

DIGGS Governance Task Force Report

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Charge: DIGGS needs to develop a sustainable governance structure that can be responsible for the standard, manage maintenance and support, provide a structure for input and new releases and provide a mechanism for keeping the standard international and collaborative. Resulting from the GMS meeting in Orlando, March 25 & 26, 2009, a task committee was assigned to develop and present options for a governance model. The models need to allow for a smooth transition from the current pooled fund (TPF) organization to one that provides long term stability.

The first phase is to develop a United States based organization that serves a similar function to the UK counterpart: the AGS. These two organizations need to continue the collaborative and co-dependent structure that has been operational under the TPF. Eventually, as the standard reaches more countries, an international organization will need to be developed.

Goals of Governance Structure: The goals of the DIGGS US-Local Implementation Group (LIG) is to:

- Manage, maintain, support and ensure adoption of the DIGGS transfer standard
- Represent the United States user community's interests
- Coordinate with other LIGs to ensure the international nature of the standard.

Principles:

The committee developed the following principles to guide the governance process:

- Must allow representation on the deciding/governing body from the stakeholder groups who will use the standard (e.g. DOT's, Software Vendors, Geotech Firms, etc)
- Committee structure must be able to represent the community and be flexible and rapid in decision making

- Have a funding model that encourages the use of the standard and supports the rapid and flexible development of new additions and corrections.
- Has a sustainable model for ensuring broad representation, adoption and adherence to the standard.
- Committee/governance membership should allow DIGGS to define membership representation groups and voting rights and structures
- Distribution and unregistered use of the standard must remain free of charge. (this does not exclude charging for other services or options)
- Sustainable funding mechanisms must be developed that enable the standard to grow, be maintained to meet evolving stakeholder business processes
- Need to allow for creation of Special Interest Groups, funded by other organizations and other Local Interest Groups (e.g. AGS) to participate and become part of the governance.
- Need to allow AGS representation on the body to ensure standard is international – until such time as a more complete international structure is developed.

Responsibilities of Governance Organization: The following is a list of responsibly or tasks that the US-LIG will manage, monitor and ensure are accomplished:

- Maintain schema (updates, new versions)
 - Consider new object types
 - Set limitations of allowed changes and still be compatible
- Support schema and users (answer questions, provide fixes)
- Market and encourage adoption of the transfer standard
 - Develop examples, maintain website, host conferences
- Develop funding mechanism for their operations
- Manage transition from The Pooled Fund study to independent organization
- Ensure collaboration and compatibility with AGS and other organizations.

Decision Criteria: The following decision criteria were used to rank the possible governance solutions:

- **Organizational Permanence:** will the organization and governance model remain viable for a long time and remain adaptable to evolving stakeholder business processes
- **Flexibility/Responsiveness:** Will the organization be flexible enough to add to and maintain the transfer standard and responsive enough to adopt and adapt to new technology and business process developments
- **Responsibilities:** Is the organization able to make decisions independently within established governance policies

- **Representation:** Does the organization provide for appropriate representation on the governance body of all DIGGS stakeholder groups' interests and policies
- **Funding Mechanisms:** Does the organization's funding requirements meet the goal of DIGGS
- **Broad Recognition:** Does the organization have broad recognition from the potential user community and stakeholders

Possible Organizations investigated: The following organizations were reviewed for possible consideration as a host for the DIGGS US-LIG.

OGC

- Mature, stable, well documented structure and standards – very good
- All players of our group would need to be members of OGC (\$500 individual)
- Real decisions made at technical committee level, \$11,000 (technical committee membership required)
 - Standing part of OGC – all technical committee members (Bentley, etc) – ALL have vote
 - They have sub-committees and working groups
- Not sure benefits for cost
- We would just be a small part of OGC
- May not be able to define sub-committee

FHWA

- No interest in maintaining standard
- Are willing to help promote, or recognize, etc (Geotech Engineers)

LandXML

- Mostly a GIS standard – land features, highway traffic – did not pursue

GeoSciML

- Geological Survey data
- Developing Plug-ins for boreholes, etc – and excepting other groups
- Very structured as to plug-ins – must follow their structure – they would decide on formatting, etc

AASHTO

- New committee to handle electronic data (XML)

- Only had one committee meeting to form committee in May 09
- Discussed with chair – and very open to maintaining DIGGS
- They would find a way to fund
- Outside membership (outside DOTs) – sure – but voting need to be discussed (They are a highway organization – and in past all standards voted on by DOT’s) – and is a departure from normal operations (typically have committees of DOT’s and no one else).
- They would probably adopt DIGGS even if they do not own governance structure.

GeoInstitute

- Can set up committee with any guidelines, membership, etc
- Can control our own funding source and methods (with the GeoInstitue structure)
- People generally volunteer their time
- Would need funding to help support and costs

University Center

- Can set up committee with any guidelines, membership, etc – Completely flexible
- Can control our own funding source and methods (with the particular University structure)
- Would need funding to help support and costs – some university support for space, etc
- Does not have the name recognition and PR capabilities of an established institute.

The sub-committee decided that there were only three of the groups that remain as possible options. Below is a matrix of the three with their pros and cons:

Group	Pros	Cons
GeoInstitute (ASCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can set up committee with any guidelines, membership, etc • Can control our own funding source and methods (with the GeoInstitue structure) • People generally volunteer their time • Will embrace DIGGS folks on committees and DIGGS developing the charter • Broad recognition as an international organization • Very established organization (ASCE) with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would need funding to help support and costs

	<p>longevity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has very good marketing and PR structure which can be used for efforts 	
University Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can set up committee with any guidelines, membership, etc – Completely flexible • Can control our own funding source and methods (with the University structure) • Same pros as GeoInstitute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would need funding to help support and costs – some university support for space, etc • Does not have the name recognition and PR capabilities of an established institute. • Structure, support, broad recognition all dependent on the developed organizations (“center”)
AASHTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a new committee to handle electronic data (XML) • Discussed with chair – and very open to maintaining DIGGS • They would find a way to fund – probably charge for use (like other ventures) • Very established organization with longevity • They would probably adopt DIGGS even if they do not own governance structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only had one committee meeting to form committee in May 09 • Outside membership (outside DOTs) – said sure but very difficult –voting needs to be discussed (They are a highway organization – and in past all standards voted on only by DOT’s) – and is a departure from normal operations (typically have committees of DOT’s and no one else). • Only well known within DOT’s so limited broad recognition

Final Recommendation:

The Governance Subcommittee recommends working with the GeoInstitute to develop a new committee within their governance structure to maintain DIGGS.

We recommend transferring DIGGS v1 (once released), have the committee develop a support structure, membership, and governance model that will allow them to maintain and support DIGGS.

We recommend the Pooled Fund group continue to further develop DIGGS including support tools, documentation and most importantly a funding strategy and transition process to move all of the work into the GeoInstitute by the end of the Pooled Fund project.

We recommend the Pooled fund group review the progress of the GeoInstitute structure and results in two years to determine if the resulting solution has met the goals of transfer of the standard.

As a side note: this above process is exactly the way AGS did the monitoring version: CIRIA paid for a committee to produce the monitoring standard. At the end they handed to AGS documents committee.