Flemish Spatial Data Infrastructure and Public Sector Innovation

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This 4-year interdisciplinary project is funded by the Institute for Science and Technology. The strategic and generic character of this project is situated in its research object as well as its method.

The research object is the relation between spatial data infrastructure (SDI) and public sector innovation. As information is the basic resource of governments to fulfil its tasks in a complex society, databases become the backbone of public administrations. These datasets contain data on citizens, companies/organizations, and geographic information. This project focuses on geographic information. A lot of information in the public sector has a geographic component, so the large-scale roll-out of an SDI will be of great strategic importance in itself and to the further development and innovation of public practices.

Administrative practices will be affected by the increasing use of geographic information. Tasks functions and responsibilities will be re-allocated and new forms of responsiveness and accountability will emerge within and between different levels of government as well as in the interface with the private sector, not-for-profit sector and civil society.

The project methodology supports a generic approach of SDI-development. First, the project looks at SDI-development from an interdisciplinary perspective. A combination of public administration, sociology, law, economics and geomatics has to guarantee a comprehensive view on the development of an SDI. Second, the development of an SDI is looked upon in all its phases; starting with the (1) acquisition of needed resources, over the (2) processing of resources to the (3) utilization of an SDI (see figure 1). In this way, each phase will be studied and analysed from an interdisciplinary perspective, but also in a static, comparative static and sometimes even dynamic way.

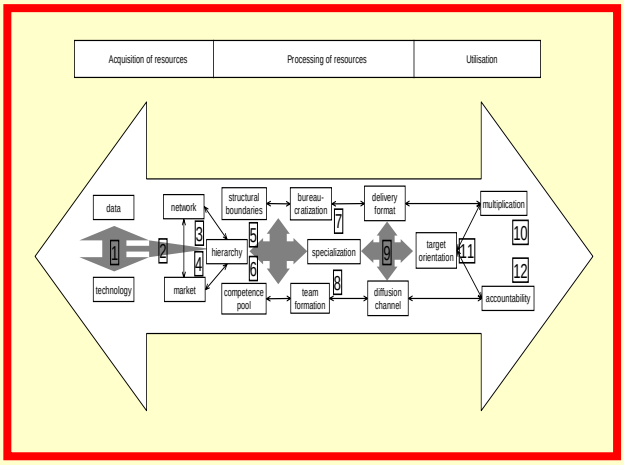

Figure 1: Analytical model

The main research question of this project is the following: "What are the technological, legal, economic, sociological and public administrative requirements to further develop, operate, and maintain the Flemish SDI, consistent with international standards, that is efficient, effective, flexible, and feasible?".

To be able to answer this research question, well-constructed and balanced work packages (WP) are designed. So, the research can be organized in an efficient and qualitative way:

- WP1 zero measurement,
- WP2 resource acquisition module,
- WP3 process inflow module,
- WP4 process outflow module,
- WP5 utilization module, and
- WP6 Multi-criteria analysis, progress measurement and scenarios (Figure 2).

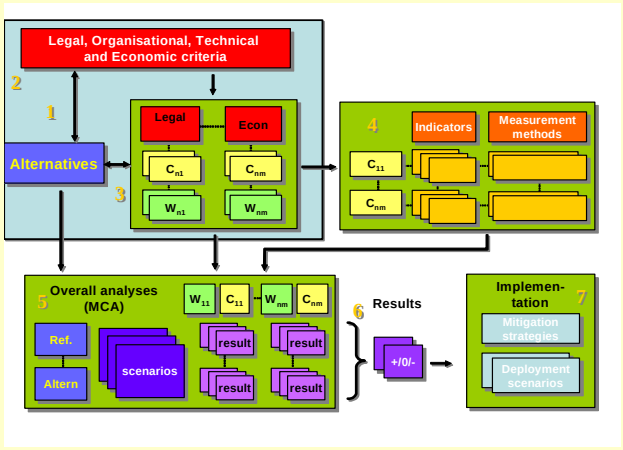

Figure 2: Methodology for a multi-stakeholder multi-criteria analysis

In addition, a user group is established to support this project. Member of this group are;

- Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities, City of Leuven
- Association of Flemish Provinces
- Co-ordination Cell Flemish e-Government
- Agency for Geographic Information Flanders
- IncGEO
- National Geographic Institute

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