

THE GEIXS PROJECT: IMPROVING ACCESS TO GEOSCIENCE INFORMATION ACROSS EUROPE

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This paper will describe a major EC-funded project to improve access to geoscience information across Europe. Geological factors are important in disaster mitigation and planning, environmental protection and sustainable resource development. Regrettably, decision-makers are often unaware of this and of the existence of high quality geoscience information and fail to take it into account. Geology and the problems and opportunities it presents crosses national borders, however, it can be difficult to determine what relevant data exists. The GEIXS project was conceived to address this problem. GEIXS (Geological Electronic Information eXchange System) is a project co-funded by the European Commission's ESPRIT programme and the geological surveys of Europe. It has created a single harmonized database describing geoscience metadata throughout Europe. This database is implemented on a publicly available Web server. Innovative multi-lingual search options have been developed using GIS and text querying technology. The GEIXS system has already been extended to Eastern Europe and proposals are being made for similar systems for the Mediterranean rim and South East Asian countries. GEIXS is a starting point for access to geoscience knowledge; it offers links to national geological survey servers and systems where other novel GIS delivery systems are being developed to access, manipulate and present, detailed and high resolution information to support sound environmental and natural resource management. Examples of some of these national approaches will be presented.