Attempting to Jointly Implement Open Data Policy and INSPIRE in 13 Mediterranean Regions. Lessons Learned from the Homer Project.
Scope

It includes 19 partners, 13 of whom as regional territories and 6 as supporters. HOMER’s objectives include setting a federation of Open Data portals among partners, sharing common data sets related to MED strategic domains (agriculture, culture, energy, environment, tourism), ensuring long sustainability and exploiting a huge number of harmonized and federated datasets, enhancing the e-participation and digital market opportunities of the MED citizens. HOMER enables governments of Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia, Montenegro, Greece, Crete, Cyprus and Malta to unlock the potential of PSI in strategic economic sectors for the MED growth. HOMER has been designed thanks to the pioneering experience of the Piedmont Region, which was the first region in Italy (and one of the first in Europe) to launch its open data portal (www.dati.piemonte.it) in May 2010.
Roles

CSI Piemonte’s role in Homer

Project leader supporter in WP1 “Management, coordination and quality control”, Press Releases Coordinator under WP2 “Information and Dissemination”, Task Leader for WP3.2 “Federation development”, Implementing Partner in the Pilot for WP5 "Stimulating digital application in the Mediterranean" and Member of the Open Data Task Force.

CELI’s role

Celi designed the technological solution with CSI, and chose an appropriate fragment of EuroVoc to be used in the solution; it also developed the solution exploiting its experience in the field of enterprise semantic search.

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Within HOMER, CSI has two main responsibilities: it is the developer of a Federation of Open Data Portals among partners providing ICT and legal support, and it is the promoter of the reuse of the technological solutions underlying the portal, developed in the context of the project. “Federation” here is intended as the capacity to collect, search and retrieve the metadata of data published by each Partner. With “data sets” here we mean descriptors of data sets, i.e. documents bearing metadata on a dataset available to the Provider.

Partners have been involved upon signing a Memorandum of Understanding where technological, organizational and legal boundaries have been defined. An analysis has been conducted to identify the informational and technical requirements for the platform, while a survey has been conducted to assess - throughout the project - the state of the art on the supply of data sets by the Partners.

The Partners provided their data sets thanks to APIs used to harvest the set of metadata common to all Providers, and to collect them into the system. The Partners provided their metadata by exposing them with one of the supported protocols (CKAN API, CSW or specialized webservices).
cross-lingual search

The portal collects and index the descriptors of data sets in a common catalogue; a semantic search engine uses the multidisciplinary LOD thesaurus EuroVoc to perform query expansion and to enable cross-lingual retrieval, in all languages involved. By using Eurovoc codes to tag the descriptors, partners did not have the burden to make translations of their metadata. Moreover the technological solution is configurable in order to reach new stakeholders, using new domains, and new languages in the Portal. All technological components (Index, Semantic Search Engine, Translator) are provided and managed – under the conditions and the coordination of CSI – that releases them on the basis of an open source philosophy.
Results

- HOMER is able to open hundreds of public datasets enhancing digital heritage transparency and promoting open data culture across the Mediterranean: the “opened” PSI are federated, setting up the basis for a transnational Open Data Federation. Addressing the legal, cultural and technological barriers of PSI has been possible by setting up an effective strategy able to harmonize open data policy and portals across the MED area with a wider re-use of PSI. This is materialized with a common process of development of open data portals in each project territory opening relevant data, with an impact on policies in the Mediterranean area, and encouraging interoperability and cooperation between partners with different skills and from different contexts and territories. For all components of the Federation, CSI ensures the main technical characteristics of the portal related to ICT aspects: access without restrictions to rationally organised public data in standard and open electronic.
OnGoing Initiatives

• The Homer Federation is conceived as potentially open to future accession by other Partners - free to conduct their own Open Data initiative independently from the HOMER project. New stakeholders who wish to expose their catalogues of open data within the Homer Federation under the technological coordination of CSI, have the opportunity to aggregate their respective and complementary skills in order to maximize advantages and effects of a common federated index.

• CSI besides, is the OPEN-Dai Project Coordinator (www.open-dai.eu) whose aims to make data and platforms available for digital public services on cloud computing infrastructures. OPEN-Dai goal is to facilitate the process of creation of API – published in a monitored and managed approach - from data within public administration without duplication or moving data or forcing costly software engineering on legacy application.

• The integration of the HOMER Federated Index in the OPEN-Dai scalable cloud infrastructure will increases the API's diffusion, facilitates its uses as a starting point to create new applications and services for public administrations, companies and citizens.
Conclusions

• Is there really a luxury for geoportals and open data portals shouldn’t we be striving for a common management - governance in the aim of efficiency?

• the need for closer collaboration between INSPIRE and OPEN data policy