INSPIRE

Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe

Summary report of the 11th INSPIRE MIG expert group meeting, 18 and 19 June 2020, online meeting

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1 Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting

The meeting was opened by Robert Konrad, Head of DG ENV Unit E.4 Compliance and Better Regulation and chaired by Joeri Robbrecht (ENV.E.4).

The Commission presented the meeting agenda (*DOC1*) and the summary of the previous meeting (*DOC2*). The MIG had no comments on the meeting agenda and the summary of the previous meeting.

All meeting documents and presentations have been made available on the *collaboration platform of the INSPIRE Maintenance and Implementation expert Group (MIG)*[1].

Conclusions and Actions

The meeting agenda and summary of the previous meeting were adopted.

2 Nature of the meeting

The meeting was a non-public meeting and was attended by nominated experts of 26 EU Member States (MS), Norway, Iceland, the Commission Services (ENV, JRC, ESTAT, AGRI) and the European Environment Agency (EEA). Italy was not represented.

3 List of points discussed

3.1 Update on Commission initiatives (Information and discussion)

Introduction

The Commission presented information document (*DOC3*) and informed the MIG about the following ongoing Commission initiatives:

- The Green Deal
- Reportnet 3.0
- Overview and main conclusions from the 2019 Monitoring

The Commission shared information on political evolutions and important communications and strategies that have been published since the von der Leyen Commission took office. Furthermore the Commission presented the overview and main conclusions from the 2019 Monitoring & Reporting exercise.

The European Environment Agency (EEA) informed the MIG about the status of Reportnet 3.0 and reporting data flows that will be piloted in Reportnet 3.0.

Conclusions and Actions

The Commission will keep the MIG informed on any progress made on the presented initiatives.

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[1] *https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/wikis/x/CCn7Gg*

The MIG was invited to share the information with relevant colleagues and communities.

3.2 Revision of Implementing Rules (Information and discussion)

3.2.1 Possible revision of Data Specifications

<u>*Introduction*</u>

The Commission explained that the amendment to COMMISSION REGULATION 1089/2010 as regards interoperability of spatial data sets and services is delayed. The amendment implements the changes agreed in the MIG as well as the corrigenda already agreed by the MIG in 2016.

The Commission will try to push the procedure forward with the objective to present the amendment to the INSPIRE Committee as soon as possible.

<u>*Discussion*</u>

The Commission was asked if the existing data specifications and more specifically the exiting XSD will be updated when the amendment is endorsed. The Commission explained that this will depend on the workload, the priorities and the available capacity.

<u>*Conclusions and Actions*</u>

The Commission will keep the MIG informed about the further procedure.

3.3 Online INSPIRE Conference 2020

<u>*Introduction*</u>

The online INSPIRE Conference 2020 was a success. We had 8 days of conference with 31 sessions that brought together 1230 enthusiastic participants. The ease with which people could participate in the online conference and the possibility to participate in all sessions was highly appreciated. For future conferences a mix of virtual and face to face was suggested.

<u>*Discussion*</u>

The MIG had no questions or comments on the presented information.

<u>*Conclusions and Actions*</u>

The online INSPIRE Conference 2020 was very successful. The findings and survey feedback will be taken into account for the organisation of the 2021 INSPIRE Conference.

3.4 Maintenance and Implementation Work Programme

3.4.1 MIWP Action progress, review and discussion including agreement of next steps

a) 2016.5 Priority list of datasets for e-Reporting (I/D)
<u>*Introduction*</u>

The European Environment Agency (EEA) updated the MIG on the progress of MIWP action 2016.5 and the performance of the Member States in making priority e-Reporting data sets available (*DOC5*).

On the common and interoperable European data models the development of an INSPIRE compliant harmonised reporting model for the Environmental Noise Directive was presented.

Discussion

Several Member State experts stated that the geoportal does not reflect all available download services.

The Commission will organise a bilateral meeting with the impacted Member States to clarify the origin of the problems.

Conclusions and Actions

The Commission will set up a bilateral meeting with FR, SE and CY experts on experienced anomalies in the representation of their data and services in the geoportal.

b) 2018.1 Monitoring and Reporting 2019 and 2019.2 Improving data availability (I/D)

Introduction

The Commission presented the status of MIWP actions 2018.1 "Monitoring and Reporting 2019" and 2019.2 "Improving data availability" (DOC6).

The country fiches were presented followed by a forward-looking presentation on the next reporting cycle including the ongoing work on the validator and the geoportal.

On popular demand a bulk validator tool was developed and in September 2020 an updated version of the validator that will be used for M&R2020 will be made available. The Member States will already have the opportunity to start testing the validator with the June release. The major change is the move from metadata version 1.3 to 2.0.

Discussion

MIG experts informed about the availability of a comprehensive document depicting the differences between metadata version 1.3 and 2.0.

The Commission explained that guidance on the difference between v1.3 and v2.0 is available in the Technical Guidance for metadata version 2.0.

Conclusions and Actions

The MIG took note of the information shared by the Commission.

d) 2016.4 Theme specific issues (I/D)
Introduction

The Commission presented the status of activities of the thematic clusters. Vlado Cetl (JRC) is the new coordinator of the INSPIRE FORUM - MIWP 2016.4. The Commission will continue to develop the INSPIRE FORUM as a platform for sharing implementation experiences and information on relevant EU projects and activities with the ambition to develop a more structured system of collecting, accepting, solving and publishing received issues. To improve the outreach and keep the INSPIRE community informed a newsletter will be sent out on a regular base.

Discussion

The MIG had no questions or comments on the presented information.

Conclusions and Actions

The MIG took note of the information shared by the Commission.

e) New action mandate: OGC API – Features (I/D)

Introduction

The Commission presented the new action 2020.1 that was endorsed by written procedure and has the objective to prepare an INSPIRE good practice dedicated to the use of the OGC API – Features standard for INSPIRE download services.

The specification was entirely drafted on GitHub and is now ready for a review by the INSPIRE community. The Commission kindly invited the MIG experts to respond to the call for nominations for this new action to help finalizing the good practice proposal.

Discussion

The MIG had no questions or comments on the presented information document.

Conclusions and Actions

The MIG took note of the information shared by the Commission.

The MIG was invited to nominate experts for action 2020.1.

3.5   Good implementation practice

Introduction

The Commission proposed a change to the existing Good Practice procedure by including a "candidate good practice status" as extra step to mobilize the community to support the implementation of the good practice and provide implementation evidence for the process. The procedure is rarely used so far. Good practice authors generally struggle to gather implementation evidence and move passed the initiation phase, hence the proposal to introduce this additional step that would allow to publish the practice to a wider audience to mobilize implementers to participate in the good practice process.

The Commission (DG ESTAT) presented an INSPIRE Good Practice "SDMX for Human Health and Population Distribution" prepared by the statistical thematic cluster. SDMX has been used

to harmonize statistical data. SDMX stands for Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange and is an ISO standard (17369:2013). It was designed to describe statistical data and metadata, to normalise their exchange, and to enable them to be shared more efficiently among organisations. The proposal is to adopt the SDMX community standard as an INSPIRE Good Practice.

Discussion

MIG experts questioned whether good practice acceptance means that the legal obligations of the INSPIRE framework become obsolete and do not have to be fulfilled.

The Commission clarified that the good practice procedure cannot change legal obligations but would allow for simplifying or facilitating the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive where the legal framework allows for flexibility. The Commission will investigate the possible interplay and legal coherence between the implementation obligations of the INSPIRE Directive and its implementing regulations and the good implementation practices to provide clarity regarding legal compliance of proposed good practices.

Conclusions and Actions

> *The MIG welcomed the review of the existing good INSPIRE implementation practice procedure.*
>
> *The Commission will share the SDMX encoding good practice for a final round of feedback and depending on the time needed by the MIG members to consult their stakeholders, seek adoption by written procedure or at the next MIG meeting.*
>
> *The Commission will investigate the possible interplay and legal coherence between the implementation obligations of the INSPIRE Directive and its implementing regulations and the good implementation practices.*

3.6   Work Programme 2020-2024 (I/D)

Introduction

The Commission thanked the MIG experts for the ample feedback received on the draft Work Programme 2020-2024, and the colleagues for the work and progress made on the document.

The Commission presented the updated document, the main objectives, the areas of work and the core actions. The revised MIWP was received positively by the MIG. Based on the received feedback, the Commission will further detail the actions, finalise the MIWP and share it with the permanent technical subgroup (MIG-T) for feedback and with the MIG for discussion and endorsement.

Discussion

The MIG identified the dependency on the emerging digital initiatives (e.g. EU Data Strategy and the EU Common Dataspaces, High Value Data under the Open Data Directive …) as a

possible issue to start the work on the new MIWP. Furthermore, the lack of data availability was identified as one of the main implementation gaps that should be addressed by the new MIWP.

The Commission confirmed that data availability remains an important implementation gap that will be further addressed in the new MIWP (Action 2.2). It is also clear that the evolving digital legislation will influence the MIWP. Both JRC and ENV are closely following the evolution of digital policies and their possible impact on the INSPIRE Directive to be able to timely translate possible impact into remediating or streamlining actions.

Conclusions and Actions

The Commission will further detail the actions, finalise the MIWP and share it with the permanent technical subgroup (MIG-T) for feedback and with the MIG for discussion and endorsement.

3.7   Spatial data governance at EU level

3.7.1   1) Agricultural land use and land coverage data sharing
Introduction

The Commission (DG AGRI) presented the IACS datasharing process. The Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), which has to be set up and operated by each Member State, allows for establishing and controlling the eligibility of the aid or support under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). IACS, and especially its geographically enabled subsystems, contains an important amount of data useful in the agricultural, environmental and climatic contexts, especially spatial/geographical information.

A first important data source is the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS), which comprises stable information on agricultural area (i.e identification of reference parcels). A second source, which was set up more recently in electronic format, is the Geo-Spatial Aid Application (GSAA), where yearly information on agricultural activity - as declared by the beneficiary in the aid application and/or payment claim - can be found at agricultural parcel level (i.e. declaration of the uses by crop or crop group as defined by the Member State). The interest presented by spatial information is common to a large number of (public) bodies, and the problems linked to sharing data as well. Furthermore, the loss of time and resources in searching for existing spatial data or establishing whether they may be used for a particular purpose is a key obstacle to the full exploitation of the data available. Therefore, measures are required to address exchange, sharing, access and use of interoperable spatial data and spatial data services across the various levels of public authorities and across different sectors.

The INSPIRE Directive will allow an efficient way to exchange, share, access and use IACS spatial data to assist Member States and policy-makers in policies impacting directly or indirectly the environment. The MIG experts were invited to reach out to the paying agencies in their country to support this data sharing initiative.

The Chair thanked DG AGRI for the presentation and opened the floor for questions.

Discussion

Reaching out to other communities such as the agricultural community was considered difficult by several MIG experts. It cannot be expected that INSPIRE experts have knowledge about all different policy domains. Furthermore, it was raised that IACS data could be categorised as privacy data.

The Commission clarified that the support by the INSPIRE community should focus on horizontal support in making the data available according to the INSPIRE Directive, more detailed thematic discussions should be left to the agricultural community.

Regarding the privacy nature of land use/land coverage data, it was argued by the Commission that the data are "spatial" par excellence and that it is not the intention to link the data to an identified or identifiable natural person. As such, the data does not amount to "personal data" and should not be subject to provisions on data protection.

Conclusions and Actions

The MIG experts were invited to reach out to the paying agencies in their country to support the IACS data sharing initiative.

The Commission will keep the MIG informed about the progress of IACS data sharing.

3.7.2   2) List of priority reference data
Introduction

The Commission (DG ESTAT) presented an overview of geospatial data requirements that are essential for policy development at European level and will also contribute to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. Key EU policies with extended geospatial information needs are the European Statistical system (ESS), the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), the INSPIRE Directive, the Open Data Directive and the Intelligent Transport Systems Directive (ITS). On a more global scale the information needs are coherent with international geospatial data needs and supports UNGGIM activities and the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (including reporting on the SDGs). The progress on the development of pan-European data sets for railways, buildings, administrative units, addresses and healthcare service was presented.

The Chair thanked DG ESTAT for the presentation and opened the floor for questions.
Discussion

The MIG inquired whether the pan-European data sets prepared by the Commission (DG ESTAT) will be available as open data and also about the preference on how to receive Member State data (harmonised or as-is).

The Commission (DG ESTAT) explained that the objective is to make the pan-European data as much as possible available as open data to maximize its reuse. The reuse conditions are determined by the reuse conditions set forth by the Member States and might in some cases limit full public reuse of the data. The question on how data should be made available (harmonised or as-is) depends on the quality of the data made available e.g. if a harmonised INSPIRE address data set is three years old and the as-is address data set is updated weekly then preference goes to higher quality as-is data.

Conclusions and Actions

The Commission will keep the MIG informed about the development of pan-European reference data sets.

3.8 News from the standardisation bodies (Information)

Introduction

The Commission shared an information document (*DOC9*) and presented new developments and activities relevant to INSPIRE maintenance and implementation from the following standardisation bodies: "ISO/TC 211", "Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC)" and "World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)". The MIG members were invited to distribute this information among their networks and share any feedback or questions on the presented topics with the EC INSPIRE team.

Discussion

An expert asked if the adoption of the OGC API standards does not make the use of XSD schemas for harmonisation redundant. The Commission explained that implementers with implementations based on XML technology will still use the XSD, other implementations could use the more abstract UML data definitions as guidance.

Conclusions and Actions

The MIG took note of the information shared by the Commission on new developments and activities by relevant standardisation bodies.

MIG experts were invited to share this information in their networks and provide feedback (mail to Michael.Lutz@ec.europa.eu, ENV-INSPIRE@ec.europa.eu in CC).

4 Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

Despite the virtual nature of the 11th meeting of the INSPIRE Maintenance and Implementation Group (MIG), it was an interactive meeting with a lot of exchanges, interventions and good discussions. The availability of environmental priority datasets is slowly improving. The endorsement of SDMX as good practice and the new work programme for the coming four years were discussed. The endorsement of both proposals was postponed to the next MIG meeting to give everybody the necessary time to consult their national

stakeholders. The presentation on the agricultural land use and land coverage data sharing and the list of priority reference data was highly appreciated.

Furthermore the MIG:

- Approved the meeting agenda and summary of the previous meeting.
- Took note of the information shared by the Commission on:
  - Commission initiatives;
  - The revision of the implementing rule on interoperability of data sets and services;
  - The progress of MIWP actions 2016.4, 2016.5, 2018.1, 2019.2 and 2020.1;
  - Agricultural land use and land coverage data sharing (IACS data sharing) and the list of priority reference data;
  - New developments and activities by relevant standardisation bodies.
- Welcomed the updated version of the list of priority data sets. An update that has added further clarifications and guidance on how to implement and publish priority data sets.
- Adopted the review of the existing good INSPIRE implementation practice procedure.

The more specific conclusions per agenda item have been highlighted under 3) "List of points discussed".

Agenda, documents and presentations are available on *the collaboration platform*[2].

5 Next steps / actions

The MIG was invited to:

- Respond to the call for nominations for the new action 2020.1 OGC API for features and for national validation experts.
- Provide feedback on the SDMX encoding good practice.

The Commission will:

- Keep the MIG informed on any progress made on the presented Commission initiatives.
- Get in touch with FR, SE and CY experts on experienced anomalies in the representation of their data and services in the geoportal.
- Adapt the existing procedure on good INSPIRE implementation practices to include a "candidate good practice status" as extras step to mobilize community to support implementation and provide implementation evidence for the process.

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[2] *https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/wikis/x/CjHNEQ*

- Investigate the possible interplay and legal coherence between the implementation obligations of the INSPIRE Directive and its implementing regulations and the good implementation practices.

- Update the draft version of the WP2020-2024 and will circulate this as soon as possible for another round of feedback in the MIG-T and the MIG.

6 Next meeting

The 12th Meeting of the INSPIRE Maintenance and Implementation expert Group is tentatively scheduled for 26 and 27 November 2020.