

Briefing Note: INSPIRE Directive

Local Government Association January 2010

Introduction

1. The European INSPIRE (*IN*frastructure for *SP*atial *IN*foRmation in *E*urope) Directive requires that member states provide public access to location based data related to the environment according to specific technical standards. Legislation that enables INSPIRE in England, Wales and Northern Ireland came into force on 31 December 2009. Parallel legislation in Scotland came into force on the same date.

About Inspire

2. The Directive applies to any public authority in the UK that creates spatial (or location based) environmental data. All local authorities creating such data under statutory duty must make them available to comply with INSPIRE.
3. The Directive broadly defines location based environmental data and includes geographic reference data not normally categorised as environmental. It therefore applies to significant data created or used by local authorities, including addresses; roads; protected sites; administrative areas; land use, and other map based datasets.
4. INSPIRE allows data providers to charge to cover the operational costs of making information viewable and downloadable electronically.

Management and Timetable

5. DEFRA is leading the implementation of INSPIRE in the UK through the UK Location Programme¹, a government initiative to maximise the use of location based data. The Programme is steered by a Location Council and supporting groups. The LGA Group is represented on these governance bodies on behalf of local government, and is actively engaging to ensure that local interests are fostered and protected.
6. The requirement to implement INSPIRE is staged over 10 years with full compliance required by 2019/20:

¹ UK Location programme website <http://location.defra.gov.uk>

- By the end of 2010 all local authorities must record specified location based data² in an online register to be provided by the UK Location Programme;
- The Location Programme will create web enabled services for data to be searched and viewed by 2011. Public authorities will have the responsibility to provide facilities to download this data by 2012;
- Initial data that will have to be provided by local authorities covers addresses, roads and protected sites. The regulation does not require new datasets to be created. Assuming that existing datasets are used, they must be available in the revised format by 2017 and if new datasets were created, the required date for INSPIRE compliance would be 2013. Further datasets may come under the regulation by 2012/13. In this case, if new datasets were required the implementation deadline would be 2014/15 and for existing datasets 2019/20..

Background

7. INSPIRE is part of a suite of European directives that aim to standardise and ensure access to public data across Europe: related regulations include the Environmental Information and the Re-use of Public Sector Information regulations.
8. The data included in the Inspire Directive must be made publicly available, but, the rationale is for a European wide ability to support strategic planning and service delivery for example for emergency planning; flooding and transport planning, regeneration; sustainable economic development and local service planning.

LGA Group Action

9. The LGA Group is working to secure cost-effective solutions for implementation. For example, the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG)³ to which all councils contribute, can now be produced in the format required by the INSPIRE Directive directly from the central NLPG hub. This will significantly reduce the burden on individual councils who would otherwise have to provide this information themselves.

² See the UK Location Programme website for details about the actual data sets included in the Directive <http://www.defra.gov.uk/location/inspire.htm>

³ The NLPG is the first, definitive, national address list that provides unique identification of properties across England and Wales and conforms to the British Standard. See www.nlpg.org.uk for further information

10. We are also working with DEFRA to identify and minimise the burdens for local authorities and are discussing with them the funding of work arising from the INSPIRE Directive.
11. Location Programme proposals for some national infrastructure (see paragraph 6) are welcome and will help minimise costs and avoid the need for individual organisations to develop their own approaches. The standardised approach to data publication and access also raises opportunities for local authorities to share both INSPIRE and other data with each other and across the public sector more effectively.
12. The LGA Group is also working with DEFRA and other government departments with a view to ensuring clarity and consistency in the implementation and application of all related UK information regulations.

Further information

13. The INSPIRE regulation and guidance is available at:
<http://location.defra.gov.uk/inspire/>
14. Further, more detailed information about INSPIRE is available to local authorities from the Community of Practice website <http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/c/214148/home.do> and from the LGA website <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageld=1094975>.
We will keep those interested up to date with developments through the Community of Practice and through the Local Government Association Research Bulletin <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageld=1254606>