

CAPACITY BUILDING OF THE NSDI IN CROATIA

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The Republic of Croatia is intensively working on the establishment of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). Readiness of the user community to accept the concepts of the NSDI and use them in their working processes, together with lack of GIS and NSDI experts who will provide the necessary level of expertise in the implementation process, are two crucial problems facing the Croatian NSDI.

Therefore, in July 2009 the NSDI Council adopted the Decision on establishing the NSDI Working Group on Capacity Building of NSDI. The basic goal of the Working Group is to propose the most efficient ways of capacity building of NSDI for the purpose of training the users to accept the concept of NSDI and introduce it into the working processes.

One of the first steps undertaken by the Working Group is a snapshot of the current situation. Since there is not enough information and knowledge on the representation of spatial data in the Croatian education system a survey was carried out. The survey included primary and secondary schools, research institutes and universities in the Republic of Croatia.

This paper describes the results of research conducted among teachers of secondary education institutions in Croatia. We believe that teachers who participate directly in the education of secondary school students have the best overview of the knowledge and the awareness of new generations in the field of spatial data. They know how to improve the teaching process and how to transfer knowledge to future generations.

The aim of the survey conducted among teachers of secondary educational institutions in the Republic of Croatia was to:

- explore the representation of spatial data in the educational programmes, with special emphasis on the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI),
- assess the knowledge on the use of spatial data that students receive during their schooling,
- determine whether the curriculum meets modern educational trends concerning spatial data,
- get teachers' recommendations for improvements in teaching which involves spatial data.

In the survey we decided to use the questionnaire of combined type. Some questions were open-ended, while the others were multiple choice questions. The questionnaire included a header with an introduction and instructions, followed by 17 questions.

Questions in the questionnaire were divided into the following topics:

- I. Processing of topics related to spatial information in the curriculum,
- II. Using spatial data in:
 - a. Teaching activities
 - b. extra-curricular activities
- III. Suggestions for improvement.

The experience of teachers who are directly involved in the educational system of future GIS and NSDI specialists is of great benefit. They helped us in developing guidelines and recommendations on building the capacity of NSDI. Based on that experience the Working Group will give recommendations and proposals for the introduction of new courses at geoinformatics and other secondary school programmes.