ESDIN - the geospatial reference data and services for INSPIRE

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Complexity characterises the production of reliable European location data. Because usage of, demand for, and access to data is different in every country, each nation adopts its own solutions to meet its own unique internal needs. So it is no surprise that complexity grows when you draw together these data sets to make a cohesive "whole" data source for Europe.

The ESDIN project, part funded under the eContentplus scheme of the EC, had an ambitious remit to provide the best practices in creating harmonised data across Europe and help countries meet their INSPIRE obligations. ESDIN has gone beyond this remit in order to lay the foundations of what we now know as a European Location Framework (or ELF) of data and services; a vital resource for pan-European analysis for any domain.

ESDIN has been successful in creating a network of users, creators, developers and stakeholders of the ELF. The nodes in this network are the consortium itself (20 partners). The network continues to grow thanks to the work so far and the commitment of partners to keep the developments alive and supported in the short term with plans for a longer term more open access to data and services from the National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies.

We set out to;

- Bridge the gap between users and providers of official location data
- Help member states improve access to their data
- Help member states prepare, harmonise and maintain pan-European data for INSPIRE themes
- To target and meet the increasing demands of users
- Improve efficiency in all the processes involved
- And unite experts from across geospatial oriented communities through various discussion fora to stimulate the development, use and re-use of European digital content in global network.

In uniting experts we created a powerful best practice network connecting end users, vendors of spatial data solutions, developers, national mapping and cadastral agencies. 250 reference group members have been connected by ESDIN events and a dedicated forum site. A subset of these became our key users. Insights about these groups gave focus to our work. The broad insights into these groups' needs show us that;

- Consistent reference data & identifiers will give their analysis some context,
- Clear updates and other meta information, such as the data origin will aid integration with user data sets,
- Trust worthy, quality assured data will eliminate the need to verify the data at the user end,
- Data from quality led processes ease the integration process with their own data sets,
- They will value an "open" policy for data

We can now look back across the path we have taken over 30 months and see how we have arrived at our proposals for a European Location Framework it's architecture, it's content and the processes that will make it possible. And we can feel confident we have addressed these needs in the below achievements.

- ESDIN Proposes;
  - Best practice in achieving INSPIRE compliance
  - A technical architecture for pan-European geospatial data harmonisation,
  - Quality led processes and tools for harmonisation,
  - A flexible access solution for data and services.
- ESDIN has delivered;
  - Prototypes for quality evaluation, edge-matching and generalisation tools and access control,
  - Interoperability services based upon national data holdings across 5 INSPIRE Annex 1 themes,
  - Best practice specifications,
  - Best Practice in metadata, quality evaluation, generalisation, edge-matching, transformation, access control, license and data management,
- ESDIN has equipped;
  - National Mapping and Cadastral agencies with the tools to make consistent contributions to the ELF,
  - Stakeholders with live services in the short term and plans for greater availability in the medium term,
  - A platform, open source software and data where the beginnings of ELF can be seen, discussed and developed and downloaded.