

## Capacity Building Aspects for a Geospatial Data Infrastructure (GDI)

Yola Georgiadou<sup>1</sup> and Richard Groot<sup>2</sup>

5<sup>th</sup> GSDI Conference, 21-25 May 2001, Cartagena de las Indias, Colombia

### Abstract

Responding to problems created by “too much state” occupied centre stage in international development agendas until the early 1990s. The consequence was a focus on cutting down on the size, expense and responsibilities of public sector after decades of too much state. Such reform initiatives failed to consider the importance of having capable states, not just minimal ones, if markets were to perform effectively and citizens were to be assured of basic rights and freedoms. By the mid-nineties, good government was added to international development agendas to correct the undue emphasis in the past on state minimalism (HIID, 1997).

Capacity building to promote good government has received increasing attention ever since. In such a context, capacity building refers generically to “improvements in the ability of public sector organisations, either singly or in cooperation with other organisations, to perform appropriate tasks” (ibid.). For the spatial information community, capacity building may refer to improvements in the ability of institutions and (government and non-government) organisations to a) carry out their functions and achieve desired results over time and to b) provide foundation data, metadata standards, clearinghouse functionalities and a facilitating environment for decentralising GIS applications in manageable application domains within the GDI concept.

Geospatial Data Infrastructure (GDI) is the innovative product of research during the 1980s and early 1990s in Geoinformation Science (Groot & McLaughlin, 2000). Innovation is effective when it has three aspects: quality, penetration and speed. Innovation is achieved through ideas, people and products. Idea innovation is judged primarily in terms of its quality. In people innovation, audience penetration is paramount. In product innovation speed in product cycles is of critical importance (Tschritzis, 1997).

In this paper, we argue that high quality GDI concepts and methods are now in place. We argue that people innovation should now be the primary issue in the agendas of international organizations engaged in knowledge transfer. We outline a capacity building model in GDI and suggest that a high level of audience penetration can lead to product innovation, in the form of organic webs of partnerships and GDI blueprints evolving purposefully within jurisdictions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor & Head, Geoinformatics and Spatial Data Acquisition, ITC

<sup>2</sup> Professor & Chair, Geoinformatics Management and Infrastructure, ITC