

THE ESO CALL CENTRE

The ESO Call Centre plays a supporting role within the Manstrat Information Centre (MIC). The integral role of the Call Centre is to provide efficient and effective support to all the valued ESO users, regarding utilisation experience, technology related assistance, subject matter related questions and any other general queries. Once a query, question, or user contribution is received by the Call Centre, it is assessed and logged accordingly, then referred to the subject matter expert.

In the event that further clarity is needed on the query/question, a friendly request will be made to extract more information, in order to give a detailed response that satisfies the user.

The Call Centre can be accessed through dedicated hotlines:

0860 ESO ESO (0860 376 376) and **072 382 8278**, as well as an email address: support@esuite.co.za.

The Call Centre offers a no-holds-barred, full response and attention service to the users of ESO.

We are looking forward to hearing from you...ESO Call Centre is all ears.

Thapedi Setshedi

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

The results you achieve will be in direct proportion to the effort you apply.

Denis Waitley



ESO GIS TEAM

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GIS AN INTEGRAL PART OF AGRICULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has become an integral part of decision making within the agricultural sector. GIS has three vital components namely; data, computers (including software) and surely the most important - capable people who can operate the system. Manstrat relies on a dedicated and fully functional team of GIS technicians, operators and programmers for the effective implementation and application of spatial agricultural information.

Although not that obvious the Regional Data section in Extension Suite Online (ESO) relies totally on GIS data and is updated on a continuous basis. The GIS team tries to keep the system updated with the latest spatial information which is acquired/extracted from various sources, including satellite data. The most recent addition to the portfolio was the New Grazing Capacity Map for South Africa that was compiled from a 10 year archive of MODIS satellite data.

A constant challenge to the GIS programmers is to improve the speed whereby information is extracted from the spatial layers and presented in the required format. If one considers the fact that there are more than 400 000 farm portions alone in South Africa the online selection of these portions and the online extraction of the relevant

information in report format is a challenge in its own.

Due to the high cost of GIS software the team at Manstrat investigated the availability of Open Source software that could handle the various tasks necessary in the development and maintenance of ESO. Not only will this make GIS software available to all potential users at Manstrat but it also opens up the link to developers worldwide that could assist with problems or new developments. GIS at Manstrat is considered to be a tool for everybody to use and not a specialised tool available to only a few lucky individuals. It is therefore one of the GIS team's objectives to train new users in the application of GIS.

The very important role of GIS data in ESO creates an environment in which the GIS personnel need to be on the edge of new technology and developments at all times. Although project deadlines can sometimes put a lot of pressure on the team the outputs are always very rewarding. The team is ready for any kind of GIS related challenge and enjoys the creative environment they are operating in.

Dirk Pretorius

Located in the **Knowledge Centre** section of Extension Suite Online, you will find a module called **"Questions & Answers"**. This module of ESO enables any user to ask a question, and get an answer from our Information Center and field specialists.

The Q&A module, for short, is made up of 3 main sections namely, **View questions**, **Tasks** and **Admin**. "View questions", allows you to view all the questions



that have been posted by other users as well as their answers. At the top of this page, you will also find a filter to help you to effectively get the questions that could be of assistance to you.

The "Tasks" section allows you to ask a question by completing a short form that gets posted into our system and then gets answered by our information centre.

TOP EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USER FOR AUGUST 2011

By the constant monitoring of the utilisation of all users in the nine provinces, Manstrat AIS selects the country's top user monthly. These ratings are ultimately used to select an annual national winner.

Congratulations to, Lesego Phakedi, the National ESO user for August 2011. As Lesego Phakedi is a second time National ESO user, he will receive a digital camera.

THE IMPACT OF ESO ON THE FARMERS THAT I WORK WITH by Sir Lesego Phakedi



Extension Suite Online, as an information system, with its vast array of information based on agricultural topics, is designed to directly equip, empower and make daily work of agricultural officers (Extension officers, Economics and Specialists or anyone involved in the field of agriculture) more efficient.

The easily available and accessible information that one can site and experience by using ESO has built the confidence of many agricultural officers. When interacting with farmers on a day to day basis this confidence in one's work is translated to one's clientele, which are aspiring farmers who only have an idea, but not the information to support what they want to establish, including emerging and commercial farmers.

The impact that ESO has on the farmers that I work with is an exceptionally positive one due to the results that are achieved on the farms and the quality of products that farmers are producing.

The farmers we work with on a day to day basis ranges from start up farmers, to those who are already operational. When these farmers are facing a problem, it is managed and solved in a very short period of time through the use of ESO, rather than one having to search through heaps of material to get answers or by trying to get hold of specialists who are sometimes very busy and have limited time to help.

Since the introduction of the system, various benefits have been identified:

- More information is disseminated through study and commodity groups, farm visits and office consultations.
- In the case of challenges regarding production, it becomes much easier through the problem solver to have an idea of what might be the cause, which also fast tracks the process of identifying the relevant stake holders for the matter, meaning losses are reduced.
- Enterprise budget are easily developed.
- Immunisation programme for livestock is made available to farmers, which helps farmers to have proper planning and to protect their livestock against diseases by taking the right precautions.

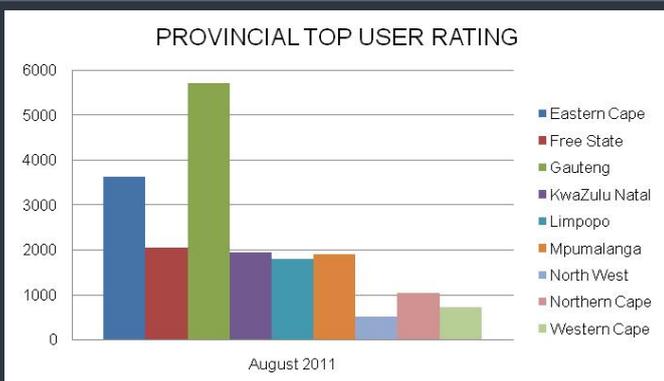
In a nutshell, the ESO system is a very important tool since it is informative, easy to use, understandable and accessible, serving the purpose of assisting the development of farmer.

UTILISATION REPORTS

The Gauteng province once again prides itself with Mr Lesego Phakedi, who has done it again. Congratulations, Mr Phakedi for being our National ESO user for the month of August, boasting with a user rating of 5695. Indeed there has been usage improvement throughout the provinces, namely: Gauteng, and Eastern Cape. The average top user utilisation rating in these provinces averages at approximately 4662. We kindly encourage all users to keep on logging in and using ESO for accelerated service delivery.

Although there are still utilisation ratings that can be improved, the overall ESO utilisation this month has been impressive.

Amanda Shokane



NAME OF THE TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE	
PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Sindile Magoda
Free State	Tlaleng Majola
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Jabulani Mdluli
Limpopo	Joshua Magomani
Mpumalanga	Mpho Mafune
North West	Mothusiotsele Setlhabi
Northern Cape	George du Preez
Western Cape	Karel Abels