



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Inspector General

DOE-OIG-26-52

September 30, 2026

The Department of Energy Has Made Limited Progress Implementing the Geospatial Data Act of 2018



AUDIT REPORT



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

September 30, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: Audit Report: *The Department of Energy Has Made Limited Progress Implementing the Geospatial Data Act of 2018*

As discussed in the attached report, the Department of Energy has made limited progress in implementing the *Geospatial Data Act of 2018*. Our audit determined that although the Department issued plans and strategies, it still had not fully implemented 11 of the 13 requirements of the *Geospatial Data Act of 2018*.

We are making three recommendations that, if fully implemented, should help improve the Department's compliance with the requirements of the *Geospatial Data Act of 2018*. Management concurred with the recommendations.

We conducted this audit from December 2025 through September 2026 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We appreciated the cooperation and assistance received during this audit.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sarah Nelson", is positioned above the typed name.

Sarah Nelson
Senior Official
Performing the Duties of the Inspector General
Office of Inspector General

cc: Deputy Secretary
Chief of Staff

DOE OIG HIGHLIGHTS

The Department of Energy Has Made Limited Progress Implementing the Geospatial Data Act of 2018

Why We Performed This Audit

We conducted this audit to determine whether the Department of Energy met the requirements of the *Geospatial Data Act of 2018* (Act).

The Act was signed into law to develop, drive, and manage the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, which includes the technology, policies, standards, and employees necessary to promote geospatial data sharing throughout Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, and the private sector.

The Department identifies geospatial data, or information that is tied to a location on Earth, as being integral to the Department's mission. It states that by leveraging location-based information, leaders across the enterprise are empowered to develop evidence-based policies and make knowledge-driven decisions to address the Nation's energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges.

What We Found

The Department has made limited progress in implementing the Act and experienced significant personnel changes within its Headquarters-level geospatial data program. Although the Department has taken some actions to implement the Act since our last required review in 2024, the Department has not fully implemented 11 of the Act's 13 requirements. These outstanding requirements include collecting, maintaining, disseminating, and preserving geospatial data; promoting the integration of geospatial data; setting geospatial data standards; and determining if existing geospatial data from other sources meet the Department's needs.

Without improving its implementation of the Act, the Department will not be able to adequately manage its collection, maintenance, dissemination, and preservation of geospatial data. This could lead to the Department experiencing increased costs, delays, and reduced impact from the data.

What We Recommend

To address the issues identified in this report, we have made three recommendations that, if fully implemented, should improve the Department's ability to manage its collection, maintenance, dissemination, and preservation of geospatial data.

Table of Contents

Background and Objective	1
Results of Review	1
Further Effort Needed by the Department to Comply With <i>Geospatial Data Act of 2018</i> Requirements	1
Geospatial Strategic Plan	2
Geospatial Data Records	3
Geospatial Data Integration	3
Geospatial Records Management	4
Geospatial Data Resources	4
Geospatial Data Standards	4
Coordination With Other Entities	5
Use and Reporting of Geospatial Data	5
Protection of Personal Privacy and Confidentiality of Geospatial Data	5
Declassification of Geospatial Data	6
Geospatial Data Sources	6
Quality of Geospatial Data	6
Geospatial Department Point of Contact	6
Conclusion.....	7
Recommendations	7
Management Comments and OIG Response	7
Appendices	
1. <i>Geospatial Data Act of 2018</i> Implementation Status	8
2. Objective, Scope, and Methodology	9
3. Related Reports.....	11
4. Management Comments.....	13

Background and Objective

Geospatial data¹ is integral to the Department of Energy's mission, enabling leaders to develop evidence-based policies and make knowledge-driven decisions to address the Nation's energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges. The *Geospatial Data Act of 2018* (Act) was signed into law in October 2018 to minimize duplication of geospatial activities across agencies, improve collaboration, reduce waste, codify previous executive actions, and give Congress an oversight role for the Federal Government's multibillion-dollar investments in geospatial data. The Act applies to covered agencies² that collect, produce, acquire, maintain, distribute, use, or preserve geospatial data on paper or in electronic form to fulfill the mission of the Executive Branch, either directly or through a relationship with another organization. As the Department's lead office for implementing the Act, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is responsible for implementation of the Act's requirements. The OCIO provides the Department's overarching governance structure, strategic direction, mission alignment, and communication for implementing geospatial science and technology. Leading the Department's efforts on compliance with the Act are the Chief Data Officer and the Geospatial Information Officer (GIO).

The Act requires the Office of Inspector General to report on the Department's collection, production, acquisition, maintenance, distribution, use, and preservation of geospatial data. In particular, the Office of Inspector General shall evaluate compliance with the Act's requirements related to: (1) standards for geospatial data, including metadata for geospatial data; (2) agency responsibilities and requirements; and (3) limitations on the use of Federal funds. To fulfill our requirements, we conducted our review based on the procedures outlined within the *Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency Geospatial Data Act Working Group Audit Guide*. Since the Act's inception, the Office of Inspector General has made a total of 14 recommendations and/or suggestions in its required biennial reports to facilitate the Department's implementation of the Act. Two of those recommendations remain open from our prior review.

We conducted this audit to determine whether the Department met the Act's requirements.

Results of Review

FURTHER EFFORT NEEDED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO COMPLY WITH *GEOSPATIAL DATA ACT OF 2018* REQUIREMENTS

Our audit found that similar to our previous reviews, the Department has progressed in some areas of its implementation of the Act, but significant work remains. The Act requires each covered agency to foster efficient management and use of geospatial data by complying with 13 responsibilities. These responsibilities outline the Department's requirements for the collection, production, acquisition, maintenance, distribution, use, and preservation of geospatial data. We

¹ Data identifying the geographic location and characteristics of natural or constructed features and boundaries of the Earth, and is generally represented in vector datasets by points, lines, polygons, or other complex geographic features or phenomena.

² The Department is a covered agency, as defined in 5 United States Code § 101.

assessed the Department's progress against each of the requirements since our prior report in September 2024. We found that since the Act was enacted in 2018, the Department had only fully implemented 2 of the 13 requirements—to appoint a geospatial point of contact and to protect personal privacy and confidentiality of geospatial data. The remaining 11 requirements were at various stages of implementation.

Since our last review, *The Department of Energy Has Made Little Progress Implementing the Geospatial Act of 2018* (DOE-OIG-24-35, September 2024), all previously dedicated geospatial staff positions at the Department Headquarters level were vacated,³ and the associated responsibilities were reassigned to other staff as ancillary taskings. Consequently, the Department has redistributed many responsibilities from the OCIO to program offices and field sites. The Acting Chief Data Officer informed us this year that the OCIO has primarily kept the existing process in place following the shift in responsibilities in May 2025, and has allowed sites to self-manage metadata standards, determine which data to make public, determine privacy and confidentiality of data, and determine whether declassified data becomes part of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). Summary results of our assessment of the Department's progress in implementing the Act's 13 requirements are included in Appendix 1.

The sections that follow detail our findings related to each of the 13 requirements outlined in the Act.

Geospatial Strategic Plan

The Department reported in its *2025 Covered Agency Annual Report and Self-Assessment for Department of Energy* (Covered Agency Report) that it met the requirement to prepare, maintain, publish, and implement a strategy for advancing geographic information and related geospatial data and activities appropriate to the mission of the covered agency, in support of the strategic plan for NSDI. However, we determined that the Department has not fully met this requirement.

To its credit, the Department issued *U.S. Department of Energy FY26–30 Geospatial Data Management Strategy* (Department Strategy) in April 2026 to meet the Act's requirements. The Department Strategy was issued to address challenges in geospatial data collection, acquisition, management, and use. However, four of the five programs and/or sites included in this year's review stated that they had not received a final version of the Department Strategy or stated that they were still unaware of the Act's requirements. The OCIO informed us that the Department Strategy had been posted on its intranet site and presented at a Data Governance Board meeting, but the lack of knowledge of it at Department sites displays a need for improved communication between the OCIO and the sites.

The Department established its *FY26 Geospatial Communications Plan* (Communications Plan) in October 2025 with the stated purpose of fostering awareness, securing engagement, facilitating knowledge transfer, building a collaborative community, and highlighting success that transparently demonstrates values and outcomes related to the Act. In our prior review, we recommended that the Department use its Communications Plan to increase engagement with program officials and sites. Although the Department made efforts regarding this objective, it has

³ The audit team was informed that there are currently no plans to rehire for these positions.

just begun implementing the activities described in the Communications Plan. Additionally, site officials reported that following the staffing turnover previously described, engagement with the Department’s geospatial governance body was unchanged or had declined since our prior review.

Geospatial Data Records

The Department has not fully implemented the requirement to collect, maintain, disseminate, and preserve geospatial data so that the resulting data, information, or products can be readily shared with other Federal agencies and non-Federal users. According to the Act, any geospatial information should be shared on the Geospatial Platform (GeoPlatform),⁴ the official Federal platform for sharing geospatial data. The OCIO informed us that it does not manage geospatial data at the Headquarters level. Instead, it relies on data call submissions from sites to determine which sites maintain geospatial data. The data call asks 67 Departmental Elements questions such as whether a site’s Management Plan explicitly accounts for geospatial data and if geospatial data assets listed in the Department inventory have an associated records schedule. Of the 67 Departmental Element responses received, 50 indicated that they did not have a Data Management Plan that explicitly accounted for geospatial data. We also found that in at least one instance, a site responded to the data call that it was actively using and generating geospatial data; however, a site official responsible for the geospatial activities was unaware of the GeoPlatform. The OCIO uses these data call submissions to produce the Department’s Covered Agency Report, which provides a self-assessment of compliance with the Act. The OCIO does not independently validate these data call submissions.

The Department Strategy sets an action item to “[p]romote and support the publication of unclassified, high-value public geospatial data assets.” However, the Department’s response in its Covered Agency Report states that data from Federal partners and non-Federal users is only shared on a limited basis, and only some geospatial data, and its metadata, is shared in open formats. Interviews with responsible site officials showed that they generally were not sharing the data with the public for various reasons, including data sensitivity and data stored in nonpublic systems. We spoke with officials that manage and coordinate with various Department platforms and determined that the Department has extensive geospatial data that is publicly available but is not always shared via the GeoPlatform.

Geospatial Data Integration

The Department has yet to take meaningful action on promoting integration of its geospatial data from all sources. The Department has not completed a geospatial data inventory, as required by the Act and, therefore, has not optimized data integration between its geospatial users. Similar to the findings in our previous assessment, the Department has plans to integrate existing data, but

⁴ The GeoPlatform is a strategic national resource that supports the Administration’s Open Government, Open Data, and Digital Government strategies to enhance transparency, collaboration, and participation. The GeoPlatform is a cross-agency collaborative effort and Shared Service that embodies the principles and spirit of Open Government, emphasizing Government-to-citizen communication, accountability, and transparency. Operating under the authority of the *Geospatial Data Act of 2018*, GeoPlatform.gov established its primary role to make Federal geospatial data assets more findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable with special emphasis as the authorized source for all the official National Geospatial Data Assets across 18 data themes, as guided by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC).

the plans have not been implemented. The Department currently houses dozens of data systems and repositories, but not all geospatial data is marked as such or identifiable without assessing each repository individually.

Geospatial Records Management

The Department has not met the requirement to ensure that records created in geospatial data and activities are included on agency record schedules that have been approved by the National Archives and Records Administration. In its Covered Agency Report, the Department reported that only some of its programs are included in the archiving appraisal process for geospatial records. It also reported that only some records are inclusive of geospatial data, and only some record schedules have been submitted to the National Archives and Records Administration. As part of the Department's transition to electronic records, the Departmental Records Management Office was keeping track of whether Departmental geospatial records were included on approved record schedules. The audit team followed up on the most recent Records Management Office review and reached out to the remaining noncompliant program offices and field sites. All but three program offices and field sites were able to provide record schedules for their geospatial data, though not all of these schedules had been approved by the National Archives and Records Administration.

Geospatial Data Resources

As we previously found, the Department has not allocated sufficient resources to fulfill the responsibilities of effective geospatial data collection, production, and stewardship. The Department self-identified that it had only partially fulfilled this requirement in the Covered Agency Report. Further, our review determined that the Department has not assigned a line-item budget for its geospatial activities, and staffing for management of the Department's geospatial activities has declined and has no full-time staff. This decline in staffing has resulted in individuals serving in multiple roles and performing responsibilities in several areas to include those beyond geospatial activities.

Geospatial Data Standards

The Department has not defined specific metadata standards for its geospatial data. This has resulted in some sites using FGDC-endorsed⁵ metadata standards, which are required per the Act, while other sites have not implemented any standard. The Department stated in its Covered Agency Report that only some eligible geospatial datasets use FGDC-endorsed data standards, Office of Management and Budget Circular A-119 compliant standards, and/or current International Standards Organization compliant metadata. Our review of the Department's geospatial data on data.gov showed that the metadata standards used for the data are not readily identifiable. However, the geospatial data on data.gov represents only a small portion of what the Department has produced. An interview with officials from the organization that creates Digital Object Identifiers for Department data systems stated that there were at least 59 Departmental data platforms. However, those officials could not identify which platforms contained geospatial

⁵ FGDC acts as the lead entity in the Executive Branch for the development, implementation, and review of policies, practices, and standards relating to geospatial data.

data, and officials from most sites we interviewed stated that they did not share their geospatial data publicly. With no Department-wide standard for sites to follow, most sites are not using FGDC-endorsed metadata standards.

Coordination With Other Entities

The Department has not fully met the Act's requirement to coordinate and work in partnership with other Federal agencies; agencies of state, tribal, and local governments; institutions of higher education; and the private sector to efficiently and cost effectively collect, integrate, maintain, disseminate, and preserve geospatial data. Interviews with both OCIO and site officials indicated that their interaction with these entities was limited. A Department official stated that there are processes in place for some mission agencies, but not for others, and that it does not involve itself with how the sites share data with outside entities. Interviews also showed that coordinating geospatial data with other entities varied greatly with some sites coordinating with multiple entities and some not coordinating at all.

Use and Reporting of Geospatial Data

The Department has not met the Act's requirement on the use and reporting of geospatial data. The Act requires that the Department use geospatial information to make Federal geospatial information and services more useful to the public, enhance operations, support decision making, and enhance reporting to the public and Congress. During our prior review, we found that the Department had not followed through with its plan to create enterprise agreements or standard tools for data. Rather, each program office and site generally operates independently of others in terms of how their data is used. The Department has continued with allowing sites to operate independently, issuing overarching guidance but not specific steps for sites to follow. The Department was also found not to be sharing data on the GeoPlatform in our last review. We found that while the responsibility to share data with the GeoPlatform was assigned at the Headquarters level, no data has been shared recently. In interviews with sites, one site told us that it was unaware of the requirement of posting to the GeoPlatform.

Protection of Personal Privacy and Confidentiality of Geospatial Data

The Department has met its responsibility to protect personal privacy and maintain confidentiality in accordance with Federal policy and law. In our last review, we recommended that the Department complete a privacy assessment specific to geospatial data to ensure that personal privacy information was adequately protected in the Department's information systems. Since that report was issued, the Department stated that it fulfilled that recommendation because it issued the *Department of Energy Privacy Program*, which requires that all information systems containing personally identifiable information have a Privacy Threshold Assessment or Privacy Impact Assessment. All sites interviewed were able to provide one of these privacy assessments or stated that their geospatial data systems did not contain personally identifiable information. Therefore, we closed our prior report recommendation related to this requirement.

Declassification of Geospatial Data

Consistent with results in prior reviews, the Department has not developed a process to review declassified datasets for inclusion in NSDI, as required. The Department self-identified that it had failed to meet this requirement in its most recent Covered Agency Report, stating that it does not have a process to review declassified datasets for inclusion in NSDI. Department officials informed us that they have plans to work on this issue, but those plans have not been implemented. They also stated that the determination of declassified data becoming part of NSDI is done at the site level as data can have different records management schedules.

Geospatial Data Sources

The Department has partially met the requirement to search sources, including the GeoPlatform, to determine if existing geospatial data from other sources meets its data needs. A Department official told us that at the Department level an inquiry is made to Department geospatial groups to determine if something already owned will meet needs before spending money on new geospatial data. They also said that they would contract with another Federal agency for geospatial information when available as a best practice. However, at the site level, the sites are expected to determine their geospatial needs and decide how to meet them. One site interviewed as part of this review informed the audit team that it was not aware of the geospatial data assets requirement to search sources for data before purchasing. However, some sites interviewed stated that their data needs are too specialized and that data matching their needs was unlikely to be available. One obstacle for the Department has been the lack of an inventory or universe of its geospatial data, which inhibits its ability to know what geospatial data already exists within the Department and if that data can be used to meet other needs.

Quality of Geospatial Data

Consistent with our prior findings, the Department did not ensure that persons receiving Federal funds for geospatial data collection provided high-quality data to the maximum extent practicable, as required by the Act. Department officials informed us that they do not set quality standards for geospatial data or its related metadata. Assessments of data quality were left to the site to determine. The Department's internal assessment of its implementation of this requirement stated that it had made progress toward this responsibility as it evaluated data for quality prior to acquisition, specified geospatial data quality standards in contracts, conducted independent verification and validation, used staff experts to review and approve deliverables, enforced data standards through automated processes, and acquired data from other Federal agencies who are responsible for quality assurance or quality control. Although the Department noted progress, our assessment identified sites that did not have any metadata standards for their geospatial data.

Geospatial Department Point of Contact

As noted in our prior reports, we determined that the Department met this requirement by appointing a primary point of contact to coordinate with the lead-covered agencies for collection, acquisition, maintenance, and dissemination of the National Geospatial Data Asset data themes used by the Department. During the period of review, the Senior Agency Official for Geospatial Information and GIO roles were transitioned to new individuals. New GIOs were also appointed

during the previous two audits' periods of review. In our previous report, we noted that the lack of a consistent GIO raises concerns about the Department's ability to fully implement all 13 requirements. We also noted that there had been a lull in communication from Department officials regarding geospatial requirements, a trend that has continued through our current period of review.

CONCLUSION

Without additional action, the Department will continue to fall short of meeting the Act's requirements. The Department has made limited progress since our last review, including issuing an updated data strategy and improving geospatial data privacy. However, significant work is needed to meet the remaining (11) covered agency responsibilities that have not been fully implemented. For example, the failure to develop a complete and accurate inventory of the Department's geospatial data assets may increase the risk of expending valuable funds to acquire or map geospatial data that has already been collected by another program or agency. Likewise, the lack of an accurate inventory makes it difficult to report an accurate inventory to Congress and FGDC. In addition, continuing to neglect data standardization for geospatial data across the Department will also impact its ability to share datasets across not only the agency but also different state, local, and Federal entities and the public.

Recommendations

To improve understanding and implementation of the Act, we recommend that the Chief Information Officer:

1. Develop and communicate a set of data standards for the Department's geospatial data assets to follow;
2. Create an inventory of the Department's geospatial data to enable sites to know what data already exists; and
3. Develop and implement a process to increase engagement with relevant personnel at the Department's program offices and field sites to ensure the Act's requirements are better understood.

Management Comments and OIG Response

Management concurred with each of our three recommendations. Specifically, it stated that it would communicate geospatial data standards and guidance to the Department's program offices and field sites to promote consistent adoption and implementation. Additionally, management indicated that it would assess the scope and requirements for establishing a Department-wide inventory of geospatial data assets, noting that implementation will be dependent upon the availability of necessary resources and participation across the Department. Management also specified that it would leverage existing engagement mechanisms to develop and implement a communications and engagement process to increase awareness and understanding of the Act's requirements across the Department. We believe that the proposed actions adequately address our recommendations. Management's comments are included in Appendix 4.

Geospatial Data Act of 2018 Implementation Status

<i>Geospatial Data Act of 2018 § 759(a)</i>	Covered Agency Requirement	Fully Implemented (Yes/No)
Part 1	Prepare and implement a strategic plan for advancing geospatial data activities appropriate to the agency's mission.	No
Part 2	Collect, maintain, disseminate, and preserve geospatial data, such that resulting data, information, or products can be shared.	No
Part 3	Promote geospatial data integration.	No
Part 4	Ensure geospatial information is included on agency record schedules.	No
Part 5	Allocate resources to fulfill geospatial data responsibilities.	No
Part 6	Use geospatial data standards.	No
Part 7	Coordinate with other Federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, and the private sector.	No
Part 8	Make Federal geospatial information more useful to the public, support decision making, and enhance reporting to Congress.	No
Part 9	Protect personal privacy and maintain confidentiality in accordance with Federal policy and law.	Yes
Part 10	Participate in determining whether declassified data can become part of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.	No
Part 11	Search all sources to determine if existing data meets the needs of the covered agency before expending funds.	No
Part 12	Ensure that those receiving Federal funds for geospatial data collection provide high-quality data.	No
Part 13	Appoint a contact to coordinate with other covered agencies.	Yes

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Objective

We conducted this audit to determine whether the Department of Energy met the requirements of the *Geospatial Data Act of 2018* (Act).

Scope

We conducted the audit from December 2025 through September 2026 at Department Headquarters in Washington, DC; Savannah River Site in Aiken, South Carolina; Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Oregon; Golden Field Office in Golden, Colorado; Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office in Lexington, Kentucky; National Energy Technology Laboratory in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, New York; and the U.S. Energy Information Administration in Washington, DC. The scope of the audit was limited to the Department's implementation of the Act. This audit was conducted under Office of Inspector General project number A26OA029.

Methodology

To accomplish our audit objective, we:

- Gained an understanding of the Act's requirements;
- Reviewed applicable guidance and standards issued by the Department, Office of Management and Budget, and the National Archives and Records Administration;
- Reviewed prior Office of Inspector General and Government Accountability Office reports and testimonies related to the Act;
- Held discussions with Department officials to gain an understanding of the processes and controls the Department employed to implement the Act's requirements;
- Obtained and evaluated related project plans and strategies that the Department developed;
- Reviewed and evaluated the Department's implementation status as it related to the Act's 13 requirements of Section 759 in United States Code, Title 43 – Public Lands, Chapter 46: GEOSPATIAL DATA;
- Identified areas of potential improvements to the Department's implementation of the Act; and

- Held teleconferences with program offices and field sites to discuss information related to geospatial data.

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. Accordingly, we assessed significant internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. We assessed the following internal control components and underlying principles significant to the audit objective: control activities and the principles related to design control activities and implement control activities; information and communication and the related principle to communicate internally; and monitoring and the related principle to perform monitoring activities. However, because our review was limited to these internal control components and underlying principles, it may not have disclosed all internal control deficiencies that may have existed at the time of this audit. We did not rely on computer-processed data to satisfy our audit objective.

Management officials waived an exit conference on September 28, 2026.

Related Reports

Office of Inspector General

- Audit Report: [*The Department of Energy Has Made Little Progress Implementing the Geospatial Data Act of 2018*](#) (DOE-OIG-24-35, September 2024). Our third review of the Department of Energy's implementation of the *Geospatial Data Act of 2018* (Act) found that the Department has made little progress in implementing the Act and managing geospatial data as a strategic asset to meet its desired mission outcomes. Our audit determined that although the Department had initiated actions, it still had not fully implemented 12 of the Act's 13 requirements. For instance, the Department had not fully implemented the Geospatial Data Strategy, allocated resources to fulfill the responsibilities of effective geospatial data collection, coordinated and worked in partnership with Federal agencies and other entities, or promoted the integration of geospatial data from all sources. We made recommendations to the Department to finalize and distribute its revised *DOE Geospatial Science Program Implementation Plan*, increase engagement with Department program offices and sites, complete a privacy assessment specific to geospatial data, and develop a strategy to incorporate the Act's requirements into the Department's contracts. Management concurred with our recommendations and indicated that corrective actions were planned to address the issues identified in our report.
- Audit Report: [*Followup on the Department of Energy's Implementation of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018*](#) (DOE-OIG-22-44, September 2022). Our followup review found that the Department had completed additional actions related to the 13 covered agency responsibilities; however, we identified that it still had not fully implemented 12 of the requirements. Although we determined that the Department had made progress since our last review, significant work remained for it to meet the Act's requirements. We made three recommendations to improve understanding and implementation of the Act.
- Special Report: [*Department of Energy's Implementation of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018*](#) (DOE-OIG-20-58, September 2020). Our inaugural review found that while the Department had taken steps to implement the Act, significant work remained. Although the Department had initiated and/or completed actions related to each of the 13 agency responsibilities outlined in the Act, we found that it had not fully implemented 12 of the requirements. We suggested seven actions to help the Department fulfill the Act's requirements.

Government Accountability Office

- [*GEOSPATIAL DATA: Progress Needed on Identifying Expenditures, Building and Utilizing a Data Infrastructure, and Reducing Duplicative Efforts*](#) (GAO-15-193, issued February 2015; reissued March 2015). According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Federal agencies report spending billions of dollars on geospatial investments; however, the estimates are understated because agencies do not always

track geospatial investments. The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) have started an initiative to have agencies identify and report annually on geospatial-related investments as part of the fiscal year 2017 budget process. FGDC and selected Federal agencies have made progress in implementing their responsibilities for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure as outlined in OMB guidance; however, critical items remain incomplete. In addition, selected agencies have made limited progress in their own strategic planning efforts and in using the clearinghouse to register their data to ensure they do not invest in duplicative data. Part of the reason that agencies are not fulfilling their responsibilities is that OMB has not made it a priority to oversee these efforts. Until OMB ensures that FGDC and Federal agencies fully implement their responsibilities, the vision of improving the coordination of geospatial information and reducing duplicative investments will not be fully realized.

- [*GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION: OMB and Agencies Need to Make Coordination a Priority to Reduce Duplication*](#) (GAO-13-94, November 2012). According to GAO, FGDC, Federal departments and agencies, and OMB have not yet fully implemented policies and procedures for coordinating geospatial investments because these efforts have not been a priority. As a result, efforts to acquire data are uncoordinated and the Federal Government is acquiring duplicative geospatial data. For example, three agencies are independently acquiring road data, which is reported to have resulted in millions of wasted taxpayers' dollars. Unless OMB, FGDC, and Federal departments and agencies decide that coordinating geospatial investments is a priority, this situation will likely continue.
- [*GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION: Better Coordination Needed to Identify and Reduce Duplicative Investments*](#) (GAO-04-703, June 2004). According to GAO, OMB, individual Federal agencies, and cross-Government committees and initiatives such as FGDC and the Geospatial One-Stop project have taken actions to coordinate the Government's geospatial investments across agencies and with state and local governments. However, these efforts have not been fully successful in reducing redundancies in geospatial investments for several reasons. First, a complete and up-to-date strategic plan for doing so has not been in place. Second, agencies have not consistently complied with OMB guidance that seeks to identify and reduce duplication. Finally, OMB's oversight of Federal geospatial activities has not been effective because its methods—the annual budget review process, the Federal enterprise architecture effort, and FGDC's reporting process—are insufficiently developed and have not produced consistent and complete information. As a result of these shortcomings, Federal agencies are still independently acquiring and maintaining potentially duplicative and costly datasets and systems. Until these problems are resolved, duplicative geospatial investments are likely to persist.

Management Comments



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

September 18, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SARAH NELSON
ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR MANAGEMENT

FROM: DAWN ZIMMER **DAWN** Digitally signed by
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER ZIMMER DAWN ZIMMER
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER Date: 2026.09.18
16:43:40 -0400

SUBJECT: The Department of Energy Has Made Limited Progress
Implementing the Geospatial Data Act of 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft report, *The Department of Energy Has Made Limited Progress Implementing the Geospatial Data Act of 2018*. The Office of the Chief Information Officer appreciates the auditors' work and provides the following comments:

The Office of the Chief Information Officer concurs with the report's three recommendations and has identified planned actions to address each recommendation, as described below.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Bridget Carper Arnone, the Department's Senior Agency Official for Geospatial Information, at bridget.carper.arnone@hq.doe.gov or 202-586-0166, or Lakisha Lewis, the Department's Geospatial Information Officer, at lakisha.lewis@hq.doe.gov or 202-617-9266.

Enclosure

Management Response OIG Draft Report:

The Department of Energy Has Made Limited Progress Implementing the Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (A26OA029)

Recommendation 1: To improve understanding and implementation of the Act, we recommend that the Chief Information Officer develop and communicate a set of data standards for the Department's geospatial data assets to follow.

DOE Response: Concur

The Office of the Chief Information Officer concurs with this recommendation and will communicate applicable federal geospatial data standards and guidance to the Department's program offices and field sites to promote consistent adoption and implementation. The Office of the Chief Information Officer will leverage existing Federal Geographic Data Committee-endorsed standards and other applicable federal standards and guidance.

Estimated Completion Date: September 30, 2027

Recommendation 2: To improve understanding and implementation of the Act, we recommend that the Chief Information Officer create an inventory of the Department's geospatial data to enable sites to know what data already exists.

DOE Response: Concur

The Office of the Chief Information Officer concurs with this recommendation and will assess the scope and requirements for establishing a Department-wide inventory of geospatial data assets. This assessment will include identifying roles and responsibilities, evaluating opportunities to leverage existing Departmental capabilities, and developing an implementation approach and associated resource requirements. Implementation of the inventory will be dependent upon the availability of necessary resources and participation across the Department's program offices and field sites.

Estimated Completion Date: September 30, 2027

Recommendation 3: To improve understanding and implementation of the Act, we recommend that the Chief Information Officer develop and implement a process to increase engagement with relevant personnel at the Department's program offices and field sites to ensure the Act's requirements are better understood.

DOE Response: Concur

The Office of the Chief Information Officer concurs with this recommendation and will develop and implement a communications and engagement process to increase awareness and understanding of the Act's requirements across the Department's program offices and field sites. The process will leverage existing engagement mechanisms, including the Geospatial Science

Enclosure

Management Response
OIG Draft Report:
The Department of Energy Has Made Limited Progress Implementing the Geospatial Data Act of 2018
(A26OA029)

Steering Committee, Energy Hub employee portal, and targeted communications and outreach activities.

Estimated Completion Date: September 30, 2027

FEEDBACK

The Office of Inspector General has a continuing interest in improving the usefulness of its products. We aim to make our reports as responsive as possible and ask you to consider sharing your thoughts with us.

If you have comments, suggestions, and feedback on this report, please reach out at OIG.Reports@hq.doe.gov. Include your name, contact information, and the report number.

For all media-related questions, please send inquiries to OIGpublicaffairs@hq.doe.gov and include your name, contact information, and the report number.