

### Check list for selecting spatial information system software

- Do you need a spatial information system or a mapping package?** If so, what scale or type – simple desktop viewer, professional workstation, custom application?
- Cost.** Hardware and software requirements (including ongoing maintenance).
- Type of operating system** that will be used (e.g. Linux, Unix, Windows, Mac).
- Format requirements.** Ability to handle raster (pixel data), vector (point, line, polygon data) or both formats.
- Local support.** Are you going to be able to get immediate help if you have problems?
- Complexity/personnel resources (including staff and training).** For a beginner, it will be important to have a user friendly spatial information system, i.e. one with an easy to understand graphic user interface (GUI). Ensure that budget funds are available for initial training and continued capacity building activities for both spatial information system technical and casual user groups.
- Company, agency or organisation requirements (general and specific).** Develop a needs assessment. Can specific benchmark requirements be met; does the software fulfil a variety of needs; does the system have the functions needed?
- Reliability of system and vendor.** Will they be around for the next ten years to service equipment and provide technical support?
- Scalability, maintenance and upgrading.** Does the technology have an update or production development program? Does it offer a migration path or suite of options? Will you need to buy add-ons and are they available?
- Support material.** Is there a pool of people locally or within your organisation that use your preferred spatial information system? If so, will it be possible to get help from more experienced users? Capacity building is one of the most important aspects in the successful implementation of a spatial information system.
- Maintenance and licencing.** What maintenance and licencing options are available?
- Interface with other software used and interoperability.** For example, between computer aided drafting (CAD), mapping, image processing, database and web systems.