

DOES INSPIRE AFFECT POSITIVELY THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN FRANCE ? AN EXPLORATORY STUDY USING A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

In this paper we investigate the economic effects of INSPIRE on the private sector focusing on the specific case of France where local authorities (region level) play a crucial role in the gathering and diffusion of geographic information (GI). As the INSPIRE directive was transposed into French law in October 2010, it stimulated the development of regional spatial data infrastructures aimed at facilitating GI diffusion. This resulted overall in a more intense intra- and inter-regional dynamics among public actors. But the question of INSPIRE economic impact upon the private sector remains to be explored. Recent economic literature brought to light the economic benefits of GI. Some authors found an additional growth of nearly 1% in the absence of barriers to access to data . In Switzerland, 23% of the firms reported that one third of their revenues came from spatial data information . More specifically, investing in the directive INSPIRE revealed to be profitable for the economies In order to analyse the effects of this directive on the French private sector, we first analyse how the INSPIRE directive was applied in France, insisting on the role of local authorities. Second we examine the mechanisms through which their action has impacted - or not - the companies producing or using GI. Our methodology consists in a qualitative research based on interviews of concerned actors, that is officials of French Regions and of companies. This type of methodology is typically appropriate in the case of explorative studies and lack of data. We conducted about thirty two-hour interviews in five regions and 20 companies. While we do not claim that we entirely explain the effects of INSPIRE here, our results nevertheless provide some interesting insights. For the firms producing and using GI the effects are ambivalent. We identified two business cases : (i) firms who have a public service mission as well as GI software firms take direct advantage of the directive ; (ii) the other companies, although they are regular GI users, may not benefit from the directive, due to the complexity and accessibility restriction of the regional spatial data infrastructures.

Categories

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