

# Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO)

## Rules of Operation and Procedure

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

(Approved August 4, 2008)

(Revised July 12, 2009)

(Revised July 9, 2013)

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**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 professional activities related to the creation, collection, dissemination, management, or application of geographical information to depict natural or manmade physical, social, or administrative features, phenomena, or boundaries, 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.
- 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/or organizations and shall express a willingness to participate in COGO under these current 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, with the following exceptions:

- a. Shall have a significant interest, but not a primary purpose, in the creation, collection, dissemination, management or application of geographical information to depict natural, manmade physical, social, or administrative features, phenomena, or boundaries, 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. may be 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

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- c. may be regional in scope or membership, and may not necessarily be comprised of individual members or member organizations, with elected officers.

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

### 3. MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

- a. COGO Member Organizations are:
  - American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)
  - American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS)
  - Association of American Geographers (AAG)
  - Cartography and Geographic Information Society (CAGIS)
  - Geographic and Land Information Society (GLIS)
  - GIS Certification Institute (GISCI)
  - International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO)
  - Management Association for Private Photogrammetric Surveyors (MAPPS)
  - National Society for Professional Surveyors
  - National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC)
  - University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS)
  - United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF)
  - Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)
- b. COGO Advisory Organizations are:
  - National Association of Counties (NACo)
  - National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
  - Western Governors Association (WGA)
  - American Planning Association (APA)
  - National Alliance for Public Safety GIS (NAPSG)

**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 (see Section 2) 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 not become a

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member of COGO and shall not again be considered for membership until at least two years have elapsed.

**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.

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- 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 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:** At least three 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" unless the members vote to make another meeting the "Annual Business Meeting." Special meetings shall be held upon the call of the Chair or the Secretary upon authorization by the Chair. 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 Chair should conduct meetings (face-to-face, phone, or web-enabled) in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. However, these Rules of Operation and Procedure take precedence over Robert's Rule of Order in situations where a conflict exists. The Chair 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 Chair 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 Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers shall serve one year. These officers will constitute the Executive Committee. All but the Chair may also serve as Delegates, Alternates or Observers for their terms of office.
- b. The Chair-Elect shall automatically succeed to the office of Chair on January 1. The Chair, upon succession to that office, will cease to be a Delegate, Alternate or Observer and the Member Organization shall fill the resulting vacancy, although the Observer is optional. The office of Chair-Elect shall be filled in turn each year from candidates of the Member Organizations through a rotation plan (incorporated into these Rules of Operation and Procedure by reference). The outgoing Chair becomes the Past-Chair and may become a Delegate, Alternate or Observer.

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- c. The Secretary and Treasurer will be elected at the final meeting of the calendar year from a slate of candidates presented by the Immediate Past Chair for consideration of the (COGO) Delegates in accordance with paragraph a. above. In the election for Secretary and Treasurer, each Member Organization shall have one vote and may be elected by secret written ballot.

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

**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.

COGO may delegate administration of finances to a member organization and negotiate the terms. Administration duties include, but are not limited to, maintaining and accounting for COGO funds, invoicing and receiving annual dues, notifying the Treasurer of any past dues, making authorized payments, and preparing quarterly financial reports including a year end summary. However, the Treasurer remains responsible for oversight of all financial transactions and reporting. The Treasurer shall prepare a financial report for each COGO meeting and prepare a draft annual budget to be reviewed by the Executive Committee for adoption by the membership.

**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.

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- 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.

**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.