

PSI is making other actions, like INSPIRE implementation, go faster

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All the cadastral and geographical organizations are making significant efforts to harmonize our data and to provide services as the INSPIRE Directive demands. The implementation of the INSPIRE Directive contributes also to the application of the PSI principles. The document below is part of a study of costs-benefits analysis of INSPIRE in the Netherlands, prepared by ECORYS Nederland BV. This makes an interesting analysis of the synergies of both e-Government and INSPIRE.

The Government and local government bodies such as the provinces, the water boards and the municipalities work hard to improve digital services and reduce the administrative burdens on citizens and companies. Indeed, e-Government policy is focused on improving services and reducing the burdens for citizens, companies and institutions.

Even though INSPIRE focuses on the provision of geo-information, and not specifically on the broader field of digital services, it makes a contribution to information housekeeping which forms the basis for good digital services. Good digital services benefit from being able to access information that is based on clear and fine-tuned data whose quality is known; data that is easily accessible as well and not 'locked up' within an organisation or system.

Comparisons between the principles used by the government for services and INSPIRE relate to the accessibility and availability of geodata of a consistent standard, and illustrate that the principles are the same and are connected to each other. The table below shows a comparison of some fundamental principles of e-Government and those of INSPIRE (from NORA2.0). Please note, the context of e-Government is weighted towards services and INSPIRE is all about services and data. We can conclude that the principles of INSPIRE vis à vis digital services are closely linked to the policy of e-Government. So INSPIRE supports and strengthens the policy principles of e-Government.

Table: Matching fundamental principles of e-Government and INSPIRE (from NORA2.0)

Some e-Government principles

Subsidiarity. Single storage/data supply; plural use

Interoperability. No one is sent from 'pillar to post': information is shared and used government wide.

Single storage/data supply; plural use

Transparent organisations give a clear, accessible picture of the services and products that citizens companies and social organisations can purchase for them.

Some INSPIRE principles

Geographical information should be gathered and managed once at the site where this can be done most efficiently.

It should be possible to share geographical information that is gathered at one level, with all the other levels of government

Geographical information that is required for use by the government at all levels to devise good policy has to be accessible under conditions that do not hamper its wider use.

It has to be easy to discover what geographical information is available. If it is suitable for a specific purpose and under what conditions one can obtain and use the data.

In the National Execution Program (NUP), Better Services and e-Government, the basis registrations are listed as basis provisions. A proportion of the basis registrations of the NUP fall under an INSPIRE theme. These consist of: the basis registration Large Scale Topography, the basis registration Topography, the basis registration Land Registry and the basis registrations Addresses and Buildings (BAG). The basis registrations of the NUP, which should be considered as a means of executing e-Government policy, are included like this in the European context. The basis registrations can be exchanged in cross-border projects and contacts, by linking to the national INSPIRE portal. The project team BAG also writes the data specifications for the exchange of address information within Europe, so that the INSPIRE data specifications would not deviate too much from the data model BAG. This means that INSPIRE links the e-Government policy in this field with policy at European level and so ensures a better level of security for national e-Government policy.

Example: Harmonisation can potentially intervene in policy

Currently each province has its own way of calculating noise contours around highways. Harmonisation may lead to agreements being made not only about the colours of the contours (the key), but also about how they are calculated. Perhaps specific formulas may only be used or specific calculations software to project a noise contour around a highway on a map. Contours may move, including the rights that third parties may extract. Houses that initially were outside the scope of the contours/ border values are suddenly within them. Where building was once allowed, this is suddenly no longer permissible. Where initially a grant facility was applicable, in the new situation this arrangement is redundant. This may mean that provinces have to modify their policy so that the costs that are connected (claims, extra grants to be provided) to these policies are not taken for granted. Source: IPO, INSPIRE starts today

The INSPIRE Directive states how provisions should be set up and under what conditions. The implementation rules connect standards to the quality of the services, for example. This concerns the standards related to performance, capacity and the availability of provisions. The standard that stipulates that a network service has to be available for 99% of the time will have a particular impact on the management organisation of a network service or the portal through which it is offered. If an organisation hasn't already based its own service policy upon 7/24 availability, then the management policy should be adapted accordingly. For management organisations of national provisions within the e-Government, this impact will not be very large; because of their central role they have often already adapted their management policy to 7/24 availability.