GAP is a common, meso-scale geospatial platform for the assembly, analysis and sharing of strategic geospatial information.

GAP is the result of an evolving, collaborative initiative. A novel feature of GAP, taken the often mentioned challenges of planning support systems (see Geertman and Stillwell, 2004: 305-307, Klosterman, 1999) is that it was developed not only as technology innovation, but in consultation with key clients and stakeholders as an integral part of the analysis and planning process. In this way it took cognisance of the policy context, as well as user (including varied skills) and local specific requirements. The principal active participants up to mid-2007 were the CSIR, The Presidency (Policy Coordination and Advice Services) and the Department of Trade and Industry. Two versions have been produced and disseminated in the form of CDs (containing maps, documents and data tables): GAP1 in mid-2006 and GAP2 in mid-2007.

APPLICATON AND IMPACT

1. the benefits in addressing the problem of spatially-incompatible statistical area boundaries (e.g. administrative boundaries differing from river catchment management boundaries)
2. the value in enabling practitioners and policy makers to move from the prevailing ‘containers’ approach to a much more relational approach to spatial analysis. This means that instead of only measuring and mapping what is in each territorial container (e.g. a local municipality), attention can also be given to measuring and mapping the relevant positions, cross-border influences and other inter-locational attributes that places have in relation to surrounding areas and regions
3. the importance of a relevant, accessible and user-friendly planning support system in supporting strategic spatial analysis and planning through innovations in and access to technology (See Vonk, Geertman and Schuetz, 2007).

REFERENCES