

ITS Radar International

ITS in Europe – Identifying Opportunities for the HA INSPIRE Fact Sheet

■ SUMMARY

EU INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information on Transport Networks) seeks to understand more about place, and the impacts upon the people and assets at that location, to better plan, manage risk and utilise resources.

Similarly the Location Strategy for the UK seeks to enhance knowledge of place by creating a framework in which data can be harmonised and shared in a meaningful way.

It has been agreed that the proposed Location Strategy for the UK would be required to meet the requirements of the EU INSPIRE Directive.

As a public sector Agency, which relates their information to 'place' or 'location', the HA will be required through legislation to comply with the EU INSPIRE Directive and populate the INSPIRE framework with their spatial information.

A number of data specifications have yet to be agreed, which will form the basis of the data framework. One of the key aims is to reduce repetition of data collation, share a common data language and exploit and benefit from shared spatial information in an efficient manner, to support the delivery of policy and operational decision making.

■ KEY WORDS

Environment, Geographic information, Standard.

■ DATE OF PREPARATION

22nd April 2009.

The author of this Fact Sheet is employed by The Highways Agency. Work on the ITS Radar International project is carried out under a contract placed on 11 March 2008 by the Highways Agency.

■ WHAT IS INSPIRE?

INSPIRE is an EU legislation which seeks to create a cross-boundary spatial data infrastructure to facilitate the sharing of spatial information amongst public sector organisations, to improve public access to spatial information, and to assist policy-making in relation to activities that may have a direct or indirect impact on the environment.

The Directive came into force on 15 May 2007, and will be transposed into UK legislation later in 2009. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) are leading on this. Once transposed, public sector agencies will have to implement the Directive in various stages between 2009 and 2019.

Spatial data underpins vital local, regional, national and international policy development on global warming and other environmental and security monitoring initiatives but current, up-to-date, well managed, easily accessible data can also benefit service delivery around transport.

However, there are a number of issues associated with the availability, quality, management, access and sharing of this information across all levels of public bodies which INSPIRE seeks to remedy. The Directive aims to:

- Make available metadata for describing spatial datasets to facilitate their discovery. In essence this is the provision of a description of the dataset and the information it contains
- Provide rules for the interoperability of spatial datasets and services so that they can be shared and harmonised into a common form and language
- Implement network services to assist data search and access, and to invoke spatial data and e-commerce
- Address any obstacles that may have an impact on performing a public task that has an environmental impact
- Coordinate the monitoring and reporting of spatial datasets and services in compliance with INSPIRE.

To be INSPIRE compliant, the Highways Agency (HA) will have to provide metadata, transform data to an INSPIRE compliant format and make it accessible through network services.

To date (April 2009), the data specifications are still being decided and the compliance format remains unclear.

INSPIRE relates to a number of new and existing pieces of work both within the HA and across wider government.

Within the HA, the principles of INSPIRE relate closely to much of the work being undertaken around Enterprise Architecture, the Unified Network Model and implementation of the government's Transformation Agenda.

Across wider government there are strategic links with Transformational Government initiatives and the UK Location Strategy.

In essence INSPIRE is about sharing information in a meaningful way, increasing access and reducing repetition and therefore cost. It is also about increasing time efficiency.

The Strategy and Planning Team within the HA Information Directorate are the Agency lead on INSPIRE and will support the Agency's contribution to the UK Government-sponsored Location Council. They will also ensure strategic linkage between the Unified Network Model and INSPIRE.

■ BENEFITS OF INSPIRE

- A robust spatial data infrastructure in place
- Less duplication of data
- Encourage high quality, fit for purpose data
- Application of common standards
- Simplification of licensing arrangements
- Reduced 'per unit' data costs
- More collaboration
- More focus upon using data.

■ TIMETABLE

- July 2004 – European Commission publishes proposal for Directive
- 2004 – 2006 negotiations by Council and European Parliament
- November 2006 – agreement reached
- February 2007 – Directive adopted
- May 2007 – Directive enters into force
- May 2009 – Directive transposed into national legislation
- 2008 – 2012 – Phased adoption of implementing rules
- 2010 – 2019 – Phased compliance with implementing rules.

■ INSPIRE IN THE UK

DEFRA is currently leading the UK transposition plan in the UK. DEFRA coordinates a group of UK government leads on INSPIRE to ensure that a cross-government approach is taken.

DEFRA has been liaising with the GI Panel and is considering how the governance proposed for the UK location strategy can be made to fit with the intended governance arrangements for INSPIRE. There are plans for a consultation exercise on transposing INSPIRE into UK law.

DEFRA continues to liaise with UK-based experts on the INSPIRE drafting teams and encourage UK based Spatial Data Interest Communities (SDIC) and Legally Mandated Organisations to participate in the review process.

■ WORK ON INSPIRE IN THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY

The Highways Agency is a Legally Mandated Organisation under the terms of the Directive and has a legal duty to comply.

The Information Directorate, Strategy and Policy Group takes the lead for INSPIRE on behalf of the Agency. Denise Plumpton, the HA Director of Information, currently represents the Agency on the UK Location Council.

The Agency is currently working on the strategic implementation of INSPIRE in partnership with DEFRA and other Legally Mandated Organisations.

A number of data specifications have yet to be agreed, which will form the basis of the data framework. One of the key aims is to reduce repetition of data collation, share a common data language and exploit and benefit from shared spatial information in an efficient manner, to support the delivery of policy and operational decision making.

The HA business drivers for exploiting its data assets to greater effect (part of the Agency's Information Strategy) means that the HA is strategically aligned with the aims and objectives of INSPIRE, and can potentially be a beacon of good practice for other public sector bodies.

The HA is well-positioned to deliver the EU INSPIRE Directive through its Unified Network Model (UNM) project.

UNM will aim for the HA to comply with INSPIRE, and will provide a common service module that will facilitate other Agency data sets to comply with INSPIRE.

By embracing INSPIRE, the Agency will have a strong example to cite of being supportive of the Transformational Government agenda.

■ BIBLIOGRAPHY

INSPIRE A TO Z – Niall Watson UK INSPIRE Policy Lead – 2007

I&DeA/LGA Position Paper – 2009

HA INSPIRE Briefing Paper – Vicky Williams – 2009

INSPIRE Network Services Architecture Version 3 July 2008: available [here](#)

INSPIRE web site: <http://inspire.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

■ GLOSSARY

DEFRA Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

GI Panel Geographic Information Panel - aims to give high-level advice to Department for Communities and Local Government Ministers on geographic information issues of national importance for the United Kingdom

INSPIRE Infrastructure for Spatial Information on Transport Networks – EC initiative

SDIC Spatial Data Interest Communities

UNM Unified Network Model project – the Unified Network Model is a project, led by the Information Directorate Strategy and Policy Group, which is seeking to develop network services that have one shared version of the strategic road network. By developing network services that work from a single definition of the network, system data can be shared seamlessly and effectively. UNM shares many of the values of the EU INSPIRE Directive, and as such will help the Agency to meet INSPIRE compliance.