



NFP SEIS meeting
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Subject: SEIS – INSPIRE - GMES INTERLINKAGES

For discussion

- The document elaborates on project 14 of the SEIS Implementation Plan.
- NFPs are invited to consider especially the questions at the end of the paper and come to the meeting with views on how EEA and Eionet could proceed together.

SEIS INSPIRE GMES INTERLINKAGES

1. Initiatives are being pursued over a wide field to update European systems for handling environmental information. This reflects a shared recognition, across organisational boundaries, of the need to respond to new factors. Member states need to assess their readiness to respond to the opportunities afforded by these initiatives in a coordinated way, and to take any action that is required to enable them to do so. This paper is designed to provide a starting point for a discussion among NFP's in developing a project to support this.

2. There are common drivers of these initiatives; they are not just sectoral;

- **citizens expect** public authorities to
 - make the information that they want freely available
 - respond immediately to emerging issues
 - provide personalised support
- **changing technologies** can enable
 - better observation of environmental phenomena
 - more sophisticated analyses than in the past
 - near real time services, to meet individual needs
 - multi-channel delivery

3. Environmental pressures are changing and policy makers need information to enable them to cope with this;

- cross-cutting problems like climate change, and issues at a strategic level (eg sustainable consumption and production, or the Marine Strategy). Priority areas were identified in the 6th Environmental Action Programme;
- changing approaches to regulation (eg water framework directive) with more focus on outcomes and growing concern to ensure that regulatory burdens are proportionate
- pressure on administrative resources in member states

4. Effective observation and data procurement will remain vital, but these drivers and pressures will require a rebalancing of information activity towards more

analysis and integration, and a greater focus on the timeliness of information flows.

5. European arrangements for environmental information and analysis have evolved over time to respond to developing needs. They are characterised by;
- the involvement of many organisations, sometimes imperfectly coordinated
 - costs for national authorities which are often hidden.
 - gaps in observation of the state of the environment
 - different formats and different channels used to disseminate different categories of information, adding to cost and making complex analysis difficult.
 - a lack of flexibility to meet new requirements
 - uncertain funding.

6. **SEIS** offers an organising framework for the further evolution of environmental information systems to respond to some of these issues. The SEIS approach is not about "demonising the past." Responding to the pressures identified above will not be achieved by a big bang. SEIS is the logical continuation of a process which started 20 years ago. It envisages that:

- information will be managed as close as possible to its source;
- information will be provided once, and shared with others for many purposes;
- information will be readily available to public authorities and enable them to easily fulfil their legal reporting obligations;
- information will be readily accessible to end-users, primarily public authorities at all levels from local to European, to enable them to assess the effectiveness of their policies, and to design new policy;
- information will also be accessible to enable end-users, both public authorities and citizens, to make comparisons at the appropriate geographical scale (e.g. countries, cities, catchments areas); and,
- information will be fully available to the general public, subject to appropriate confidentiality constraints, and at national level in the relevant national language(s).

A Commission Communication on SEIS is in preparation. A key intention of this is to provoke a political debate. Council and Parliament conclusions will set the tone for further work, which may involve a legislative proposal in 2008.

7. Within this organising framework, the implementation of **INSPIRE** will ensure that data within its scope (spatial data) are collecting and maintained by public authorities according to rules which facilitate access and sharing. Following adoption of the INSPIRE Directive earlier this year, the Commission is pursuing in close contact with stakeholders the development of implementing rules in 5 thematic areas - metadata standards; network services (including access and linkages between data sets); data sharing; interoperability; and monitoring and reporting. One of the principles of SEIS is that the INSPIRE approach should be applied to all environmental information – ie to those data that are not spatial.

8. **GMES** provides information services through the integration of in-situ and satellite data, analysis and dissemination. The essence of GMES services is that they are **user-driven**. Some precursor services, funded by FP5 and FP6, and by ESA are already in place (detailed via <http://www.gmes.info>). A new phase is now in hand, with “pre-operational” services being developed in the context of FP7; the first year’s work programme is in place, focussing particularly on “fast tracks” where demand appears clear and provision is already mature, but further projects will be need to be developed. Decisions on the 2008 programme are in hand and formulation of the 2009 programme will start shortly.

9. Much of the nature of GMES currently derives from the R&D framework within which it has been developed – project based, with a major role for service providers in defining services. For the longer term, structured user engagement will need to be further developed, together with a more sustainable funding model. During 2008, the Commission will bring forward proposals for the sustainable finance and governance of GMES.

10. While the collection of satellite data for GMES is in few hands, and is coordinated by ESA, the position for *in-situ* data is more complicated. There are many players, and collection has long been the responsibility of authorities within member states. Future coordination poses big challenges. The informal meeting of the GMES Advisory Council (GAC) on 13 September recognised (1) that the “fast track” services would each need to handle their own *in-situ* data needs; (2) that there was a need for a “bottom – up” examination of member states’ capacity to meet the *in-situ* data needs of GMES; and (3) that a new working

group should advise on these two processes and the long term arrangements for securing GMES services' *in-situ* data needs.

11. INSPIRE will not in itself involve the development of new data flows or new types of analysis. Neither INSPIRE nor GMES will in themselves give rise to greater efficiencies or cost savings. Neither requires coordination across organisational boundaries, or identifies the distributed information holdings that are the key to the new approach. The steps identified in paras 6-11 above, which will mostly occur over the next year, will be crucial across all 3 initiatives. User and provider communities will need to ensure that they are in a position to make the most of the opportunities. Specific areas to explore are:

- effective **communication** between the different communities engaged in these initiatives, and by Governments, to develop and share an understanding of the links between the communities and to contribute to responses to the forthcoming Communications on a rounded basis;
- adequate **engagement** of environmental interests in all the relevant decision making fora, particularly INSPIRE implementation, Framework Programme management, and GMES Advisory Council;
- detailed concerns about the SEIS vision described in para 6 above, and barriers to its delivery, particularly the impact of **data policy** issues, and the application of INSPIRE principles beyond spatial data ;
- identification of **priority information needs**, to inform discussion of the initiatives as they develop and the Agency's emerging strategy;
- member states' **capacity to meet new requirements, especially to match the emerging needs for in-situ data under GMES.**
- what **collaboration tools** could be provided to enable member states to make the best possible contribution.
- the scope to use other **implementation projects** (notably nos 2 and 5-11) as a means of identifying specific GMES applications to support SEIS activities.
- coherence with **international aspects** (GEO/GEOSS in particular)

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