

NSDI in Croatia

ABSTRACT

IT IS CERTAIN THAT CROATIA IS ON ITS WAY TO BECOME A FULL EU MEMBER WHICH, WE BELIEVE, WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED SOON. ONE OF THE CHALLENGES FOR THE GI COMMUNITY IS TO BUILD NSDI ACCORDING TO INSPIRE. CONSIDERING THE EFFECTS AND SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE PUBLIC AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, IMPROVEMENT OF THE EXISTING NSDI SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AS AN ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE AND GROUNDWORK FOR BUILDING THE OVERALL INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY. THE CROATIAN STATE GEODETIC ADMINISTRATION (SGA) RECOGNIZED EARLY THAT SIMPLE ACCESS TO SPATIAL DATA IS THE KEY PREREQUISITE FOR AN EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICALLY PROSPEROUS SOCIETY. THE NEED FOR NSDI IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN INCLUDED AS PART OF THE CROATIAN E-GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE.

KEYWORDS

NSDI, legal and institutional framework, Croatia, INSPIRE

1. INTRODUCTION

Croatia recognizes the need for the NSDI improvement and this task has been included as a part of the infrastructure of the Croatian e-Government (Cetl et al. 2009). In the last few years there have been different initiatives and activities concerned with NSDI and most of these were initiated by the State Geodetic Administration (SGA) which is the national mapping and cartographic agency (NMCA). NSDI connects the public sector with the national and international spatial data network and provides support to the decision-making processes carried out by the Government, citizens and private companies. A prerequisite for a fast and sustainable growth of NSDI is a well organized society of spatial data in the sense of open collaboration between public, private and academic sectors. This partnership relies on a joint vision and the process of consensus, uniting Croatian principles as well as the skills and readiness of organizations and individuals who are capable of and willing to contribute to the NSDI.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A synergy of different initiatives and activities, mostly driven by SGA, resulted in February 2007 in a new Law on State Survey and Real Estate Cadastre (OG 16/2007). A separate chapter defines NSDI as a set of measurements, standards, specifications and services which, within the framework of establishing e-government, aim at enabling effective gathering, managing, exchange and usage of georeferenced spatial data. The Law gives definition of NSDI and metadata, content of metadata information, services, NSDI data and subjects that are obliged to participate in its establishment and maintenance, and, what is very important gives institutional framework and defines NSDI bodies and their responsibilities. It is to be stressed that at the time the Law was being prepared, the INSPIRE directive was in its final phase. Croatia is still a non EU country and is not obliged to apply INSPIRE directive at the moment. However, it was decided to use advantage that INSPIRE directive is already prepared and to use it in order to prepare information society to be ready to implement INSPIRE at the moment Croatia will join EU. As a result there is a high compatibility between the Law and the INSPIRE directive (Bačić et al. 2008). With this Law the basic NSDI framework was established which is only the first step of transposition INSPIRE into national regulations.

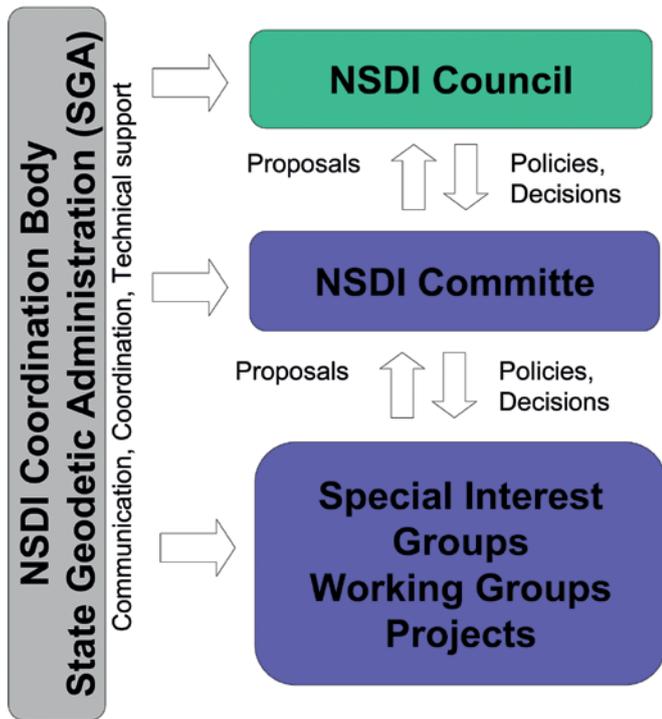


FIGURE 1. NSDI Institutional structure

3. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Law gives institutional framework and defines NSDI bodies and their responsibilities. It distinguishes three bodies in the NSDI institutional structure (figure 1).

The supreme NSDI governing body is the NSDI Council as a political body responsible for managing the NSDI establishment. It was formed by the Government's decision on May 31, 2007 and it consists of 15 members, representatives of: Central State Administrative Office for E-Croatia, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, State Geodetic Administration, Central Bureau of Statistics, Croatian Hydrographic Institute, Croatian Geodetic Institute, Association of Geodetic-Geoinformation Specialty, Croatian Employers Association, Association of Information-Communication Specialty, and Croatian Chamber of Architects and Civil Engineers. The basic tasks of the Council are: deciding on the aims, strategies, policies and basic activities of the NSDI institutional framework, harmonizing the NSDI activities with the state policy and programmes, coordinating the planning of and using the state funds for the NSDI development securing a strong political support for the overall process of NSDI development.

On the managerial level, there is the NSDI Committee appointed by the Council consisting of three representatives from the Council, two from SGA and heads of Working Groups. Working Groups are temporary or permanent work bodies responsible for the concept and implementation aspects. Their members are representatives of the state authorities at all levels, of users and producers of spatial data, research and educational institutions, etc. These bodies are appointed or dismissed by the NSDI Committee, with approval of the NSDI Council. A prerequisite for forming a body is a clearly defined mission and a detailed execution plan. During 2008 two working groups (WGs) were created: a WG for NSDI technical standards and a WG for spatial data sharing policies. At the end of 2009 three new working groups were created: WG for building the NSDI establishment capacities, WG for linking the NSDI

program and e-Government and WG for establishing a business model for the NSDI.

The State Geodetic Administration in the organizational structure is a coordination body, a kind of secretariat, providing continuous support in the NSDI development process, coordinating work of all NSDI bodies, and providing technical support. Its main tasks are: set-up and maintenance of the central NSDI web portal, securing communication support, public relations, services of leading projects, services of quality control, etc. This organizational structure is similar to that in countries like Germany or the Netherlands.

4. GEOPORTAL

One of the tasks of the SGA is to establish and maintain a public metadata service through a geoportal. The development of the geoportal, currently containing only the data owned by the SGA, is in its final stage (figure 2).

Having a geoportal in operation means that other governmental organizations can not only use SGA data but also make their data accessible. Through SGA geoportal Croatian GIS users have access to vast quantities of spatial data that will make their everyday work much easier. This is the first step to the establishment of a Croatian national geoportal as part of an NSDI.



FIGURE 2. SGA Geoportal (www.geo-portal.hr)

5. CONCLUSION

Some important steps in NSDI establishment in Croatia have already been undertaken but the future ones will also be important for the success. The Law on State Survey and the Real Estate Cadastre gives a very good legal and institutional framework. SGA's Geoportal has been launched as a basis for national Geoportal. All this is a good basis for further development and harmonization with INSPIRE when Croatia becomes a member of the EU.

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