

NSGIC Guidelines for Business Partnerships

The following principles are based on the premise that in certain circumstances, NSGIC may wish to collaborate with business partners and other entities to further NSGIC's core purposes and initiatives. In these cases, these guidelines will be followed to retain NSGIC's independence, avoid conflicts of interest, and guard our organizational and professional values.

Organizational Culture and its Influence on Externally Funded Programs

Organizational culture has a profound impact on whether and how NSGIC business partnerships are pursued. NSGIC activities reflect on all State geospatial coordination programs. Moreover, all State geospatial technology practitioners are represented to some extent by NSGIC actions. Thus, NSGIC must act as the professional representative for all State geospatial technology practitioners.

As a professional organization, NSGIC continues to operate with a high level of purpose representing the ideals of state governments with regard to geospatial ethics and professionalism. Non-profit associations today often require the generation of non-dues based revenues. NSGIC will continue to maintain and provide full disclosure and oversight on all financial interactions and follow the guidelines below for funding support through external sources.

Every Board, Committee and supporting organization member in the association must continue to be accountable to ethical standards derived from the vision and values of the Council. In turn, leaders of NSGIC must continue to recognize the critical role that the organization plays as the sole professional association for State geospatial technology practitioners in America. NSGIC leaders must continue to make programmatic choices that reflect a commitment to professional values and the core organizational purpose.

Overview of Principles

NSGIC's principles to guide business partnerships have been organized into General Principles that apply to all or nearly all situations, and Special Guidelines that deal with specific issues and concerns. These guidelines should be reviewed annually to assure their continued relevance to the policies and operations of NSGIC and to our business environment. These principles serve

as a guide to anyone considering or developing a relationship with NSGIC from a business or for-profit organization perspective.

For the purpose of these guidelines, "business partnerships" shall mean transactions in which NSGIC receives funds, in-kind or other contributions or services from an entity, either as a direct contribution in support of a NSGIC program or activity or as part of a collaborative public program or event.

General Principles

1. NSGIC's vision and values must drive the proposed activity. NSGIC's vision and values ultimately must determine whether a proposed relationship is appropriate for NSGIC. While it is assumed that any potential business partnership opportunity arises from mutual benefit, NSGIC will carefully weigh relationships with organizations or industries whose principles, policies or actions conflict or appear to conflict with NSGIC's vision and values. NSGIC's mission statement will provide additional guidance for externally funded relationships. Activities that are inconsistent with the organization's mission are unacceptable. In general, NSGIC will proactively choose its priorities for external relationships and participate in those that fulfill these priorities.
2. The relationship must preserve or promote trust in NSGIC and the geospatial technology profession. NSGIC primarily represents the interests of state governments and must continue to be sensitive to issues of "public trust." Corporate or other relationships that could undermine the public's trust in NSGIC are not acceptable.
3. The relationship must maintain NSGIC's objectivity with respect to geospatial issues and technologies. NSGIC will only consider business partnerships from businesses or for-profit organizations when such partnerships do not conflict or in any way impact the objectivity of the association, its members, activities, programs or employees. NSGIC's objectivity with respect to geospatial issues should not be biased by external relationships.

Special Guidelines

The following guidelines address a number of special situations NSGIC will advocate for its membership and States within the geospatial technologies industry, but will not involve itself in the production, sale, or marketing to consumers of geospatial technology products. Marketing geospatial technology-related products (e.g., GIS software, GPS products) undermines NSGIC's objectivity and diminishes its role in representing geospatial technology values and educating the public about the technology.

1. Activities should be funded from multiple sources whenever possible. Activities funded from a single external source are at greater risk for inappropriate influence from the supporter - or the perception of it, which may be equally damaging. Therefore funding for activities should be done with multiple business partners, if possible, NSGIC recognizes

that for some activities the benefits may be so great, the harms so minimal, and the prospects for developing multiple sources of funding so unlikely that single-source funding is a reasonable option. The Board should review single-business partner activities prior to implementation to ensure that: a) reasonable attempts have been made to locate additional sources of funds; and b) the expected benefits of the project merit the additional risk to NSGIC of accepting single-source funding. In all cases of single source funding, NSGIC will guard against conflict of interest.

2. The relationship must preserve NSGIC's control over any projects and products bearing NSGIC's name or logo. NSGIC shall retain editorial control over any information produced as part of a business partnership arrangement. When a NSGIC program is supported by a business partnership arrangement, NSGIC must remain in control of its name, logo and all content, and must approve all marketing materials to ensure that the message is congruent with NSGIC's vision and values.
3. Relationships must not permit or encourage influence by the business partner on NSGIC. NSGIC business partner or other business relationships must not permit influence by the partner on NSGIC's policies, priorities, and actions. Relationships that appear to be acceptable when viewed alone may become unacceptable when viewed in light of other existing or proposed activities.
4. Participation in a business relationship does not imply NSGIC's endorsement of any external entity or its policies. Participation in business partnership of a NSGIC conference or other program does not imply NSGIC approval of that business partner's general policies, nor does it imply that NSGIC will exert any influence to advance the business partner's interests outside the substance of the arrangement itself. NSGIC's name and logo should not be used in a manner that would express or imply a NSGIC endorsement of the business partner or its policies.
5. Identification of supporting business partners must be disclosed on all promotional and briefing materials. The use of business partnership support must be disclosed in promotional and briefing materials for events that use that support.

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