Dear Reader

In August 2010 the eSDI-Net+ project concluded after three demanding but also very successful years. The final review of the project was very positive, constructive and motivating as we even delivered more than was requested. I'm proud to announce that the achievements of the project will be sustained and continued by **EUROGI,** the *European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information*.

With this final project newsletter we will furthermore inform you about the publication of the eSDI-Net+ SDI database, the Final Report of the project, the eSDI-Net+ Self Assessment Framework and much more!

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

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

Learn more about eSDI-Net+ by visiting our website www.esdinetplus.eu.

Project News

eSDI-NET+: A Network to continue!

The achievements of the eSDI-Net+ project will be sustained and continued by EUROGI - *European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information* - after the end of the project.

EUROGI with its experience as an umbrella and networking organisation is positively suited to ensure the long-term sustainability of the investment of the European Commission towards a European Spatial Data Infrastructure. As one of the initiators of the eSDI-NET+ project and leader of the work package on the *Identification and Analysis of Best Practices* EUROGI and its members were strongly involved from the very beginning.

Specific future activities will include the maintenance of the eSDI-NET+ website and the continued updating of the public database of SDIs according to the resources needed and the decisions already taken by the experts involved in the evaluation framework. EUROGI will furthermore involve the SDIs and the partners of the network in the workshops of EC-funded projects that EUROGI participates in.

Public SDI Best Practice Database

Over the last 3 years the eSDI-Net+ project collected numerous data related to the 135 SDI applications from 24 European countries. The defined criteria, indicators and weighted indexes were used to assess the sub-national SDIs - at the same time this information is a valuable good in itself. The SDI analysis and selection process resulted in **a reference database** that contains all collected data of the SDIs analysed. European SDI best practices are documented and categorised according to these criteria and indicators developed during the project. A large subset of the database information now has been made available publicly following the approval of the SDI owners. Currently more than 100 SDIs are referenced in the public version of the eSDI-NET+ database containing information about good practices in the SDI field in Europe.

This SDI reference database will also manage the information that will be collected on the base of the SDI self-assessment framework and will be maintained by EUROGI in the future.

All sub-national and thematic SDIs are invited to self-assess themselves using the eSDI-Net+ SDI self-assessment framework and to feed the reference database. Register your SDI now!

Joining it incurs no costs or obligations. Even partial information about an SDI will still enable users to find similar operations in their own or other countries. The database facilitates the exchange of information about common issues even though applications or levels of administration may be very different.

SDI Self Assessment Framework

During 2008 and 2009 the eSDI-NET+ project team produced a "Methodology for describing sub-national SDIs" and derived from that an operational "Evaluation Framework" that includes defined criteria, indicators and weighted indexes in order to assess sub-national SDIs. This process was tested and verified with all submitted SDIs from 24 countries in Europe.

The results of this assessment process were presented in the *European SDI Best Practice Awards 2009 Learning from Best Practices*, International Conference held in Turin, Italy, 26th and 27th November 2009. Twelve sub-national SDIs were commended as excellent Best Practices.

The eSDI-Net+ SDI self-assessment framework (SDI-SAF) derives from the experiences resulting from the adopted methodology and the overall assessment process which were presented and appreciated at an international level. Its main purpose is to help SDI's in characterising and describing themselves. It can be even regarded as useful check-list to better focus at key issues in developing an SDI. To single out and to follow a successful implementation path in developing an SDI needs understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. **Self-understanding implies comparisons and measuring against others.**

The SDI-SAF is also intended to work in the opposite direction, from SDIs to the SDI community: by facilitating the comparison among various SDIs practices, it fosters networking and sharing experiences among similar SDIs.

Final Report

The Final Report of the project will be available for download at the eSDI-NET+ Project Website soon. It provides a comprehensive summary of the project achievements:

- SDI Assessment Methodology
- Identification and Analysis of SDI Best Practices
- SDI Best Practice database and SDI Assessment Indicators
- Best Practice Awards 2009
- Showcase Workshops
- Impact and Sustainability

Evaluation of the Best Practice Award 2009

In the context of the European SDI Best Practice Awards 2009, the eSDI-NET+ distributed a questionnaire in order to reveal the opinion of all participants. This valuable information was used to constantly improve all related areas in order to better meet their needs in the future.

A total of 37 people from 12 different countries completed the questionnaire. Their professional background ranges from public authorities on the local, regional (province) and national level to research organisations/ universities, technology and consultancy companies as well as pan-European organisations. The majority of them described themselves as geodata integrators, end-users of spatial information, end-users of geodata, geodata custodians or simply as researchers. The motivation behind the participation at the Award ceremony was quite heterogeneous. The general interest for knowledge in this field, the possibility to exchange information with experts, sharing experiences and networking with peer groups across Europe as well as the interest in the eSDI-NET+ project itself were all named equally.

The overall impression of the Turin Workshop was very positive. In terms of specific criteria especially the comprehensibility of the presentations as well as the organisation and scheduling of the event were regarded as very good. The participants were highly satisfied with the venue and services of the event. The quality of discussions has been evaluated as satisfying by the participants. This can be explained by the fact, that the most important discussions were the bilateral once, in which the participants exchanged their particular experiences with each other.

All participants agreed unanimously on the fact that the eSDI-Net+ networking activities are very beneficial and that the activities from the network should be continued after the project has ended. The majority of workshop participants (84%) furthermore also indicated their interest in participating in such a network.

Market Analysis - Expert Study

The interoperability of geodata is an important aspect related to the implementation of SDIs across regional and national borders as well as across application areas and markets.

In close cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences Aschaffenburg, Germany a market research analysis has been conducted in German speaking countries. It was mainly targeted at revealing general market trends and developments related to data harmonisation aspects.

In summary it can be stated that the interoperability of geodata across various application areas and markets will be of increasing importance – in both the public as well as in the private sector. There is a clear need for data harmonisation processes to ensure the cross-linkage of SDIs on the data level. Sophisticated expertise and knowledge of data harmonisation methods and processes will be required in the future. Yet, there is still a high uncertainty factor in the market that leads stakeholders to be very reluctant and cautious in their decisions and actions towards the interoperability of geodata in their areas. Also the expectations towards data harmonisation are very diverging in the market.

Major Events

eSDI-NET+ at the INSPIRE Conference in Krakow

Krakow, Poland was the host of this year's INSPIRE Conference which took place from 22nd to 25th June 2010. The theme was "INSPIRE as a Framework for Cooperation".

The INSPIRE Conference, being the final international conference within the project period, was used as an opportunity to present the eSDI-Net+ project achievements to the GI community and the broad public. It was also a point of arrival and an occasion to present the activities that have been carried out and, simultaneously, an occasion for some reflection to support the future sustainability planning.

The eSDI-Net+ project was represented by the pre-conference workshop "European SDI Best Practices in Dialogue" and the papers "Operational SDIs: The Sub National Dimension in the European Context" by Joachim Rix, Swetlana Fast and Ian Masser and "SDI assessment looking towards the European Interoperability Framework" by Sergio Farruggia and Franco Vico.

At the eSDI-Net+ Workshop outstanding Spatial Data Infrastructures (SDIs) introduced their best practices on Tuesday, 22nd June 2010. Three best practice examples from twelve highly commended European SDIs presented and demonstrated the key factors of their success towards the INSPIRE implementation at the sub-national level. The aim of the workshop was to highlight outstanding SDI best practices as examples of successful local and regional SDI developments and intensify the dialogue in the GI and INSPIRE community.

More details about the conference are available at the INSPIRE conference website.

International Conference on Spatial Data Infrastructures 2010

The SDI Conference 2010 was held from 15th to 17th September 2010 in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

The main theme of the Conference was the development and use of SDI's and all their aspects - technology, criteria and standards for organizing and sharing spatial data. The realization of the European INSPIRE directive in the countries of South East Europe was an important part of the conference. The conference was the major SDI conference in the region being influential for SDI development.

The eSDI-Net+ project was represented through several partners. For further information, please refer to the conference programme.

HUMBOLDT Open Day: Geospatial Data Harmonisation in Action

Our partner project HUMBOLDT organised the **HUMBOLDT Open Day on Tuesday 28th September 2010 in Lisbon, Portugal.** The opportunity of this open event was used to demonstrate the main outcomes and achievements of the project.

The Open Source Tools and Services developed in HUMBOLDT were demonstrated in the application context of selected scenarios (e.g. applications from the area of Protected Areas, Ocean and Marine Environment, Transboundary Catchments, Atmosphere, or Flood Risk Management). In addition to these showcase presentations, the participants had the opportunity to get acquainted with the training courses available on the HUMBOLDT training platform as well as to receive supervised hands-on experiences with the tools for data harmonisation.

The HUMBOLDT Open Day addressed SDI Stakeholders and more generally users dealing with heterogeneous geodata. In particular, the Open Day addressed end users, data providers and persons concerned with data integration and harmonisation who are involved in the INSPIRE and GMES initiatives, but was also useful for GIS users working in any relevant application field, GIS developers or educators.

The HUMBOLDT Open Day was organised by the consortium of the HUMBOLDT project in cooperation with the VESTA-GIS project. The event was co-located with a Training Conference organized by the NatureSDIplus project on Wednesday, 29th September 2010.

For further information on this subject, please refer to the HUMBOLDT Open Day Website.

The eSDI-Net+ project in brief

The project "eSDI-Net+ European Network on Geographic Information Enrichment and Reuse" started its activities on September 1, 2007. The Thematic Network is funded by the European Commission within its eContent*plus* Programme and was established in order to create a platform for communication and exchange between different stakeholders involved in the creation and use of Spatial Data Infrastructures (SDIs). The main goal of the network is to promote the cross-border dialogue and exchange of best practices on SDI's throughout Europe.

For more information about eSDI-Net+, ongoing activities, upcoming events and public project documentation, please, visit our website www.esdinetplus.eu.

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