158



	Gold mining suitability model	158
	Regional Suitability Selection Model for Primary School	180
VI	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
	Introduction	192
	SDSS-LP Capabilities	192
	The location capability	193
	The Conditional capability	194
	The Reclassify Capability	194
	Overlay Capability	195
	Map Algebra Capability	196
	The Suitability Capability	197
	The Allocation Capability	198
	SDSS-LP Significant Contribution	200
	SDSS-LP Limitation	204
VII	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	
	Introduction	205
	Summary	205
	Conclusion	213
	Direction for Future Research	214
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	216
	APPENDICES	
	A Source code of Data Management Modules	224
	B Source code of Analysis Modules	285
	C Source code of Modeling Modules	371
	VITA	447



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 SDSS-LP modules scripts testing	143
2 Example of scripts source code	144
3 SDSS-LP modules testing	149
4 Part of weight and rate module output fields values	151
5 Part of overlay module output fields values	153
6 SDSS-LP main menu items and testing result	155
7 SDSS-LP requirements and its related modules	157
8 Factors rate and weight for gold mining suitability model scenarios	161
9 Factors weight and rate of regional suitability selection for school	181



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Roberto (1983) Steps of land use planning process	16
2	Architecture of a spatial decision support system	26
3	System development lifecycle methodology and phases activities	42
4	The data flow model symbols notations	48
5	System graphical user interface design (menu)	48
6	Direct manipulation and control panel for input	48
7	The flow chart of the priority procedure	55
8	The flow chart of the optimization procedure	56
9	Location of MSC in Selangor state	59
10	Preparing spatial inventory steps	62
11	SDSS-LP modules architecture	69
12	SDSS-LP main menu	71
13	Data flow model of layout module	74
14	Data flow model of histogram module	74
15	layout and histogram dialog windows	75
16	Data flow model of attribute data module	77
17	Display attribute data module dialog window	78
18	Data flow model of query module	80
19	Query module dialog window	81
20	Data flow model of selected features module	83
21	Selected attribute data module dialog window	84
22	Data flow model of Boolean filtering module	87
23	Boolean filtering module dialog window	88
24	Data flow model of theme relation module	91
25	Theme relation dialog window	92
26	Data flow model of MaxMin Module	94
27	MaxMin module dialog window	95
28	Data flow model of Mode module	97
29	Mode module dialog window	98
30	Data flow model of linear regression module	100
31	Linear regression module dialog window	101
32	Data flow model of mathematical operation module	104
33	Mathematical operations module dialog window	105
34	Data flow model of reclassify module	108
35	Reclassify module dialog window	109
36	Data flow model of assign module	111
37	Assign module dialog window	112
38	Data flow model of overlay module	114
39	Overlay module dialog window	115



40	Data flow model of weight and rate module	118
41	Weight and rate Module dialog window	119
42	Data flow model of suitability module	122
43	Suitability module dialog window	123
44	Data flow model of suitability ranking module	126
45	Suitability ranking module dialog window	127
46	Data flow model of single allocation module	130
47	Single allocation module dialog window	131
48	Data flow model of multiallocation module	134
49	Multi-allocation module dialog window	135
50	SDSS-LP main password dialog window	137
51	Part of Inventory Layers	140
52	Example of script testing	145
53	Weight and rate module testing (testing steps)	150
54	Weight and rate module testing (data tables)	151
55	Overlay module testing (testing steps)	152
56	Overlay module testing (data tables)	153
57	Example result of testing main menu	156
58	Cartographic model for scenario 1 and scenario 2	162
59	Assign weight and rates to gold in sediment	163
60	Assign weight and rates to arsenic in sediment	164
61	Assign weight and rates to wulframite in sediment	165
62	Assign weight and rates to land use type	166
63	Assign weight and rates to proximity to fault	167
64	Assign weight and rates to proximity to granite	168
65	Assign weight and rates to history of area potential	169
66	Assign weight and rates to area size	170
67	Prepare suitability composite map to scenario 1	172
68	Prepare suitability composite map to scenario 2	173
69	Example of suitability ranking to scenario 1	174
70	Example of suitability ranking to scenario 2	175
71	Allocation of 100 zones from scenario 1	176
72	Allocation of 200 zones from scenario 1	177
73	Allocation of 100 zones from scenario 2	178
74	Allocation of 200 zones from scenario 2	179
75	Cartographic model for school suitability process	183
76	Assign weight and rates to number existing school	184
77	Assign weight and rates to distance from industry	184
78	Assign weight and rates to distance from highway	185
79	Assign weight and rates to distance from commercial	185
80	Assign weight and rates to population density classes	186
81	Prepare suitability composite map	188
82	Example of suitability ranking	189
83	Allocation of 5 zones	190



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DBMS	Data Base Management System
DSS	Decision Support System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GIS	Geographical Information System
GUI	Graphical User Interface
KBS	Knowledge-Based System
LIS	Land Information System
MACRES	Malaysian Center for Remote Sensing
MCDM	Multiple Criteria Decision Making
MCE	Multi-Criteria Evaluation
MDBS	Model Base Management System
PSS	Planning Support System
SDSS	Spatial Decision Support System
SDSS-LP	Spatial Decision Support System for Land use Planning
SEPSS	Socio-Economic Planning Support System
WLC	Weighted Linear Combination



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The primary purpose of this research was to develop a spatial system to support decision making in land use planning process by offering a flexible tool that allows decision makers to change planning parameters so as to produce several land use scenarios. For many years, computer applications have been used to facilitate the land use process especially data management and analysis. However, these applications were fixed with some of land use plan process parameters such as data sets, land use types, suitability factors, and factors weights and rates. These constrains have been making the process of generating land use plan alternatives very complicated. This system was developed to give flexibility and convenience to the users more than other land use applications software offers. It was developed using Arc/View software programming language Avenue and dialog designer extension of Arc/View.

Land resources are limited and finite. Land use planning is the systematic assessment of land and water potential, alternatives for land use, and economic and social conditions, in order to select and adopt the best land use options (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation, 1993). Planning involves a variety of



activities undertaken at different spatial scales by national, regional or local organization (Scholten and Stillwell, 1990). Land use planning and management have an obvious spatial dimension where complex models and methods of assessment are used. Information technology now permits us to improve acquisition, distribution, and utilization of geographic data and mapping.

The use of information technologies and spatial concepts promises many benefits to planners and decision makers in land use planning process. Computer technology, due its ability to provide answers at a high speed, can be used to transform masses of raw data into more comprehensive aggregates in a short time such that the information needed by planners and decision-makers are available more quickly and easily. Land use planning and design, site selection, and other problems requiring the manipulation of geographic information have benefited from recent advances in GIS (Wright, 1990).

Sang-Yun and Kim (1990) stated that urban planning starts with data and information, because these sources describe the conditions of the real world from which planners try to achieve the aspirations and goals of society. So, to manage planning data and information, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) provide an integrated set of tools for handling and analyzing large volumes of spatially referenced data and potentially provide a useful framework for analyzing complex space-time processes (Eric, 1999).

To assist land use planning decision-making process, Decision Support Systems (DSS) are designed to solve ill or semi-structured problems, i.e. where objectives cannot be fully or precisely defined such as land use planning. Yeh (1999) stated that, the DSS concept was extended to the spatial context in the development of SDSS; SDSS help decision-makers to make decisions on different location alternatives. SDSS are explicitly designed to support a decision research process for complex spatial problems. SDSS provide a framework for integrating database management systems with analytical models, graphical display and tabular reporting capabilities, and the expert knowledge of decision-makers (Densham, 1991).

Problem Statement

Many people are involved in planning and making decisions about land use. They work in national, state, district, and local organizations. They include ministers, administrators, technical specialists, developers, and planners. They introduce a wide range of skills and experience to carry on land use planning. Effective land use plans take into consideration various factors, some of which seem unrelated to the problem of land use. The most important of these considerations are diversity of human wants, fixed nature of land resources, diversity of capabilities and suitability of landscape units, complexity of environmental attributes and uncertainties surrounding the decision problem (Scholten and Stillwell, 1990).

Once the digital computer was developed half a century ago, applications in public planning and management became widespread. GIS is increasingly accessible to the planners besides DSS and SDSS. The suitability and allocation techniques applications started in the 1960s and 1970s, in an area of limited computing power, small datasets, and rudimentary computer graphics. In the recent years, progress has been made towards solving complicated suitability and allocation problems by using GIS and other technologies which provide richness of the data and the visual quality of the computer environment for data exploration, investigation of scenarios and decision support (e.g. Despotakis et al. 1992, Jankowski and Richard 1994, Lin et al. 1997, Makropoulos et al. 1999). However some limitations exist with respect to the technical functionality of current systems.

One of these limitations is that many of the applications were produced their land use plan output using overlay and other GIS functions without developed systems that may be used by other users (e.g. Zipperer and Andersen 1991, Miller et al. 1998, and Faber et al. 1998). Bright (1997) reported a model called "ALLOT" to perform land suitability and allocation for various future land use types. In spite of the fact that the model is a step forward, nevertheless, the model fixed land use types and suitability factors, and factor weights. One of the remarkable computer based systems in land use planning is Klosterman (1999) system, which provided a complete package for planning support system. However he fixed suitability factors and their related factor types. Therefore, the problem statement for this research is

stated as “current land use planning systems lack the flexibility in accommodating changes of land use parameters”. This limitation prevents decision makers from generating alternate land use scenarios.

Land use planning is the systematic assessment of land and water potential, alternatives for land use, and economic and social conditions, in order to select and adopt the best land use options. Its purpose is to select and put into practice those land uses that will best meet the needs of people while safeguarding resources for the future (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation, 1993). Consequently, the way in which planning activities are performed is not static over time. Each time period is dominated by a kind of issues, which emphasizes land use plan objectives and parameters. Planning activities are often of a non-route character and the policy making process knows many irrational moments. The planning issues change according to existing political priorities and community needs. Land use planning can be applied at three broad levels: national, district and local. Different kinds of decisions are taken at each level. Land is not same everywhere; different area presents different opportunities and management problems. All this requires a level of flexibility that most of information systems cannot yet reach. The ideal system to support land use planning process should be very flexible to accept all these differences in order to support system users to produce several land use plan alternative scenarios. The system has to allow a system user to change data set, suitability factors, factors weight and rates, and land use allocation demand and priority.

Motivation

The most important research issues, which motivate the author to undertake this research, are as follows:

- The author is a member of Knowledge Engineering for Safety, Health and Environment Research Group, Faculty of Engineering, University Putra Malaysia. This research group takes interest in developing computer systems in fields of safety, health, and environment. The physical development has the direct impact on the environment. This matter motivated the author to develop this system so as to support planning teams to allocate land use types on the most suitable location. Thus, the system assists decision-making process by facilitating the allocation of land to the uses that provide the greatest sustainable benefits.
- The current state of the art certainly indicates that GISs are increasingly used in both the public and private sectors. However, the systems seem to be used primarily for data storage and graphic output (Harry, 1997). There is an increasing awareness of the need to develop new tool and modules within GIS environment to perform several types of spatial analysis and modeling in the fields of planning, environment, engineering and business as well. Therefore, system analysts and information technology people are encouraged to conduct