Newsletter

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in the eSDI-Net+ project funded by the European Commission within its eContentplus Programme. With this project newsletter we would like to inform you about the project's latest achievements and activities. It also features an outlook on future events and workshops. In this issue we will provide you with information related to the ongoing national and regional SDI Best Practice Workshops and preparation of the Best Practice Award, which will take place in Turin, Italy in November 2009.

Enjoy reading and please do not hesitate to give us your feedback.

Dr. Joachim Rix, Co-ordinator of the eSDI-NET+ Project

INI-GraphicsNet Stiftung, Darmstadt, Germany

Project News

Response to our SDI assessment campaign

The interest in our Best Practice Workshops was remarkable. The comprehensive list of SDI applicants includes a total of 93 applications from local SDI's in Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy, Germany and France so far.

In the course of this SDI assessment campaign, sub-national and national SDI's throughout European countries and regions get the chance to present themselves both to Spatial Data Experts and local SDI stakeholders. To give this chance to even more SDIs, we decided to extend the deadline for the application for SDI submissions. Online registration as application to the national workshops is possible. For further information, please get in touch with the national points of contact which are available at the eSDI-Net+ web site under the section "Get Involved – Regional Contacts" or apply directly on the eSDI-Net+ project website.

Best Practice Workshops

The first Best Practice Workshops were conducted in Italy, France, Hungary and Czech Republic. Especially the participation of local SDI's in France was quite impressive. More than 50 applications have been considered to be promising SDI solutions.

An initial conclusion based on the presentations and discussions in the first local workshops that could be made, is that a mature SDI is difficult to find. The majority of the observed SDI's is less than 3 years old. Another interesting finding of these workshops is the fact that some geographic information systems (GIS) were denominated as SDIs. This synonymous use of GIS and SDI highlights the fact that these regions regard their SDI's as an evolution of their GIS. Another explanation for this lack of mature SDI's is the applied principle of subsidiarity which means that public administrations at a higher level operate on behalf of administrations at a lower level if they don't have enough resources and capacity to implement their own systems for publishing and sharing spatial data. This became apparent e.g. in the Italian workshop.

Project-related one of the major conclusions was the verification of our defined methodology for the assessments of SDI's. The methodology applies to the needs of the different areas as a main guideline. Although some deficiencies were identified during preparation and implementation of the interviews, they could be overcome quickly by the interviewers or addressed and clarified during in the workshops. Above all there was sufficient flexibility allowed to adapt to different needs of the SDI representatives.

The next SDI Best Practice Workshops will take place according to the following schedule:

Workshop location	Date	European region(s) represented at the workshop
Cracow, Poland	January 29, 2009	Poland
Lisbon, Portugal	February 5, 2009	Iberia (Portugal, Spain)
Thessaloniki, Greece	February 5-6, 2009	South-East Europe: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovenia, Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey
Liverpool, UK	February 11, 2009	United Kingdom, Ireland
Darmstadt, Germany	February 12-13, 2009	Germany

Besides these events, regional workshops are planed to represent SDI solutions from Scandinavia (Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Norway), Netherlands and Belgium in March/April of 2009.

Best Practice Award 2009

SDI's that have been evaluated positively will be considered for the Best Practice Award. An official call for entries will be launched in March 2009. In response and in addition to the already evaluated candidates from the identification and analysis phase, further SDI's are asked to submit their application at the eSDI-Net+ web site under the section "Get Involved – SDI Workshops".

Based on the concluding presentations and exhibitions of the finalists a final ranking will be applied. All finalists' solutions will be actively promoted to relevant stakeholders and media.

The International Conference and Award Ceremony will take place in Turin on 26th and 27th of November 2009, where a final selection of SDI's is given the opportunity to present themselves.

Next steps

The future activities for the coming months will primarily focus on the planning of the eSDI-Net+ Best Practice Award Turin in 2009. Furthermore, eSDI-Net+ will proceed with the collection and documentation of relevant existing local, regional and national SDI initiatives and the determination of common problems and good practice solutions.

Dissemination activities will accompany all project activities. In this context, two workshops representing eContentplus projects and eSDI-Net+ will be organised at the GSDI11 Conference in Rotterdam, the Netherlands on 15-19 June 2009, in collaboration with EUROGI. The workshops will address lessons learnt and present SDI best practices in Europe.

The next consortium meetings will take place in Leuven, Belgium on March 18-19 and in Krakow, Poland on Sept 17 - 18, 2009. The envisaged topics will be the planning and organization of the Best Practice Award and exchange of experiences made in national and regional events, to build up awareness about the future perspectives of the INSPIRE initiative and its introduction.

Imprint

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