

Global Environmental Alert Service

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There is a pressing need to build a mechanism which can consolidate scientific information and evidences, package this knowledge in a form usable to international and national decision makers and actively disseminate this information to those users. Although much information and many data sets are available in the public domain, currently there is no information broker who searches and packages the policy relevant material and delivers that information in an easily understandable format to the public and decision makers. A Global Environmental Alert Service (GEAS) could provide information emanating from monitoring, earth observing and early warning systems to users in a near real time mode and bridge the gap between the scientific community and policy makers.

A state-of-art analysis of existing alert systems indicates that efforts are necessary for turning the tide in early warning processes and technologies. A comparison analysis of existing warning systems is presented in order to assess feasibility and performance of existing systems of interest. Several criteria have been chosen for the comparison analysis so as to provide a comprehensive description of the systems regarding coverage of contents, impact and accessibility to information. A critical review of existing alert systems reveals a major gap and need for an innovative service. Characteristics and operational aspects of such a service are proposed. Early warning represents the process to effectively and timely detect a potential risk, predict the area under threat and its vulnerability and communicate the information with a certain reliability and sufficient time for taking action. An effective warning system requires an integrated and effective approach of each of the three components of the process.