

## Coordination initiatives to improve the use and diffusion of cadastral data

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The Spanish government has taken the initiative to create a Cadastre Permanent Committee, a new coordinating organisation in the field of cadastre. The initiative is highly appreciated and it is very wise to organise a conference to discuss the initiative and the possibilities to develop this further.

I was asked to present a paper on the subject of coordination initiatives to improve the use and diffusion of cadastral data. In this paper I will describe a number of coordinating initiatives that were taken in the past years in the Netherlands. From these examples I will draw a number of conclusions and I will try to translate these conclusions to a European level.

To start with it is necessary to tell something about where I come from, the Netherlands Cadastre and Land Registry Agency, in short Kadaster, to be able to understand the different coordination initiatives.

### **Kadaster**

#### **Organisation**

Kadaster is an independent public agency. This means that Kadaster is a public organisation with a limited political responsibility for the Minister of housing, physical planning and environment. The minister is end responsible for the continuity of the organisation and decides on the fees for the cadastral services. Kadaster itself is responsible for product development, marketing, staff and finance. In this way Kadaster can be run on modern business principles.

The organisation of Kadaster consists of 6 regional management units that run 15 local offices, a directorate for Land Development, and a corporate staff. An Executive Board heads Kadaster and a Supervisory Board controls the decisions of the Executive Board.

An important part of the organisation of Kadaster is the User Council. This council consists of representatives of the main customer groups of Kadaster and advises the Executive Board on all aspects of the services of Kadaster.

The number of staff of Kadaster is 2300.

#### **Products and services**

Kadaster is responsible for the maintenance of the cadastral and land registry records in the Netherlands and the dissemination of information out of these registers.

In the framework of this task yearly about one million deeds of transfer and mortgage deeds are registered, 100.000 cadastral measurements are executed and 10 million information requests are answered.

Kadaster also has the statutory task to produce information products from the data that is available in the databases. This information does not serve legal security needs but is bought by organisations that are for example active in marketing and logistics.

A third statutory task of Kadaster is the execution of activities in the framework of the land development program in the Netherlands and finally Kadaster maintains the national triangulation network.

All these activities lead to a turnover of more than 160 million euro.

The main developments in the field of services are the building of a system for electronic conveyance of deeds and the system to make the cadastral information available on the Internet, also for the general public.

In contrast to cadastral organisations in some other countries, Kadaster is not responsible for planning and zoning, valuation and national mapping. However a merger with the National Mapping agency is foreseen for the near future.

### **Customers**

The basic customers of Kadaster are the almost 4 million entitled persons that have a legal right over the 7 million cadastral parcels in the Netherlands. Yet Kadaster mainly does its business with the professional parties that represent those entitled persons like notaries, real estate agents and banks or with government organisations on all levels that need the cadastral information in the framework of their responsibilities.

The tasks of Kadaster in the field of information products, land development and triangulation know different customer groups.

### **Some coordination initiatives for use and diffusion in the Netherlands**

#### **Introduction**

Kadaster is involved in a wide variety of coordination and cooperation activities. In the following 5 examples are described that vary from bilateral to government wide. An important remark to make in advance is that cooperation and coordination is not a goal in itself. At the end the customer should benefit.

#### **Cooperation with municipalities**

The municipalities are an important counterpart for Kadaster. In the Netherlands the municipalities are keeping the records for natural persons and addresses, information that is also stored in the cadastral records. It is important to keep both records consistent. Kadaster takes the address information on a person's residence from the municipal records. On the other hand the municipalities are depending on cadastral information for their tax-collection, planning and zoning etc.

One example of joint operation of Kadaster and municipalities is the cadastral desk at the municipal office. The Netherlands has about 500 municipalities, Kadaster has only 15 offices. The cadastral desks increases the potential of physical points of distribution to a large extend. The advantage for the municipality is that they can offer the civilian a more complete service. For example all information necessary for a building permit is available at the municipal office.

For the above-mentioned reasons the cooperation with municipalities is very important. Kadaster cannot change the structure of its products or databases without very careful consulting of the municipalities. Therefore Kadaster and the municipalities have a very tight structure of cooperation, starting with the representation of the national society of municipalities in the User Council (see above). Kadaster has regular bilateral meetings on the level of the Executive Board and technical working groups on various aspects with this society. Finally the marketing organisation

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of Kadaster employs specialised account managers to keep in touch with the individual municipalities.

#### *Large scale base map*

In the past the Dutch government has decided that the production of large-scale topographic maps (1:500-1:2000) is not a government task. Organisations that need such a map had to find a way themselves to produce it. This has led to the creation of joint ventures that, with some ups and downs finally have succeeded in producing a large-scale base map for the whole territory of the Netherlands. Main participants in the joint ventures are the municipalities, utility companies and Kadaster. The maps only contain the basic topographic data (buildings, roads and waterways, street names). In the future the regional joint ventures will probably grow into a (more) national structure to create one window for national customers. Also selling and viewing will be made possible through the Internet.

#### *National clearinghouse for Geo-information*

The National clearinghouse for Geo-information (NCGI) is a distributed network of organisations that produce, store or use geo-information. The goal is to make the existing geo-information transparent and accessible by metadata and to exchange the information in a digital way. The participants produce topographic, soil, land use environmental, cadastral information etc.

The first activity of the NCGI was to produce a meta-data description. This is partly ready. The meta-data standard of CEN proved to be too complicated. However in general the objectives in the business plan of NCGI were not achieved. Main problem was that there were no transactions executed through the website. Participating organisations did at the end not see the added value of such a point of distribution.

The decision was taken to privatise the NCGI, however it still has a strong link to the public administration.

#### *Authentic registrations*

The Netherlands government organisations all-together maintain many thousands sets of information. The result is that civilians often are asked the same questions, that there are inconsistencies in the datasets and therefore that decisions often are not accurate. A fragmented data administration is also more costly then necessary. This is more an organisational problem than an ICT-problem.

The Netherlands government has recognised the necessity of sustainable data management. Objective is to have a one-time collection of all data and multiple use and not to have a separate system for each government task.

It is recognised that the only way to achieve this is by legislation. A law should determine authentic registrations that are databases of high quality with explicit guarantees for quality management. These are datasets that are vital for the government service and the use by government organisations is compulsory.

The cadastral registration along with the registrations of natural persons and the company register are the first candidates to become an authentic registration.

#### *National spatial data infrastructure*

The Netherlands government has no mayor program to build up a national spatial data infrastructure but more in general there is an investment program to stimulate the creation of new flexible knowledge networks. One of the

themes of this program is high quality spatial use. 50 organisations in the geo-information sector, private, public and research, have decided to make a proposal for a structural improvement of the geo-information supply, in the framework of this investment program. This means that these organisations have to find a new structure to be able to make the proposal.

#### **Conclusion**

Looking into the examples of coordination initiatives in the Netherlands it can be seen that there is a wide variety, from small (bilateral cooperation) to big (many organisations involved, ambitious objectives), from bottom up (voluntary cooperation) to top down (leading to legislation). Most of these initiatives had their own added value and proved to be necessary one or the other way.

Most initiatives are bottom up. It is the explicit vision of the government that the geo-information sector has to run its own business as much as possible. It also realises that government decisions without a high level of support of the sector do not have a big chance of success. But at the end, decisions have to be taken and legislation is a good way to do that.

Looking to the European landscape there is a big similarity with the national level. There are bottom up and small initiatives: the bilateral cooperation between cadastral organisation is in place. Kadaster went to Sweden to discuss ICT-developments, we went to Britain to see electronic conveyance and we ourselves get many visitors too. The Eulis project, discussed elsewhere during the conference, has a very modest objective with respect to the creation of a European portal for 8 national information systems. Yet a big number of issues have to be discussed and concluded to create such a portal.

Bigger coordination structures are WPLA and Eurogeographics, two organisations that unite most of the cadastral and/or mapping organisations in Europe.

The European Union has until now only produced a limited amount of regulations that are relevant for the cadastral sector. Examples are the directives on privacy issues and data base protection. Looking to the objectives of the Inspire program to create a legislative framework for a European spatial data infrastructure, it can be concluded that the involvement of the EU in cadastral issues is growing and that it is important for the cadastral organisations in Europe to coordinate closer to influence the decision making in the European Union. In this respect the initiative of the Spanish government to create a coordination body that is closely linked to the decision structure of the European Union is worth wile considering. ■

## Legal aspects of the Cadastre

### **DIARMUID CLANCY**

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There are certain characteristics of land, which influence its ability to meet the needs of society. Location, extent,