

Terms of Reference

for an

EUCC Information and Data Management (IDM) Working Group

proposed by R A Longhorn, Information Policy Advisor to EUCC – The Coastal Union
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Introduction.

Information management is a key part of all marine and coastal research and management tasks, for recording, using and disseminating information. In the coastal zone, most – perhaps all – of this information is geospatial, i.e. related to a location on earth - including above, on or under the water. New information management techniques, standards and interoperability technologies are being developed rapidly for all geospatial data users. Much of this data is collected by or for government agencies and thus forms part of the public sector information (PSI) framework for which access, dissemination and exploitation rights and responsibilities are governed by EU-wide Directives already enacted (e.g. re-use of PSI Directive, access to environmental information Directive) or soon to be adopted (e.g. INSPIRE Directive for spatial information in Europe, early 2007).

1. Why propose a new Working Group?

- The IDM W.G. would form the basis for a more active coastal and marine SDIC (Spatial Data Interest Community) within the EU's INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) Directive¹.
- EUCC are already officially registered with the EC as an SDIC in the INSPIRE framework².
- EUCC need access to staff working within the coastal and marine research and management environments who have specific remits for, or knowledge of, information technology and marine/coastal data and information management issues, both technology and policy.
- For many IT-related issues, the relevant participants in the proposed IDM W.G. would be better placed to advise INSPIRE Drafting Teams (DTs)³ on issues such as data specifications and metadata requirements for thematic communities, than the marine and coastal researchers by themselves, who are often unaware of the IT-related standards and interoperability issues involved in INSPIRE.⁴
- The existing INSPIRE Drafting Team (DT) experts, who are all volunteers, include very few representatives from the marine/coastal community.⁵ This means that the specific needs of the marine community may not be well recognized nor covered by the resulting 'implementing rules', which will later be applied, by law, in all EU Member States.

2. Who should be involved in this Working Group?

- The IDM W.G. will be a voluntary group comprised mainly on IT and/or information and database management staff from major coastal and marine science research institutes or coastal management organisations, both public and private.
- We will not limit the group only to members of EUCC organisations.
- The IDM W.G. will be an open group where quality and experience in the world of marine information harmonisation and interoperability, including Web services, are more important than

1 see <http://inspire.jrc.it/>

2 see http://inspire.jrc.it/ir/list_registered_sdics.cfm – search on “EUCC”

3 see <http://inspire.jrc.it/ir/index.cfm> for background on how the INSPIRE Implementing Rules are being developed.

4 The work of the INSPIRE Drafting Teams is likely to extend into 2009, with the draft Directive itself being adopted sometime early in 2007 – see

5 see http://inspire.jrc.it/ir/list_registered_experts.cfm

existing membership in any specific organisation.

3. Responsibilities of the IDM W.G.?

- The EUCC Information Policy Advisor will inform W.G. members of developments related to geospatial data harmonisation, standards, interoperability technology and open source specifications of relevance to the group and the marine/coastal community.⁶
- As draft reports are produced by the five INSPIRE Drafting Teams, these will be circulated to IDM W.G. members for comment and discussion. Work of the DTs is expected to continue well into 2008.
- Members will take part in discussions relating to information management, data harmonisation, systems interoperability and Web services, as their time and expertise allow. They will help frame official responses to the proposals of the DTs.⁷
- From time to time, the IDM W.G. may provide advice to the EUCC Information Policy Advisor (a member of the EUCC Advisory Committee) and the EUCC Information Officer.

4. How will the work be done?

- The W.G. will typically work on-line, just as do the INSPIRE Drafting Team experts.
- Special meetings may be convened in the framework of the MOTIIVE Project or at other EUCC events at national and international level at which IDM W.G. members may be present.
- Information will be passed to the INSPIRE Drafting Teams as either collectively agreed statements concerning those issues covered by the DTs, or as views of individual organisations (if desired), via EUCC's SDIC, an organisation officially recognized by the European Commission to represent the coastal community to the INSPIRE DTs.

5. Leadership.

- The IDM W.G. will be led by the current EUCC Information Policy Advisor, a member of the EUCC Advisory Board, assisted from time to time by other EUCC staff as necessary.

6. Reporting.

- The EUCC Information Policy Advisor will prepare 6-monthly reports to the EUCC Council on work of the IDM W.G. and progress of INSPIRE Drafting Team reports which may have an impact on the coastal/marine Information communities.

7. Funding.

- The IDM W.G. is voluntary, including the work of the IDM W.G. leader.⁸

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6 This will be accomplished formally through end of 2007 via the MOTIIVE – Marine Overlays on Topography - EU-funded FP6 project. Following that, this advisory service will continue on a fully voluntary basis or as part of any project that is enacted as follow-on to MOTIIVE (as MOTIIVE was follow-on to MarineXML).

7 We are especially interested in enlisting members who have practical experience in geospatial data harmonisation and information systems interoperability, including Web services.

8 Throughout 2007, some small amounts of funding may be available from within the MOTIIVE project budget. Following that, we would expect to see activities of the IDM W.G. included in other, future project proposals.