

Spatial Data Infrastructures: Hype or Hit?

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SUMMARY

The emergence of Spatial Data Infrastructures (SDIs) is considered to be the major development in the GI-world the last ten years. Considerable amounts of money are invested in their development, and both political and commercial interest is growing worldwide. At the global level, intensive discussions are held on the development of a Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI). In The Netherlands, for instance, the national government has recently decided to invest 20 million Euro in the enhancement of Dutch SDI and its related research. The European Commission of EU has adopted in July 2004 the INSPIRE (INfrastructure for SPatial InfoRmation in Europe) proposal. Looking to all these developments, could we speak of a SDI-hype? Maybe more important for SDI-development is the question if this potential hype will evolve into a hit.

In this paper, these questions will be addressed. An overview of the current SDI developments is presented to introduce the main developments. Second, a classification framework to indicate developments as hype or hit will be presented. This classification framework consists of the following key indicators: Expectation, Subject attention, Stakeholder's involvement and Benefit justification. For each of these variables, the current SDI development are assessed and justified by giving examples. We feel that SDI development certainly shows hype aspects. The expectations are high, a strong increase in attention for topic is observed, stakeholder involvement is biased and the expected benefits are high. We hope and think, however, that SDI is moving from a slightly hyped development into a real hit.