



GEodata Openness Initiative for Development and Economic Advancement in Romania

Joint Research Project under the Romanian-Swiss Research Programme

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Dissemination Strategy

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GEOIDEA.RO Report		
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ABSTRACT:		
<p>The aim of the Dissemination Strategy is to define suitable actions to ensure the most effective promotion of the results of the GEOIDEA.RO project during and after the lifetime of the project, as well as the interaction of the project with similar research activities across the world. Appropriate communication tools were identified to bridge the project outcomes with the relevant target audiences.</p>		
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This document outlines the strategy for the communication and dissemination of information resulted from the activities of the GEOIDEA.RO project.

1.2 Scope

The aim of the Dissemination Strategy is to define suitable actions to ensure the most effective promotion of the GEOIDEA.RO project results during and after the lifetime of the project, as well as the interaction of the project with similar research activities across the world. Appropriate communication tools were identified to bridge the project outcomes with the relevant target audiences.

1.3 Overview

The governmental agencies are major geodata providers and there is an immense potential (Ilie 2013) for data to be reused, combined, and processed for secondary purposes. However, these agencies are usually reluctant to make those geodata available for many different reasons, ranging from cultural, economic, political and infrastructural ones. Open access would mean to make publicly accessible in commonly used, machine-readable format the data that the numerous governmental agencies own and collect. There have been studies about the economic effects of open data access policy and they show that governments can expect to boost their economy by opening their data (Newbery et al. 2008 & Office of Fair Trading 2006). The main objective of the GEOIDEA.RO project is to improve the scientific basis for open geodata model adoption in Romania, because it is believed that publishing governmental geodata in Romania over the Internet, under an open license and in a reusable format can strengthen citizen engagement and yield new innovative businesses, bringing substantial social and economic gain.

1.4 Abbreviations

CCIAS	Groundwater Engineering Research Center
IKG	Institute of Cartography and Geoinformation
OGP	Open Government Partnership
IT&C	Information Technology and Communications
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
UEFISCDI	Romanian Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education Research

2. OVERALL STRATEGY

Overall, the GEOIDEA.RO dissemination and promotion activities are designed to address and meet the main project objective of improving the scientific basis for open geodata model adoption in Romania. The main objectives of the Dissemination Strategy are:

- To build awareness of the project;
- To communicate the research findings regarding the tools and technologies for geodata publishing and retrieval;
- To facilitate collaboration and information exchange between partners (internal dissemination);
- To create the foundation for an effective use of the technologies developed within the project by the interested stakeholders (e.g. geodata producers working on publishing their geodata as under open data principles);
- To prepare support products, including the documentation, in a form which could be accepted by potential users, help in technology transfer, provide necessary advices and support;
- To establish a wide network of potential users of the knowledge and tools developed within the project;
- To enhance project visibility and create awareness within administrations throughout Romania, Switzerland and European Union;
- To lay the ground for strategic partnerships with high-level governmental bodies.

The following elements are considered by the Dissemination Strategy document:

- Target groups identification and profiling;
- Definition of messages to capture the attention of the targeted audience;
- Selection of communication channels that carry the messages to the target audiences;

3. DISSEMINATION TARGET GROUPS

The term “target groups” is used to describe the different groups of stakeholders that can benefit from the project implementation. Targeting these audiences through appropriate dissemination means and activities is the main objective of the dissemination work in the GEOIDEA.RO project.

Two main dissemination and promotion levels were identified:

- Non-scientific communities at Romanian local and national level. Targeting governmental bodies (geodata producers, ITC facilitators, etc.), industry, non-governmental organizations, media and the general public.
- Scientific communities at European and international level.

Based on their roles and functions, we can broadly classify dissemination target groups into the following categories:

- **Governmental bodies.** This includes representatives from different levels of governmental organizations, like an important list of geodata producers (e.g. National Agency for Cadastre and Land Registration, Military Topographic Directorate, Geological Institute of Romania, National Meteorological Administration, etc.), but also non geospatial entities as policy makers (it is important to understand their interests and match dissemination outputs to their needs, priorities and vocabulary) or more technical bodies like the Department for Online Services and Design within the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (responsible for Digital Agenda and Open Government Partnership implementation in Romania);
- **Academia and research institutions.** This includes organizations (universities, research centres, research networks) whose primary focus is on creating novel cartographic portal technologies (e.g. geodata web services for map rendering and data delivery, highly interactive web interfaces).
- **Industry.** This includes private companies interested in providing added-value products based on open geodata.
- **Non-governmental organizations and media.** This includes organizations interested in visualization, analysis and filtering of large datasets (e.g. data-driven journalism)
- **General public.** Ordinary people in society interested in promoting and using open geodata.

For dissemination purposes, a comprehensive list of target Romanian institutions was compiled (see Annex I).

4. DISSEMINATION AND PROMOTION MESSAGES DEFINITION

The key messages to be communicated to the target groups are related closely to the projects scope and objectives. Key messages can be expressed in a single statement or in a series of statements that convey important information associated to open data movement in general and to the GEOIDEA.RO project in particular. The messages should:

- Show the importance of open geodata (transparency and economic value);
- Show the relevance of the GEOIDEA.RO results for the open geodata principles implementation in Romania;
- Show the benefits offered, and their significance;
- Be tied to specific values, beliefs, or interests of the audience. Very technical terms should be avoided in communication with non-technical bodies.

It is important to recognise that there is a limit to the amount of messages, which can be communicated, and often a trade-off between the number and complexity of key messages and the level of uptake achieved. "The message is the extreme synthesis of what the project wants to communicate, or rather the essential core of the contents or line of reasoning that should, in any case, be learned and remembered by the receiver: everything, in the communication, must contribute to getting it through to the public" (Carrada 2006). Regardless of the purpose, messages must be developed with consideration of the desired outcome. Factors that help determine groups of interest acceptance include:

- **Credibility.** The communication channel and the information source should be convincing and conceivable;
- **Clarity.** Messages must clearly convey information. Clear messages should be non-technical and limited to the essential information, without unnecessarily detailed explanations;
- **Consistency.** Messages should be consistent through the project lifetime. Partners consensus must be achieved;
- **Groups needs.** Messages should be based on what the target audience perceives as most important or interesting to them.

5. SELECTION OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND TOOLS

Communications channels carry the project findings to the target audiences. There is a number of different types of such channels, each with their strengths and weaknesses.

The channels which may be used within the GEOIDEA.RO dissemination process can be classified in two main categories:

- **Oral communication channels:** workshops, conferences, exhibitions, development day type of events, formal and informal meetings, etc.
- **Written communication channels:** website, brochures, leaflets, newsletters, articles in scientific journals, articles in general publications, press releases, posts in social media networks, clustering/liaison with other relevant projects, etc.

For the GEOIDEA.RO project, the selection mechanism to identify the most effective channels for reaching each of the groups of interest was carried out according with the following important questions:

- What are the credible sources of information for the targeted audience?
- In what context are they most likely to pay attention to the messages being communicated by the project partners?
- What is the number of persons that can be reached with the communication channel?
- What are the economic resources required for the channel?
- How much time is required to prepare the action associated with the communication channel?
- How much time is required to execute the action associated with the communication channel?

6. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

The following key principles should be met for every dissemination activity:

- Consistent and unified visual identity;
- Project logo clearly visible;
- Project partners (IKG and CCIAS) and funding authorities mentioned (SNSF and UEFISCDI);
- Written materials (other than scientific articles) should include a disclaimer. The disclaimer text will include standard paragraphs like "*The information in this document is provided as is and no guarantee or warranty is given that the information is fit for any particular purpose*" and a statement indicated that the content of the material does not necessarily reflect the official position of SNSF and/or UEFISCDI.
- All scientific articles and other appropriate dissemination materials should acknowledge the financial contribution of SNF/UEFISCDI through the following sentence: "*The research was supported by Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and Romanian Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI) through project geoIDEA.ro (award number IZERZO-142129)*".

6.1 Project website

The project website is a key element of the project's dissemination and communication strategy, since the web offers a powerful communication platform for internal and external purposes. The GEOIDEA.RO website (<http://geoidea.ro>) contains two major areas:

- The general promotion web pages. The content is available in three languages Romanian, English and French;
- The GEOIDEA.RO geoportal.

The first area contains information on the GEOIDEA.RO project in general and provides an overview on the activities carried out by the project consortium. The following sections correspond to the menu items of the web page:

- Home. This is the homepage of the GEOIDEA.RO website (see Figure 1). The page contains a short description of the GEOIDEA.RO project and its aims. In the "News" box, the latest news of the GEOIDEA.RO project are announced;
- About: More details about the project, partners description and funding authorities description;
- Objectives: Detailed project objectives list;

- Activities: Present the project activities.
- Results: Publication of deliverables, reports, articles and other results;
- Events: Announcement of upcoming events; information repository for past events.
- Geoportal: A collection of dedicated tools for interactive publishing and retrieval of geospatial data (Figure 2).
- Contact: This section provides contact details of the official focal points for both project partners.

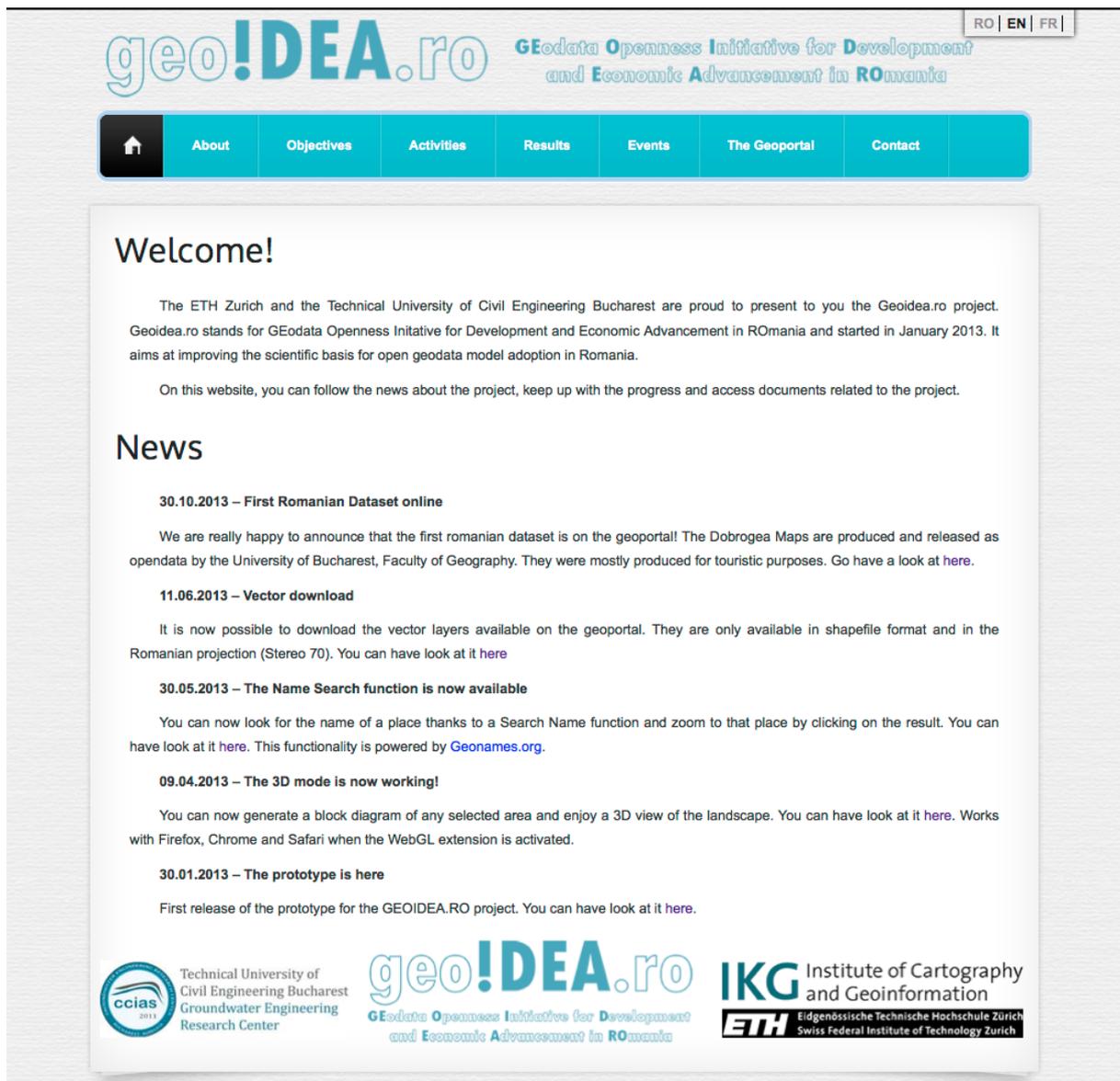


Figure 1: GEOIDEA.RO website (www.geoidea.ro)

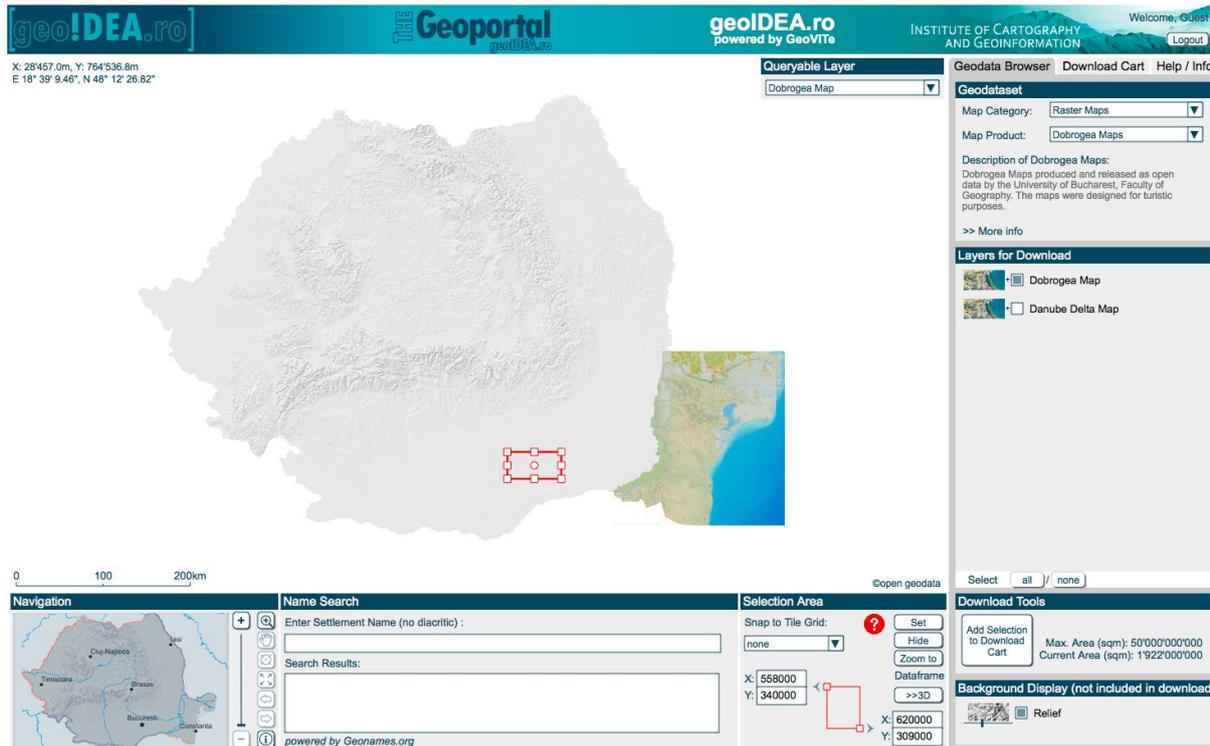


Figure 2: GEOIDEA.RO - The Geoportal (direct access <https://geodata.ethz.ch/geoidea.ro/>)

6.2 Workshops and expert meetings

A number of workshops and expert group meetings are planned during the duration of the project. The first one was held in February 2013 in Bucharest at the project's kick-off. The objective of the workshop was to present the project and to share and discuss experiences about how to improve the open geodata model adoption in Romania through effective tools and technologies, in accordance with user expectations, and appropriate policies. The workshop constituted as an important event where individuals and representatives from authorities in charge with geodata production, policy makers and open data promoters attended. A second event was organised by GEOIDEA.RO consortium in collaboration with the geo-spatial.org Association, the Soros Foundation Romania, and the Department for Online Services and Design - Chancellery of the Prime Minister and the British Embassy in Romania. It was a side-event meeting, within a larger conference called FOSS4G-CEE 2013 (Free and Open Source Software for Geospatial – Central and Eastern Europe; <http://2013.foss4g-cee.org>), held in Bucharest in June 2013. The event was focused on an open debate regarding:

- Clear and concise definitions of the related notions together with drawing up the Romanian, European and international legal context;
- Hard-line radiography of the Romanian open data situation in 2013;
- Implementing OGP views from officials and social society;

- Motivation behind open data;
- Implementing Open Data and Open Geodata in an institution - guidelines, best practices.

The meeting attracted participants both from the private and public sector, with special guests from the OGP (Paul Maassen - civil society coordinator for the OGP), the Open Knowledge Foundation (Marcus Dapp - strategy and business development coordinator) and the Romanian Government (Radu Puchiu - State Secretary and Prime Minister advisor). Full meeting agenda is available at <http://2013.foss4g-cee.org/program/opendata>.

One more workshop will be organised in the framework of subproject 3, *Create innovative technologies and tools for geodata publishing and retrieval*.

A final workshop is planned at the end of the project to present the project's conclusion. This will be organised in cooperation with the stakeholders and used to disseminate the results of the project to end-users.

6.3 Participation to national and international conferences and seminars

In order to stimulate knowledge sharing, the GEOIDEA.RO partners will engage in making oral and poster presentations at seminars and international conferences as well as submitting publications in scientific and technical journals. The already identified suitable event list include:

- FOSS4G-CEE 2013 International Conference, June 16-20 June 2013, Bucharest, Romania (already attended);
- Sharing Geospatial Data, October 29 – November 1 2013, Bern, Switzerland (already attended);
- FOSS4G-E 2014 International Conference, June 15-17 2014, Bremen, Germany;
- Environmental eInfrastructures 2014, June 29 - July 3 2014, Ascona, Switzerland
- 27th International Cartographic Conference, August 23-28 2015, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

6.4 Project brochure

The project brochure is a core element of the GEOIDEA.RO dissemination strategy. It aims at giving information, that are easy to understand, about the GEOIDEA.RO project, both for geodata producers, interested in understanding the open geodata concept and technical publication of their own data, and the geodata consumers. A first, a preliminary, brochure version was released in the second month of the project (Annex II - Romanian language) and disseminated during the kick-off workshop. A new version (bilingual version) is expected for the project mid-term. The final version will be disseminated before the project end.

6.5 Newsletters

Three newsletters (electronic format) will be issued during the project lifetime and delivered to the GEOIDEA.RO end users through contact lists. The newsletters will be sent to relevant recipients, from governmental bodies, industry, non-governmental organizations, media and the general public. The newsletter layout and content will reflect the core image of the project.

6.6 Development day event

A “development day” will be organized. This kind of competition has multiple advantages, for all parties involved. Its main purpose is to prove to governments and governmental institutions the social and economical advantages of opening their geodata, through exercising the imagination of application developers. It is far from being the only purpose, though. An event of such sort offers a great opportunity to bring together people from a wide range of domains, with a common denominator - geodata, no matter if it is from production, usage or implementation point of view. The outcome of the development day would concern a wide range of stakeholders, from developers and companies, to common users and governmental institutions. The benefits for the participants are also to take into consideration. The opening of data and the possibilities that these could trigger represent today a hot subject in Europe. Indeed, innovative applications for mobile, web and desktop devices would certainly attract the attention of companies, agencies and why not, venture capital.

6.7 Other activities

The GEOIDEA.RO consortium considers other dissemination activities. The list includes:

- Participation at relevant national exhibitions;
- Press releases and general articles. A partnership is foreseen with one of the most active IT&C media actor from the Romanian market, Agora Group;
- Clustering and liaison with other relevant projects. To achieve the aim of the project, the GEOIDEA.RO consortium, is aware of the need to establish links with different research and non-research projects that are focusing on open data. At Romanian level, the GEOIDEA.RO is already part of an coalition of institutions and projects with open data activities called “*Open Data Coalition*”.

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