

SDI Catalonia: A Regional Approach

Early in 2002 the government of the autonomous region of Catalonia (Spain) began the IDEC project (SDI of Catalonia). The first year was devoted to general planning and preparation and to creation of the appropriate collaborative framework. The following year institutional compromises and agreements were made regarding general understanding of the concepts, architecture and technologies proposed by the initiative. Last year, 2004, marked the implementation phase of this project.

Add Value Platform

The regional SDI currently offers via its Geoportal several services the most important of which is the multilingual Catalog Server, with more than 18,000 records of metadata (53,000 in both Spanish and English) describing data available from over seventy providers. Metadata for services and schemas will also become available shortly. The Viewer, a 'WMS' client that implements the OpenGIS Web Map Server Specification, allows the user to access more than a dozen WMS servers from different providers who together provide about 125 layers of geodata. Services are also active that implement the OpenGIS Web Feature Service (WFS) Specification for Web-based query and delivery of vector-based data, and the OpenGIS Web Coverage Service (WCS) Specification for Web-based query and delivery of raster-based data. This services framework is also offered as a platform to which other institutions and organisations can add value, sharing and reusing the services for specific applications.

Open and Distributed Architecture

Our strategy has been to promote SDI based on themes such as environment, coastal information and transportation. This thematic approach, based on the IDEC platform, has had a clear impact on the models upon which other projects have been planned. Some important initiatives have been changed in initial conceptualisation from a centralised model to one of open and distributed architecture, from a proprietary system to a standardised one based on interoperable technologies.

Regional Approach

One example is the EUROSION Project, an initiative funded by the European Commission to promote better management of its coastal zones. Others include UNIVERS, a regional initiative to connect Catalan university departments WMS to share land information and other geospatial information, SITCAT, a corporate governmental GIS, and LOCAL, a recently launched project that aims to incorporate municipalities within the Information Society and e-government. All are clear examples of a new era in managing GI technologies. The open SDI paradigm demonstrates the importance of interoperability concepts and technologies. We think that a regional approach helps to set up and more easily promote projects based on SDI concepts and technologies because a region is intermediate between the large scale of the State and the smaller scale of local government.