

Date

Monday 13th July 2009

Title of session

Breakout Discussion Group:

What are the impacts of economic turbulence on mapping in your country?

What are the impacts of economic turbulence on your institution/organisation?

What are the measures you have undertaken to cope with the challenge?

How do you think mapping (and your institution/organisation) can support your societies and countries in overcoming this period of economic turbulence?

Name of presenter/chair

Colin MacDonald, Chief Executive, Land Information New Zealand - Facilitator

Attendees: David Coleman (Canada), Željko Bačić (Croatia), Belete Tirfie (Ethiopia), Rachapudi Siva Kumar (India), Muhammad Nuhu (Nigeria), Adriana Padureanu (Romania), William Farmer (Sierra Leone), Anne Catherine Føstrup (Norway), Mark Corey (Canada), Rabin Sharma (Nepal), Lionel Fewson (UK - DGC), Steve Hagan (USA), Carsten Rönsdorf (UK – Ordnance Survey)

Name of rapporteurs

Danny Hyam & Jenny Green

What are the impacts of economic turbulence on mapping in your country?

The results of this question varied between the nations present and fell into three areas: Developing, Transitional and Developed.

Developing:

- Issues updating maps 40-50 years old. (Sierra Leone, Nigeria)
- Politics in the country affecting mapping priority. (Nepal)
- Private Industry suffering due to European outsourcing reducing. (India)

Transitional:

- The situation is difficult as the agency is self-financed. (Romania)
- Interest rates are increasing, there are already a lot of loans and so there is no room for further borrowing. This is leading to co-financing of projects. (Croatia)

Developed:

- Government is a stimulus to spending resulting in accelerate mapping, mapping tied to government agenda. (Canada)
- Reduction in interest rates meaning property market is increasing. (Norway)

- Reduction in revenue in the Land & Property sector leading to reduction in survey which is freeing up resource to do lower priority work. (Great Britain)

Overview: everyone is experiencing change, but change is different for all.

What are the impacts of economic instability on your institution /organisation?

Developing:

- Digital data is capital intensive to capture and maintain, unable to implement studies with no capital or investors. (Ethiopia)
- Reduction in budget means no new activities, difficult to keep staff active, taking longer to deliver current work. (Nepal)
- No resources or professionals following 12 years of war, harder to find required assistance to start over again with surveying. (Sierra Leone)

Transitional

- Budget reduction resulting in salary reduction; however outsourced services are now cheaper. (Croatia)
- Reduction in salaries could lead to an increase in corruption. (Romania)

Developed:

- Budget cuts lead to staff cuts and modernisation programme cuts. (UK – DGC)
- Government asking for increased public sector efficiencies. (Norway, New Zealand)
- Demographic issue with age profile within the organisation with large number of staff nearing retirement age. (Canada, New Zealand, UK)
- New technology is leading to increased surveying, in the case of the railways in the USA this is leading to increased safety and better data. (USA)

What are the measures you have undertaken to cope with the challenge?

- External factors will trigger an increased demand for spatial data.
- Geospatial data will be a part of the road out of recession, so there is an emphasis on showing the value of collected data.
- How should data be priced, if it is free it stimulates the economy, if it is charged for it is better for the bottom line.
- There has been a culture of high quality data, which can create a cocoon to the exclusion of customer's requirements.
- Crowd sourced data allows for updates for free.
- There has been a long period of stability but now things are changing, can the Developing Countries learn from the experiences of the Developed Countries? Do they need to create high quality, extremely accurate and detailed data or can they create mapping that is sufficient from crowd-sourcing, or other alternative methods?
- Becoming a data aggregator moving from making maps to taking data from other sources and creating mash-ups.

How can mapping and your institutions support your societies and countries in overcoming this period of economic turbulence?

- The role as a data aggregator.
- That there is a need to show the need for spatial data for the future.
- That mapping will play only a minor role in recovery.
- That data needs to be connected to the governments requirements.

Summary

- The impacts are far greater than at first thought.
- It is interesting to see the impacts on different countries.
- The impacts and potential solutions are different for each country.
- The topic will no doubt come up again at future events.