

2006 National Spatial Data Infrastructure Cooperative Agreement Program

Project Title: NSDI CAP Category 3 Grant: Development of a Strategic Plan to implement the NSGIC 50 States Initiative in Oklahoma

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(1) **Project Narrative**

(a) **Summary of project activities**

In March 2006, Phase One of the Office of Geographic Information (OGI) strategic planning began by a representative of the OGI attending a workshop at the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) Mid-Year Meeting in Annapolis, Maryland. Phases Two through Six (assumptions, mission and vision, long-term goals, objectives and action plans) began after the Council adopted a proposal to hire a facilitator to guide it through the strategic planning process approved by the Oklahoma Office of State Finance and financially supported by a NSDI Grant from the Federal Geographic Data Committee.

The three-year strategic plan was developed using the NSGIC Strategic Plan Template to fulfill the requirements of the NSDI Category 3 Grant. A Strategic Planning Team (SPT) comprised of representatives from the Council and key stakeholders in the GIS technology community planned a needs assessment and two follow-up focus groups to precede the official strategic planning development sessions. The SPT ensured the planning process began on a firm foundation of a thorough environmental scan and a survey of the customers and stakeholders. Using the results of the needs assessment and the focus groups, the team met on three days to complete the environmental study, write the mission and vision for the Office of Geographic Information, determine the strategic directions, and identify goals and key performance measures

The comprehensive needs assessment was distributed electronically to 213 stakeholders representing the Oklahoma geographic information community. The purpose of the needs assessment was to find out who is using GIS technology, what the level of usage is, what the future need for GIS is, what types of activities or support stakeholders want from the

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OGI, how they believe the OGI should be funded, and if they support a statewide GIS conference. The 143 responses represented a 67 percent return rate. The categories of respondents included state, federal, regional, county, municipal, non-profit, private, utility, energy, education, military, and tribal entities.

The needs assessment was followed by two focus groups (in Tulsa and Oklahoma City). The invitations (75) were sent to those who indicated an interest in attending on their returned needs assessment. The focus groups were also a statistical representation of the population surveyed in the needs assessment. The focus groups processed five questions: a visioning question and questions about OGI's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The Strategic Planning Team that completed the strategic planning process is to be complimented for its dedication and effectiveness. Their thorough review of the current status of GIS in Oklahoma and careful planning creates a clear path for establishing geographic information technology in Oklahoma that will help numerous state, regional, and local agencies enhance the quality of life in the State.

(b) Key Accomplishments to Date

The main accomplishment to date is the completion and approval of the strategic and business plan. The Council is also working on the job description action plan which includes developing job description classifications for geographic information positions to be submitted to the State Office of Personnel Management for approval.

(c) Explain how statewide coordination has changed as a result of this project?

By involving over 200 different stakeholders in the needs assessment survey we gave the GIS community of Oklahoma a chance to participate in the strategic planning process. This process allowed the stakeholders to voice their opinions and concerns about the current coordination efforts in Oklahoma. This participation will help to strengthen the coordination efforts throughout the state once the Office of Geographic Information is fully operational.

(d) How inclusive is your effort? What have you done to bring new stakeholder groups or organizations into statewide coordination?

The GI Council made every effort to locate groups that would be interested in providing input into the strategic planning process. The stakeholders were identified by using a number of list serve, user group and meeting databases. These resources provide a fairly inclusive representation of the stakeholders in Oklahoma. While many of these stakeholders have participated in GIS activities throughout the state, many have not been active in the GI Council. By including these groups in the list of recipients of the needs assessment survey they had the opportunity to participate in activities that they may not have been aware of in the past.

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(e) What practices or activities led to success? What practices or activities have not?

The use of a highly recommended facilitator to guide us through the planning process made this activity much easier and more successful. We have also found success in locating stakeholders by using various user group and list serve resources that have not been used in past Council activities. Our biggest hurdle in the process was finding enough volunteers to complete the strategic planning activities. We found it difficult to be able to coordinate the schedules of many of the people who wanted to participate in the planning activities.

(2) Next Steps

(a) How will the project continue in the future?

The Oklahoma State Geographic Information Council will use the newly developed Strategic Plan to show the need for legislative funding of a State Coordinator positions as well as funding for the Office of Geographic Information. The Council would also like to implement the action items that were developed from our focus group meetings.

(b) Describe the next steps in your project?

Our next step in the project will be to implement the action plans and use the Strategic Plan as a guide for our future activities throughout the next three years. We also hope to use the plan to leverage our need for funding from the State Legislature.

(c) Where do you need assistance?

At this point our limiting factor is a lack of funding. Currently the Council receives no funding thus making it difficult to achieve many of the action items described in our Strategic Plan.

(3) Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program

(a) What are the CAP Program strengths and weaknesses?

We had a difficult time finding eligible "state" match for our share of the grant. We were unaware that state personnel positions that are funded from non-USGS federal programs can not be used as match. The two principal parties in carrying out this grant were funded through other federal program funds which greatly complicated the management of this grant. Essentially a large amount of state personnel time was used on this grant that was not eligible for match. This is confusing since the description of the CAP grant program specifically states that the NSDI CAP "is open to *Federal, State, Local, and ...*"

(b) Where does it make a difference?

It could have made a difference and may make a difference in the future in consideration of future CAP grants as long as the personnel involved with the Office of Geographic Information are partially funded with federal funds.

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(c) Was the assistance you received sufficient or effective?

The assistance received as a percentage of the total cost of the project was actually much smaller than the actual grant implies since a large portion of the personnel time spent on this project was conducted by state employees whose time was not eligible for match.

(d) What would you recommend that the FGDC do differently?

Define the eligibility requirements clearly on how federal programs can qualify for funding and that federally funded state personnel are not eligible.

(e) Are there factors that are missing or additional needs that should be considered?

None other than what has already been discussed in this feedback.

(f) Are there program management concerns that need to be addressed, such as the time frame?

Time frame was adequate.

(g) If you were to do this again, what would you do differently?

In light of the match requirements that precluded federally funded state positions being eligible would have caused us to seriously consider not applying for a CAP grant but to have pursued another less restrictive source of funding.