

IHLET Research Institute of Social, Environmental and Economical problems



The *Tisza Watershed* is an integrant environmental, social and economic unit. Apart from geographical, ecological, cultural and social resemblance, there is a definitive interdependence among the inhabitants of the region (floods, water pollution, trade, migration, etc.). The extent of the Tisza Watershed is about 154.039 km², embracing five countries (Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine), its population is app. 15.7 million.

Due to the expansion of the European Union, this interdependence will get stronger. In response, the local governments of the region began discussions in 1995, and, after several reconciliatory talks, along with central governments of the involved countries they agreed in Szeged, 2000 about the need for a common background-institution functioning on national level in order to formulate and operate the IT and technological infrastructure required for concordance.

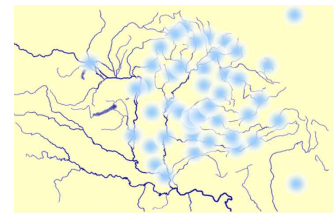


commonly usable spatial data supply, thus GIS based data management is the fundamental part of the information system. The basis of the operation of "IHLET" is to create a network of public benefit companies capable of setting the standards for decision making in local governments and to apply these standards, together with the involved local governments, in national level administration processes.

"IHLET" wishes to operate a monitoring system in the watershed, which (as part of the above mentioned decision support system) will provide opportunity to intervene on inter-national level in case of water quality problems, occurring ever more frequently.



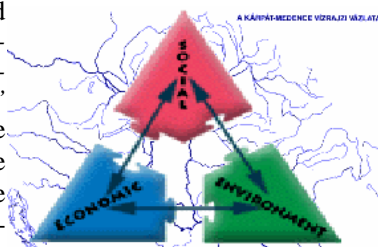
The network of offices currently developing with assistance from RETC will consist of 48 self-supporting, fully fledged agencies. In order to achieve this, their structure and legal status is about the same, regardless of national boundaries.



The Regional Environmental Technology Centre (RETC) is in close connection with "IHLET". It was founded to provide the infrastructure for co-operation. As a fulfilment of the covenant in 2001, RETC organises and plans

financial aspects of establishing local organisations on micro-regional association level.

The document titled „Johannesburg Declaration about Sustainable Development” confirms that the three, inseparable pillars of sustainable development are protection of environment, economic and social development.



The "IHLET" achieves goals which assist the involved settlements in creating their plans for environmental protection and economic development. The Tisza Watershed is not only a geographical unit, but also a system based on environmental, economic and social resemblances and interdependencies. The solution of common spatially related questions of this system inevitably requires

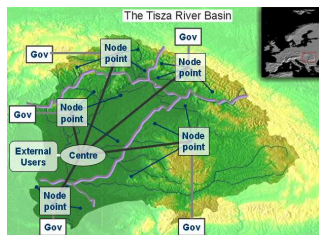
The cross-border project concept wishes to use primarily its own resources regarding the spatial and legal characteristics of the participating countries, in addition to which it counts on international subsidies as supplemental funding. "IHLET" aims for self-supportiveness through economy-organising and enterprise development activities, which means that regional and state subsidies do not help operation but rather R+D and infrastructure development.

On Nov 18th, 2000 the participants signed an international agreement concerning the creation and financing of the office network. The owners of offices would be the participating local governments, universities, civic organisations, and 51 % would be in the hands of "IHLET". Yearly operational costs of the offices consist of the following items. The local (founding) governments include 30 % in their yearly budget. 20 % comes from various applications in the national governments' subsidising structure. 30 % would come from international subsidies required for international (common) tasks of project construction. 20 % would originate from the "IHLET"'s business activities.



PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Establishment of Physical Infrastructure



The absolute fundamental development is the construction of the data-management and data-transfer system over the entire office network. Data will be managed on three levels. The central

level will include compiled and generalised data from the entire area, as well as supplementary basemap data from national datasets, themes, e. g. environmental, economic, social etc. and metadata. National level distribution points will process and manage data compiled and generalised from individual countries. These will provide access to national level thematic maps. Level three consists of local offices covering areas analogous to NUTS4. They manage large scale data (cadastre, urban and settlement planning, communal networks, etc.).

Creation of Spatial Data Infrastructure

80 % of data used in administration is directly or indirectly spatial in nature, e. g. address, registration number, regulatory zones, neighbourhood, real estate properties, use of public areas, etc. The harmonised, co-operative utilisation of such data based on network connections and data exchange would increase the efficiency of managing environmental, social and economic issues.

The aim of EU's INSPIRE and GINIE initiatives and the currently evolving EU regulations is to expand unified and conscious management of geospatial data, systems and the technical, financial and administrative aspects of joining. The region in question has little insight about the results achieved by EU in the subject.

Tasks to achieve: survey of conditions, know-how distribution, technical specifications, GIS development

Environmental and Flood Protection System

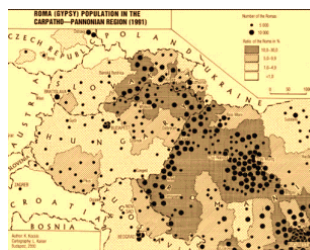


Flood and environmental risks in the region particularly necessitate unified watershed management. This network building from the bottom up includes a unified environmental monitoring

system able to satisfy special local requirements and

tasks. The participants develop this system together, as equal partners, which will monitor the conditions in the watershed, provides timely warning and guidance for prevention. The most important feature of the system is the cross-border co-operation of local governments and their associations.

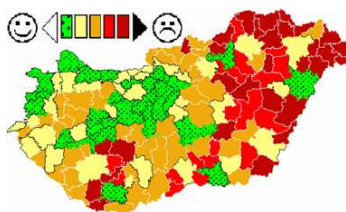
Cadastre of Socially Inadequate Residences



The region contains numerous residences that do not meet certain social requirements. The map on the left shows the spatial distribution of gypsies, the most influenced ethnic group. Many border neighbouring settlements have been fighting for a long time with the problem of rehabilitation of impoverished districts, eliminate unhealthy residences, to help the housing of the poorest. It is very important for local governments, as well as their associations and any other involved organisation to be able to access a precise, unbiased registry of areas requiring intervention, based on objectively devised definitions. Such a database would improve the settlements' ability to apply for subsidies and it would also help financing authorities because they could both rely on a system of criteria precisely defining areas worthy of financial support.

Initiated by "IHLET" on July 3rd 2003, Head of the National Habitation Secretariat in the Prime Minister's Office Lászlóné Csabai and under-secretary of Slovakia's Ministry of Construction and Regional Affairs Árpád Hideghéty, began talks concerning harmonisation of planning and measures for the elimination of socially inadequate residences.

Economic Information System



Most of the region is economically declining or stagnant. The aimed system will provide commerce, investment and promotion related data as well as analysis. This will have a positive effect on the viability of counselling, market surveying in the area, especially in terms of increasing the efficiency of utilising tourism opportunities of the region.

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