

NGDA Lifecycle Maturity Assessment (LMA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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1. What is the purpose of the NGDA LMA automated tool?
 - a. The NGDA LMA survey tool was developed to simplify the assessment process. It provides easy and continuous access, via the GeoPlatform, alleviating the need to manage separate e-mails and documents; it allows for better accounting and database management with ability for automated reporting; and it provides online data storage and tracking of the NGDA lifecycle over time. Outputs from the tool will be a future source of input for annual NGDA and Theme reports. Please reference the NGDA Lifecycle Maturity Assessment Training Slides, “Introductions, Background, Purpose, Process and Timeline” section available online: <https://www.geoplatform.gov/A-16-NGDA-Theme-Community/LMA>.
2. Are there training materials available to assist with users of the NGDA LMA tool?
 - a. Yes – the recording from the training webinar as well as the presentation slides (in PDF format) are available online: <https://www.geoplatform.gov/A-16-NGDA-Theme-Community/LMA>.
3. How many questions do I need to answer?
 - a. All questions need to be answered. There are a total of 19 questions over the 7 lifecycle stages – the assessment is 14 web pages long.
4. Where is the data collected from the survey go? Is there a database associated with it?
 - a. Data is stored online in the open source tool LimeSurvey. The NGDA LMA team will look at using the tool within agencies to help manage and maintain data within an organization – please contact the NGDA LMA Help Desk via NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov with your recommendations and feedback.
5. Can the NGDA LMA survey tokens be shared?
 - a. You can share token but the NGDA LMA team recommends that only one person fill out the assessment. All responsible POCs can work off Cut-n-Paste tool and reviewing prior to submission.
6. Will new tokens be issued for next year’s assessment?
 - a. Tokens will be resent to all identified Dataset Managers, another token will be sent for FY16 process. Migration to a new assessment will happen after September 30 – this will not be immediately available due to the review and reporting requirements. The NGDA LMA team requests your feedback and input to improve the assessment for next year.
7. How else can this tool help me?
 - a. Tool will assist if problems occur and help identify trigger points to quickly show managers and supervisors any areas of concern (i.e. loss of funding, lack of resources, etc.)
8. I have multiple NGDAs, will I receive multiple tokens?
 - a. If you are a DM for 3 datasets, you will receive 3 tokens (all unique). If a named NGDA dataset is an aggregate of multiple datasets then only 1 token will be received – please note this in your Justification

Comments. The NGDA LMA process should be done at the dataset level, not aggregations of datasets. See FAQ #14 for more info.

9. I have an NGDA that is comprised of multiple datasets, will I receive multiple tokens?

- a. No, only each single named NGDA will receive a token. The NGDA LMA was designed at the dataset level, not the aggregate. Dataset Managers will have to address the breakout in the Justification Comments. See FAQ #14 for more info.

10. I didn't receive my NGDA LMA invitation?

- a. Email invitations will be auto-generated and sent from the NGDA LMA Help Desk (NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov), please check your Junk and/or Spam folder to ensure it was not lost. If you still do not see the invitation or correct token, please e-mail the NGDA LMA Help Desk (NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov).

11. Why do I have to manually input the Reviewer info (i.e. Theme Lead and Executive Champion) if these positions have already been identified for all NGDAs and saved in an existing spreadsheet?

- a. This is only for you to show who reviewed the information you put into the assessment. You do not need to name every one of these positions – it is good to be familiar with them, but this is to show who reviewed what was entered into the assessment only. We do maintain a list of NGDA Dataset Managers, Theme Leads, Executive Champions, etc. this can be made available to you if you contact the NGDA LMA Help Desk via NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov.

12. Is this assessment available for internal use within an organization or for Dataset Managers supporting other datasets not identified as an NGDA?

- a. All NGDA LMA resources are available online via the GeoPlatform Theme Community site: <https://www.geoplatform.gov/A-16-NGDA-Theme-Community/LMA>. The survey itself is only open to NGDAs, based on token access and we are currently only assessing the existing list of datasets. We do hope to enable broader access in the future for those interested, especially those nominating data to be designated as a new NGDA.

13. What do I need to know about Justification Comments?

- a. Pay close attention to the **Clarifying Statements**, example actions are provided for each question – use these to formulate justification comments and the **Justification Comments**, which provide additional details on why the maturity metric was selected – what demonstrates this level is achieved. Enter answers from the perspective of the Dataset Manager – with respect to the maturity metric you selected. Some questions are related but are specific to lifecycle stage – referencing to previous answers is acceptable, ensure maturity metric is justified. More later on Q3 and Q7; as well as Q4 and Q16. The text box limit is 3500 characters (including spaces). It is recommended you use the offline template developed to enable users to easily 'cut-n-paste' text. The NGDA LMA Dataset Manager Cut-n-Paste Tool can be found online at <https://www.geoplatform.gov/A-16-NGDA-Theme-Community/LMA>, along with other resources.

14. My NGDA is not one dataset, but many datasets – how is this handled in the Justification Comments?
- Clarify this in your narrative – for this year respond as if the group was one dataset. Provide any documentation that clarifies this further, if possible recommend how to split out the NGDA to individual, but related datasets. Further discussions with the Dataset and Theme Manager will be scheduled to determine if the NGDA should split into separate datasets or be maintained as one.
15. What level of detail is required in the Justification Comments?
- The level of detail must provide sufficient information to justify the metric selected. Users are also encouraged to upload documents or provide web links to documents that support the metric selected. If documents are internal or sensitive please cite these and provide a brief summary of contents. If there is a need to review the Dataset Manager will be contacted. Users are also encouraged to provide any summaries, status updates or maps, annual reports, etc. supporting the metric selected. You may also reference between questions if appropriate.
16. Some of the questions appear the same or very similar, how should we address?
- Questions may be related and differentiate between defining requirements and meeting requirements – referencing to previous answers is acceptable, but ensure the maturity metric is justified. Examples include: Sensitivity questions – Q2 and Q7, Q2 is on open government and transparency for all stages while Q7 is specific to Stage 1 Define/Plan – examples Title 13 limits, no limitations, etc. Business requirements – Q4 and Q16, Q4 is on your defined Business Requirements in Stage 1 Define/Plan while Q16 is on how to deliver those Business Requirements in Stage 6 Use/Evaluate. You may also reference between questions if appropriate.
17. How far back do I go? What historical information is required to define our ‘baseline’ assessment? Should we report on the current state or date back to an earlier time?
- We rely on the Dataset Managers to determine what to report and assess. The goal of the first assessment is to include all pertinent information associated with the dataset to the most recent defined business requirements. Historical documents are not required but can be referenced – may be prior to 1990. Datasets created after 1990 can go back to the creation date or a significant change to the business requirements.
18. How long do I have to enter my input online?
- Do NOT leave survey open for more than 1 hour or it will timeout – ALL information entered will be lost. It is recommended you use the offline template developed to enable users to easily ‘cut-n-paste’ text. The NGDA LMA Dataset Manager Cut-n-Paste Tool can be found online at <https://www.geoplatform.gov/A-16-NGDA-Theme-Community/LMA>, along with other resources. The survey is open and available to edit, revisit, or resubmit prior to closing date. Final NGDA LMA inputs due September 30, 2015.
19. How do ensure my input is saved?
- Clicking 'Next' will save your inputs on the current page. Before leaving a page make sure you click 'Next'!

20. How do I navigate across different sections?

- a. Please use the Question Index bar to link to other sections or use the survey buttons 'next' or 'previous'. Do NOT use the browser forward and back buttons.

21. How can I print out my assessment for easy review?

- a. If you would like to export your answers, please wait until your Assessment page then click the option to "Print this Page". A pop up window will open and you can choose the option to 'Export to PDF'. Please use the 'landscape' option.

22. Where can I learn more about the Maturity Matrix to understand the rankings?

- a. A full Maturity Matrix is available which defines each maturity ranking across all stages. The document is available online at <https://www.geoplatform.gov/A-16-NGDA-Theme-Community/LMA>.

23. How can I determine if the LMA has been verified and signed?

- a. The NGDA dataset's LMA is registered as "Verified and Signed" when the survey has been submitted and the Name, Email, and Date of the reviewer has been entered in the 'Review and Approval' stage of the assessment. This information is entered by the person completing the survey. The "Date Approved" field is the trigger for the status change.

24. Who do I contact for help?

- a. For questions or assistance please contact the NGDA LMA Help Desk via NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov.

25. Who will be reviewing NGDA LMA inputs?

- a. The NGDA LMA team will be reviewing the input while the assessment is open, if there are concerns and questions they will reach out to the DM or the assigned person entering the assessment information. Briefings will be provided to the Theme Leads and the DMs while the assessment is taking place. A final report will be delivered in 2015 Q4 after the assessment closes.

26. How do I provide feedback on the NGDA LMA?

- a. All feedback is welcome and helps drive future improvements. There are 2 Feedback Mechanisms available: the Feedback page at end of survey or the NGDA LMA e-mail: NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov.

27. We are working in the Cut-n-Paste Tool and completing the assessments offline before entering the information online, should we still report our progress?

- a. Yes, please report your progress through the NGDA LMA team via NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov even if you complete the assessments on paper in order for an accurate progress report to be provided to managers, GAO, or others interested in the process as needed.

28. Are there NGDA LMA Status Reports available for Dataset Managers and Theme Leads to access?

- a. Yes, the NGDA LMA Status Reports (full Overview, Overview by Agency, and Overview by Theme) are available through the internal Theme Lead Collaboration Community site (password protected):

<https://www.geoplatform.gov/theme-lead/theme-lead-home>. In addition, submitters are provided an opportunity to export results directly from the online survey into a PDF format. If you need an individual data report please contact the NGDA LMA team via [NGDA LMA_help@fgdc.gov](mailto:NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov).

29. Is there a recommended approach for assembling survey data?
- The approach is up to the Theme Lead and associated Dataset Managers. The 16 Theme Leads should be communicating and collaborating with their Dataset Managers on completing the assessment even if all the datasets are not in their agency. As an example, a Theme may have a central person to aggregate results based on regular meetings and outreach conducted to each Dataset Manager. Another example is a Theme appointing an A-16 coordinator to facilitate coordination across the Dataset Managers as well as with the NGDA LMA team. The Coordinator may host brown bags and training sessions to help Dataset Managers and Theme Leads handle their responsibility. Maintaining awareness and open communication is key!
30. I'm having trouble getting the key people needed to respond and assist with inputting data to the LMA, what should I do?
- If Theme Leads and Dataset Managers are unsuccessful with coordination efforts or unable to obtain the necessary information to complete the LMA, please contact the NGDA LMA team via NGDA_LMA_help@fgdc.gov so it can be brought to the attention of the FGDC Coordination Group. As we collectively learn how this process is evolving, it's important to keep the communication open to help facilitate coordination.
31. Will there be negative impacts for a low maturity score?
- The LMA process is designed to determine what NGDA lifecycle activities are occurring across the A-16 portfolio and determine how Federal agencies are achieving the goals of the NSDI. Outputs such as reports and dashboards should be used by Dataset Managers as an opportunity to show results to the managers to increase their awareness about the status of NGDAs and use the process as an opportunity for communication on where these datasets need more resources to increase the maturity levels. The goal, as we respond to the assessment results, is to ensure that the Federal agencies and our stakeholders can get the data needed for implementing business and mission goals. This will make users more confident about the quality and consistency of the data.
32. Is there a way to show a trend instead of a snapshot in time or a way to backdate assessments to show how a dataset changed over time?
- Every time the survey 'submit' button is hit a snap shot is created so one can map the process over time. The end of the baseline assessment period is September 30, 2015 which is the last snapshot. The idea is that starting in 2016, when a Dataset Manager updates their assessment, one could visualize the maturity changes of the dataset across the assessment years.
33. Will questions be changed, added, or removed in future LMAs?
- Based on feedback and future requirements, questions in the LMA may be adjusted, added, or removed in the survey to provide clarification or better evaluate criteria and capture metrics.