

FGDC CAP Grant Category 5: 2011 Supplement to Final Project Report

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Agreement Number: G11AC20056

Project Title: New York Statewide Imagery Return on Investment Study

Organization:

NYS Office of Information Technology Services – GIS Program Office
(Formerly, Office of Cyber Security (OCS))
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Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program

1. What are the CAP Program strengths and weaknesses?

The funding from the CAP Program is targeted at projects (metadata, planning, ROI analysis, etc.) which typically are neglected when government agencies are operating with reduced resources. When budgets are cut and staffing levels are locked down, agencies focus on core services. CAP grants make it possible to look beyond this narrowed focus, to evaluate current efforts and to plan for the future. The focus of the different CAP categories is a definite strength.

2. Where did it make a difference?

In our specific situation, the CAP grant allowed us to supplement our staff with contractors and funded travel. Our own budget is limited for these types of expenses.

3. Was the assistance you received sufficient or effective?

Overall, FGDC support was sufficient and effective. We appreciated the willingness to consider and then grant requests for extensions. This allowed us to complete a higher quality study.

4. What would you recommend that the FGDC do differently?

The 2011 announcement included discussion of a “project kick off workshop” for Category 5. This was the ROI training, and since it was a “kick off” session, New York’s proposal had completing this as a step prior to most of the project. However, the workshop did not take place until October 2011. It would have been better if FGDC had kept this session as a “kick off”, or managed the session individually for each of the grant recipients.

5. Are there factors that are missing or are there additional needs that should be considered?

No.

6. Are there program management concerns that need to be addressed, such as the time frame? See comments above about the project “kick off workshop”. NY’s original schedule was built to avoid the busiest times of year for our core activities. This could have been accomplished if the training had been scheduled soon after grant award. Since the FGDC Training was delayed for several months, we had to schedule contractor procurement, data collection, and report development around and through peak season for other activities.
7. If you were to do the project again, what would you do differently?

We would have started outreach earlier (before the ROI training if necessary), and planned to use the survey mechanism from the start. While field visits were good for establishing personal connections with users of the imagery, they typically proved inefficient for gathering detailed costs and benefit data.

When interviewing counties, we could have selected a wider range of geographic locations and demographics.

In addition, an earlier start would have allowed us more time to develop a more effective strategy for collecting data from two sectors which were largely untapped in our study: the private sector (only partially represented by a few categories) and Federal Agencies.