

Ten Years of Norwegian Assistance to the Land Sector in Moldova:

Assessment of the Results Supporting Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

The Republic of Moldova, formerly a part of the USSR gained its independence in August 1991. The country's territory is ca. 34000 sq.km and 62% is agricultural lands. In 1997-2006, Moldova made a good progress with land privatization process during the First Cadastre Project with support from the World Bank and other donors.

Norwegian support to the land sector in Moldova has started in 2006, and since then, a number of projects have been successfully implemented delivering tangible results, bringing new technologies and establishing professional and technical capacity to ensure sustainability and efficient use of the delivered products and transferred knowledge. The main development goal of the Norwegian support to the land sector in Moldova is to achieve economic growth supported by a functioning land market.

Norway is a donor-country that allocates annually more than 1% of gross national income to the official development assistance – ODA, through the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following political priorities, the Ministry has established several assistance programs for respective geospatial or thematic areas. One of the programs that supports democratic development in the Eurasian region, provides grants to ODA-eligible OSCE¹ countries including Moldova.

The grant scheme assumes the presence of an implementation agency from Norway and a co-operating partner in Moldova. The Norwegian Mapping Authority – NMA, and the Agency for Land Relations and Cadastre of Moldova – ALRC, have jointly implemented Norwegian funded projects aimed at supporting efficient, secure and transparent real estate registration and providing access to geospatial information throughout Moldova. The projects have provided crucial support for sustainable land management as well as for other matters in public and private sectors. Good co-operation between NMA and ALRC has been vital for successful completion of all projects.

During the last ten years, NMA has assisted with production and delivery of geospatial information: Orthophoto, Digital Terrain Model and Base map to support the ongoing property privatization and registration program in Moldova, with up-to-date mapping data. The correct maps enhance the quality of registration and the quality of information to the public and professional users of land information, thus also reducing the possibility for errors, manipulation and corruption in land matters. Up-to-date maps needed for correct registration of previously registered properties and for a wide range of other usage, such as land use planning, land reform, improvements to infrastructure, environmental protection, etc. The assistance from Norway has

¹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe www.osce.org

significantly contributed to improvement of public services providing open access to geospatial data on the Internet.

Norway as a donor was concerned that the geospatial data produced with Norwegian funding used and maintained effectively. After ten years of successful co-operation, there was a desire to assess the achieved results. In a common understanding that the delivered geospatial data is crucial for the country, NMA and ALRC have designed and executed a research on the access and use of the geospatial information funded by Norway in public and private sectors of Moldova.

The main objective of the study was to investigate with a selected number and types of potential users of the geospatial information in different regions of Moldova whether they were aware of the available data and whether they have been using the data.

The situation with the use of geospatial information by state authorities, public organizations at central level, ministries and academia is satisfactory. ALRC is a geo-data coordinator in Moldova responsible for implementation of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. Twelve public authorities participate in the NSDI co-operation and geo-data exchange.

On the other hand, NMA encourage ALRC to promote a much broader and wider use of geospatial information by local public authorities for territory administration, land use planning etc.

For the study, NMA and ALRC selected 43 users - contacts at different levels of public administration as well as in private sector. The primary target group was 32 local public authorities in 20 districts of Moldova.

The study commenced with data collection through the questionnaires and interviews. The idea was to investigate if and how the selected contacts were informed about the availability of the geospatial data; about ways and terms of access to the data or any obstacles to accessing and using data. The contacts, which have been using the data, were asked about the format they have used the data; how data was delivered to the contacts; what the data actually have been used for; and whether the contacts were satisfied with the quality of the data.

Based on the responses, it has become evident that the 95% of the contacts knew about the availability of the geospatial data. However, only 79% of the contacts were aware of the ways and terms of access to the data; 33% of the contact indicated some obstacle in accessing the data, such as lack of specific GIS software, lack of technical and professional capacity etc.

NMA and ALRC decided to address the issue and jointly with the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova, run an information campaign particularly targeting local public authorities.

Geospatial data together with a national population data are critical for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals' achievement at all levels. The SDGs are focused on ensuring a certain

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percentage of population to have access to certain resources or services. All SDGs deal with the information that is related to geospatial data. “Knowing where people and things are, and their relationship to each other, is essential for informed decision-making, and to measure and monitor outcomes.”²

Moldova has received a valuable basis for measuring progress towards the SDGs by combining maps, census data and survey data provided by respective thematic sources.

² <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51608#.Wct1fk1rxaT>

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