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**Prepared by
Michalis Petrakos, Liaison Systems SA
Photis Stavropoulos, Liaison Systems S.A.
Panagiota Bisiella, Liaison Systems S.A.**

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Authors:	Michalis Petrakos Photis Stavropoulos Panagiota Bissiela			Liaison Systems SA Liaison Systems SA	
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Contact Information

Liaison Systems S.A

BU Statistics

Acadimias 77 – Athens - 106 77 GR
 Tel.: +30 1 33.04.315
 Fax: +30 1 33.04.345
 E-Mail: liaison@liaison.gr
 Contact: Michalis.Petrakos@liaison.gr
 Web: www.liaison.gr

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is the outcome of Task T9.2 (“Dissemination Activities”), of Work Package 9 of the STATLAS IST Project. It corresponds therefore to Deliverable D9.2, as specified in the STATLAS workprogramme.

Chapter 1 focuses on the project’s dissemination strategy, by identifying:

- The major outputs of STATLAS which have to be diffused during the project’s life-cycle,
- principal target groups as potential users of the project results,
- specific actions which should be undertaken

Chapter 2 reviews the content and major topics covered in the STATLAS project Web site (<http://www.statlas.org/>).

Chapter 3 aims to present the STATLAS user community which is dedicated to all the project’s potential users as a Web based online collaboration tool and a shared access document repository.

Chapter 4 presents the project’s leaflet and the user-survey, which is currently under way.

1 DISSEMINATION PLAN

1.1 OBJECTIVES

Task 9.2 of WP9 is dedicated to the formulation and implementation of the project's dissemination strategy. Following the initial outlines of the project, the main objective of the STATLAS Dissemination Strategy (DS) is to increase awareness of and promote the main concepts and results of the project to the general public and especially to persons and organizations that would benefit most from them.

To achieve this objective some actions have already been taken and even more are envisaged for the rest of the project. All these form part of the STATLAS Dissemination Strategy Plan (DSP), which has been structured around the following three main axes:

- Identification of the outputs, which must be disseminated (methodologies and concepts, software products, etc.);
- Identification of the persons and organizations who would be interested in the project's progress (target groups). An important part of this axis is the identification of a number of potential users of the project's software products who would like to become members of the STATLAS user community as evaluators;
- Elaboration of an effective dissemination strategy (actions and timing).

Dissemination will be an ongoing activity for the entire duration of the STATLAS project. All participants to the project are involved in several activities, and will correspondingly disseminate their progress and results within the context of the DSP. This is expected to enhance the visibility of the project.

The present document presents the DSP of STATLAS, the actions that have been taken so far and the actions envisaged for the future.

1.2 IDENTIFICATION OF STATLAS OUTPUT FOR DISSEMINATION

The dissemination strategy plan calls for a continuous stream of information about the project's progress directed towards the target groups. This information refers to the methodological developments, innovations and the stage of completion of the project's products. The members of the STATLAS consortium review during their regular meetings the dissemination actions foreseen for the period up to the next meeting and approve the intermediary or final results they are willing to communicate in order to promote the whole project.

The main software products of the project, about which information is disseminated, are the following tools:

- **STATLAS as a map composition product:** this product will be distributed in CD format and will contain georeferenced statistical data along with the tools that will allow their presentation

on cartographically correct maps and their spatial statistical analysis. The product is addressed to expert users and laymen alike.

- **STATLAS as a map producing service:** this product is an enhanced version of the previous one. It has the same abilities and moreover it allows access to a data server from where data can be downloaded at will. Users will also be able to handle their own data with this product. It is addressed to expert users who need to produce, analyze and disseminate geo-referenced statistical information.

Other innovations of the project are the following:

- **A spatial statistical analysis tool:** many spatial statistical analysis tools have been made available in recent years. However, their use by social scientists (as opposed to environmental sciences and engineering that use extensively geo-statistics methods) is quite limited. Another drawback of current tools is that they are not adapted to their use for analyzing large databases. We expect that by putting together the data and the tools to analyse it will contribute to more widespread use of spatial analysis methods.
- **An XML standard for maps:** the project consortium is working on defining and implementing an XML standard for the transmission of geo-referenced statistical information and maps. Such a standard will become necessary in the future because of the heavy traffic of statistical information between authorities and might be incorporated in European statistical transmission systems such as STADIUM.
- **A database design for geo-referenced statistical data:** geo-referenced data have particularities that require a specific database design for their efficient storage. This design must moreover facilitate the combination of the data with geographical information (soil type, road network, altitude, etc) from other databases. The development of an effective design can lead, through its universal adoption, to a homogeneous way of storing geo-referenced statistical information.

1.3 TARGET GROUPS FOR DISSEMINATION

The targets of STATLAS dissemination can be divided into three groups, according to the use we expect them to make of the project's results:

Organisations that will use the multimedia statistical atlas as dissemination and decision making tool (International authorities, Governmental agencies and National statistical organisations): this group consists of parties who would use the software products of the project in their everyday activities.

The academic community and especially scientists from GIS, Social Sciences, Economics, Statistics and Information Technology: this group consists of people with distinct interests. They will mainly require information about methodological developments that are related to their scientific field.

Educational professionals, students, media personnel and the public at large: the lighter of the two software tools produced by STATLAS may be used for educational or information presentation purposes by laymen with a basic understanding of statistics and computing.

1.4 DISSEMINATION CHANNELS, DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES PAST AND FUTURE

In order to reach the target groups in the most effective ways we have selected to use several dissemination channels. Below we present these channels, the activities already undertaken through them and those foreseen for the future:

STATLAS flyer and/or brochure: a STATLAS flyer gives general information about the project's aims and the consortium and provides contact information for interested parties. A first version of the flyer was developed and circulated during the first months of the project. Based on recent results of the project and on the comments of the flyer's recipients we are currently preparing an updated version of the flyer. This will be distributed in conferences and workshops and will also be directly mailed to organizations, governmental authorities, statistical institutes and academics.

STATLAS web site: the project's web site is up and running since the beginning of the project. A detailed description of it is given in the following section of the present document. It is a dissemination tool, accessible to everyone on the Internet, which will also be exploited for the establishment of a discussion forum for the exchange of comments on the issues involved in different stages of the project. Software for communication and collaboration has already been developed for cooperation between project partners and will be modified for use by the general community.

The STATLAS user community: this is an application for the online sharing of documents and for online meetings of the consortium members initially, but of interested parties too in the future. A detailed description of it is given in a following section of the present document. Such third parties will acquire increased awareness of the project's progress through their participation in the user community.

User survey: an indirect way of promoting the project is a survey among potential users of its software products. We are carrying out this survey among users of similar products, developed by the consortium members, like the Atlas of Switzerland and the National atlas of Bundesrepublik Deutschland. We are planning to expand the sample of potential users with the addition of other parties such as registered members of the user community, organizations that have expressed interest, etc. The STATLAS web site can obviously provide facilities to carry out the survey on-line when the sample has acquired a large size. The questionnaire is available in German and English, while a Greek version is under preparation. It is designed to collect information on user characteristics, scientific interests, software used, scientific magazines read and on preferences regarding software like STATLAS' future products. Clearly an important result of this survey will be the collection of information about user needs that will help in designing the final software products of the project.

- **Scientific publications:** All the results of the project, as each stage is completed will be submitted in the form of research articles for publication to scientific journals and presentation to conferences, in the fields of Official Statistics and GIS.

Workshops / information days: The organization and hosting of at least two one-day workshops during the project life cycle, in suitable locations in Europe is envisaged. Each workshop will gather parties from the three target groups and particularly from the first two. Consortium members will be invited to propose participants and to attend the workshop. Moreover, the workshops /information days

will be announced to the target groups via all other channels. During the workshops the consortium members will communicate research work and results to other participants, while the ensuing discussions will provide useful feedback. The locations and dates for these events have not been decided yet but all consortium members are capable of hosting them.

Conferences: we envisage participation to conferences related to the project's theme and possibly the organization of a conference by the consortium. Such events are addressed mainly to members of the academic community but also to professionals involved in Statistics, Information Technologies, Geographical Information Systems and Metadata. Within the next eighteen months project partners envisage oral presentations and submission of scientific papers to the following international conferences:

- AGIT 2002, “Symposium für Angewandte Geographische Informationsverarbeitung”, University of Salzburg, Austria, 2-4 July 2002. STATLAS partners will present the progress of the project. The title of presentation is “STATLAS-Cartographic visualization of multi-national European statistics in the 21st century”.
 - HellasGI, “Spatial Information and Social Processes: European and Greek Experience in GIS” University of Thessaloniki 27-28 June 2002. The title of presentation is : The Contribution of Digital Atlas in the Dissemination and Exploitation of Spatial Information”
 - ICC 2003, 21st International Cartographic Conference, Durban, South Africa, 10-16 August 2003.
- **Cooperation with other projects:** Contacts have been established with a number of IST projects. An IST project on spatial data mining is SPIN!(Spatial Mining for Data of Public Interest). SPIN! partners have already expressed strong interest in cooperating with STATLAS and a joint meeting/workshop has been scheduled for this summer. Cooperation with Metanet, a Statistical Metadata network of excellence has also been established.
- **Press releases:** these short bulletins, which will describe the project in layman's terms will be published occasionally and will be circulated beyond the limits of the official statistics community. Usual dissemination channels for these are the publications of professional bodies and scientific communities.

2 STATLAS PROJECT WEB SITE

In the result-dissemination process the STATLAS Project Web Site (<http://www.statlas.org>) has great importance. Through this dissemination channel enhancement of communication and interaction with all potential users is intended.

The STATLAS Project Web Site holds also the core dissemination instrument namely “STATLAS User Community”, which is presented in detail in the following chapter.

Furthermore, the course of the project and current results, as well as the results of other dissemination activities (seminars, conferences) will be presented via this Web site.

2.1 Structure and content

STATLAS Project Web Site is structured in the following sections:

Home (What is STATLAS)

The scope of the project is presented in this page

Project Description

STATLAS project summary along with project objectives, description of work and milestones and expected results are topics introduced in this web page

Current Status

A description of results obtained so far.

Mailing list

Access to the STATLAS users mailing list.

Useful links, Contact us

In these links the user may contact the STATLAS project consortium via e-mail, and follow various related

Consortium

A description of the organisations involved in the STATLAS project.

Restricted site

Leads the user to the project intranet, which is restricted to the project partners.

User community

Leads the user to site of the STATLAS web-based user community.

3 STATLAS USER COMMUNITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The core dissemination instrument of the project is the “STATLAS USER COMMUNITY”. To be more specific, it will be a target group of invited representatives from national statistical institutes, governmental organizations and the academic disciplines involved with spatial statistics, coming from major European countries. Although the “STATLAS USER COMMUNITY” will be formally instituted and hosted by the project, its vision extends beyond the project duration.

The STATLAS user community is a separate area on the STATLAS intranet web site

(http://electra.liaison.gr/workplace/user_auth/user_authorisation.asp?project=STATLAS),

which will allow registered users to share a common set of resources and communicate in “private teams” (i.e. private moderated groups), in order to exchange information either asynchronously (i.e. share documents) or synchronously (i.e. conferencing). Each group of interested parties who wish to

form a user community within the User community will become a “user community” by having space in the User community Repository dedicated to it. The team moderator will be responsible for the registration of the team members into the User community, as well as their privileges (access rights) in the newly created user community. The users will be able to store/exchange their work using the user community’s facilities. Moreover, as soon as a user logs into the user community, by providing his/her ID, the user will be able to identify other members of the group, currently logged in, and communicate with them (conferencing).

Envisaged users include ordinary users (i.e. registered User community members) and moderators of User communities, as well as administration personnel (one administrator).

The conferencing facility, namely “User community Meeting (code: UG MT)”, is one of the main components of the envisaged System. This facility will enable users to concurrently communicate and exchange information, in a way similar to other Internet chat or IRC based systems. The primary aim of the facility is to enable the practical convening of working meetings, organised and maintained in a systematic way, thus aiming at minimising the need for “real” meetings involving the physical presence of the participants.

This facility is an integral part of the User community system, albeit inherently different from the rest of the modules, since it is focused on concurrent communication rather than asynchronous information exchange (as is the case for the later). Therefore, interactions with them or other user community components are minimal, being mainly restricted to the access of the User community Database for user authentication, usage logging and document exchange.

Following a virtual meeting paradigm, it will offer capabilities including, among others, a “meeting room”, a “meeting table” for the distribution of accompanying material documents, person-to-person messaging as well as the possibility to record meeting minutes. The system consists of a server and a client module. The later – offering the above-mentioned capabilities – is not a “real” local client; one of the major constraints of the project is that the client functions must be accessible through simple standard web browsers (i.e. implementing a thin-client architecture).

Apart from the conference facility, other facilities include:

- a document library, allowing the remote usage and management of a structured database of documents, including document metadata;
- an announcement board, allowing the posting of announcements, in a way similar to other BBS’s;
- a users directory, allowing access to and management of the user community users database;
- mailing lists, providing contact data and group e-mail to the user community’s “partners”.

The system will also include tools for the management of the User community by moderators (assigning new users, housekeeping of the user community repository etc.), as well as for the management and monitoring of the whole system by user community Operations personnel (administrator).

3.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

3.2.1 *Application perspective*

User community

User community will be focused in offering users communication and information sharing facilities; thus, it will be a totally new and different kind of service offered to the Project's User Community.

UG Meeting is one of the modules of the user community system. Although it is an integral part of the later, it is inherently distinct from the other modules, since it is the only one based on real-time communication and exchange of information, thus requiring a completely different architecture.

3.2.2 *General capabilities and structure*

i) General Capabilities

user community will be a distinct sub-system of the overall project Site, offering to users the functionalities and facilities required to use, customize, administer and operate a workgroup intranet, hosted by Liaison. Moreover, the application is meant to support co-operation (i.e. concurrent communication and information exchange) among defined groups of users, ranging from formal procedures, i.e. virtual working meetings to informal ones.

The system will enable users to share information within the group as well as with group partners and the public at large. Thus, a user community includes a private (or restricted) and a public area. User community operation will be primarily based on the provision of customisable intranet functions including:

- A document library, for the sharing of documents within the group and/or the public;
- A bulletin board, for the posting of short announcements, news etc.;
- Mailing lists;
- A meeting facility;
- A member administration facility, etc.

The Meeting subsystem must offer to the UG users:

- Real-time group communication: the users will be able to communicate by posting plain text chunks (phrases) as well as accompanying material (binary files) to a common area, constantly updated and accessible transparently by all UG members.
- Group privacy: Access to the aforementioned common area (the conference room) will be permitted to registered UG members only, or exceptionally to other "invited" Users.
- Interpersonal messaging and person-to-person communication: once in the conference area, the users will be able to directly exchange short messages (not displayed in the conference room) or engage in private chat.
- Distribution of accompanying material (documents etc.): Users will be able to distribute accompanying material (i.e. binary files of any type) to other meeting participants, by temporarily uploading files to a specific area (the meeting table).
- Meeting minutes: Users will be able to log the contents of the discussion in a text file and locally save that file.

- Moderator: The UG moderator will be able to grant temporary access to the meeting room to selected invited users, registered in different User communities.
- Operation and Maintenance: Operations personnel should be able to easily install, configure, operate and maintain the system through appropriate tools. These include usage logs, usage statistics as well as error logging.

The main concept underlying the overall system is that of a user community (UC). Each user community is associated with a specified user community. A user community may be viewed as both a confined group of registered users and a controlled-access area. Within this area, the members (users) may communicate, exchange information or publish information content. Communication and information exchange may be restricted to the members group or extend beyond the scope of the group to other specified users or the public.

Each user community will be administered by one or more users, assuming the role of the group moderator. Moderators will be totally responsible within their user community for user and information management. The moderator(s) will perform all required management functions including adding and removing users, enabling and/or customizing services etc.

The overall system management will belong to Liaison Systems SA. Interested parties can make a request to Operations by filling a web application form providing the scope of the work and the details of the moderator. Approval will result in the initial creation of the (initially empty) user community and transfer of the moderator privileges to a designated member of the group with the appropriate authorization.

ii) System Structure

The system structure includes:

- A user sub-system (US), offering access to and implementing the user functionalities;
- A moderator sub-system (MS), offering access to additional administration related services;
- A administrator sub-system (AS), intended for Operations.

All UG structured data (users, document metadata, announcements etc.) will be maintained in the UG Repository (i.e. a relational database).

iii) The User Sub System

The US will include the following modules, roughly corresponding to the offered functionalities:

- Document Library (DL): DL will be an application allowing users to upload documents (i.e. files of any type) and store them in a document database. Upon storage a number of document metadata will have to be recorded, such as authors, version, keywords, description etc. as well as ownership and access rights. Moreover, documents can be organized within the DL in subject-specific folders. Other UG members (or the public, according to specified access rights) will be able to browse document lists or query the document database and download or view the documents. A “soft-locking” mechanism (i.e. marking a file as “under modification” etc.), as well as a version control system, are desirable.
- Announcements Board (AB): AB will be an application allowing users to post announcements (i.e. pieces of plain text) in a virtual announcements board. According to access classification, these postings should be displayed to UG members and (possibly) the public. Postings can be arranged in

reverse chronological order and/or a subject hierarchy. The UG moderator is responsible for the management of the AB, i.e. deleting obsolete postings etc.

- Mailing Lists (ML): The users will have access to a searchable database of contact information (i.e. names, organisations, addresses, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail addresses).
- Meeting (MT): A conferencing (i.e. chat) facility.

The MT system structure is expected to include:

- A client module, providing the different user functionalities; UR's relevant to the client module concern functionalities provided to regular UG users, including UG moderators. The term client refers to the user view and is not meant to imply separate software installed on the user's machine.
- A server module, connecting different clients and being configured and operated by Operations; UR's relevant to the server module concern functionalities provided to the Operations personnel.

iv) The Moderator Subsystem

Additional functionality will be offered to UG members assigned as User community Moderators. These include:

- Member Administration (MA): The moderator will be responsible for the administration of UG members, i.e. registration of new members, grant and revoke access rights, maintenance of member database etc.
- User community Administration (WA): The moderator will be able to administer and maintain the UG repository database (documents, announcements, mailing lists etc.).
- Web Site Administration (WB): The moderator will be able to publish and maintain web content in the UG web area. Remote authoring of the content (i.e. via Frontpage extensions) is preferable. Moreover, the moderator will be able to choose among a series of predefined styles (themes).

v) The Administrator Subsystem

The AS subsystem will enable Operations personnel to perform top-level administrative functions, including:

1. Receiving and accepting new applications for User communities;
2. Maintaining a database of User communities, Moderators and Users;
3. Assigning Moderator accounts and passwords;
4. Monitoring system usage.

3.3 General constraints

All functionalities, in all distinct subsystems, including the AS, will be accessible exclusively via web-based thin clients. This is obvious for the US and MS subsystems. For the AS subsystem, web-based accessibility will enable cost-effective and simple administration of the system.

Access through any standard web browser (or at least to the most widespread browsers) is an important constraint, due to established policies as well as good Internet practices.

Nevertheless, restriction to specific newer versions of the different browsers is an allowable option, provided that these versions are widely used, in order to allow for more advanced functionality.

The client part of the MT subsystem should be remotely accessible via any standard browser without the need for installation of any client software; accessibility constraints

also refer to operation in a broad range of network configurations (i.e. dial-up with dynamic fake IP addresses, firewall and proxy protected LANs etc.)

The server part of the MT subsystem should be able to operate at least on MS Windows NT, while portability to other platforms (Unix) is an optional but preferable feature.

Where configuration of operation parameters is possible or required, the server part should be easily configurable by Operations, preferably via a web application too.

Where possible available technical infrastructure (in terms of both hardware and software) should be used and the need for additional equipment and software should be minimized.

3.3.1 *User characteristics*

There are three user communities:

- The main User community Users (for the US and MS Subsystems);
- The Operations Personnel (for the AS Subsystem);
- The general public and occasional User community users.

Users are assumed to be regular STATLAS users. Users (including UG moderators) are assumed to be adequately computer literate (i.e. the standard expected level of an Internet user). Thus complicated procedures should be avoided, while too many customisation and configuration options (which are rarely used) are not necessary. Where possible standard, familiar terms should be used in the UI.

user community operations personnel are assumed to be of a higher technical level. Nevertheless, friendly configuration, operation and maintenance tools are preferred over plain editing of configuration text files or complex logs.

The main target group of User community consists of defined groups of users co-operating within the framework of STATLAS Project.

An adequate level of familiarity of these users with usual web applications can safely be assumed, although it must be noted that many of these users may be novice or not possessing a technical background. Thus, User Friendliness of the MMI is a primary concern, which may be opted against advanced functionalities, if the latter cannot be made accessible in a simple way.

The same assumptions exist for occasional users and the general public, a higher level of application usage ability may be assumed for operations personnel.

3.3.2 *Operational environment*

i) Activities Supported by External Systems

- All UI will be offered by standard web browsers (at least Netscape Navigator and MS Internet Explorer). No additional client software will be required at the user's machine.
- A standard RDBMS will be used to store, organise and maintain all operational information, including UG structured content and metadata (such as file locations).
- All functions involving access to User Data, such as User Authentication, retrieval and display of personal user data etc. will reference the user community Database.
- The "Meeting Table" facility will be provided through a customised interface to the user community Document Library module.

ii) External Interfaces

All interaction with the RDBMS will be based on transparent modules such as ODBC.

3.3.3 *Computer infrastructure*

The system will be operating on a server running MS Windows NT or Windows 2000 Server and MS Internet Information Server. The typical hardware configuration required for a server concurrently used by an important number of users is assumed.

3.3.4 *Assumptions and dependencies*

The MT subsystem module is dependent from other UG modules, namely the UG database and the UG authentication sub-system, in some specific confined areas:

- The UG Users Database;
 - The UG Document Library (possibly, in order to implement the “meeting table”;
- Both these modules can be easily substituted by “internal” subsystems in case of them not being available for any reason; therefore the criticality of these dependencies is low.