



WHAT IS INSPIRE?

INSPIRE is an EU directive which aims to establish an infrastructure for spatial information in the Europe Union. INSPIRE enables the sharing of environmental spatial information among public sector organisations and better facilitates public access to spatial information across Europe by defining common technical standards for publishing spatial datasets such as addresses, transport networks, land use, protected areas and risk zones. In total, over 34 data themes are defined within the framework.

It comprises a framework of rules and standards to help make spatial information more accessible for a wide range of purposes that support sustainable development. The directive came into force in 15th May 2007 and was transposed into Scottish law in December 2009.

INSPIRE promotes improvements in:

- Joining of and access to existing spatial data across the EU at a local, regional, national and international level;
- Sharing of spatial data between public authorities; and
- Public access to spatial data.

INSPIRE is based on a number of common principles:

- Geographic data should be collected only once and kept where it can be maintained most effectively.
- It should be possible to seamlessly combine geographic information from different sources across Europe and share it with many users and applications.
- It should be possible for geographic information collected at one level/scale to be shared with all levels/scales; detailed for thorough investigations, general for strategic purposes.
- Geographic data needed for good governance at all levels should be readily and transparently available.
- Geographic data should be easy to find, and easily understood as to how it can be used to meet a particular need and under which conditions it can be acquired and used.