

Still looking for a (sustainable) business model?

Joint EuroSDR EuroGeographics Workshop

10 February 2026, NGI Belgium HQ, Brussels



- **FROM FULL FEES TO FULL OPEN DATA: SOME KEY DATES ALONG THE JOURNEY**
 - **BUSINESS MODEL UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT AND MICROSCOPES, A CONTINUOUS SUCCESSION OF INSPECTION OR AUDIT MISSION**
 - **FUNDING THE CORE ACTIVITIES, THE CORE ISSUE**
 - **CLOSING THE GAP A VERY HIGH CHALLENGE**
 - **THE SOLUTIONS DEPLOYED TO BRIDGE THE GAP**
 - **CONCLUSION**
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**FROM FULL FEES TO FULL
OPEN DATA, SOME KEY DATES
ALONG THE JOURNEY**

FROM 1970s TO 2000

- « *Your data/documents/informations are valuable, so **value** (and keep valuing) them!* »

AROUND 2005

- When **fees > public fundings**: the limits of the fees and non-discriminatory terms and conditions for a public body
- “Public colleagues: “*Hey IGN, we pay **twice!** Why should we work with you?*”

THE HITS OF THE 2010s

- « *YOU MUST find a new business model!* »
- « *Is it **still useful** to hold a French NMA when we have Google Maps and OSM for free?* »

2010 - 2011

- The first open and free licenses
 - For **Research** and **Education** purposes (all datasets)
 - For carrying out a **public service mission** (some datasets)

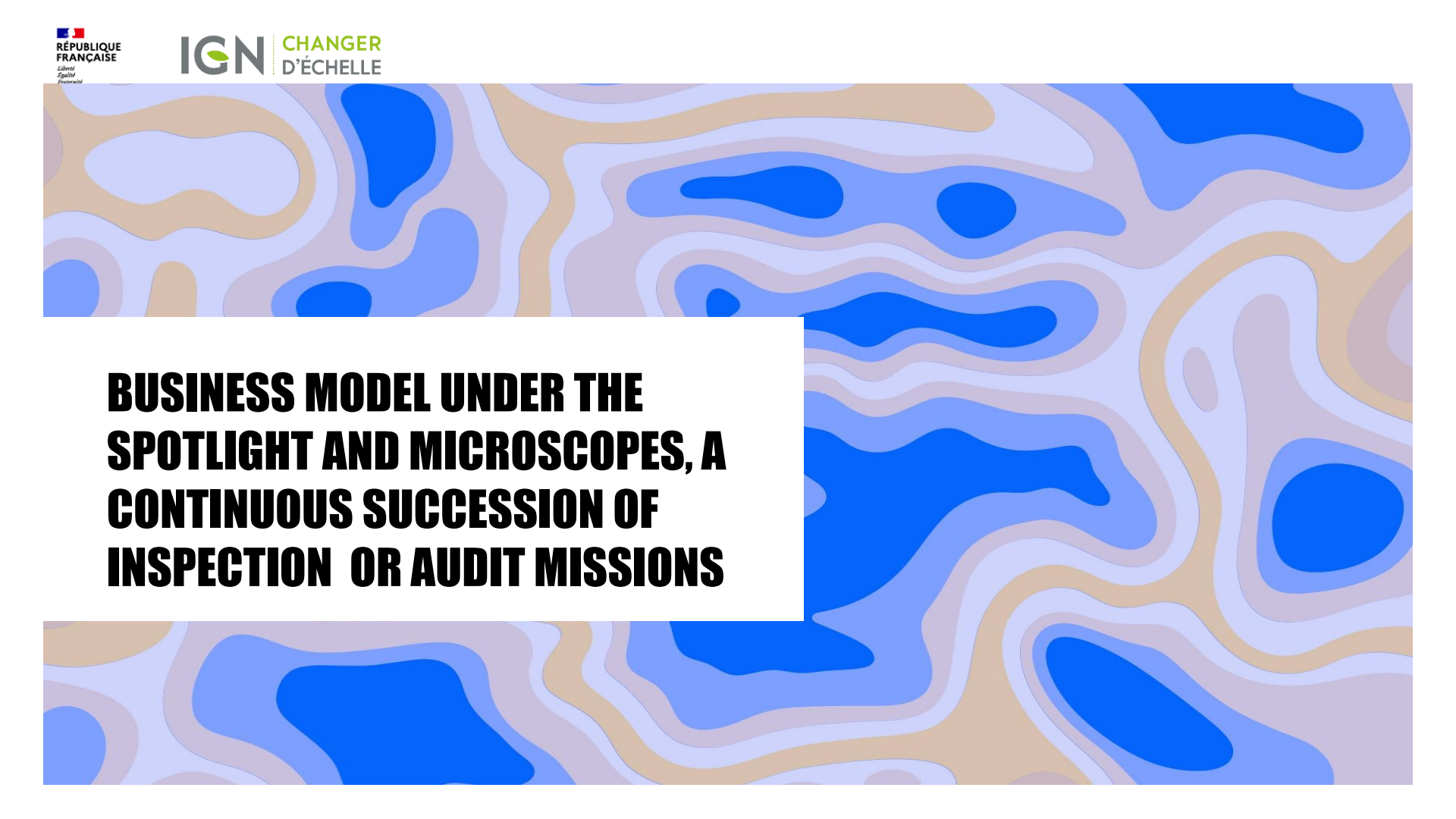
JANUARY 1ST 2017

- Entry in force of the French “Republic Digital Law”
- Use of Public datasets is **free by default** for all purposes (fees are the exception)

JANUARY 1ST 2021

- The switch (on our own) to **full open data**





**BUSINESS MODEL UNDER THE
SPOTLIGHT AND MICROSCOPES, A
CONTINUOUS SUCCESSION OF
INSPECTION OR AUDIT MISSIONS**

2013

- [Report](#) to French Prime Minister (by Mohammed Adnène Trojette): *“Opening up public data: Are all **exceptions** to the principle of free access **legitimate**?”* Open data and Government as a platform (API)

2018, A PIVOTAL YEAR

- [Report](#) to French Government (by Valéria Faure-Muntian): *“**Sovereign Geodata**”* (a counter-fire)
- The Cambridge Analytica scandal
- Unilateral and unforeseen [modification](#) of the tariffs applied to Google Maps services

2024

- [Report](#) (by a French Governmental Public Audit team) to French Sustainable Development Minister: *“**Business model** for Public organisations: the cases of **IGN** and **CEREMA**”*
- *“A financial support [to IGN] through an **urgent readjustment of funding rates** for 2024 and 2025 seems essential”*

2024

- French Senate Finance Committee [Report](#) (by Senator Vincent Capo-Canellas): *“an alert regarding the failure to take into account the underfunding of **IGN**, which is facing a **budget shortfall of 15 M€**”*



**FUNDING THE CORE
ACTIVITIES, THE CORE ISSUE**

UNBALANCED

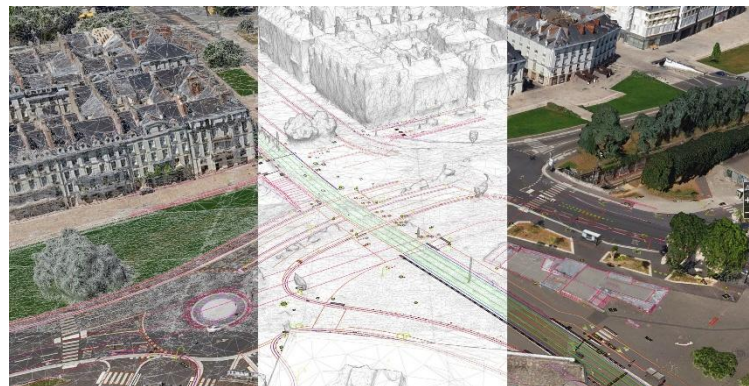
- The total costs of the core activities (Research and Education, geodesy, altimetry, orthoimagery, point clouds, topography and cartography) are not fully covered by subsidies for public service obligation paid annually to IGN

BALANCED

- Some projects are **totally funded**
- **Large-scale Land Use Land Cover** database: for Soil Sealing & Biodiversity Public Policies
- French national agricultural parcels database (for EU Common Agricultural Policy – CAP)

UNBALANCED (BIS)

- Other projects could be **partially funded**
- National **Lidar HD** project: 53 M€ out of 58 M€ (first coverage, ongoing reflections for a potential update)
- **Digital twins of France** and its territories (Junn): 26 M€ for IGN and its 13 partners to develop a POC within 3 years





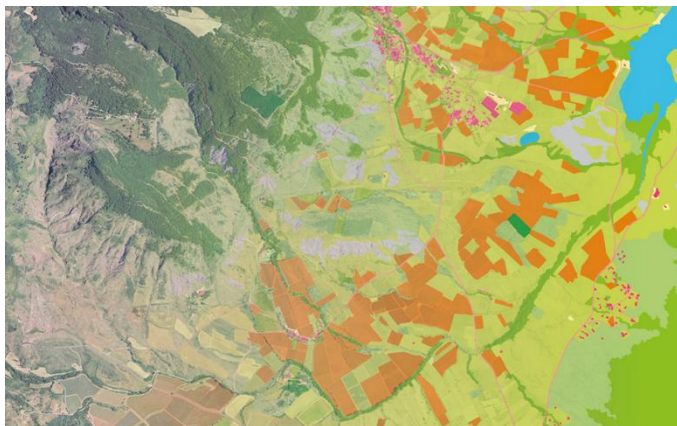
**CLOSING THE GAP, A VERY
HIGH CHALLENGE**

STRATEGIC POSITIONING SINCE 2021

- To support Public Policies, as the **key player** in **national data** to reinvent the map of all public policies

WHEN FRENCH PUBLIC FINANCE IS IN THE (DARK) RED: THE MALUS EFFECT

- **Cut** in IGN budget and IGN HR and... **cut** in our stakeholders budgets too





THE SOLUTIONS DEPLOYED TO BRIDGE THE GAP

PRODUCTIVITY

- **Automation** and **Geo-AI** (a task force of 30 experts in Geo-AI)

STRATEGY FOCUSING ON DIGITAL COMMONS

- Datasets: National Address Database, [Panoramax](#) (Streets View), Community sourcing (BD France)
- Digital tools: Géoplateforme, Local Data Factory, Digital twins (with a [partnership](#) with BGK)
- “European Open Digital Ecosystems” recent [consultation](#) by DG CONNECT: IGN promoted DC in its [contribution](#)

POLITICAL SUPPORT

- A “**circular**” from the **French Prime Minister** has been [published](#) in September 2025: this instruction invites French Ministries and French State bodies “*to make greater use of the resources and expertise of IGN France in the production, use and dissemination of geolocated data as well as services or hosting of digital content.*”

FINANCIAL SUPPORT...

- #crossfingers
- ... and a **recasting** of the offer in 2026: 6 bricks and 4 claims (#marketing + [Géodata Paris](#))

IGN, YOUR DATA PARTNER FOR PUBLIC POLICIES

READY-TO-USE OR CUSTOMIZED DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TERRITORY



Obtain regular observations of your territory



Use territorial core databases and have your own professional databases developed



Mobilize sovereign cartographic representations

MAPPING TOOLS AT THE SERVICE OF PUBLIC ACTION



Give your data impact with public service mapping tools



Mobilize decision support services



Make the map your companion for your discoveries and your actions in the field

TO INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY

- Satellites, planes, drones, radar, LiDAR to enhance frequency and resolution
- Artificial Intelligence and LLM solutions to speed-up production and enhance data processing

TO HANDLE DATA SOVEREIGNTY

- Data Infrastructure hosted in France (OVHCloud)
- Mastery of skills throughout the geodata production chain

ACT IN COMMON

- Open data by default and digital commons co-produced by citizen, public, associative and private actors
- Territorial data factory, to facilitate the co-production of harmonized territorial data across France,
- Datalliance network to combine the best of public and private capabilities.

DEVELOP EVERYONE'S EXPERTISE

- Géodata Paris, the French School of Geographic Engineers, affiliated with the IGN, develops initial and continuing education programs closely aligned with the needs of public and private stakeholders to train the engineers, data scientists, and surveyors of tomorrow.

The background of the slide is a stylized topographic map. It features various shades of blue and grey, with prominent blue contour lines that represent elevation changes. The lines are irregular and wavy, typical of a natural landscape. A white rectangular box is positioned on the left side of the map, containing the word 'CONCLUSION' in bold, black, uppercase letters.

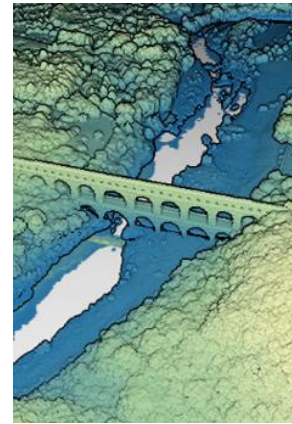
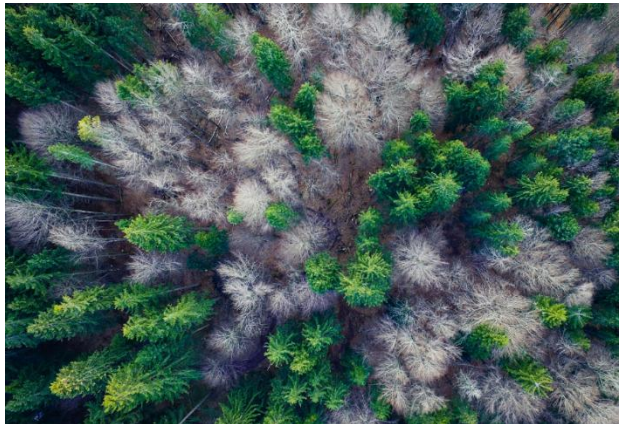
CONCLUSION

WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL

- (glass **half empty**)

BUT (GLASS **HALF FULL**)

- The issue of getting a balance budget is a subject shared with all our stakeholders “you must find a new business model”. And “Is it still useful to hold a French NMA” are not a hit anymore!
- A clear political support



Thank you for your attention!



Frédéric Cantat

IGN France

Expert in collaborative innovation and
collective intelligence methods

