The mapping tool allows real-time interactive cartography | Photo source Map Action

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MAPPING APP TRACKS WATER AND SANITATION PROBLEMS

NONPROFIT & SOCIAL CAUSE

A mobile app allows development officials and city workers to track problems with water, hygiene and sanitation

Spotted: Map Action is a Mali-based start-up that has developed a real-time interactive cartography and mapping tool. Map Action plans to use the tool to monitor and assess issues to do with sustainable development in water, sanitation and hygiene.

Map Action works as a mobile application that allows individuals to photograph and report issues such as water pollution and illegal dumping of waste in Bamako, Mali's capital. This information is then geotagged and sent on to development partners and city authorities, who can use the information to make more informed decisions about urban management.

The company also uses Google Earth imagery and drone monitoring to augment this information. Map Action has combined this information to build a digital map of Bamako, showing the location of issues, such as broken pipes, stagnant wastewater in the open or poor-quality wastewater systems. City workers and development agencies are also using the app to pinpoint and map problem areas. This allows them to make rapid improvements in urban planning and management.

In addition, Map Action sends out trained field teams to locate and study problems, such as investigating the source of pollution. The findings from the research are visually represented in colour codes that are visible on the map. This data is easily accessible by development institutions and city authorities. Boubacar Keïta, CEO of Map Action explained that "The goal is to collect, analyse, and submit the data to improve urban and environmental management."

Mapping is more than a tool for finding your way from A to B. At Springwise, we have seen a number of innovative uses for cartography, from creating wildlife corridors to tracking environmental changes and scoring sustainability.

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Takeaway:

Map Action is looking to scale up its platform to cover other cities in Mali, and different countries in Africa. In order to do this, it is developing deep-tech and AI algorithms to aid in identifying land features that impact on local environments. The start-up is making use of satellite data available through Airbus' OneAtlas Living Library platform. Airbus is providing the satellite subscription through its OneAtlas Pitch Your Project competition. This offers selected start-ups limited free access to Pléiades and SPOT optical imagery to develop their product.