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Core Spatial Data Theme Administrative Units Recommendation for Content

Working Group A - Deliverable of Task 1.b

Version 1.0 - 2018-02-01

Version History

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Content

1	Executive Summary	4
2	Foreword	5
2.1	Document purpose and structure	5
2.2	Core data context	6
2.3	Document objectives and principles	7
2.4	Abbreviations	8
2.5	Glossary	8
2.6	Reference documents	8
3	Overview	9
3.1	General scope	9
3.2	Use cases	9
4	Data content	11
4.1	Features types and attributes	11
4.2	Levels of detail	13
4.3	Geographical extent.....	14
4.4	Data capture	15
4.5	Quality	15
5	Other recommendations	17
5.1	Coordinate Reference System (CRS)	17
5.2	Metadata	18
5.3	Delivery	18
6	Considerations for future	18
6.1	Administrative data on administrative units.....	18
6.2	Geometric consistency	18
7	Annex A: Relationship with INSPIRE	20
7.1	Data model	20
7.2	Other Issues	25
8	Annex B: Methodology	26

1 Executive Summary

As the United Nations (U.N.) Millennium Development Goals (2000) era came to a conclusion with the end of the year, the U.N. announced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, an ambitious, integrated, indivisible and transformational global agenda with 17 Sustainable Development Goals, 169 associated targets and 230 indicators promising to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced way. Geospatial data supports measuring, achieving and monitoring several if not all goals and targets set by the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda mentions the need for new data acquisition and integration approaches to improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of data. Goal 17 explicitly emphasizes the need for developing capacities and partnerships. In this context the success of Agenda 2030 depends on senior administrators owning and leading the geospatial efforts in their respective countries.

Building on INSPIRE Directive and pertinent documentation and redirecting the focus on a cohesive Spatial Data Infrastructure without gaps in content and discrepancies in quality, stakeholders in Europe are working on geospatial standardization and increasing richness of data through Core Data Recommendation for Content that corresponds to the first phase of the WG A work program. Core Data is primarily meant for fulfilling the common user requirements related to SDGs in Member States and European Institutions.

The theme Administrative Units is widely required by most if not all the SDGs, as it defines the areas of responsibility of governments, at different levels, from national to local. In addition, administrative units are also necessary for many other applications, such as mapping or use as statistical units.

This theme is composed of two sub-themes Land Administrative Units and Maritime Units.

The land administrative units are generally organised in a hierarchical way; they should be provided with key attributes, such as geometry, identifier, name, national code, national order, residence of authority. In addition, it is strongly recommended to manage their temporal attributes. The data should be provided at different levels of detail: large scale, medium scale or small scale.

There are five types of maritime units (internal waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf). These maritime units should be provided with at least a geometry, an identifier and their type.

In both cases, it is advised to get a unique and agreed representation of these administrative or maritime units, in order to ensure correct topology. However, the edge-matching of international boundaries is recognised as being still a challenge, especially for large scale data.

In longer term, the geographic data on Administrative Units might generate more benefits if linked with an information system managing the responsibilities and the responsible parties of each administrative level.

2 Foreword

2.1 Document purpose and structure

2.1.1 Purpose

This document provides the main characteristics of core data for theme Administrative Units with focus on the recommendation for content. This document aims to help decision makers (from governments, data producers, national coordination bodies, etc.) to define their policy regarding the improvement of existing data and production of new geospatial data. It addresses digital data.

This document has annexes containing more detailed explanations targeting the technical people who will be in charge of implementing or adapting core data recommendations (e.g. for production purpose, as source of other standards, etc.).

2.1.2 Structure

The executive summary synthesizes the main conclusions of the Working Group A (WG A) process and results to develop the recommendation for content. It is meant mainly for high level decision makers.

The foreword reminds the general context of core data, the first step achieved by WG A (i.e. selecting core data themes), and it explains the general principles set by WG A to develop the recommendations for content of core data specifications for all selected themes.

The ‘recommendation for content’ document itself includes four chapters:

- Overview: it provides the general scope of the theme and describes the main use cases addressed;
- Data content: it provides the main characteristics of the recommended content, such as the list of core features and attributes (for vector data), as well as data capture and quality rules;
- Other recommendations: e.g. Coordinate Reference System, Metadata, Delivery;
- Considerations for future: this chapter addresses some key trends or significant user requirements that cannot be considered as core today but that might be considered in future.

The ‘recommendation for content’ document is meant for medium level decision makers. It is written in natural and not too technical language.

The technical explanations included in annexes describe the relationship between the recommendation for content and the corresponding INSPIRE specification, and contain any other appropriate information useful for this theme.

2.2 Core data context

2.2.1 Rationale for core data

The following background of harmonised pan-European data was identified.¹

Authoritative geospatial data are used to support both the implementation of public policies and the development of downstream services. Moreover, geospatial data are required to be homogenous to enable the implementation of public policies in a coherent and coordinated way among countries and at regional or global level. Likewise, significant opportunities exist if services developed by industry can be exploited without requiring country specific adaptation.

The INSPIRE Directive has set up the legal and technical framework for harmonisation of the existing data related to the themes in annexes I, II and III. INSPIRE specifications provide common data models that ensure a first step towards interoperability, however ensuring homogeneous content is outside their scope, as they contain no indication about levels of detail, very few recommendations about quality, and as most features and attributes are “voidable”, i.e. to be supplied if available or derivable at reasonable cost.

This background led the UN-GGIM: Europe Regional Committee to setup in 2014 the Working Group A on Core Data to deal with core data content and quality, production issues, funding and data availability.

Recommendations for content of core data will complement INSPIRE data specifications by defining the priorities on the core content that is encouraged to be made available in Europe in order to fulfil the main user requirements that are common to many countries, with focus on the SDG related ones.

Core data availability may be ensured either through upgrading of existing data when feasible or through production of new data when necessary.

2.2.2 Core data scope

In its first phase, WG A selected core data themes according to the following criteria: core data is the geospatial data that is the most useful, either directly or indirectly, to analyse, to achieve and to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals.

Among the 34 INSPIRE data themes, 14 have been considered as core including theme Administrative Units.

More information about the selection process and results may be found in document [‘Core Data Scope - Working Group A - First Deliverable of Task 1.a - Version 1.2’](http://un-ggim-europe.org/content/wg-a-core-data) on <http://un-ggim-europe.org/content/wg-a-core-data>

¹ Extract from the Report by the Preparatory Committee on the establishment of the UN-GGIM: Europe Regional Committee, European Commission Ref. Ares(2014)1491140 - 09/05/2014.

2.3 Document objectives and principles

2.3.1 Encouraging content availability

This deliverable provides recommendations for national governments and data producers, aiming to help them to define their priorities for enriching existing data or producing new data. This deliverable is meant mainly for data producers; however it defines the recommended result and target but not the production process.

2.3.2 Complementing INSPIRE

Core data specifications are built upon INSPIRE data specifications. On one hand, they often simplify INSPIRE by selecting core feature types and attributes and by restricting or clarifying the scope; On the other hand, they enrich INSPIRE by recommending specific levels of detail, quality rules and sometimes data model extensions. Besides, the INSPIRE common terminology is thoroughly used for naming core features and attributes.

Regarding the levels of detail, the ELF (European Location Framework) project terminology has been used. The ELF levels of detail are the following: Global, Regional, Master level 2, Master level 1, Master level 0. These terms are defined in the glossary.

Regarding delivery, core data may be supplied according to several ways. It is expected that, very often, the core data recommendations will be used to enrich and upgrade existing products. In this case, core data will be available through these improved products. Core data may also be delivered through INSPIRE conditions (specifications and services).

2.3.3 Status of core data recommendations

This document contains recommendations that are not legally binding. However, some recommendations are more important than others. This order is indicated as follow:

Core Recommendation X

It is first priority recommendation, considered as both necessary and achievable in principle. Ideally, it should encourage involved stakeholders to launch short-term actions (typically within a couple of years).

Core recommendations are usually addressing only technical aspects and are meant for the organisations in charge of producing this theme. The set of core recommendations defines the basic expectations on core data.

Good Practice X

It is second priority recommendation; if adopted, it will provide significant added value to core data; it indicates a relevant trend to be adopted as much as possible. It encourages involved stakeholders to take these recommendations into account in long term, if not possible in short term.

NOTE: some of these good practices may be quite easy to achieve and are already effective in some countries whereas some others may be more difficult to achieve. This is typically the case when these good practice recommendations involve other stakeholders in addition to the organisations in charge of producing this theme, and when they address not only technical aspects but also legal or organisational ones.

A “core data set” should contain the minimum data defined by the core recommendations (and ideally also by the good practices) of this deliverable but may of course contain more and/or better information.

2.4 Abbreviations

AD	Addresses
AU	Administrative Units
CP	Cadastral Parcels
CRS	Coordinate Reference System
EBM	EuroBoundaryMap
ELF	European Location Framework
IHO	International Hydrographic Organisation
LAU	Local Administrative Units
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SU	Statistical Units
UN-GGIM	United Nations initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management
WG A	(UN-GGIM: Europe) Working Group on Core data

2.5 Glossary

Global	Level of detail defined by ELF: data to be used generally at scales between 1: 500 000 and 1: 1 000 000, i.e. mainly at international level
Master level 0	Level of detail defined by ELF: data to be used generally at scales larger than 1: 5 000; typically, data at cadastral map level, for local level actions.
Master level 1	Level of detail defined by ELF: data to be used generally at scales between 1: 5 000 and 1: 25 000; data for local level actions.
Master level 2	Level of detail defined by ELF: data to be used generally at scales between 1: 25 000 and 1: 100 000; data for regional (sub-national) actions.
Regional	Level of detail defined by ELF: data to be used generally at scales between 1: 100 000 and 1: 500 000; data for national or regional (European or cross-border) actions.

2.6 Reference documents

INSPIRE Data Specification on Administrative Units– Technical Guidelines 3.1:

<http://inspire.ec.europa.eu/id/document/tg/AU>

ELF Data Specification (chapter 5.3.4):

http://elfproject.eu/sites/default/files/ELF_DataSpecification_v0.12_20160328.pdf

3 Overview

3.1 General scope

Definition: Units of administration, dividing areas where Member States have and/or exercise jurisdictional rights, for local, regional and national governance, separated by administrative boundaries [INSPIRE Directive – 2007].

The scope is the same as the one of the INSPIRE theme Administrative Units. It includes both the sub-themes Administrative Units and Maritime Units.

To avoid confusion between the theme “Administrative Units” and the sub-theme “Administrative Units”, in the following parts of this document, the sub-theme will be renamed “Land Administrative Units”.

More detailed comparison with INSPIRE is available in the annex A.

3.2 Use cases

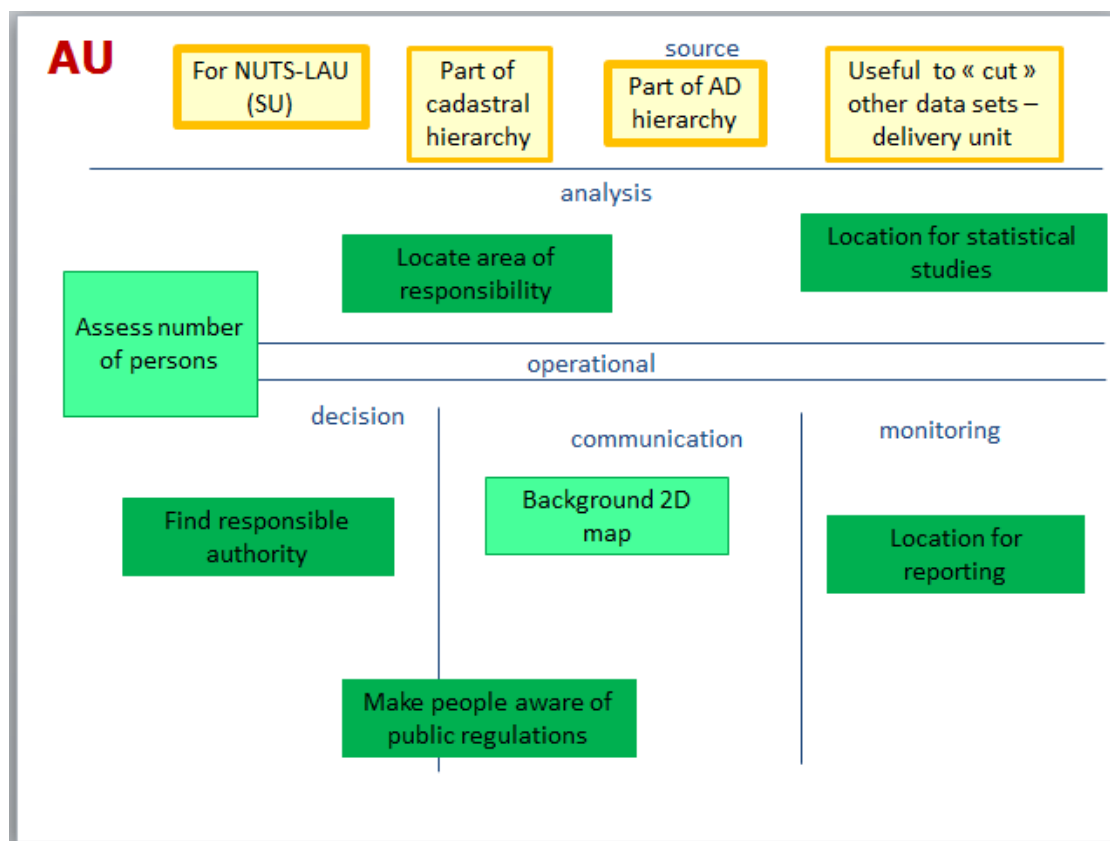


Figure 1: map of use cases for sub-theme (land) Administrative Units

Sub-theme ‘Land Administrative Units’ has three main roles:

It represents the territory of responsibility of a competent authority. Administrative units determine unambiguously the responsibilities and competences of the various authoritative entities in relation to any area of a Member State. In the analysis phase, any government has to know the geographic

extend for its expected actions. In the operational phase, it may be necessary to find the responsible authority to manage a located event. For instance, in case of disasters administrative units help to identify the affected areas and thereby to trigger rescue and support measures by the responsible / competent authorities and services. Furthermore they enable selective warnings and information of the affected residents. The key tools of local governments to mitigate risks, to address pollution issues, to ensure energy or water supply and to provide efficient waste management, include land use planning and other regulations (e.g. restrictions of private car traffic and/or industrial emissions): in both cases, it is necessary to know the territory where these regulations have to be designed and where they have to be applied.

It is part of the basic geographic equipment of a country. Administrative units are widely used in the management of geographic information, for instance to “cut” other data sets as delivery units are often based on the country administrative division or as search criteria in gazetteer services, GeoPortals, GeoCatalogues etc. At national level, municipalities are generally used to build the cadastral system and administrative unit names are also basis for the address system. In addition, administrative units are widely used as background data, either in classical topographic maps or to display regulated areas. Typically, administrative units are needed for the area based documentation and visualisation of many different issues and circumstances in order to support political decision-making, like for instance welfare and education, land use, housing, traffic, public money allocation and subsidiaries.

Administrative units are often used as statistical units and therefore enable the combination of geographic information with all kinds of statistical data (population distribution, socio-economic data, health statistics ...). Consequently, administrative units are widely used in the analysis and in the reporting phases: in combination with statistical data they strongly support the monitoring and reporting of the SDG’s indicators. They are of course widely used to display these various indicators and may even be necessary in their computation (e.g. Number and size of Administrative Units with established sanitation and water management - SDG indicator 6.b.1).

The sub theme ‘Maritime Units’ defines the various areas of a Member State sea territory with their associated set of rights (navigation, fishing, exploitation of resources, security ...). The rules of delimitation and the associated rights to each kind of maritime areas are defined in the UNCLOS international law [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea].

Maritime Units are key data to ensure well-established and peaceful relations between countries. Careful delimitation of maritime units is also necessary step for establishment of a marine cadastre that might boost the blue economy and contribute to sustainable development of sea.

4 Data content

It is reminded that theme Administrative Units is divided into two sub-themes:

- Land Administrative Units
- Maritime Units.

4.1 Features types and attributes

4.1.1 Land Administrative Units

Core Recommendation 1

Core data should include feature type AdministrativeUnit with following attributes:

- **geometry (as surface or multi-surface)**
- **unique and persistent identifier**
- **national code**
- **national level and national level name**
- **geographical name(s) with the name itself, i.e. its spelling and with information on its language, status and (if relevant) source.**
- **residence of authority**
- **temporal attributes (in the data set)**

NOTE 1: all these attributes are defined in the INSPIRE data specifications on themes Administrative Units and GeographicalNames. For more details, see annex A.

NOTE 2: administrative units are generally organised according to a hierarchical order, generally from country to municipality. This hierarchical order is documented by the attributes 'national level' and 'national level name'.

NOTE 3: the attributes describing the name (language, status, source) should help users to decide on which name(s) are the most relevant to be displayed on a map. The information about "source" is relevant if some sources are considered as more reliable than others.

NOTE 4: the mechanisms provided by the INSPIRE data specifications, namely versioning and temporal life-cycle attributes, enable the management of evolutions in the database and the delivery of change-only updates or of data at a given date in the past.

4.1.2 Maritime Units

Core Recommendation 2

Core data should include feature types **MaritimeUnit** with the following attributes:

- geometry (as surface or multi-surface)
- unique and persistent identifier
- type
- name (if any)

In addition, it should include the **Baseline** defined by an identifier and by the list of its **Base Map Segments** with their geometry and type.

NOTE 1: For **MaritimeUnit**, the 'type' includes the following values: internal waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf. For the **Base Map Segments**, the type includes the following values: normal, straight, archipelagic. Definitions are provided in the INSPIRE data specifications on Administrative Units.

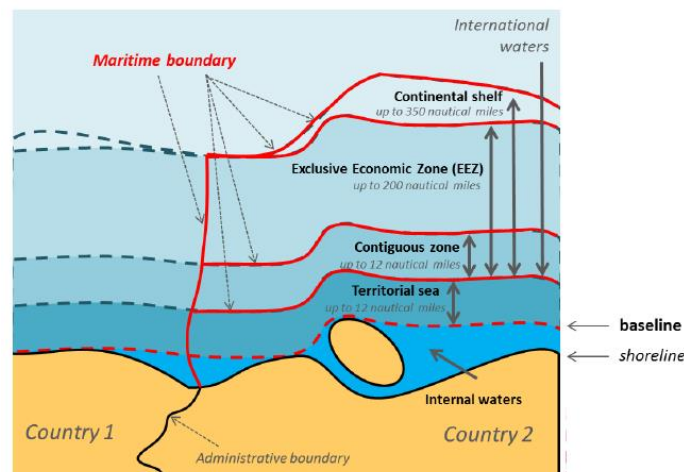


Figure 2: the different types of Maritime Units

4.1.3 Boundaries status

In most cases, in theory, the land administrative units of same national level should form a partition of land territory. This is also the case of maritime units for the sea part of the territory.

This means that ideally, there should be neither gaps nor overlaps between the land administrative units of same national level or between maritime units. In INSPIRE terminology, the respective boundaries should be “**technically agreed**”, i.e. for a given level of detail, there should be a common, single **representation** in GIS of the administrative boundaries provided by data producer(s) – the boundaries of neighbouring countries have the same set of coordinates.

In addition, still ideally, the administrative or maritime boundaries should also have legal value. In INSPIRE terminology, the respective boundaries should be “**legally agreed**”, i.e. for a given level of detail, there should be a common **definition** of the administrative boundaries by the neighbour competent authorities, e.g. neighbour Member States – the edge-matched boundary has been agreed between neighbouring administrative units and is stable now.

This deliverable recommends in a following paragraph to have both technically and legally agreed boundaries. However, it should be recognised that in practice, the current situation is heterogeneous according to Member States and to levels of detail. Typically, it may take a long time to get legally agreed international boundaries, in whole Europe.

Good Practice 1

It is recommended to provide additional feature types Administrative Boundary and Maritime Boundary in order to document the technical and the legal status of the boundary.

NOTE 1: the relevant attributes of Administrative Boundary are described more in details in annex A.

NOTE 2: this good practice (documenting status at feature level) is especially relevant in case of heterogeneous data. If the boundaries are of same status on whole territory, the information may be provided at dataset level, in metadata.

4.1.4 Maritime Units and Standard S121

The IHO (International Hydrographic Organisation) is preparing a new standard S121 about Maritime Units. This new standard includes a more detailed description of the sub-theme Maritime Units. For instance, it includes the points used to define the boundary and it makes distinction between boundary (line between neighbour countries) and limit (line between different types of Maritime Units).

Good Practice 2

Once standard S121 adopted, it is recommended to provide the additional geographic feature types and attributes listed in this standard.

4.2 Levels of detail

4.2.1 Land Administrative Units

Land Administrative Units should be provided at various scales, in order to enable an easy use by all levels of governments, from local to global.

Core Recommendation 3

Core data should on land administrative units should be captured at large scale (master level 1). Other levels of detail (at least Regional and Global) should be derived from the large scale core data.

NOTE 1: The derivation process consists mainly in the generalisation of the geometry. The generalisation process should respect the topological and hierarchical relations between administrative units and ideally with other themes.

NOTE 2: in addition to the generalisation process, it is advised to agree on a common representation of international boundaries at medium and small scales (see core recommendation 7). It is recognised that getting technically agreed international boundaries is more easily achievable at Regional and global levels than at large scale levels.

4.2.2 Maritime Units

Common practice is to deliver only one set of Maritime Units data that may be used for various levels of detail. In practice, the units and boundaries close to the coastline are captured and may be used as large scale data (Master level 1) whereas the other boundaries require less accuracy and are relevant for use at Regional or Global levels.

4.3 Geographical extent

The general rule is that sub-theme Land Administrative Units covers the land part of a country (including inland waters) and that the sub-theme Maritime Units covers the sea part of a country.

In most countries, the land administrative units stop at the coastline. However, in other countries, these land administrative units may include coastal areas. As the main use case of administrative units data is to display the territory of a competent authority, the geometry of the administrative units should be provided according to its definition in the national regulation (e.g. with coastal areas in some countries).

Core Recommendation 4

Regarding Administrative Units overlapping or not with sea, administrative unit data should reflect the national administrative reality.



Figure 3: land administrative units stopping or not at coastline, according to countries

NOTE 1: It should be recognised that the expression “Land Administrative Units” is used in this deliverable though some sea part might be included in the land units. This choice has been done to keep a simple terminology, providing the general case but not taking into account a few exceptions.

However, for the other use cases of administrative units, such as mapping or use as statistical units, users generally prefer to display only the land part of administrative units. This may be done by subdividing the administrative units into administrative unit areas, respectively for their sea and land parts, as done by the EBM product or in the ELF application schema for theme Administrative units.

Good Practice 3

For countries where (land) administrative units include some coastal areas, it is recommended to provide additional feature type administrative unit area, in order to make distinction between land and sea.

NOTE: for more details, see Annex A (figure 8).

4.4 Data capture

4.4.1 Land Administrative Units

Good Practice 4

Great care has to be taken to ensure that geographic data reflects the relative position of Cadastral Parcels and Administrative Units in the real world.

NOTE 1: All relevant administrative and data capture processes must ensure that there is unambiguity between Cadastral Parcels and Administrative Units. Typically, in most (if not all) countries, a Cadastral Parcel should not overlap with two or more Administrative Units of same national level.

Good Practice 5

Great care has to be taken to ensure that geographic data reflects the relative position of topographic data (such as roads, rivers, buildings) and Administrative Units in the real world.

4.4.2 Maritime Units

Good Practice 6

Great care has to be taken to determine the Baseline and its geographic representation.

NOTE 1: more detailed guidelines may be provided by the future S121 standard. It is advised to follow them, once the standard has been adopted.

4.5 Quality

4.5.1 Completeness

Core Recommendation 5

100 % completeness should be ensured both for land administrative units and for maritime units.

Core Recommendation 6

All official names of land administrative units should be captured and provided.

4.5.2 Topologic consistency

Core Recommendation 7

For Regional and Global data, there should a seamless European data set of land administrative units, with technically agreed administrative boundaries (except on areas under political dispute).

NOTE 1: This core recommendation has already been (more or less achieved) through the pan-European products of EuroGeographics, mainly EBM. The efforts to maintain such products should be continued in future.

NOTE 2: This core recommendation encourages the availability of a pan-European data set, without gaps and overlaps; this data quality is necessary for mapping or statistical applications.

Core Recommendation 8

For large scale data (Master level1), there should be, in each Member State, a national data set of land administrative units, with technically agreed internal administrative boundaries.

NOTE 1: The case of international boundaries is not included in this core recommendation because it is recognised that it may take time to be achieved in whole Europe.

Significant progress to get technically and legally agreed international boundaries international boundaries at large scale has been accomplished due to the efforts of the SBE (State Boundaries of Europe) project and then of the SBE KEN (Knowledge Exchange Network); however, there are still international boundaries not yet legally agreed.

In addition, the large scale geographic representation of the international boundary is often considered as the boundary definition and so Member States prefer to get first legal agreement before publishing a common GIS representation, i.e. before publishing technically agreed boundaries. And in practice, the legal agreements require lots of negotiations and so lots of time!

Good Practice 7

There should be cooperation between neighbour countries in order to legally agree on common international boundaries, both for maritime boundaries and administrative boundaries.

NOTE 1: legally agreed boundaries are necessary to avoid uncertainties about the link between territories (administrative units) and responsible authorities.

4.5.3 Geometric accuracy

Administrative boundaries are artificial lines, generally defined in legal texts. The geometry of administrative units should be conformant with these legal texts. What matters more than geometric accuracy is the fact to have, for a given level of detail, a single data set, agreed by all and used as reference data.

Good Practice 8

It is recommended to have reference data on maritime and land administrative units, agreed and used by all stakeholders.

The accuracy should be adapted to the level of detail. For land administrative boundaries, the accuracy should be around a few meters for Master level 1, around 50 m for Regional level and around 250 m for Global level. These figures are just indicative and may be adapted to the type of landscape.

Good Practice 9

Data on land administrative units should be consistent with data on cadastral parcels and with data on topographic features (e.g. roads, rivers).

NOTE: In other words, the data should respect the relative positions of administrative units and of cadastral parcels or topographic features in real world. For instance, administrative boundaries are generally not supposed to cross parcels. There should also be geometry sharing of the centreline of a road link and of an administrative boundary, if in real world, the administrative boundary is defined by reference to the road.

4.5.4 Temporal consistency

Core Recommendation 9

There should be temporal consistency between the administrative or maritime unit in the spatial data set and the administrative or maritime unit in the national or international regulations.

NOTE 1: this recommendation aims to encourage continuous update of the geographic administrative data. For land administrative units, this recommendation applies only for data at Master level 1. A delay of a few days may be acceptable.

NOTE 2: however, some users, mainly for statistic applications, would prefer to get land administrative data, with a reference date (e.g. each first January of each year) in order to ensure reliable link with statistic data.

Good Practice 10

Data providers should provide both large scale land administrative data at regular reference dates (considered as convenient by the statistical community) and in its most updated version.

NOTE 2: Regarding Regional and Global levels, a yearly derivation from Master level 1 land administrative data is considered as reasonable.

5 Other recommendations

5.1 Coordinate Reference System (CRS)

5.1.1 Case of 2D data

Good Practice 11

Core data should be stored and managed in a CRS based on datum ETRS89 in areas within its geographical scope, either using geographic or projected coordinates.

NOTE 1: geographical scope of ETRS-89 excludes over-sea territories, such as Canary Islands or French Guyana or Madeira Islands and Azores Islands. In these cases, it is recommended to use a CRS based on ITRS (International Terrestrial Reference System).

NOTE 2: storing and managing data in CRS based on international datum facilitates the import of measures from modern sensors, ensures that data is managed in a well-maintained geodetic framework and of course, facilitates the export of data into international CRS (e.g. those mandated by INSPIRE).

NOTE 3: if core data at regional and global levels has to be provided as a single data set on an area including over-sea territories, it is recommended to use as CRS geographic coordinates with any realisation of the International Terrestrial Reference System (ITRS), known as International Terrestrial Reference Frame (ITRF). At small or medium scales, all ITRS realisations can be considered as equivalent, as deviations between them are negligible compared to data accuracy.

5.1.2 Case of 2.5D or 3D data

Administrative data is not expected to be supplied as 2.5D data.

5.2 Metadata

Good Practice 12

Core data should be documented by metadata for discovery and evaluation, as stated in the INSPIRE Technical Guidelines for metadata and for interoperability.

NOTE 1: this is a legal obligation for the Member states belonging to the European Union. For the other countries, this is a way to make their data easily manageable by transnational users.

NOTE2: if the legal and/or technical status of administrative boundaries is homogeneous in whole country, it may be documented at data set level, in metadata (e.g. in the abstract or by a link to the national specifications).

5.3 Delivery

It is expected that core data will be made available through improved existing products (or new products) or as INSPIRE data, and perhaps as specific core products (delivery issues still have to be investigated by the working group).

Good Practice 13

Core data should be made available according to the INSPIRE Technical Guidelines for interoperability, for metadata and for services.

NOTE: this is a legal obligation for the Member states belonging to the European Union. For the other countries, this is a way to make their data easily manageable by transnational users.

6 Considerations for future

6.1 Administrative data on administrative units

This deliverable deals only with the geographic part of information on administrative units. However, other information may be of interest for citizens and for e-government applications: knowing who is the competent authority acting on the administrative unit and how to contact it, knowing what are the responsibilities of this authority (for instance, which governmental services it manages), finding easily the regulation text establishing the administrative unit, etc. Setting up such an information system and ensuring its link with the geographic representation of administrative units might also be an objective of Geographic Information Management in future. The ISO 19152 standard “Land Administration Domain Model” may provide the concepts to design this potential future information system. It is already envisaged to use it for the future standard S121 about maritime units to model the set of rights applying to each kind of maritime units.

6.2 Geometric consistency

This deliverable recommends land administrative data to be consistent with regulation texts, with cadastral and topographic data and to be legally agreed on international boundaries. However, it should be recognised that these recommendations (even as good practice) are very ambitious and may create conflicts, at least when envisaging short term solutions.

The most efficient way to ensure geometric consistency of administrative data depends of course of the initial situation of each country, for instance if there is one or several data providers or what is the most accurate and reliable data. Research or knowledge exchange activities should be promoted to clarify the possible methodologies and their cost-benefit assessment.

Coordination between data producers of various themes (cadastral, topographic) is also required to ensure cross-theme consistency.

6.2.1 Data from the past

Land administrative units are often used as statistical units. One of the purposes of statistics is to show the trends on a given topic through time. To understand and describe these trends, statisticians use “long rows”, i.e. statistic data related to many years. Of course, this is possible only if the geographic data related to these statistical units are available for the past years.

This may be achieved according two ways. In most favourable case, the data provider has already managed for years the temporal life-cycle attributes in the database and may provide administrative data at a given date of the past. Else, it may require specific efforts to retrieve the administrative data from the past.

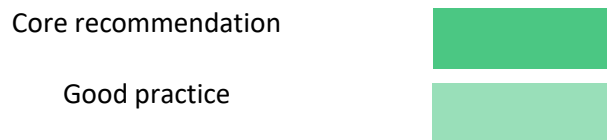
The geographic and the statistic community should cooperate to assess the real requirements of the statistical community (e.g. how far to go in the past?) and to find the most cost-benefit efficient ways to fulfil these requirements.

7 Annex A: Relationship with INSPIRE

7.1 Data model

The UML models provided in this annex are only graphical illustrations of the core recommendations and of the good practices present in this document.

The recommendations for content are represented by highlighted the selected attributes in the following way:



7.1.1 Comparison between Core Data and INSPIRE content

7.1.1.1 Core Recommendation 1

Core Recommendation 1

Core data should include feature type AdministrativeUnit with following attributes:

- **geometry**
- **unique and persistent identifier**
- **national code**
- **national level and national level name**
- **geographical name(s) with the name itself, i.e. its spelling and with information on its language, status and (if relevant) source.**
- **residence of authority**
- **temporal attributes (in the data set)**

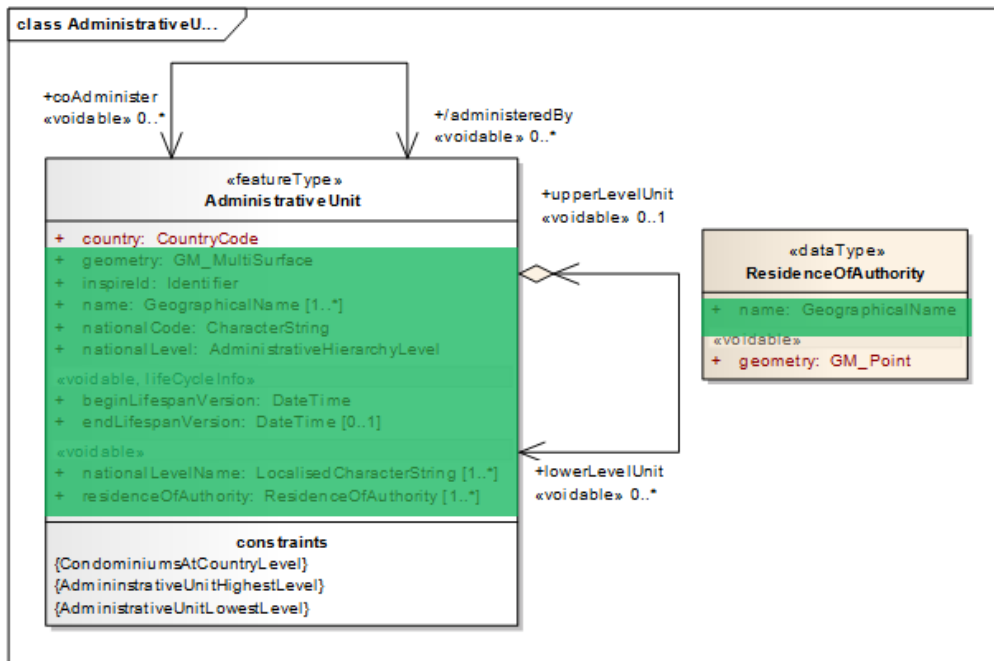


Figure 4: core content from INSPIRE for AdministrativeUnit

The attribute inspire identifier (inspireId) is implementing the unique and persistent identifier of core recommendation 1. It is the identifier of the feature in the database. It has to be different for Master level 1, for Regional level and for Global level.

The 'countryCode' that is a mandatory attribute of INSPIRE doesn't need to be managed and stored at feature level and may be provided for INSPIRE in the transformation phase.

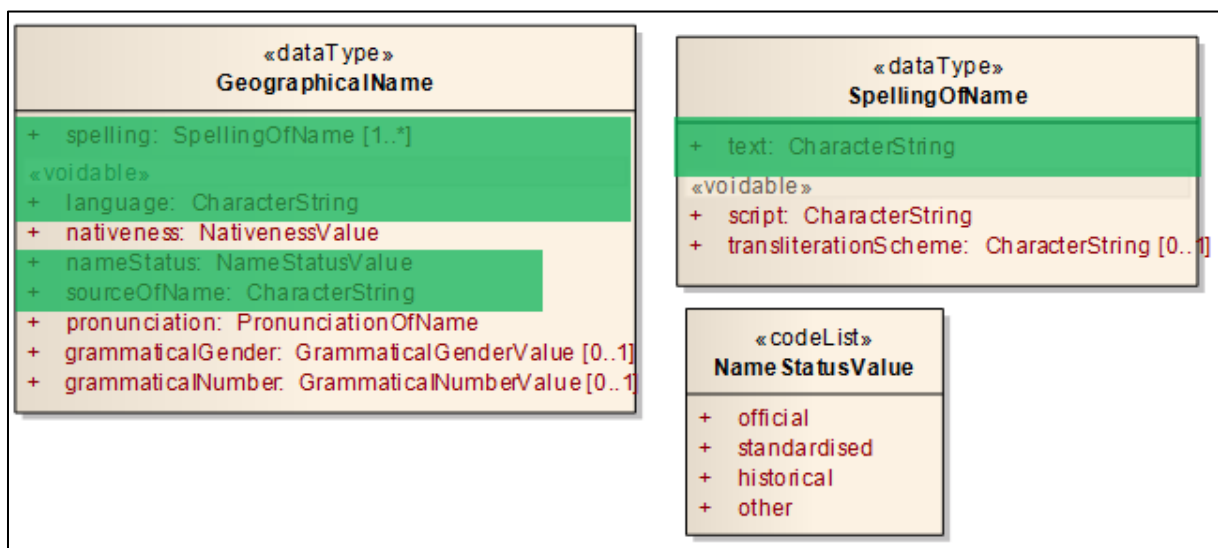


Figure 5: core content from INSPIRE for names of AdministrativeUnit and ResidenceOfAuthority

7.1.1.2 Core Recommendation 2

Core recommendation 2

Core data should include feature types MaritimeUnit with the following attributes:

- geometry
- unique and persistent identifier
- type
- name (if any)

In addition, it should include the Baseline defined by an identifier and by the list of its Base Map Segments with their geometry and type.

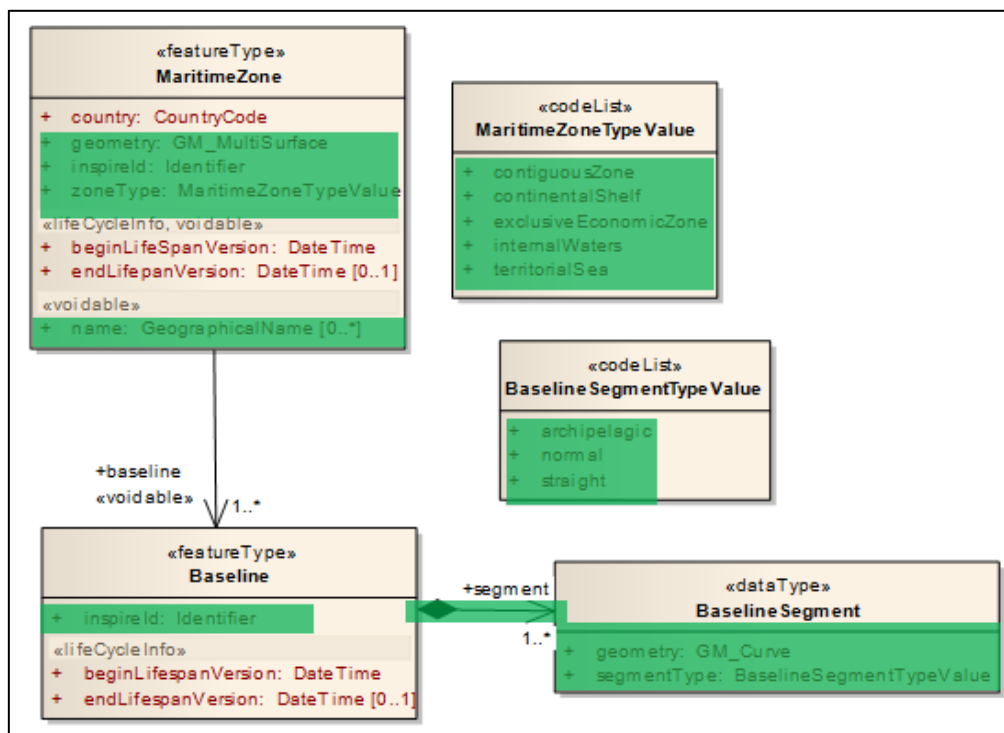


Figure 6: core content for MaritimeUnit

7.1.1.3 Good Practice 1

Good Practice 1

It is recommended to provide additional feature types Administrative Boundary and Maritime Boundary in order to document the technical and the legal status of the boundary.

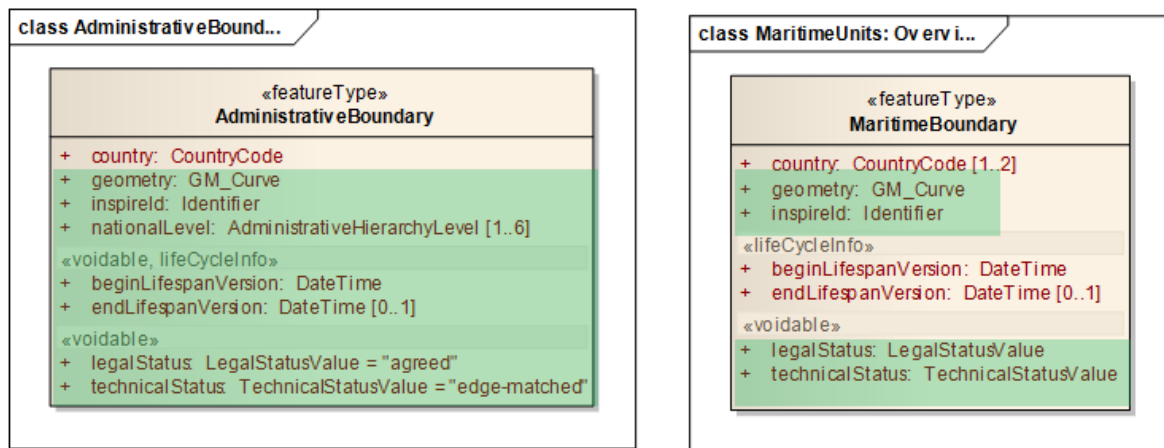


Figure 7: best practice for AdministrativeBoundary and MaritimeBoundary

These administrative boundaries are provided in order to document their technical and (above all) legal status; however, they should be provided with some other basic attributes, such as geometry and identifier.

7.1.1.4 Good Practice 3

Good Practice 3

For countries where (land) administrative units include some coastal areas, it is recommended to provide additional feature type administrative unit area, in order to make distinction between land and sea.

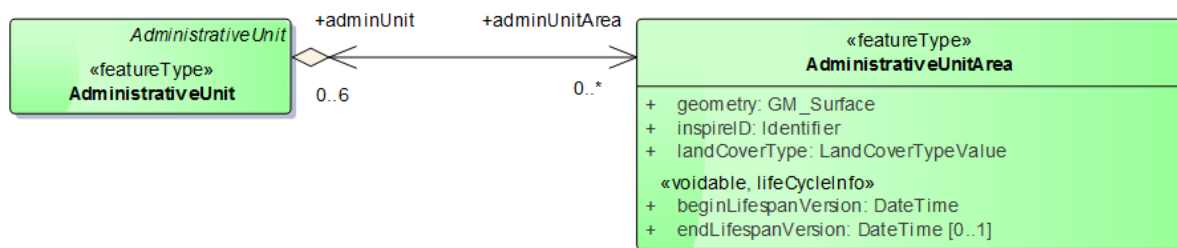


Figure 8: Best practice on administrative unit area.

The feature type AdministrativeUnitArea is in an extension of the INSPIRE application schema AdministrativeUnits. It comes from the ELF project.

In practice, the ELF code list LandCoverTypeValue includes the values 'coastal waters' (for the sea part of administrative areas), 'land area' and 'inland waters'.

7.1.2 Alternative implementation data model

7.1.2.1 Compact model or not?

The INSPIRE data model has been designed for purpose of data interoperability in Europe; it is a compact model with a single feature type for all land administrative units. However, for large scale data (Master level 1), an alternative data model with a feature type for each national level of

administrative units may be considered as more convenient both by data producers and by national data users.

Find below an illustration of a potential alternative model for the (theoretical) example of a country having 4 levels of administrative units: country, province, district and municipality.

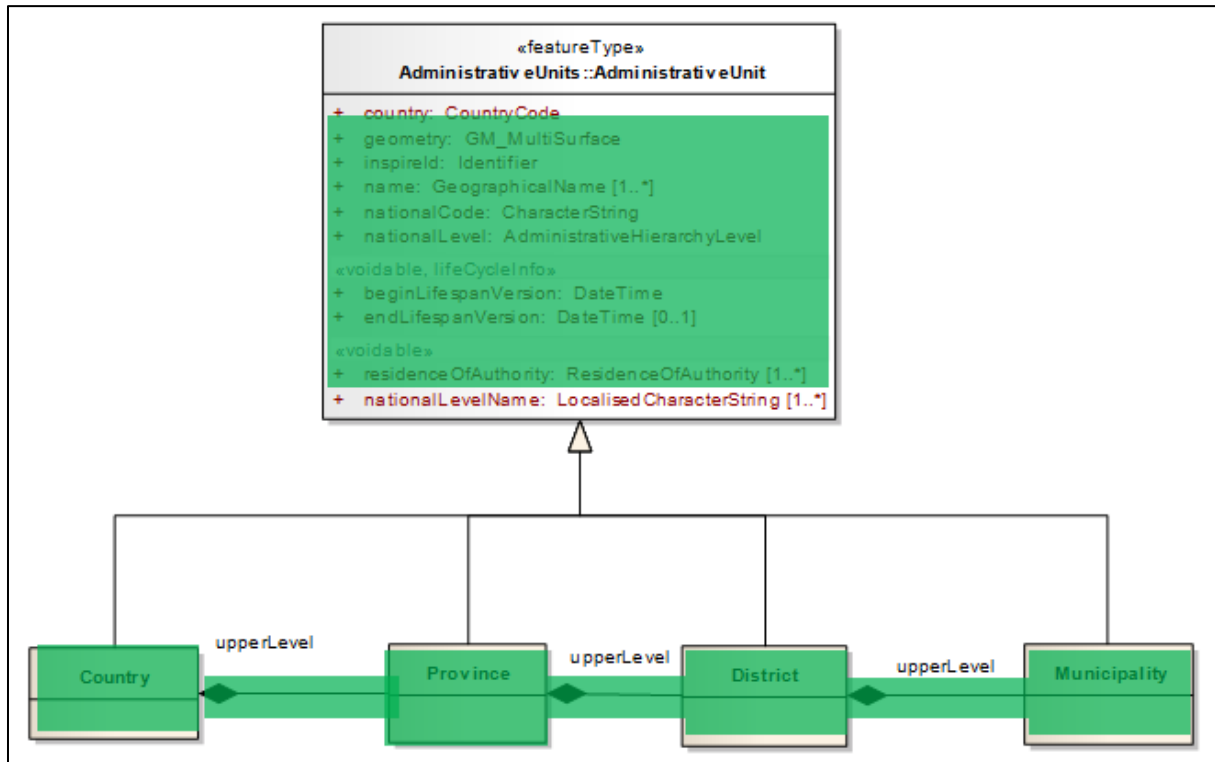


Figure 9: example of alternative model with a feature type for each level of administrative unit

In this alternative model, the nationalLevelName is documented by the name of the child feature types (Country, Province, District, Municipality). This model may also be more explicit about the implementation of the hierarchical relations between administrative units, if the semantic relations are considered as useful.

In a similar way, it is possible to extend the INSPIRE model for feature type AdministrativeBoundary (e.g. by adding children feature types for Country Boundary, for Province Boundary, for District Boundary and Municipality Boundary).

It is also possible to use similar concepts for the Maritime Units and Maritime Boundaries. This is the approach chosen by the future standard S121.

7.1.2.2 Residence of Authority

In the INSPIRE data model, the Residence of Authority is considered as an attribute of AdministrativeUnit. This attribute is defined as a data type, including a voidable geometry. In practice, the Residence of Authority of an Administrative Unit is generally a named place, typically a populated place for Regional and Global levels and a building for Master 1 level.

In order to avoid duplication of data, it may be possible to implement the ResidenceOfAuthority as an association to feature type NamedPlace (in theme GeographicalNames) rather than as a complex attribute (data type).

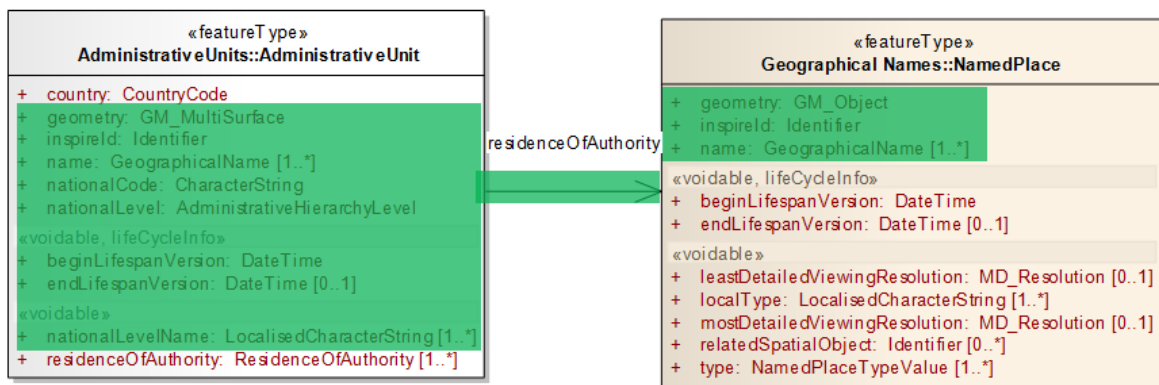


Figure 10: alternative model for ResidenceOfAuthority

7.2 Other Topics

7.2.1 Levels of detail

INSPIRE data specifications are generally not specifying the expected level(s) of detail. However, in case of land administrative units, there is a quality recommendation about positional accuracy being better than 50 m, i.e. INSPIRE is targeting medium scale data (Regional level or Master level 2).

This deliverable is more ambitious by recommending the provision of land administrative units according to 3 levels of detail: Master level 1, Regional and Global.

7.2.2 Quality criteria

Both INSPIRE data specification and this deliverable are recommending topological consistency between administrative units. By the way, the INSPIRE recommendation n° 2 supplies a list of rules to test topologic consistency; these rules might be used also for core data.

This deliverable is more ambitious by recommending other quality criteria, such as completeness or continuous update.

8 Annex B: Methodology

Core data specifications have been elaborated based on one hand on user requirements (with focus on the ones related to SDG) and on the other hand on INSPIRE data specifications.

The work has been based mainly on a deep review of the INSPIRE data specifications aiming to raise the open issues to be investigated, such as levels of detail, quality criteria, relation between land and sea.

In addition to the animated discussions conducted within WG A, this deliverable has benefited from the contribution of two other main experiences: the EuroGeographics activities on pan-European products (mainly EBM) and on the ELF project (on theme Administrative Units) and the IHO project of new standard on Maritime Units.