

## National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program - STATEMAP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

*The following is provided as a resource for applicants for, and recipients of, STATEMAP cooperative agreements. Although these answers are correct at the date of most recent posting (May 2026), these answers are subject to change based on new or modified guidance, policy, and (or) procedure at the Program, Bureau, and (or) Department level. Additional information can be requested at any time by sending an email to [statemap@usgs.gov](mailto:statemap@usgs.gov).*

Q: Is GeMS Level 3 the requirement for all GeMS databases? Does it need to be explicitly stated that deliverables will be up to the current GeMS standards, or is this assumed?

A: There is no need to reference “levels” when discussing the [Geologic Map Schema \(GeMS\)](#) standard. While it is expected that all GeMS submissions will be formatted and submitted in compliance with the GeMS standard, we acknowledge that there may be instances where submitted GeMS databases do not validate as fully compliant for a variety of reasons. Additionally, GeMS databases may be submitted as restricted if there are plans for future updates and/or inclusion in a broader compilation for future publication. Regardless, all GeMS databases should include a graphics file in accordance with [GeMS Submittal Requirements](#). Please note, work proposed/awarded under GC1 must include a GeMS submission of the same area and scale as the cartographic product and while both the map and GeMS need not be listed separately on Attachment A, the Program will track the map publication and GeMS database as separate deliverables.

Q: We are proposing a multi-phase project which will result in updates to our state digital atlas. and at present, our plan is to submit a GeMS (level 1) database with no plans to publish a stand-alone cartographic product. Is this acceptable to include in our STATEMAP Proposal?

A: It seems you are proposing work that would be covered under Guidance Criterion (GC) 3 (create and submit new and (or) improved geologic map compilations at 1:24,000 to 1:500,000 scale). Per this GC, compilations must be GeMS-compliant, be internally reconciled, and be accompanied by a description of how the compilation was constructed. Note, compliance will be validated during the GeMS QC process. States may submit GeMS deliverables as “restricted” if such submissions are not yet appropriate for release (i.e., additional compilation activities or anticipated updates to the accompanying, preliminary cartographic product). As noted under GC 3, compilations must include either a map graphic (suitable for GeMS requirements) or a full cartographic product and draft compilation maps must be submitted as published products no later than 12 months after the end of the project period of performance. Please also note that, under GC 5, states may request funds to convert digital maps to citable GeMS-compliant databases and/or bring previously submitted non-GeMS-compliant databases to GeMS-compliance.

Q: 2027 GSA Connects which is in Montréal, Québec. Is it acceptable to request funds for international travel?

A: Yes, the location is not something that is considered particularly relevant, however attendance must be clearly justified, and total travel expenses cannot exceed \$6,000.

Q: For the DOI Research and Development (R&D) form, should we list only the current or pending projects that directly support our STATEMAP work, or should we also include other funding requests? For example, our office recently applied for the NOFO G26AS00102 grant (Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (Earth MRI) Mine Waste Cooperative Agreements FY2026), and we typically receive annual USGS funding for data preservation. If these do not contribute to our STATEMAP goals, should they be included on the R&D form?

A: The current and pending other support form should list all the projects an individual is involved in. The point is to see all their funded research projects on one form and all the sources of funding. They should also be listing their non-USGS funded research. Anything they are currently involved in. Please note, OMB forms should be completed for all key personnel involved with the work and these need to be provided to the Program office before the final award can be issued.

Q: Guidance Criterion 6 of STATEMAP 2026 states: *An update can be at any scale or map style, provided that it covers the whole state*. The current CNGM sources from the 1968 Geologic Map of Maryland. MDGS has recently completed 100k digital compilation maps of 4 of its western counties and would like to update the CNGM with its western MD compilation data. Would updating the CNGM with a focus on western MD data be allowable under GC6?

A: We want to be flexible to accommodate those updates that local experts feel are important. We would like to keep things to statewide publications for those updates to help manage communication and maintenance; but there are no stipulations about what level of update is required for a revision. In this example, the geology from the Cleaves et al., 1968 map could be replaced with that of the new mapping - but preserve the older geology in the eastern part of the state. So long as that was published as a citable data product, it could be incorporated into the CNGM. In future years, this could be updated with new versions that incrementally replaced more of the '68 map with modern mapping. Alternatively, applicants can wait until the entire state is updated to submit as a single major revision. Applicants can also update unit descriptions and ages for portions of their state as new mapping is completed while leaving original lie work intact. Or applicants could do a bit of both - replace the line work in a portion of a state, and update unit names, ages, and descriptions (as necessary) statewide. In any case, we can provide GeMS versions with current CNGM symbology and terminology and would be happy to talk through CNGM GeMS formatting choices to make content geologically and cartographically consistent.

Q: We plan to propose a two-year performance period beginning on September 1, 2026, and ending on August 31, 2028. Is the proposed September 1 start date achievable, or would applicants recommend pushing it back? If so, by how much? At this time, we believe a September 1 start is a realistic request, provided that we can return revisions ASAP once we receive the funding decision.

A: In general, our goal this year is to have all STATEMAP and EDMAP awards issued by the end of the calendar year, keeping in mind that our systems go offline for a couple of weeks mid-late September into early October.

Q: I realize that projects submitted under Guidance Criterion 5 require the map being converted to have a PDP page on the NGMDB. However, does the map being converted into a GeMS-compliant geodatabase need to be a previous STATEMAP product?

A: GeMS database conversions (GC5) can be done for any relevant, previously published paper or digital maps (not just STATEMAP); just be sure to include the citation.

Q: Are the Statement of Outcome letters optional for proposals requesting less than \$150,000 in federal funds, or is the threshold based on the total project cost (state + federal)?

A: The \$150K threshold refers to federal funding requested.

Q: I believe it was mentioned in last week's meeting that OMB disclosure forms are not required in the initial proposal but can instead be provided during the budget revision process. Is this correct? If so, does the STATEMAP grants program have a preference on whether they are included with the initial proposal or submitted later?

A: After additional discussion with the Grants Office, we recommend including your disclosure forms/OMB project abstract summary at the time of proposal submission.

Q: We are preparing to propose the first phase of a state Quaternary map. We have some questions regarding what guidance criteria this would fall under (GC1-new mapping or GC3- compilation mapping), what field work is allowed under the compilation map category, how best to phase the maps to ensure completion of a statewide map in a timely manner, and how this might interface with the national map initiative (GC6)?

A: Bottom line, applicants can structure and phase the work for their state maps in a way that best suits their capacity and mid/short-term mapping strategy. Re: GC selection, it really doesn't matter too greatly which criteria are applied as long as it is clear and makes sense in terms of your approach; this could certainly be a mix of GC 1 and 3 with GC 6 rolled in this year or a later funding year depending when applicants release those updates (either as a partial compilation or the GeMS comp for entire state at the later phase of the effort). It's certainly fine to request funds for this FY just for the initial phase but keep in mind that we may see some significant funding reductions in out years. In that vein, we suggest requesting funds for the full effort if applicants have the capacity to produce provisional products at the end of 24months. If untenable, esp. with field-mapping needs, applicants certainly can scope it as a multi-phase/FY effort.

Re: allowable field work under GC 3, really anything that is required per your project mapping strategy so long as clearly explained & justified in technical section. Final note on GC selection, consider the expected deliverable...if primarily focused on improving and or updating parts of, or an existing stand-alone compilation, then GC 3 seems appropriate. If the proposed deliverable is a new geologic map (of any scale) then GC 1. If delivering both of those, as well as updates to GeMS currently integrated into CNGM (or new contributions to it), applicants could attribute GCs 1, 3, and 6 to the national effort. Funds DO NOT have to be broken out into GC...just list funding request for the entire project.

Q: Our proposed mapping area overlaps a small parcel of Tribal trust land that does not appear in the [BIA layer](#) provided by the Statemap office in prior years as the official reference. We want

to avoid confusing the review panel by referencing trust lands that will not show up in the BIA layer. Should we still indicate that the project overlaps tribal lands and address the questions in Attachment D of the FY26 NOFO?

A: Short answer is a definitive YES. For clarification, there is no "official" STATEMAP (or NCGMP) source doc for identifying Tribal Nation land/interest with respect to the project areas of proposed or NCGMP-funded work. Rather, there are a host of resources available to the public (including geospatial data layers provided by BIA and other federal agencies) that can inform your assessment as to whether your project area overlaps Tribal Nation land and/or interests. We also encourage applicants to reach out to their state/agency Tribal Relations offices as these local resources likely can provide additional insight into local Tribal Nation interests. As detailed in Attachment D of the FY26 STATEMAP NOFO, STATEMAP Proposals that include land of Tribal Nations require Program Review to determine whether the project is subject to the NCGMP Tribal Nation Implications Assessment and Notification Process. Generally, this process is triggered if the answer to any of the following is "Yes":

- Does any portion of the proposal study area(s) include Tribal Nation land (this also refers to ceded territory and land areas with where Tribal Nations have reserved rights)?
- Will any of the products resulting from the work in the proposal (i.e., deliverables) include data collected on or over Tribal land (including interpolated data), regardless of when the data was collected, who it was collected by, or previous use/publication of the data?
- Is access to, or sampling on, any Tribal Nation land (including ceded territory and or areas with reserved rights) required to support the work in the proposal?

Q: We'd like to propose new bedrock mapping in a quadrangle that was mapped as part of the late 90s STATEMAP funding. The map is out-of-date and a new shear zone has been identified with work from the last ~10 years in the area. This would require some new mapping and geochemistry as well as creating a GeMS geodatabase. The existing STATEMAP map has an old digital file, but needs significant work to convert. Would this be acceptable as a STATEMAP project in FY26 and if so would this be GC 1 or 3?

A: For your new bedrock mapping of the previously mapped/out-of-date quad, this is acceptable for funding under GC1 (unless part of a broader compilation in which case, you could use GC3). As described, it appears that the project would require significant new mapping and analytics and result in delivering a new, significantly updated cartographic product as well as the first-time production of a GeMS database.

Q: We have a couple of legacy bedrock quadrangle maps that were put directly into GeMS for FY20 STATEMAP, however these quadrangles are out-of-date and require new mapping to make these modern geologic maps with the addition of brittle and ductile structures, mineralogy, and geochemistry. Can we propose new mapping for these quadrangles and include GeMS for the updated map? Again, would this be GC 1 or 3?

A: Yes, the significant update of the legacy bedrock quadrangle maps/GeMS as you describe are eligible for funding under GC1.

Q: We'd like to propose mapping in the metamorphic rocks of a quadrangle that had a portion of the quadrangle included in FY23 STATEMAP (sedimentary rocks). There would be no new

mapping in the portion of the quadrangle that was part of the FY23 STATEMAP, however this new map will be 1:24k scale and the FY23 STATEMAP was 1:100k scale, so we will need to do minimal work in the sedimentary area of the quad to produce a full geologic bedrock map. Is this acceptable?

A: Your project that includes part of a quad mapped @ 1:100K with FY23 STATEMAP funds is also acceptable as described, given you'll be delivering a new full 1:24K-scale geologic bedrock map.

Q: Our FY26 proposal will include mapping sulfides and I am purchasing a transmission reflective microscope to identify these in thin section. Can the microscope be used as match?

A: Per current CFR guidance, purchases under \$10K are considered as supply items and do not necessarily require a quote/cost estimate (unless otherwise specified as required per the NOFO). As such, if the microscope is under \$10K, it would be allowable with appropriate justification. If the cost is over \$10K, this would be unallowable although it may be possible to request a prorated amount under that threshold if appropriate.

Q: Does the LiDAR have to be flown in the past year to be included as match? We have State funded LiDAR flown in 2023. Would I be able to use a portion of that as match?

A: LiDAR data used as match does not have to be flown in the past year to be included as match, using the data collected in 2023 is acceptable but needs to be fully explained and prorated appropriately.

Q: Since we are proposing three separate projects with different principal investigators for each, would applicants recommend that we provide OMB biographical sketches for each project PI in addition to the STATEMAP PI (myself)? Or would that be unnecessary?

A: Please do submit biosketches for each project PI; this seems to be the safest bet given the guidance we've been provided to date. That said, if just one PI is identified in the proposal, submitting just for that individual is acceptable (please note, additional forms can be submitted with revisions if necessary - the requirement stems from DOI/grants management requirement to validate these prior to issuing your award). For context, the forms are required for "key personnel" which are currently defined by the applicant. We will advise if we get anything more concrete in terms of which participating personnel are considered "key".

Q: We have GeMS geodatabases developed during the 2022 grant cycle that were submitted to the NGMDB by the grant deadline but have not yet been published on our website, and therefore on the NGMDB website, due to shifting priorities and internal review delays. Should we have requested an extension for this? Do applicants foresee this being a problem?

A: There is no issue whatsoever with the delays to publishing GeMS and no extensions required; whether GeMS are "published" is not subject to a current proposal merit review protocols; currently we are only assessing PDP/map publications submitted to the NGMDB as a measure of past award deliverable timeliness.

Q: Is Geoheritage work something that will be funded under the FY26 NOFO?

A: Unfortunately, no. Although this type of work was funded in previous years and is an active FEDMAP project, it is not an allowable request under the FY26 NOFO and this type of work should not be included in your FY26 STATEMAP Proposal. Current plan are to bring this back as an option for proposed work under the FY27 STATEMAP NOFO.

Q: Do indirect costs count against the \$6,000 cap for conference travel funds?

A: No, your claimed indirect costs do not count against the \$6K cap for conference travel. Only direct costs related to conference travel will count against that cap. Please also note that conference/workshop/meeting/training fees (e.g., \$200 estimate for Digital Mapping Techniques 2027 meeting) do not count against the \$6,000 travel cap; this said all conference and workshop travel must be appropriately justified and directly related to proposed work.

Q: Guidance Criteria (GC) 4 can include training – is USGS planning to hold any trainings for the 3D modeling?

A: Although we are not aware of, or sponsoring, any currently scheduled USGS 3D modeling training, funds can be requested for training to build 3D modeling capacity, etc. It is good practice to send an email to [statemap@usgs.gov](mailto:statemap@usgs.gov) to verify that the specific proposed training venue is an appropriate use of GC4 funds.

Q: Regarding GC 4 it was a struggle last year to know exactly what format was required for 3D deliverables. How should deliverables be phrased and what types are appropriate (e.g., PDF files containing the data and cross sections) for 3D work?

A: Be very specific about which deliverables will be provided and in which format. We understand capacity for states to produce different kinds of 3D data and models is growing, and we don't necessarily expect a fully complete, plug-and-play model. We currently welcome a variety of subsurface data and models, so in any format, just clearly describe in your proposal what will be submitted and what the delivery format will be. NCGMP is evaluating a guideline for the repositing and exchange of subsurface data; this guideline can be accessed on the USGS GitLab page (see <https://code.usgs.gov/ngmdb/data-standards/s3ds>). Please note, there is no current requirement for NCGMP-funded 3D deliverables to adhere to this format.

Q: Can funds be requested to bring past databases up to GeMS compliance?

A: Yes, funds may also be requested for actions in response to GeMS Quality Control (QC) revisions.

Q: In terms of the Cooperative National Geologic Map (CNGM) GC 6, should an update of the statewide GeMS database be annotated as this GC 6 or GC 5? Or both?

A: If relevant to GC6, be sure to annotate that but applicants can also include other appropriate GCs (GC 5 in this instance) when applicants list this deliverable in your STATEMAP Proposal Summary Sheet. Standard GeMS archive updates (not related to specific CNGM updates) should be annotated as GC 5.

Q: Would an index map of the state fit better under GC 9 than GC 2?

A: We would recommend applicants consider the project approach and applied use of the anticipated deliverable. If the deliverable is clearly derived from previously published work or updates to an existing product, use GC 2; likewise, if it is largely a new data compilation effort with data tables and/or a database of a specific type of geologic data, use GC9.

Q: Is it allowed under GC 6, to develop a process for updating the state geologic map and delivering it at the end of the Period of Performance (PoP)? The deliverable would be the process development along with the statewide map update work.

A: As stated under GC 6 guidance, deliverables should include updates delivered as a GeMS-compliant database. If applicants are, in parallel, developing a new procedure to build capacity designed to produce updates to the CNGM and this includes training (either executed or the development of a training plan), then seems also allowable under GC 6. It will be important to clearly detail the specific deliverables applicants intend to deliver, the specific format of these deliverables, and how this effort will lead to enhanced capacity for future updates to the CNGM.

Q: If the GeMS is the same as the field mapping work proposed, does the request for GeMS effort need to be requested under GC 1, rather than GC 5?

A: GeMS work should be delineated under the respective project and should be annotated with the appropriate GC related to the parent project. Although all GC 1 work requires GeMS databases (as does GC 5 and GC 6), work proposed under other GCs may include a GeMS database as a deliverable. Just list the total funding required per project and then annotate the applicable GC(s) for each project. No need to delineate funding amounts going to different GCs within the same project budget.

Q: There are cases in which databases follow GeMS level 3 but will not validate at that level, regardless of restricted vs unrestricted. What are the expectations around that and a preliminary review?

A: It is understood that there are a variety of reasons why a submitted GeMS database may not pass the initial GeMS QC review. Revisions and/or restrictions related to GeMS databases submitted to the NGMDB will be handled through the GeMS QC process; the Program will handle specific compliance issues as needed on a case-by-case basis.

Q: What is the process for preliminary submissions of maps versus GeMS products?

A: Cartographic products may be submitted as preliminary or draft (PDF) by the deliverable due date with 12-months to publish and submit the map to the NGMDB catalog; GeMS databases should be submitted via NGMDB connect and, if not finalized or ready for public release, annotated as restricted with notes about the plan and timeline for publication.

Q: PoP relative to GeMS database: If the GeMS database is submitted as restricted, and it's not fully GeMS level 3, how does the QC review work?

A: All GeMS databases submitted through NGMDB Connect will undergo GeMS QC review for compliance. However, restricted submissions are subject to a modified, less-comprehensive

review. It is expected that all GeMS submissions (or related, subsequent versions) will eventually pass QC with a subsequent release to the public via the NGMDB.

Q: Do GC4 3D and subsurface mapping products have to be submitted in GeMS format?

A: No, just specify what format it will be submitted in. NCGMP is evaluating a guideline for the repositing and exchange of subsurface data; this guideline can be accessed on the USGS GitLab page (see <https://code.usgs.gov/ngmdb/data-standards/s3ds>). Please note, there is no current requirement for NCGMP-funded 3D deliverables to adhere to this format.

Q: NGMDB bibliography is required for everyone, even if the proposal is under \$150K?

A: Correct

Q: Are there page limits on appendices to a proposal under \$150K?

A: There are no page limits on appendices.

Q: Is the 25 page limit for the entire proposal technical sections combined, or per project?

A: The 25-page limit applies to the entire combined technical section, inclusive of all projects

Q: Factsheets required at the time of submission of FY26 deliverables, but this is not mentioned in regards to the proposal, do we need to also include it with the proposal?

A: Factsheets should be submitted along with other deliverables, within 90 days of the end of the period of performance, there is no need to include with proposal. Please note, while NOFO guidance for factsheet requires 1) a map of the state outlining previously performed STATEMAP projects, 2) a summary of STATEMAP geologic mapping in table format indicating fiscal year, project(s)/deliverable(s), and funds awarded/matched – the Program is happy to discuss modifications of this format and will discuss this in detail during the Revision/Award Webinar that will take place after FY26 funding decisions.

Q: Project abstract summary: is this needed at both the first submission and the revision? It is listed in the NOFO as required with the proposal.

A: This language change was included in the NOFO as it IS a required document for issuing an award, but Program does not need it to evaluate proposals. That said, because it is listed as an item required for the application, we advise you submit a draft abstract summary with your proposal with the understanding that you will be able to modify this with the submission of revisions.

Q: Is it ok to just list the SMAC members and how they voted?

A: There is no need to indicate how specific members voted. The required information is to list the SMAC voting members, their expertise, their affiliation, and whether they attended/voted.

Q: Is the Project Summary Table example listed in order of priority, and should it be in the introduction or appendix?

A: The example table is not intended to represent a priority order. States may order projects in the table in the way that makes most sense for their proposed work and state mapping

plan/priorities. Although this table is required in the Introduction section, states may choose to reference the table and include it as an appendix.

**Q: If we included the Project Summary Table in the main text, does the table text count towards word limits?**

**A: Text within tables does not count towards word limits**

**Q: What are the federal priorities we should reference for the Project Summary Table?**

**A: While the example provided in Attachment F of the NOFO provides a guideline for the column headers, federal priorities do not need to be explicitly listed. It is widely understood that all STATEMAP activities directly support the federal priority to accelerate the ongoing, detailed geologic mapping of the United States (as referenced in Executive Order 14154 and Secretarial Order 3418, Unleashing American Energy.)**

**Q: Can unknown student mappers be claimed as match? What about known student workers who fill existing positions?**

**A: As with all personnel, federal funds can be requested for unspecified student workers but cannot be claimed as match. All personnel identified by name (i.e., filled positions) including student hires can be budgeted as request and/or match funds.**

**Q: Is the overlap/duplication of effort statement separate from the OMB forms, and if so, where does this statement go?**

**A: Yes, the “overlap or duplication of effort statement” is separate from the OMB disclosure form requirement; this statement can be provided anywhere in the technical section or even as an appendix. If applicants feel that there is a need to clarify that the funding requested is not overlapping with other previously funded work, then that statement could go in either technical section, budget justification, or other section depending on how applicants need to frame the clarification. If there is concurrent/parallel work occurring under another federal award, we recommend applicants explain how this work complements those other projects and delineate/clarify these related efforts as needed. The OMB forms need to be completed regardless of the duplication of effort statement.**

**Q: Within a multi-year proposal, can we include conference travel funding for both year 1 and year 2?**

**A: Yes, but both years need to fall under the \$6K cap combined**

**Q: If a state helps fund geophysical surveying for part of the study area, can we claim those funds as match?**

**A: Yes, that is allowable match so long as the survey was not funded and the associated costs must be prorated to the study area specific to the proposed work. The source of these match funds also needs to be clearly explained to verify that the match fund request is in no way linked to a resource acquired through federal funding.**

Q: Can conducting analytical lab work count as training, analogous to fieldwork training, so long as the lab work is contributing towards the project?

A: Yes.

Q: Is Panel being provided with a rubric?

A: The list of questions that Panel will be asking (i.e., the rubric) is included in the NOFO.

Q: Can we confirm what map product materials are being reviewed by Panel?

A: NOFO states that Panel may review any previously published (preferably STATEMAP product) including associated pamphlets, reports, and supplemental maps – Program staff will randomly select the reviewed map, and this information will be provided to applicants along with their funding decisions.

Q: Will panel be reviewing digital or paper versions of our maps?

A: Digital versions.

Q: Do OMB disclosure forms apply to student workers?

A: These only apply to key personnel: e.g., PIs, Co-PIs, and other lead personnel and likely shouldn't be required for students. Definition of "key personnel" is at your discretion

Q: Under Budget Narratives, does a budget justification need to be provided for proposed match funds, including those for salary?

A: Both the federal request and state match must be discussed in the budget justification. The state matching funds need to relate to the project just as the federal request does, so match must be addressed in the budget justification; the primary focus will be what federal funds will be used for, but match should also be discussed.

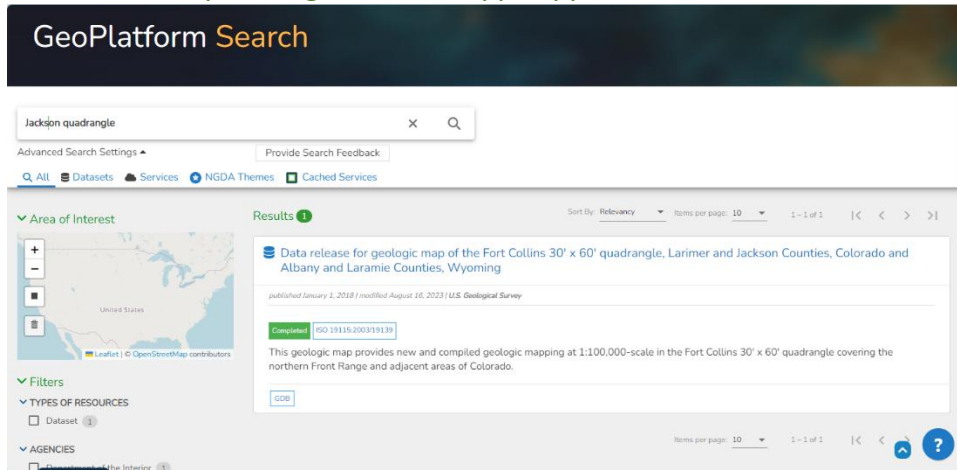
Q: Do we need to provide documentation of estimated costs of software and similar match expenses?

A: All significant costs, including software licenses, require an up-to-date quote and adequate justification.

Q: How to search/indicate the geoplatform.gov requirement is meant?

A: Navigate to <https://www.geoplatform.gov/>. In the search bar, enter the name of your proposed quad, county, area, etc. For example, if applicants were planning on mapping the

Jackson 1:24K quadrangle in Mississippi, applicants could search “Jackson quadrangle”



The result shows that there are only digital geospatial data archived for the Fort Collins quad in Jackson County. Therefore, no digital geologic map data exist for the Jackson 1:24K quad in Mississippi, and Mississippi should indicate “NO” on the STATEMAP Proposal Summary Sheet when listing out the deliverable/project. Each proposed deliverable must be searched in [geoplatform.gov](https://geoplatform.gov).

