



USDA Privacy Impact Assessment

Fiscal Year 2025

Privacy Division (PD)
Cybersecurity and Privacy Operations Center (CPOC)
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Revisions

Date	Version	Notes
07/14/2025	1.0	Documented created.
02/12/2025	1.1	Removed “Gender” and “Sexual Orientation” from Biographical Information in accordance with Executive Order 14168, “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government.”

Table of Contents

Privacy Impact Assessment for the USDA IT System/Project	3
Mission Area System/Program Contacts	3
Abstract	4
Overview.....	4
Section 1: Authorities and Other Requirements	6
Section 2: Information Characterization	7
Section 3: Information Uses	8
Section 4: Notice	9
Section 5: Data Retention	10
Section 6: Information Sharing.....	11
Section 7: Redress	12
Section 8: Auditing and Accountability.....	13

Privacy Impact Assessment for the USDA IT System/Project

Detail	Information
System/Project Name	Geospatial Systems (GS)
Program Office	Information Solutions Division
Mission Area	Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)/Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS)
CSAM Number	2038
Date Submitted for Review	-

Mission Area System/Program Contacts

Role	Name	Phone Number
MA Privacy Officer	Samantha Jones	202-221-9289
Information System Security Manager	Karl Hill	816-823-1496
System/Program Managers	Lori Uhlhorn	801-844-2903

Abstract

The Geospatial Systems (GS) supports [Geospatial Technology Coordination and Project Execution Section](#). The program provides leadership and support at the national and state level for the use of geospatial technologies including Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) elevation, Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (SUAS), Mobile Workflows, to the FPAC Mission Area. GS uses the information collected to provide private landowners with advice, guidance, and technical services to carry out conservation practices. The PIA is being conducted because this system contains PII.

Overview

GS is owned by Geospatial Technology Coordination and Project Execution Section within USDA's Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS). The business purpose of the information technology (IT) system is to provide private landowners with advice, guidance, and technical services to carry out conservation practices. This relates to NRCS mission to deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.

The system, which users include members of the public (US citizens), was created to provide advice, guidance and technical services to carry out conservation practices. The program assists leadership and support at the national and state level for the use of geospatial technologies including Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) elevation, Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (SUAS), Mobile Workflows, to the FPAC Mission Area.

Individual information is not stored within GS. GS provides geo data services which include geospatial data and imagery data. GS is currently comprised of 6 applications, which include (1) Geospatial Data Gateway (GDG), (2) GeoObserver for Dams (DAMS), (3) Geospatial Services (GSS), (4) Remote Sensing Data Mart (RSDM), (5) Easements Imagery Web Map, and (6) High Resolution Elevation Application (HREA). The applications:

- Allow users to choose area of interest, browse and select data from catalog, customize the format, and have it downloaded or shipped on CD or DVD.
- Provide a nationally consistent workflow mechanism for NRCS National and State Engineers and Watershed Program Managers (or their designees) to review the NRCS Inventory of Dams (NRCSID) geodatabase, to verify or correct existing dam locations, to update dam attributes, to add new dams, and to create reports.
- Support Conservation Desktop, Mobile Planner, Web Soil Survey, GeoObserver for Easements.
- Manage imagery used in support of the National Resource Inventory (NRI) and Stewardship Lands Imagery (SLI) programs.
- Conduct annually required easement monitoring.

- Provide visualization and analysis for high resolution elevation data and provisioning of derivative elevation products and services for use in Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative, conservation planning and design, environmental assessment, and terrain mapping.

The completion of this PIA will not result in changes to business processes or technology changes.

Section 1: Authorities and Other Requirements

These questions identify all statutory and regulatory authorities for operating the project, application, or system, including the authority for collection, which SORN applies, if an ATO has been completed, and if there is Paperwork Reduction Act coverage:

What legal authorities and/or agreements permit the collection of information by the project, application, or system?

The following legal authorities apply to GS:

- Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 USC 590a et seq.)
- Food Security Act of 1985(Public Law 99-198)
- Conservation Title of the Farm Bill (various sections across different farm bills).
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): Established under the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-171).
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): Authorized under the Food Security Act of 1985 and subsequent farm bills.
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): Established under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246).
- OMB Circular A-16 and Geospatial Data Act (GDA) of 2018

Has Authorization and Accreditation (A&A) been completed for the project, application, or system?

- Security Plan Status: Completed
- Security Plan Status Date: June 24, 2025
- Authorization Status: Authorized to Operate
- Authorization Status Date: November 29, 2023
- Authorization Termination Date: November 29, 2026
- Risk Review Completion Date: April 2, 2025
- FTPS 199 Classification of the System: Moderate

Which System of Records Notices (SORNs) apply to the information?

The following SORN covers GS: [NRCS-1](#).

Is the collection of information covered by the Paperwork Reduction Act?

N/A

Section 2: Information Characterization

These questions define the scope of the information requested and collected, as well as the reasons for its collection as part of the project, application, or system being developed:

What information is collected, used, disseminated, or maintained in the project, application, or system?

Biographical Information:

- Business Email Address

What are the sources of the information in the project, application, or system?

Information is gathered directly from the public users.

How is the information collected?

GDG collects customer order data from the customer placing orders for Geospatial data. It is collected via a web-based interface, which is open to the public.

Does the project, application, or system use information from commercial sources or publicly available data? If so, explain why it is used.

GDG does not use commercial sources or publicly available data.

How will the information be checked for accuracy? How often will it be checked?

The GDG forms include automatic format validation of some entered user data.

Does the project, application, or system use third-party websites?

Not applicable

What is the purpose of the use of third-party websites?

N/A

What PII will be made available to the agency through the use of third-party websites?

N/A

List the privacy risks and mitigations related to the characterization of the information.

Privacy Risk: Misclassification of Data: Incorrectly categorizing PII which can lead to inadequate protection measures, exposing sensitive data to unauthorized access or misuse.

Inadequate Security Controls: If PII is not properly identified and characterized, it may not receive the necessary security measures, increasing the risk of data breaches.

Mitigation: User Consent for Sensitive Data: Obtain explicit consent for the collection and processing of sensitive personal information, such as health or financial data, and ensure that users are aware of its characterization.

Data Classification Policy: Adhere to departments data classification policy that categorizes PII based on sensitivity and the potential impact of unauthorized access or disclosure.

Section 3: Information Uses

These questions delineate the use of information and the accuracy of the data being used.

Describe why and how the information collected, used, disseminated and/or maintained will support the project, application, or system's business purpose.

GDG collects the information to provide the customer with links to download geospatial data or for requests for support.

Does the project, application, or system use technology to conduct electronic searches, queries, or analysis in an electronic database to discover or locate a predictive pattern or anomaly? If so, state how USDA plans to use such results.

N/A

List the privacy risks and mitigations related to uses of the information.

Privacy Risk: Unauthorized Use of Data: PII may be used for purposes other than those for which it was collected, violating privacy principles and user expectations.

Data Misuse: Employees or third parties may misuse PII, either intentionally or unintentionally, leading to breaches of confidentiality and trust.

Mitigation: Access to geospatial data must be requested from the customer for support.

Purpose Limitation: Clearly define and communicate the specific purposes for which PII is collected and used, ensuring that it is not used for unrelated purposes without consent.

Data Minimization: Collect and use only the minimum amount of PII necessary to achieve the intended purpose, reducing the risk of misuse.

Section 4: Notice

These questions are intended to provide notice to the individual of the scope of information collected, the right to consent to use of the information, and the right to decline to provide information.

How does the project/program/system provide notice to individuals prior to collection?

Privacy Act Statements are placed on each form that collects PII. The statement notifies the individual of the authority to collect the information, what organizations may be legally authorized to receive it, how the information may be used, and individual's option to refuse to provide the information to USDA.

What options are available for individuals to consent, decline, or opt out of the project?

Individuals may decline to provide any of the information without penalty. However, refusing to provide some information could delay processing or result in the denial of their application. Users have the right to provide consent to access their information. To do so, the individual must make a written request to the information owner, system owner, or Privacy Officer to evaluate their request.

List the privacy risks and mitigations related to notice.

Privacy Risk: The information collected in accordance with USDA NRCS-1 is a part of a Privacy Act System of Records that requires safeguarding access and disclosure when legal authority exists. The system information is specific to each individual and could cause moderate harm to individuals upon unauthorized disclosure.

Mitigation: As a result of the information being connected to USDA NRCS-1, information in the system can be only accessed or disclosed upon legal authority or dictated routine use.

Section 5: Data Retention

These questions outline how long information will be retained after the initial collection.

What information is retained and for how long?

All records found in GS are retained for 10 years and deleted only after the information is no longer needed for administrative, legal, auditor or other operational purposes.

Has the retention schedule been approved by the USDA records office and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)? If so, indicate the name of the records retention schedule.

The retention schedule has been approved by the USDA records office and NARA. The Records Schedule Number is [N1-114-08-3](#).

List the privacy risks and mitigations related to data retention.

Privacy Risk: The information contained in the records are sensitive, which could cause privacy breach if not properly safeguarded.

Mitigation: Data Retention Policy: Use NARA data retention policies that outline how long different types of PII will be retained and the rationale for those timeframes.

Section 6: Information Sharing

These questions define the content, scope, and authority for information sharing.

With which internal organizations and/or systems is information shared, received, and/or transmitted? What information is shared, received, and/or transmitted, and for what purpose? How is the information transmitted?

NRCS's National Geospatial Center of Excellence (NGCE) shares information with GS for reporting purposes, to show the amount of data ordered and what domains are ordering specific products, with the number of megabytes and counts of the delivery method.

List the privacy risks and mitigations related to internal information sharing and disclosure.

Privacy Risk: Unauthorized access to sensitive data could pose a risk to existing data and disclosure to unauthorized parties.

Mitigation: Information is electronic transmission of the data is encrypted, and access is only granted based on a user's role and active/inactive status.

With which external organizations (outside USDA) is information shared, received, and/or transmitted? What information is shared, received and/or transmitted, and for what purpose? How is the information transmitted?

N/A

List the privacy risks and mitigations related to external information sharing and disclosure.

Privacy Risk: N/A

Mitigation: N/A

Section 7: Redress

These questions address the individual's ability to ensure the accuracy of the information collected about him or her.

What are the procedures that allow individuals to gain access to their information?

Should an individual wish to gain access to their information, they will need to make a written request to the system owner or FPAC FOIA Officer; to authenticate their identity and identify the records they request access to GS.

What are the procedures for correcting inaccurate or erroneous information?

Individuals must make a written request to the system owner, information system owner or Privacy Officer, authenticate their identity, identify the portion(s) of the record that needs to be corrected and describe whether their information is inaccurate or erroneous. Upon receipt and review of the request, if it is verified a correction needs to be made, the record will be corrected and a sample of the document with the correction will be transmitted to the individual who made the request.

Requests to correct a record should be sent directly to a local or state FSA Office. All requests (1) must be in writing, (2) clearly identify the information that needs correction, (3) provide a reason why the information is incorrect, and (4) state what the correction should be.

How are individuals notified of the procedures for correcting their information?

In addition to normal notification through the SORN process, field technicians provide correction procedures to individuals upon request.

If no formal redress is provided, what alternatives are available to the individual?

Individuals may contact their administrative point of contact to obtain access to their information.

List the privacy risks and mitigations related to redress.

Privacy Risk: The system information provided by participants is important to be accurate, as it has an impact on their program participation. Incorrect information may adversely affect the participant or other individuals, resulting in denial of service or incorrect payments.

Mitigation: Individuals are provided with access to their information electronically to check for accuracy of their submission(s). Additionally, program staff will verify submitted information with the individual as well as previously collected data.

Section 8: Auditing and Accountability

These questions describe technical safeguards and security measures:

How is the information in the system/project/program secured?

Access to the system is role-based and requires multi-factor authentication for all accounts. All data transfer and storage utilize Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS 140-2) compliant encryption.

What procedures are in place to determine which users may access the program or system/project, and are they documented?

Access to PII is determined by user role and restricted access. Access to PII is granted by appropriate legal authorities. Applicable user and roles are documented in the System Security Plan.

How does the program review and approve information sharing requirements?

Any time organizations outside of USDA requests access to information, a data sharing agreement is created and routed through the Grants and Agreements Office for review. The Grants and Agreements Office ensures all stakeholders, to include, but not limited to the FPAC Privacy Officer, a Senior Agency Official, and receiving organization official, review and sign the data sharing agreement that lays forth the standards and rules for handling USDA PII.

Describe what privacy training is provided to users either generally or specifically relevant to the program or system/project.

Annual organizational training, including USDA Information Security Awareness Training & Acknowledgment of Rules of Behavior, is mandatory for all federal and contractor staff working with GS.