



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



The EU INSPIRE Directive (2007/2/EC), and associated UK Regulations, place legal obligations on public authorities which hold geographical data about the environment and things that affect the environment. The definition of environment is broad and INSPIRE includes data about: species and habitats, population demographics, utility services, energy resources, marine features, metrological features and human health.

The geographical information held by European countries does not currently join up - but the environment does. Environmental issues such as flooding, forest fires and climate change do not respect national borders.

To manage the environment better at European, national and local levels change is needed in how geographical information is managed and made available. The INSPIRE Directive (Infrastructure for Spatial Data in Europe) seeks to make those changes happen.

The INSPIRE Directive

INSPIRE applies to all Member States and requires public authorities, and organisations which carry out duties on behalf of public authorities, to publish any geographical information they manage that relates to a series of environmental themes defined in the Directive.

INSPIRE imposes challenging deadlines, these vary by theme but by December 2013 any data in scope of INSPIRE must be published in-line with certain technical standards. Between 2012 and 2020, data must also be transformed to comply with a standard set of data models, making data interoperable across Europe.

INSPIRE complements the government's transparency and open data policies. Contributing directly to improvements in the way that data are published, and making it easier for users across the public, private and third sector to find data, and reuse it.

In the UK, INSPIRE compliance is being delivered by the Defra UK INSPIRE Project. The project provides standards, guidance, technology and assistance to organisations with a duty to publish data under INSPIRE.

Your department may be required to publish data under INSPIRE and may need to take action now to do this by December 2013.





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Data published for INSPIRE can be used to support the delivery of government's priorities and provide opportunities for businesses, the 3rd sector, researchers and the public.

Growth

With a wealth of INSPIRE data already available on data.gov.uk the exploitation opportunities in public, private and 3rd sectors are enormous.

Insurers, for example, are increasingly using geographical data to improve profitability. By developing their understanding of risks at locations insurers can provide policies that better reflect actual risks reducing the costs of claims. Insurers are also reducing the number of fraudulent claims by understanding the areas impacted by events.

Sustainability



Data published by INSPIRE will enable government to make more informed decisions about the environment.

Government has recognised the value of the natural environment, INSPIRE data will enable us to better understand the economic value of environmental assets, the factors affecting them and the benefits they offer.

INSPIRE Supports Government Priorities

Localism and Citizen Empowerment

INSPIRE will make it easier for citizens and communities to access public data from multiple sources and combine this to inform local decisions. For example geographical data shared because of INSPIRE will help community forums and parish councils develop compelling, robust neighbourhood plans that identify land use constraints, define land allocations and show the benefits of new development proposals.

Smarter Government

INSPIRE will allow us to understand the attributes of a place to enable more intelligent mitigation and rapid government responses to environmental threats, such as floods, moorland fires and pollution incidents, reducing risk to life and associated economic impacts.



Efficiency

INSPIRE will reduce the costs associated with sourcing and processing geographical data. Economic research from the Local Government Association has shown that the use of geographical data and systems has increased the real output of local government by £232 Million. For example Blackpool Council has identified potential annual savings of £4m by using geographic data to better manage its highway assets. INSPIRE will enable even greater benefits to be realised.

Transparency

INSPIRE complements government open data policy it promotes the reuse of public data and it will enable departments to publish geographical data in formats that can be easily reused by third parties.