

# First Southeast European Spatial Data Infrastructure

The Republic of Croatia has simplified access to countrywide geographic data through an online geoportal, a type of Web site that makes it easier for citizens, government, and private-sector users to find and access vast quantities of geographic information and related services. The geoportal has already proven its value as an essential component of the country's Organised Land Project. By making data more accessible, the average time for processing changes to land titles has dropped from a 400-day average to 37 days.

The geoportal is hosted by the State Geodetic Authority (SGA) of Croatia. Dr. Ćeljko Bačić, head of SGA, states, "Simple access to geospatial data is the key prerequisite for an efficient and economically prosperous society. The geoportal in active operation means that other governmental organizations can use SGA data but also make their data accessible. This is the first step to establishing a Croatian national geoportal as part of a national SDI."

The geoportal is modeled after the European Union's Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE) directive to share geographic information across Europe. "The Croatian geoportal is the first comprehensive NSDI [National Spatial Data Infrastructure] in southeastern Europe," says Mark Cygan, ESRI manager of map, chart, and data production and SDI. "Croatia continues to be a leader in the region when it comes to the collection, management, and distribution of geospatial data."

SGA is able to support the discovery and purchase of national data through the geoportal while also providing strict access control and data quality policies. Data available through the geoportal includes digital orthophotos, basemaps, administrative units, and land survey information.

The geoportal was developed by ESRI distributor GISDATA d.o.o. and con terra GmbH, the professional services arm of ESRI Deutschland GmbH, using ESRI's ArcGIS Server Geoportal extension. The Geoportal extension provides the platform for organizations to quickly access geospatial resources regardless of location or type.

"The implementation of this portal is enabling a change in behavior from a restrictive data policy to a more open, transparent, and efficient use of spatial information," says Andrej Lončarić, director of GISDATA in Croatia and the southeastern region of Europe.