

# Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO)

## Rules of Operation and Procedure

### "COFPAES Model" Organization of Stakeholders in the Geospatial Community

(Revised April 21, 2008)

**1. NAME:** The name of this organization shall be Coalition of Geospatial Organizations and hereinafter referred to as (COGO).

**2. MEMBERSHIP:** Membership in (COGO) shall be of two types as set forth below.

"Member Organizations" are national organizations that comply with all of the criteria for full or voting membership as hereinafter set forth, and which have been admitted into full membership in COGO and which are represented by a voting delegate (herein called the "Delegate") and an alternate Delegate (herein called the "Alternate"). To be considered for membership in COGO, an organization shall meet the following criteria:

- a. It shall be a national professional organization, recognized under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, whose primary purpose is the advancement of the professional practice of the creation, collection, dissemination and application of geo-referenced graphical or digital data to depict natural or manmade physical features, phenomena, or boundaries of the earth, geospatial intelligence, and any information related thereto, including any such data that comprises a survey, map, chart, geographic information system, remotely sensed satellite or aerial image or data.
- b. It shall be a formally-structured organization with bylaws and national officers elected by its membership, and shall be financially sound.
- c. It must be incorporated as an independent national organization.
- d. It shall be comprised predominantly of individuals, private firms, agencies, or institutions whose customary professional activities are related to geospatial information and technologies, as described in (a).
- e. It shall have a history of effectively and successfully working with other coalitions and shall express a willingness to participate in COGO under current these Rules of Operation and Procedure, including payment of contributions or dues, if applicable.

"Advisory Organizations" are organizations that otherwise comply with all of the criteria for member organizations, but shall meet the following criteria:

- a. have a significant interest, but not a primary purpose, in the creation, collection, dissemination and application of geo-referenced graphical or digital data to depict natural or manmade physical features, phenomena, or boundaries of the earth, geospatial intelligence, and any information related thereto, including any such data that comprises a survey, map, chart, geographic information system, remotely sensed satellite or aerial image or data,
- b. are established outside of the United States of America and are recognized under an equivalent to section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Service Code in another country, or
- c. are regional in scope or membership.

Such Advisory Organizations are admitted to limited membership rather than full membership in COGO and whose representative shall not be classified as a Delegate, does not have voting

# Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO)

privileges, and shall express a willingness to participate in COGO under current these Rules of Operation and Procedure, including payment of contributions or dues, if applicable.

**CRITERIA FOR COGO MEMBERSHIP:** To be considered for membership in COGO, an organization shall meet the following criteria:

- a. It shall be a national professional organization concerned with national geospatial issues.
- b. It shall be a formally-structured organization with bylaws and national officers elected by its membership, and shall be financially sound.
- c. It must be incorporated as an independent association and not be subsumed by a parent organization.
- d. It shall have a history of effectively and successfully working with other coalitions and shall express a willingness to participate in COGO under current COGO Rules of Operation and Procedure, including payment of contributions or dues, if applicable.

### 3. MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

a. COGO Member Organizations are:

- American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM)
- American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS)
- Association of American Geographers (AAG)
- Cartography and Geographic Information Society (CAGIS)
- Geospatial Information Technology Association (GITA)
- GIS Certification Institute (GISCI)
- Management Association for Private Photogrammetric Surveyors (MAPPS)
- National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC)
- University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS)
- Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)

b. COGO Advisory Organizations are:

- National Association of Counties (NACo)
- National Emergency Numbers Association (NENA)
- Western Governors Association (WGA)
- American Planning Association (APA)

**4. PROCEDURES FOR ADMITTING NEW MEMBERS:** The following procedures shall apply in considering organizations for membership in COGO:

a. COGO may consider for membership any organization from which it receives a letter, signed by its President, expressing interest in becoming a member of COGO, asserting that all criteria for membership as set forth herein are complied with, and providing such other information as may be appropriate or helpful in evaluating the application.

b. The proposed new membership shall be discussed at a Business Meeting. If desired, a representative from the new organization may be invited to a portion of the meeting to ask and answer questions.

c. Unanimous affirmative vote by secret written ballot of all of the Delegates present shall be required at said Business Meeting for acceptance of the new organization. At such time, if a unanimous affirmative vote is not obtained, the new organization shall cease to be a member of COGO and shall not again be considered for membership until at least two years have elapsed.

# Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO)

**5. PURPOSE:** The general purpose of COGO shall be to provide a forum for organizations concerned with national geospatial issues that will 1) improve communications among the member organizations (and others), 2) provide educational information on relevant issues for their respective memberships, 3) align and strengthen their respective policy agendas, and 4) facilitate development of strategies to address national issues.

The objectives in carrying out its general purpose shall be:

1. Developing programs of coordination and mutual action by member organizations that positively affect the interests of the membership from each of the Member and Advisory organizations. Subjects may include, without limitation, legislation, agency policies and regulations, publications (including a website), conferences and seminars.
2. Providing a framework maintaining awareness and coordinating policy positions of the organizations comprising COGO, as such policy positions relate to issues at the federal, state and local levels.

**6. AUTHORITY:** Adoption of Policy Positions:

a. COGO shall undertake legal or advocacy action only through unanimous agreement of all of the Delegates in accordance with its purposes on behalf of the Member Organizations. Each Member Organization or Advisory Organization reserves the right to express separate views or take independent action when it is not in agreement with a proposed course of action presented for consideration by COGO, except that no Member Organization or Advisory Organization shall take a contrary public position or bring suit or commence legal action (external or internal) without first submitting notice of such intent to COGO for consultation prior to the initiation of such action. Notice of such intent to take a position or to commence legal action is to be given as early as practically feasible so that, if time permits, COGO may provide counsel on the matter and may determine whether or not COGO concurs in such action.

**7. DELEGATES:**

a. Each Member and Advisory Organization shall be represented within COGO by one Delegate. A Delegate should be a member of the Organization he or she is representing, and should be in a position of leadership in the Organization so as to facilitate efficient liaison and policy coordination between (COGO) and the Member Organizations.

b. Each Member Organization shall appoint an Alternate Delegate ("Alternate"). An Alternate may attend all (COGO) functions and Member Organization Alternates may exercise the voting and other rights of the Delegate in the Delegate's absence.

By January 1 of each year, each Member and Advisory Organization shall notify in writing the COGO Secretary of the names and addresses of its Delegate and Alternate. A Delegate should be an individual member of the Organization he or she is representing, and should be in a position of leadership in the Organization so as to facilitate efficient liaison and policy coordination between COGO and the Member or Advisory Organization.

c. In specific cases where neither a Member Organization's delegate nor its alternate can attend a (COGO) meeting, the Member Organization may designate another of its members as the representative with voting and other rights to facilitate efficient liaison and policy coordination

# Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO)

between (COGO) and its Member Organizations, provided that the individual otherwise meets the criteria established for delegates.

**8. OBSERVERS:** Each Member and Advisory Organization may designate one observer to attend COGO meetings.

**9. STAFF:** Each member organization shall designate staff. Such staff should be individuals who are 1) familiar with the administration and policies of their respective organizations, and/or 2) knowledgeable of their respective organization's advocacy agenda and whose responsibilities include representation before Congress and Federal agencies.

**10. COGO MEETINGS:** Two regular meetings of COGO shall be held each year at such time and at such place as may be determined by the Delegates. The last regular meeting of each calendar year shall be the "Annual Business Meeting." Special meetings shall be held upon the call of the Chairman or the Secretary upon authorization by the Chairman. Costs of attendance at meetings shall be borne by the Member Organizations or Advisory Organizations for their Delegates, Alternates, and observers. COGO meetings shall be principally intended to foster discussion among the Officers, Delegates and Alternates and formulate and implement COGO policies. The Chairman may recognize staff to provide information and background on issues under discussion.

**11. STAFF MEETINGS:** Meetings of member organizations' Staff shall be held periodically to discuss current issues, strategies, and plans, as well as to coordinate activities between organizations. Meetings shall be called by the COGO Secretary. The COGO Chairman will be notified of all COGO Staff meetings. The COGO Secretary shall preside at Staff meetings. A summary of the proceedings at each Staff meeting shall be prepared and distributed.

## **12. OFFICERS' ELECTIONS AND TERMS:**

a. Officers shall consist of a Chairman, Chairman-Elect, and Secretary. Officers shall serve one year.

b. At its first Annual Business Meeting, (COGO) Member Organizations will (1) recommend delegates or alternates to serve as inaugural Chairman, Chairman-Elect, and Secretary and (2) establish a rotation plan to appoint delegates or alternates from its Member Organizations to serve as successive Chairmen-Elect. A one-time inaugural election will be held for Chairman, Chairman-Elect, and Secretary. Each Member Organization shall have one vote. Inaugural Officers shall be elected by secret written ballot. Persons holding the offices of Chairman-Elect and Secretary may also serve as Delegates or Alternates for their terms of office. *(This clause shall be removed upon the conclusion of the first annual business meeting).*

c. Henceforth, the Chairman-Elect shall automatically succeed to the office of Chairman at the end of his/her one-year term as Chairman-Elect. The Chairman, upon succession to that office, will cease to be a Delegate or Alternate, and the Member Organization shall fill the resulting vacancy with an appointed Delegate or Alternate. The rotation plan established at the first Annual Business Meeting will determine the succeeding Chairman-Elect. The Secretary will be elected at each Annual Business Meeting from a slate of candidates presented by the Immediate Past Chairman for consideration of the (COGO) Delegates in accordance with a. above. In the election for Secretary, each Member Organization shall have one vote. The Secretary shall be elected by secret written ballot. The Secretary may serve for not more than two consecutive terms.

# Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO)

**13. CHAIRMAN:** The Chairman shall preside at all meetings, issue the call for meetings, establish the agenda, and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Delegates.

**14. CHAIRMAN-ELECT:** The Chairman-Elect shall perform the duties of the Chairman in the absence or inability of the Chairman to serve and fulfill such other responsibilities as are assigned by the Chairman.

**15. TREASURER:** The delegates may designate a Treasurer. The Treasurer shall receive all funds, maintain a financial record of all receipts and payments, regularly report the financial status of COGO to its members and file such other reports or documents as may be required by the Delegates. Payment of all bills and accounts shall be based on vouchers and may be certified by the Chair as approved for payment.

An account or accounts shall be established in a bank, banks, or other depository approved by COGO for the receipt and disbursement of funds. Disbursements from the COGO account or accounts shall be made at the direction of the Treasurer with approval of the Chair.

**16. SECRETARY:** Responsibilities and duties of the Secretary shall include the following:

- a. Compile, distribute, and maintain a current COGO roster.
- b. In consultation with the Chair, Staff and Officers, prepare and distribute notices of meetings, agendas with supporting information, and other information of interest to all persons listed on the roster.
- c. Prepare and distribute minutes of COGO meetings to all persons listed on the roster no later than one month after the meeting.
- d. Develop a calendar at the beginning of each year to reflect COGO meetings, Staff meetings, and other major events, to facilitate advance planning by those concerned.
- e. Arrange for and preside over Staff meetings on a four to six week cycle or as required to maintain communications and coordination.
- f. Participate in and coordinate activities to fulfill current action items.
- g. In consultation with Counsel, coordinate legislative and regulatory visits to further the COGO mission.
- h. Oversee implementation of programs developed by COGO to meet its annual goals and objectives, and keep the Chair informed of their progress.
- i. Cooperate with the Officers to keep COGO members informed on important matters.
- j. Act as teller to open, tabulate and announce the results of all secret written ballots by the Delegates.

**17. COUNSEL:** If deemed appropriate, COGO may retain Counsel.

**18. FINANCES:** COGO shall operate on a calendar year fiscal basis. The operation of COGO shall be financed by contributions or dues from Member Organizations and Advisory Organizations, if deemed necessary and appropriate, in amounts to be determined at each Annual Business Meeting or from time to time by contributions from the Delegates subject to the authorization of the organizations that they represent. Payment shall be due at the first of each year unless otherwise determined by the Delegates. Surplus funds from the sale of documents published by COGO and from conferences, seminars or other activities may also be used to defray operational expenses. It is the objective of COGO to maintain a reserve equal to one year's projected expenses.

## Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO)

**19. PURCHASING AND CONTRACTING:** COGO, upon the authorization of the Delegates, may purchase or enter into contracts for goods, supplies or services, including legal, accounting and other advisory services, but shall not obligate the Member Organizations or Associate Organizations beyond the financial resources which are currently available in the COGO account.

**20. NONPAYMENT OF DUES:** If any Member Organization becomes delinquent in its contributions or dues to COGO for a period of six months or more, then such organization shall no longer be a Member or Advisory Organization.

**21. REINSTATEMENT OF MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:** In the event a Member or Advisory Organization voluntarily withdraws from COGO, it may be reinstated by a written expression of interest from its President or Chief Officer, a unanimous affirmative vote by secret written ballot of all of the COGO Delegates present and payment of full contributions or dues for the current year.

**22. AMENDMENT:** These Rules of Operation and Procedure may be amended at any duly called meeting with the unanimous consent by secret written ballot of all of the Delegates.