

FGDC Annual Report to OMB

Format for Agency Reports – FY 2004

Part B

LEAD AGENCY/BUREAU AND/OR SUBCOMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP REPORT (Agencies with Lead Responsibilities Assigned under Circular A-16 in Appendix E - <http://www.fgdc.gov/publications/a16final.html#appendix>) (Please provide a separate report for each activity for which you have the lead)

1. Program/Activity Name:

FGDC Standards Working Group (<http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/standards.html>)

2. What are the specific federal programs this data supports?

The FGDC Standards Working Group does not have *direct* responsibility for data themes; rather, it provides guidance on FGDC standards policy and procedures, facilitates coordination between FGDC subcommittees and other organizations having overlapping standards activities, and reviews and makes recommendations on the approval of standards proposals, draft standards for public review, and draft standards for FGDC endorsement.

3. Uses of Data: How does your data benefit customers and support agency missions?

ISO, the International Organization for Standardization, describes standards as “documented agreements containing technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics, to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose.” Geospatial data standards developed and endorsed through the FGDC standards process provide common descriptions of objects, features, or items and thereby promote interoperability among automated geospatial information systems. FGDC Standards apply to, and are mandatory for, Federal Agencies as described in OMB Circulars A-11 and A-16. As FGDC standards are publicly available and do not contain any copyrights or other limitations on their use or reproduction, many non-Federal organizations choose to adopt these standards in order to promote data sharing and to save time and effort in developing their own standards.

4. Charter/Plan: Do you have a current charter or plan for collection? If so - please describe (include how recently the charter/plan was implemented and whether it is in need of update).

The charter of the FGDC Standards Working Group may be viewed at <http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/organization/swgcharter.html>. The NSDI Future Directions initiative and greater reliance on standards being developed through voluntary consensus standard organizations (for example, framework data standards being developed through the ANSI/INCITS process) may necessitate review and update of the FGDC Standards Working Group charter.

5. Performance Measures: Does your agency have performance measures for your data theme? If so, please list the measures and whether you achieved your goals.

FGDC Standards directives (see <http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/directives/directives.html>) assign fixed periods of time for the FGDC Standards Working Group has to review proposals or draft standards, whereas the standards development teams have no such constraints. The time it takes to develop standards has been an issue for management. The FGDC Standards Working Group will recommend timelines for standards development teams to develop standards, adjudicate comments from public review, and prepare the final draft for FGDC endorsement.

6. Metadata Status: Is metadata discoverable and served through the NSDI Clearinghouse? What percentage of this theme's data has metadata and is in a Clearinghouse node?

The FGDC Standards Working Group does not have direct responsibility for data, nor does it have direct responsibility for collecting metadata and serving metadata through the NSDI clearinghouse. The Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (version 2.0), FGDC-STD-001-1998, was developed through the FGDC standards process and endorsed by the FGDC, as were the following profiles and extensions:

- Biological Data Profile
- Metadata Profile for Shoreline Data
- Extensions for Remote Sensing Metadata

The FGDC Standards Working Group provided valuable support in the development of all these standards, as described in item 2.

7. Standards: What is the status of this theme's data, process, transfer, and classification standards?

A complete list of standards that have been endorsed or are being developed through the FGDC standards process may be found at <http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/status/textstatus.html>.

8. Progress: List FY 2004 activities/progress to date (quantify where possible).

- Revision of *Geospatial Positioning Accuracy Standards, Part 3: National Standard for Spatial Data Accuracy*, FGDC-STD-007.3-1998 in progress.
- Preparation of a draft *Shoreline Data Content Standard* in work; delivery to FGDC Standards Working Group for pre-public review expected in early March 2005.

9. Participation: List participating Federal agencies.

EPA, NGA, USGS, USDA, DHS/FEMA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NASA, BLM, NOAA, Census

10. Planned Activities: What are your planned activities for FY05?

- The FGDC Standards Manager, who chairs the FGDC Standards Working Group, will spend much of the first half of CY 2005 managing the effort that began through Geospatial One-Stop and was later transferred to FGDC to secure ANSI approval of framework data standards.
- The FGDC Standards Manager is leading a NSDI Future Directions action item to identify and prioritize additional data themes of national importance that require standards and begin standards development for these themes.
- Secure FGDC Steering Committee endorsement of proposed policy on recognition of non-Federally authored standards.
- Develop guidelines for implementing the policy on recognition of non-Federally authored standards.
- Secure FGDC Steering Committee endorsement of *Geospatial Positioning Accuracy Standard, Part 5: Standard for Hydrographic Surveys and Nautical Charts*.
- Release draft *Shoreline Data Content Standard* for public review.
- Obtain commitments from agencies and individuals to develop standards for additional data themes of national importance before submitting a list of data themes requiring standards for approval by the FGDC Coordination Group and FGDC Steering Committee.

11. Policy: Do you have a formal agency policy in place for full and open access or data sharing? Are you able to fulfill this policy and provide public access with your current agency financial resources as allocated or are you in pursuit of collaborative federal partnerships to support data access?

The FGDC Standards Reference Model (<http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/refmod97.pdf>) states:

FGDC Standards will have a broadly based public notice of their availability. FGDC Standards will not be developed from copyrighted or proprietary standards that would limit the ability of the final standard to be publicly available. They will not contain any copyrights or other limitations on their use or reproduction. FGDC Standards will be available electronically when ever possible.

The FGDC and its member agencies are able to fulfill this policy and provide public access to FGDC standards with current agency financial resources.

12. Are there areas or issues regarding lead responsibilities for spatial data themes that require attention, or lessons-learned that you would like to share with others? Please describe.

- Standards development takes time – ISO directives recommend three years between approval of a project proposal and final approval and publication of a standard. While the standards process is presented as a sequence of steps, the need to reiterate steps often lengthens the time for standards development.
- The framework standards effort that began under Geospatial One-Stop and was later transferred to FGDC demonstrates the need for a “middle way” for

standards development. That effort was top-down in directing organizations to develop standards, but did not collect requirements for standards, which made it difficult to justify the need to develop these standards.

- There is interest in updating standards for Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUCs), but no commitment of personnel to develop standards. USGS, USDA, and EPA have strong interest in HUCs, but there is need for management to commit time to update HUC standards.
- Resolution is needed for further processing of the Address Data Standard, which completed public review in 2003. Key people in URISA object to this standard because it “does not support best practices in local government addressing activities” (see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/URISAAddressStandards/message/6>), but is this an obstacle to FGDC endorsement of the Address Data Standard?