

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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OPI: Office of the Chief Information Officer, Enterprise Geospatial Management Office	EXPIRATION DATE: March 15, 2028

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1. PURPOSE

- a. This Departmental Regulation (DR) establishes the policy for enterprise geospatial data management (EGDM) in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Led by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), this DR defines the strategic direction necessary to optimize the management of the USDA geospatial data and geospatial infrastructure. The USDA EGDM policy will help to achieve the requirements of:
 - (1) The *Geospatial Data Act (GDA) of 2018* ([43 United States Code \(U.S.C.\) Ch. 46, Geospatial Data](#));
 - (2) The [National Spatial Data Infrastructure \[NSDI\] Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#); and
 - (3) Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Circular A-16](#), *Coordination of Geographic Information and Related Spatial Data Activities*.

- b. This EGDM DR establishes the policy framework to implement GDA and NSDI guidance. Many of the policy elements also reflect Mission Area, agency, staff office, executive, and geospatial program management requirements, as well as demonstrate an enterprisewide public service enhancement.
- c. This policy creates consolidated Departmental direction for Mission Area, agency, and staff office management of geospatial data. It is consistent with Departmental policies and delegations of authority. This DR helps ensure coordinated action and responsiveness within the Department, and between external stakeholders, on EGDM issues.

2. SCOPE

- a. This DR applies to all USDA Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, programs, teams, organizations, appointees, and employees, including contractors and grantees receiving Federal funds that utilize and collect geospatial data. This policy introduces the geospatial data management objectives for the implementation of the GDA for the adoption of geospatial data management best practices, used by USDA internal and external geospatial data creators, partners, publishers, and consumers.
- b. This DR applies to USDA's geospatial portfolio, including all geospatial data created for, by, and enhanced by USDA, with a priority focus on the USDA's National Geospatial Data Assets (NGDA), other data supporting NGDA data theme communities and NSDI, and other Geospatial Authoritative Data (GAD). GAD is any geospatial data that meets one or more of the following:
 - (1) Is defined by statute;
 - (2) Is authored, maintained, and considered authoritative by USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices;
 - (3) Is used to support policy;
 - (4) Is used to manage programs; or
 - (5) Is used to inform the public.
- c. The USDA geospatial data will include geospatial standards processes to ensure data integrity throughout the lifecycle, including the acquisition, storage, and distribution process.
- d. Authoritative data products used in emergency response situations will have established data lifecycle controls before and after emergency deployments. During emergency response execution, the USDA Geospatial Information Officer (GIO) will defer to

Mission Area, agency, and staff office discretion in the determination of the characteristics of authoritative data products.

3. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/CANCELATIONS

- a. This DR supersedes DR 3465-001, *Enterprise Geospatial Data Management*, dated August 5, 2016.
- b. This DR is effective immediately when published.
- c. All Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices that utilize and collect geospatial data will align their policies and procedures with this DR within 6 months of its publication.
- d. All Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices that utilize and collect geospatial data will develop a 5-year road map for geospatial program implementation within 1 year of DR publication.

4. BACKGROUND

- a. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices use geospatial data to ensure evidence-based procedures, ensure continuity of operations, make decisions, and inform policies. Geospatial applications support the delivery of all key USDA programs including trade, emergency response, farm loans, conservation, research, forestry, fire, and pandemic response.
- b. In 2018, the GDA was signed into law. The Act was designed to ensure that our Nation invests and utilizes geospatial data effectively and efficiently, and to support the NSDI. The Act describes some of the required geospatial data management efforts, such as:
 - (1) Metadata and data lifecycle management to ensure that data can be found and used effectively;
 - (2) To promote data sharing efforts to reduce redundancy and decrease costs;
 - (3) To promote the use of geospatial data for improved management and decision making; and
 - (4) To appropriately resource geospatial data.
- c. The EGDM policy supports the implementation of the GDA and delegates geospatial executive authority; establishes geospatial data asset management responsibility; directs participation on statutory, national advisory, and interagency committees; and prescribes procedures governing the USDA geospatial portfolio.

5. POLICY

- a. The USDA GIO serves as the Senior Agency Official for Geospatial Information (SAOGI) for USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices with major programmatic geospatial responsibilities. The USDA GIO leads the Enterprise Geospatial Management Office (EGMO), a component of the OCIO, and provides management oversight for USDA's geospatial portfolio.
- b. In concert with the EGMO's Geospatial Change Control Board (GCCB; "the Board"), or a similar EGMO organization that ensures representation of all its Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices with a geospatial portfolio, the USDA GIO will prepare, maintain, publish, and implement a geospatial strategic plan for advancing geographic information, related geospatial data, and activities in support of:
 - (1) The [*USDA Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022-2026*](#);
 - (2) The USDA [*Information Technology Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026*](#); and
 - (3) The *National Spatial Data Infrastructure Strategic Plan 2021-2024*.
- c. The USDA [*Geospatial Strategic Plan*](#) will be reviewed by the USDA GIO and members of the GCCB annually and updated thereafter as required;
- d. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices that utilize and collect geospatial data will establish processes and infrastructure necessary to maintain, disseminate, preserve, and identify authoritative geospatial data;
- e. The USDA EGMO and each USDA Mission Area, agency, and staff office that utilize and collect geospatial data will integrate geospatial data from all sources through collaboration, system architecture, infrastructure, and communications. This DR is consistent with the aims of the *Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017 (MGT Act)*. The *MGT Act* was enacted as part of the [*National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\) for Fiscal Year 2018*](#) on December 12, 2017 (Subtitle G, *Modernizing Government Technology*, §§ 1076-1078). The *MGT Act* authorizes two types of funds for the purpose of modernizing the Federal Government's legacy information technology (IT), and to incentivize IT savings in Federal agencies.
- f. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices responsible for GAD creation and maintenance will ensure that official records and other GAD are included on Mission Area, agency, and staff office record schedules approved by the National Archives and Records Administration per [*DR 3080-001*](#), *Records Management*;
- g. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will fulfill the responsibilities of effective geospatial data collection, product development, and data stewardship activities, and support the activities of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), at EGMO's request;

- h. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will:
 - (1) Use FGDC-endorsed geospatial data standards per the GDA, and as stated on the [FGDC Geospatial Standards](#) website;
 - (2) Where available, create geospatial metadata, compliant with FGDC-endorsed standards, per [FGDC-STD-001-1998](#), *Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata*;
 - (3) For all geospatial data, follow USDA-specific requirements for metadata content, to include future Departmental Manuals (DM) and guidelines;
 - (4) Ensure metadata is certified and documented; and
 - (5) Make the metadata available through the FGDC's [GeoPlatform](#), unless legally restricted;
- i. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will coordinate and work in partnership with other Federal, state, tribal, and local governments; higher education; and the private sector to efficiently and cost-effectively collect, integrate, maintain, disseminate, and preserve geospatial data. Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will coordinate data acquisition and management to limit duplicative or redundant activities to maximize the efficiency and collaboration in Departmental management of geospatial data, building upon existing non-Federal geospatial data to the extent possible.
- j. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will use geospatial information and services to support decision making, enhance operations, communicate with the public, and enhance reporting to Congress and the public;
- k. When creating and using geospatial data that contains personally identifiable information (PII), USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will follow PII guidelines, per [DR 3515-002](#), *Privacy Policy and Compliance for Personally Identifiable Information (PII)*;
- l. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will participate in determining whether declassified data can contribute to and become part of the NSDI, in support of:
 - (1) [DR 3440-001](#), *USDA Classified National Security Information Program*;
 - (2) [DR 3440-002](#), *Control and Protection of "Sensitive Security Information"*; and
 - (3) [DR 3440-003](#), *Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Program*.

- m. Prior to expending funds for geospatial data collection, USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will search all sources, including the FGDC's *GeoPlatform* and its [*Marketplace*](#), to determine whether data and associated acquisition suitable for the intended purpose exists;
- n. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will ensure that contracts, grants, agreements, and business processes are written to ensure that geospatial data collected utilizing Federal funds is high quality and meets the business requirements;
- o. The USDA GIO (or appointed delegates) will act as the contact to coordinate with the lead covered agencies for collection, acquisition, maintenance, and dissemination of NGDA data themes used by the USDA and will coordinate and manage the annual lead covered agency reporting effort; and
- p. The USDA GIO (or appointed delegates) will coordinate and manage the annual GDA covered agency reporting requirements and responses to the biannual covered agency Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigation.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The USDA Chief Information Officer (CIO) will:
 - (1) Delegate executive leadership for geospatial technology, data, and information solutions to the USDA GIO;
 - (2) Approve revisions to the USDA *Geospatial Strategic Plan*;
 - (3) Review and approve policy waiver or exception requests. As the owner of this DR, the CIO will have the final review and approval authority for any waiver or exception requests;
 - (4) Ensure appropriate procedural DMs are written to provide specific guidance for this DR; and
 - (5) Approve DMs written to provide specific guidance to this DR.
- b. The USDA GIO will:
 - (1) Serve as the SAOGI, the senior executive responsible for Departmental geospatial strategy, planning, coordination, assessment, and synchronization of all USDA geospatial data activities, assigned to the GIO per OMB A-16 requirements;
 - (2) Have authority, responsibility, and coordination for USDA's geospatial information technology portfolio;

- (3) Oversee and facilitate the USDA internal external and implementation of the geospatial IT and geospatial data policies, governance, directives, requirements, management, product, and service standardization;
- (4) Review and ensure procedural DMs are written to provide specific guidance for this DR. These will be approved by the CIO prior to publication;
- (5) Serve as the policy-level official representing USDA at the FGDC;
- (6) Appoint Mission Area, agency, and staff office representatives to serve on FGDC coordination groups, governance, and working groups;
- (7) Serve as GCCB Executive Champion for the activities of the GCCB;
- (8) In collaboration with the GCCB, annually review the USDA *Geospatial Strategic Plan*, and update it at least every 5 years, as warranted;
- (9) Maintain a knowledge base of USDA geospatial portfolio investments, oversee the enterprise geospatial capital planning process per [DR 3130-013](#), *Information Technology Capital Planning and Investment Control*, and the investment control process per [DR 3130-010](#), *United States Department of Agriculture Enterprise Information Technology Governance*, and advocate for Mission Area, agency, and staff office geospatial portfolio budgets and acquisition plans;
- (10) Advocate for the use, value, and benefits of geospatial innovation and information supporting decision makers, citizens, partners, and others;
- (11) Collaborate with the CIO, the EGMO Program Manager, the USDA Chief Data Officer, and other OCIO components to implement strategic initiatives;
- (12) Provide the Departmental response to external geospatial portfolio data calls;
- (13) Coordinate with the lead covered agencies for collection, acquisition, maintenance, and dissemination of NGDA data themes used by the USDA and coordinate and manage the annual lead covered agency reporting effort;
- (14) Coordinate and manage the annual FGDC GDA Covered Agency Annual Report, and other reporting requirements and responses to the biannual covered agency OIG investigation;
- (15) Review and provide a recommendation to the CIO on any submitted and completed waivers to the primary requesting office for any requirement that is not in compliance with this policy. The CIO, as the policy owner, will make the final decision;

- (16) Implement and execute the necessary internal controls to proactively and regularly monitor, measure, audit, report, and enforce compliance with the provisions of this directive. This statement is also driven by [DR 1110-002](#), *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control*;
 - (17) Delegate, as needed, others to act as the contact to coordinate with the lead covered agencies for collection, acquisition, maintenance, and dissemination of NGDA data themes used by the USDA and will coordinate and manage the annual lead covered agency reporting effort; and
 - (18) Delegate, as needed, others who will coordinate and manage the annual GDA covered agency reporting requirements and responses to the biannual covered agency OIG investigation.
- c. The EGMO Program Manager will:
- (1) Act as the primary Departmental Program Manager for geospatial matters, overseeing and coordinating various programs, projects, and staff;
 - (2) Manage enterprise-level geospatial software and services contracts as the Contracting Officer's Representative;
 - (3) Support and coordinate geospatial portfolio with Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices;
 - (4) Collaborate with USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices researching new geospatial technologies and potential implementations across Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices to meet geospatial data management requirements;
 - (5) Ensure that appropriate DMs are written to provide specific guidance for this DR. These will be reviewed by the GIO and approved by the CIO prior to publication;
 - (6) Integrate geospatial data from all sources through collaboration, system architecture, infrastructure, and communications;
 - (7) Serve as the GCCB Chair; and
 - (8) Establish working groups to address geospatial data topics as needed for cross-agency coordination, including oversight for working groups arising from the GCCB.
- d. The USDA Chief Data Officer will collaborate with the CIO, the GIO, the EGMO Program Manager, and OCIO units on geospatial matters to implement strategic initiatives.

- e. USDA Mission Area, agency, and staff office Geospatial Leads will:
- (1) Serve as the members of the GCCB, to:
 - (a) Review proposed changes to enhance, modernize, strengthen, or increase the impact of geospatial data, products, and services in USDA;
 - (b) Provide expertise and perspective to support mission-focused products and services, modernization strategies, compliance with audit requirements, as well as statutory obligations under the GDA and other relevant USDA policies and regulations;
 - (c) Consider methods to anticipate, monitor, and mitigate possible risks as it pertains to geospatial systems at the Departmental, Mission Area, agency, office staff levels;
 - (d) Address goals and objectives described in the *USDA Strategic Plan*; and
 - (e) Ensure prompt response to executive data calls, Federal mapping service requests, and information requests associated with FGDC reporting; and
 - (2) Ensure the Mission Area, agency, or staff office geospatial guidance aligns with this DR and relevant DMs;
 - (3) Be accountable for monitoring and reporting geospatial data quality, geospatial portfolio governance, metadata, and lifecycle management to ensure alignment with this DR;
 - (4) Ensure that annual fiscal year geospatial investment portfolios meet business needs and geospatial guidance;
 - (5) Complete the annual FGDC GDA Survey and provide feedback to the GIO for the FGDC GDA Covered Agency Annual Report and Self-Assessment;
 - (6) Take responsibility to ensure that PII, CUI per DR 3440-003, and other legally restricted data is protected; and
 - (7) Participate in determining whether declassified data can contribute to and become part of the NSDI per DR 3440-001, DR 3440-002, and DR 3440-003.
- f. USDA Mission Area, Agency, and Staff Office Heads will:
- (1) Align their policies and procedures with this DR within 6 months of its publication;
 - (2) Develop and implement a 5-year road map, if they utilize or collect geospatial data, for geospatial program implementation within 1 year of DR publication;

- (3) Ensure that geospatial data are managed in a coordinated and documented manner that meets the requirements of this DR;
- (4) Ensure a Geospatial Lead from their organization actively participates as a member of the GCCB;
- (5) Establish processes and infrastructure necessary to maintain, disseminate, preserve, and identify authoritative geospatial data;
- (6) Ensure that geospatial data management roles and functions are defined and assigned for their Mission Area, agency, or staff office, and GAD are understood and managed throughout the data lifecycle.

g. The GCCB will:

- (1) Establish best practices for governance of geospatial investments and changes consistent with modernization and statutory guidance, and as informed by the GDA and OMB Circular A-16;
- (2) Be championed by the GIO, and chaired by the EGMO Program Manager;
- (3) Be comprised of Mission Area, agency, and staff office Geospatial Leads;
- (4) Address goals and objectives described in the *USDA Strategic Plan*;
- (5) Annually review and update the *USDA Geospatial Strategic Plan*, in collaboration with the GIO, and update it at least every 5 years, as warranted;
- (6) Review proposed actions to advance geospatial strategic initiatives;
- (7) Review proposed geospatial acquisitions;
- (8) Review proposed infrastructure or architecture changes consistent with USDA modernization objectives;
- (9) Consider methods to anticipate, monitor, and mitigate possible risks pertaining to geospatial systems at Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices:
 - (a) Including risks associated with data management;
 - (b) Compliance with statutory obligations;
 - (c) Computational and archival platforms (on premise and cloud); and

- (d) Other factors that would inhibit the provision of mission critical geospatial products and services, including as described in USDA's *Geospatial Strategic Plan*;
- (10) Use baseline Mission Area, agency, and staff office geospatial profiles (e.g., per regular surveys consistent with FGDC covered agency annual reporting templates) to inform proposed improvements, and to address the goals and objectives described in the USDA's *Geospatial Strategic Plan*; and
- (11) Ensure prompt response to executive data calls, Federal mapping service requests, and information requests associated with FGDC reporting.

7. POLICY EXCEPTIONS

- a. If a specific policy requirement cannot be met as explicitly stated, USDA Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices may submit a waiver request. The waiver request will identify the sponsoring executive, explain the reason for the request, identify compensating controls and actions that meet or exceed the intent of the policy, and identify how the compensating controls and actions provide a similar or greater level of quality, mitigation, or compliance than the policy requirement.
- b. USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices must address all policy waiver request documentation to the USDA GIO and submit the request to usdageospatial@usda.gov.
- c. The CIO, as the owner of this DR, will have the final review and approval authority for any waiver or exception requests.

8. INQUIRIES

Information regarding this DR, policy recommendations, updates, changes, and relationships to other Administration, Departmental, Mission Area, agency, staff office, and Federal Government policy, directives, and memoranda will be directed to the USDA GIO located in OCIO EGMO at usdageospatial@usda.gov.

-END-

APPENDIX A

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIO	Chief Information Officer
CUI	Controlled Unclassified Information
DM	Departmental Manual
DR	Departmental Regulation
EGDM	Enterprise Geospatial Data Management
EGMO	Enterprise Geospatial Management Office (OCIO Component)
FGDC	Federal Geographic Data Committee
GAD	Geospatial Authoritative Data
GCCB	Geospatial Change Control Board
GDA	Geospatial Data Act of 2018
GIO	Geospatial Information Officer
GIS	Geographic Information System
IT	Information Technology
MGT Act	Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018
NGDA	National Geospatial Data Asset
NSDI	National Spatial Data Infrastructure
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
P.L.	Public Law
SAOGI	Senior Agency Official for Geospatial Information
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USGS	United States Geological Survey

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS

Certified and Documented. All metadata will be certified as compliant with data standards by the specific Mission Area, agency, or staff office owner. Metadata will include identification that confirms its nature as authoritative data. Metadata will be documented in an authoritative system that can be queried to find the data themes in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-16, *Coordination of Geographic Information and Related Spatial Data Activities*. All metadata will be certified and documented even if the underlying data is subject to restrictions on public release. (Source: OMB, Circular A-16)

Covered Agency. The *Geospatial Data Act* (GDA), Section 752 (3) in reference to the Federal Geographic Data Committee, defines a Covered Agency as (A)(i) an Executive department, as defined in Section 101 of Title 5, U.S.C., that collects, produces, acquires, maintains, distributes, uses, or preserves geospatial data on paper or in electronic form to fulfill the mission of the Executive department, either directly or through a relationship with another organization, including a State, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, business partner or contractor of the Federal Government, and the public; (ii) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; or (iii) the General Services Administration; and (B) does not include the Department of Defense (including 30 components and agencies performing national missions) or any element of the intelligence community. (Source: The *GDA*)

Data Stewardship. Data stewardship is primarily the job of the professionals who create and maintain data. The collection of practices that ensure that an organization's data is accessible, usable, safe, and trusted. Further, data stewardship is the management and oversight of an organization's data assets to help provide business users with high-quality data that is easily accessible in a consistent manner. (Source: Adapted from United States Geological Survey (USGS) Stewardship website, [Stewardship – Data Steward Roles and Responsibilities](#))

Enterprise. Used here to refer to the Department level, even though a USDA Mission Area, agency, staff office, or service may own, create, and manage the geospatial data.

Executive Champion. A USDA executive champion serves as an advocate for a specific activity, function, or center of excellence in an organization.

Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC). An interagency committee of Federal geospatial professionals and constituents that provide executive, managerial, and advisory direction and oversight for geospatial decisions and initiatives across the Federal Government. In accordance with OMB Circular A-16, the FGDC is chaired by the Secretary of the Interior with the Deputy Director for Management, OMB as Vice-Chair. Numerous stakeholder organizations participate in FGDC activities, representing the interests of state and local government, industry, and professional organizations. (Source: FGDC website, [FGDC Structure and Federal Agency and Bureau Representation](#))

FGDC Geospatial Data Act Covered Agency Annual Report and Self-Assessment. The *Geospatial Data Act* (GDA) requires covered agencies to submit an annual report regarding the achievements of the covered agency in preparing and implementing their geospatial strategies and in complying with GDA requirements. These annual reports also include a self-assessment of the agency's progress. (Source: FGDC website, [GDA Covered Agency Reports](#))

Geographic Information System (GIS). A GIS is a computer system (collection of software) that creates, manages, analyzes, and displays geographically referenced information (also known as geospatial data). It uses data that is attached to a unique location. Because the data contains both a location and information about the features, it can be used to analyze a situation and even make predictions about the future. This can lead to better decision making and planning for governments and private businesses. (Source: Adapted from USGS website, [What is a Geographic Information System \(GIS\)?](#))

Geospatial Authoritative Data (GAD). Any geospatial data that meets one or more of the following: is required by statute, is used to support policy, is used to manage programs, is used to inform the public, is shared outside of USDA, or is considered a high-value asset. For many geographic information system practitioners, the term usually means that the data was produced or is approved by some authority. Authoritative Data is officially recognized data provided by an authoritative source. The data may be original, or it may come from one or more external sources all of which are validated for quality and accuracy. (Source: Adapted from FGDC Cadastral Subcommittee web page, [Authority and Authoritative Sources: Clarification of Terms and Concepts for Cadastral Data](#), Version 1.1)

Geospatial Change Control Board (GCCB; “the Board”). A group chaired by the USDA GIO, representing Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices across USDA that will review proposed changes to enhance, modernize, strengthen, or increase the impact of geospatial data, products, and services in USDA. Members represent in-depth knowledge of geospatial technology and how it applies to program requirements within each USDA Mission Area, agency, and staff office, provide expertise and perspective to support mission-focused products and services, modernization strategies, compliance with audit requirements, as well as statutory obligations under the GDA and other relevant USDA policies and regulations. The Board will also consider methods to anticipate and monitor possible risks as it pertains to geospatial systems at the Departmental, Mission Area, agency, office staff levels. This includes risks associated with data management; compliance with statutory obligations; computational and archival platforms; and other factors would inhibit the provision of mission critical geospatial products and services, including as described in USDA’s *Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022-2026*, USDA’s *Information Technology Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026*, and USDA’s *Geospatial Strategic Plan*. The Board will address the goals and objectives described in these USDA strategic plans. The Board will ensure prompt response to executive data calls, Federal mapping service requests, and information requests associated with FGDC reporting. The Board replaced the former Geospatial Advisory Committee.

Geospatial Data. Information that is tied to a location on the Earth, including by identifying the geographic location and characteristics of natural or constructed features and boundaries on the Earth, and that is generally represented in vector datasets by points, lines, polygons, or other

complex geographic features or phenomena; may be derived from, among other things, remote sensing, mapping, and surveying technologies; includes images and raster datasets, aerial photographs, and other forms of geospatial data or datasets in digitized or non-digitized form. (Source: 43 U.S.C. Ch. 46, *Geospatial Data Act of 2018*)

Geospatial Data Act Reports. The *Geospatial Data Act* includes requirements for multiple reports from the FGDC, from GDA covered agencies and lead covered agencies, and from (Federal) agency Inspectors General. (Source: FGDC website, [Geospatial Data Act \(GDA\) Reports](#))

Geospatial Lead. The USDA Mission Area, agency, staff office, or service lead responsible for geospatial data. This could be the Chief Data Officer, Mission Area Assistant Chief Information Officer, GIO, or another lead as determined by the Mission Area, agency, or staff office. The geospatial lead as identified by the Mission Area, agency, staff office is a member of the GCCB.

Geospatial Portfolio. USDA Geospatial assets that can be brought to bear to address an issue. These assets include funding, data, infrastructure, hardware, software, applications, personnel, services, and products.

Geospatial Standards Process. The *Geospatial Data Act* (GDA) establishes the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) as the lead entity in the executive branch of government for the development, implementation, and review of policies, practices, and standards relating to geospatial data. The GDA describes responsibilities related to geospatial standards for the FGDC and the agencies covered by the law (covered agencies). These responsibilities are reinforced by Office of Management and Budget Circular A-16 and OMB [Circular A-119](#) (*Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities*). In the near future, FGDC will reestablish and resource a sustainable standards process, including implementing supporting governance requirements, updating, and improving legacy processes, and validating standards for use as required under the GDA. Federal agencies should continue, to the extent possible in lieu of an active standards process, to develop, review, update, and achieve compliance with existing and pending standards, and become members of the appropriate FGDC standards body when active (approved by the FGDC December 17, 2021). Historically, the FGDC had an active standards process as part of its funded activities. Note that FGDC standards information may date to 2017 with updates pending the revised FGDC standards process. Standards facilitate development, sharing, and use of geospatial data and services. The FGDC develops or adopts geospatial standards for implementing the [NSDI Strategic Plan](#), in consultation and cooperation with State, local, and tribal governments, the private sector and academic community, and, to the extent feasible, the international community. Federal agencies that collect, use, or disseminate geographic information and/or carry out related spatial data activities shall use FGDC-endorsed standards both internally and through their activities involving partners, grants, and contracts. (Source: FGDC website, [Geospatial Standards](#))

Information. Any communication or representation of knowledge, such as facts, data, or opinions in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative,

or audiovisual forms. (Source: FGDC web page, *Lexicon of Geospatial Terminology, Information definition*)

Lead Covered Agency. An Executive department, per [5 U.S.C. § 101](#), *Executive Departments*, that collects, produces, acquires, maintains, distributes, uses, or preserves geospatial data on paper or in electronic form to fulfill the mission of the Executive department, either directly or through a relationship with another organization, including a State, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, business partner or contractor of the Federal Government, and the public; *The Geospatial Data Act* requires the National Geospatial Data Asset data themes, known as lead covered agencies, to submit an annual performance report that documents activities relating to and implementation of the NGDA data themes, including progress in achieving requirements. These annual reports also include a self-assessment of theme related progress. The USDA is an Executive Department, a Federal Government agency, also known as a lead covered agency. Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices are considered covered agencies within USDA, and sit under, within or are an entity of the lead covered agency. (Source: Adapted from FGDC website, [GDA Lead Covered Agency Theme Reports](#))

Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017 (MGT Act). The MGT Act was enacted as part of the *National Defense Authorization Act [NDAA] for Fiscal Year 2018* on December 12, 2017. The Act authorizes two types of funds for the purpose of modernizing the Federal Government's legacy IT, and to incentivize IT savings in Federal agencies. (Source: Adapted from OMB, [M-18-12, Implementation of the Modernizing Government Technology Act](#))

National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). A physical, organizational, and virtual network designed to enable the development and sharing of this nation's digital geographic information resources, and a consistent means of sharing geographic data among all users to produce significant savings for data collection, data use, and enhanced decision making. The technologies, policies, and people necessary to promote sharing of geospatial data throughout all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and the academic community. (Source: OMB Circular A-16; affirms the FGDC and describes the NSDI.)

APPENDIX C
AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

[5 U.S.C. § 101](#), *Executive Departments*

[43 U.S.C. Ch. 46](#), *Geospatial Data Act of 2018*, as amended

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