

## **Federal Geographic Data Committee Steering Committee Charter**

### **Purpose**

This Charter establishes the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Steering Committee as the policy-level interagency group responsible for providing leadership and direction in support of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-16 related activities and the development of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The Steering Committee's central focus is to provide the executive leadership for the coordination of federal geospatial activities between, among, and within agencies. The FGDC shall also seek to involve state, local and tribal governments, academia, the private sector, professional societies, and others to aid in the development and implementation of the NSDI. Such involvement will be conducted in compliance with the applicable requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Coordination of geospatial investments and activities is essential in order to eliminate duplication of effort and data, avoid redundant expenditures, reduce resources spent on unfunded mandates, leverage geospatial investments, accelerate the development of electronic government to meet the needs and expectations of citizens and agency programmatic mandates, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public management.

### **Authority**

This Steering Committee is created pursuant to the authority granted to the FGDC by OMB Circular A-16 and Executive Order 12906.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Steering Committee is responsible for policy-level recommendations for guidance of federal geospatial activities and interagency coordination and providing direction for the implementation of the NSDI, in accordance with existing law, statute, and policy. The E-Government Act of 2002 and the subsequent OMB implementation guidance provide additional responsibilities to the FGDC to foster and guide the development of common protocols for geographic information.

The Steering Committee's Chair is the Secretary of the Department of the Interior. The Deputy Director for Management, OMB, serves as Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair may select designees to serve on their behalf. All agencies responsible for NSDI spatial data themes are required to be members of the FGDC. Per OMB Memorandum M-06-07, "Designation of a Senior Agency Official for Geospatial Information" (March 3, 2006). Steering Committee members shall be the policy-level official designated as Senior Agency Official for Geospatial Information for each member agency.

The responsibilities of the Steering Committee members include:

- Overseeing coordination of the member agency's acquisition, management, development, maintenance, documentation, and dissemination of geospatial data using the National Spatial Data Clearinghouse and Geospatial One-Stop portal
- Overseeing coordination of geospatial investment management
- Attending all FGDC Steering Committee meetings (or sending a designated alternate)
- Voting on the adoption of FGDC standards and decisions
- Promoting agency compliance with FGDC standards and responsibilities
- Promoting the allocation of agency resources to fulfill the responsibilities of effective spatial data collection, production, and stewardship
- Ensuring the communication of key national geospatial activities within the agency and with the greater FGDC Community
- Appointing an agency representative and alternate to serve on the Coordination Group of the FGDC, one vote per agency
- Appointing representatives to lead or serve on FGDC subcommittees and/or working groups
- Promoting the benefits of coordinating and partnering among federal agencies in the development of the NSDI within the larger agency
- Serving as a champion for the use, value, and benefits of geospatial information in decision making and in the business of government
- Collaborating with the agency Chief Information Officer to ensure the agency leverages its cumulative geospatial information investments to benefit agency-wide business processes and support information technology programs.

### **Membership**

Steering Committee membership is designed to facilitate coordination among federal agencies that produce, maintain or use spatial data either directly or indirectly in the fulfillment of their missions. All agencies listed in Appendix E of OMB Circular A-16 are required to be members of the Steering Committee. The current member agencies are:

Department of Agriculture  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense  
Department of Energy  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Department of the Interior  
Department of Justice  
Department of State  
Department of Transportation  
Environmental Protection Agency

Federal Communications Commission\*  
General Services Administration  
Library of Congress  
National Archives and Records Administration  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
National Capital Planning Commission\*  
National Science Foundation  
Office of Management and Budget  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
(\**Non-voting members*)

Federal departments or agencies that are not members of the FGDC but have significant activities in geographic information or spatial data collection or use may request membership in writing to the Chair of the FGDC. Upon acceptance, they assume the same responsibilities and privileges as other members of the FGDC. In some cases agencies may serve as non-voting members.

### **Meetings and Decision Making**

The FGDC Steering Committee meets three to four times per year, as agenda items requiring action arise. Meetings are open to all interested parties. At the discretion of the Chair and Vice-chair, additional meetings may be called for emergencies and/or to address immediate issues of national significance requiring special geospatial support and coordination. The FGDC Secretariat will arrange the meetings. Minutes documenting action items and responsibilities are circulated to all members following the meetings. Meeting announcements and minutes will be posted on the FGDC website ([www.fgdc.gov](http://www.fgdc.gov)). A quorum is not required for meetings to take place. Members unable to attend will send the agencies' designated alternates to vote their proxies. Alternates must be able to make commitments for their organizations.

Decisions will be made at scheduled Steering Committee meetings, during teleconferences, and by electronic ballot, as appropriate. Meetings and teleconferences will be announced in advance and conducted in accordance with a published agenda. For decisions made at scheduled meetings and teleconferences, a quorum of members must be present. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the voting members. If a quorum is not present, decisions will be tabled or another method for reaching them will be implemented. Options may include decisions by the Chair and Vice-Chair, by an appointed team, or by electronic ballot. Any decisions made without a quorum present may be reviewed by the Steering Committee at subsequent meetings.

The preferred process for decision-making regarding policy recommendations, controversial issues and commitment of agency resources is by member roll call, with a written record of votes. Each member is entitled to one vote. As deemed appropriate by the Chair or Vice-Chair, consensus may be used as a non-binding method to provide a sense of group opinion or a qualitative measure on minor issues. If the Steering

Committee vote is tied or it is unable to reach consensus, the issue will be decided by the option of the Chair. Member agencies shall strive to implement Steering Committee decisions consistent with the intent of OMB Circular A-16 guidance for "Agency Responsibilities and Reporting Requirements."

In the case of an electronic ballot, a decision will be considered valid and a quorum achieved when two-thirds of the voting members have cast their votes by the stated deadline. A simple majority of ballots cast will determine the outcome.

### **FGDC Secretariat**

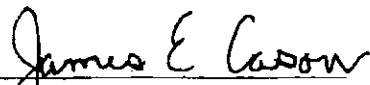
The Department of the Interior provides administrative support to the FGDC. FGDC Secretariat Staff will be assigned to support the Steering Committee to maximize productivity at meetings. Secretariat staff responsibilities in support of the Steering Committee include:

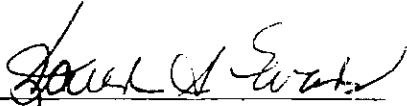
- Developing and vetting meeting agendas
- Consolidating and distributing materials for Steering Committee member review
- Taking and distributing meeting minutes
- Managing all administrative requirements associated with scheduling and conducting meetings
- Undertaking staff analysis, technical development and other activities on behalf of the Coordination Group
- Providing notification and read-ahead materials on issues requiring a vote. Advance materials on issues requiring a vote should be provided one month in advance of meetings, if possible
- Maintaining up-to-date membership lists for the FGDC Steering Committee, Coordination Group, subcommittees, and working groups on the FGDC website.

**Approval**

The Associate Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior and the Administrator, Office of E-Government and Information Technology of the Office of Management and Budget have been designated as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the FGDC Steering Committee.

This Charter will remain in effect until amended or replaced. Any amendments or revisions to the Charter will be posted on the FGDC website ([www.fgdc.gov](http://www.fgdc.gov)).

 8/18/08  
**James E. Cason, Chair**      **Date**  
**FGDC Steering Committee**  
 Associate Deputy Secretary  
 U.S. Department of the Interior

 8/27/08  
**Karen S. Evans, Vice-Chair**      **Date**  
**FGDC Steering Committee**  
 Administrator, Office of E-Government  
 and Information Technology  
 Office of Management and Budget