

CARTOGRAPHIC PRODUCTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SNIT; THE INITIATIVE OF THE CHILEAN NSDI

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CHILE is a southerly and elongated stretch of territory located around the southern end of the Americas and rather far from the rest of the world.

This distance has not prevented it from possessing a wide range of products such as geo-cartographic works and maps, multimedia products and obviously a complete and modern geodesic network and set of official regular cartography of the nation. It has achieved this through the Military Geographic Institute of Chile, its official body for all matters related to the representation of Chilean territory, the presentation of Geographic issues, and moreover the organisation for technical research and release of information in related matters.

Thus Chile can be proud of having available almost all of its national territory covered by cartography at 1:50,000 scale, with 1:250,000 scale and 1:500,000 scale maps sets derived from it, both in paper and digital media, ultimately leading to a Geo-spatial database, which makes it a unique case in the Latin American context. Moreover, as part of its mission, it has made several Atlases and Maps in both traditional and multimedia formats. All of this is based on a substantial training program for its personnel to national and international levels.

In this context, and convinced of the optimum use of the information created being a necessity for the country and needing to interact with and be compatible with the information of many other areas of development in Chile, the IGM recognises the initiatives for geo-spatial data infrastructures as a fundamental tool for the development of the country. For this reason it has supported, participated in and worked for the national initiative for an SDI since its beginnings; this initiative is known as the National Territorial Information System (SNIT in Spanish initials).

The work of the Chilean NSDI officially began in the year 2001, when, on the 25th of September of that year, the President of the Republic recognised and supported the work that an inter-ministerial group had been doing, and issued the Presidential instruction or mandate N° 14, which decrees that :

- The SNIT be created and its political and technical dependance on the authorities be defined
- Moreover, three main objectives were set :
- To set up an inventory of the situation of territorial information in the country
- To study and make progress on the standards that enable interoperability in territorial information
- To draft a National Plan

After a year of work, in which a survey was carried out at national level to obtain an overview of the current state of territorial information and a 'National Plan for the Capture and Standardization of Territorial Information 2003 – 2005' was drafted; the President of the Republic gave his support to the work done, by means of another presidential instruction that set the tasks of :

- Fulfilling the National Plan

- Working on a proposed Law for the SNIT

The organisation necessary for facing these new tasks in the second Presidential instruction made it necessary to restructure the SNIT, giving rise to the units that aid the work of the SNIT; thus it is that a TECHNICAL UNIT and a CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE were created. The first of these contains participants from the institutions involved in technical work or in basic territorial information, providing support in the technical aspects, such as standards, metadata, databases and other tasks, while the Consultative Committee was set up especially to aid the SNIT in proposing the projected Law.

The National Territorial Information System is in its fourth year, having achieved goals never before reached in Chile. The most outstanding of these are :

- The coordination and opening up of the various areas of development in Chile leads to the idea of sharing information and combining efforts for this to be created under standards that enable and ease their exchange
- The implementation at a national level of the Catalogue of Metadata as a tool for finding out what there is, where it is, what state it is in and how to obtain it. This catalogue, over the current year, is to be fed with the metadata of several different organisations at national level.
- The drafting of a proposed law to give a legal foundation to the SNIT as the national SDI

In parallel with these achievements, each one of the thematic areas defined in the SNIT have been making progress towards the standards required for creating and managing their respective information types. For the IGM, this means coordinating the Basic Territorial Information Group, which, together with its sub-committees, has worked on :

- Making the reference system SIRGAS (WGS 84) the official and single system for the whole country.
- specifications for GPS measurements in Chile
- drafting a project for the "CAPTURE OF TERRITORIAL INFORMATION LACKING IN CHILE, AT 1:10,000 (RURAL) AND 1:1,000 (URBAN) SCALES, with accompanying finance
- studying the ISO standards and their application in the SNIT
- developing a thesaurus for the GITB and the SNIT

On the basis of the work done and to be performed, it can be concluded that :

- The Geo-Spatial Data Infrastructure is a national necessity, involving the hard task of convincing the authorities and finding political support for putting it into effect.
- Although the SNIT has achieved a lot of work and made progress successfully, with the aid of two official instructions from the President of the Republic, it does not have sufficient funding. The various institutions which have worked on it have done so with their own means and resources.
- The National Territorial Information System of Chile has established a proposed law for the SNIT to have a legal and economic foundation and to become the Chilean NSDI, although currently it is going through a stage of political analysis during this year of Presidential elections