

NEWSLETTER

Colombia Planning Portal Project June 2009

Dear Reader,

This newsletter presents some highlights up to June 2009 and is primarily intended for people affiliated with the project. Please also note that the newsletter has an informal character and that its content does not imply official endorsement by IGAC, Sida or Swedesurvey. The newsletter and more information about the project can be found at <http://sigotn.igac.gov.co/sigotn>

Visit to the Governor's Office

On the project agenda for familiarization and advocacy it was time to visit Magdalena Departamento, which governs a part of the Coastal Region. The SIG-OT team was welcomed by the Governor and the senior management on the 28 May to present the project. After the presentation, a constructive dialogue followed and in the end the Governor expressed his appreciation of the project achievements so far of the way to access information for decision-making and wished his best for the future and finally encouraged his staff to attend training.



Staff News

We deeply regret the untimely demise of Jose' Albornoz, who passed away on March 13, 2009. He was with the Project from the start and was a staunch supporter of the GIS to be used in the field of poverty alleviation and conflict management. With his support, the SIG-OT Project was realized and was running smoothly until his last days.

Background

SIG-OT aims to organize the production, flow and dissemination of spatial information to support the planning processes at different levels of government in an optimized and effective way.

So far, the pilot application of the SIGOT with free access via Internet provides the following:

- ✉ Planning indicators, organized under five components: environmental, economic, social, cultural and institutional;
- ✉ Metadata provided for each of the default maps and the thematic layers;
- ✉ Information regarding almost 200 topics of interest for the land use planning, which permit to generate about 500 maps with national coverage and ?? Maps for the pilot region of ???;
- ✉ Possible to perform modeling and queries for spatial analysis.

In its pilot concept, SIG_OT

- ✉ facilitates decision-making and formulation of policies, and strategies for development plans by collecting and providing access to a broad base of land information available in the country into a single Web page.
- ✉ encourages the move from a sector oriented planning process to a cross-sector and integrated approach at municipal, regional and national levels.

Training in the Coastal Region

About 30 participants from 11 municipals and regional authorities in Magdalena Departamento gathered 30 – 31 May 2009 in Santa Marta. The purpose of the training is to familiarize the participants about the portal and explore the usefulness of the system in various planning activities. So far in the SIG-OT project 2,000 participants have been trained at national level and in the pilot region (Valle de Cauca, Cauca and Narino Departamentos).



Meeting with St Marta City Officials

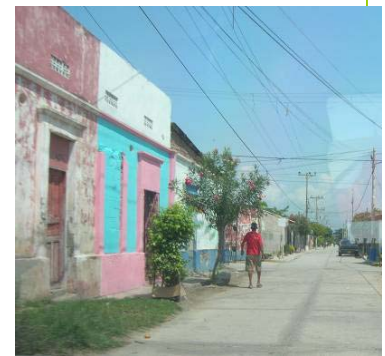


St Marta City is the largest municipality in the Departamento as regard to population, has the deepest port along the Caribbean coastline and shows great potentials for tourism.



The SIG-OT team joined up with a number of officials at the planning office to examine the conditions for planning activities at local level. It was very clarifying to understand that planning at local level often needs fast action to be taken in order to be appreciated by local decision-makers and the general public. The need for accurate and current data is therefore much urgent, however in a bit more detailed form than the SIG-OT pilot version can offer at the moment.

Visit to the Municipality of Ciénega



To find out the condition in a everyday municipality regarding planning practices and protocols, access to and use of computers, etc, Ciénega Municipality was visited. The municipality, once the birth place of the banana industry in Colombia, is now depending on fishery and has a troubled however slowly improving financial situation, seems to be a representative showcase of the situation for many local governments today,

SIG-OT Has Become a National Policy!

A most welcomed decision by the Colombian Government is the decision made by the National Council for Social and Economic Policies in May stating that SIG-OT, being a practical application of the policies of the Colombian Infrastructure of Spatial Data in terms of standards, metadata and web portals has now got official recognition as a *national policy*. It is truly an appreciation of all efforts made to create a corporate project shared by agencies and leading authorities at national, regional and local level. The decision will imply that the IGAC, in coordination with the DNP and the other stakeholders of the Project Management Group will design a strategic development and sustainability plan with a planning horizon of year 2019, aimed at strengthening the system as a tool that contributes to an efficient and timely decision making for authorities and planning bodies at national, departmental and municipal sector.



The SIG-OT is an inter-institutional initiative by a group of government institutions. In 2005, a technical cooperation partnership arrangement was formed between the **Colombian Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation**, and the **Swedish Agency for International Development (SIDA)**. The **Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC)** has been tasked to develop SIG-OT and **Swedesurvey** is assisting IGAC in project implementation.

For more information about the Project, please contact sigot@igac.gov.co