

European Commission Awards Deployment of Pan-European Open Data Portal



Capgemini, a provider of consulting, technology and outsourcing services, has announced that the European Commission has awarded the firm a three-year contract, worth several million euro, for the deployment of an EU open data core platform. The goal of this project is to develop, launch and operate a single, large-scale, pan-European Open Data Portal, which will bring together public data resources from all over Europe in one portal covering all 39 European countries, thus improving the discoverability and reusability of this data. The data is to be made fully public, so the information will be available to every European resident who has internet access.

Capgemini Consulting, the global strategy and transformation consulting arm of the Capgemini Group, will lead this three-year engagement, co-ordinating a number of partners and subcontractors, including Capgemini's Group subsidiary - Sogeti, Intrasoft International, the Open Data Institute, Fraunhofer FOKUS, con terra, the University of Southampton and time.lex.

As acknowledged specialists in creating national and international spatial data infrastructures, con terra is responsible for the field of spatial data. By opening up spatial data infrastructures and integrating them in open data portals and catalogues, the project aims to simplify access to public data and information and to advance their use.

Policies

The consortium will support public administrations in each of the 39 countries with the implementation of policies regarding open data, to ensure significant uptake on the publication and supply of open data, and to provide evidence on the economic impact of the reuse of public data resources, as detailed in the recent G8 Charter. This includes promoting knowledge on the organisational and technical requirements to foster the publication of open data resources, providing training, developing strategies for interaction with user groups and promoting the use of reuse friendly licensing conditions. Private-sector players will also be engaged to best make use of open data for the creation of new products and services, while citizens will be equipped to make more informed choices.

Dinand Tinholt, vice president and EU Lead at Capgemini Consulting, said with the increasing digitisation of society, the amount of data across the world is set to increase exponentially. For the EU two main questions arise: How can the EU ensure the accessibility and reuse of information collected by public administrations? And: What is the value of this information? This strategic project is at the heart of all the Open and Big Data initiatives of public administrations across Europe.

Harvesting mechanisms

con terra is contributing its extensive experience in the construction of national and international spatial data infrastructures to the creation of the Open Data Portal. In close collaboration with Fraunhofer FOKUS, con terra is developing harvesting mechanisms designed to retrieve metadata from INSPIRE portals and map this data onto the DCAT-AP profile. As a result, open geographical data from EU member states and other European countries can be disseminated at EU level and subjected to qualitative enhancement. To enable the refinement of place-name searches, con terra is implementing a gazetteer which is based on the INSPIRE Annex I Geographical Names, and which makes use of both FME technology and the smart.finder. The map.apps application will then be employed for visualising the spatial data.

Marc Kleemann, market delivery manager for e-government, open data and open government at con terra commented: Initiatives such as INSPIRE have advanced the creation of spatial data infrastructures in the countries of Europe. And now the time has come to sustainably integrate them with open data infrastructures so that they can be used over a broader base. This will allow public users to enjoy easier and more intuitive access to generally available data and information.

Image: Environmental noise in North Rhine-Westphalia. Maps created on the basis of freely available data are a valuable source of information for members of the public. (Source: www.uvo.nrw.de)