

Data Endorsement ad-hoc Committee

September 1, 2026

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Attendees

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| ☒ Alison Slaats , MnGeo (Co-Chair) | ☐ Alison (Ali) Wieckowicz , MNIT DOT |
| ☒ Kevin Trappe , Beltrami Co. (Co-Chair) | ☐ Linse Lahti , DNR |
| ☐ Sally Wakefield , MnGeo | ☒ Pamela Oslin , MESB |
| ☐ Gerald (Gerry) Sjerven , Allete | ☐ Jonathan Mortensen , City of Shoreview |
| ☒ Stacey Stark , U-Spatial, U of M | ☒ Robin Mertes , MN Pollution Control Agency |
| ☒ Tanya Mayer , Met Council | ☐ Kory Thurnau , MnGeo |
| ☒ Jason Ewert , MNIT MPCA | |

Discussion

I. Review the final revisions to the evaluation questions

- Kevin led the team in reviewing and clarifying ambiguous questions on the evaluation and proposal forms, focusing on rewording the data quality question and adding clarifiers to ensure alignment with framework themes or GAC priorities.
- The team discussed the revised question 3.3 under the quality section of the evaluation form, and Kevin shared the changes in the wording from 'best' to 'most appropriate statewide data set for the identified theme or priority' to avoid ambiguity.
- Kevin explained that clarifiers were added to the proposal form, specifically in questions 1.5.1 and 1.5.2, stating that a data set must address either a framework theme or a GAC priority to be considered, making it clear for proposers what needs to be identified and described.
- The group acknowledged the potential for multiple datasets within a single NSDI or MnSDI theme and decided to address such cases as they arise, referencing previous examples like county boundaries and emphasizing the need for agencies or groups to collaborate to identify the most broadly applicable dataset.
- The discussion revisited the Streams Dataset Evaluation from last meeting which led to the clarification about the criteria for selecting the most appropriate statewide dataset and the group discussed the importance of broad applicability in the endorsement process. This led Kevin to reference the operational procedures document, highlighting guiding principles and key policy

considerations that prioritize datasets with statewide or broadly applicable coverage, consistent use across jurisdictions, and support for statewide decision making.

- It was also suggested that split decisions among evaluators could be resolved by moving the dataset to a public review phase, where broader community feedback would help determine the most appropriate dataset for endorsement.

II. Review the draft presentation/package for the September 16th GAC Meeting

- Review of Operational Procedures document for GAC approval
- Kevin presented the draft package and presentation for the upcoming GAC meeting, detailing the operational procedures, forms, and key points to be included.
 - **Presentation Structure and Content:** Kevin outlined the presentation, starting with committee background, objectives, benefits of data endorsement, and emphasizing statewide value, followed by explanations of GAC endorsement, framework themes, and the distinction between authoritative and endorsed datasets.
 - **Framework Themes and GAC Priorities:** The team discussed how to present framework themes from NSDI and MSDI, and the group suggested the inclusion of examples like critical infrastructure to illustrate GAC priorities that do not fit neatly into framework themes.
 - **Evaluation Process Overview:** Kevin described the nine-step endorsement process, color-coded by committee, public review, and GAC decision stages.
 - **Post Endorsement Actions:** Kevin summarized post endorsement actions, including creating a data summary sheet, communication, publication steps, and a three-year review process to ensure continued appropriateness of endorsed datasets.
 - **Committee Status and Membership:** The group discussed making the committee a standing committee, updating references from ad hoc, and encouraging new members to join, with Alison and Kevin agreeing to continue as co-chairs and inviting others to participate.
 - **Endorsement Indicator on Geospatial Commons:** Pamela asked about how endorsed datasets would be represented on the Geospatial Commons, and Alison explained that the technical team would propose options, with the committee to provide input once suggestions are available.
 - **Protocol for Process and Documentation Changes:** Kevin, Alison, and Tanya discussed the protocol for making changes to forms and supporting documentation, agreeing that minor clarifications can be handled by the committee, while substantial changes should be brought back to the GAC for approval, following the Standards Committee model.
- **GAC Meeting Preparation and Member Communication:** To ensure GAC members review materials before the upcoming meeting, the group decided to send an email encouraging review and offering to answer questions in advance of the meeting.

III. Discuss the proposed permanent Data Endorsement Committee

- **Committee Status and Membership:** The group discussed making the committee a standing committee, updating references from ad hoc, and encouraging new members to join, with Alison and Kevin agreeing to continue as co-chairs and inviting others to participate.

IV. Finalize recommendations for the GAC

V. Follow-up tasks

- GAC Meeting Preparation: Draft and send an email to GAC members encouraging them to review the endorsement process materials before the upcoming meeting and reach out with questions. (Alison, Kevin)
- Operational Procedures Document Update: Update the operational procedures document to change the wording from "promoted" to "indicated as endorsed" on the Commons as per legal team feedback. (Alison, Kevin)
- Commons Endorsement Indicator: Coordinate with the Commons technical team to determine how endorsed datasets will be represented on the Geospatial Commons and present suggestions to the committee for input. (Alison, Sally)
- Presentation Enhancement: Add or clarify examples of GAC priorities (such as critical infrastructure or specific datasets) in the presentation to distinguish them from framework themes. (Kevin)