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FEDERAL GEOGRAPHIC DATA COMMITTEE

Standards Working Group

Policy on Endorsement/Acknowledgement of Non-Federal Standards

OBJECTIVE: To provide a mechanism for including adherence to specific, non-federally developed standards under the responsibilities of federal agencies as given in OMB Circular A-16 and coordinated by the Federal Geographic Data Committee.

CATEGORIES: For purposes of this policy, standards are divided into categories:

Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) developed standards – those standards developed wholly through the FGDC standards process.

Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) – those standards developed and published by the National Institute for Standards and Technology.

American National Standards Institute (ANSI) endorsed standards – those standards developed by a standards body recognized by the ANSI and issued as an ANSI standard.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published standards – those standards developed through the ISO standards process.

Open GIS Consortium (OGC) developed specifications – those specification (standards) developed by the OGC.

Other standards – those standards that do not fall in the previously defined categories.

LEVELS OF RECOGNITION:

This policy establishes the following two levels of FGDC recognition for non-federal standards:

Endorsement – the non-federal standard shall have the same status as that of an FGDC developed standard and, in accordance with OMB Circular A-16, its use shall be required by federal agencies.

Acknowledgement – the non-federal standard is recognized as a useful standard for geographic data capture, exchange, and/or processing, but it is not deemed to be of a level such that its use should be mandatory. Therefore, the FGDC shall publicize and encourage, but not require, its use by federal agencies.

STEPS TO ENDORSEMENT / ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Any federal agency or other organization may propose any non-federal standard for endorsement or acknowledgement

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by the FGDC. However, if a non-federal organization is making the proposal, they must get a federal agency to act as the standard's sponsor.

NOTE: Since the adoption of a standard by the federal government has both a policy as well as a budgetary impact, at least one federal agency must be willing to act as the sponsor of the standard's adoption.

The following outlines the steps of the process to acknowledgement and endorsement. Unless covered in the section of this document concerning exceptions, all proposals shall follow the steps below.

1. The sponsoring agency will submit to the FGDC Standards Working Group (SWG) both a hardcopy and an electronic copy of the standard along with a report stating the following:
 - a. The category of the standard and the level of recognition being requested, i.e., endorsement or acknowledgement
 - b. The specific reason(s) that the standard would be of value to the Government and other members of the FGDC.
 - c. Any restrictions, limitations, or other constraints that may affect the adoption and/or promulgation of the standard, i.e., copyright, license fees, applicability to specific technology, and so forth.
 - d. The name and address of a POC in the sponsoring agency. And, if applicable, the name and address of a POC in the proposing organization.
2. The SWG will circulate the proposed standard and accompanying report to SWG members for a (xx) day review/comment period.
3. Based on the comments from the SWG members, within (xx) days, the SWG will prepare a report and recommendation to the FGDC Coordination Group.
4. The FGDC Coordination Group will publicize the report and recommendation and make available the standard to the FGDC membership and provide (xx) days for comment by the membership.
5. The SWG, on behalf of the FGDC Coordination Group and within (xx) days of the end of step 4, will consolidate the final report and recognition recommendation.
6. The FGDC Coordination Group will vote to approve or disapprove the recommendation.
7. If the recommendation is for recognition of the standard and it is approved by the FGDC Coordination Group, the Coordination Group will forward the recommendation to the FGDC Steering Committee for final approval.

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8. If approved by the FGDC Steering Committee for,
 - a. *endorsement*, then the FGDC SWG will assign a “cover” type FGDC standard identification number¹ and include it on the FGDC list of approved standards as if it were an FGDC developed standard.
 - b. *acknowledgement*, then the FGDC SWG will include it on the FGDC list of approved standards, but NOT provide a “cover” type FGDC standard identification number.

EXCEPTIONS: Some non-federal standards will have been developed through a process that has already provided the FGDC membership sufficient time and/or reason to review the standard, such that all the steps to recognition above do not have to be followed, e.g., a combined FGDC and ANSI process or other similar means. Excluding the requirement for step one, exceptions will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the SWG and the steps that the standard must follow and the time allocated for each step will be modified appropriately. In a few instances, the FGDC may exercise its right to act as the sponsor of a standard, e.g., the FGDC metadata standard.

¹ A “cover” type standard consists of a regular FGDC standard cover page and a page that (1) endorses the standard as an FGDC standard, (2) describes the reason the standard is being endorsed, i.e., the value to the government, and (3) fully identifies the standard being endorsed. The identification number assigned to the cover standard is a regular FGDC standard number. However, no part of the standard is reproduced, nor does this endorsement imply that copies are in the public domain.