



NATIONAL LAND SURVEY OF FINLAND



GREENLAND HOME RULE



LANDMÆLINGAR
ÍSLANDS



MILJØMINISTERIET

Kort & Matrikelstyrelsen



NORWEGIAN MAPPING
AND CADASTRE
AUTHORITY

To the Arctic Council

Karsten Klepsvik
Ambassador
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P.O.Box 8114 Dep.
N-0032 OSLO

Your Excellency

The First International Circumpolar Conference on Geospatial Sciences and Applications / IPY GeoNorth was held in Yellowknife, Canada, in August 2007. The conference presented the idea of creating Arctic Spatial Data Infrastructure (ASDI), which would make it possible to share geospatial data in support of sustainable development of Arctic communities, regions and nations. The Yellowknife Conference participants agreed that the proposed ASDI would provide a unique and effective infrastructure for the sharing of geospatial data, information, knowledge and best practices between all stakeholders in the Arctic region.

Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia have had a joint project "GIT Barents" (Geographic Information Technology within the Barents Region), which has been going on since 1994 and was finished in April 2008 with the EC funding.

The project has produced homogenous & uniform geographic information within the Barents region. In addition to that, this project also developed and implemented Internet-based technology for effective access to and distribution of geographic information within the region. Project information as well as access to the Barents Interactive Map is found on www.gitbarents.com.

The Nordic National Mapping Agencies of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden and the National Spatial Planning of Greenland now propose to enlarge the Barents SDI into an Arctic SDI - to be implemented by all the circumpolar national mapping agencies, i.e. also including Russia, Canada and the USA.

The initial National Mapping Agencies partnership could - and should - later on be expanded to include other major contributors, users and other stakeholders. This expanded partnership would help transform the Arctic SDI into a true Geospatial Infrastructure for Sustainable Development in the polar region.

The Nordic National Mapping Agencies share the view that the Arctic Council's long term monitoring ambitions will require sustainable services in order to efficiently provide background geographic information and system for data sharing among circumpolar countries. In order to establish these sustainable services, the Arctic SDI should be initially and jointly implemented and supported – i.e. developed and managed – by all the circumpolar National Mapping Agencies. The National Mapping Agencies could provide reliable reference data to the Arctic Council, so the Council would not need to rely on data from separate projects, etc.

The National Mapping Agencies are largely responsible for the development and management of national NSDIs (National Spatial Data Infrastructure) – concerning the Nordic countries this responsibility is governed by the EU INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) Directive.

We are hereby asking for the Arctic Council's positive response and support for our proposal to extend/develop the existing Barents SDI into a circumpolar Arctic SDI – as suggested at the IPY conference in Yellowknife, aligned with the CAFF proposal by Tom Berry (11/01/2008, Executive secretary for CAFF) and also reported by the *EPPR Circumpolar Mapping Workshop* (Oslo February 2008) to the AC SAO meeting April 2008.

Provided that the Arctic Council will support the idea to provide background geographic information and system for data sharing among circumpolar countries – developed and managed by the National Mapping Agencies, an implementation process would include the following steps:

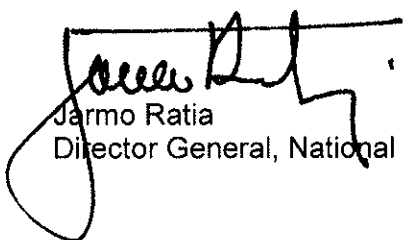
- 1 Based on the Arctic Council statement, the Nordic Mapping Agencies will then make proposals to their respective Governments in order to get support for the idea to use the Barents SDI, for jointly developing and extending its capacity, for starting cooperation with their sister organisations around the pole and for raising financial support for the proposed work.
- 2 The Arctic SDI - i.e. the basic technical infrastructure with suitable background geographic information - will be developed, maintained and administered by the circumpolar national mapping agencies – financed through slightly increased yearly governmental allowances.
- 3 The Arctic Council and its research- and co-operational programmes - being the prime intended users of the Arctic SDI - are to provide the requirements on the system's functionality and its basic background information.
- 4 The Nordic National Mapping Agencies will initiate discussions with their sister organisations in Russia, Canada and the USA in order to start and

arrange for the joint development of the SDI and to provide for needed and homogenous geographic background information, covering the entire circumpolar cooperation area.

- 5 The mapping organisations should later also agree on future long term cooperation to provide for managerial and administrative support of the SDI and its basic information.

Enclosed is also a background paper for the Arctic SDI.

Yours sincerely,



Jarmo Ratia
Director General, National Land Survey of Finland

On behalf of:

Jesper Jarmbæk, Director General of the National Survey and Cadastre, Denmark
Klaus Georg Hansen, Head of department, National Spatial Planning of Greenland
Magnús Guðmundsson, Director General of the National Land Survey, Iceland
Anne Cathrine Frøstrup, Director General of the Norwegian Mapping Authority
Stig Jönsson, Director General of the National Land Survey, Sweden

cc:
Arctic Council Secretariat
Polarmiljøsentret
9296 Tromsø