

# Standards of the Federal Geographic Data Committee

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The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) is tasked to develop geospatial data standards that enable the sharing of spatial data among producers and users and support the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). Acting under the Office of Management and the Budget (OMB) Circular A-16 and Executive Order 12906, and the E-Government Act of 2002, FGDC subcommittees and working groups develop standards for the content, quality, and transferability of geospatial data, in consultation and cooperation with State, local, tribal, private, academic, and international communities.

FGDC standards are developed through a structured, open consensus process; integrated with one another and with voluntary consensus standards, as defined by OMB Circular A-119, to the extent possible; are supportable by the current vendor community but are independent of specific technologies so they may evolve as technology and institutional requirements change; and are publicly available.

To date, the FGDC has formally endorsed twenty geospatial data standards. They include the *Spatial Data Transfer Standard (SDTS)*, *Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata*, *Cadastral Data Content Standard*, *Content Standard for Digital Orthoimagery*, and *Geospatial Positioning Accuracy Standards*. Another eighteen standards are in various stages of development.

## FGDC STANDARDS WORKING GROUP

The primary responsibility of the FGDC Standards Working Group (SWG) is to support the various FGDC standards activities. The SWG provides guidance on FGDC standards policy and procedures and coordinates standards activities within the FGDC and between the FGDC and other standards bodies. The SWG reviews and approves all standards proposals submitted to the FGDC and reviews all draft standards for compliance with FGDC policy and procedures. Development of standards mostly occurs in the subcommittees and working groups of the FGDC, but the SWG may sponsor the development of standards when there is merit for having an FGDC standard but there is no appropriate FGDC Subcommittee or Working Group to develop the standard.

## FGDC STANDARDS REFERENCE MODEL

The *FGDC Standards Reference Model* provides the guiding principles for the FGDC standards program. It defines the expectations of FGDC standards, describes the different types of geospatial standards, and documents the FGDC standards process, including the role of the SWG. Additional guidelines are given through a set of Directives that document specific procedures within the many areas of standards development.

## STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

FGDC standards follow a five stage development and approval process to ensure that they are created in an open and consensus driven manner, with the widest possible participation by the non-federal community, and that they are integrated with existing standards. At the **Proposal Stage** the SWG reviews and approves proposals submitted by any FGDC or other organization to adopt or adapt an existing or create a new standard. During the **Project Stage** a development work group is formed and the development methodology and schedule are established. During the **Draft Stage** a working draft and then a committee draft for public review are produced. At this stage, input is received from as many affected parties as possible. The **Review Stage** consists of a series of reviews of the standard by the SWG, the FGDC Coordination Group, and then the public. The standard undergoes revisions based on these reviews and the document is prepared for final approval. In the **Final Stage**, the FGDC Steering Committee formally endorses the standard.

## COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTARY CONSENSUS STANDARDS

OMB Circular A-119 directs Federal agencies to consult with, and participate in voluntary consensus standards bodies. To that end, the FGDC and individual member agencies are members of the InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards (INCITS) Technical Committee L1, Geographic Information Systems (<http://www.incits11.org>). INCITS is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and

directly operates under ANSI rules to ensure that voluntary standards are developed by the consensus of and materially affected interests. ANSI is the U.S. member body of ISO, the International Organization for Standardization. INCITS Technical Committee L1 serves as the U.S. Technical Advisory Group to ISO Technical Committee 211, Geographic information/Geomatics.

## HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

The FGDC Standards page on the World Wide Web directs the user to information on all approved FGDC standards projects and the FGDC SWG. The home page provides links to the current list of all FGDC standards with their status in the development and approval process, the *FGDC Standards Reference Model*, FGDC directives, and related standards activities, such as ISO, ANSI, and INCITS.

The FGDC Standards home page is accessed through the FGDC home page at <http://www.fgdc.gov/> (select Standards), or directly at <http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/standards.html>.

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