

FGDC Invites Comment on Framework Data Standards

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The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) invites comments from all interested parties on draft framework data standards. The public review period will begin in July 2004 and will last 90 days. These draft standards were developed through the Geospatial One-Stop e-Government initiative to help create common geographic base data that are of critical importance to the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI).

The draft framework data standards are intended to establish common requirements to facilitate data exchange for seven themes of geospatial data that are of critical importance to the NSDI, as they are fundamental to many different Geographic Information Systems (GIS) applications. The seven geospatial data themes are: geodetic control, elevation, orthoimagery, hydrography, transportation, cadastral, and governmental unit boundaries. These themes are known as NSDI framework themes.

Framework data standards specify a minimal level of data content that data producers, consumers, and vendors should use for the interchange of framework data, including through Web services. Each of the framework data standards includes an integrated application schema expressed in the Unified Modeling Language (UML) and guidance to implementers on the transformation of the UML information content into a specific encoding environment. The application schema specifies, as appropriate, the feature types, attribute types, attribute domain, feature relationships, spatial representation, data organization, and metadata that define the information content of a data set.

Framework data standards have a positive impact on the overall Geographic Information Systems (GIS) community by promoting data exchange through common means of

describing data content. The standards should decrease the costs of acquiring and exchanging framework data among creators and users in Federal, State, local, and other governmental agencies, the private sector, and the academic community. The private sector (software developers and vendors) will benefit through development and marketing of software tools that exploit data based on these data content standards.

The FGDC will solicit comment on the draft framework standards from all segments of the GIS community. Comments that address specific issues/changes/additions may result in revisions to the framework data standards to ensure that the standards meet the broadest set of needs across the GIS community. After the end of the FGDC public review period, the comments will be evaluated and reviewers will receive notification of how their comments were addressed. Revised draft framework data standards will be submitted for further processing for approval by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). After ANSI approval and formal endorsement by the FGDC, which are expected in the second half of calendar year 2005, the published framework data standards and a summary analysis of the changes will be made available to the public.

The 19 federal agencies that make up the FGDC are developing the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) in cooperation with organizations from State, local and tribal governments, the academic community, and the private sector. The NSDI encompasses the policies, standards, and procedures for organizations to cooperatively produce and share geographic data. More information on the FGDC and the NSDI is available at www.fgdc.gov. Please watch the FGDC web site for information about the exact dates of the review period and participation in public review.