

Space technology

CSIR geospatial training resource to benefit North-West University students

A copy of the Fundisa disc, a geospatial training resource developed by the CSIR Satellite Applications Centre, has been handed over to the North-West University (NWU) in Potchefstroom. This will allow students interested in pursuing studies in geospatial sciences free access to a range of data and tools.



Daniel Matsapola (second from left) and Tammy Lotz (seated) at NMMU with lecturing staff and students during the handover of the Fundisa disc.

The CSIR delegation comprising Raoul Hodges (acting centre manager: CSIR Satellite Applications Centre), Tammy Lotz (a remote sensing specialist responsible for the production of the Fundisa disks) and Daniel Matsapola (responsible for the CSIR data democracy project), was welcomed on 7 August by Professor Frik van Niekerk, executive director for research and innovation of NWU.

Some 13 NWU staff members representing different departments with an interest in the data as well as four representatives from the NWU's Mafikeng campus were present at the event, where Lotz presented the Fundisa disc. A lively question and answer session facilitated by Van Niekerk confirmed the level of interest in the data. Participants were keen for clarity from the CSIR on legal implications and raised a number of technical and practical aspects. These included data custodianship, dealings with commercial companies, sharing of data with other campuses of the NWU, the need for more data on specific projects, follow-up training workshops and future disc dissemination with updates.

The Fundisa disc was accepted and signed off by Van Niekerk. Commenting on the event, Hodges noted, "The atmosphere was generally positive and we believe the data were well received. This augurs well for our campaign to make the Fundisa disc available to all South African universities."

As a tool, the Fundisa disc also meets the four pillars of the CSIR's [data democracy initiative](#). This initiative relies on focused efforts along several fronts, namely, data access; software and tools; dissemination and human capital development.

In a recent development, Fundisa discs have been handed over to institutions in the Eastern Cape, notably the University of Fort Hare, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and Rhodes University.

- Biffy van Rooyen

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