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WP 6 – Communication & Dissemination

EGDI-Scope - Scoping Study for a pan-European Geological Data Infrastructure

Communication and Dissemination Strategy

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Summary

This document presents the EGDI-Scope Communication and Dissemination Strategy. It serves as guidelines for communication and dissemination activities; it defines key messages, target audiences, and methods of communication and tools. It lists the dissemination events aimed at the dissemination to the public at large, and the communication among the partners. Furthermore, it describes the material to be used for various dissemination tasks.

The Strategy covers the whole duration of the scoping study.

The document is intended for internal use and is under the responsibility of Work Package 6 (WP6). Amendments, comments and suggestions should be sent to the WP6 leader.

Executive Summary

The objective is to disseminate and clarify the benefits of the study via two main lines of communication, namely (a) internal communication amongst the partners and (b) dissemination towards the main stakeholders, in order to raise awareness.

This document outlines the Communication and Dissemination Plan of the Scoping Study for a pan-European Geological Data Infrastructure (EGDI –Scope). In the course of the study, the WP6 team will continuously review this plan and produce updated versions. Moreover the present document will be continually supplemented with new information about dissemination activities that will be carried out.

This dissemination strategy has been prepared by EGS. However, all partners are also involved in the dissemination process in order to foster awareness for the study, especially in their own countries and in their own communities.

The plan defines the key messages, target audiences and presents the different methods of communication tailored on a specific target. It serves as blueprint to assure reaching targeted audiences.

A separate WP on dissemination is foreseen to “*raise the visibility of the EGDI-initiative*” to a wide audience, and to gather support for the implementation of the EGDI. Although no direct *International Cooperation* activities are foreseen in the current study,

The aim of dissemination is to raise awareness of digital preservation and data harmonisation and to spread project results among the following groups:

- **Providers of digital primary data:** Geological Surveys, data archives, traditional memory institutions
- **Creators of digital primary data:** Geological Surveys, researchers, industry
- **Users of digital primary data:** researchers, industry, academia
- **Management/Policymakers/Public sector**
- **Funders research funders,** project funders, institutional funders
- **General Public**

The plan encompasses the three main steps of dissemination. The three steps are to **raise awareness** with the largest pool of potential users and users community, promote and **deepen the understanding** of the EGDI-Scope and **promote its goal to become a project**.

The dissemination activities will also tackle the international dimension through the active involvement of the international network of EGS.

Part of the plan is dedicated to the EGDI-Scope visual identity that contributes to the overall perception of the study and its uniform impression. The identity is important to make recognizable the study, its documentation, the developed products and services at a glance.

The visual identity includes elements that will represent the study in a distinct and consistent way (logos, colours, templates, photos, etc.). Some elements are already available and others will be produced and provided during the course of the project.

It also includes a work plan and metrics that will measure the dissemination success.



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Outline

The document, Communication and Dissemination plan, is organised as follows:

- Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION presents the brief view on what is the EGDI-Scope and its objectives.
- Chapter 2 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY presents the communication and dissemination objectives and deliverables, introduces the target audiences and synergies, gives the key EGDI-Scope messages, and informs about the EGDI-Scope visual identity.
- Chapter 3 ANNEXES gives additional relevant information.

EGDI-Scope Study

Concept and Objectives

Based on the successes of earlier joint projects including ‘OneGeology Europe’, the Geological Surveys of Europe developed the EGDI-Scope concept to prepare the ground for a “European Geological Data Infrastructure (EGDI)”. The need for such an infrastructure was recognised by the European Parliament Committee on Industry Research and Energy in its recent report “on an effective raw materials strategy for Europe’. In fact access to digital geological data are one of the most important requirements to cope with the challenges that the EU nowadays has to face. Such challenges include sustainable supply of energy, water, and mineral resources; mitigation of natural hazards for the health and safety of EU citizens; containing hazardous substances (e.g. radioactive waste, contaminants); mitigating climate change by exploiting renewable energy and capturing and storing greenhouse gases; and addressing conflicting claims on the use of subsurface space.

The EGDI will provide the backbone for serving interoperable, pan-European geological data currently held by the Geological Surveys of Europe, and data from past, ongoing and future European projects. EGDI-Scope will focus on:

1. Developing connections with and gathering user requirements from EGDI end-users;
2. Selecting and prioritizing datasets producing maximum societal benefit;
3. Technical design;
4. Models for governance and future funding of the EGDI

It will focus on further developing the collaboration between the Geological Surveys of Europe and other relevant institutions across the continent to create access to data and enable the building of ‘on-the-fly’ derived datasets from the maintained and updated source components. In this way, developing the EGDI will allow for economies of scale, reduced costs and increased potential to engage in joint projects.

The study does so by proposing to design a “European Geological Data Infrastructure”, which is to become a central, virtual repository of the shared knowledge (in the form of primary and derived data) of the Geological Surveys of Europe. The primary aim of EGDI-Scope is to “establish an implementable concept for the future EGDI e-infrastructure”.

The study will have a great impact on the EU Economy. The EGDI can support European industry and economic development and recovery in many ways, including: exploration and production of earth resources, developing innovative services and supporting insurance and re-insurance business.

The EGDI will facilitate truly pan-European assessment of such issues as availability of earth resources, vulnerability to geological hazards, environmental impacts of new initiatives and directives, etc. It will also facilitate the Geological Surveys of Europe abilities to respond to information requests from European public administrations. The EGDI will support mitigation of natural hazards for the health and safety of EU citizens, as well as public outreach.

CHAPTER 2

Internal and External Communication and Dissemination Strategy

Dissemination and Communication plan's structure

The Dissemination Plan is divided into two parts. The first part of this report specifies the internal dissemination among the partners furthering the exchange of information by using an internal mailing list and a Chiliproject (web-based management tool - Intranet) as well as personal regular meetings. The second part describes the dissemination at “large” which means the dissemination to all relevant stakeholders by logo, website, dissemination material, mailing lists and dissemination actions.

The dissemination material will be regularly updated to provide the latest version of its status and achievements .

The study will (also) provide input for relevant European Commission initiated dissemination activities (e.g. press releases, brochures, success stories, posters, web-based publications, multimedia material, etc). In this context the study's dissemination messages will also reflect its broader societal and economic impact.

The dissemination of the aims and both partial and final results of the project at various stages of realization is one of the basic goals of the dissemination strategy of EGDI-Scope .

All partners take part in the internal dissemination (dissemination within the project) as well as in the external dissemination (dissemination to all relevant stakeholders in the EU community) of the project during the whole study run time. All partners contribute to the dissemination activities producing documents, regularly documenting their work via the EGDI-Scope intranet, editing and providing source material for press releases, presenting EGDI-Scope in conferences, and promoting the benefits of the study to a broader community, distributing material about EGDI-Scope, through web sites, magazine, participation in events and liaison with other projects and initiatives.

Both, internal dissemination as well as external dissemination is of great importance during the whole EGDI-Scope study.

Message

In the course of the EGDI-Scope study there will be intensive activities in public relations. The goal of these activities is to inform the institutions involved in long-term preservation about partial and final results of the project. Furthermore, the project aims at attracting new institutions for long-term preservation of digital primary data. For this purpose it is necessary *to raise awareness for the needs for and interests in long-term preservation of digital data, which includes not only the storing and retrieval of data but also both the access and enable the building of ‘on-the-fly’ derived datasets from the maintained and updated source components.* In this way, developing the EGDI will allow for economies of scale, reduced costs and increased potential to engage in joint projects.

The information which will be made accessible will be used for a broad spectrum of purposes – hazard mitigation, mineral and energy resource exploration, groundwater protection, civil engineering, land and property development, planning, policy making and insurance.

Therefore, dissemination will also focus on promoting the dialogue among data providers, researchers academia, public sector and on building up cooperation with the industry .

EGDI-Scope (WP2/WP6) will investigate on what are the specific needs on long-term preservation and if there are already structures according to the special needs.

Objectives

- To implement effective internal communication within the consortium, which includes both the full participants in this proposal and the other member organisations of EuroGeoSurveys.
- To widely disseminate information on and progress of EGDI-Scope in a comprehensive, systematic, objective and professional manner to all relevant stakeholders, with a particular focus on EU bodies and the broad geo-scientific community.

Internal Communication and Dissemination Plan

The project partners will stand in close contact for the project duration. In order to ensure a smooth workflow a close collaboration is necessary. For internal communication the partners are provided with an internal mailing list and a Chiliproject (web-based management tool- Intranet). Also both personal and virtual meetings will take place.

Partners - Target

- Nederlandse Organisatie Voor Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek - TNO
- Bureau De Recherches Geologiques Et Minières BRGM
- Natural Environment Research Council BGS
- The Geological Survey Of Denmark And Greenland GEUS
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven KU Leuven
- EuroGeoSurveys – EGS
 - Albanian Geological Survey – AGS
 - Geological Survey of Austria – GBA
 - Geological Survey of Belgium - GSB
 - Bulgaria Ministry of Environment and Water Directorate of Subsurface and Underground Resources - MOEW
 - Hrvatski geološki institut - Croatian Geological Survey - HGI-CGS
 - Cyprus -Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment Geological Survey Department - GSD
 - Czech Geological Survey – CGS
 - Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland – GEUS
 - Geological Survey of Estonia – EGK
 - Geological Survey of Finland - GTK

- France - Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières - BRGM
- Germany - Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe - BGR
- Greece - Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration – IGME
- Hungarian Geological and Geophysical Institute – MFGI
- Iceland GeoSurvey – ISOR
- Geological Survey of Ireland - GSI
- Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA) - Geological Survey of Italy - ISPRA
- Geological, Seismic and Soil Survey of Emilia-Romagna
- Geological Survey of Lithuania - LGT
- Service Géologique du Luxembourg - SGL
- Malta Resources Authority – MRA
- Geological Survey of the Netherlands – TNO
- Geological Survey of Norway – NGU
- Polish Geological Institute - National Research Institute - PGI-NRI
- Portugal - Laboratório Nacional de Energia e Geologia - LNEG
- Geological Institute of Romania – GIR
- Russian Federation - A. P. Karpinsky All Russia Geological Research Institute - VSEGEI
- Slovak Republic - State Geological Institute of Dionyz Stur - SGUDS
- Geological Survey of Slovenia - GeoZS
- Instituto Geológico y Minero de España - IGME
- Institut Geologic the Catalunya -IGC
- Sweden - Sveriges Geologiska Undersökning - SGU
- Switzerland -Bundesamt für Landestopografie, Landesgeologie - SWISSTOPO
- State Geological and Subsurface Survey of Ukraine – SGSSU
- Ukrainian State Geological Research Institute - UkrSGRI
- British Geological Survey - BGS

Chiliproject (web-based management tool - Intranet)

Information and documentation will be found in the Chili (<https://egdi-scope.eurogeosurveys.org/>).

Chiliproject is an open-source development. It is like a web site whose content may be edited in a browser. That means that anyone can add, modify and/or re-organize the content.

Principally, this platform will be used as a communication platform concerning administration (e.g. minutes of the conferences). It will be used as an operational platform. Every partner may use an account to have access to the chili and to change or add information.

Internal meetings

In order to enable a regular exchange among the partners and to achieve further agreements, internal conferences will take place regularly. At these meetings the focus will be on issues related to content, but management matters will be discussed as well. Every partner who is a work package leader will report on the work of that work package and/or that task. The minutes (including the presentations) on these conferences can be found on the Chiliproject .

Teleconferences

To facilitate the sharing information among the partners and to save cost and time WP6 will set up a series of teleconferences. During the teleconferences will be possible to share documents, data, video and discuss on the issues in agenda.

Action plan

Objective	Deliverables	Actors	Time	Tool	Data to collect
To implement effective internal communication within the consortium	Web-based management tool to access confidential documents	EGS/TNO	1M	Chiliproject (intranet)	Number of time upload and download the documents
	Developing templates	EGS/TNO	4M	PPT presentations, reports, and posters	
	Forum section	EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	1	Chiliproject Teleconferences (E-works)	Number of time forum is used Number of teleconferences
	Organising project meetings	EGS	1-18M	Location	Number of meeting organised
	Keeping EGS members informed	EGS	1-18M	EGS General Meeting EGS Newsletter Teleconferences	Number of people attending Number of articles published Number of teleconferences
	Internal report	EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	1-18M	Progress reports	Number of the reports produced

To disseminate and clarify the benefits of the study	Spreading information materials	EGS Members	1-3 M	Teleconferences PPT presentations EGS Newsletter EGS General Meeting	Number of people attending Number of articles published Number of teleconferences
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External Communication and Dissemination Plan

The main goal of plan is to inform, through a range of communication channels, all relevant stakeholders on the study and its progress.

The EGDI-Scope communication and dissemination strategy is designed to foster the creation a potential worldwide community of individuals and institutes interested in using and exploiting the geological data. The major communication and dissemination objectives are:

- a) To diffuse information and raise awareness about the EGDI-Scope study to the users community, with a particular focus on EU bodies and the broad geo-scientific community.
- b) To promote participation and further strengthen ties with the user communities.
- c) To show how the study is able to optimise synergies with activities related to the e-Infrastructures and other related areas including the participation and contribution to relevant thematic working groups.
- d) To communicate the advantages brought by EGDI-Scope for environment, society and economy.

The external dissemination starts with some presentations about the aim of the project and switches over to the results of the project as soon as there are some. In contrast to internal dissemination, it is particularly crucial in the second half of the project, when the WP Leaders will present the results of the study and the user cases as well as the recommendations during the conferences, events, workshops and in the final symposium to the public (providers, creators and users of digital primary data, management/policymakers, funders, developers of preservation components and infrastructure).

The dissemination will be divided in three phases:

The three steps are to **raise awareness** with the largest pool of potential users and users community, **promote and deepen the understanding** of the EGDI-Scope project **and promote its goal to become a project**.

- 1) In the beginning the focus lies on the presentation of the study itself so that it is well-known within the community (*communication and dissemination for awareness*).
- 2) In the second half of the scoping study the emphasis is put on the dissemination of the results from the general survey and the case studies (*communication and dissemination for understanding*).

3) At the end the final results of the scoping study, that is the roadmap and the recommendations, will be disseminated (*communication and dissemination for action/participation*).

Target

The main target audiences and stakeholders to disseminate the EGDI-scope study results have been identified. Different groups of stakeholders are connected to the EGDI-scope.

An extremely wide range of organisations in commercial and public sector domains uses geological information.

The audiences need information about the project results and progress, as well as the European Commission that needs to establish on-going progress and achievement of results.

- Stakeholders Panel and Forum
 - Environment: European Environment Agency (EEA)
 - Non-energy raw materials: DG Enterprise and Industry (DG ENTR)
 - Science and technology : DG Joint Research Centre (DG JRC)
 - Research : DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD)
 - Energy : DG Energy
 - GeoHazards : DG Enterprise and Industry (DG ENTR) (GMES)
 - Industry and Commerce: Insurance Europe
 - Urban Planning and Infrastructure : To be indentified
- Academia
- EU Bodies
- Trade and professional associations
- International GSO's
- Public sector
- Industry
- Governmental
- General Public

Communication and dissemination for awareness

The audience needs to be aware of the work of the EGDI-Scope. The offer of information will be frequent and dynamic. All partners are involved and will be requested to participate in different activities.

EGDI-Scope Visual Identity

The EGDI-Scope visual identity contributes to give the uniform impression of the study, putting the bases for the future step when the study will become a project. The identity is important to make recognizable the project, its documentation, the developed products and services at a glance.

The visual identity includes elements that will represent the study in a distinct and consistent way (logos, colours, templates, photos, etc.). Some elements are already available and others will be produced and provided during the course of the study.

Logo (Annex N.1)



The EGDI-Scope logo created is used for project events and activities (e.g. presentations, publications, leaflets and the website). The logo is flexible and can be used in very small (for example on flyers) and also in large versions (for example on a poster).

The logo is simple and distinctive. It is projected considering the possibility that the study will become a project .

The colours have been chosen to represent the colours of the earth: red for the core, yellow/brown for the crust, green for the environment, blue for the water/ocean/sea.

There are no formal restrictions regarding the use of the logo for internal purposes by EGDI-Scope partners. Nevertheless it is requested not to edit, squeeze, distort or rotate it. The colours should not be altered.

The logo is available in the following format : JPEG, PSD and TIFF and can be downloaded via Chiliproject (<https://egdi-scope.eurogeosurveys.org/>)

Templates (Annex N. 2)

In order to create a corporate identity WP6 has developed the “Slide presentation template” (in PowerPoint format), designed for the EGDI-Scope’s official kick-off meeting, it is projected in a simple and elegant way for both internal and external use (general public and scientific and technical audience).

The elements present in the slide are:

- logo of EGDI-Scope on the top left
- logo of European Union on the top right

The templates can be downloaded from Chiliproject (<https://egdi-scope.eurogeosurveys.org/>)

Web site

The EGDI-Scope public web site is the primary dynamic information source and will provide access to all information and materials. The web site is for external users.

It will support result dissemination. It will include background information, list news and events, links to partners' web sites, press releases, articles, radio, video, publications, etc.

Partners will play a leading role in promoting public exposure and awareness of the study by providing links to the EGDI-Scope public web site from their institutional web sites.

WP6 will define the structure and the content of the site . The website will be updated continuously by EGS/TNO, responsible for the website until end of the study.

Furthermore, EGDI-Scope will build a forum for the discussion of the results of the study with the different stakeholder communities. It is interlinked with the website and can be used by all interested people who will have subscribed for it. The forum will be meant to be used by a very wide community.

Newsletter (Annex N.3)

EGDI-Scope will periodically provide a brief overview on the progress of work via the EGS newsletter. The Newsletter is quarterly . It is electronically distributed around Europe in over 40 countries and the world trough EGS mailing lists. The newsletters will be downloadable.

Events

Events may be organised by the EGDI-Scope itself.

Public external events refer to dissemination and include participation to:

- Presentations at conferences
- Awareness Seminars
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Training events, etc...

Many workshops are planned, sometime using video/teleconferences tools.

Link exchange

During the project duration, web sites from similar initiatives (such as ProMine, EuroGeoSource and PanGeo) will be contacted for link exchange. This will generate additional traffic to the EGDI-Scope web site.

Publicity material

Several promotional items, including posters, brochures, flyers, banner etc. will be prepared, with the contribution of all partners, to introduce EGDI-Scope and promote its objectives and activities.

The communication and dissemination material will be regularly updated to provide the latest study status and achievements. All produced material will use the EGDI-Scope logo and European logo.

Material will be available at events and handed out to visitors.

As soon as possible generic EGDI-Scope flyers will be produced. The aim is to present the study in a structured and appealing way and will be used by partners during meeting and workshops as a tool to disseminate EGDI-Scope benefits, aims and results as well as about the current status.

In line with the design of the website, WP 6 will create a poster template which contains the basic information about the scoping study. This poster may be adjusted to several target audiences and the respective work status of the project. The template will be uploaded in Chiliproject. WP6 will create 2 type of posters: Poster Version 1 (Information about the scoping study) and Poster Version 2 (Information about the EGDI).

Communication and dissemination for understanding

Reports

Technical reports will be posted in the documentation section of the web site. The access to confidential documents will be possible through Chiliproject .

Dialogue, debate and networking

The web site will propose an online user registration page that will invite people to register if they are interested in the study and wish to remain in the loop to receive updated information (newsletter).

Communication and dissemination for action/participation

Case studies

By publishing case studies of the delivery of geological data EGDI-Scope will show synergies and encourage the participation of the users community.

Press releases

Even if EGDI-Scope is not a project, it might well be that interesting results emerge during its development. A good method to formally advertise them study is through the publication of official press releases that coincide with major achievements and/or events. The press releases are also an

opportunity to outline what EGDI-Scope study is, what it will do, what it is intended to, the innovation it will bring and its benefits. The scoping study partners are invited to dedicate some resources and publish one or more press releases during the study lifetime. Press releases will be normally written in English. However, to maximize their impact, partners may undertake translations in own language.

WP6 will also prepare press releases in case relevant news emerge, and will prepare a report containing a collection of all press releases eventually published during the study.

This activity will start when the first results will be available.

Mailing lists

EGDI-Scope will inform the stakeholders about partial and final results of the study and both events and activities by using existent mailing lists (EGS mailing list). In addition the public relations developed during the study lifetime will allow us to collect a significant number of contacts around the world of people with an active interest in preservation of digital data. This is a valuable resource which will allow us to interact directly with key players in this area. This listing, which will be available on the Chiliproject may constantly be complemented by the partners.

Meeting and Workshops

The partial and final results of EGDI-Scope will be disseminated through a series of workshops. Furthermore, the project partners will participate at various international conferences to promote the study.

The DoW sets out three progress meetings to disseminate the results of the study where the Executive Board, the Steering Group, the Stakeholder Panel, the NGO representatives and the other stakeholders will take part. The meetings will be public and free of charge for the participants, and will be announced on the website, the forum and through several mailing lists. Moreover 5 workshops will be organised for the executive board will participate. 3 of those workshop could be held via teleconference. The meetings will be organized by WP6.

It from the meetings and workshops relevant issues will emerge, WP6 will disseminate them through mailing lists, the website and the intranet.

At the end of the study a final Symposium will be organised. During the Symposium the partners will present the results achieved and the audience will have the possibility to properly value the opportunity to transform the study in a real project.

Face to face interview / Public relation

At the beginning of the study it is very important to understand the needs of the potential users and at the same time to disseminate the importance and benefits of the EGDI-Scope, advising them on what EGDI-Scope can become.

To achieve these two important goals the principal tools are face to face interviews (Questionnaires) and public relations. Thanks to those tools it is possible to see people's reaction and get their direct feedback.

Action Plan

Objective	Deliverables	Actors	Time	Tool	Data to collect
To diffuse information and raise awareness about the EGDI-Scope study to the users community, with a particular focus on EU bodies and the broad geo-scientific community	Developing a comprehensive communication and dissemination strategy	EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	3M	Communication Plan	Number of activities done
	Developing Database with contact details of stakeholders	EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	2M	Mailing list	Number of the contacts
	Developing a public project website	EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	4M	Website Forum	Number of time forum is used Visibility of the logo Number of the visitors
	Dissemination material	EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	12M	Website Brochure Leaflet Flyer EGS Newsletter Presentations Banners	Number of copies distributed Number of presentations organised Number of articles published
	Disseminating the results	EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	12-24M	Forum Conferences Workshops Thematic workshops National and international events	Number of people attending Number of teleconferences Number of conferences attended
	Report on the final	EGS	24M	Final event	Number of

	symposium	TNO BRGM BGS GEUS		Press release Newsletter	people attending
To promote participation and further strengthen ties with the user communities	Disseminating the information and results	EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	12-24 M	Face to face interview / Public relation Questionnaires Forum Conferences Workshops Thematic workshops National and international events Teleconferences Brochure Leaflet Flyer EGS Newsletter Presentations Banners	Number of people attending Number of teleconferences Number of meetings organised Number of copies distributed Number of articles published
To show how the study is able to optimise synergies with activities related		EGS TNO BRGM BGS GEUS	12-24M	Case studies Thematic workshops Forum Flyer EGS Newsletter Presentations Press release	Number of the case studies Number of participants Number of copies distributed Number of articles published



CHAPTER 3

Annex 1



Pantone Solid to Process: 376 PC
CMYK : 50,0,100,0



Pantone Solid to Process: 382 PC
CMYK : 29,0,100,0



Pantone Solid to Process: 660 PC
CMYK : 90,57,0,0



Pantone Solid to Process : 187 PC
CMYK : 0,100,79,20



Pantone Solid to Process : 180 PC
CMYK : 0,79,100,11



Pantone Solid to Process : 7408 PC
CMYK : 0,25,95,0



Pantone Solid to Process : 660 PC
CMYK : 90,57,0,0



Pantone Solid to Process : 298 PC
CMYK : 69,7,0,0

Annex 2



TITLE

EGDI Scope Kick-off meeting – 21st June Brussels



TITLE

Issue

EuroGeoSurveys NEWS

2012

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Shale Gas: EGS strengthen ties with USGS on GeoEnergy

In April 2012 a EuroGeoSurveys delegation paid an official visit to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The visit was organised under the Memorandum of Understanding recently signed between the two organisations, and as a follow up of several meetings previously held in Europe. Nine EuroGeoSurveys representatives accompanied the Secretary General, Luca Demicheli, on the visit, which was organised as a Study Tour on shale gas and its exploitation.

The issue of shale gas is an extremely hot topic and of significant interest in Europe where exploration and extraction is just starting, as well as in the USA where, after nearly 40 years of experience it is now booming, also due to the availability of new and more effective extraction techniques. In the USA unconventional natural gas sources already account for about 60% of domestic production, with shale gas accounting for more than half of this. In the past few years shale gas extraction has accelerated and the USA has reduced gas imports by about a quarter because of shale gas production. Only 8% of the total domestic gas consumption is nowadays imported.

In Europe the situation is very different, even if trends show that the demand for natural gas will

increase, while conventional production capacity will decrease. This will have the logical consequence that the EU will become even more dependent on import from other countries, unless alternative sources can be found.

Shale gas extraction is controversial, due to potential consequences on the environment, notably on groundwater. However also the potential impacts on biodiversity or air pollution, as well as several others, should not be neglected. Public perception in both USA and Europe is very much driven by the above threats.

The most criticised aspects of hydraulic fracturing (from now on simply 'fracking': originally called 'fracing' - the technique used to facilitate the extraction of gas from shale formations by fracturing rocks through the injection of high-pressure fluids) concern the considerable quantity of water used and the chemical additives that are added to the fracking fluid together with a proppant (sand). Some of the additives have the potential to cause adverse environmental (human health and ecosystem) impacts even if released in small quantities (normally less than 1% of the fracking fluid). In reality the potential threats to the environment are many more.

Group photo at the active drilling site

