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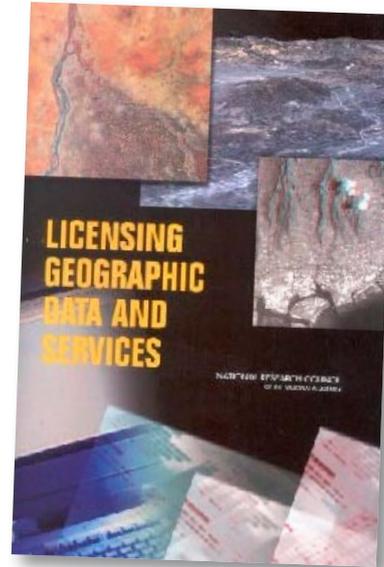
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Legal Interoperability it Is!

Awareness is rising that legal interoperable spatial data is among the key factors for successfully utilising spatial data infrastructures. Legal interoperability was introduced in the *Licensing Geographic Data and Services* publication of the NRC's Committee on Licensing Geographic Data and Services back in 2004, and is now the key discussion topic of the GSDI working group on legal and socio-economic aspects. To increase awareness and capacity to this end, the GSDI working group on legal and socio-economic issues organised a workshop on the harmonisation of licences at the GSDI13 conference in Quebec in 2012. The group also published a chapter in the book *Geographic Data and the Law* by Katleen Janssen and Joep Crompvoets, in which many relevant legal topics are discussed by leading scholars.

In Europe, the European Commission recently provided grants to two projects aimed at increasing the legal interoperability of data. The first project is the European Location Framework (ELF), led by the Norwegian Kartens Statverk. This pilot project will foster the wider use of geoinformation and enable the creation of innovative value-added services. The purpose of this project is to deliver the ELF required to provide up-to-date, authoritative, interoperable, cross-border, reference geoinformation for use by the European public and private sectors. The work package 'Sustainable access and use' will create a policy for a sustainable legal interoperability consistent with European legislation (INSPIRE and PSI legislation) and policy.

The second project concerns the Legal Aspects of Public Sector



Licensing Geographic Data and Services.

Information 2.0 project, with the KU Leuven in charge. This project will identify the remaining legal barriers and obstacles to the access to and re-use of public sector information (PSI) on the European content market, and provide measures and tools to overcome or reduce these barriers and to stimulate the progress of the European market towards open data. The Licensing Framework work package will identify the essential elements for the development of public sector-body licensing policies that are interoperable, allowing the combination of datasets from multiple public-sector data suppliers in a cross-border information product or service. It will further develop a licensing framework that promotes the open availability of PSI for any use, while at the same time allowing sufficient flexibility to take into account the needs of particular public sector bodies or national legal frameworks.

Although the scope of these projects' objectives is Europe, the

legal interoperability issue does not stop at the European border. The heavy involvement of members of the GSDI working group on legal and socio-economic aspects in both projects should ensure that the experiences and results will be shared with the rest of the world, and likewise that developments taking place elsewhere in the world will be taken into account to bring the legal interoperability of geographic information one step further on a global scale.

Dr Bastiaan van Loenen is chair of the GSDI Legal and Socio-Economic Working Group of the GSDI Association. He is a faculty member and member of the OTB Research Institute for the Built Environment at the Delft University of Technology in The Netherlands.

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