

# BCO

STAR-APIC NEWSLETTER - NUMBER 5 - NOVEMBER 2008

## EDITORIAL

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### EDITORIAL

STAR-APIC  
FRANCOPHONE  
EVENT 2008

PAGE 1

#### NEWS

PAGES 2 / 3

- STAR-APIC Belgium
- New customers
- Events

#### FOCUS ON PRODUCTS

PAGE 3

- So what is ELYX ?
- FME Server

#### CASE STUDY

PAGE 4

- Using web services to integrate GI into corporate systems at Department of Agriculture (Northern Ireland)



For the first time since the creation of the STAR-APIC Group, the Francophone users of STAR and APIC software gathered together in Paris on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2008.

The aim of the day was to share customer successes, discuss current issues (such as the EU INSPIRE program), and to introduce our users to our new product range, ELYX. ELYX represents the future development of the current STAR and APIC product ranges onto the latest technologies.

The numerous comments that I received and the amount of interest from customers who wish to migrate to the ELYX platform demonstrate to me how much this project was understood and appreciated.

This enthusiasm from our customers has increased the motivation of our development teams to bring to fruition the ELYX project that constitutes a major step in the future development of our Group.

This issue of BCO includes more details of ELYX and other news and events from around the world. ■

Issam TANNOUS  
CEO  
STAR-APIC Group

## ▶ STAR-APIC FRANCOPHONE EVENT 2008

### Thank you !

We would like to thank all the people who contributed to make the 23<sup>rd</sup> September event such a success, and especially the speakers: Gilbert Bardin (Ville de Marseille), Gilles Boulanger (Lyonnaise des Eaux France), Jean-Pierre Kinnaert (Région Wallonne), Jean-Michel Pignon (Communauté d'Agglomération de Poitiers) and François Salgé (MEEDDAT) for their professionalism and their high quality presentations. In this issue of BCO, there is an article on the new ELYX range which was unveiled at the event. ELYX converges the STAR and APIC product ranges onto the latest technology platforms. ■



For more information on the event  
(photos, articles) visit:  
[www.star-apic.com](http://www.star-apic.com)

To request powerpoint and videos,  
please contact us by email:  
[evenement2008@star-apic.com](mailto:evenement2008@star-apic.com)

# STAR-APIC Belgium

## A new general manager for STAR-APIC Belgium



**In August, STAR-APIC appointed a new general manager for our Belgian operations, Alan de Hepcée.**

After working in successful international companies such as Caterpillar, Volkswagen and Europcar, Alan de Hepcée moved into the cartographic and geospatial industry to

manage Ionic Software who are also based in Liege. After the acquisition of Ionic by the Erdas Group, Alan de Hepcée accepted a new challenge: to take charge of STAR-APIC Belgium operations.

### What motivated you to join the STAR-APIC Group ?

This is an interesting time to join STAR-APIC. The launch of ELYX is particularly exciting. There is huge market potential for this kind of solution which points the way to the future of GIS. The Group is in a strong position in the market; we now need to conclude this project, continue to meet our customers' needs and develop our strategy for the future.

### What have you noticed during your first weeks with STAR-APIC?

STAR-APIC has a very diverse and impressive customer base. I am aware of their loyalty to our products, and also of the opportunity that they each offer us to further develop our product range. This is a unique

opportunity and one of the main components of our success. The second most notable aspect of my first weeks is the commitment of the STAR-APIC staff.

### What do you think you will bring to the STAR-APIC Group?

Such a dynamic, enthusiastic environment is infectious, and is also what motivates me. I also bring an enthusiasm for challenges, my own vision of the GIS market and the place that STAR-APIC can take in this market. I arrive with strong experience of software publishing, project management and managing a geospatial company in an industry that is continually developing. I am looking forward to the challenge. ■

## New customers

### The Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg (CUS) renews its commitment to STAR-APIC

Following an exhaustive competitive tendering process, CUS chose STAR-APIC to implement its corporate GIS. The project valued at between 1.5 M€ and 3 M€, aims

to replace the current GeoCity system. The project involves both data migration to a common reference database and then migration of applications from up

to 15 different departments together with development of new functionality. ■

### More success in Syria for STAR-APIC

Damascus Reef Electricity Company, a major Syrian Electricity Company, has acquired STAR-APIC software

for the management of its electrical distribution network. This contract follows the tender awarded to STAR-APIC

in 2007 by the Aleppo Electricity Company. ■

### Mercator successes in the commercial publishing world

After an intensive evaluation phase, which included a pilot project, Mercator has been acquired as a cartographic publishing solution by the Swiss company media swiss ag a well-known publisher of street plans,

to replace its existing Freehand-based production system.

Mekkarto who produce maps for the Dutch Topographic Service have also selected Mercator.

One of the factors behind these companies' decisions to invest in Mercator was the requirement to keep pace with the changing needs of their customers and the industry. ■

## Other STAR-APIC reference sites:

### Local Authorities

- Cities of Pont-Sainte-Marie, Chambray-lès-Tours, Cerisay (France).
- The Communauté d'Agglomération de Poitiers (France) chose NeXt to distribute the Local Town Plan to the general public, via the Internet.
- The Communauté de Communes du Pays Bilurien (France) acquired the host GIS solution, Geocite.fr.
- Havant Borough Council (UK) acquired APIC-Shift.

### Engineering companies

- The Engineering Office SOGREAH (France) chose STAR GIS to meet the technical requirements of Moroccan ports management.

### Police Authority

- Borraine Police Authority (Belgium).

### Private Company

- The RAPL company (Rotterdam Antwerpen Pijpleiding, Pays-Bas) has just acquired the PipeGuardian solution to manage a pipeline that supplies the petrochemical industry of the Anvers Region, from Rotterdam. This new project will be delivered in partnership with GlobeZenit. ■

## Events

### Mercator Suite 7 introduced at the Mercator User Group meeting in Sweden

This year's Mercator User meeting was held at the Swedish Maritime Administration in Norrköping, a long-standing Mercator user. During the Mercator workshops on Thursday, the new Mercator Suite 7 version was well received by all participants. The users themselves then presented what they had been able to achieve with Mercator in the past year.

The input of the users during the wish-list discussion ensured that Mercator will remain the leading cartographic output system for the mapping community at large and continues to address the dynamic, digital cartographic needs of today's marketplace.

### STAR-APIC Police Conference was a hit

For the 4<sup>th</sup> successive year, the STAR-APIC Group organised on 15<sup>th</sup> October a seminar to introduce its police service applications. More than 50 police officers met to discover the CONSTAT, CRIMI, CRASH and DISTAR software, and their latest releases. Amongst other developments, police forces that do not have access to a cartographic map base are able to use the CONSTAT applications. In this specific case, the software is based on Google Earth® and the results obtained are very impressive. In Belgium, more than 36 police forces work with STAR-APIC software.

**More information on these products:**  
[www.star-apic.com](http://www.star-apic.com)

### STAR-APIC solutions in Madagascar

GEONUMERIS S.A., a service company based in Madagascar, are organising an open day on the 25<sup>th</sup> November in Andrainarivo. The event will highlight the range of software solutions available from STAR-APIC and our partners, TRIMBLE, suppliers of GPS and survey equipment, and GEOMENSURA, suppliers of software for infrastructure management and development. This initiative will bring together many attendees from around the Indian Ocean.

**For more information:** [www.geonumeris.mg](http://www.geonumeris.mg)

## So what is ELYX ?



A focus on the new ELYX product range which was unveiled at the Francophone event held in Paris on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Pierre-Jean Lautier, STAR-APIC's R & D Director, explains the concepts behind the product range and our future plans.

#### Could you describe the ELYX architecture?

The ELYX architecture includes a kernel (ELYX Kernel), that provides common services to a GIS desktop client solution (ELYX Office) and a web solution (ELYX Web). A key goal is to offer the maximum common functionality on both the "thick" desktop and "thin" web clients from a single set of source code. The functionality of the ELYX kernel is being made available as standard web services (SOAP and OGC) which can be consumed both by the web client (ELYX Web) and third party applications. In addition ELYX is managed by a single administration module.

ELYX Office offers a basic set of functionality for all users and an advanced set for professional users. The functionality available is managed according to user profile.

ELYX Web is a new web client using the latest AJAX technology. We aim to address the needs of users for intuitive and easy to use functionality that is easy to configure and integrate with other applications.

#### Is ELYX based on existing STAR-APIC products?

Yes, indeed; we didn't want to re-invent the wheel. As base for the ELYX development, we have chosen to use the latest software (APIC 5 and NeXt 7) to be integrated into a service oriented architecture (SOA). This architecture will support the use of the most modern and standard programming languages.

#### What functionality will be available?

The functionality of ELYX is defined by the market and our customers. It will be based on the functionality available in our current desktop products APIC, WinSTAR and STAR GIS. The limits to the functions that will become integrated within ELYX will be determined in collaboration with the users of our current products.

#### Will a mobile version of ELYX be available?

Yes, a mobile version is planned. A configuration for Tablet PC derived from ELYX Office (in a simplified version) will be implemented. The solution for PDA devices will be based on MobileSTAR.

#### We hear a lot about 3D at the moment. Will it be a part of ELYX?

Of course! We announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> September the development of ELYX 3D, a real 3D GIS which will result from the Terra Magna research program (Cf. BCO n°3).

#### How are you going to organize the migration of your users to ELYX?

Our users will be kept informed about the progress of the ELYX project. The managers of the support teams in Belgium, France and UK are responsible for supporting them and answering all their questions. In due course, migration of current licenses to ELYX licenses will be covered by current maintenance contracts.

#### What about the existing products?

During the ELYX development, STAR-APIC will continue to develop the current products and, as has always been the case in the past, STAR-APIC guarantees continuity during the changeover period. New NeXt, APIC, WinSTAR and STAR GIS versions are already planned for 2009.

#### What are the main dates for ELYX in 2009?

We plan a release of ELYX Office version 1.0 for the first quarter of 2009. Version 1.1 is forecast for the end of the second quarter of 2009 and this will include the first web module. We plan to communicate regularly regarding the progress of development. ■

#### For all queries, please contact:

Belgium - Christian Cabron:  
[christian.cabron@star-apic.com](mailto:christian.cabron@star-apic.com)

France - Roland Mousset:  
[roland.mousset@star-apic.com](mailto:roland.mousset@star-apic.com)

UK: [support@star-apic.co.uk](mailto:support@star-apic.co.uk)

### New FME server solution available

STAR-APIC are now able to offer the latest FME Server solution from Safe software ([www.safe.com](http://www.safe.com)). FME Server is a scalable and efficient spatial ETL solution that provides users with access to spatial data - where, when and how they need it.

With FME server you can:

- Enable On-the-Fly Data Transformation via the Web
- Create a Spatial Data Download Service
- Deliver Spatial Data as a Web Streaming Service
- Share Common Spatial ETL Tasks across the Organization
- Create a Spatial Data Quality Assurance Service

**For more information contact us:**  
[info@star-apic.co.uk](mailto:info@star-apic.co.uk), [info@star-apic.com](mailto:info@star-apic.com)





# Using web services to integrate GI into corporate systems at Department of Agriculture (Northern Ireland)

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is part of the devolved Northern Ireland Government, with responsibility for food, farming, environmental policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland. The administration, management and verification of over £300m of EU funding is a major responsibility. The Department has to ensure that farmers are aware of the funding available, and that payments are correct.

In 2004 DARD implemented the Grants and Subsidies GIS system, (G&S GIS) to help maintain a record of agricultural fields and comply with EU regulations. The G&S GIS is the definitive record of fields and field area in Northern Ireland. It manages 750,000 fields, and maintains a complete history of all changes. The system, based on STAR-APIC software and an ORACLE database, is accessible via a desktop application for editing and maintaining data, and a web interface for data query and plotting.

The data are maintained by a team of more than 40 staff in regional offices, with some 60,000 changes made per annum.

To improve efficiency and integration of IT systems, DARD has embraced the concept of Service Oriented Architecture (SOA). SOA is a software architecture where functionality is grouped around business processes and packaged as interoperable services.

From the outset, the G&S GIS was designed to integrate into existing DARD systems, such as those managing subsidy payments. Initially this was achieved via SQL access to the ORACLE database and regular synchronisation.

To improve remote plotting functionality and general integration of G&S GIS with the Customer Information System (CIS), a process to implement web services in G&S GIS was started. A G&S GIS report server mechanism has been replaced by a web service. This has proved very successful - significantly faster and more resilient than previous mechanisms.

DARD systems are required to record any conflicts of interest where DARD staff may have business dealings with family members. A central register of conflicts of interest is maintained and a web service made available by this

system. The G&S GIS now consumes this service to trap potential conflicts. If a conflict is found then the web service is called with details of the issue which is recorded. Both of these examples of use of web services to integrate the G&S GIS into other DARD systems proved relatively simple to implement and test. Once initial mechanisms were in place the development of new services proved quick and efficient. A new application managing Agri-Environment schemes is making extensive use of the G&S web services and it is likely that additional services will be added in the future. ■

*This article is based on a paper presented at the leading UK Geospatial conference - AGI2008 - which was held in September. For more information and the full paper please visit [www.agi2008.com](http://www.agi2008.com) or the Association of Geographic Information (AGI) website - [www.agi.org.uk](http://www.agi.org.uk).*

**For more information:** [www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk)

**Contact:** Danny O'Reilly

**Email:** [danny.o'reilly@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:danny.o'reilly@dardni.gov.uk)

