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Spatial Data Infrastructures**

**The GSDI Association activities related to SDI convergences\***

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Bas Kok, Past-President GSDI Association.**

The new GSDI Strategic Plan focuses for a major part on SDI convergences and strategic alliances. The world is experiencing currently rapid technological, economic, environmental and social changes. Spatial Data Infrastructure concepts and practices have been successfully deployed and implemented in many jurisdictions.

Capacity building is becoming increasingly important all over the world to promote the use of spatial data infrastructures all over the world and communicate about the main conditions for successful SDI development and implementation.

One of the most successful approaches is the work of INSPIRE and the role of the National Mapping Agencies in Europe in the creation of successful SDI implementation. the need to create more strategic alliances with important partners in the future, and the importance of having excellent topographic and cadastral data available as a key condition for SDI development and implementation.

To illustrate the importance of these conditions I will focus on good experiences in Europe.

We organized our GSDI 11 conference this year in June in cooperation with the European Commission in the Netherlands to launch the SDI convergence process as one of the key elements of our work.

During this conference the main results of the INSPIRE Directive and the progress made in the implementation of the legal and technical process of the SDI's in the European Union member states were presented. Excellent cases were shown on how a combination of the use of accurate cadastral and topographic data, the creation of a legal framework and strong involvement of the professional community can lead to optimized access of spatial data to citizens and active involvement of the Spatial Data Infrastructure community in e government processes in the European Union countries.

The INSPIRE process is a very successful one. In 2006 the INSPIRE Directive was adopted. This European Directive has been developed in a relatively short time. It contains a legal framework for implementation in the EU countries and it contains rules for data specifications, metadata, network services, data and service sharing, and monitoring and reporting. INSPIRE is a well balanced program aiming at the creation of a European Spatial Data Infrastructure built upon National Spatial Data Infrastructures created by the Member States with an open and participatory approach Another essential element in this successful approach in this process is the availability of well maintained topographic small scale and large scale topographic and cadastral data sets.

An overview of the current status of the implementation of the INSPIRE in the regulations of member status shows that that European regulation has been transposed in the national legislations of Hungary, Finland, the Netherlands and Denmark. In other EU countries the transposition process will be realized soon, because the implementation in

most of the countries is well coordinated. In many countries the national Geo Information portal is currently operational.

Another strong point in the European approach is the role of the National Mapping Agencies and Cadastre and Land Administration Agencies. They play a leading role in the SDI development and implementation processes in their countries. These registrations are key essentials for sustainable economic development on national level. Their involvement was also one of the success factors behind the successful INSPIRE implementation in Europe. For that reason coordinate and reference systems, cadastral parcels and topographic and core data sets are qualified in INSPIRE as an essential part of the annex 1 core data sets of the European INSPIRE Directive.

In most of the member states the NMA's and Cadastres provide accurate and well maintained topographic and cadastral data sets which are a key element in their national SDI and e government programs.

In some countries in the European Union, such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, topographic and cadastral core data are essential elements in their national e government programs. In Finland geographical information is an important part of the national basic information pool for e government in their national e- government programs, together with taxation information, information on pensions and corporate information. In Sweden the Swedish government assigned the National Land Survey of Sweden a strategic and coordinating role in making a National Strategic Plan for the integrated provision of information within the geo data sector. The National Geo Data Portal of Sweden is an essential element in the Swedish national e government program. In Denmark the National Land Survey and Cadastre is responsible for the implementation of the INSPIRE directive in Denmark. The Infrastructure for Spatial Information Act creates the connections to e Government. In the Netherlands the main SDI registers are currently a formal part of the e government program and every authentic register in the so called key registers are laid down in special regulations and laws. The impact on this approach is that these registers must be obligatory used by government institutions. The main SDI registers are currently a formal part of the e government program and every authentic register in the so called key registers are laid down in special regulations and laws. The impact on this approach is that these registers must be obligatory used by government institutions. The Dutch Cadastre plays an important strategic role in this process. The Dutch Cadastre maintains currently the key register for cadastre, and topography, and is distributor of building and address information. The government recently decided that Cadastre will also become the distributor of sub soil information. Preparations are now be made about the distributor role for the large scale basic map, for planning and zoning information as well as valuation information.

The experiences in Europe show that the Cadastres and National Mapping Agencies are playing an important role in their Spatial Data Infrastructure Development and implementation and some SDI's are currently essential tools in their national e government programs.

The time is ripe for the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association to share and promote the effective use of geographic information as well as the broader societal communities that apply geographic information technologies to demonstrate their achievements to governments and decision makers.

For that reason strategic alliances between the GSDI Association and other important partner play a major role in the further execution in the SDI convergence process. The Association would like to amplify the success of our potential strategic partners to seek a similar level of ministerial and executive visibility and support of contributed systems, products, and services through coordinated efforts.

The GSDI Association will intensify cooperation and will intensify co-operation and the creation of strategic alliances with all the GEO GEOSS community, and the National Mapping Agencies and Cadastres world wide to communicate the successes throughout the world in more detail and stimulates capacity building in other parts in the world as much as needed.

We are aware that also many successes in the SDI development and implementation can be presented from the American regions. This is one of the main reasons behind our SDI convergence approach in the broader spatial community but also in our SDI Community itself. The SDI concept has been launched in almost every country in the world. There is a rapidly growing need for communication, debate and interaction among successful international SDI stakeholders concerning how they utilize each other's SDI for e-government, optimized access and business development.

For that reason the GSDI Association stimulates in the coming years the establishment of strategic forums throughout the world that enables the American Community to interact and communicate with other regions to exchange the knowledge about the key elements of successful SDI implementation. The GSDI Association invite all our partners in the American Region to take actively part in this discussion, debate and SDI bridge- building process and learn from each others successful experiences This process is necessary for our decision making process on global level for solving the most pressing societal issues, such as urban sprawl, climate change, poverty issues and global calamities.

As a result of this convergence process, in the coming years, similar successes and common approaches in the American regions can be communicated with our global network as well.