

To: Open ELS project partners

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Completion of the Open ELS project on 30 April 2019 and next steps

Dear colleagues,

European Commission funding for the Open ELS project concluded on 30 April 2019 after a 2 years duration. The entire project team is currently working on the finalisation and documentation of the project results. Therefore now is an appropriate time to write to thank you for your work in the project and also to inform you about the next steps after the project.

First, may I thank you all for your contribution and support for the Open ELS project. Without the engagement of all our project partners, and the skills and experiences of all our colleagues involved in the project activities, we would not have been able to achieve the project outcomes which were planned in our proposal, and which are very important to demonstrate the value of authoritative open geospatial data.

We have succeeded in launching Open ELS test services with which we are now able to demonstrate the value of Open geospatial data to the public and to other potential users. Based on user requirements, in particular from European Commission and interviewed SMEs, the ELS Programme Board decided on the Open ELS product roadmap:

- Open WFS test services with AD and BU
- Open Cadastral Index Map
- Open EGM as a service (built and hosted by IGN France without being an Open ELS project partner)
- Open Regional Gazetteer Service (built and hosted by BKG)

The services can be accessed via the Open ELS user interface implemented during the project by ThinkWhere, a Scottish geospatial services company appointed following an open tender. The Open ELS user interface can be accessed here: <https://www.euro-geo-opendata.eu/>. We have already had very positive feedback on this user interface and available services from attendees at the Geospatial World Forum in Amsterdam at the beginning of April. The activities around user orientation were accompanied by a survey of small and medium sized enterprises (SME) and the identification of Open ELS use cases. We also commissioned Deloitte to prepare an appraisal of the potential economic and social benefits of open data from authoritative sources.

We have also implemented a policy and legal framework for Open ELS that allows us to use our members' open data for Open ELS and defines the terms and conditions for use and re-use of this data. We have defined and agreed amongst our members the "Open Data policy

for Open ELS”, the “Open use license” and the “ELS Data Provider agreement”. And we drafted a guideline for edge-matching and a policy for cross-border harmonisation for our members.

I would like to thank the data supply team for investing so much time and resources in making our members’ open data services available and trying to engage our members as data providers. Of course, the project experience shows that we have to improve our approach to the technical infrastructure and to data supply, and we definitely need more content. Nevertheless, we have data that allows us to demonstrate the potential. Furthermore, we have prototyped in the project a centralised approach to overcome technical constraints for the data supply chain. The lessons learned from that exercise could help us in the future to improve the data supply and the accessibility of our member’s data significantly. Crucial for the project success, was the work on the compliance with the Metadata Quality Assurance (MQA) tool of the European Data (EDP) Portal. The Open ELS services’ metadata are now being harvested by the EDP.

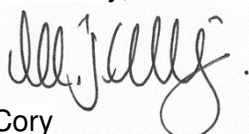
While running and using the Open ELS technical platform to build the Open ELS test services, the technical experts worked on demonstrating the Linked Data concept for Open ELS, developed an “on-the-fly-edge matching tool” as a demonstration, and explored vector tiles as an opportunity for visualisation. These results will inform our thinking about improving the access to our members’ data in future.

You might be aware of the current discussion in the Management Board about our future approach to European Location Services after the Open ELS project ends. The Management Board will decide on the further direction in the coming months. In the meantime, the Open ELS project results will continue to be available after the project end for a limited period only.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without our EGHO ELS team, but as the project (and its financing) comes to an end, I also want to inform you about some changes in the team. Following the completion of the Open ELS project at the end of April, the ELS team will conclude their work for EuroGeographics: Saulius Urbanas completed his contract the end of April; Helen Kaestner will conclude her contract at the end of May, and Abigail Page at the end of June. Jari Reini has also already concluded his secondment and returned to NLS Finland at the beginning of April. I want to take the opportunity to place on record my thanks to each of them, and also on your behalf, and to wish them the best for the future.

Finally, let me thank you all again for your help in the delivery of the Open ELS project and for your support over the last years. We have learned a lot, and I am confident that our experience and these lessons are very important for our members. They will inform the Management Board in its discussion and decision on the future direction for pan-European products and services, and EuroGeographics role in facilitating access to your data and services in the future.

Your sincerely,



M J Cory
Secretary General & Executive Director
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