

U.S. Department of Energy Geospatial Sciences Steering Committee (GSSC) Charter

Adopted by GSSC Majority Vote on January 8, 2007

Introduction

Over the past two decades, geographic information systems (GIS) and geospatial science have become increasingly important and pervasive at all levels of government and in private industry. The events of September 11, 2001 and the emergency response efforts following both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have brought widespread public recognition of the fact that GIS is a key decision support and information-sharing technology used in emergency management, intelligence gathering and analysis, and military operations. An estimated 80-90% of all government data have a geographic component. This is most certainly the case at DOE, where geospatial data and GIS are used across the DOE complex to address a broad set of security, safety, cost saving, and R&D matters including emergency response, homeland security, environmental restoration, weapons stewardship, site operations, transportation routing (nuclear materials, weapons, and hazardous waste), infrastructure siting and operations, and support of both basic and applied scientific research.

Furthermore, DOE has been at the technological forefront in melding advanced physical and mathematical modeling capabilities with the geospatial sciences. ***DOE's unique combination of advanced modeling capabilities in the geospatial and physical sciences represents a critical resource for national and homeland security and defense.*** It is of fundamental importance that the DOE national laboratories, major facilities, and DOE headquarters program elements function together in a coordinated role to bring DOE's sophisticated scientific and technological geospatial capabilities to bear on the nation's most pressing problems.

Purpose

The GSSC functions in an advisory role to the DOE national laboratories, major facilities, and to headquarters and field office elements to actively promote effective utilization of GIS science and technology in the DOE complex. The principle goals of the GSSC are to foster technical excellence and communication, to identify and advocate best business practices, to provide sound recommendations on policy and standards, and to promote coordination between DOE and other federal and state agencies in areas of mutual interest.

Membership

As a strategic planning level coordinating body, the GSSC will consist of members who occupy leadership or senior technical positions with responsibilities

for geospatial science, GIS, or advanced computational and mathematical modeling. It is expected, therefore, that the membership will be knowledgeable of Laboratory programs, DOE missions, and the role geospatial science and GIS plays in these areas. In addition, GSSC members should be knowledgeable about emerging computer, communication and information technologies and appreciative of the operational impact that technological advancements or policy changes may have on DOE research and development activities.

GSSC membership also shall be open to DOE headquarters and field offices; however, only a single representative from a given organization shall have voting privileges on the GSSC. Members shall be appointed by their respective organizations at the request of the GSSC Chair with final approval by the GSSC comprised of a simple majority vote. GSSC members who do not participate in meetings, teleconferences, or other GSSC activities for a period of 12-months without a reasonable explanation may be removed from the GSSC by a two-thirds majority vote.

Non-voting representation from other federal agencies or other DOE organizations with specific geospatial science expertise who are not permanent GSSC members is encouraged.

Voting

Decisions will be made by voting with one vote for each GSSC member. Ballots may be cast by members during meetings or by electronic mail to the Chair, within 10 working days of GSSC meetings, by voting members who were not present. For any vote taken, a quorum, consisting of two-thirds of the GSSC shall participate in the voting process. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, will be used for parliamentary procedure governing all GSSC meetings and teleconferences. If a GSSC member is unable to attend a meeting or teleconference, that member may designate a proxy to act and vote in their absence. The Chair or Chair-Elect shall be provided with the identity of the proxy.

Officers

The Officers shall consist of a Chair, Chair-elect (Vice-Chair), and Secretary. The Chair, Chair-elect, and Secretary shall be elected by the GSSC membership and shall serve for two years. The Chair and Chair-elect shall be responsible for calling and conducting GSSC meetings and teleconferences and shall represent the GSSC on the DOE Geospatial Sciences Program Management Office (GS-PMO) monthly teleconferences. The Secretary shall be responsible for: (1) recording and compiling meeting minutes and distributing these minutes to members of the GSSC and (2) maintaining a contact list of current GSSC members and officers. The Chair Ex Officio will form a nominating committee to identify appropriate candidates for officer elections.

Relationships

The GSSC will provide the following interfaces:

- Advise national laboratory senior management, DOE field office personnel, and DOE headquarters elements regarding geospatial science and GIS technology policy and practice as it impacts DOE.
- Advise the GS-PMO on matters of geospatial science and GIS technology implementation and practice within DOE.
- Interface with DOE organizations and other federal and state agencies on matters of mutual interest or concern.

Activities

The GSSC shall undertake such studies and activities as its membership proposes and agrees. Integrated Project Teams (IPTs) and working groups will be formed to examine specific matters of importance. Recommendations from the IPTs and working groups will be presented to the GSSC membership for review and approval.

Meetings

Regular meetings and/or teleconferences of the GSSC shall be scheduled by the Chair. They shall be scheduled at times and places to be most effective in conducting the business of the GSSC, but in no case shall there be less than one meeting and/or teleconference per calendar year. Meetings and teleconferences will be announced via electronic mail. Members are permitted, when necessary, to bring subject matter experts to assist them with agenda items.

Normally meetings will be open. However, when appropriate, the Chair may call meetings of the GSSC membership only.

Amendments

This Charter may be amended by a two-thirds vote of all GSSC members. Proposed changes shall be compiled by the Secretary and presented to the full membership of the GSSC for discussion and vote.