

[News story: Geospatial Commission making geospatial data more accessible](#)

Today, the [Geospatial Commission](#) and its [partner bodies](#) have launched a new single Data Exploration Licence to harmonise and simplify access and use of geospatial data. This is part of its [£5 million investment](#) made to the partner bodies last year for data foundation projects.

The Geospatial Commission was created in April 2018 in the centre of government, as an independent, expert committee. We aim to unlock the significant economic opportunities offered by geospatial data, and to reinforce the UK's geospatial expertise on the global stage. As part of that, the Geospatial Commission is working with its six partner bodies to make the UK's location data more accessible and useful.

The Data Exploration Licence means that anyone can now freely access data held by the British Geological Survey, Coal Authority, HM Land Registry, Ordnance Survey and the UK Hydrographic Office, for research, development and innovation purposes.

This single licence will mean that, without having to take a separate licence:

- researchers will be able to access data held by five partner bodies via one licence, rather than many
- users can be confident that they are using the data on consistent, harmonised terms, and that the various datasets can be used, combined and delivered in the same way, subject to the same conditions
- innovators have access to the data at no cost
- users will be permitted to share some of the results of their work with others

The project was driven by a collective determination to change the licensing landscape and simplify data access for users.

Nigel Clifford, Deputy Chair of the Geospatial Commission, said:

This is strong and collaborative progress against the commission's mission of maximising the value of geospatial data for the UK. This makes geospatial data accessible for researchers in one place for the first time using a simplified licence.

This is one of four initial data improvement projects taken forward by the Geospatial Commission in partnership with the partner bodies to improve the UK's geospatial data infrastructure. This joint programme of work aims to develop consistent data standards, whilst improving the accessibility, interoperability and quality of these datasets.

To date, this joint programme has run four programmes:

- **Data Discoverability** – through this project, the partner bodies have published catalogues outlining all of the datasets they hold and have made this available on data.gov.uk. Enhanced versions of these catalogues will be published at the end of April.
- **Licensing** – this project has resulted in today's launch of the joint Data Exploration Licence. Work continues to look at ways to simplify licensing across the partner bodies.
- **Linked Identifiers** – this ongoing work is looking at how to increase the integration potential of different datasets across partner bodies and beyond, in order to drive both operational efficiency and innovation
- **Enhancing of the Core Data Asset** – this work led to the partner bodies sharing information and approaches on using third-party data, to enhance the quality of publicly-held geospatial datasets, specifically their own data.

The programme of work will continue through the next year, building on early successes and exploring new areas. The Geospatial Commission will say more about this programme of work in the annual plan it will publish this spring.

Professor John Ludden, CEO of the British Geological Survey, leaders of the licensing project, added:

BGS are always looking for ways to get its data used in new and novel ways. This new licence gives innovators a safe space to see what's possible with data without having to worry about financial commitments or complicated restrictions on how the data should be used. We're delighted to have joined up with our partner bodies of the Geospatial Commission to make this happen.

For further information, see the [British Geological Survey](#), [Coal Authority](#), [HM Land Registry](#), [Ordnance Survey](#) and the UK Hydrographic Office at intellectual.property@ukho.gov.uk.