Land-Sea Integrated Reference Data for the North Sea

SeaZone is collaborating with hydrographic offices and other organisations from Norway, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Sweden and United Kingdom on a 3 year European funded project to improve marine reference information for the North Sea. The title of the project - â€˜Bringing Land and Sea Together (BLAST)' - aptly describes the project's main aim, that is to harmonise and integrate terrestrial and marine geographic datasets to create a consistent reference base suitable for integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and other purposes.

BLAST has a transnational challenge to incorporate maritime information from the sea areas of the different countries making up the North Sea Region to ensure this information can be readily combined to improve coordination and maritime safety.

The project is one of many projects being funded under ‘The Interreg North Sea Region Programme 2007 - 2013'. The aim of the programme, partially funded by the EU, is to help organisations co-ordinate regional projects effectively. The programme links regions from seven countries around the North Sea, incorporating policy level planning and the long lasting and tangible effects of these projects. These are the foundations of future multi-national projects, which will create added value to partner regions and beyond.

This project has provided SeaZone the opportunity to enhance its' global marine mapping improvement programme by building on established relationships with North Sea hydrographic offices and forging new links with coastal administrations, local authorities and other marine stakeholders. The project will act as an opportunity for public organisations outside of the UK to test SeaZone's digital marine mapping product, HydroSpatial, against their emerging requirements. SeaZone's specialist land-sea mapping integration tools, developed for the UK, will be improved to incorporate terrestrial mapping from Norway, Denmark and Belgium.

Andrew Iwanoczko, SeaZone's project manager for BLAST, stated, "Whilst SeaZone already has agreements to use North Sea hydrographic office data in HydroSpatial, the BLAST project will help to establish the inter dependency of disparate data used for maritime safety and other purposes, both on land and sea. The project is bound to lead to an uptake of organisations using more appropriate data that is fit for purpose and interoperable, and not rely only on what is to hand. BLAST is a major step towards SeaZone realising its goal to provide INSPIRE compliant reference information as input to a marine spatial data infrastructure (SDI) for the North Sea, and eventually the whole of Europe. SeaZone is delighted to be working with North Sea hydrographic offices and the EU on this ground breaking project."

SeaZone HydroSpatial is the first "off the shelf" authoritative digital marine mapping, engineered and maintained from raw material from hydrographic offices and other data agencies. HydroSpatial provides reference information comparable with land mapping and is designed for easy access and cost effective use in desktop and web GIS, satisfying the majority of user needs and applications. SeaZone Hydrospatial consists of six topic layers including Bathymetry and Elevation, Natural and Physical Features, Structures and Obstructions, Socio Economic and Marine Use, Conservation and Environmental Protection and Climate and Oceanography.