



# HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

AUD-MERO-20-41

## **(U) What OIG Audited**

(U) The Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA or the Act) requires Federal agencies that collect, produce, acquire, maintain, distribute, use, or preserve geospatial data to comply with certain requirements. The Act is designed to promote geospatial data sharing among government agencies, academia, and private industry, and to encourage the use of existing geospatial data when possible. Among other things, the Act requires covered agencies, including the Department of State (Department), to (1) comply with geospatial data standards developed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), (2) comply with 13 covered agency responsibilities, and (3) limit use of Federal funds associated with geospatial data that does not comply with applicable standards. The Act also requires covered agency inspectors general to submit an audit to Congress every 2 years, which includes reviewing agencies' compliance with Sections 757, 759(a), and 759A, described above.

(U) The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit to determine whether the Department has complied with the 13 covered agency responsibilities in accordance with Section 759(a) of the Act. OIG, in collaboration with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, determined that sections 757 and 759A were not relevant to this inaugural audit.

## **(U) What OIG Recommends**

(U) OIG made three recommendations to Department management intended to assist the Department in implementing GDA requirements. Management's response to the recommendations offered follow each recommendation in the Results section of this report. Management comments to a draft of this report are reprinted in their entirety in Appendices D and E. OIG considers all three recommendations resolved, pending further action.

**September 2020**

**OFFICE OF AUDITS**

MIDDLE EAST REGION OPERATIONS

## **(U) Audit of Department of State Compliance With the Geospatial Data Act of 2018**

### **(U) What OIG Found**

(U) The Department is not presently in compliance with the 13 covered agency responsibilities required by section 759(a). Although the Department plans to incorporate geospatial data considerations into its Enterprise Data Strategy—a Department strategy for data governance—to comply with 1 of the 13 responsibilities, the strategy is not expected to be completed until Summer 2021. With respect to the remaining 12 responsibilities, OIG found that some Department bureaus and offices have established practices that address some GDA requirements. For example, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research combined information from Federal agencies, academia, and the private sector to develop and make available maps of key facilities for disaster relief in non-capital cities, an important example of compliance with the GDA requirement to promote geospatial data integration from all sources. However, a significant amount of work remains for the Department to achieve full compliance with the Act.

(U) The Department has not complied with the Act, in part, because Department officials stated that they were unaware of the GDA's enactment because it was enacted under an unrelated reauthorization act, and neither the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) nor FGDC formally notified the Department of GDA requirements. However, OIG found that prior to enactment, the Bureau of Legislative Affairs circulated a draft of the law but did not send it to the bureaus with geospatial data expertise that would likely lead implementation efforts. In addition, official Department representatives did not attend FGDC meetings, including one in October 2018 discussing GDA enactment. Moreover, although the Bureau of Information Resource Management learned of the GDA in August 2019, when OMB requested information on the Department's GDA implementation progress, it did not promptly take action to implement GDA requirements at that time. By not fully implementing the GDA, the Department is not meeting the intent of the Act, which is to promote open geospatial data sharing, avoid duplication of effort, and effectuate the use of existing data when possible.