

Framework Data

The development of framework data is a concept endorsed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and being carried out in many states (<http://www.fgdc.gov/framework>). Framework data represent the best available datasets for an area, certified, standardized, and reliable for intended uses. Cooperative data management provides many benefits to stakeholders and the public including better and faster data access, more reliable and useable data and more interchangeable information products. In addition to providing accessible and reliable base-map datasets, framework data that have been developed as part of a single system expressly for the support of critical uses will be easily integrated for analysis and will conform to existing standards. These qualities will allow multiple agencies to communicate without confusion in the assessment of a single situation for their respective actions, such as in a disaster or for management of a region in which there are several jurisdictions in operation.

Framework Data layers or themes defined by the FGDC are:

- Orthoimagery – imagery that has been rectified to real-world coordinates on the ground;
- Elevation – or topography, generally referred to as Digital Elevation Models (DEM) of ground surface;
- Transportation – typically includes roads, highways, rail lines, etc.;
- Hydrography – rivers, lakes, canals, and other waterbodies;
- Governmental (or Administrative) units – for example, county boundaries
- Cadastral (or Parcel) information – land record or parcel boundary & ownership information
- Geodetic control – high precision ground location information often used by surveyors and scientists

The seven themes of geographic data are those that are produced and used by most organizations. Various surveys indicate that they are required by a majority of users, form a critical foundation for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), and have widespread usefulness. A cooperative approach to producing and sharing these common data benefits most organizations that use geographic data. In some instances, the US Geological Survey will provide cooperative funding with states and local governments to complete these layers.

The framework consists of many data sets that are, or can be, integrated and related to each other and to other data. Participants may contribute or use any data theme for any geographic area.