

## **The role of civil society organisations in SDI development**

**Vlatko Roland, Dragan Divjak**

GIS Institute

**e-mail:** vlatko@i-gis.hr, dragan@i-gis.hr

**Event:** 1st Regional INSPIRATION forum and 4th Croatian NSDI and INSPIRE Day, 27th Sept. 2012

### **Abstract:**

Awareness of the importance of geographic information for the work of civil society organizations (CSOs) exists globally for many years. Some examples of the application of geographic information are creating plans for the management of protected areas, providing assistance to endangered citizens after a natural disaster, providing medical care and education in underdeveloped areas, public awareness, etc. Geographic information is critical not only because of the spatial nature of problems that are addressed by CSOs, but because geoinformation provide a quick and meaningful way for the aggregation of other thematic information and their placement in a meaningful context. In today's mashup society GIS systems are gaining in importance because increasing number of users is recognizing GIS as an ideal platform for the aggregation of information and as a support for decision making. In recent years awareness that information is a public good is rising. Sharing of information leads to the creation of new information and development of new cognitive knowledge. On other hand more and more factors are influencing development of collaboration environment that enables it. In countries with high civil engagement the local government sector recognizes civil society organisations as partners who provide support in achieving their goals and needs. Nevertheless, without taking into account the interaction of natural and human factors it is not possible to obtain high quality results of any complex analysis. Not to mention technology that now days provides opportunities for information sharing and joint action that were until recently unimagined. Mainly because the physical location of a particular individual was insurmountable obstacle. GIS Institute (IGIS) is a civil society organization whose mission is to connect professional users of GIS technology with other users or potential users of GIS. One of the activities of the Institute of GIS is the education of other civil society organizations about the possibilities that GIS provides. The concept of spatial data infrastructure (SDI) provides new opportunities for civil society organizations for their work - as a platform for networking and promoting their activities, public awareness and access to existing spatial data. Besides the role CSOs has as users of existing spatial data sets, they contribute to popularization of SDI. Mainly by demonstrating SDI usability, but also as a producer of spatial data thus becoming an active participant in development of SDI.

**Keywords:** civil society organisations, spatial data infrastructure