

Fostering Federal Partnerships for Homeland Defense and Security

Responding to an urgent need for a comprehensive database of geospatial information about the US domestic infrastructure, the Department of Defense in 2004 asked Booz Allen Hamilton to support and facilitate the multi-agency Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data (HIFLD) Working Group. Together, HIFLD and Booz Allen have built cross-government partnerships and information-sharing processes to create a robust homeland infrastructure database that continues to grow in size and value for its many government users.

Need for Sharing Geospatial Data About Our National Infrastructure

The Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and other agencies with mission responsibilities for homeland defense and homeland security need to be able to share geospatial data regarding our national infrastructure. To work together during a terrorist attack or other crisis, they need both a common operating picture and assurance that their data is consistent and complete—which can only happen if they are able to compare, refine, and standardize information with their mission partners.

United States defense, intelligence, and civilian agencies have exercised fiercely independent control over their geospatial datasets for US infrastructure. Creating a shared foundation-level database would require an unprecedented partnership among these organizations.

Building Collaborative Partnerships Through the HIFLD Working Group

The DoD established HIFLD in 2002, which has evolved into a joint program with the DHS, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and the US Geological Survey to create a geospatial infrastructure database that can be used by all agencies with mission responsibilities for homeland defense; civil support; and emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. The HIFLD sponsors called upon Booz Allen to help guide HIFLD activities and build a collaborative community among agencies that collect and use infrastructure data.

Booz Allen has reached across the firm to assemble a team of experts in mission assurance, geospatial technology, and infrastructure protection. Booz Allen assisted HIFLD by supporting its bimonthly meetings and agenda; drafting policy recommendations and standards for acquiring, sharing, and using geospatial data; as well as working with HIFLD to craft a long-term strategy for maintaining an authoritative infrastructure database.

As a result of these efforts, HIFLD has evolved into a large interagency community of interest, with more than 2,600 contributing participants across the United States. Working closely with these partners, HIFLD supports the continuous improvement of the Homeland Security Infrastructure Program (HSIP) Gold and HSIP

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Freedom, a common database that can be used by all federal agencies and decision makers. HSIP Gold contains more than 341 homeland geospatial data layers—rivers, roads, power plants, water treatment facilities, etc.—and represents all 18 natural hazard Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Sectors and base map layers.

HIFLD is now expanding to include state and local government users, such as State Geographic Information Systems coordinators, State Fusion Centers, National Guard Joint Operations Centers, and State Emergency Operations Centers. HIFLD also works with state and local governments to improve their infrastructure data and add it to the HSIP dataset.

“If it weren’t for the HIFLD Working Group, there would be no Homeland Security Infrastructure Program, little to no collaboration among the pertinent federal agencies responsible for homeland infrastructure data, and programmatic inefficiencies and redundancies,” said Jane Dickerson, Deputy Director for NGA Office of Americas.

Helping Agencies Responsible for Homeland Defense and Homeland Security Be Ready for What’s Next

Large numbers of federal, state, and local agencies share overlapping mission responsibilities for protecting critical infrastructure, guarding US borders, responding to disasters, and performing other related tasks. This whole-of-government approach to homeland security requires more than just information sharing among agencies. It requires them to adapt cultural,

organizational, operational, and technical processes to enable mission integration with government partners at all levels. The HIFLD Working Group has successfully addressed these issues through partnerships and government participation in the continual improvement of the geospatial infrastructure database by a growing community of shared-interest partners.

“The HIFLD Working Group has facilitated unprecedented collaboration across government and the private sector in support of Homeland Security and Defense needs,” said Antwane Johnson, Director, Critical Infrastructure Protection, for the Department of Defense. “If other departments and agencies needed a model for the establishment of a true public/private sector partnership that provides true relevance and value, the HIFLD Working Group would be the place to start.”

Ready to Help You

Our effort for the HIFLD Working Group is just one example of how Booz Allen’s global strategy and technology consultants collaborate to help government leaders effectively integrate shared-mission responsibilities with government partners. Our consulting teams draw from a wide range of capabilities in mission assurance, geospatial technology, critical infrastructure protection, and organizational strategy, as well as in-depth knowledge of government operations and requirements. To learn more about the functional expertise behind this project’s success and how it can help your team be ready for what’s next, visit www.boozallen.com.

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