

MINING THE DATA

IRELAND'S NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS PROVIDING NEW INSIGHTS TO AID DECISION-MAKING ON AREAS FROM HOUSING TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

Data lies at the heart of our society; it informs and drives public policy and is central to the delivery of public services. Knowing when and where things happen is important for the planning, targeting and delivery of services, and geospatial data is an important element in the overall Government data ecosystem. Geospatial data relates to the geographic location and characteristics of natural or constructed features and boundaries on, above or below the Earth's surface, and can be delivered as both digital and paper mapping, imagery and reference systems.

Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi), the national mapping agency, has an important role in the provision of trusted, authoritative and timely State geospatial information to meet the evolving needs of citizens, business and policy makers. It is playing an active role in the development and implementation of the Government's key data strategies, and is focused on collaboration and innovation to enhance and develop the value of geospatial information to society as a whole. OSi has a vision for a geospatially enabled nation that shares, integrates and uses a wide range of data to achieve social, economic and environmental benefits.

To achieve this aim, the mapping agency has focused on strengthening and further modernising its approach to best-in-class geospatial data capture, management and distribution, to ensure that a single source of digital geography is accessible and understood across the public sector.



GeoHive – the National Geospatial Infrastructure

In order to make its data easier to find, share and use, OSI provides a web-based data platform called GeoHive, which is free to use and offers geospatial services including the capability where users can save and share their own map. GeoHive combines OSI mapping with authoritative layers of data from multiple public sector bodies, and presents them seamlessly to the end user in a single view. Since its initial launch in 2015, GeoHive has been further developed to deliver new ways of sharing data while allowing the presentation of information to different audiences, with different views, known as 'micro-hives', which focus on key initiatives and policy matters.

Dublin Housing Observatory portal

One such micro-hive was developed by OSI in partnership with the All-Ireland Research Observatory (AIRO) on behalf of the Dublin Housing Observatory (DHO), a new business unit under Dublin City Council's Housing and Community Services Department. The DHO mapping viewer was launched in 2018 to allow users to source up-to-date and verified information on Dublin's housing market, sourced from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), the Residential Property Register, and local authorities.

The viewer provides detailed information on Dublin's housing market with a focus on the rental market, property sales and valuations, planning and zoning, along with key Census-based socioeconomic variables. It can be viewed by the public online and provides detailed information on various aspects of Dublin's housing market, including: rental rates in different parts of the city; the number of registered tenancies versus owner-occupied homes in Dublin; and, rental and property prices. The data and analysis offered by the DHO will play a key role in the future development of Dublin City Council's housing policy.

UN SDG portal

Another micro-hive developed by OSI in partnership with the CSO and the geographic information systems company Esri Ireland, is Ireland's public platform for exploring, downloading and combining publicly available data relating to the United Nations (UN) and



European Union (EU) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This location-based platform supports collaboration among data producers and users, and facilitates interoperability across a wide range of data and sources. It allows users to search, discover and visualise the data used to create the set of globally and EU-agreed indicators for measuring Ireland's progress against the 17 SDGs, and is helping Ireland to implement significant international policies and achieve agreed targets.

Increasingly, public policy will be influenced by the need to deliver on the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by member states in 2015. By delivering high-quality data about SDG indicators in a timely, usable, open, and actionable manner, Ireland's SDG hub supports the making of data-driven decisions, drives progress on policy initiatives, and contributes to positive change. The GeoHive platform helps to promote the value of the SDGs, and engages with citizen and public sector bodies to encourage their participation in furthering progress on the goals. It is also useful for the academic sector and non-governmental organisations to understand the challenges in our world.

Census 2016 portal

In partnership with the CSO, OSI launched an open data website designed to provide geographical

and statistical information into the hands of public sector decision makers and civil society groups. This site makes the Census 2016 Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS), which were released by the CSO on July 20, 2017, available as geographical open data for the first time. The site provides public policy makers, researchers, academics, and all public stakeholders with access to over 500 layers of authoritative OSI boundary data that has been enriched with the Census 2016 variables from the CSO in 15 themes.

Planned micro-hive developments in 2019

During 2019, OSI will develop a number of additional micro-hives on behalf of its parent department, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. These include an INSPIRE Geoportals micro-hive supporting Ireland's compliance with the EU INSPIRE Directive, and a MyPlan micro-hive, one of the key planning portals for the State.

Summary

Understanding changes that are occurring within locations and our environment is essential to many decisions we make. Geospatial data is now recognised for the importance it plays in national policy, and it is through the applied use of data that we can develop a truly 'smart' society.