



Press Release

FAO KIDS-based applications adopt GIEWS Workstation database structure and software components

by GIEWS Workstation Staff, October 2007

The FAO KIDS-based information system GLiPHA is being moved to GIEWS Workstation architecture, while plans are underway to consolidate the latest version of the KIDS framework with the GIEWS Workstation's software and database structure.

The link between the GIEWS Workstation and KIDS (Key Indicator Data System) has always been a strong one. The GIEWS Workstation uses the KIDS framework (particularly the mapping component) to implement its thematic information system, which is aimed at the collection, referencing, exchange and analysis specifically of food security data. At the same time, over the past few years the Workstation's development team has significantly contributed to the redevelopment of KIDS's underlying architecture and user interface design.

From its origin, KIDS – an open-source, software framework developed by the World Agriculture Information Centre (WAICENT) of the Food and Agriculture Organization – has been used to implement thematic information systems for the collection, monitoring and visualization of statistical, survey and indicator data. However, the GIEWS Workstation is the first KIDS-based application to be made fully database-driven, which, among other advantages, has improved its capacity in terms of data management and of volume of data handled.

The GIEWS Workstation's database structure was also developed using open source technology. Indeed it is thanks to the proposal presented by the Workstation project that the MySQL standard has now been adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization as the open source alternative to Oracle. This was a crucial factor towards ensuring that the Workstation would remain freely available under the GNU General Public License to a network of intended beneficiaries – including local institutions, national and international organizations and NGOs – in line with its objectives as part of the EC-FAO Food Security Information for Action programme.

Now KIDS developers are moving GLiPHA (Global Livestock Production and Health Atlas) to be based on the GIEWS Workstation architecture and will later re-incorporate the GLiPHA/GLIS extensions and enhancements. In the longer term, they plan to consolidate the latest version of KIDS with the GIEWS Workstation to create KIDS 3.0 (which could potentially include all the Workstations' core components). This in turn means that other FAO, KIDS-based applications, such as OPMS, PSMS, EMRPES-i, TADinfo and AgroMAPS, would also build on the Workstation's software and database structures.

This will enhance data compatibility between all the systems involved and improve access to key food security-related information such as livestock and animal diseases. In addition, having a common database structure and the possibility to implement a peer-to-peer data exchange module could favour the development of faster and more efficient data sharing protocols both between KIDS-based applications within FAO and with the GIEWS Workstation network worldwide.

