

National Geospatial Advisory Committee Bylaws

Date	Revision
6/3/2008	Original NGAC bylaws adopted by the NGAC on June 3, 2008.
10/28/2020	Bylaws revised to reflect new NGAC responsibilities under the Geospatial Data Act of 2008. Adopted by the NGAC on October 28, 2020.

Section I: Purpose

The purpose of the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) is to provide advice and recommendations related to the management of Federal and national geospatial programs, the development of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, and the implementation of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA), Office of Management and Budget Circular A-16, and Executive Order 12906. The NGAC reviews and comments upon geospatial policy and management issues and ensures the views of representatives of non-Federal interested parties involved in national geospatial activities are conveyed to the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC).

Section II: Authority

The Secretary of the Interior is directed in the GDA to establish the NGAC within the Department of the Interior to provide advice and recommendations to the Chair of the FGDC. The NGAC is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as outlined in the NGAC Charter, except as otherwise noted in the GDA.

Section III: Membership Selection and Appointment

Members of the NGAC are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior consistent with the terms of the GDA and the NGAC Charter. Members are selected based on specific needs of the NGAC in order to provide a balance of viewpoints. The Secretary of the Interior reserves the ability to replace any member as needed.

Section IV: Meeting Procedures

The NGAC shall meet at the call of the NGAC Chair not less than one time each year and not more than four times each year. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) will provide appropriate support for NGAC meetings and activities. Meetings will be called by the NGAC Chair in consultation with the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) according to the following considerations:

A. Agenda: The NGAC Chair and Vice-Chair will develop meeting agendas with input from NGAC members and in consultation with the DFO. The DFO will distribute the agenda to the members prior to each meeting and will publish an outline of the agenda with the notice of the meeting in the Federal Register. Items for the agenda may be suggested to the DFO or the Chair by any member of the NGAC. Items may also be suggested by non-members, including members of the public.

B. Member Participation: Most NGAC public meetings will be conducted in person. Webinar or conference call meetings may be conducted at the discretion of the Chair and the DFO. All members are expected to make a good faith effort to attend all NGAC meetings in the intended format. Under exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Chair and DFO, members may be allowed to participate via conference call for in-person meetings.

C. Minutes and Records: The DFO will prepare minutes of each meeting and will distribute copies to each NGAC member. Minutes will be reviewed and approved by the NGAC. Minutes of NGAC meetings will be available to the public. The minutes will include a record of the persons present, including the names of NGAC members, staff, and members of the public. The minutes will also include a complete and accurate description of the matters discussed and conclusions reached, and copies of all reports received, issued or approved by the NGAC.

The NGAC will comply with all applicable FACA and Department of the Interior records retention policies and requirements.

D. Open Meetings: All meetings of the NGAC will be open to the public. All materials brought before, or presented to, the NGAC during the conduct of an open meeting will be available to the public.

Members of the public may attend any NGAC public meeting and may offer oral comment during a set period of time at such meeting. Members of the public may submit written statements to the NGAC at any time. At the discretion of the Chair and the DFO, public input may be requested on selected NGAC work products, consistent with FACA procedures.

E. Administrative Meetings: The Chair and DFO may convene administrative meetings of the NGAC for the limited purposes of discussing administrative, operational, or logistical issues. Administrative meetings may be closed to the public. During such meetings, only administrative, operational, or logistical issues may be discussed.

Section V: Subcommittees

NGAC subcommittees may be established to compile information, conduct research, and/or develop draft recommendations or products. Members of subcommittees will be appointed by the NGAC Chair in consultation with the DFO. Subcommittee membership may include non-NGAC members if additional expertise is deemed necessary for the purposes of the subcommittee. The length of terms of non-NGAC members of subcommittees may not exceed the length of terms of NGAC members. The membership of all NGAC subcommittees will be reviewed and updated as needed, but not less than once per year.

NGAC subcommittees will act under the direction of the NGAC Chair and the DFO. Subcommittees shall provide their draft recommendations or products to the full NGAC for final consideration. Subcommittees shall not provide advice or work products directly to the FGDC or federal agencies. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish the objectives of the subcommittee, subject to the approval of the NGAC Chair, the DFO, and the availability of resources. The DFO or a representative of the DFO shall attend all subcommittee meetings.

Consistent with the purpose of the NGAC to comment upon geospatial policy and management issues and to convey the views of non-federal stakeholders, subcommittees may prepare draft advisory papers for consideration and approval by the NGAC. Upon NGAC approval, such papers will be submitted through the DFO to the Chair of the FGDC.

Section VI: Decision-Making

Consensus is the preferred decision-making model for the NGAC. When consensus cannot be achieved, the Chair may request a motion for a vote when a decision or recommendation of the NGAC is required. A quorum of members and a balance of viewpoints must be present for any vote at an NGAC meeting. A quorum will consist of a simple majority of the voting members. Each NGAC member is entitled to one vote. Votes will be decided by a simple majority of votes cast.

At the discretion of the Chair and the DFO, minority opinions may be included with NGAC decisions and recommendations. Requests for NGAC studies or reviews will be transmitted through the DFO. NGAC recommendations or decisions will also be transmitted through the DFO.

Section VII: Role of NGAC Officials

A. Chair: The Chair, in consultation with the DFO, establishes priorities, identifies issues which must be addressed, helps determine the level and types of support required, and will chair NGAC meetings. In addition, the Chair is responsible for certifying the accuracy of minutes developed by the NGAC to document its meetings. The Chair will initiate review and revision of the Bylaws as needed, but no less than every five years.

B. Vice-Chair: The Vice-Chair works with Chair and DFO to establish priorities and issues for consideration by the NGAC. The Vice-Chair assumes the duties of the Chair in NGAC matters when the Chair is not available.

C. Designated Federal Officer: The DFO serves as the government's agent for all matters related to the NGAC's activities. The DFO (or designee) must: (1) be consulted in advance on all meetings of the NGAC called by the Chair; (2) be consulted in advance on content of agendas for all NGAC meetings; (3) attend all NGAC and NGAC subcommittee meetings; and (4) adjourn the meetings when such adjournment is in the public interest.

In addition, the DFO is responsible for ensuring adequate staff support to the NGAC, including the performance of the following functions: (1) notifying members of the time and place for each meeting; (2) maintaining records of all meetings, including subcommittee activities; (3) maintaining the roll; (4) preparing the minutes of all meetings of the NGAC's deliberations, including subcommittee activities; (5) attending to official correspondence; (6) maintaining official NGAC records and filing all papers and submissions prepared for or by the NGAC, including those items generated by subcommittees; (7) acting as the NGAC's agent to collect, validate and pay all vouchers for approved expenditures; and, (8) preparing and handling all reports, including the annual report to the General Services Administration (GSA) as required by FACA.

The DFO will approve the NGAC bylaws and any amendments to the bylaws.

Section VIII: Expenses and Reimbursement.

Approved expenses related to the operation of the NGAC will be borne by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Expenditures of any kind must be approved in advance by the DFO. Federal government employees serving on the NGAC are not eligible for any form of additional compensation. The USGS will pay approved travel and per diem expenses for non-federal

members while attending committee meetings at a rate equivalent to that allowable for federal employees. NGAC members will be responsible for submitting all travel expense information to FGDC within one week following NGAC-related travel.

Section IX: Reports and Information.

Under the terms of the GDA, the NGAC has responsibilities related to GDA-required reporting requirements. The NGAC also has the authority to request certain information from covered agencies. The term “covered agency,” as defined in the GDA, refers to the departments and agencies that have specific responsibilities under the GDA. This section provides additional detail on these responsibilities and authorities.

A. Reporting Requirements: Per the GDA, the FGDC is responsible for developing on an annual basis: (1) a summary of the status of each National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) data theme, and (2) a summary and evaluation of the achievements of each “covered agency” in achieving certain requirements of the GDA. The FGDC is also responsible for making the summaries and evaluations described in items (1) and (2) available to and requesting comments from the NGAC. In addition, if requested by the NGAC, the FGDC will respond to any comments made by the NGAC on these items (1 and 2). The NGAC and the DFO will develop additional operational procedures to implement these new responsibilities and authorities.

B. Information from Covered Agencies: Per the GDA, the NGAC, with the concurrence of the FGDC Chair, may request directly from any covered agency information the NGAC considers necessary to carry out its roles in relation to the requirements of the GDA. Upon request of the NGAC Chair, the head of the covered agency shall provide the information to the NGAC through the DFO. The NGAC shall include in the comments described in the “Reporting Requirements” subsection above any failure by a covered agency to provide information in response to a request under this subsection. The NGAC and the DFO will develop additional operational procedures describing the process for developing, approving, and executing these requests for information in greater detail.

Section X. Review and Amendments of the Bylaws.

The bylaws and any amendments will be approved by the NGAC and the DFO. The bylaws may be amended as needed with approval of the NGAC and the DFO and will be reviewed and updated not less than once every five years.