

# Overcoming Barriers to Regional SDI Development in the Americas



There is nothing else like INSPIRE in the Americas and most probably there never will be, according to Santiago Borrero from the GeoSUR Program. At its own pace and under its own circumstances, the region is advancing in the process to build a sound spatial data infrastructure (SDI) for the Americas. When asked to choose a starting point for this effort, he states it would be compounded by the establishment of SIRGAS – the unified reference system for South America – in 1993, the Interamerican Geodata Network established in 1996 and the UNRCC for the Americas held in 1997...which is more than 20 years ago. Jumping to 2017, he gladly shares new developments in overcoming barriers encountered along this journey.

*(By Santiago Borrero, GeoSUR Program)*

Recently, I attended the international seminar on 'Geospatial Information for Social, Environmental and Economic Development in the Americas' in Santiago, successfully organised by the Chilean government. It incorporated multidisciplinary presentations by leading experts and parallel workshops on GEOSS, disasters management and SDI national and regional initiatives – and, as an added bonus, the fourth meeting of UNGGIM: Americas and the first joint session between ECLAC's Statistical Commission and UNGGIM: A.

After this visit to Santiago I can conclude that SDI is moving on in the Americas. How? Well, UNGGIM: Americas is preparing itself to contribute to UNGGIM 2.0, including construction of the first geospatial and statistical data base for the region called MEGA; SIRGAS is expanding its already proven capacity-building skills across the region around reference systems; the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), with support provided by the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), is progressing towards a first seamless database of the Americas at scale 1:250,000, currently focusing on South America; at the same time, in coordination with the GeoSUR Program, it has prepared a new version of the Latin American Metadata Profile (LAMP v2) and GeoSUR, in collaboration with the USGS and Spain's CNIG, will soon have a new version of its geportal, adding new OGC-complaint services including a new and open metadata editor tool.

There are other relevant activities going on at the regional level, like PAIGH's proposal for a regional fundamental datasets policy, yet I believe this bouquet of activities is sufficient to indicate that SDI in the Americas is moving ahead with support from multiple actors, namely PAIGH, SIRGAS, UNGGIM: A, GeoSUR and now, too, AmeriGEOSS.