



INSPIRE

Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe

Discussion Paper on Action 2016.4 Theme specific issues - supporting the INSPIRE implementation community in 2019-2020

Type	Document for information and discussion
Creator	EC and EEA INSPIRE Team
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Identifier	MIG/9/2018/DOC10
Description	<p>This paper summarises the status of action 2016.4 on theme specific issues of data specifications & the exchange of implementation experiences in thematic domains and proposes changes for the years 2019-2020. The proposed adaptation reflect new policy requirements, 3.5 years of experience with the activity as well as results of the dedicated TC evaluation Workshop.</p> <p>The main proposed changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting the organisation and upgrading the technical solution of Thematic clusters on-line platform • Strengthening the role of MIWP 2016.4 sub-group to regularly assess, document and monitor any change proposals raised in the TC platform, including good practice proposals.
Actions	<p>MIG to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and endorse the proposed modifications (Chapter 2) in the action 2016.4 for the years 2019-2020

Preface

The implementation and use of EU Spatial Data Infrastructure (INSPIRE) is progressing. There are various stakeholders involved in the activity at the MS level (mainly the implementation) as well as at the EU level (mainly the use). Furthermore, both implementation and use of INSPIRE generate very often theme/domain-specific questions.

In this context, action MIWP Action 2016.4 was created to facilitate the discussion of theme specific issues of data specifications & the exchange of implementation experiences in thematic domains

The main tool supporting this action is the common collaborative platform (Thematic Clusters) that allows stakeholders to share, discuss and propose issues and share implementation & use experiences.

To support and promote this activity, the 2016.4 sub-group has been set up. The group is composed of facilitators of Thematic Clusters and MIG-T liaisons. Their role has been proven to be essential to fulfil the ultimate goal - effective support to the implementation as well as maximising the use of INSPIRE.

In the recent period Action 2016.4 has also started to reflect more on the importance of bringing in relevant discussions from relevant policy groups, technical experts or other communities (e.g. Eionet).

The document is organised in two sections. First it is summarising the current State of play of the organisation and use of the Thematic Clusters platform, including the conclusions from the evaluation meeting. The second part presents the proposal for modifications of the 2016.4 Action for the period of 2019-2020.

1 Introduction – State of play of the use of Thematic cluster platform

Since its official launch (11.12.2014) the INSPIRE Thematic Clusters on-line collaborative platform (TC platform, <https://themes.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>) - has been **an integral part of action MIWP-14/2016.4 of the INSPIRE Maintenance and Implementation Work Programme**, with the main objective of providing a platform for sharing any theme-specific issues, change proposals or just good practices with wider INSPIRE community. The overall aim has always been to support successful implementation and evolution of INSPIRE in the Member States.

To aid this natural INSPIRE evolution the TC platform has played the following roles:

- On-line INSPIRE users collaborative platform... **to share**
- User's implementation "knowledge base"... **to find**
- Incubator for change/addition proposals... **to propose** (e.g. 1st set of corrigenda published end of 2016; evaluation of the collected MS proposals of the second round 2017)
- Discussion forum for e.g. links with other environmental policies... **to discuss**

INSPIRE TC platform organisation

Since the beginning the TC platform has been organised by 9 thematic domains (thematic clusters) that follow/cover all 34 INSPIRE data themes. The exchange of information, support / responses to discussions and generation & assessment of change requests etc. is facilitated for each thematic cluster by a facilitator. The facilitators are selected experts with INSPIRE as well as domain knowledge.

In order to bring the information provided by communities of practice closer to the MIG-T group (MS technical representatives), the role of **MIG-T liaison** was established. One MIG-T expert was selected per cluster to liaise with the relevant and to provide feedback from and to MIG-T. Especially when collecting and evaluating change proposals, the role of MIG-T liaisons has proven to be very useful and effective. This activity is formalized under the 2016.4 MIWP Action, where facilitators and MIG-T liaisons meet formally in the sub-group supporting the action.

While the content of the TC platform **is mainly generated by communities** of MS INSPIRE implementers (ca. 965 registered members), the role of facilitators is very important since it keeps the platform organized and "alive" and to promote it in the relevant thematic communities. This can be seen e.g. in the Earth Science cluster, which, due to the administrative issues, was without facilitator for some time, and where activity has significantly decreased over this period.

TC Activity – statistics of use (13.11.2018)
Registered users: 965
Discussion topics: 687
Discussion replies: 1945

Uploaded Files: 293
Dedicated topic summarizing pages: 198
Groups: 11 (9 Thematic Clusters + 2 cross domain clusters)
News: 163
Events: 26
Nr. of Visits from 1-1-2018 until 12-09-2018: 23937
Nr. Pageviews from 1-1-2018 until 12-09-2018: 83482

The current TC facilitators were supported through contracts (that concluded at the end of May 2018) with JRC covering ca. 30 days over 2 years. Two additional thematic clusters facilitators are currently planned to work under the conditions of the Collaboration agreements between DG-JRC and respective employers of the facilitators.

The whole TC platform activity is coordinated as well as technically administered by JRC.

The current situation is following:

Thematic Cluster	Facilitator	MIG-T liaison
Earth Science	Amelia Baptie (UK)	Carlo Cipolloni (IT)
Statistics	Mirosław Migacz (PL)	Jari Reini (FI)
Marine and Atmosphere	Keiran Millard* (UK)	Anders Ryden (SE)
Land Cover and Land Use	Lena Hallin-Pihlatie (FI)	Lars Eric Storgaard (DK)
Elevation, Orthoimagery, Reference Systems, Geographical Grids	Jordi Escriu (ES)	Markus Seifert (GE)
Environmental Monitoring and Observations	Katharina Schleidt (AT)	Jose Miguel Rubio Iglesias (EEA)
Biodiversity and Management Areas	Stefania Morrone (IT)	Darja Lihteneger (EEA)
Facilities, Utilities and Public Services	Angel Lopez* (ES)	
Topo & Cadastre, Reference Data	Anja Hopfstock (GE)	Markus Jobst (AU)
(NEW) Environmental Policy	Stefania Morrone** (IT)	Joeri Robbrecht** (DG ENV)
(NEW) Software tools and services	Jordi Escriu** (ES)	Michael Lutz** (JRC)

* Possibility to swap the TC cluster facilitation activity due to the experts working assignments

** Proposed

Main conclusions from the INSPIRE TC Evaluation meeting

After more than 3 years of existence of the TC platform, an evaluation meeting was held on 13-14 March 2018 to take stock of the activity, evaluate and discuss possible improvements and alignments with new policy requirements.

During the meeting the results of the open **user satisfaction survey** were also discussed. The survey, opened from 14.2 – 9.3., gave us **125 responses**. With a very clear conclusion that TC platform is well used by MS implementers and is still needed.

Detailed results of the survey are available here:

<https://ies-svn.jrc.ec.europa.eu/projects/thematic-clusters/wiki>

Conclusions of the meeting:

Based on the presentation of the policy needs of DG ENV, results of the public survey as well as working experience and proposals by facilitators/MIG-T liaisons, **the main conclusion was that the platform and the facilitation of the Clusters was useful and still needed**. However, it will be important to better focus, consolidate the content and ensure that it is addressing better relevant policy requirements and questions. In particular, the following major changes were agreed:

1. **Complete re-evaluation/reclassification of the TC platform content** based on a new controlled list of tags (see Annex II) and definition of new “virtual views” that would enable to e.g. to align better the TC activity/content with the MIWP actions and other policy activity.
2. The **structure of the platform should change** in two major ways: two new cross cutting clusters will be added (Policy and SW Tools) the presentation of the re-classified content should appear to the users according to the new “virtual views”- based on the controlled new tags.

The re-classification and consolidation of content has already been completed by the facilitators during the summer 2018.

More information about the TC platform evaluation meeting including the presentations, Minutes etc. can be found here:

<https://ies-svn.jrc.ec.europa.eu/projects/thematic-clusters/wiki>

2 Proposal for the organisation of the action 2016.4: Theme specific issues - supporting the INSPIRE implementation community in 2019-2020

Based on the conclusions from the TC evaluation meeting the overall 2016.4 Action is proposed to be continued, with the following 2 categories of modifications in order to enable better alignment / support to policy needs:

- Adapting the organisation and upgrading the technical solution of Thematic clusters on-line platform
- Strengthening the role of MIWP 2016.4 sub-group

TC platform changes:

1. Creation of a new cross-cutting cluster: **INSPIRE MIWP Actions and policy** to facilitate better the integration with policy or other communities requirements (INSPIRE MIWP 2016-2020 Actions as well as with other communities e.g. e-Reporting = Eionet).
 - This cluster, ideally coordinated by a DG ENV Policy liaison, will be set up to give right directions/policy requirements, to help in reaching out the other environmental communities as well as concentrate relevant content in one place.
 - The new Policy cluster will be organised also as a place for other relevant environmental communities to share their views and relevant achievements.
 - The policy liaison (DG Environment) will be supported in the coordination by a facilitator. It is proposed to extend a selected expert contract from 30 days to 50 days per 2 years.
2. Creation of a new cross-cutting cluster: **Software & Tools** to provide one place for sharing of experiences, good practices, bugs etc. related to the use of software and tools for implementation and use of INSPIRE.
 - This cluster will be coordinated by DG JRC Technical liaison.
 - It should facilitate better the integration of the TC platform activity with MIG-T collaborative platform as well as INSPIRE Knowledge base .
 - The technical liaison (DG JRC) will be supported in the coordination by a facilitator. It is proposed to extend a selected expert contract from 30 days to 50 days per 2 years.
3. Improving **the overall management and monitoring of discussion topics** in the TC platform
 - More pro-active approach from the side of all facilitators to monitor and consolidate discussions and close them with clear follow-ups. The closure of an issue could take following 4 forms:
 - A new well documented change proposal to the INSPIRE legal and/or technical framework
 - A new dedicated page summarizing the issue and adding contextual information, references if need it etc.
 - A new good practice document for the review by MIG
 - A simple answer e.g. pointing to an existing document/chapter in the technical guidelines to read/study the possible solution
 - Use of the new controlled list of tags to correctly indicate (tagged) the Status of question/issue – to enable effective monitoring of existing issues/questions/topics.
4. **Overall simplification** of the TC platform structure and use.
 - In the new TC platform only main 9 current TCs + 2 new cross cutting will remain (based on domains) as physical containers of the TC content.
 - The content of the TC will be displayed based on the selection of controlled tags.

- Users will be able to set up the notification of changes by individual controlled tags.

Strengthening the role of MIWP 2016.4 Sub-Group

The sub-group (e.g. facilitators, MIG-T liaisons, EC) will regularly assess, and monitor any TC documented change proposal including good practice proposals.

- Setting up an issue tracker system to document and properly manage change proposals.
- During each MIWP 2016.4 teleconference (once every 4-5 weeks), dedicate time to evaluate the status of proposals including prioritization and follow-ups.
- Regularly report to the MIG-T (and, where relevant, the MIG), including concrete proposals for follow-up actions.

Roadmap

Role	Deadline
Discussion/modifications/agreement with DG ENV	6/2018
Endorsement of MIG	26-27.11./2018
Preparation of TC facilitators contracts	11-12/2018
Start of the new 2016.4 - TC activity	1/2019
TC Activity facilitator's reports	6/2019
TC Activity facilitator's reports	12/2019
TC Activity facilitator's reports	6/2020
TC Activity facilitator's final reports	11/2020
End of the new 2016.4 - TC activity	12/2020

As in the past facilitator's contracts, the following additional activity is expected from the facilitators:

1. All facilitators should attend one face-to-face meeting per year. The date and place of the meeting will be communicated in due time.
2. All facilitators should participate to INSPIRE conferences or similar (e.g. 2019 – INSPIRE Technical Workshop)
3. All facilitators should actively promote INSPIRE in the thematic communities, meet with the members of their clusters, organize Q&As sessions etc.
4. In order to promote the INSPIRE Thematic cluster activity, all facilitators can select one relevant thematic conference where he/she would organise a seminar, workshop a longer presentation about his/her thematic cluster activity. The selection of the proposed conference will be approved by JRC/DG ENV.
5. All facilitators are expected to organise at least one on-line webinar for the registered members of the clusters related to the discussion topics published on the platform. The technical tools for such a webinar will be provided by JRC.

All facilitators as well as MIG-T liaisons are expected to participate to regular MIWP 2016.4 web-/teleconferences (about once every 4-5 weeks) organised and chaired by the JRC.