

EuroRoadS aims at building a European road data infrastructure

The EC-supported EuroRoadS project — in which ERTICO is a participant — took an important step forward on 15 September when its first open workshop was held at ERTICO in Brussels. The workshop was the occasion to present the project approach to an audience of over 40 representatives of key stakeholders, and to validate the early emerging results.

EuroRoadS, a project within the eContent programme, kicked off in March 2004 and runs for 30 months. Coordinated by the Swedish National Land Survey, the consortium includes survey and road agencies of Sweden, France, UK, Germany and Austria, as well as PTV and ERTICO. ERTICO's role is to lead the work on market, cost-benefit and business case

analysis as well as exploitation.

Road data in Europe today is a patchwork of varying quality, coverage and ease of access, with typically little cooperation between each country's mapping agency and national road



Finding the way to a European solution

administration, as well as between countries. On the other hand, markets are developing for products with pan-European coverage, notably in the sector of ITS and in-vehicle applications.

The market for on-board navigation is developing rapidly, with over 2 million units fitted that use a digital map database produced by one of two major suppliers. Much work is underway to develop applications for advanced driver assistance (ADAS) that will need new types of road data such as speed limits, with high accuracy and reliability as well as full European coverage.

EuroRoadS is developing a specification framework consisting of a road data structure, a description of data content (including a "core" data set to be available from each country), data exchange mechanisms and specifications for interoperability. This framework is built on user requirements identified through wide-ranging surveys, and will be tested through a prototype demonstrator.

EuroRoadS solution

The elements of such a "EuroRoadS solution" were presented in the form of a "strawman" for discussion. This set out initial ideas for the following:

- EuroRoadS architecture - based on distributed public-sector sources accessible through a single European portal
- data model - common model for data exchange with difference conformance levels and a common metadata specification
- quality - common quality system and quality measures
- business model - transparent and accessible pricing and licensing models
- organisation - ranging from loose network to shares in a

central "Euro-RoadS Operator"

The discussion at the workshop showed keen interest in the work and expected results of the project.

Participants noted the following actions:

- There is a need to work on technical harmonisation, such as a common linear referencing system for Europe
- There is also a need to use existing standards such as GDF or ISO 19100 family
- EuroRoadS should focus on data where public sector has clear role
- Public authorities need to implement and promote take-up of EuroRoadS results
- The project should also identify and promote best practice in road data handling.



From road signs to road database

This first open workshop also identified the need to strengthen contacts with the user community, and to make more use of the reference groups — including the Conference of European Directors of Roads, Eurogeographics and ERTICO. It was proposed that reference group members be invited to attend specific technical meetings and review draft deliverables. Once results are available, regional workshops will be organised to promote their take-up across Europe. The final project achievements will be presented in a closing workshop in the first half of 2006. •

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