

GI Panel Annual Report – 2005/06

Introduction

The Geographic Information Panel (GI Panel) was formed in 2005 to provide high-level advice to Ministers on geographic information issues of national importance for the United Kingdom. This is a report of the GI Panel's activities during its first year.

The aims of the GI Panel are:

- to identify the key medium to long-term geographic information issues and advise Government through reports to Ministers;
- to encourage more effective, extensive and systematic use of geographic information, led by the example of Government Departments and other public bodies where appropriate;
- to facilitate a co-ordinated position on potential legislation, both national and international, that might impact on the geographic information market; and
- to promote a coherent approach to the management of geographic information in the United Kingdom.

The GI Panel has focused on two key areas of activity in its first year:

- the development of a United Kingdom strategy for geographic information, and
- address information within the United Kingdom.

The GI Panel website (<http://www.gipanel.org.uk>) is the key means of communicating its work.

UK GI Strategy

The main piece of work that the GI Panel has focused on has been the development of a United Kingdom geographic information strategy (UK GI Strategy). At its first meeting in June 2005, the GI Panel agreed to commission a Scoping Study covering the requirements of a UK GI Strategy, and received that report at its September 2005 meeting. In December 2005 the GI Panel agreed to let a contract for the development of a UK GI Strategy, and following an S-CAT procurement, Know Edge Ltd were appointed in May 2006. They are expected to present their report to the GI Panel in late 2006.

Once that report has been received and approved, the GI Panel aims to move to implementation, subject to resources being available. The report itself will give a first indication of the costs of implementation. Experience in other countries however demonstrates the general level of investment that is required to fully implement a geographic information strategy is normally in the range of £5M to £50M.

The GI Panel will be actively considering how to secure appropriate resources to implement the UK GI Strategy, in particular in the light of the tight fiscal climate that is forecast over the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review period.

Address information

The GI Panel has considered developments in address information within the United Kingdom at several of its meetings, and at its December 2005 meeting received a full briefing from officials within the Department of Communities and Local Government (then the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

Background

The formation of the Geographic Information Panel (GI Panel) was announced by Yvette Cooper MP, Minister at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 4 April 2005 with the following statement.

The GI Panel will focus on medium to long term issues and will encourage more effective, extensive and systematic use of geographic information and will provide regular short reports to Ministers. This high-level advice will complement the advice provided to the ODPM Minister with responsibility for Ordnance Survey by the Director General and Chief Executive of Ordnance Survey.

Membership of the panel aims to ensure broad representation of key interest groups in government, the private sector and the wider Geographic Information industry across the United Kingdom. The GI Panel will initially be chaired by the Director General and Chief Executive of Ordnance Survey. Panel membership will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to adequately reflect the user community and has sufficient experience of the key issues.

Membership

The members of the Panel represent key interest groups in government, the private sector and the wider Geographic Information industry across the United Kingdom. The current membership of the Panel is:

- Association for Geographic Information - represented by Simon Doyle, GDC
- Association of British Insurers – Nick Starling, Director of General Insurance
- e-Government Unit, Cabinet Office – Andrew Stott, Deputy CIO and Head of Service Transformation
- Demographic User Group – represented by Michael Fishwick, Head of Commercial Data, Yell plc.
- Department for Communities & Local Government – Michael Kell, Director of Analytical Services
- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs – Andrew Burchell, Chief Operating Officer
- Ministry of Defence – Nick Rigby, Director, Intelligence Collection Strategy and Plans
- Office for National Statistics – Karen Dunnell, National Statistician
- Ordnance Survey – Vanessa Lawrence, Director General and Chief Executive
- Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland, Stan Brown, Business Development Director, representing Northern Ireland government
- Registers of Scotland – James Meldrum, Keeper. Appointed to represent land registration in the United Kingdom and the views of Scotland

- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – represented by Rob Mahoney, Director, Mahoney Geomatics
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) – represented by Cheryl Miller, Chief Executive of East Sussex County Council

In addition, the following also served as members of the GI Panel, but have now left their posts:

- Association for Geographic Information - Robert Mann, Director
- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs – Mark Addison, Director General of Operations and Service Delivery
- Office for National Statistics – Len Cook, National Statistician
- Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland – Mick Cory, Chief Executive

When setting up the GI Panel, the Minister appointed Vanessa Lawrence as Chair of the Panel, and at its meeting in March 2006, the GI Panel unanimously agreed that she should continue as Chair for a second year.

Meetings

During its first year, the GI Panel has met on 4 occasions: 21 June 2005, 19 September 2005 and 13 December 2005, and 20 March 2006. In addition, prior to the GI Panel's establishment, some members of the GI Panel held a meeting in March 2005. The minutes of those meetings are available on the GI Panel's website.