Abstract

Implementing GSDI/Global Mapping Projects in the Caribbean

Track: Global and National Spatial Data Infrastructure

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The rationale for the effective management of natural and physical resources in the Caribbean has been a subject of discussion in many fora in the last decade. The relatively fixed quantity and exposure of these resources to natural and human degradation are major concerns to the population at large. In an attempt to manage these resources in rational and sustainable ways, efforts have rightly been focused on the development of legislative and policy instruments. These instruments have shown little-known results and their impacts are sometimes difficult to measure because of the under developed state of the geospatial data infrastructure of the region. Thematic maps of natural resources and the physical infrastructure are mostly dated if they existed at all. The poor state of this important development tool is a source of concern to resource managers and policy makers. GSDI/Global Mapping Projects have presented opportunities for the region to revamp its geospatial infrastructure and many of the countries are taking advantage of the benefits of these projects.

This paper will review the opportunities and challenges of implementing the GSDI/Global Mapping Projects in the Caribbean with particular reference to countries that are currently participating in the projects. The paper concludes by proposing a strategic plan for the effective implementation of the GSDI/Global Mapping Projects toward a better use of GIS for management of land and marine resources in the Caribbean.

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