

Date

Wednesday 18 July 2007

Title of session

Plenary: Business Models and Sustainability

Name of presenter/chair

Chair: Prof Michael Blakemore, IDRA Limited and University of Durham
Presenters: Jean Dotse, Past Director of Surveys, Ghana
Knut Flathen, Director General, Norwegian Mapping & Cadastre Authority
Eric Loubier, Natural Resources, Canada

Vanessa Lawrence, Director General & Chief Executive, Ordnance Survey

Name of rapporteur

Sarah Hamylton, Cambridge University

This session made it clear that the changing needs of the geoinformation community have given rise to a wide range of business models for the provision of geographic data. In turn, this has led to an increased need to link researching with market demand to align ever changing organisation models with customer needs. Each National Mapping agency was subject to different dynamics arising from management frameworks, although all highlighted the need to leverage institutional capacity more efficiently. Selective release of products was noted as a good tactic for stimulating markets for specific geoinformation products. The following lessons can be taken from the countries that presented:

- Government subsidy is needed to achieve cost recovery (Ghana)
 - State and commercial activities should be separate (Norway)
 - Data standardisation helps meet customer needs (Canada)
- Value-Added partnerships facilitate Trading Fund models (Great Britain)

Questions	Answers
<p>Suha Ulgen, (UN) Is cost recovery possible in Africa?</p> <p>It is true that the UK has less 'uneconomic mapping areas' relative to African countries.</p>	<p>Three things need to be considered when seeking cost recovery:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look at the geography (e.g. producing map sheets of a large area is less efficient than a smaller one) 2. Take your users into account (public sector or a wider community) 3. There needs to be an embedded understanding of the value of geography in a country (location as key) <p>The difference between the UK and Norway or Canada is population density. It is difficult to have a self supported business model with a small market. Hence all geographical information should be state funded and made freely available to the public.</p> <p>It is necessary to look at product delivery; this factor is very difference across countries.</p>
<p>Fraser Taylor, (Canada): Do you think Google Earth will affect your business?</p>	<p>Vanessa Lawrence: We already receive payment from Google via one of our partners.</p> <p>Eric Loubier: Information gets pushed into the mass market, which in turn creates demand.</p>