

HUMBOLDT Application Scenario

Sustainable Urban Atlas

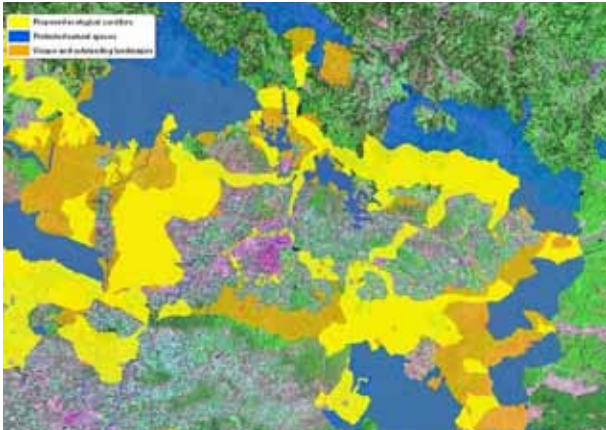
Urban planning provides one of the most technically demanding applications of the HUMBOLDT framework and yet successful application offers great rewards in terms of policy impact. Horizontal integration across the sectoral boundaries of the policy themes allied with vertical integration between the levels of governance presents a myriad of harmonization challenges. Solutions to these challenges provide the key to unlock the prime concerns of the policy end user to secure integrated intelligence that is central to effective decision-making and policy integration.

Policy integration is universally viewed as the pre-requisite for successfully addressing the complex interrelated processes at the urban level that generate environmental impacts including climate change. Car based transport in urban areas, for example, contributes to 30% of urban greenhouse gas emissions and so forms a major driver of global warming and climate change.

In order to meet these challenges, Vitória-Gasteiz since the 1990's has operated an Environmental Information System (SI@M). The aims of this system include supporting decision-taking and policy evaluation and enhancing public access to environmental information. The system is based on the principle that decision-taking is a shared responsibi-

lity that requires the sharing of knowledge between citizens, planners and political representatives.

SI@M today faces new challenges to deepen effective integration in the decision-making and participatory processes, to adapt to the new technological and legal scenarios arising from the INSPIRE Directive, and to go beyond the environmental aspects and thereby contribute to the local implementation of the EU Urban Thematic Strategy. SI@M therefore aims to analyze the city as a complex system, stressing especially at the urban scale, the social and economic as well as environmental issues, and using this knowledge to support local planning in an effective way.



Supporting identification of ecological corridors around Vitoria-Gasteiz/Spain for NATURA2000 (© Ayuntamiento de Vitoria-Gasteiz/Indra).

The Sustainability Observatory of Vitoria-Gasteiz in response to these challenges aims to improve information gathering and management for urban policies, and effective participation of social and economic stakeholders in sustainable development policy formulation.

Specifically, SI@M will develop a series of measures to establish a new integrated framework for the management of environmental information at the local level, and create new public services to satisfy

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The issues identified above for Vitoria-Gasteiz have pan-European relevance, as the problems are common throughout Europe. Solutions developed in Vitoria-Gasteiz via the harmonization of key variables of urban development will have pan-European applicability, and, in terms of responses to climate change, a global significance.

the strategic aims of the Sustainability Observatory. A wide range of harmonization issues will be addressed, concerning the use and integration of datasets focussed on planning, including the general urban development plan, land categorization, real estate categorization, protected zones, urban economic activity diversity, industry inventories, drainage networks, areas of special protection against surface waters etc.

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