

Facilitating a spatially enabled society

Land and Property Services Northern Ireland

The Challenge

- Achieve the aims of the Northern Ireland GI strategy

The Benefits

- Open, universal access to location data for all of Northern Ireland via a single GIS-based portal
- Substantial, sustainable public and private sector cost savings and quantifiable carbon reductions
- Better information to support decision making across government and private sector organisations
- An effective platform for ensuring compliance with EU INSPIRE Directive

The Customer

Land and Property Services (LPS) is part of the Department of Finance and Personnel for Northern Ireland.

The Challenge

In 2009, the Northern Ireland Executive endorsed the second Northern Ireland Geographic Information (GI) Strategy, a ten year plan for promoting and facilitating greater use of location information. By 2019, the strategy aims to have nurtured “a spatially enabled society in which government is using GI as a decision making tool, businesses are using GI to increase efficiency, and the public are actively using GI, all on a daily basis.”

The Northern Ireland GI Strategy was influenced by a wide range of factors, including the EU INSPIRE Directive. Introduced in 2007, this legislation mandates member states to make environmental data publicly accessible. As many as 50 separate public sector bodies across Northern Ireland need to comply with INSPIRE, but didn't have a simple and cost effective way to do so.

LPS realised that, to facilitate the GI strategy, it would need to build an entirely new technical infrastructure for storing, managing and delivering location information to a broad user base. From the outset, the organisation was convinced that a geographic information system (GIS) would be a vital component of the project.

The Solution

LPS conducted a formal tender process to evaluate GIS solutions and selected Esri's ArcGIS platform. “ArcGIS ticked all the boxes in our tender, at the right cost,” recalls Suzanne McLaughlin, GI Strategy & INSPIRE co-ordinator at LPS.

Esri Ireland worked closely with LPS to help it design, build and implement a versatile GIS infrastructure and web-based GIS portal using ArcGIS technology. LPS also worked with con terra, one of Esri Ireland's partners, to develop a sophisticated data licensing mechanism that enables LPS to control which groups of users can access which data sets and mapping services.

Named Spatial NI, the solution consolidates hundreds of different location-based data sets, including, for the first time, information from all 26 local authorities in Northern Ireland. Users can access these vast resources via the Internet and layer data sets on maps and aerial images to get a deeper understanding of issues.

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