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Mapping projects and policies of the Vicenza Province
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The drafting of the Preliminary studies for the territorial coordination plan of the Vicenza Province, was carried out by a group of Diap experts. It required the updating of projects and policies undertaken by the Province itself and the creation of new representations of the territory more related to the specific contents of the studies. The three maps produced for the studies concerned the system of services at the provincial level, the infrastructural system, and the system of protected areas.

The regional planning law adopted in the year 2004, n. 11, defines the information framework as an element of the provincial plan, together with the plan document, the plan prescription and the maps. The information framework is the system of integrated knowledge and data necessary for the comprehension of spatial and territorial dynamics, required for the provincial plans.

Maps and data produced in the studies were built using the methodology and the procedures provided by the regional law, allowing to understand advantages and drawbacks of the approach chosen by the Veneto Region for data management and representation.

This paper describes the regional indications for the creation of the information framework and the integration of those prescriptions in the data management and maps making process of the preliminary studies.

The information framework is a database aimed at the systematic knowledge of demographic and socio-economic dynamics, of environmental phenomena, of physical constraints from the sustainability perspective. In order to organize the amount of data able to describe the state of the knowledge on the territory, thematic matrices were identified. The matrices are: air, climate, soils, water, vegetation, biodiversity, population, cultural heritage, archaeological heritage, architectural heritage, human health, planning constraints. Every matrix is then composed by many information levels corresponding to thematic layers of a Geographical information system, to be acquired from existing data sources or originally constructed, depending on the specific content of the plan. The law identifies up to 100 themes that must be treated in the information framework and in the plan.

The Veneto Region forced provincial administration to manage the knowledge on their territory using information techniques for data collection, data updating and maps creation which becomes a representation derived from an existing database not a primary source of information.

This kind of approach requires the definition of standards in the use and format of digital data which are not so widely used. Each thematic layer must be associated to a meta-data, a scheme necessary for the correct interpretation and use of the data which contains the following information: description, purpose, scale, source, projection, datum, validity, accuracy, type, use, dimension, geographic extension, attributes, users, author.

The format proposed for the geographical database is the shapefile, identified as a universal format and a detailed list of information to provide is available. The purpose of the regional law is to have data and plans which are composed by high quality data and which are comparable and harmonized. On the other side the quantity and the typology of information required risk to increase the difficulty of administrations in building an information framework acceptable and updated, which is a requisite for the approval of the plan by the region.

The procedure designed by the region requires a data flux from municipalities, provinces and region in order to build a common and harmonised information framework but data often do not exist or are not usable or are difficult to obtain.

In our work we face all these issues and we underline some advantages and drawbacks of the regional methodology. During the preliminary studies, the Diap group collected a big amount of data which have been used for elaboration and for the final maps production. Data useful for understanding the main socio-economical dynamics, the settlements patterns, the morphological and environmental constraints, regarded a lot of themes on which the information framework requires to be organised and updated.

The three maps of the preliminary studies are: the Map of services at the provincial level with the localization of existing and designed strategic functions, the Map of the infrastructural system containing existing and designed infrastructures and the Map of the protection and the promotion of environments and landscapes.

For each theme of the three maps data have been acquired and updated and their respective metadata have been compiled in accordance with the regional prescriptions.

An other innovation of the law regards the way in which the maps of the plan must be prepared. The maps become the graphical representation of the information framework. The content of the map is described, such as the graphical symbols to be used.

The Region requires to provinces the building of plans with an higher level of homogeneity and harmonisation than today, with respect to both the database implementation and the maps making process.

The declared aim is the reduction of dishomogeneity and differences between plans, increasing the use of standard formats and procedures which must be validated by the Region itself.

The risk of a too strict application of the system proposed by the regional law could be to indirectly weaken the emerging of territorial specificities, to use information mainly provided by higher level administrations, to reduce the importance of local actors and territories which could provide elements for implementing adequate projects and policies in the plan. Moreover the definition of graphical standard for each element of the maps legend can lead to the realization of very similar provincial plans, reducing the possibility of innovation in the communication process.

The table represents the compulsory information to provide for every vector thematic layer in the information framework such as description, purpose, scale, source, projection, datum, validity, accuracy, type, use, dimension, geographic extension, attributes, users, author.