

Report on the Digital Earth 2003 Symposium

The International Symposium on Digital Earth (hosted by the Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic between 21-25 September 2003) was the 3rd one in a series initiated in China and continued in Canada. By the kind invitation of the President of the Organizing Committee Assoc. Prof. Dr. Milan Konecny, the representative of the Hungarian GI Association (HUNAGI, host of the 6th Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Conference attracted 55 countries in last year in Budapest) to attend the 3rd ISDE. The Secretary General was able to participate the event in Brno, providing presentation and posters.¹

Features of the conference from the invitee's perspective

Timing

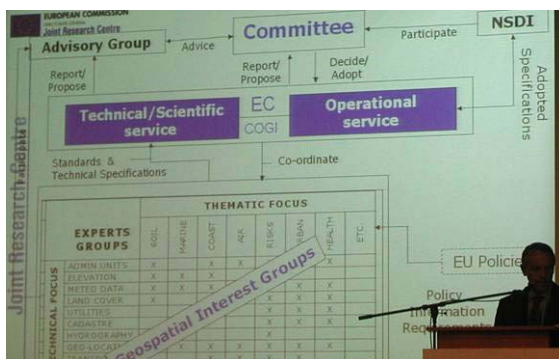
- *The calendar timing was fortunate from the UN World Summit on Information Society, the GMES Forum the INSPIRE Initiative and the GSDI7 Conference point of view, which follow(ed) the Brno ISDE event not more than by 5 months.*
- *Also from the domestic (Hungarian) viewpoint the time of the 3rd ISDE was in line with the visibility and networking development of the World Bank funded CelkCenter project as well as awareness raising of the interdisciplinary members of HUNAGI.*

Subject

- *The range of the subjects discussed was wide and covered a series of topics areas: Technologies and techniques of the data-information-knowledge chain serving the sustainable development, delivering services to the citizens, synergy by welding science and heritage for the knowledge economy (with close-look on Czech Republic), how to support the implementation of the Millennium Goals, contribution to global sustainability by concepts, discussions and dialogue.*

Acknowledgement

- *The event had seemingly strong political support on behalf of the host country's government and was in the focus of the industry not only of the GIS solution providers Intergraph, ESRI and others but also by the user side of the market dominated by local SMEs. The presence of governmental agencies, leading space agencies as well as international organisations (FAO), professional affiliations (ISPRS) was also an indication of the high profile acknowledgement of the event' topics and the active participants of the oral and interactive poster sessions.*



Visibility, knowledge transfer

- *Excellent overview on the recent stage of the role and activities of the Joint Research Center was given by Alessandro Annoni from the European Commission with special emphasis on INSPIRE, highlighting the 17 scopes and its 60 components the modelled information flow from providers to users and the steps from*

¹ This condensed report was compiled by request of the organisers

standardisation to integration via harmonisation, from discovery to full interoperability. An In-depth study was performed on the stage of NSDI development in 9 countries including Hungary. The selection criteria and the results of the early evaluation were really interesting.

- Among the European projects, the ongoing IST founded GINIE project, in the GI network based information society context has to be mentioned (presentated by Eva Pauknerova prepared with Chris Corbin)
- Value of the interdisciplinary National GI Association (eg. CAGI) in fostering the wider use of GI
- Fundamental role of the NMAs were clearly pointed out by J-P Lagrange of EuroGeographics
- Internet and location based services, modeling and 3D visualisation were also topics with state of the art presentations
- Due to the excellent work of the organisers, the Proceedings and other conference materials were available at the time of the Symposium, which enabled easy orientation and facilitated the time sharing among parallel sessions and better understanding.
- Good visibility was provided by the organisers to introduce HUNAGI and CelkCenter just in the middle of the Exhibition area



Part of the exhibition area

Challenges

- The Hungarian Association for Geo-information HUNAGI made a formal proposal for the Organisers and the Steering Committee of ISDE to host the next 4th ISDE to be held in 2005. The proposal was taken by the appropriate Committee very seriously, but after long debate, at the Steering Committee Meeting, the other candidate, the Japanese

Keio University was chosen taking into account also the geographical balance, which was welcomed by the Hungarian bid representative.



ISDE Steering Committee Meeting

Lessons learned

- Geographic information has inherent value, and the creators of that value should be equitably compensated (extract from the Principles of the GeoData Alliance). This was also a main point in the discussion around the European INSPIRE Initiative, where in interest of all parties an appropriate compensation should be ensured

for the primary data providers.

Direct benefits

- Based on the presentation given on the goals, activities and expected achievements of the Central European Land Knowledge Center (a Hungarian-World Bank project serving the needs in property rights and land market development of the beneficiary countries in the CEE



3rd DE Plenary Room

region), the lecturer was approached by the Bulgarian Delegation, who are dealing with a similar type initiative but in the subject Spatial Data Infrastructure anticipated the South East European (SEE) countries as beneficiaries. The Hungarian lecturer was invited to Sofia between 23-24 October, 2003 for the international Conference and Exhibition on SDI in the SEE, where the experiences on CelkCenter and

HUNAGI were highlighted, exchanged and discussed with representatives of NGOs, academia and private sector.

- *The CD version of the Proceedings will be available for those of the HUNAGI members, who can be able to adopt the proven, novel approaches and successfully introduced technologies into their curricula.*

References on ISDE made by the invitee in follow-on actions

- *Executive Committee Meeting, European Umbrella Organisation of Geographical Information (EUROGI) having National GI Associations as members from 22 European countries. Apeldoorn, 25-26 September, 2003.*
- *UNECE WPLA Workshop on Sustainable Land Management and Capacity Building Edinburgh, early-October, 2003*
- *UNECE Human Settlement Division 3rd Working Party on Land Administration Session, Geneva, mid-November, 2003*
- *4th Global Monitoring of Environment and Security hosted by the European Commission under the Italian Presidency and GEO Forum in Baveno, November, 2003 representing the EUROpean umbrella organisation for GI.*
- *Meeting of the Permanent Committee on Cadastre and the 2nd Congress on Cadastre in the European Union, hosted by the Ministry of Finance, Rome, December 3-5*
- *World Forum on Information Society Paralell Sessions on Knowledge Management and Digital Divide as well as GSDI held at IATA HQ and HABITAT-ESRI Session on 1000 GIS Cities at the UN Summit on Information Society Geneva, December 8-12*
- *HUNAGI Annual Report 2003. Disseminated for 84 legal entity members and 20 student members of HUNAGI. December 18, 2003 Available also on the web: www.hunagi.hu*
- *ISPRS WG VII/4 Annual Report on Human Settlements and Impact Analysis. Compiled for the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. Budapest-Regensburg December 21, 2003*

ISDE knowledge management – References planned

- *Meetings of the International Advisory and Steering Committees of the Central European Land Knowledge Center (CelkCenter) Budapest, 26th January 2004 (Establishing CelkCenter is a joint venture of the World Bank and the Government of Hungary and is operational since February 2002. For more info please visit www.celk.org)*
- *Revisiting the scope of the INSPIRE Initiative. Task force of the INSPIRE Expert Group of the European Commission (January-February 2004)*
- *7th Global Spatial Data Conference held in Bangalore, hosted by the Indian Space Research Organisation (1-9 February, 2004) www.gsdiassociation.org*

Further results gained from the participation

- *HUNAGI has the intention to host the 5th ISDE event in Budapest in 2007 – in conjunction with EC DG JRC and EUROGI as it was in the GSDI6 case last year.*

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Notice: special thanks for the Organisers and the World Bank supporting the presence by covering the costs of travel, registration fee and accommodation.
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