# Editorial note

Cartography, just as with other disciplines, has had to adapt to rapid technological changes: hardware resources and software tools have improved on what they can contribute, increasing the speed of processes, the security of operations and the ease of their handling. In the Internet, powerful and ingenious informatics tools available 'on line' have come closer to an ever-more diverse range of users and widened their horizons, leading to unexpected and multiple applications.

In this sense the institutions responsible for creating the official geo-cartographic information of each country have seen that it is necessary to adopt new procedures, modifying their production systems and emphasizing the speed, quality and reliability of their products, within the terms of a tendency towards satisfying the needs of increasingly demanding users. Many professional persons in various disciplines of knowledge, a double role: that of user and at the same time that of creators of geo-information, which makes "cartographic communication" increasingly more demanding.

We therefore face an interesting process in which geo-cartographic information plays a major role in how territory is conceived and portrayed, enabling the combination not only of traditional interests in each economic sector, but also new figures acting in society which, added up together, exercise significant pressures on land that are becoming increasingly frequent in terms of the environment and sustainability. This is how demands have been placed on geo-cartographic information regarding its role. Today, those "cartographic standards" that dealt with the use of colours, visual design or typography are not enough. Current demands speak to us about a new aspect in which the new technologies are inter-related under new, modern and efficient mechanisms for electronic transmission, about standards under which the integrity and quality of information are assured, and, of course, about the human and financial resources which enable the territorial management at various levels to reach the objectives set. With this, we are referring to spatial data infrastructures.

Important programs such as the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI), the European Umbrella Organization for Geographic Information (EUROGI),

the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG), or the Permanent Committee for the Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas (CPIDEA) have become models for achieving substantial and potential development in the countries of the Pan-American region, so the Colombian Spatial Data Infrastructure or the Chilean National Territorial Information System Chile are clear examples of this tendency.

On this occasion it is Chile, as a Member State of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), that takes up the responsibility of coordinating issue N° 82 of the *Cartographic Journal* of the PAIGH, which is presented this time with a wide and interesting range of contributions from our colleagues across the Americas. While ending this editorial, the opportunity should be taken to recognise the hard work performed by Eng. Antonio Hernandez N., who has been in charge of the editorial coordination over the past years, so our thanks are due to him.

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