

## ISO/TC 211 Geographic information / Geomatics Newsletter No 1 Summer 2003



### 9<sup>th</sup> EC GI & GIS Workshop A Coruna, June 25-27, 2003

A paper, [Standards for Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe \(INSPIRE\) and Global Spatial Data Infrastructure \(GSDI\)](#) was presented by Henry Tom, Co-Chair, ISO/TC 211 Advisory Group on Outreach, at the 9<sup>th</sup> EC GI & GIS Workshop, A Coruna, June 25-27, 2003. This paper will be forthcoming in the proceedings of this conference. It has also been published in the July, 2003 issue of the GIS Development magazine. A copy of this paper is available in [Appendix 1](#).

Mr. Alessandro Annoni presented [Inspire Development: First Results of On-line Consultation](#). The following URL provides access to download all the conference presentations: [ <http://www.ec-gis.org/Workshops/9ec-gis/> ]

The event featured INSPIRE, which is an EC initiative, supported by EC environmental, statistical & JRC organizations, to establish the European Spatial Data Infrastructure (ESDI). The hope is for EC legislative approval, in September 2003, of this initiative for funding and implementation.

The significance of the INSPIRE initiative, from a standards perspective, is that this will be the first region of the world where there will be major efforts to implement ISO/TC 211 standards and Open GIS Consortium (OGC) specifications. It was quite evident that almost all conference presentations of European projects indicated that they recognized and will be using both ISO/TC 211 standards and Open GIS Consortium (OGC) specifications.

The INSPIRE initiative is led by the EC Joint Research Centre (JRC), Ispra, Italy. The JRC, an ISO/TC 211 Class A Liaison, will host the ISO/TC 211 Working Group and Plenary meetings in October, 2004. [ <http://INSPIRE.jrc.it> ]



### Re-activation of CEN/TC 287 Geographic Information

A recent letter ballot to member countries confirmed the re-activation of the dormant CEN/TC 287 Geographic Information. The Netherlands will serve as the Secretariat. A forthcoming meeting to appoint a



Chair and establish a new work programme will be announced. As many of the ISO/TC 211 work items have been approved as International Standards – CEN/TC 287 will be initiating the adoption process and may be involved in the development of profiles.



**Eurogeographics** – Europe's National Mapping Agencies working for the European Geographic Information

Infrastructure. [ <http://www.eurogeographics.org> ]

The requirements for implementing the EuroGeographics core mission (*achieve interoperability of mapping and other GI data within 10 years*) and the initial steps envisaged by INSPIRE for developing the ESDI (European Spatial Data Infrastructure) converge in recognising the need for common specifications for reference data. This is the challenge that the EuroSpec project has accepted to meet.

**EuroSpec** is a long term – 10 years – process that will develop by stages. The ultimate goal – interoperability of all reference data, and other geo-located data, across boundaries, themes and resolution ranges – will be aimed at by a step-by-step approach. Practically, it is envisaged to focus firstly on some themes and scale ranges, selected according to priority user requirements, and to realistic assessment of operational result expected in the short and medium terms. These first stages will be based on the analysis of the current state of the art, and the sharing of best practice in the fields relevant to the initiative.

The work plan itself will be defined collectively, through two kick-off workshops. [EuroSpec workshop 1](#), targeted to the main national custodian of reference data components – national mapping agencies (NMAs) and cadastre agencies – will draft in March 2003 a first version of the EuroSpec strategy. [EuroSpec workshop 2](#) will open the discussion of this initial draft to a wide panel of the GI stake holders. Indeed, interoperability of reference data is an ambitious goal that requires a shared vision, and the commitment of the larger GI community.



## EuroSpec Workshop 2: July 3-4, 2003

Workshop 2 is jointly organised by EuroGeographics and the European Commission, represented by the ESDI project of the Joint Research Centre. The **main objective** of this second EuroSpec workshop is to review the initial concepts of EuroSpec taking into account INSPIRE requirements (considering both current needs and the reactions to the INSPIRE public consultation soon available). It will be slightly more technical focused than Workshop1, as the purpose is to better define the project work plan – deliverables, timescale and resources - required to develop the necessary specifications.

To this end, the provisional agenda comprises four main sections:

- A plenary composed of a number of presentations to 'set the scene' for EuroSpec in general, and this workshop in particular
- Three breakout working sessions, focused on:
  - Interoperability: its different levels, requirements and priorities for INSPIRE and EuroSpec
  - European Common Reference Data Specifications: what is required, what will they comprise, what steps to completion
  - Work plan: how to get there, who will be involved, what are the required resources.

The participants will be leading experts in the relevant fields and potential partners in future work, from the NMAs and Cadastre agencies, the European Commission and key European projects, and others from the Industry and Research communities, etc.

### **EuroGeographics Launches EuroGlobalMap v1.0**

EuroGeographics - Paris -- In July 2003, EuroGeographics, the association of European national Mapping Agencies, launched the first release of EuroGlobalMap dataset. EuroGlobalMap is the digital topographic dataset that covers Europe at the scale 1:1 Million. It is seamless and harmonised data and is produced in cooperation by



the National Mapping Agencies of Europe, using official national databases.

The production of the dataset was co-funded by the European Commission (eContent).

EuroGlobalMap contains six themes: Administrative boundaries, Hydrography, Transport, Settlements, Elevation and Named location (geographical names). The dataset will be licensed on annual subscription basis. It is also available for evaluation.

The first release covers 30 European countries - Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Northern Ireland, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands and Vatican. The coverage will gradually be extended to cover the whole of Europe.

EuroGlobalMap is ideal for a range of uses including planning, monitoring and presenting environmental policies, marketing planning, network analysis and as a background for displaying information.



### **The Second Administrative Level Boundaries (SALB) Project**

The Second Administrative Level Boundaries (SALB) Project is a dataset aimed at improving the availability of digital administrative boundaries at the second sub-national level. The SALB database will form part of the UN geographic database and was developed in the context of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) [ <http://www.ungiwg.org> ].

The SALB dataset is a global digital dataset consisting of digital maps and codes that can be downloaded on a country-by-country basis. In order to insure consistency from one country to another, the database uses an international border standard developed in the context of the UN Geographic Database. This dataset is representative of January 2000, and it is downloadable at no cost from this website. Due to the difference in the quality of the documents compiled, the dataset will be more



adapted for thematic mapping than for precise location or modeling.

SALB database website:

[http://www3.who.int/whosis/gis/salb/salb\\_home.htm](http://www3.who.int/whosis/gis/salb/salb_home.htm)

Mr. Steeve Ebener, SALB Project Director has worked tirelessly to coordinate and develop this database. If you or your organization would like to consider joining this effort, please contact Steeve Ebener [ [ebeners@who.int](mailto:ebeners@who.int) ]. He has also recently issued a mid-year report on the activities of the SALB Project ([Appendix 2](#)).

UNGIWG, at its next meeting (October 20 – 22, 2003, venue to be announced), may want to consider submitting SALB for processing as an ISO/TC 211 standard. The SALB Project falls under the UNGIWG and UNGIWG is also a Class A Liaison to ISO/TC 211.



**US Government - COMMON PROTOCOLS FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

**e-Government Act of 2002**

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**SEC. 216. COMMON PROTOCOLS FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS.**

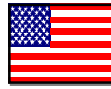
(a) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are to—

- (1) reduce redundant data collection and information; and
- (2) promote collaboration and use of standards for government geographic information.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “geographic information” means information systems that involve locational data, such as maps or other geospatial information resources.

(c) IN GENERAL.—

(1) COMMON PROTOCOLS.—The Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, working with the Director and through an interagency group, and working with private sector experts, State, local, and tribal governments, commercial and international standards groups, and other interested parties, shall facilitate the development of common protocols for the development, acquisition, maintenance, distribution, and application of geographic information. If practicable, the Administrator shall incorporate



intergovernmental and public private geographic information partnerships into efforts under this subsection.

(2) INTERAGENCY GROUP.—The interagency group referred to under paragraph (1) shall include representatives of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and other agencies.

(d) DIRECTOR.—The Director shall oversee—  
(1) the interagency initiative to develop common protocols;

(2) the coordination with State, local, and tribal governments, public private partnerships, and other interested persons on effective and efficient ways to align geographic information and develop common protocols; and  
(3) the adoption of common standards relating to the protocols.

(e) COMMON PROTOCOLS.—The common protocols shall be designed to — H. R. 2458—48  
(1) maximize the degree to which unclassified geographic information from various sources can be made electronically compatible and accessible; and

(2) promote the development of interoperable geographic information systems technologies that shall—

- (A) allow widespread, low-cost use and sharing of geographic data by Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, and the public; and
- (B) enable the enhancement of services using geographic data.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.— There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section, for each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2007.



Mr. Mark Reichardt, [Open GIS Consortium \(OGC\)](#), presented a paper entitled, [An Interoperability Report, a](#)

[Forecast and a Call to Action](#) at the recent Cambridge Conference, July 20 – 25, 2003, Cambridge, UK.

Abstract:Advances in digital information technologies present new challenges and opportunities for National Mapping Agencies. This paper reports on the progress of information, software and applications interoperability. It also describes how members of the Open GIS Consortium (OGC) have expanded the Consortium’s scope of work beyond basic system-to-system interoperability to include work in Web pricing, Sensor Web Enablement, Geospatial



Fusion, and technologies that support semantic interoperability.



Ravi Gupta, Editor,  
GIS Development  
[Ravi.Gupta@GISdevelopment.net](mailto:Ravi.Gupta@GISdevelopment.net)



**Dr Kaew Nualchawee A pioneer in GIS in Thailand**

The June, 2003 issue of [GIS@Development](#) contains an article (attached) on our colleague and good friend, Dr. Kaew Nualchawee, ISO/TC 211 Head of Delegation, Thailand. It is not often that one of our own colleagues is recognized for his achievements and I have personally known this very kind and wonderful human being for years, Dr. Kaew has always been quiet and quite modest of his accomplishments. I invite you all to read this article and you will know why I admire and salute him ([Appendix 3](#))



The **16 th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference (UNRCC) for Asia and the Pacific** was held in conjunction with the **9<sup>th</sup> annual Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific (PCGIAP)** and with the **Global Mapping Forum** in Okinawa, Japan, July 12 –18, 2003. Information summarizing these meetings is not yet available. We hope to have this material for the next issue of this newsletter.



This rather exclusive event (invitation only) occurs every four years and is organized and sponsored by the Ordnance Survey,

United Kingdom. There were approximately 178 delegates from over 71 countries participating.

The Cambridge Conference's main focus is on the issues confronting National Mapping Agencies (NMA's). Mr. Ravi Gupta, Editor, GIS Development provided daily reports on the presentations and sessions. The GIS Development website provides access and downloading of the papers presented at this conference.



**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

Since early 2002 the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations is actively

developing its spatial information infrastructure, **GeoNetwork**, both internally and externally within the UN Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) context. GeoNetwork, based on a philosophy of distributed ownership, allows individuals and organizations to work interactively with FAO's vast wealth of map and related information. Its development is undertaken in close cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP) and ESRI and the system will have both Internet as well as desktop-based versions.



In the words of Mr. Gupta,

"In summation, the four days reflected exchange of visions, analysis and paradigms that had promises of oceans of opportunities and built upon various pillars of success stories from various organizations and agencies across the world. What emerges practically out of these deliberations (read 'resolutions') for users, NMAs, policy makers and the individual, is what is most crucial. I keep my fingers (positively) crossed for that."

For its metadata GeoNetwork has adopted the recently approved **ISO 19115 Metadata Standard** and for the actual data the OpenGIS Consortium (OGC) specifications while the application is powered by OpenSource software thus allowing broad participation in its further development. Currently ongoing key developments are the establishment of a distributed search capacity, using the Z39.50 protocol that will allow for searching the content of some 250 major databases worldwide through Geonetwork and the development of an **InterMap** capacity, allowing for dynamic combination of map layers from distributed



Food  
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sources. The full GeoNetwork capacity will be demonstrated at the forthcoming UNGIWG meeting in

Nairobi, Kenya in late October. For an idea about the current GeoNetwork capacity, go to <http://www.fao.org/geonetwork>



Dear Readers,

Our inaugural issue is intended for the members

of ISO/TC 211 and its Class A Liaison organizations. As this ISO/TC 211 Newsletter, a service provided by the ISO/TC 211 Advisory Group on Outreach, develops and evolves, we hope it will also become informative to the global geographic community and eventually to the public at large.

**Our mission is to provide information on the standardization of geographic information and related activities.**

Sincerely,

Henry Tom, Editor  
ISO/TC 211 Newsletter.



**Other useful links:**

EIS – News Issue 14, June 2003 [Appendix 4](#)

Global geography related sites:  
<http://www.geog.uu.nl/nicegeo.html>

GIS journals & associations:  
<http://www.sidsnet.org/pacific/usp/~gisunit/RESOURCE/JOURNALS.HTML>