



NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

4600 SANGAMORE ROAD
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20816-5003

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Contacts: Marshall Hudson, 301-227-2057, marshall.a.hudson@nga.mil

Susan Meisner, 301-227-3132, susan.h.meisner@nga.mil

GEOINT Standards: Enabling a Common Vision

BETHESDA, Md.—The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) has issued a new document that provides guidance and direction to develop an overall baseline for common geospatial standards used to share, manipulate, and exploit digital geospatial data.

The document, "[Geospatial Intelligence Standards: Enabling a Common Vision](#)," outlines the standards that will be used in the National System for Geospatial-Intelligence (NSG). The NSG is the combination of technology, policies, capabilities, doctrine, activities, people, data and communities necessary to produce geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) in an integrated multi-intelligence, multi-domain environment.

NGA's position on standards for the GEOINT community parallels a growing policy direction developing across the defense and intelligence community as well as across many other communities of interest around the world. The movement is towards a greater mandate for open, standards-based interoperable technology solutions.

"Having GEOINT standards that are universally adopted and implemented across the defense and intelligence communities, as well the entire U.S. government and our coalition partners is crucial to mission success," said NGA Director, Vice Adm. Robert B. Murrett, USN. "Standards ensure that GEOINT data, services, and products – regardless of source – are timely and accurate."

Shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, the National Center for Geospatial Intelligence Standards (NCGIS) was formed by the NGA to develop and coordinate geospatial standards with other Department of Defense (DoD) agencies, other intelligence agencies, standards organizations, civil agencies, private industry, and foreign partners. These groups have worked with NCGIS to develop and mature a set of standards that enable data and service interoperability in the context of a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA).

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The domestic civil community and the international community are implementing largely the same suite of common geospatial standards. This architecture is particularly valuable to the Homeland Security community, allowing it to share investments in geospatial data and knowledge related to critical infrastructure and natural environments with U.S. cities, counties and other organizations to support the prevention and mitigation of national disaster and security situations.

In "Enabling A Common Vision," the NSG has endorsed a set of key specifications known collectively as the OGC Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) 1.0 baseline. These OGC standards include the OpenGIS® Specifications for Web Feature Service (WFS), Geography Markup Language (GML), Web Map Service (WMS), Styled Layer Descriptor (SLD), Catalogue Services (CS-Web), and Filter Encoding Specification (FE). Other standards included are ISO 19115 Geographic Information - Metadata, and ISO 19119 Geographic Information - Services.

The OGC is an international industry consortium of more than 330 companies, government agencies, research organizations, and universities participating in a consensus process to develop publicly available interface specifications. NGA is a strategic member of the OGC, representing the needs of the GEOINT community to assure that those needs are considered in OGC's strategic planning.

NGA is a Department of Defense combat support agency and a member of the National Intelligence Community. Its mission is to provide timely, relevant and accurate geospatial intelligence in support of our national security. Geospatial intelligence is the exploitation and analysis of imagery and geospatial information to describe, assess and visually depict physical features and geographically referenced activities on the Earth. Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., NGA has major facilities in the greater Washington, D.C., and St. Louis, Mo., areas with NGA support teams worldwide. Visit us online at <http://www.nga.mil>.