Down to Earth
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A perspective on INSPIRE and environmental information

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The next 25 minutes

• An invitation .... and why me?
• The appraisal - Highlights, lowlights and lessons learned
• Some final thoughts
An invitation ..... and why me?

• Invited to present a candid appraisal of INSPIRE and environmental information

• Why me?
  – 25 years of being a part of the design and implementation of environmental spatial information systems
    • Corporately – British Geological Survey
    • Nationally – UK public sector GI
    • Continentally – EC projects and INSPIRE
    • Globally – OneGeology
  – Close...but not too close... to INSPIRE/SEIS

• A personal perspective, but I’ve listened a lot to others
The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."

Michelangelo

**The vision**

**Highlights**

**Lowlights**
Not well communicated or marketed as it deserves: within Europe, globally & in other domains (industry)

**Lessons to be learned?**
Invest more in communication and marketing from the outset ... start now!
The use case

**Highlights**

Strategic infrastructure. Multiple end uses.

**Lowlights**

Lack of drive & engagement of user community, especially industry. Infrastructure never an easy sell.

**Lessons to be learned?**

More focus and effort on who is going to build on the infrastructure and how.

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"Be not simply good, be good for something."  
David Henry Thoreau
Legislation and technology

Even when laws have been written down, they ought not always to remain unaltered
Aristotle

Highlights
You need carrot and stick – without legislation organisations and nations would not have delivered

Lowlights
Legislation and technology don’t mix – specifications are detailed and the pace of change is great

Lessons to be learned?
Keep the legislation strategic and the implementation flexible
Bureaucracy is the art of making the possible impossible
Javier Pascual Salcedo

Governance and management

Highlights
Sponsorship and partnership of 3 EC Directorates.
Personal commitment of key people.

Lowlights
Lack of structured leadership. Silo’d and labyrinthine nature of the EC. Too many initiatives and documents

Lessons to be learned?
Manage as a project. Introduce more clarity, transparency and accountability ... and brevity!
Implementation

A good plan implemented today is better than a perfect plan implemented tomorrow.  
George Patton

Highlights
Action is better than endless strategizing and talking.

Lowlights
Deployment weak. Under-estimated the complexity, time and resources

Lessons to be learned?
Learn from Annex I & plan realistically for difficulties
Annex II and III / environmental data will present
The water that runs through the pipes is more important than the plumbing. 

**Data and content**

**Highlights**
Rich and diverse knowledge is being unlocked

**Lowlights**
There is so much more hidden away. The quality is... varied.

**Lessons to be learned?**
Invest more in IM. Make data available – if it’s wanted it will get cleaned & the quality will improve.
Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.
WB Yeats

Communication

Highlights
Extraordinary PR potential – it’s the environment, it’s multinational, it’s digital innovation in a digital age

Lowlights
Not exploiting that potential and losing an opportunity, especially beyond our SDI community.

Lessons to be learned?
Give communication a higher priority and coordinate it better - it will tangibly improve outcomes
Lack of money is the root of all evil.  George Bernard Shaw

Resources

Highlights
Huge projects which are harnessing talent across Europe and beyond

Lowlights
Insufficient dedicated resources. Failure of EC funding programmes to align with INSPIRE implementation

Lessons to be learned?
Recognise that infrastructure like INSPIRE/SEIS will not happen unless funded (especially for standards)
Impact

We shall be judged more by what we do at home than what we preach abroad.
John F Kennedy

Highlights
INSPIRE more successful at national level than many envisaged. Improved IM in nations & organisations.

Lowlights
Not enough evidence of tangible success at pan-European level.

Lessons to be learned?
European agencies and those with an pan-national brief need to engage......and be engaged with.
**People and knowledge**

**Highlights**
Building an enormous enthusiastic team across Europe. Exchange of know-how and experience.

**Lowlights**
Lots of voluntary added work – but has there been comparable added value?

**Lessons to be learned?**
Fewer, prioritized, initiatives and goals. Better coordination *and* direction of the team

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

Henry Ford
Success is a marathon, not a sprint.
Anon

Sustainability and evolution

Highlights
Positive changes now embedded at organisation and national level which can provide the foundation.

Lowlights
Insufficient clarity about how the infrastructure will be coordinated, maintained and used at EU level.

Lessons to be learned?
SDI’s take as much effort to maintain as they do to develop – we need a plan & resources
Some final thoughts ......

• Make outreach and communication a priority
  – INSPIRE is world-leading – but it’s still a whisper
  – SDI initiatives are opaque to wider stakeholders and those who have to implement them outside

• Keep it simple
  – The larger and more complex the venture, the simpler the mission and goals must be.
  – Build incrementally, add more functionality and data later
  – Merge some of the many initiatives!
Some more final thoughts ......

• It’s about people more than technology
  – Make knowledge exchange an explicit INSPIRE/SEIS goal
  – The people who are doing the implementation are a diverse militia not an army
  – Cherish the variety and expertise of the militia but recognise their diversity is a two-edged sword
  – Give the militia clear leadership!
• Take full advantage of the unique pan-national scope
  – Add value at a European level
• Don’t talk about it – do it, show it, learn from it
  • Don’t overdo the technical theory and strategizing - take a practical approach
A very final thought.....
Infrastructure

The SDI world according to...

....geographers and environmentalists

....a flat Earth ;-)
4D infrastructure

The SDI world according to...

....geologist’s

Down to Earth!
Thank you!