

NSDI'S-CLASSIFICATION AND COMPARISON BETWEEN VARIOUS NATIONAL REPORTS

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ABSTRACT

At a global level, the broad use of new information and communication technologies constitutes an important tool for spatial information capturing and handling focused on the environmental monitoring and the natural resources protection, an issue of first-priority importance for the management of the global world's raising problems. In a 'knowledge society' geo-products and geo-services becoming more integrated and 'intelligent' with the demand on organizations and their 'knowledge workers'. Infra- and supra-structures are developed –driven by demand- on different levels with interrelated components like communication networks, data infrastructure and E-business.

From a European point of view, an improved access to information can also largely benefit the European integration process. The initiation of IT systems in all levels of public administration, the establishing of common standards and the creation of a networking environment will improve the quality of life in all fields, such as: environmental services, transport/communications, health, education, employment, economic growth/businesses, cultural heritage.

According to the 'EU Green Paper on Public sector information in the Information Society (IS)', public sector information in all above mentioned fields can be of

- administrative nature, which relates to the function of government and administration, i.e. laws, court cases, Parliamentary information etc, or
- non-administrative nature, which relates to information of the outside world that is collected during the execution of public tasks, i.e. geographic/spatial information, statistical information, information about businesses, etc.

The importance of raising the awareness both among the population and the key decision makers in the political arena/senior government officials -at national, European and international level- of the opportunities opened up by spatial information and its associated technologies and new collection/handling/sharing developments has been one of the main objectives of relevant associations (FIG, ISPRS, EUROGI, CERCO) at numerous meetings and publications.

At national level, the promotion of the IS within each country also facilitates the creation of modern, more democratic states via the opening of the public sector and the improvement of relations between the state and the citizens, without discrimination,

safeguarding citizens' rights, pluralism and the freedom of expression and access to information in a competitive environment.

The rapidly emerging spatial information management activities, at all levels, resulted to a considerable large number of independent spatial public databases, within each country. To help the various types of 'information-users' to find their way in this mass of data a new, better organized spatial data collection, management and sharing system within the various organizations, at national level is necessary. In addition to that, the achievement of a better coordination between the responsible National SDI agencies, at international level, would be of significant importance. At this direction, one of FIG Com3 objectives is the encouraging of greater country participation and National Report-presentation of the ongoing activity and the experiences of NSDI initiatives.

This paper will consider some of the recent developments in Spatial Data Infrastructures in various countries, i.e. Great Britain, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Greece, Israel, etc, presented in FIG Com3 and other relevant meetings. It will be divided into three parts.

The first part will examine briefly the recent consideration about policy-issues like: the creation of a common strategy for spatial information in Europe, the activity towards the global spatial infrastructure, the accessibility concept and the pricing policy of various types of spatial information (meta-data, information of a basic character, etc), the NMA's activities towards a fair competition in the international information market, copyright, privacy and dissemination of information considerations, etc.

The second part will briefly describe each country's approach in the field of establishing a NSDI. Besides the above mentioned issues, information about: the organizations responsible for NSDI- their role and time of their establishment, financial status/support, legal framework, future strategies, technical characteristics (such as the reference frames, map projections, standards, types of national spatial infrastructures, types of national spatial data models and products, scale, accuracy issues), up-dating policy/maintenance of data, applications of NSDI/values to the society, contribution to European and international SDI projects/research activities, education and training facilities and the new role of the surveyor will be included, if available.

At the third part, an attempt will be made to outline some first resolutions and evaluation in comparative terms. An optional framework for additional possible information of interest to be included in future national reports will be suggested, so that a more accurate 'state of the art' approach to be achieved. This will lead to new proposals for further development in the field, towards a seamless national, European and international SDI and the improvement of the contribution of the surveyor in the years to come.

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