

JRC and INSPIRE Interoperability

More than 25% of EU legislation has a technical or scientific basis, and this trend is likely to continue as policies increasingly cut across several disciplines.

JRC

The mission of the JRC is to provide customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of the European Union. As a service of the European Commission, the JRC functions as a reference centre for science and technology across the Union. Close to the policy-making process, it serves the common interest of the Member States whilst being independent of special interests, whether private or national. JRC employs over two thousand people and has seven scientific institutes spread over five sites in Belgium, Germany and Italy.

INSPIRE

The INSPIRE initiative was launched in 2001 with the intention of making available harmonised sources of spatial information in support of the formulation, implementation and evaluation of Community policies. It relates to the base information collected within Member States in order to respond to a wide range of policy initiatives and obligations at local, regional, national and international level. This information is often already in existence but cannot be exploited within a broader context due to fragmentation of current monitoring system definition and implementation.

Once the INSPIRE Directive (a legal framework currently under review) has been formally approved it will be implemented and expanded in phases, starting with information in support of environmental policies, and gradually adding information specific to other sectors such as transport, agriculture, etc.

JRC as Co-ordinator

For purposes of process organisation a participative framework was put into place in 2005 with an open call to spatial-data interest communities to propose experts and reference material for the drafting of the technical implementation rules and the JRC acting as overall technical co-ordinator. This ensures the viability and evolution of the technical infrastructure for INSPIRE and guarantees liaison with the European and international research community. JRC also initiates and monitors the work with international standardisation bodies and is responsible for technical co-ordination with other relevant international initiatives. JRC is responsible for the preparation of draft Technical Implementing Rules for:

- metadata for spatial data
- spatial data specifications and harmonisation
- network services and interoperability
- technical aspects of monitoring.

Interoperability Key

Interoperability is, of course, central to the INSPIRE vision. JRC works with other organisations to develop interoperability standards in the Open Geospatial Consortium, Inc. (OGC) and works to establish metadata standards through ISO TC 211 and other organisations. Information sharing by means of Web access to data and services is essential to achieving the INSPIRE vision, and such access depends on open, consensus-derived standard interfaces and encodings.