

MOTIIVE (Marine Overlays on Topography) – Why Participate?

The EC's INSPIRE Directive (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe), now likely to be adopted early in 2007, proposes that harmonised 'core' spatial data underpins the integration and harmonisation of many additional data themes, including those key to coastal zone research and management. Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) and International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) TC 211 non-proprietary spatial data standards and interoperability tools are expected to help foster more efficient data integration, at lower cost to users than they previously experienced when using multiple data sources in the type of integrated data projects common in integrated coastal zone management.

A key objective of **MOTIIVE** is to examine this expectation for a selected set of core and thematic data, while fully documenting the processes, procedures, barriers, solutions and resources involved in creating and using non-proprietary spatial data geographic information standards and new interoperability tools to aid such data harmonisation. The cost-benefit analysis included as a key component of **MOTIIVE** explores the implications of harmonisation across core and thematic data areas, as well as within thematic data groups.

Presentations at various coastal/marine conferences during the first year of the project, which began in September 2006, have led us to identify two groups of coastal and marine information users from whom we need to learn more about information needs. These are:

- the 'non-IT' group, i.e. research scientists and coastal managers or related practitioners, who use tools such as GIS, spreadsheets and numerical models in performing their research or management operational tasks, and have aspirations as to what they want 'harmonisation' to do for them, i.e. data that can be "magically combined" from different sources of different types as easily as possible, and
- the 'IT' group that build or recommend systems for managing coastal/marine data, typically using community-specific data protocols and standards, which then make interoperability between communities more difficult.

The **MOTIIVE** "User Engagement" workpackage, led by **EUCC – the Coastal Union**, is trying to capture the aspirations of what the 'non-IT' group want with regard to data harmonisation, and then see how this is aligned with what the 'IT' group does with respect to information management tools. To do this, we need to look at how over-arching data standards, such as those from ISO TC211, and open source interoperability specifications from OGC, can help in this harmonisation process. We also need to investigate how well these standards and specifications are being communicated to the IT group in the coastal/marine community and, more importantly, are they being adopted and, if not, why not. Additionally, there are other existing and new projects underway which continue to focus on several data related issues for the marine and coastal communities, with whom **MOTIIVE** provides a valuable liaison function.

MOTIIVE is a unique experiment in dedicating a significant project resource to "User Engagement", arguing that it should be a central theme in such projects, rather than a peripheral activity to the standardisation process. It is now up to the coastal/marine community to justify this investment of EU funding, both from scientific and management practitioners and from their IT support teams, at institutional level. Such participation should focus on better articulating the data harmonisation needs of the target user group(s), so that they can be taken on board not only within **MOTIIVE's** technical workpackages, but also as crucial advice to the appropriate INSPIRE Drafting Teams, who are even now developing the 'implementing rules' that will apply to the INSPIRE Directive once it is adopted at EU-wide level.

MOTIIVE team members cannot do this alone. **They need your active participation.** The best way to reach you is to request that you join the **MOTIIVE** discussion list, from which central point we can focus on specific data harmonisation themes and launch short surveys to gather information from practitioners. The information gained will then be fed into the appropriate **MOTIIVE** workpackage team to see if the needs are being addressed by the data harmonisation tools and techniques being developed and tested in **MOTIIVE**.

We cannot do this alone – we need your help. What do you gain by participating? Outputs from **MOTIIVE** and the related projects with whom we liaise will offer you future returns in better, more efficient tools to achieve more efficient data integration across disciplines, sectors and even national boundaries.

The **MOTIIVE** list can be joined either by visiting the Web at <http://iodeweb2.vliz.be/www/info/motiive> and choosing the "Subscribe" button from the menu, or by sending an e-mail to sympa@sympa.iode.org with the phrase "subscribe motiive" in the body of the message. More information available at www.motiive.net