

# The Federal Geographic Data Committee

August 2004

The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) is an interagency committee that promotes the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of geospatial data on a national basis. This nationwide data sharing effort is known as the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) established the FGDC in 1990 and rechartered the committee in its August 2002 revision of Circular A-16, "Coordination of Geographic Information and Related Spatial Data Activities." The FGDC is a 19 member interagency committee composed of representatives from the Executive Office of the President, Cabinet level and independent Federal agencies. The Secretary of the Department of the Interior chairs the FGDC, with the Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as Vice-Chair.

Revised OMB Circular A-16 affirms the Administration's commitment for building the NSDI, and describes the effective and economical use and management of spatial data assets in the digital environment for the benefit of the government and the nation. Federal agencies responsible for spatial data themes are required to be members of the FGDC. The Steering Committee sets high-level strategic direction for the FGDC as a whole. The Coordination Group advises on the day-to day business of the FGDC. The Committee structure is composed of agency-led Subcommittees and Working Groups. The Subcommittees are organized by data themes, e.g. "Cadastral." Working Groups play a crosscutting role, dealing with issues that span many subcommittees, e.g. "Standards." The FGDC committees and working groups provide the basic structure for institutions and individuals to interact regarding all aspects of NSDI implementation.

Collectively they establish and implement strategic guidance and specific actions that support improved collection, sharing, dissemination and use of geospatial data, contributing to the development of the NSDI. Public interest groups participate within the committee structure to ensure that their needs are included in developing the national infrastructure. Building an effective NSDI requires a well-coordinated effort among Federal, tribal, State, local government, and academic institutions, as well as a broad array of private sector geographic, statistical, demographic, and other business information providers and users. Involving these stakeholders in the development of the NSDI will aid in meeting the nationwide data needs of end-users.

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

**Chair** - Department of the Interior

**Department of Agriculture**  
**Department of Commerce**  
**Department of Defense**  
**Department of Energy**  
**Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Department of Housing and Urban Development**  
**Department of the Interior**  
**Department of Justice**  
**Department of State**  
**Department of Transportation**  
**Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Federal Emergency Management Agency**  
**General Service Administration**  
**Library of Congress**  
**National Archives and Records Administration**  
**National Aeronautics and Space Administration**  
**National Science Foundation**  
**Office of Management and Budget**  
**Tennessee Valley Authority**

## THE FEDERAL GEOGRAPHIC DATA COMMITTEE AND THE NATIONAL SPATIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

Through its committees, working groups, and stakeholders, the FGDC initiates and supports activities in areas crucial to the NSDI: development and establishment of a National Clearinghouse for finding and distributing geospatial data; development and implementation of standards for documentation, collection, and sharing geospatial data; creation of a national digital geospatial data framework of basic data themes; and promotion of collaborative relationships for geospatial data among partners outside the Federal sector.

The FGDC is currently engaged in the following activities:

- Sponsoring national forums and regional/state workshops on geospatial data
- conducting a grant program to support cooperative agreements for Clearinghouse establishment, metadata training, framework development, and web mapping services with participants from State and local, tribal and Federal governments, academia, and the private and not-for profit sectors
- developing and adopting content standards for use by Federal and non-federal agencies
- developing user training materials and conducting workshops throughout the country to support the metadata standard and Clearinghouse efforts. This includes an online metadata training resource and an active network of trainers.
- supporting the continuing evolution of the National Geospatial Data Clearinghouse, which includes over two hundred interconnected data servers around the nation and the world, containing thousands of data sets, and accessible through the [geodata.gov](http://geodata.gov) portal.
- conducting studies of issues and ideas for improving Federal agency geospatial data coordination, and options for financing spatial data collection and use
- Testing, improving and promoting the Framework concept of creating widely available sources of basic geographic data
- participating in the emergence and evolution of the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure as a concept and as an organization promoting spatial data infrastructures on a global basis.

## FEDERAL AGENCY COORDINATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Circular A-16 defines specific coordination responsibilities for Federal agencies to include:

Prepare, maintain, publish, and implement a strategy for advancing geographic information and related spatial data activities appropriate to their mission, in support of the NSDI Strategy.

Collect, maintain, disseminate, and preserve spatial information such that the resulting data, information, or products can be readily shared with other federal agencies and non-federal users, and promote data integration between all sources.

Coordinate and work in partnership with Federal, State, tribal, and local government agencies, academia and the private sector to efficiently and cost-effectively collect, integrate, maintain, disseminate, and preserve spatial data, building upon local data wherever possible

Use FGDC data standards, FGDC Content Standards for Digital Geospatial Metadata, and other appropriate standards, documenting spatial data with the relevant metadata, and making metadata available online through a registered NSDI-compatible Clearinghouse node.

Provide leadership and facilitate the development and implementation of needed FGDC standards, especially a data content standard for each data theme.

Provide leadership and facilitate the development and implementation of a plan for nationwide population of each data theme.

Publish information online showing the current extent and status of the spatial data themes for which they have the lead, and encourage all other sources of data for those same themes to provide access to their data through the Clearinghouse.

Use spatial information to enhance electronic government initiatives, to make federal spatial information and services more useful to citizens, to enhance operations, to support decision-making, and to enhance reporting to the public and to the Congress.

For more information on the FGDC or to receive the committee's newsletter, please contact us at [fgdc@fgdc.gov](mailto:fgdc@fgdc.gov) or visit the FGDC website at [www.fgdc.gov](http://www.fgdc.gov)