

# Ordnance Survey Goes International

From September 2012, the UK geospatial information agency Ordnance Survey will be launching a new international organisation, Ordnance Survey International. It will harness the skills and expertise within Ordnance Survey to primarily support other national mapping agencies and countries. Ordnance Survey International will be headed by Steven Ramage, former executive director at the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC), a global body developing open geospatial standards.

The aim is to provide advice and services across the full spectrum of Ordnance Survey's expertise, including data collection and maintenance, product development and geospatial data management.

The advice will enable international customers to develop and enhance their own business requirements and ultimately reap the benefits, which can be delivered through the efficient management of accurate, maintained geospatial information.

The quality, accuracy and use of the mapping data varies from country to country. The global recognition of the importance of reliable and trusted GI has in turn resulted in greater customer demand on national mapping agencies to collect and maintain accurate location data.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said that Ordnance Survey has a defined strategy in providing their customers with accurate and efficient services, and a strong track record of working collaboratively with partners. This has continued with the development of the Public Data Group, and an international service was the next step.

Dr Vanessa Lawrence CB, director general and chief executive at Ordnance Survey added saying that for some time the organisation has been approached by other national mapping agencies to provide guidance and share their expertise. Following encouragement by Ministers to export the skills Ordnance Survey International has been set up facilitating working with overseas customers who wish to seek our assistance. Within Great Britain, location-based data is recognised as a vital tool in underpinning decision making and supporting economic activity, with an estimated annual value to the British economy at more than GBP100 billion. Ordnance Survey knows from the many overseas approaches that we receive that the skills and knowledge can be shared to support other national mapping agencies in implementing standards of data collection and product development, which meet the needs of their customers.

Over the last decade, Ordnance Survey has frequently engaged with international audiences, either through overseas visits to Ordnance Survey or via the established Cambridge Conference. Staff from Ordnance Survey have also delivered a number of presentations, sharing knowledge and best practice, at many high profile overseas conferences. Last year Dr Lawrence, undertook an investigation into the spatial capability of Australia. The study was commissioned by the Australian Government and was carried out in 2011 by Vanessa, acting on behalf of the British Government.

Supporting Steven in developing new overseas opportunities will be Carsten Roensdorf, an international GI expert who will be located in the Middle East providing Ordnance Survey with a local presence and enabling Ordnance Survey International to build and strengthen relationships and to take forward business opportunities.

Steven added: "I've been very fortunate in my career to have worked for some organisations at the forefront of the geospatial industry, such as NAVTEQ (Nokia), 1Spatial and most recently the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC). I am very pleased to be able to take all that knowledge and experience into, what is possibly the world's leading mapping agency, Ordnance Survey."