

Award ceremony celebrates outstanding European Spatial Data Infrastructures

Twelve outstanding Spatial Data Infrastructures (SDIs) from 9 European countries were highly commended at an International Conference in Turin on November 26th and 27th 2009 in Turin, Italy. The aim of the event was to highlight promising SDI solutions in Europe, to exchange experiences and to learn from each other. The twelve award winners were selected from 135 regional and local Spatial Data Infrastructures in 26 countries in Europe.

The conference was organised by the European project eSDI-Net+ and hosted by Regione Piemonte. It attracted an international audience of about 130 professionals engaged in SDI and related GI activities at the European, national, regional and local levels.



Speakers presented their solutions, focusing on the key factors of their success. Besides the provision of viewing services, information exchange with the user community and free of charge data provision, the speakers emphasized the necessity to start small and grow up fast. "Don't think that you can provide the final solution on one day; start to build up a small corner. The users will validate it by its application and give you their feedback. So you can start on working on the next step." (Steve Brandwood, UK)

The main message for the Award Jury was that "each Spatial Data Infrastructure is a special case." The diversity of experiences made was a fundamental challenge for the Jury. Facing the difficulty of comparing "apple and pears, oranges and potatoes" Jury, consisting of 6 GI experts, decided to highly commend all twelve SDIs.

The SDI Best Practice Award is part of the eSDI-Net+ project, a thematic network co-funded by the eContentplus Programme of the European Commission. It aims to bring together key European SDI stakeholders to share knowledge and to provide a platform for communication and knowledge exchange at all levels, from local to global. The Network identifies working, accessible and intelligible solutions, as it communicates the purpose and aims of INSPIRE; it also encourages local collaboration in setting up innovative solutions.



Previous to the Award, all SDIs in Europe were invited to submit their best practice and be part of the fast growing network of SDIs. After an initial evaluation of the applications, a number of promising SDIs has been selected for detailed interviews to provide further information. Each interviewed SDI was evaluated by the national representatives of the eSDI-Net+ project, focusing on the key aspects such as:

1. Technological, innovative level and originality of the project
2. Implementation and/or readiness for INSPIRE principles
3. Level of fostering cooperation between different users (proof of visibility and/or user feedback)
4. Possibility of extension or transfer to other countries and regions

Further information on the Awards can be seen at <http://www.esdinetplus.eu/news/news.html>.

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