



French Land Register opens access to geo-data

The French participants in the Open Street Map (OSM) - a project that creates and provides free geographic data - reported that they will be given access to vectorised geo-data from the French Land Register.

A German IT news site reported on the opening of the French geographic systems last week. The announcement was made public on an OSM mailing list on 20 January 2009.

One of the OSM participants quoted a letter from the French Ministry of Economy: "I am glad to announce the positive official answer to your request about using the cadastre.gouv.fr Web Map Server (WMS)." According to this OSM developer, this means the project can use detailed data from the French Land Register, like streets and roads, names and buildings.

The ministry wrote that all users are granted to freely use the data for their own projects, as long as the origin of the data is clearly indicated. Redistribution of the data is limited by the ministry to those products that use the registry as part of their product.

The ministry explained in its letter to the Open Street Map participants that the WMS server is currently being tested. "This is why we have not yet provided a public link to the service." The WMS server will be publicly announced in the middle of the year.

Open Street Map participant Steven Le Roux, an IT worker in the French city of Brest, explains that the group had in November 2008 already found out about the access to the WMS. "After some discussion we decided to contact the ministry, to make sure the licence actually allows us to use the data. If the ministry did not allow this, we would need to erase some of our work."

