FGDC Annual Report to OMB
Format for Agency Reports – FY 2003

The following outline should be used by FGDC Member Agencies (or Bureaus) for their Annual Spatial Data Reports, which will be consolidated by the FGDC and submitted to OMB. Reports **should be brief, using bullets where possible**. Please provide only the information that will be useful for OMB to assess the agencies' achievements and for establishing future direction.

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

1. Program/Activity Name:

Homeland Security Working Group

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

The working group's activities are to ensure that the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) supports the preparation for, prevention of, protection against, response to, and recovery from events and other threats to the nation's population centers and critical infrastructures. Member agencies' programs include those that employ geospatial data to enable readiness for, response to, and recovery from events, or that provide geospatial data, alone or in cooperation with other Federal and non-Federal organizations, to support readiness, response, and recovery activities.

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

Timely, accurate geographic information made seamlessly interoperable and accessible will weave together the disparate data and information necessary to accomplish the priority objectives of homeland security as stated in The National Strategy for Homeland Security:

- Prevent terrorist attacks within the United States,
- Reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and
- Minimize the damage from potential attacks and natural disasters.

Without the real-time ability to quickly visualize activity patterns, map locations, and understand the multi- layered geospatial context of emergency situations, homeland security will not be achieved.

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 was approved in May 2002, and is still relevant.

5. **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?**

Surveys being conducted by the Geospatial One-Stop Program and urban-focus activities supporting *The National Map* being conducted by USGS, when complete and analyzed, will serve as a baseline for addressing the current state of FGDC compliant metadata and NSDI Clearinghouse nodes supporting homeland security missions.

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

Map symbology: Use of different map symbols for the same information slows and degrades communication, especially when many organizations need to work together; a standard would help establish a common set of symbols for features that are commonly portrayed. The Working Group has a subgroup developing draft standard symbology that may be taken through the ANSI NCITS L-1 process for formal approval. Point symbology supporting emergency response applications will be ready for community review in October.

Information content: Identification of "common" minimum information content that supports homeland security activities, especially that for critical infrastructure, will encourage convergence and enable sharing among those charged with developing data. The Working Group has heard presentations about related projects, and reviewed relevant information content definition efforts, undertaken by several agencies. The task needed is large for a working group staffed with resources volunteered by member agencies. If resources become available, the working group anticipates supporting a (as yet unidentified) lead agency to conduct a process similar to the one used in Geospatial One-Stop to develop standards.

7. **Progress: List FY 2002/2003 activities/progress to date (quantify where possible).**

Point feature symbology to support emergency management applications: To be available for community review in October 2003

Geographic data policy subgroup established in May 2003. This group will develop principles and guidance for use in evaluating the need to reduce or eliminate public access to specific geospatial data for Homeland Security reasons. The group now is reviewing existing principles and policies, as well as agencies' guidelines. The group's product will be forwarded to the FGDC for adoption; this action is anticipated for early summer 2004.

8. **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?**

Not applicable to the work of the Homeland Security Working Group.

9. **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.**

The working group recognizes the following issues as relevant:
- Process for "'fast and broad' consensus" – Homeland security activities include a large number of public, private, and non-profit organizations whose responsibilities range from local to international in geographic scope and whose potential roles and contributions vary significantly in type and size. Achieving consensus among these different parties is a challenging task. This challenge is compounded by the urgency of the activity, which requires quick action to stay ahead of this quickly developing field. In addition, security concerns that restrict the sharing of working group information outside the group inhibit the ability of members to represent their constituents.
- Need for continual resources for standards – As a consequence of the factors described above, standards that support homeland security applications are likely to require continual support for development and implementation. In part this is a consequence of "fast and broad" consensus. This approach likely will result in a triage of action, in which standards will be achieved for those items for which consensus can be reached quickly. These items will require continual attention as homeland security needs and applications mature; meanwhile, more contentious issues will require additional attention. For items for which no single solution can be found, it will be helpful to support registries of solutions to aid the community. In addition to support for this baseline of standards and, resources will be needed for outreach, training, and implementation of standards and related approaches, and to ensure that the standards are kept current with maturing applications.
- Security concerns – A unique factor added by homeland security applications is the need for confidentiality for some information and processes. Challenges in this area include different views regarding what is sensitive and authorities for protecting information, and contradictions between the need to restrict access to information and to provide for broad participation in processes and data development and sharing.