

Evaluation and Specification of Geospatial Portal Software:

Background - The U.S. Federal Government has recent experience in specifying Geospatial Portal Software, especially as part of the interagency “e-Government” project known as the “Geospatial One-Stop Portal”. That project delivered two distinct systems: one built among components provided by a consortium of vendors through the OpenGIS Consortium (OGC), and another one built by a single vendor, Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). In the interest of interoperability based on consensus standards, this recent experience will be used to develop a widely reviewed model procurement specification for a geospatial portal.

Requirement - A model specification document is needed for a geospatial portal that is easy to use, component-based, services-oriented, and interoperable where standardized services are defined. To develop that model specification requires:

- (1) an evaluation of usability features for geospatial portals, and
- (2) delineation of specific technical requirements of interoperable geospatial portals.

Approach – The document will be developed by the end of November 2003 by a team of 5-10 people. This team will include: typical users of geospatial portals; experts in information systems architecture, standards-based interoperability, and usability; and, persons involved in the Spatial Data Infrastructure Clearinghouse and the Geospatial One-Stop procurements. The team will base its work on the Geospatial One-Stop functional requirements document developed in the OGC Request for Quotation process, the OGC Portal Architecture document produced as part of contracted work, and experience gained from the currently deployed portal (www.geodata.gov). Looking at the deployed Geospatial One-Stop portal and other geospatial portals, the team will evaluate:

- (1) how the key functional requirements of a geospatial portal can best be specified in a procurement document,
- (2) what usability characteristics should be given special weight in the scoring of geospatial portal proposals, and
- (3) what service interfaces and other standards should be specified, how they specifically interact, and how compliance with such standards should be ascertained.

Products and Review Process - The team will produce two products: a model technical specification document usable in the procurement of geospatial portals, and a report of the process by which that document was developed. Insights and recommendations surfaced through the evaluation will be published regularly in a broad forum of interested parties. A draft technical specification document will also be published for review; comments will be taken into account in the final technical specification document.