INSPIRE
Maintenance and Implementation Group (MIG)

Update on Commission initiatives

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	MIG members are invited to take note of this information and to share it with relevant colleagues and communities, as appropriate.

Contents

1. Reporting Fitness Check: outcome and next steps, relevance for INSPIRE (Action 6) and alignment proposal (Action 1) (ENV)

1.1. Alignment Proposal (to update)

The Proposal on alignment of reporting obligations in the field of environment policy was adopted on 21 May 2019.

The new rules on alignment of reporting obligations in the field of environment policy will cut red tape for administrations and simplify procedures for businesses involved in reporting and regulatory monitoring. In addition, policymakers will have access to higher quality information to support decisions, and citizens will have better access to information on important issues that affect them.

The new Regulation will be published in the EU's Official Journal and will enter into force on the following day, while some provisions will only be applicable as of 2020 and 2022.

Background
The proposal implements action 1 of the Fitness Check evaluation action plan. This alignment proposal has been prepared on the basis of the evidence in the Fitness Check evaluation and other evaluations that were recently carried out on individual pieces of legislation. The alignment proposal's objectives are to improve the evidence base for implementing EU policy, increase transparency for the public and simplify reporting with a view to reducing administrative burden. It covers 10 pieces of environmental legislation:
- Sewage Sludge Directive
- Noise Directive
- Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) Directive
- Birds Directive
- European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR) Regulation
- Animal Testing Directive
- EU Timber Regulation
- Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Regulation
- Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Regulation (EC)
- Environmental Liability Directive

For several pieces of legislation, the reference of using INSPIRE in the monitoring and reporting process was introduced. In addition, the following changes to the INSPIRE Directive related to monitoring and reporting are introduced:

- Article 21 is amended as follows:
    - (a) in paragraph 2, the introductory sentence is replaced by the following: "No later than 31 March every year Member States shall update and publish their summary report. This report, which shall be made public by the Commission services assisted by the European Environment Agency, shall include summary descriptions of:";
    - (b) paragraph 3 of Article 21 is deleted;

- Article 23 is replaced by the following:

"The European Environment Agency shall publish and update annually the Union-wide overview on the basis of metadata and data made available by the Member States through network services in accordance with Article 21. The Union-wide overview shall include, as appropriate, indicators for outputs, results and impacts of this Directive, Union-wide overview maps and Member State overview reports.

The Commission shall, at regular intervals, carry out an evaluation of this Directive. The evaluation shall be based, inter alia, on the following elements:

(a) the experience gathered with the implementation of this Directive;

(b) the information collected by Member States in accordance with Article 21 and the Union-wide overviews compiled by the European Environment Agency;

(c) relevant scientific, analytical data;

(d) other information including relevant scientific, analytical data required on the basis of the Better Regulation guidelines, in particular by relying on efficient and effective information management processes.".
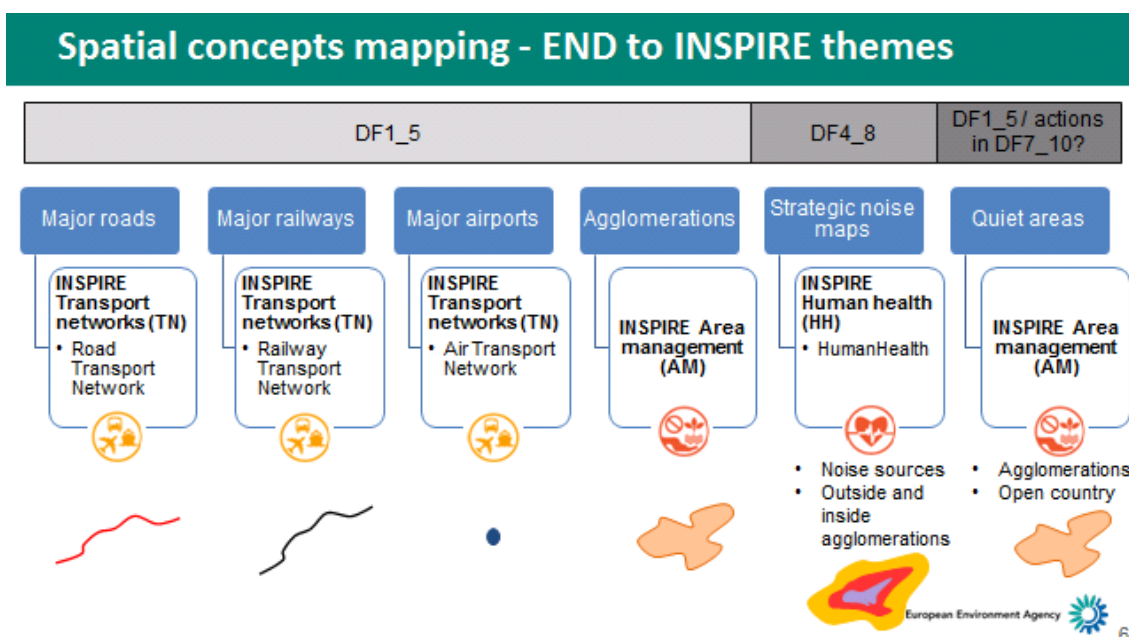
1.2. INSPIRE & streamlined e-Reporting

1.2.1. Environmental Noise Directive

In the last NOISE REGULATORY COMMITTEE (25/09/2018) the progress on INSPIRE implementation for the priority eReporting use case in general and the NOISE Directive specifically was presented. An update of the high-level streamlining roadmap and future actions to align reporting under the Environmental Noise Directive and implementation of the INSPIRE Directive was presented and discussed.

Roadmap and status of planned actions

- Q3/18 – Q3/19: develop common reporting model and process aligned with Reportnet 3.0; address implementation gaps.
  - **Ongoing**. A first draft model was presented for discussion at the EIONET-NRC meeting to all the noise representatives from the EEA countries on 14-15 May.

- Q4/19 – Q4/20: common reporting model and process implementation by Member States (INSPIRE interoperability deadline in 2020)
- 2021: Test e-reporting model & process (MS/EEA/ENV)
- 2022: next NOISE reporting cycle - NOISE reporting and INSPIRE obligations aligned

2. Reportnet 3.0

To promote and modernise eReporting with the latest IT solutions, the EEA is working to develop Reportnet 3.0. This modern reporting infrastructure will integrate new ideas about reporting, take into account national capabilities and produce a platform that can support the new challenges in reporting for the future periods.

The Reportnet 3.0 project has been initiated in 2018 to be finalized at the end of 2020. After the planning phase concluded late 2018, the execution phase is focussing on design and development of the modernised platform and started in the beginning of 2019 as scheduled. The activities regarding the design and development will run under the framework contract signed on January 2019 with the awarded company, the Tracasa/Altia consortium from Spain.

In the first months of 2019, the technical architecture was designed and the user stories were outlined in accordance with the DG Environment 10 step guidance (Vademecum for Streamlining Environmental Reporting) to describe how each Reportnet 3.0 user (data provider/reporter, data custodian, helpdesk) interacts with the system. These activities defined the features and functionalities of the system that needs to be developed.

As of May 2019, the concrete software development activities are kicked-off. The progress regarding the development will be presented in the demo, beta and first candidate releases scheduled for the end of June, September and December 2019 respectively. The demo version of Reportnet 3.0 will

include simple features of the system, whereas the beta version will demonstrate the implementation of two selected pilot data flows and highlight the benefit of Reportnet 3.0 over the existing system: higher performance and stability; decreased burden in data delivery; timelier and, higher quality data and reduced manual intervention for reporters.

In the meantime, the Reporting Obligations Database (ROD) will be upgraded with associated Reportnet 3.0 features (View Obligation Details, Search and Find Obligations, View lists of Obligations) and a new version of the United Notification System (UNS) will be developed by the end of October.

The project to deliver the initial Reportnet 3.0 system is expected to run until the end of 2020. The migration of the reported data will start during this time and continue together with further system developments beyond the duration of this project.

The final deliverables and the communication material produced under the project are publicly available from this link: https://projects.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet-3.0-project-public

3. Study on improving national environmental information and data harvesting

The Commission launched a service request for the promotion of best practices for national environmental information systems and tools for data harvesting. The project was carried out by a Consortium of Consultants led by Wageningen University and Research (the Project Consortium) and will be concluded end of June 2019 (see www.eis-data.eu):

- The Project Consortium organised three workshops with stakeholders on Environmental Information Systems (EIS).
- The Project Consortium compiled an overview of the accessibility of environmental information through existing environmental information portals in each Member State based on four selected criteria: content, data sharing, usability and governance.
- There were three tasks involved, linked to Actions 4 and 5 of the Action Plan:
  - Task 1 covered the mapping of the national environmental information systems, development of criteria to assess these and the drafting of guidance on best practices, including recommendations on active dissemination of environmental information.
  - Task 2 aimed to address the topic of harvesting by exploring the available technologies and drafting a roadmap and recommendations on how reporting can use this concept.
  - Task 3 included developing a demonstrator tool to test the concept of modernizing reporting by linking harvesting technologies with the publicly available data on national portals and pointing out current challenges and opportunities in a feasibility study.

The project overall confirmed the premises at the beginning that there is an enormous amount of environmental information available in the Member States which can potentially be used for harvesting purposes. Technology is not the main barrier. Instead, data governance, knowledge, capacities and resources vary widely between Member States and often prevent the effective sharing and re-using of environmental information.

One of the key results of the project to promote good practices will be the guidance document that provides good practices for setting up and improving the dissemination of environmental information and data through EISs.

4. Study of INSPIRE data sharing, access and use (Art. 17 and related provisions)

To evaluate the shortcomings of the national data policies in relation to Article 17 of the Directive in more detail, the Commission has launched a study for the "Evaluation and assessment of INSPIRE Directive 2007/2/EC data sharing between public authorities and public access and use provisions". The final deliverables of this study are expected by end of June 2019.

Preliminary outcomes of the study show that additional efforts are needed to further harmonise data policies and licenses for data reuse in the Member states. Benefits can be expected from further aligning Article 17 on data sharing of the INSPIRE Directive with the new Directive on Open Data and on the re-use of public sector information.

5. Copernicus in-situ and INSPIRE – latest developments

As entrusted entity for the Copernicus in-situ component, EEA is working on locating downloadable and harmonised INSPIRE compliant Hydrography (HY) and Buildings (BU) spatial datasets in response to Copernicus requirements. The work is focused on priority countries identified by the Copernicus Emergency Management Service and EU28 Member States in general, and the goal is to construct and maintain so-called multi-country data sets for use primarily by Copernicus Services.

The HY and BU data models and necessary processing steps to ingest both INSPIRE compliant and non-compliant 'almost INSPIRE' data into a simplified 'multi-country' spatial database have been developed and testing is on-going.

As regards the Copernicus Reference Data Access Portal (CORDA), at the end of first quarter 2019, more than 2200 links to geospatial data sets from 257 national and regional data providers were available for use by the Copernicus Services. This content of the portal is based on the needs expressed by the Copernicus services. Due to national data polices, some data is only available to Copernicus services. News about CORDA are regularly updated at https://corda.eea.europa.eu/_layouts/15/CORDANews/CORDANews.aspx . General news about the in-situ service are published at https://insitu.copernicus.eu/news.

6. Overview and main conclusion from the 2019 Monitoring & Reporting exercise

By 15 May 2019 Member States were due to submit their annual INSPIRE monitoring information, with reference year 2018, and the tri-annual implementation report (i.e. updated country fiches), in pursuance of the art. 21 of the INSPIRE Directive and the Commission Decision No 2009/442 as regards monitoring and reporting. The amended INSPIRE Directive, with its updated art. 21, and the subsequent revision of the Monitoring and Reporting Decision are only expected to enter into force in June 2019, so the previous provisions still applied by the referred May deadline.

As in the last monitoring round, a Reporter Guidance Document[1] was provided to guide INSPIRE reporters through the different systems during this year's monitoring and reporting exercise together.

Annual monitoring obligation

Since 2013 the annual INSPIRE monitoring information has been formally submitted through Reportnet[2], the EEA's electronic infrastructure for data collection. Reportnet provides online questionnaires (web forms) to help INSPIRE National Reporters to create, modify, save and modify the monitoring file. Member States were also encouraged to use the INSPIRE dashboard sandbox[3] to harvest the content of their national catalogues, validate their results and create automatically a compliant INSPIRE monitoring file to be then uploaded in Reportnet. This sandbox functionality is restricted to the national INSPIRE reporters and is used by a significant number of countries. During the preparation and submission process, which lasted a couple of months (March to May 2019), the EEA provided support to many Member State national reporters both in the process of harvesting their catalogue records and in the creation of a valid monitoring file.

All EU countries formally submitted their monitoring file in time. All the monitoring files were subsequently uploaded to the official INSPIRE dashboard[4], which provides public access to all monitoring information seamlessly since 2010.

After a first quick analysis of the 2019 annual monitoring results[5], we can conclude that:

- There is still an ascending number of reported INSPIRE datasets, especially in Annex III, with a relatively stable number of Annex I and II datasets. Five countries (FR, DE, IT, PL and UK) account for the vast majority (96%) of datasets reported.
- Around 79% of the datasets are labelled with themes from Annex III, while 14% use themes from Annex I and 9% Annex II.
- There is also an increase in the number of reported INSPIRE services. As in the case of last year, FR accounts for almost 60% of all services reported across Europe.
- There is a moderate increase in the reported number of view (16%) and download services (9% more) with respect to 2018 monitoring exercise. In total, 56% of reported network services are download services, while 42% account for view services.

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[1] http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/INSPIRE_ReportingGuidance2019_v1.0.pdf
[2] https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet
[3] https://sandbox-inspire-dashboard.eea.europa.eu/#/
[4] https://inspire-dashboard.eea.europa.eu/#/. Please note that slight change in the URL - no "/change" at the end of the URL anymore
[5] This includes both EU and EFTA countries.

- The average percentage of spatial data sets and services metadata conformity[6] reported continues its ascending trend and is now around 95%.
- The average percentage of self-declared conformity in network services per country has decreased slightly and is now only above 50%. However, the number of reported services has increased slightly (16% more view services, 9% more download services).
- The number of self-declared conformant datasets with respect to the Annex data specifications is increasing, especially for Annex III, but surprisingly not in a significant manner in the case of Annex I or II.
- In comparison with the total number of reported datasets, 51% of Annex I datasets are declared to be conformant, while this percentage is lower in the case of Annex II (10%) and Annex III (14%). Overall, only 19% of all datasets are declared to be conformant with the IR on interoperability of spatial datasets and services.

Differences with respect to the geoportal statistics (i.e. number of datasets and services available) will be analysed in order to draw some conclusions that can help subsequent monitoring rounds.

Tri-annual implementation report

As the amendment of the Directive had not been adopted by the 15 May deadline, Member States were also due to submit the tri-annual implementation report this year. The Commission encouraged Member States to submit an annual update of the summary report published after the 2016 reporting exercise via the country fiche editor set up for that purpose by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission[7]. The country fiche editor was designed to support update of *State of Play* part of the country fiches. It was open for national reporters from 25th March.

Here is the statistics of reporting by 15 May 2019:

- Member States that updated country fiches: BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, HR, LV, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, AT, PL, OT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK.
- Member States without updated country fiches: FR and IT
- Member States that provided full Report: CY (through the ROD)
- Member States that provided updates in national languages: PL, EE, BG, AT
- EFTA countries that updated country fiches: IS and LI (both in national languages)
- EFTA countries without updated country fiches: CH and NO

7. Enforcement action

The list of data sets that are a priority under environmental legislation was communicated to Member States by two letters and was also made available on the WIKI. The first letter was sent to all Member States on 21 December 2017 (ARES(2017)6316317) requesting them to allow access and download of priority data sets by 15 May 2018. The second letter was sent to all Member States on 25 July 2018 (Ares(2018)3946754) requesting them to inform the Commission of their priority data sets and where these data sets are accessible (i.e. a link to the respective view and download services) by 15 October 2018. The Commission based its assessment of the fulfilment of the

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[6] Calculated against the old geoportal harvesting checker, now phased out.

[7] https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/countryfiche

requirements of data accessibility by using the INSPIRE Dashboard and the INSPIRE EU-geoportal (established under Article 15(2) of the INSPIRE Directive). Those tools ensure a precise and clear overview of the status of implementation on the main obligations under the Directive and related Regulations by each Member State. The available information on INSPIRE EU-geoportal showed that in begin of 2019 many Member States where still lagging behind with the implementation of the priority list of data sets and that some Member States showed no progress at all. Therefore, the Commission decided to issue letters of formal notice for those Member States that have shown no progress at all, in which it takes the view that the concerned Member States have failed to implement several provisions of the INSPIRE Directive and of the Metadata and Network Services Regulations in relation to the priority list of data sets for eReporting. A letter of formal notice was sent on 8 March 2019 to Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.