FY 2026 Audit of the Department's Compliance with Geospatial Data Act Requirements

Audit Report OIG-27-003-A
October 29, 2026

➤ **What We Audited |** Our objective was to review the Department of Commerce's compliance with its 13 responsibilities under the Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA) and progress toward implementing geospatial data standards and best practices.

➤ **Why This Matters |** Within the Department, both the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration manage geospatial data that takes many forms, including satellite imagery and maps as well as weather, environmental, and census data.

Geospatial data records contain metadata—data about the data—that provides information (such as content, source, and other characteristics of the data) useful for data discovery and analysis. Accurate and complete metadata enables government agencies, businesses, researchers, and automated tools to find and understand the Department's geospatial data. The GDA mandates how the federal government manages geospatial data and defines 13 requirements for covered agencies, including the Department.

➤ **What We Found |** We found that the Department fully complied with 11 of the 13 responsibilities defined in the GDA and partially complied with the other two. First, the Department did not maintain a current geospatial data strategy after its previous strategy expired at the end of FY 2025. Although it did publish an updated version in September 2026, the update lacks a framework to ensure successful implementation. The Department's second partial compliance was related to the requirement to ensure that all geospatial metadata is complete, of high quality, and available.

➤ **What We Recommend |** We made four recommendations to help the Department improve the completeness, quality, and availability of its geospatial metadata.