

# "Towards an INSPIREd e-Reporting?" Workshop

## 2017 INSPIRE Conference

Monday 4 September, 9-12:30, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Kehl (Germany)

### Executive Summary

The objective of the workshop was to trigger a discussion about the enhancement of environmental reporting re-using INSPIRE, existing and emerging approaches as well as new visions and paradigms brought by novel data sources and technologies. The workshop, organised by the European Environment Agency (EEA), was very well attended by Member States representatives, INSPIRE experts, European Commission staff and interested people from across Europe.

The workshop started with an overview of the main elements of the concept paper "The future of e-Reporting and its link to INSPIRE"<sup>1</sup> elaborated by the European Commission (DG ENV) and the EEA, which has set the vision, the overall approach and a series of actions on how to better use the approaches set out in the INSPIRE Directive for the purpose of electronic reporting. This was followed by a more practical talk on approaches and examples of environmental reporting re-using INSPIRE. This presentation introduced the different encoding approaches (in particular *Extensions* and *Linked Approach*) and a couple of examples of environmental reporting data streams which are currently embedding INSPIRE in their data models: Common Database of Designated Areas (CDDA) and the EU Registry of Industrial Facilities.

Three countries presented their activities related to the alignment of e-reporting and INSPIRE:

- Finland (National Land Survey) presented a project for a common platform for geo-data users and producers which includes a work package on the implementation of INSPIRE services in support for environmental reporting;
- The Netherlands (Geonovum) is developing a proof-of-concept e-Reporting tool for CDDA reusable by everyone, and is organising soon a workshop gathering both INSPIRE experts and environmental reporters;
- Germany (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety) presented the activities carried out at national level to find a common view of the INSPIRE relevant datasets that serve environmental reporting, taking into consideration the current complexity of actors involved due to its federal structure.

The discussion which followed thereafter was structured around two main topics: the impact of INSPIRE on environmental reporting processes (i.e. encoding approaches, use of harvesting) and new innovative reporting approaches (i.e. towards zero reporting/active

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ies-svn.irc.ec.europa.eu/attachments/download/2098/eRep%20and%20INSPIRE%20concept%20-%20rev%20-%20May%202017.pdf>

dissemination, use of novel data sources). The interventions could be condensed in the following take-away messages:

- INSPIRE is considered to have a great potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness and is as such reflected in the Action Plan to Streamline Environmental Reporting<sup>2</sup>; however, and so far, many environmental reporters perceive INSPIRE as another layer of complexity which does not appear to facilitate such streamlining. Should not exist a legal obligation, it is quite doubtful Member States would publish data according to INSPIRE.
  - Added value needs to be shown so the use of (and compliance with) INSPIRE is not considered as an additional burden. Popular encoding formats beyond GML need to be explored that can facilitate the re-use of the data.
  - Environmental reporters want to avoid submitting twice the same information; solutions needed to be found to avoid this when re-using INSPIRE, using agreed formats and standard services (which will also depend on the theme or topic); There is a general interest in evolving towards a fully automated reporting systems.
  - Tools need to be developed in order to facilitate the transition towards an INSPIRE e-reporting while, if possible, hiding its complexity. Solutions have to take into consideration the different degrees of maturity of Member States. Lessons learned from the statistical community, which is using automated solutions, could be taken into account in this process.
  - There is a strong interest from the (INSPIRE-aware) environmental community to be provided with blueprints of INSPIRE-based reporting models in different areas, agreed by the thematic communities and with the support of EU institutions.
  - The use of INSPIRE in the field of environmental reporting would not only bring benefits in the reporting context but will also create awareness about the different areas covered by INSPIRE, in particular Annex III, encouraging data sharing and interoperability in these areas. Currently, reporting geospatial datasets from many Member States are only “hidden” in Reportnet and not easily available for the general public.
  - Operational cost of EU reporting is comparatively low with regard to the potential of the use of the data reported. The evolution of the reporting process should therefore be focused on exploiting the value of the data, facilitating its share and (re-) use not only by EU institutions but for public in general.
  - There is the political will to go towards the active dissemination of data in the future, when Member States will publish the information on national portals which EU institutions will then be able to harvest in a more flexible manner.
- In this sense, INSPIRE would have here a powerful role in order to facilitate interoperability of solutions and data across Europe. This will facilitate the dissemination and access to data at any time (“continuous reporting”), for a better evidence-based decision making and assessment of the state of the environment. But this is still a target will only be achieved most likely in the long term.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/reporting/pdf/action\\_plan\\_env\\_issues.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/reporting/pdf/action_plan_env_issues.pdf)