

Final Report
Vermont 2007 FGDC CAP 3 Project
Fifty States Initiative, Strategic and Business Plan Development
August 26th, 2008



Agreement Number: 07HQAG0039

Report Date: August 26th, 2008

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Project Narrative

The primary goal of Vermont's 50 States Initiative was to enable greater cooperation within the State of Vermont in the use and management of geospatial data and technologies. This initiative has brought together state government organizations to establish an accepted, realistic, functional and effective Enterprise GIS Strategy for Vermont; a vision and a plan that is sustainable and supports broad participation by all state entities.

In the past, State Agencies have been largely on their own in developing in-house GIS capabilities. Some agencies such as Transportation, Natural Resources, Agriculture, E-911, and Commerce have developed sophisticated systems. Other agencies are making less or limited use of GIS. The Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI) develops GIS technical guidelines, distributes GIS data to the general public, and promotes information exchange among the agencies.

The Enterprise GIS Strategic Plan is an important part of the state's 'comprehensive strategy' for the development and use of Vermont's Geographic Information System (VGIS). The VGIS represents a broad spectrum of geospatial activities and constituencies throughout the state of Vermont, including academic, town, regional, non-profit, state, private sector, and the general public. The Plan articulates a strategic vision for the development and use of geospatial technology within state government; a critical component of the VGIS. It's a dynamic document, one that will be updated on a regular

basis in order to leverage emerging opportunities in a rapidly evolving geospatial industry.

The most significant outcome of this strategic planning effort was the establishment of the Vermont Enterprise GIS Consortium (EGC), a voluntary consortium of state government organizations focused on the management of Vermont's Enterprise Geographic Information System (GIS).

Summary of Project Activities

VCGI and collaborating organizations have made some significant strides in the past 12 months. First, the Enterprise GIS Taskforce (EGT) was established under the auspices of the State Information Technology Committee (STC). The EGT worked with the Department of Information and Innovation (DII), the State CIO's Office, and numerous State Agencies to draft and endorse the state's Enterprise GIS Strategic Plan and associated Business Plan. The strategic plan and business plan will help guide the use and management of GIT resources within state government.

Key Accomplishments:

1. Established the *Enterprise GIS Taskforce* (EGT). The EGT has been meeting on a monthly basis since June 4th, 2007.
2. Completed all Phases of the *Strategic Planning Process Map (SPP Map)*.
3. Hired a professional Facilitator to assist the EGT with the development of a Strategic Plan.
4. Strategizing Workshops
 - a. The EGT held 7 workshops between October 2007 and May 2008.
 - b. The professional facilitators hired by the EGT managed and directed the workshops.
5. Drafted and completed an "GIS Program Self-Assessment Survey" to help address the following goals:
 - a. Help State Agencies and Departments assess their use of Geographic Information Technology (GIT)
 - b. Help State Agencies and Departments identify and define their GIT needs.
 - c. Help the Enterprise GIS Task Force (EGT) create a collective picture of GIT utilization in State government.
6. Established an online presence for the EGT, including the posting of meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, reports, contact information, etc.
 - a. <http://maps.vcgi.org/egt>

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7. Drafted and endorsed Vermont's Enterprise GIS Strategic plan and associated Business plan.
 8. Established Vermont's Enterprise GIS Consortium (EGC), a voluntary consortium of state government organizations focused on the management of Vermont's Enterprise Geographic Information System.

How inclusive was your effort? What did you do to bring new stakeholder groups or organizations into statewide coordination?

The creation of the Enterprise GIS Taskforce (EGT) was the first step toward establishing a framework for greater communication and coordination. The EGT cast a broad net to all state government entities¹. EGT participants agreed that the number one priority was getting the state government's GIS "house" in order. As a result, participants were limited to state government agencies and departments. However, the strategic plan developed and endorsed by the EGT has led to the formation of Vermont's Enterprise GIS Consortium (EGC), a voluntary consortium of state government organizations focused on the management of Vermont's Enterprise Geographic Information System. The EGC's charter defines two classes of membership; 1) voting and 2) non-voting. State government agencies, departments, and VCGI are eligible for voting membership. All other organizations, including regional and local government, are eligible for non-voting membership.

Explain how statewide coordination has (or will) change as a result of this project

As noted above, this project led to the formation of the Enterprise GIS Consortium (EGC). The EGC is an important part of the state's 'comprehensive strategy' for the development and use of Vermont's Geographic Information System (VGIS)². The VGIS represents a broad spectrum of geospatial activities and constituencies throughout the state of Vermont, including academic, town, regional, non-profit, state, private sector, and the general public. This Enterprise GIS Strategic plan articulates a vision for the development and use of geospatial technology within state government; a critical component of the VGIS.

What practices or activities led to success? What practices or activities did not?

1. Methods of communicating with members of the EGT were effective. Email was the primary means of communication.
2. Professionally facilitated workshops promoted clear, engaged, and non-threatening conversations. They also eliminated potential perception of a VCGI "power grab", something that could have arisen if VCGI had attempted to

¹ Refer to the "Collaborating Organizations" section of this document for a complete list of participating organizations.

² Vermont Statute (Title 10 VSA - Chapter 8 § 121)

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- facilitate the workshops. VCGI often acts as a broker and facilitator. However, in this case, it would not have been appropriate.
3. Facilitator “note taking” was comprehensive and contributed positively toward the drafting of strategic and business plans.

Next Steps

1. **Describe the next steps in your project:**
 - Encourage state organizations to become members of the Enterprise GIS Consortium.
 - Begin to work on the tasks outlined in the Enterprise GIS Business Plan – FY2009.
2. **How will this project continue into the future and remain viable?**
 - The Enterprise GIS Consortium will meet on a monthly basis well into the foreseeable future.
 - VCGI will continue to work with and through the EGC to meet the objectives articulated in Vermont’s Enterprise GIS Strategic Plan, including those elements consistent with the 50 States Initiative and the NSDI.
3. **Where do you need assistance?**
 - Encourage federal agencies to work with the EGC to coordinate geospatial data acquisition and maintenance efforts in Vermont. Specifically, the EGC would like to target coordination efforts with
 - i. FGDC
 - ii. USGS
 - iii. FHWA
 - iv. NRCS
 - v. DHS / NGA
 - vi. Census
4. **What type of assistance do you need?**
 - Those noted in question 3.
 - Support efforts that foster and enable ongoing maintenance and availability of NSDI Framework data, specifically data that complies with NSDI/FGDC Framework standards, data models, and schemas. One-time support for such efforts won’t ensure the availability of high-quality Framework data well into the future. It would be as if FHWA only funded the initial construction of the national highway system, then failed to allocate funding for future maintenance. The same is true for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), it takes money to build it AND maintain it. As we know, the NSDI won’t spontaneously generate itself.

Attachments

Strategic & Business Plans

- Strategic Plan (2008A)
 - http://www.vcgi.org/about_vcgi/projects/egis/EnterpriseGIS_SP_v2008A.pdf
- Business Plan (2008A)
 - http://www.vcgi.org/about_vcgi/projects/egis/EGC_BusinessPlan_FY2009_2008A_final.pdf

EGC Charter and MOU

- Charter (2008A)
 - http://www.vcgi.org/about_vcgi/projects/egis/EGC_Charter_2008A_final.pdf
- MOU (2008A)
 - http://www.vcgi.org/about_vcgi/projects/egis/EGC_MOU_2008A_final.pdf

Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program

What are the CAP Program strengths and weaknesses?

- **Strength:** The CAP Program provides a broad range of categories to choose from. This allows states and other grant recipients to select those that align with current opportunities or needs within the state or organization. They also align well with important National and State priorities (such as NSDI/SSDI).
- **Weakness:** None identified at this time.

Where does it make a difference?

- Metadata
- Data access and distribution (Clearinghouse and Geodata.gov)
- Open Standards and Protocols
- Collaboration and Coordination

Was the assistance you received sufficient or effective?

- Yes, FGDC personnel have been very supportive of this initiative. They have provided support on an as needed basis.

What would you recommend that the FGDC do differently?

- VCGI doesn't have any recommendations at this time.

Are there factors that are missing or additional needs that should be considered?

- VCGI doesn't have any recommendations at this time.

Are there program management concerns that need to be addressed, such as the time frame?

- VCGI doesn't have any recommendations at this time.

If you were to do this again, what would you do differently?

- Nothing. We are happy with the outcome of this project.