

INSPIRE "Facilities" themes: low complexity, high impact.

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“Facility” is an abstract term covering a wide range of physical infrastructures designed, built or installed to serve for a use. Preventive and integrated approaches in environmental governance finds a challenging field of application in “Facilities” which because of its emplacement, social and economic dimension and the nature of inputs and outputs related with its functioning, are referred as passive or active subjects in different thematic domain regulations across Europe. Explicitly included in the descriptive name of some INSPIRE themes and implicitly covered by the scope of many others, Facilities are a core dimension in many public and private data sets linked to environmental administrative procedures and reporting obligations (e.g. Seveso, IPPC/IED; EIA, SEA Directives...).

Heterogeneous physical and legal approaches to refer “Facilities” under cross-cutting thematic regulations became an additional issue to be solved during the Data Specifications process when establishing the scope borders between thematic areas. In that sense, large cross-them discussions took place among concerned thematic working groups, giving as result a generic data model so called “Activity Complex” which allows to describe Facilities at a common level of abstraction across different thematic data models, bringing in addition the potential advantage for linking thematic data sets through a common geographical representation. This level of abstraction was tested also against other interoperability data models as ISA - Core Vocabularies (EC ISA Program, 2010), facilitating efficient and effective cross-border electronic collaboration between European public administrations in further domains.

Production and Industrial Facilities (PF) data theme (Annex.III-8), one of the main sponsors of the “Activity Complex” generic data model, represents a clear example of this “Facilities” heterogeneity and data fragmentation under different legal acts and reporting obligations. Scenarios and Use Cases considered during the Data Specification process for this theme were mostly based on information exchange among public bodies, private organizations and individuals under legal reporting obligations, administrative procedures and public consultations. The implementation of INSPIRE Data Specifications in this field of applicability could trigger a wide set of “win-win” scenarios for the enhancement of participation of different actors on the co-definition of sustainable measures, effective environmental policies, efficient administrative procedures and related data flows, aims shared in addition with other trending initiatives as e-government or Smart Solutions.

This article compiles additional material, viewpoints and outputs (diagrams, templates and procedures) coming up during the Data Specifications process around “Facilities” and “Activity Complex”. Should this material be of especial interest for those communities in charge for the INSPIRE implementation in the concerned areas, even further to others, as guidelines and methodological approach to facilitate the criteria for matching entities described under existing data sets with those described under the INSPIRE Data Models. Core material is based on a template in which Legal Acts, Geographical terms and INSPIRE Entities were matched for most of the Environmental Regulations analysed as reference material.

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