

Recommendations for the 2017 Transition

Geospatial data is a critical national asset that has increased the value of America's data resources and underpins key aspects of the economy. Dependence on and use of spatial data and services span all business sectors, levels of government, and public and private investments today. A recent study by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) estimated that the U.S. geospatial industry generated approximately \$73 billion in annual revenue and comprises at least 500,000 high-wage jobs. BCG also found that geospatial services deliver efficiency gains in the rest of the economy that are valued at many times the size of the sector itself with geospatial services driving \$1.6 trillion in revenue and \$1.4 trillion in cost savings.ⁱ These benefits create an important competitive advantage for the U.S. economy, and create a growing number of high-wage technology jobs. Geospatial data and services are now ubiquitous and integrated into almost everything we do, resulting in significant changes in citizen and economic behavior.

The U.S. National Spatial Data Infrastructure – the NSDI – provides a framework for the collaborative development of this critical digital infrastructure for the Nation. The Federal Geographic Data Committee – the FGDC – is the Federal interagency body that coordinates the development of the NSDI through development, use, sharing, and dissemination of geospatial data on a national basis. These recommendations provide a high-level plan for increasing the value and impact of the NSDI and supporting the Administration's priorities.

A Geospatial Agenda to Address National Priorities

The following recommendations have been developed through extensive consultation and collaboration with FGDC agencies, state, local and tribal governments, and with partners from the private sector and academia. The Federal geospatial community can serve as a catalyst to promote the success of these initiatives.

- **Appoint the FGDC Chair and Vice-Chair:** The FGDC is Chaired by the Secretary of Interior (or designee) and Vice-Chaired by the OMB Deputy Director for Management (or designee) per OMB Circular A-16: "Coordination of Geographic Information and Related Spatial Data Activities": https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a016_rev.
- **Update the national geospatial policy framework.** The policy framework guiding national geospatial programs and activities should be updated to reflect significant changes in technology, the expanded use and value of geospatial information, and the evolving roles of partner organizations. OMB Circular A-16 was last updated in 2002. Revisions to the policy framework are needed to better align Federal geospatial programs and investments to support key national priorities.
- **Support the development of critical national datasets.** Federal agencies are working with public and private sector partners to create and support a more robust geospatial infrastructure, which will have a national impact in addressing critical national issues and driving new economic activity. We recommend the Administration support intergovernmental efforts to establish a National Address Database, implement the 3D Elevation Program, and support a national imagery program.
- **Champion the expansion of the National Geospatial Platform.** Geoplatform.gov is the national capability for geospatial data and maps. It is a powerful tool for collaboration and dissemination of data that supports better governance through transparent accessible information. FGDC will work with partners to build on the success of the GeoPlatform by developing new communities and soliciting participation from public and private partners to expand opportunities to the broader geospatial community.

- **Develop new geospatial partnerships to address national priorities.** Under the leadership of the FGDC, expand and leverage partnerships with state and local governments, tribal nations, and the private sector to address critical national issues. Continue to align Federal data needs with data production at all levels. Building the NSDI must be the work of a team and incentives should be considered to create the best possible infrastructure.
- **Enhance the Management of Federal Geospatial Assets.** Promote the development, management, and accessibility of consistently documented spatial data across the geospatial community. FGDC will work with data stewards and partners to refine the National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) portfolio management initiative based on best practices and lessons learned.

Leadership and Coordination of National Geospatial Activities

The FGDC is a 32-agency committee that fosters coordination across agencies and with non-Federal partners.. The FGDC works across agencies and with other partners to find and support cross-cutting initiatives that leverage shared infrastructure and goals. Active leadership from the Administration will help ensure collaborative development of this critical digital infrastructure for the Nation and hold agencies accountable for full participation in achieving national geospatial priorities. The Secretary of the Interior chairs the FGDC, and the OMB Deputy Director for Management serves as Vice Chair. The FGDC Secretariat is housed within the U.S. Geological Survey.

Collaboration with Partners on a Strategic Framework for the NSDI

Over the past year, the FGDC has collaborated with partners to develop a new draft strategic framework for the NSDI, which reflects the viewpoints of the geospatial community regarding key opportunities for the new Administration. This draft framework has been developed with inputs from multiple sources, including forums for leaders of key geospatial organizations, workshops for Federal leaders, sessions at geospatial professional conferences, and public meetings of FGDC Steering Committee and the National Geospatial Advisory Committee. The strategic framework describes a broad national approach for the sustainable development of the NSDI and includes goals and objectives for the Federal government's role as well as opportunities and challenges for the broader geospatial community of practice. Following completion of the strategic framework, the FGDC will develop a final strategic plan and implementation approach in 2017.

The NSDI Framework and these recommendations have been informed by extensive input from the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC). The NGAC is a Federal Advisory Committee with representatives from the private sector, State and local governments, academia and non-profits that provides advice and recommendations on national geospatial policy and management issues. The NGAC has also developed a set of transition recommendations, which are posted at: www.fgdc.gov/ngac/2017transition.

Resources:

- Federal Geographic Data Committee: www.fgdc.gov
- Draft NSDI Strategic Framework: <https://www.fgdc.gov/nsdi-plan/2017>
- National Geospatial Platform: www.geoplatform.gov
- National Geospatial Advisory Committee: www.fgdc.gov/ngac

Contacts:

- FGDC Executive Director: Ivan DeLoatch (ideloatch@usgs.gov, 703-648-5752)
- Acting FGDC Chair: Tod Dabolt (thomas_dabolt@ios.doi.gov, 202-208-4109)

ⁱ The Boston Consulting Group, 2012, December, Putting the U.S. Geospatial Industry on the Map, accessed November 8, 2016, at <http://www.ncge.org/files/documents/US-FullReport.pdf>