



United States Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
Office of the Director
Reston, Virginia 20192

The Honorable Kamala Harris
President of the United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Vice President Harris:

The Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA) (43 U.S.C. § 2802(a)) establishes within the Department of the Interior the interagency Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) as “...the lead entity in the executive branch for the development, implementation, and review of policies, practices, and standards relating to geospatial data.”

In accordance with 2802(c)(11)(C) and 2802(c)(12)(B) of the GDA, the FGDC is to provide, not less than once every 2 years, a report to Congress on implementation of the statute. The enclosed document, the FGDC’s second biennial report to Congress, includes a high-level summary of GDA implementation activities since the 2020 report to Congress and more detailed FGDC agency performance information as required by the GDA.

Sincerely,

David Applegate
Director

Enclosure

Identical letters sent to:

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz, Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Frank Lucas, Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Manchin, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Geospatial Data Act Report to Congress

2023



Federal Geographic Data Committee, Reston, Virginia: 2023

For more information on the Federal Geographic Data Committee

World Wide Web: <https://www.fgdc.gov/>

E-mail: fgdc@fgdc.gov

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The Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA) (43 U.S.C. 2802(a)) establishes the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) as “...the lead entity in the Executive branch for the development, implementation, and review of policies, practices, and standards related to geospatial data.” The GDA requires the FGDC to provide a biennial report to Congress on the implementation of the statute. This report is the FGDC’s second biennial report to Congress under the GDA.

The FGDC member agencies, listed below, approved this report on July 7, 2023.

Department of the Interior: FGDC Chair

Office of Management and Budget: FGDC Vice Chair

Department of Agriculture*	General Services Administration*
Department of Commerce*	Library of Congress
Department of Education*	National Aeronautics and Space Administration*
Department of Energy*	National Archives and Records Administration
Department of Health and Human Services*	National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
Department of Homeland Security*	National Science Foundation
Department of Housing and Urban Development*	Office of Personnel Management
Department of Justice*	Small Business Administration
Department of Labor*	Smithsonian Institution
Department of State*	Social Security Administration
Department of Transportation*	Tennessee Valley Authority
Department of Treasury*	U.S. Agency for International Development
Department of Veterans Affairs*	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Communications Commission	

*Agencies identified as “covered agencies” under the Geospatial Data Act of 2018.

Contents

Executive Summary	v
1. Biennial Update on Implementation of the Geospatial Data Act	1
1.1. Developments Since the Report to Congress 2020.....	1
1.2. Geospatial Data Act Reporting Requirements.....	4
1.3. Description of the Information Contained in This Report	5
1.4. Challenges and Planned Responses	6
2. Summary of NGAC Comments, the FGDC Response, and the NGAC Evaluation of GDA Implementation Since 2018 ...	7
2.1. NGAC Comments on the FGDC Summary Reports.....	7
2.2. FGDC Response to the NGAC Comments	8
2.3. NGAC Evaluation of GDA Implementation Since 2018	10
3. Conclusion	10
4. Selected References	10

Abbreviations

CDO	Federal Chief Data Officers Council
FGDC	Federal Geographic Data Committee
FGDC OS	Federal Geographic Data Committee Office of the Secretariat
FY	fiscal year
GDA	Geospatial Data Act of 2018
GDAWG	GDA Working Group
IG	Inspector General
NGAC	National Geospatial Advisory Committee (“Advisory Committee” in the GDA)
NGDA	National Geospatial Data Asset
NSDI	National Spatial Data Infrastructure
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
UN–GGIM	United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
U.S.	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
WG	working group

Executive Summary

The Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA) codifies the committees, processes, and tools used to develop and manage the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). In passing the GDA, Congress recognized the growing use and importance of geospatial data, tools, and services and that they are critical investments for the Nation’s infrastructure and economy.

The GDA includes a requirement for the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) to submit a biennial report to Congress on the status of the FGDC’s reporting and implementation progress. This report to Congress covers fiscal year (FY) 2021 and FY 2022, which is the period from October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2022. This report to Congress includes summaries and evaluations of the FGDC member agencies’ GDA annual reports, comments and recommendations from the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) on those summary reports, and the FGDC’s responses to the NGAC’s comments. For both years, the NGAC provided constructive feedback on the GDA annual reports and, in its FY 2022 comments, noted that the NGAC “...continues to applaud the thoroughness and completeness of the GDA reporting. The results of these individual reports will inform [the] NGAC, Congress, and the broader geospatial community on the future of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI).”¹

The FGDC has developed and implemented an enterprise approach for tracking and reporting annual GDA requirements. Based on feedback from the NGAC and the FGDC community, this approach has been refined each year to streamline reporting. The following table summarizes the performance of the FGDC covered agencies and lead covered agencies in FY 2021 and FY 2022 in meeting the requirements of the GDA.

Agency performance summary for fiscal years 2021 and 2022.

[FY, fiscal year; %, percent]

Performance standard	Covered agency performance ¹		Lead covered agency performance ²	
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2021	FY 2022
Meets expectations	69%	70%	7%	14%
Making progress toward expectations	29%	29%	93%	86%
Fails to meet expectations	2%	1%	0%	0%

¹Covered agency reporting contains a total of 208 reporting elements across 16 agencies.

²Lead covered agency reporting contains a total of 72 reporting elements across 18 National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) data themes.

Additional details on agency performance can be found in the FY 2021 and FY 2022 GDA summary reports.^{2,3} Although the results demonstrate that the agencies continue to make progress in implementing the requirements of the GDA, challenges remain.

¹National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC), 2023, NGAC Comments on FY 2022 FGDC Summary of GDA annual reports: Reston, Va., National Geospatial Advisory Committee, April, 12 p., accessed August 2, 2023, at <https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/meetings/april-2023/ngac-paper-ngac-comments-on-fy-2022-fgdc-summary.pdf>.

²Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), 2022, FGDC summary of the covered agency and lead covered agency annual reports for FY 2021—Fulfilling requirements of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018: Reston, Va., Federal Geographic Data Committee, June, 9 p., accessed August 2, 2023, at <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-reports/fgdc-gda-summary-report-fy-2021.pdf>.

³Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), 2023, FGDC summary of the covered agency and lead covered agency annual reports for FY 2022—Fulfilling requirements of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018: Reston, Va., Federal Geographic Data Committee, July, 12 p., accessed August 2, 2023, at <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-reports/fgdc-gda-summary-report-fy-2022.pdf>.

The FGDC has identified the following four sets of challenges and plans to take the following actions to improve the implementation of the GDA and advance the development of the Nation's geospatial resources:

Challenge 1: The NSDI strategic plan expires in 2024 and must be updated to reflect changes in national priorities and technology.

Planned response: The FGDC will lead the development of the next NSDI strategic plan to address geospatial data, technologies, and services as components of the Nation's digital infrastructure and enable the integration of disparate information from many sources to support decision making and drive economic growth across the economy. The FGDC will work with Federal and non-Federal partners and stakeholders to develop a common set of NSDI goals that can be collaboratively implemented across sectors.

Challenge 2: The FGDC standards list must be updated to comply with the requirements of the GDA.

Planned response: The FGDC Executive Committee has established a standards task team to develop a coordinated standards development and vetting process supporting nationally findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable geospatial datasets and services. Once implemented, this process will lead to an updated list of FGDC-endorsed standards to support data access and interoperability.

Challenge 3: The National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) portfolio needs to focus on the coordinated development and provisioning of foundational and reusable national geospatial datasets and lowering barriers to increase the access to other geospatial data.

Planned response: The FGDC will assess the NGDA portfolio list to prioritize critical datasets to meet current national requirements.

Challenge 4: The current FGDC and NSDI governance processes do not fully engage critical stakeholders in the Federal and national geospatial communities.

Planned response: Following the issuance of the revised version of OMB Circular A-16, the FGDC will work with Federal and national geospatial stakeholders to update the governance model and practices. Governance issues will also be addressed through the updated NSDI strategic plan.

Geospatial Data Act Report to Congress 2023

By the Federal Geographic Data Committee

1. Biennial Update on Implementation of the Geospatial Data Act

The U.S. Congress passed the Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA) in recognition of the vital role that geospatial data has in enabling the missions of the Federal agencies and in promoting innovation and growth across the economy. The intent of the GDA is to improve collaboration across agencies; specifically, to foster collaboration across Federal, State, Tribal, Territorial, and local governments, academia, and the private sector to develop the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), provide opportunities for innovation, increase efficiency in accomplishing agency missions through shared services, and enhance oversight of the Federal Government's investments in geospatial data. The GDA identifies the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), under the direction and leadership of the U.S. Department of the Interior, as the lead interagency body for implementing the GDA. This document is the FGDC's second biennial report to Congress, as required by the GDA.

1.1. Developments Since the Report to Congress 2020

The 2020 Geospatial Data Act Report to Congress reported on activities of the FGDC and the covered agencies and lead covered agencies (as defined in the GDA; collectively, the agencies) through September 30, 2020. The current report covers activities of the FGDC and the agencies through September 30, 2022. During the time covered in this report, the FGDC has undertaken multiple actions supporting the implementation of the GDA. In addition, a number of new laws and policies related to geospatial standards, data, and data management have been issued that have required or will require action by the FGDC and the agencies. Some of these key developments are summarized below.

1.1.1. FGDC Executive Committee

- a. *Resumed operations.*—In 2022, the FGDC Executive Committee resumed operations to provide overall leadership and strategic planning to the broader FGDC. This subset of the FGDC Steering Committee is co-led by the Executive Director of the FGDC and an annually approved Executive Committee member. Members of the Executive Committee include the Senior Agency Officials for Geospatial Information from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Homeland Security, the Interior, and Transportation; the Environmental Protection Agency; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Executive Committee provides strategic leadership, recommendations, and Federal interagency coordination to the FGDC in the development, implementation, and review of laws, policies, practices, and standards relating to geospatial data; in the implementation of FGDC initiatives; and the development of responses to national issues in concert with applicable Federal interagency bodies.
- b. *Federal councils and United Nations engagement.*—The FGDC continues to work with other Federal councils, including having an FGDC ex officio member on the Federal Chief Data Officers' (CDO) Council. Also, the FGDC's United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN–GGIM) Working Group provides the UN–GGIM with U.S. member state perspectives on the use of global geospatial information to address key global issues, such as climate change, disaster management, and environmental quality. The FGDC ex officio member of the CDO Council and the head of the U.S. delegation to the UN–GGIM are both members of the FGDC Executive Committee.

- c. *FGDC priorities.*—The FGDC identified four priorities for 2023. The four priorities are geospatial standards, FGDC governance, the GeoPlatform, and development of the next NSDI strategic plan. Each priority is championed by an FGDC Executive Committee member and an interagency task team. These priorities will help the FGDC agencies meet the requirements of the GDA and advance the programs of the FGDC and its member agencies.
- d. *National Spatial Data Infrastructure strategic plan.*—The current NSDI strategic plan expires in 2024. The FGDC began developing the next NSDI strategic plan in 2023. This next NSDI strategic plan will cover a longer timeframe than the previous plan and will focus on national priorities and challenges. An expanded non-Federal stakeholder network will provide feedback and input on the new strategic plan to ensure that it meets national needs and represents all sectors of the geospatial community. This plan will include a coordinated process, working with Federal agencies and non-Federal constituents, for identifying and prioritizing foundational, authoritative national geospatial dataset development.

1.1.2. Recent Geospatial Laws and Policies

Several laws and policies (including the “President’s Management Agenda”) that have direct relevance to the geospatial community have been released recently (see the “Recent Laws and Policies Related to Geospatial Programs” call-out box below). These new laws and policies reflect the increased demand for geospatial information and underscore the importance of Federal geospatial data and portfolio management.

RECENT LAWS AND POLICIES RELATED TO GEOSPATIAL PROGRAMS

Laws:

- **Federal Lands Asset Inventory Reform (FLAIR) Act**, Public Law 117–328, December 2022
- **MAPLand Act**, Public Law 117–114, April 2022
- **Digital Coast Act**, 16 U.S.C. 1467, April 2021
- **National Landslide Preparedness Act**, Public Law 116–323, January 2021
- **Broadband Data Act**, 47 U.S.C. 642, March 2020
- **Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018**, Public Law 115–435, January 2019, Title 1

Executive Orders:

- **Executive Order 14008**, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, January 2021

Executive Directives:

- **President’s Management Agenda**, 2020 and 2022
- **Federal Data Strategy (FDS) and FDS Action Plan**, 2020 and 2021

1.1.3. OMB Circular A–16 Revision

The FGDC is working closely with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on a revision to OMB Circular A–16, “Coordination of Geographic Information and Related Spatial Data Activities”. The circular provides guidance to Federal agencies that produce, maintain, or use spatial data either directly or indirectly in the fulfillment of their mission and

provides for improvements in the coordination and use of spatial data.

1.1.4. GDA Reporting Improvements

The FGDC continues to refine and improve the GDA reporting and implementation processes each year. These processes have been led by the following two interagency FGDC working groups: the GDA Working Group (GDAWG) and the NGDA Theme Lead Working Group (Theme Lead WG). The GDAWG is made up of representatives from the covered agency geospatial community. The Theme Lead WG is made up of the theme leads and representatives of the National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) theme community. These two working groups and the FGDC Office of the Secretariat (FGDC OS) work year-round to analyze recommendations, update the common reporting approaches, and streamline the agencies reporting processes while fulfilling the requirements of the GDA.

The National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) is a Federal advisory committee that provides advice and recommendations to the FGDC on the management of Federal and national geospatial programs, the development of the NSDI, and the implementation of the GDA. The NGAC includes members from Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, the private sector, academia, and nonprofit organizations. The FGDC utilizes the NGAC to gather feedback on the approach, emphasis, and scope of GDA reporting and implementation on an annual basis. The varied perspectives from the NGAC membership contribute to the quality and usefulness of the GDA annual reports.

The NGAC has provided ongoing advice and recommendations related to the GDA since the enactment of the law in 2018, including providing constructive feedback on the FGDC reports. The NGAC's input on GDA-related activities has been included in the following documents, which are available on the FGDC website (<https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/key-documents>):

- “Initial Comments on Geospatial Data Act Implementation”
- “Comments on the Revision of OMB Circular A–16”
- “Recommendations on the 2020 National Spatial Data Infrastructure Strategic Plan”
- “Summary of 2020 Use Cases” (to support the FGDC’s GDA report to Congress)
- “NGAC Comments on FY 2020 FGDC Summary of GDA Annual Reports”
- “NGAC Comments on FY 2021 FGDC Summary of GDA Annual Reports”
- “NGAC Comments on FY 2022 FGDC Summary of GDA Annual Reports”
- “Evaluation of Geospatial Data Act Implementation—High Level Summary”

1.1.5. FGDC Coordination with the Inspector General Audits

The GDA requires the Inspectors General (IGs) of covered agencies to conduct biennial audits of agency compliance with the requirements of the GDA. Two biennial audits, which were conducted by 16 independent IG offices, have been performed to date. These audits were completed in October 2020 and October 2022. Agency geospatial leadership, program leads, and data managers met with covered agencies’ IG staff on numerous occasions during the 2020 and 2022 audit processes to educate and provide information and documents to inform the IG audit findings. In addition, the FGDC OS held several meetings with representatives from the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to provide an overall perspective on GDA implementation and reporting to help inform the biennial audit process. The FGDC and the agencies developed common approaches and templates to help streamline the annual reporting processes and meet the GDA requirements, as outlined in section 2.2. The IGs have developed their own independent processes for their audits. The FGDC will continue to work with the IGs to help inform their processes for future reviews. The IG audit reports for FY 2022 are available at <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-ig-reports/>.

1.2. Geospatial Data Act Reporting Requirements

As per 43 U.S.C. 2802(c), the GDA includes a requirement for the FGDC to submit a biennial report to Congress (this document) on the status of the GDA's implementation progress. The text of the GDA states that the Committee (that is, the FGDC) shall, not less than once every 2 years, submit to Congress a report that includes the following:

- “the summaries and evaluations required under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (10),” the “comments of the Advisory Committee,” and the “responses of the Committee to the comments” (43 U.S.C. 2802(c)(11)(C)); and
- “the comments of the covered agencies and the responses of the Committee to the comments” (43 U.S.C. 2802(c)(12)(B)).

The “summaries and evaluations required under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph 10” refers to the single report prepared annually by the FGDC that summarizes the covered agency and lead covered agency annual reports. This report is referred to in this document as the “FGDC summary report.” This report is submitted by the FGDC to the NGAC for review and comment.

The “comments of the Advisory Committee” refers to the NGAC’s review of and comments (including recommendations) on the FGDC summary report. This comment document is referred to in this report as the “NGAC comments.”

The “responses of the Committee to the comments” refers to the formal response that the FGDC provides to the NGAC comments. The written response is referred to in this report as the “FGDC response.”

As shown in table 1, fulfilling the planning and reporting requirements of the GDA requires the development of 106 different plans and reports. The coordination needed to support the number and frequency of these reports and the processes used to compile them requires significant agency resources as well as FGDC OS staff resources and contract support.

Table 1. Summary of the planning and reporting requirements of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018.

[The specific paragraph of the law in which the requirement appears is included in parentheses following the requirement description.

FGDC, Federal Geographic Data Committee; GDA, Geospatial Data Act of 2018; IG, Inspector General; NGAC, National Geospatial Advisory Committee; NGDA, National Geospatial Data Asset; Sec, Section; #, Number of reports]

GDA Sec	Requirement	Type	Periodicity	#
2802	Office of Management and Budget guidance (section 2802(b)(3))	Guidance	Periodic	1
	FGDC NGDA/Covered agency evaluation and summary report (sections 2802(c)(10)(A) and 2802(c)(10)(B))	Report	Annual	1
	FGDC response to comments from the NGAC on the FGDC annual summary report (section 2802(c)(11)(B))	Response	Annual	1
	FGDC report to Congress (sections 2802(c)(11)(C) and 2802(c)(12)(B))	Report	Biennial	1
2802	NGAC comments on FGDC annual summary report (section 2802(c)(11)(A))	Comments	Annual	1
2804	FGDC National Spatial Data Infrastructure Strategic Plan (section 2804(c))	Plan	Periodic	1
2805	Lead covered agency NGDA plan and standards plan (sections 2805(b)(3)(B) and 2805(b)(3)(A)(iii))	Plan	Periodic	18
	Lead covered agency annual performance report (section 2805(b)(3)(E)(ii)(I))	Report	Annual	18

Table 1. Summary of the planning and reporting requirements of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018.—Continued

[The specific paragraph of the law in which the requirement appears is included in parentheses following the requirement description.

FGDC, Federal Geographic Data Committee; GDA, Geospatial Data Act of 2018; IG, Inspector General; NGAC, National Geospatial Advisory Committee; NGDA, National Geospatial Data Asset; Sec, Section; #, Number of reports]

GDA Sec	Requirement	Type	Periodicity	#
2808	Covered agency strategy (section 2808(a)(1))	Plan	Periodic	16
	Covered agency annual report to the FGDC (section 2808(b)(1))	Report	Annual	16
	Covered agency annual report to Congress identifying Federal Government-wide geospatial data assets (section 2808(b)(2)(C))	Report	Annual	16
	Audits—IG reports to Congress on covered agency compliance (section 2808(c))	Report	Biennial	16
Recurring Planning/Reporting Documents – TOTAL:				106

1.3. Description of the Information Contained in This Report

The purpose of this report is to fulfill the FGDC’s GDA-mandated Congressional reporting requirements outlined in section 1.2 above. The report covers FY 2021 and FY 2022, or the period from October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2022. The reports that address the reporting requirements of the GDA are outlined below.

- **FGDC summary reports for FY 2021 and FY 2022.** As required under sections 2802(c)(10)(A) and (B) of the GDA, the FGDC prepares an annual summary (“FGDC summary report”) of the accomplishments of each covered agency and each lead covered agency (which are the agencies that have the responsibility for the NGDA data themes) as well as evaluations of the progress being made by these agencies in meeting the requirements of the GDA. The FGDC summary report provides links to the 16 GDA annual reports prepared by the covered agencies and the 18 GDA annual reports prepared by the lead covered agencies as well as links to online dashboards for both sets of reports. The FGDC agencies and FGDC OS staff have collaborated to develop a coordinated and consistent reporting approach for these GDA annual reports. The two FGDC summary reports for FY 2021 and FY 2022 are posted as standalone documents on the FGDC website (<https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-reports/index.html#fgdc-annual-summary-reports>).
- **NGAC comments for FY 2021 and FY 2022 (section 2.1 of this report).** As required under sections 2802(c)(10)(A) and (B) of the GDA, the FGDC submits the FGDC summary report to the NGAC each year for review and comment. The NGAC, in turn, provides its comments on the FGDC summary report. A synopsis of the [NGAC’s comments on the FGDC summary reports for FY 2021](#) and the [NGAC’s comments on the FGDC summary report for FY 2022](#) is provided as section 2.1 of this report.
- **FGDC’s response for FY 2021 and FY 2022 (section 2.2 of this report).** As indicated under section 2802(c)(11)(B) of the GDA, the FGDC should “if requested by the Advisory Committee, respond to any comments by the Advisory Committee” on the FGDC’s summary report. Section 2.2 of this report is the FGDC’s response to the NGAC comments for FY 2021 and FY 2022.

1.4. Challenges and Planned Responses

The GDA advances the effective management and delivery of the Nation's geospatial resources through the NSDI. The requirements of the GDA are intended to develop and deliver geospatial data and services to help in understanding and addressing local to national issues. These requirements include the development of the NSDI; the establishment of standards and data interoperability; and fostering partnerships with Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, academia, and the private sector. However, the amount of reporting required by the GDA reduces the resources available for the efficient development and delivery of these services. In an increasingly competitive international environment, the NGAC and FGDC members have called for a greater focus on strengthening the NSDI and expanding national geospatial data coverage, rather than emphasizing reporting, which is the current focus.

Based on 4 years of experience in implementing the GDA and on feedback from agencies, stakeholders, and the NGAC, the FGDC has identified a series of challenges and planned responses that will improve the delivery of services while ensuring effective management and implementation into the future. The FGDC has identified the following top four challenges and planned responses for 2023–24.

Challenge 1: The NSDI strategic plan expires in 2024 and must be updated to reflect changes in national priorities and technology.

Planned response: The FGDC will lead the development of the next NSDI strategic plan to address geospatial data, technologies, and services as components of the Nation's digital infrastructure and enable the integration of disparate information from many sources to support decision making and drive economic growth across the economy. The FGDC will work with Federal and non-Federal partners and stakeholders to develop a common set of NSDI goals that can be collaboratively implemented across sectors.

Challenge 2: The FGDC standards list must be updated to comply with the requirements of the GDA.

Planned response: The FGDC Executive Committee has established a standards task team to develop a coordinated standards development and vetting process supporting nationally findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable geospatial datasets and services. Once implemented, this process will lead to an updated list of FGDC-endorsed standards to support data access and interoperability.

Challenge 3: The National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) portfolio needs to focus on the coordinated development and provisioning of foundational and reusable national geospatial datasets and lowering barriers to increase the access to other geospatial data.

Planned response: The FGDC will assess the NGDA portfolio list to prioritize critical datasets to meet current national requirements.

Challenge 4: The current FGDC and NSDI governance processes do not fully engage critical stakeholders in the Federal and national geospatial communities.

Planned response: Following the issuance of the revised version of OMB Circular A–16, the FGDC will work with Federal and national geospatial stakeholders to update the governance model and practices. Governance issues will also be addressed through the updated NSDI strategic plan.

2. Summary of NGAC Comments, the FGDC Response, and the NGAC Evaluation of GDA Implementation Since 2018

The following sections summarize the comments and recommendations of the NGAC on the FGDC’s summary reports and the FGDC’s response to the NGAC’s comments. A summary of a special report prepared by the NGAC in 2023 is also provided.

2.1. NGAC Comments on the FGDC Summary Reports

As required under sections 2802(c)(10)(A) and (B) of the GDA, the NGAC reviewed and provided thoughtful and constructive comments on the FGDC summary reports for FY 2021 and FY 2022. The NGAC adopted the comments on the FGDC summary report for FY 2021 during a public meeting held on May 18, 2022. The NGAC adopted the comments on the FGDC summary report for FY 2022 during a public meeting held on April 11, 2023. The NGAC papers with the complete text of the NGAC comments for FY 2021 and FY 2022 posted on the FGDC website ([NGAC’s comments on the FGDC summary reports for FY 2021](#) and the [NGAC’s comments on the FGDC summary report for FY 2022](#)).

The performance of the covered agencies and lead covered agencies as reported in the FGDC summary reports for FY 2021 and FY 2022 are summarized in table 2 and displayed graphically in figure 1. As shown, the covered agencies and lead covered agencies continue to make improved progress each year. Results for covered agencies and lead covered agencies reflect different GDA requirements. Covered agencies respond to 13 requirements found in section 2808 of the GDA, whereas the lead covered agencies respond to 4 requirements found in section 2805 of the GDA. Additional details on these requirements are described in greater detail in the FGDC summary reports available on the FGDC website (<https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-reports/index.html#fgdc-annual-summary-reports>).

Table 2. Agency performance summary for fiscal years 2021 and 2022.

[FY, fiscal year; %, percent]

Performance standard	Covered agency performance ¹		Lead covered agency performance ²	
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2021	FY 2022
Meets expectations	69%	70%	7%	14%
Making progress toward expectations	29%	29%	93%	86%
Fails to meet expectations	2%	1%	0%	0%

¹Covered agency reporting contains a total of 208 reporting elements across 16 agencies.

²Lead covered agency reporting contains a total of 72 reporting elements across 18 National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) data themes.

The NGAC comments for FY 2022 include the following note: “[the NGAC] continues to applaud the thoroughness and completeness of the GDA reporting. The results of these individual reports will inform NGAC, Congress, and the broader geospatial community on the future of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)” (National Geospatial Advisory Committee, 2023b).

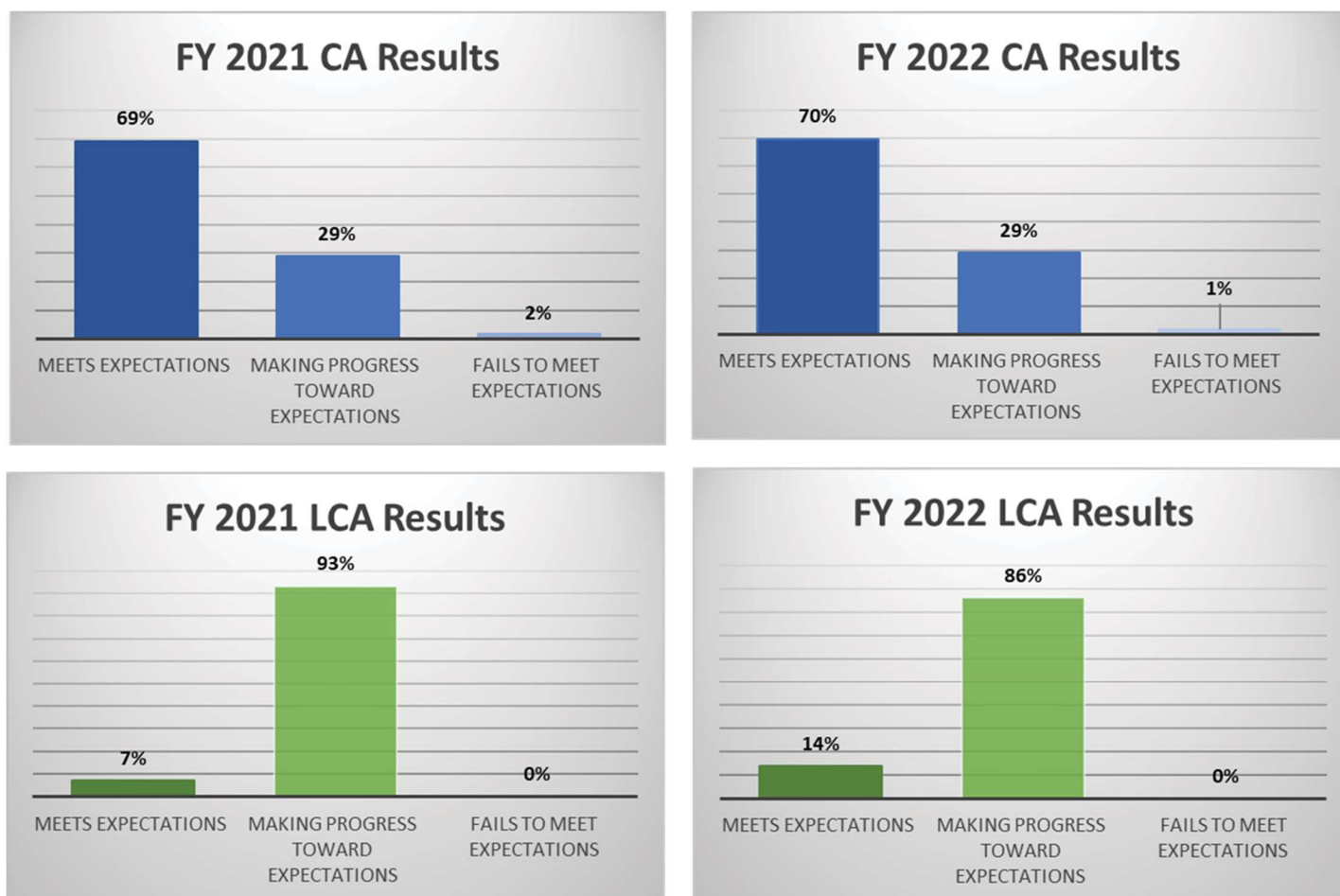


Figure 1. Fiscal year (FY) 2021 and FY 2022 covered agency (CA) and lead covered agency (LCA) performance results in meeting the requirements of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018. Data are from the Federal Geographic Data Committee (2022, 2023).

2.2. FGDC Response to the NGAC Comments

Section 2802(c)(11)(B) of the GDA indicates that the FGDC should “if requested by the Advisory Committee, respond to any comments by the Advisory Committee.”

The advice and recommendations from the NGAC have helped to shape and influence the FGDC’s implementation of the GDA, including the reporting results described in this document. The FGDC develops responses to the NGAC’s comments and recommendations for the FGDC summary reports and shares those responses with the NGAC. The FGDC OS has met with the NGAC GDA Reporting subcommittee and engaged in dialogue on improving these reports. This has been a productive collaboration between the FGDC and the NGAC to enhance the utility and transparency of the reports.

The FGDC offers below its response to and perspectives on the NGAC comments for FY 2021 and FY 2022. The NGAC’s comments for FY 2021 were organized under three categories: positive elements, areas needing improvement, and recommendations for future reports. The NGAC comments for FY 2022 included a fourth category (“other comments”)

as well. The response headings below mirror the three common categories in the NGAC's comments for FY 2021 and FY 2022, although the fourth category, other comments, is not broken out separately in this response.

Category 1: Positive Elements

The NGAC's comments have been supportive of the FGDC's approach to the GDA reporting process, which has relied upon common templates, common criteria, a survey-based method, and dashboards. The FGDC appreciates these comments and notes that the enterprise reporting approach has been an important success factor in meeting the GDA reporting requirements in a consistent, transparent manner. The reporting approach also establishes a temporal record of FGDC compliance and progress towards meeting the requirements of the GDA. The FGDC plans to build upon this approach in future reporting cycles. The NGAC has also recognized that the comments and recommendations they have provided have resulted in noticeable improvements to the GDA reports and reporting processes.

Category 2: Areas Needing Improvement

The NGAC's comments identify several areas where the reporting process could be improved, including suggestions on refinement of the self-assessment approach and improvements in formatting and consistency. The NGAC has also identified opportunities to improve the reporting dashboards and to more effectively highlight the effects and results of agencies' geospatial activities under the GDA. The FGDC is assessing these suggestions and will continue its dialogue with the NGAC.

Category 3: Recommendations for Future Reports

The NGAC's comments include recommendations for improvement. The FGDC has reviewed these recommendations and has made improvements to the GDA reports on an iterative basis to address the NGAC's feedback. In response to NGAC's comments on the FY 2021 and FY 2022 GDA summary reports, the following changes were made to the GDA reporting process.

Covered agency reports: Covered agency reports continue to use online survey-based reporting tools to facilitate consistent reporting. The FY 2021 and FY 2022 covered agency reporting templates included minor changes from previous reports. Questions representing each of the 13 reporting requirements include slight modifications, based on agency suggestions, to improve the online reporting tools and ensure consistency in reporting results.

Agencies are responsible for maintaining documentation to support the responses provided for their self-assessments. To support a more comprehensive picture of agency progress and related activities, agencies have the option to submit a two-page overview document as part of their submissions. In addition, the template was modified to include additional space for agencies to describe their performance accomplishments for the year and to highlight key GDA-related agency achievements.

Lead covered agency reports: Many of the updates to the FY 2021 GDA reporting process focused on enhancing reporting for the NGDA data themes by the FGDC lead covered agencies. For FY 2022, the lead covered agency reporting template was transitioned to a survey-based environment. This common set of online reporting tools helped facilitate consistent and efficient reporting on NGDA data theme responsibilities. FY 2022 reporting focused on self-assessment and brief summaries of the major reporting requirements. The FY 2022 reports also describe how the NGDA theme strategic plans, which are planned to be completed in 2023, will provide a common basis for future lead covered agency annual reports. The FGDC staff has shared the draft template for these strategic plans with the NGAC and will continue to collaborate with the NGAC as the plans are developed and implemented.

2.3. NGAC Evaluation of GDA Implementation Since 2018

In 2023, in addition to providing comments on the FGDC summary reports, the NGAC developed a report, “Evaluation of GDA Implementation,” that provides high-level evaluation of the implementation of the GDA since its enactment in 2018 as well as recommendations for improvement. This report, which was approved by the NGAC in April 2023, is available on the FGDC website (<https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/meetings/april-2023/ngac-paper-evaluation-of-gda-implementation-april.pdf>). The recommendations are summarized in the callout box below.

NGAC EVALUATION OF GDA IMPLEMENTATION

The NGAC adopted a report in April 2023, “Evaluation of GDA Implementation” that provides an assessment of the FGDC implementation of the GDA since the enactment of the law in 2018. The report evaluates progress toward the anticipated outcomes of the GDA and includes a set of recommendations summarized as follows:

1. Collaboratively redesign the national organizational framework for the NSDI.
2. Reexamine the approach for identifying NGDAs.
3. Define best practices for data governance and management.
4. Update the FGDC standards process.
5. Review and evaluate the business case and governance of the GeoPlatform.
6. Work with Congress to revise the GDA reporting process.
7. Modify the approach and frequency of GDA reporting.
8. Work with Congress to revise the GDA audit requirements.

3. Conclusion

The FGDC member agencies look forward to continuing to work with Congress to meet the intent of the GDA to provide an integrated, sustainable, and world-leading NSDI while ensuring efficiency and transparency.

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