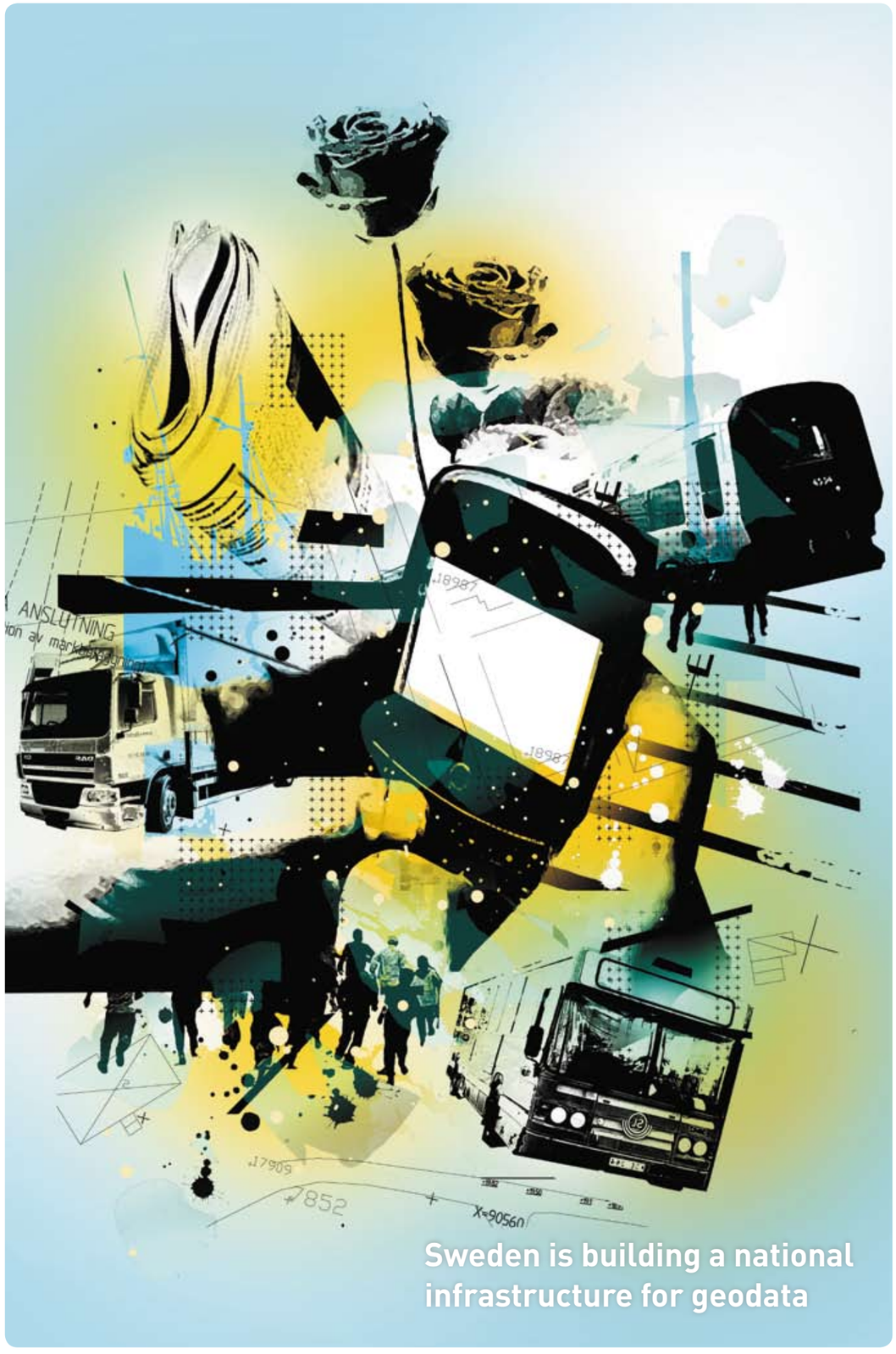
Production: Blomquist Annonsbyrå AB | Illustrations: Cecilia Lundgren | Photos: Johnér, iStock, Fotolia, Försvarets bildbyrå/Katja Öberg



Geodata
SWEDEN BIT BY BIT

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Limitless knowledge about the environment

Floods are causing major damage all over the world, and Europe is no exception. Europe has many high risk areas, which are often affected and which require major – often international – rescue efforts.

It was against this background that the EU Member States adopted a flood directive in 2007. The directive has to do with how we can work together to prevent and deal with floods, covering everything from mapping the areas affected to risk analyses, action plans, and plans for rescue initiatives.

There can be no doubt that access to accurate information is essential. Not just information about one's own immediate area, but also about neighbouring countries. Therefore, the EU has also taken the initiative to harmonise the geodata of all Member States. The initiative is called INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) and is intended to ensure that everyone can access and utilise all geodata within the EU – map data as well as register information about buildings, roads and population statistics, for example.

From the Swedish perspective, INSPIRE is fully in line with the government's efforts to make Sweden a pioneering country in the field of e-governance. Under the motto "As simple as possible for as many as possible", it is our intention to make available all relevant information about our society, not just with regard to the environment and crisis readiness, but also in a wide range of political areas. In this way, we will open the door to more efficient societal administration as well as a range of new e-services, which will result in even better service for citizens, companies and authorities, and appreciable benefits for society as a whole.

Andreas Carlgren
Minister for the Environment, Ministry of the Environment

What is INSPIRE?

INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) is an EU directive that lays the foundations for comprehensive harmonisation of geodata within the EU. The intention is to make it easier to use geodata, through measures such as common regulations concerning how information is to be compiled in a uniform manner and made available via Internet-based services.

Everything that happens, happens somewhere

A storm moves in over Småland in Sweden. A chemical factory is to be built in the local area. A route through the landscape has to be found for a new stretch of railway track. A house on the other side of the road starts to burn. A taxi comes to pick you up from your home.

Almost everything that happens and affects our lives is linked to some aspect of geography. The more we know about the area, the better. What does it look like? Are there people nearby who may be affected? How about buildings, animals, watercourses and vegetation? The more information we have, the more appropriately we can act, plan and allocate our resources, deal with damage, calculate risks, implement preventative measures and make sure we are prepared.

Why Sweden is building a national infrastructure for geodata

Good access to geodata is a precondition for healthy, sustainable societal development. That is why Sweden, along with other EU Member States, has decided to implement an infrastructure to improve and facilitate access to geodata. It will function roughly like a "cloud" of geodata and geodata services that you can access via the Internet. To help you, there is a portal – the Geodata Portal. The portal provides a quick and straightforward overview, as well as access to information from local, regional and national authorities and other players in Sweden that produce and supply geodata.

Immediate benefit – locally, regionally and nationally

Increased access to geodata will make it possible to improve and increase the efficiency of a wide range of societal functions – disaster response and rescue initiatives in particular. However, the new service will benefit a variety of other operations such as forestry planning, environmental analyses, transport planning, national registration, and postal and distribution services. Companies will be able to develop new products and services in the fields of transport planning, navigation equipment, search services and decision-making support, for example. Private citizens will also benefit from improved access to geodata through more efficient public administration based on new e-services.

International network for cross-border collaboration

The work on the new Swedish geodata infrastructure is based on INSPIRE, an EU directive through which EU countries have agreed to harmonise crucial data within the EU. The cross-border perspective is particularly important as regards sustainable development centred on, for example, combating climate change, protecting the environment, fighting crime and adapting to a borderless market.

This means that the work that is currently underway in Sweden is being mirrored in all EU countries. This work will open the door to expanded international collaboration, where the Swedish Geodata Portal will function as a node for Sweden's collaboration in Europe.

ACCURATE INFORMATION MEANS FASTER RESPONSE TO DISASTERS

Every day, hazardous goods are transported on our roads. To help drivers choose the safest route, the Swedish County Councils recommend roads and parking facilities that are suitable for hazardous goods, while prohibiting access to sensitive areas. Should an accident occur, it is essential that the local authority have access to all necessary geodata – information about soil type and hydrogeological data, for example – so that action can be undertaken quickly to clean up the area and protect the groundwater.

What is geodata?

"Geodata" is the term used for all information that describes phenomena and their geographical location, i.e. map data and register information about buildings, lakes, roads, vegetation and population statistics, for example.

Need and market are growing

The market for geodata is growing by 10–30% per year. This is particularly noticeable in the rapid development of new search, positioning and navigation services. Demand is also increasing within the property sector, the credit markets, business development, the insurance industry, the transport sector, the media and the tourist industry.

In other words, there is enormous potential for new geodata services. And the information that the market needs is available. Local, regional and national authorities continuously collect geodata – as do a range of other societal actors. Today, however, these data are often difficult to access, which means that they are not used as well as they might be.

Manual processing takes time and costs money

Today, geodata administration is largely performed manually. This applies to everything from search processes to the signature of agreements, pricing and delivery. This means that the path from initial enquiry to final delivery can be long and demanding. For example, a survey in Great Britain reveals that users of geodata spend 80% of their time collecting and processing the information, and just 20% analysing facts with a view to solving problems and generating value.

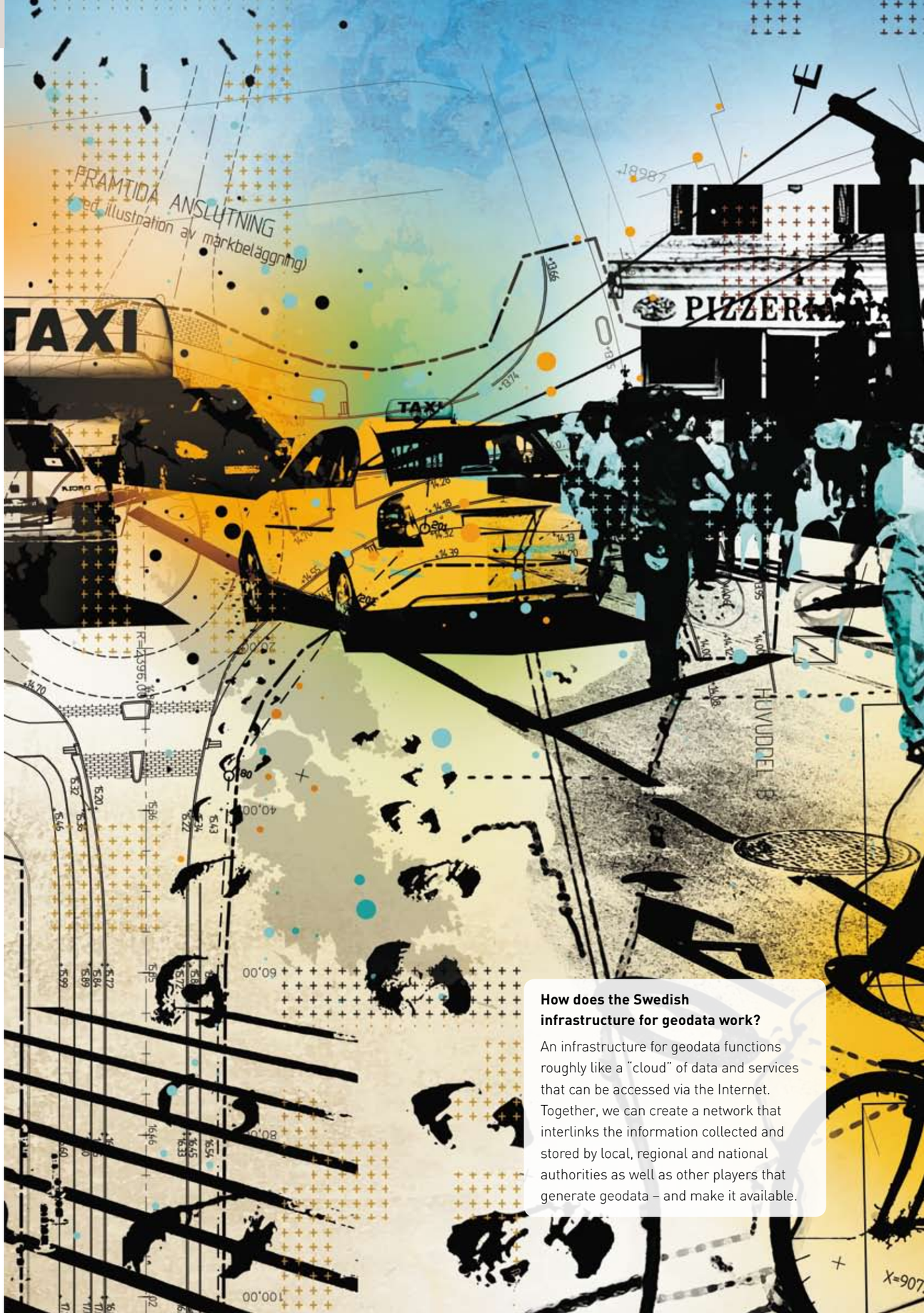
Many people quite simply do not know where to look for the information they need. In addition, it is not uncommon for multiple versions of the same data to exist at the same time. Another problem is the intricate agreement process. Very often, a person who wants access to information has to negotiate and sign agreements with each individual supplier. Moreover, the information that is subsequently delivered has to be harmonised both structurally and technically before the data can be compiled and used in comparisons and analyses or for products and services.

Less administration – more benefit

In summary, we can state that the supply of geodata today causes a lot of unnecessary work and costs society appreciable sums. This is what we are striving to change now, within the framework of INSPIRE, the EU directive. The aim is to make the future supply of geodata as automated and uniform as possible. People looking for information should only have to search in **one** place, submit **a single** order, sign **a single** agreement, pay **just once** and then have the information in question delivered quickly, simply and automatically. In this way, we hope that in future, people will be able to spend most of their time actually analysing the data or developing products and services – i.e. actually benefiting from the latest knowledge rather than wasting time searching for it.

MORE EFFICIENT PLANNING AND GREATER BENEFIT TO SOCIETY

Today, a consultant who is working on a project for a new road in a given municipality needs to contact all kinds of authorities to access all the necessary information. For example, the consultant may need to view population statistics, travel habits, the location of the largest workplaces, shopping centres, water supply networks and so on. With a dedicated geodata infrastructure – that provides a single point of access to the information – it will be much easier to find and access the relevant information, the costs to society will fall and the benefit to society will increase.



How does the Swedish infrastructure for geodata work?

An infrastructure for geodata functions roughly like a "cloud" of data and services that can be accessed via the Internet. Together, we can create a network that interlinks the information collected and stored by local, regional and national authorities as well as other players that generate geodata – and make it available.

Sweden is building a national infrastructure for geodata

In summer 2006, the Swedish Government commissioned Lantmäteriet (the Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority) and the Geodata Advisory Board to prepare a strategy for the development of a national infrastructure for geodata in Sweden. Since then, work has been carried out in close collaboration with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and a range of other relevant organisations.

The objective of the effort is to maximise the benefit to society from the geodata that exists in Sweden. By improving the efficiency of the processing and making it simple to find and access information, we aim to create the preconditions for increased use of geodata.

By harmonising the information, we will also make it possible to exchange and combine geodata from different sources, which is a precondition for efficient collaboration, both between players in the public sector and in the interaction between companies and the general public.

By making greater use of geodata as a decision-making basis and a starting point for new and improved services, we create better preconditions for sustainable development and greater competitiveness in the business community, public administration and society in general.

Our vision is for the infrastructure for geodata to:

- generate improved societal benefit at the lowest possible cost,
- link information resources together in a network and make them available using uniformly designed services and descriptions of information,
- serve public administration, companies and citizens by providing them with the information they need at local, regional, national and global level,
- create good conditions for refining geodata and support the development of Swedish e-governance, the Swedish business community and international competitiveness, and
- improve the efficiency of collaboration between different players to such an extent that the cost of using geodata is reduced.

THE RIGHT ADDRESS IS CRUCIAL IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT

In the event of accidents and disasters, the right address is crucial to fast and efficient rescue initiatives. All the authorities involved in helping victims must quickly be able to access information about the site of the accident and open routes to and from the site. This will be much easier with a shared infrastructure for geodata where the information is reliable and accessible across municipal and county borders.

A network of information resources accessible via the Internet

The new infrastructure for geodata can be described as a "cloud" of data and services that can be accessed via the Internet. In this infrastructure, we will collect the information from local, regional and national authorities as well as other players that generate geodata – and make it available.

The simplest way – the Geodata Portal

To make it simple to search the information and services within the infrastructure, we have created a common site on the Internet: the Geodata Portal, **www.geodata.se**. This portal is to serve as a meeting place for people looking for information, and suppliers of geodata. The portal features a search engine and a map display function, and an e-commerce solution will be gradually introduced to allow users to order information and data services online.

Collect data and services from suppliers

The portal is the simplest way into the infrastructure for many users. However, users can also choose to connect directly to the services that are available from public authorities and private businesses. It is here that all the data are stored, so it is here that users can connect geodata and geodata services directly to their own applications without having to pass through the portal.

This means that it is no longer necessary for users to download their own copies of the information and then store and maintain it.

Via the infrastructure, users have constant access to geodata online. All they need to do is call up the relevant service from the supplier and then wait for delivery. It should be possible to deliver simple orders immediately.

Security, vulnerability and integrity

The conditions for how geodata are to be exchanged and used in this simple manner are to be clear and straightforward. The opportunity to access information is to be founded on a balance between the need to protect important societal interests with regard to security, vulnerability and integrity, and the users' need for easy access to geodata.

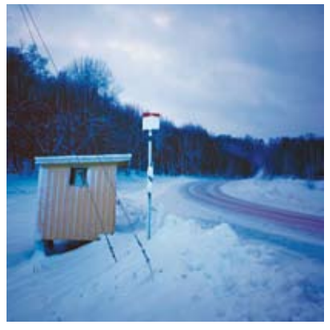
TRANSPORT PLANNING SAVES TIME AND MONEY AND REDUCES IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Swedish Home Care Service involves a lot of transport. By finding the smartest routes between customers, local authorities can save time and money, and reduce impact on the environment. More and more local authorities are therefore investing in traffic management systems. The problem is how to access the right information. Data about the road network and buildings do exist, but as many employees of the Home Care Service travel by bicycle, local authorities also need information about cycle paths – and this is not always easy to come by. With the new infrastructure for geodata, it will be possible to find the relevant information and to integrate it into useable applications.

Geodata – a valuable asset for everyone

Improved access to geodata will make it possible for us to carry out rescue actions more safely. We will be able to plan our residential areas and road networks better, and to place industries that affect the environment in more secure locations. New products and services will allow companies and private citizens to apply for construction permits online, find the most appropriate route to the shops, or identify the best marketplace for a new commercial idea.

Geodata are extremely important in a wide variety of societal functions, particularly at local level, where almost all business has geographical links. For this reason, both government authorities and the 290 local authorities in Sweden will play a key role in the new infrastructure, both as suppliers of information and as the users who stand to gain the most from improved access to geodata.



Better societal planning

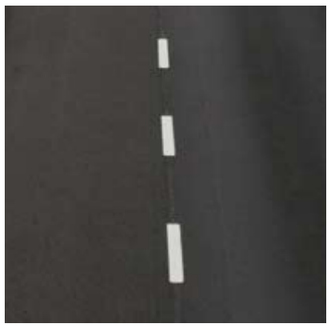
Improved access to geodata means a better basis for making decisions, both in everyday operations and in the context of long-term societal development. For example, when it is time to find the best location for a new residential area, geodata improves the opportunities for analysing and comparing different options with reference to nature conservation interests, transport systems, public transport, water and drains, proximity to schools, healthcare facilities, stores and so on.

Public sector service also has much to gain from increased use of geodata. For example, route optimisation for public transport, school buses, goods transport and healthcare arrangements can lead to improved service, major savings in time and money, and a reduction in environmental impact.

Easier collaboration across borders

Many local authorities and other public sector organisations are dependent on other players in the region. The working relationship with the neighbouring local authorities is particularly important. This may have to do with the shared road network, environmental issues, transport solutions and the opportunity to provide cross-boundary rescue efforts and readiness.

Today, it is difficult to share the necessary information, because maps and other geographical register information are often processed in different ways. With the new infrastructure, everyone will have the same opportunity to utilise geodata in the development of their business. Fast and easy access to each other's information will also improve the options for cross-border collaboration. This applies to local and regional authorities and, in the long term, to all EU Member States.



More information and improved service for citizens

The new infrastructure will also benefit the general public. For example, it will become appreciably easier to access public information of which geodata constitutes an important part. Via the Internet, private citizens will be able to search for information about service facilities, properties, ground constructions, green areas, nature conservation, environmental work or the current traffic situation, for example. This is a good service, but it is also a question of democracy. Improved insight makes it easier for citizens to form opinions and exercise their political influence.

Improved access to geodata is also a precondition for expanded e-governance. This means simpler contacts with authorities and other public sector players, better service and new e-services such as the opportunity to file a building permit application online. Such services are certain to be joined by a range of new consumer services, such as search services (of the www.eniro.se/www.hitta.se type), as well as positioning tools and navigation services for mobile phones, boats, outdoor activities, hiking and cycle rides.

BETTER PREPAREDNESS AND IMPROVED CAPACITY TO HANDLE CRISES

Geodata and geographical information systems (GIS) are key tools in the work of organisations such as MSB, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. For example, it may be a question of mapping objects worthy of protection, analysing risk or estimating the consequences of an event. The information can also be supplemented with performance statistics and visualised geographically on a map. This is how we gather important knowledge that helps us to improve our state of readiness and our capacity to handle crises.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS – SO IS A MAP

A few years ago, it became clear that the primary and secondary schools in the City of Uppsala had excess capacity of around 1,000 places. The challenge was to see the big picture and assess need over time. The solution was a digital tool with a geographical link in which complex table data could be visualised on maps and then compared. In this way, it was a relatively quick and simple procedure to gain an overview of the situation – both in the municipality as a whole, and in individual areas – and prepare a local plan which made it possible to eliminate many of the superfluous and costly primary and secondary school places. The same opportunity to visualise geodata and trace patterns over time is extremely valuable in many other areas, such as research, crime fighting, opinion-building and environmental issues, to name but a few.

A new market and better decision-making bases for Swedish companies

The expansion of Swedish e-governance will make everyday operations easier for the business community and help reduce companies' administrative costs. Contact with authorities and other public sector actors will

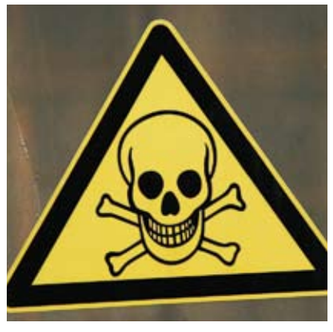
be simplified, with improved service and new e-services through which, for example, permit applications and different types of reports can be carried out via the Internet. The greatest benefit is almost certainly to be found in the new business opportunities that follow on from improved access to information. There is a large interest in products and services based on geodata and geographical information systems (GIS), and the market is developing rapidly. For example, it may have to do with positioning services and optimisation tools that make it possible to plan and improve the efficiency of transport, logistics, business development, expansion and new establishment projects. There is a growing need in the property sector and the construction industry, too, while in the insurance industry, improved access to geodata should result in more accurate risk assessment and more appropriate premiums.

With the infrastructure and access to Sweden's total store of geodata, conditions are in place for healthy growth for both existing companies and new establishments.

More efficient crisis management and rescue initiatives

In the event of accidents and disasters, identifying the right address is crucial to fast and efficient rescue initiatives. A major benefit of the new infrastructure is thus the fact that what are known as the emergency services will have better and easier access to the information they need.

Today, these services work with Lantmäteriet's national address register, but a range of other registers and navigation services exist in which organisations such as SOS-Alarm and the Swedish Police Force enter local designations for streets and other meeting places. This means that the same place can appear under different names, which can prove an obstacle to rapid response.

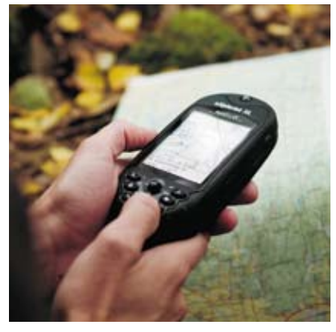


Access to reliable information improves our chances to act efficiently in the event of an accident. It also increases our opportunities to analyse risks and consequences of heavy storms and flooding, for example, so that we can distribute our resources appropriately and respond efficiently in the regions affected.

More efficient research and environmental work

Environmental issues are at the heart of the EU directive INSPIRE. The intention is to make it easier to call up information for environmental research and environmental consequence assessments, and to improve conditions for preventative environmental work and the handling of environmental damage resulting from floods, storms and chemical spills, for example.

By building a common infrastructure for geodata, we are laying the foundations for cross-border environmental monitoring. The infrastructure provides us with access to, and the opportunity to combine, information from different sources. It also enables us to perform analyses and draw comparisons between countries, regions, sectors and individual industries. Within the environmental area alone, the EU Commission is calculating on a net benefit of around EUR 1 billion per year. This translates into an average of EUR 35–40 million per year for each Member State.*



* Source: INSPIRE Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe, Results Task Force XIA, 01-03-2004.

SIMPLER TO PRODUCE AND SIMPLER TO USE GEODATA

Local authorities are major producers of geodata. New information, addresses, buildings, roads, topographical features, etc. are being added all the time and have to be reported to different authorities. In the future, this work, which currently requires a great deal of manual processing, will become much easier and largely automated. Once the information has been published in the new infrastructure, it is clear and easily accessible – not just to authorities and other public sector actors, but also to everyone who works in his or her home municipality.

PEACE, CRISIS AND WAR – RAPID ACCESS TO GEODATA IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ARMED FORCES

The armed forces are a major user of geodata. They use such data, for example, in rescue work following a natural disaster or in planning measures in the event of changes to the level of threat. To carry out their tasks quickly and efficiently, the armed forces are dependent on updated and standardised information from public sector authorities and both public and private sector actors. It is also important that tried and tested methods can be used to find, receive and disseminate geodata so that all those involved are working on the basis of a shared view of the situation.

Sweden's national infrastructure for geodata – interaction and use

Sweden's new infrastructure for geodata has to do with making geodata available and useable. The intention is to make it simpler for suppliers to work together, and easier for users to utilise geodata and to create new business opportunities within the area of geodata.

Technical infrastructure and an efficient business model are crucial to the realisation of this aim. For example, we have to make clear **what** the new infrastructure is to comprise, **how** these data and services are to be communicated, **which** actors are to be involved, and **how** they are to interact with each other.

Service-based exchange of geodata

Development is increasingly moving in the direction of a more service-based exchange of information. For this reason, the new infrastructure is built on a distributed collection of data and services that can be accessed via the Internet.

"Distributed data" means that the geodata and geodata services are "stored" at the suppliers' facilities, i.e. at the facilities of the authorities, public sector actors and companies all over Sweden that generate geodata.

The new aspect is that all the information available is now described, and that the descriptions of the metadata, geodata and services have been harmonised to make it simple for users to search for, display and download information, link it to their own applications and then process and use it in line with their specific needs.

Network of information available via the Geodata Portal

Users can search for data directly from suppliers or via a portal – the Geodata Portal. Here, the person searching for information can get an overview of the information available, and customers and suppliers can find one another. The portal contains features such as a search engine, a display function and an e-commerce solution.

The Geodata Portal will be developed progressively to include additional functionality. In addition to opportunities to search for, look at and download information, there are, for example, to be tools for entirely Web-based processing of geodata and associated services from producer to user. In the long term, the Geodata Portal will become the "go-to" publishing forum for Sweden's geodata.

Interaction model – how we get together and interact in the infrastructure

The establishment of Sweden's national infrastructure for geodata affects all suppliers and users of geodata. First in line are the public sector authorities which, according to INSPIRE, are responsible for making their information available. However, it is our ambition to include additional authorities and municipalities by 2011, and then to expand the circle successively.

The model for how we are to work together in the new infrastructure has therefore been designed for a broader working relationship, involving more parties and data themes than those covered by INSPIRE. This means that other information owners – companies and

IMPROVED QUALITY AND SIMPLER ADMINISTRATION ONLINE

Local authorities depend on geodata: information about roads, nature conservation, soil types, environmental impact and so on. They generate much of this information themselves, so it belongs to the local authority in question. Nevertheless, they still have to collect just as much information from other geodata producers, store it and keep it up to date – and quite how often they do so can vary. However, the level of inaccuracy and unreliability increases when almost all the work has to be done manually, as it is today. Within the new infrastructure, updated geodata is available online. This means that there is no longer a risk of a building permit, for example, being processed incorrectly because the case officer could not access the latest nature conservation regulations from the County Council.

What are metadata?

"Metadata" is the term for information that describes the content, accessibility and quality of volumes of data and services, so that it is easier for users to find data and assess if it is what they are looking for and wish to use. The infrastructure features a metadata catalogue and a tool that allows geodata suppliers to create metadata so as to make it possible to search for their information via the Geodata Portal.

organisations – can enter into agreements within the framework of the geodata collaboration and make their geodata available through the shared infrastructure.

Business model – how we exchange and use geodata

The principles for how data and services in the infrastructure are to be used will be laid down in a business model. This will be used to deal with the exchange of information between local authorities and other authorities (data sharing), and to define how end users and companies that refine the geodata will be allowed to use the information. It has to do with factors such as how the processing of agreements, licences and pricing for the use of the content in the infrastructure is to function.

The main points of the business model:

- Authorities affected by INSPIRE offer each other their geodata for use in authority-related business. The terms and conditions for use are the same, and participants pay an annual fee that is defined in advance on the basis of a number of agreed parameters. Other authorities, municipalities, institutions, organisations and the like that are entitled to participate in data sharing in accordance with the INSPIRE directive will be entitled to use the data from these authorities on the same terms and conditions.
- Other information owners may also make their geodata available through this collaborative venture. The difference is that they, like other users, will be required to pay if they wish to use the information in the infrastructure themselves (see next point).
- Other end users, who are not part of the circle of authorities responsible for information, buy licences for the right to use the information. The licences are valid for a certain volume of data, a specific type of data, or use of a specific service.
- "Refiners", i.e. everyone who wants to develop new products and services based on geodata, are recommended to purchase a "refiner licence". This entitles them to use the authorities' primary geodata in the development of new products. Before any resulting products are launched onto the market, the refiner has to ensure that all end users have a licence to use the data in question, or to purchase a special licence through which the end user fee is paid in advance by the refiner.
- Special licence terms and conditions apply for research and education, and for situations in which members of the general public wish to use the geodata that is available through the new infrastructure.

From the very start, the Geodata Portal will meet the requirements of the INSPIRE directive as regard searching, viewing, ordering and transforming geodata. It will also contain a number of business solutions, such as support for the handling of authorisations, agreements and licences. The portal will then progressively be developed to include additional functions defined by user wishes, needs and requirements.

INCREASED COLLABORATION ACROSS MUNICIPAL BORDERS

Many municipal operations are built on regional collaboration. However, it is not always easy to exchange and use geodata across municipal borders. When each local authority stores maps and other data in different ways, the information has to be synchronised before it can be used. This additional work and system dependency will be eliminated by the new infrastructure for geodata. Here, the information is already harmonised and available from the suppliers online.

INSPIRE – a European infrastructure for geodata

The work that is currently underway is part of the initiative to build up the European equivalent: INSPIRE – Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe. The background for and primary purpose of this work is to improve conditions for collaboration in the field of the environment.

The INSPIRE directive came into force in spring 2007, and involves EU Member States binding themselves to comprehensive harmonisation of national geodata. The intention behind the initiative is to help us to work efficiently together, across national borders. It is also intended to enable us to exchange information and services between different computer systems, and to ensure that the information can be interpreted and used without any problems.

This means that we are currently working to build up a shared, stable and legal basis for efficient handling of geographical information in the context of European partnership. In order to achieve harmonisation in accordance with the INSPIRE directive, the EU Member States are to introduce common, standardised specifications for geodata and services.

The idea is to build up a uniform infrastructure that makes the information more readily available, both between producers and with regard to end users.

In order to facilitate the organisational collaboration within the EU, geodata are to be available via a variety of services on the Internet. In addition, it must be possible for authorities to exchange data with each other in a more efficient manner. This means that it is to be possible to combine data from all Member States seamlessly once the INSPIRE directive has been fully implemented.

RESEARCH AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Environmental research on how pollution is spread between different countries through the air and the water requires access to – and the opportunity to compare and combine – information from a variety of different data sources. With a single point of entry, the Geodata Portal, to search for and access information, we will be better placed to conduct research across organisational boundaries and national borders, and over long periods of time. This will lead to more reliable research results and increased sustainability.

Sweden, bit by bit

Sweden bit by bit symbolises the common work to build up the Swedish infrastructure for geodata. It already involves a great many authorities and organisations, and even more will soon be added. In order to achieve a shared approach and good forms of collaboration, all players – national, regional and local authorities, and companies – are invited to participate in the work.

Ultimate responsibility rests with the Swedish Government and Parliament

The Swedish Government and Parliament have the ultimate responsibility for implementing the INSPIRE directive in Sweden. For example, they are responsible for adapting Swedish legislation and appointing authorities with responsibility for information pursuant to the provisions of the INSPIRE directive. The new legislation is expected to come into force on 1 August 2010.

Lantmäteriet has a national co-ordination responsibility

In June 2006, the Swedish Government commissioned Lantmäteriet to work with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, as well as other authorities affected, to prepare a national strategy for the creation of a national infrastructure for geodata. This means that Lantmäteriet has national co-ordination responsibility for geodata, including production, collaboration and development issues. Lantmäteriet is also responsible for co-ordination and support in connection with the implementation of the EU directive INSPIRE, and for looking after Sweden's interests internationally within this business area.

The Geodata Advisory Board is preparing the guidelines

To support Lantmäteriet, the Swedish Government has established a Geodata Advisory Board made up of representatives of ten important players in the geodata area. The advisory board comprises the Director General of Lantmäteriet, representatives from the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI), the County Councils, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), the City of Stockholm, the Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU), the Swedish Maritime Administration, the Swedish Armed Forces, the Swedish National Road Administration, the Swedish Development Council for Geographic Information (ULI) and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, which all work together to initiate, plan, anchor and follow up on the activities included in the Geodata Strategy.

The Geodata Secretariat is co-ordinating the work

The task of the Geodata Secretariat, at Lantmäteriet, is to organise, administrate and co-ordinate the work on the national Geodata Strategy.

The Geodata Project is developing

The Geodata Project was initiated in connection with Lantmäteriet's co-ordinating role and the Geodata Advisory Board. Under the project, which is expected to run through 2010, representatives from national and local authorities and the business community work together on the development of the associated activities.

Municipalities, other authorities and organisations are producing and making available

Municipalities, other authorities, companies and organisations have the extremely important task of producing and delivering geodata. In this context, data, services and metadata are to be standardised and made available. Many public state authorities have information responsibility according to INSPIRE, but as Sweden's national infrastructure for geodata has been expanded to include areas other than the environment, the work now involves more organisations.

INSPIRE working group

This working group has been established on the initiative of the Geodata Advisory Board. It consists of representatives from authorities with information responsibility in accordance with INSPIRE. The aim of the working group is to co-ordinate activities and issues associated with INSPIRE.

AN IMPROVED DECISION-MAKING BASIS LEADS TO BETTER DECISIONS

What is the most appropriate location for a new residential area or a new district heating plant? To answer this question, we need information – about nature conservation interests, transport routes, public transport, water and drains, distances to schools, healthcare facilities and businesses. Improved access to geodata and good modelling tools that make it possible to analyse different options mean better conditions for healthy and sustainable societal development.