

National Geospatial Advisory Committee
OMB Circular A-16 Subcommittee Summary Report
December 2012

Subcommittee Composition

Members:

Kim Nelson (Chair)
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Dave Cowen
Dave DiSera
Randy Johnson
Jerry Johnston
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Participating Subject Matter Experts:

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Subcommittee Guidance

The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) provided guidance to the NGAC in April 2012, describing topics for NGAC review and feedback. The FGDC guidance included the following section on the OMB Circular A-16 Supplemental Guidance:

“Provide feedback and comment on the revised Circular A-16 data themes that were approved by the FGDC Steering Committee in 2011. The FGDC is requesting that the NGAC provide its perspective on these revisions, including the following questions:

- Are there significant gaps or omissions in the revised data themes and associated datasets? Are there gaps in the initial groups of core datasets recommended by Federal agencies under the 17 data themes?
- How can State, local, and tribal governments, as well as other stakeholders, contribute most effectively to implement the development of the revised data themes and associated datasets?
- How can stakeholders and communities of interest contribute to the development of sustainable models for data theme and dataset development and maintenance?”

Background

The OMB Circular A-16 Supplemental Guidance document, released November 10, 2010, further defines and clarifies selected elements of OMB Circular A-16 to facilitate the adoption and implementation of a coordinated and effective Federal geospatial asset management capability that will improve support of mission-critical business requirements of the Federal Government and its stakeholders.

The Guidance’s primary focus is on geospatial data as a capital asset. It provides the foundation for a Portfolio Management approach of Federal geospatial datasets of National Significance - a National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) Portfolio comprised of National Geospatial Data Asset Themes (NGDA Themes) and their associated National Geospatial Data Asset Datasets (NGDA Datasets). Elements clarified by the Supplemental Guidance include: the Geospatial Management Approach, Portfolio Management roles and responsibilities, the process for updating themes, and an outline of the Portfolio Management Investment Strategy.

Under OMB Circular A-16 there were 34 themes. There was great variability in the scope of the 34 themes with some actually being datasets and others being what would become multiple themes. The themes have been consolidated into 17 themes for Portfolio Management (and are being further consolidated to 16 themes). The FGDC Steering Committee approved those 17 themes and their definitions.

Discussion

The subcommittee reviewed the A-16-related documents provided by the FGDC and conducted several meetings with the full subcommittee and subject matter experts to discuss and provide feedback. A summary of the feedback was provided at the September 2012 NGAC meeting.

General Comments

- There was general support for the 17 Themes in the new A-16 Guidance
- Comments received focused primarily on sub-themes and data sets. Key suggestions included the following:
 - Need for aviation data sets as part of transportation theme
 - Domestic digital aeronautical data
 - Vertical obstruction data
 - Real Property Theme needs a new subcategory for private property in addition to public property
 - Location should be called Location Names or Named Locations and should include both formal and informal names.
 - Several data sets are attributes of parcels, rather than separate data sets.
 - There needs to be an increased focus on imagery, particularly a need to address the public domain imagery programs (i.e. Imagery for the Nation) and the commercial imagery options, with perhaps a different agency serving as lead since DOI, USGS has focused on this issue.

Potential Next Steps for Further Subcommittee Review

Through discussions with US Government SMEs, the subcommittee believes the following topics represent potential areas for further review and discussion:

- Selecting a Dataset and process for review to recommend best practices to ensure adequate participation by user groups.
- Potential follow-up questions from FGDC regarding response to GAO review of Federal geospatial programs (including A-16/portfolio management activities).

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Nelson, Chair
NGAC A-16 Subcommittee