

GIS REQUIREMENTS EVALUATION AND PLANNING SERVICES

Croswell-Schulte provides a full range of services for GIS program and project evaluation, needs assessment, and planning. We are active in GIS industry research and standards initiatives, maintain GIS certifications, and active involvement in professional societies and events.

GIS Needs Assessment and Conceptual Design

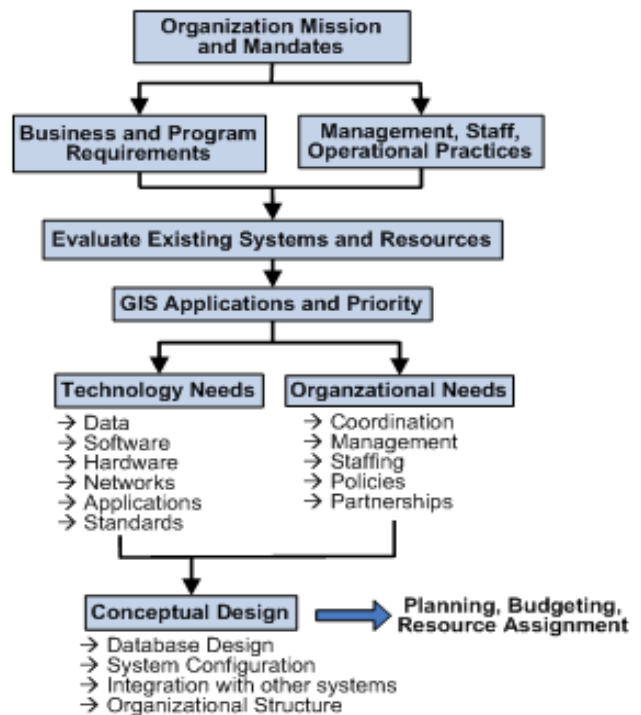
GIS needs assessment services provide a foundation for GIS project and program planning. We provide these services to address a range of organizational or project environments:

- new, “ground-up” GIS development initiatives
- expansion or re-orientation of existing GIS programs
- significant technical or application migration efforts
- new educational or promotional campaigns to increase GIS program support and awareness

Our methodologies establish a clear baseline, identifies current resources and gaps, and defines priority areas for GIS development. As depicted at right, our needs assessment approach typically begins with an examination of an organization’s mission, programs, and business requirements. We define GIS applications that respond to the business requirements and use this as a foundation to identify needs that address all technical and non-technical aspects of a GIS program or project.

Our conceptual design work creates a technical and organizational structure for subsequent detailed design and development. As shown above, the conceptual design typically encompasses three main areas: system configuration, database, and organizational structure. Based on the results of GIS needs assessment, we create a design that gives a clear picture for the future and allows for appropriate budgeting and initiating GIS development or enhancement work.

We use efficient techniques for information gathering and consensus building including on-line surveys, interviews, focus groups, and interactive brainstorm sessions. We examine the organizational environment and technical infrastructure to deliver a comprehensive picture of current resources and requirements. We engage management, technical staff, and users to build understanding and a unified consensus for GIS development and deployment issues and decisions.



GIS needs evaluation and conceptual design projects can include the following main components:

- GIS technology orientation sessions for management and staff
- Inventory of current systems, data resources, software, and applications
- Evaluation of business drivers and organizational mandates for GIS
- Evaluation of technical deficiencies and gaps
- Review of organizational structure, policies and practices, staffing, and GIS governance

- Definition of technical needs (system, data, applications)
- Definition of non-technical needs addressing organizational structure, management, staffing and financial elements

GIS Strategic and Implementation Planning

Strategic planning creates a vision for information technology and defines high-level goals to establish a foundation for long-term development, enhancement, and operations. *Implementation plans*, (sometimes referred to as “work plans”, “business plans”, or “project plans”) are carried out within the context of the strategic plan. They define implementation tasks and resources for GIS programs and projects that address specific strategic goals and projects. Our planning work takes into account all factors that impact GIS development and deployment: technical, organizational, administrative, and financial.

Typical components of strategic and implementation plans are identified below:

| GIS STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENTS | GIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN COMPONENTS |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Vision and Mission Statement → High-Level Goals → Internal and External Stakeholders → Objectives or Initiatives → Business Case → General Timing → High-level GIS Cost Estimates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Project Description and Objectives → Tasks with Task Hierarchy → Task Linkages/Dependencies → Specific Milestones and Deliverables → Schedule and Timing Constraints → Costs, Budget, Resources → Definition of Roles/Responsibility → Management Control/Communication Procedures |

Croswell-Schulte is expert in strategic visioning and planning for special-purpose and enterprise GIS efforts. Our work provides for efficient and practical results that guide long-term GIS programs and project execution. We ensure that strategic visioning and plan development is sensitive to the organization’s mission, business requirements, and the needs of user organizations. Our implementation planning work makes use of appropriate project planning and management tools resulting in practical “blueprints” for GIS development projects and management tools that support project coordination and execution.

Croswell-Schulte offers the following GIS visioning and planning services:

- Information technology and GIS orientation sessions for management and staff
- Assessment of current systems and needs
- Evaluation of business drivers and organizational mandates for information technology
- Research on GIS and geospatial industry trends, products, methodologies and impact for the organization
- Focus group sessions for strategic visioning and consensus building
- Strategic plan preparation and presentation
- Long-term GIS program budgeting and development of funding approaches
- Implementation and business planning for GIS initiatives and projects
- Program and project risk assessment and risk management development
- GIS cost-benefit analyses and business case preparation
- Support in plan adoption and execution

Support in GIS Program Outreach and Promotion

An important ingredient for the success of a GIS program is outreach and promotion of GIS services and benefits--inside the organization and with external groups. This requires effective communication and strategies for provision and distribution of products and services to a large user community. Croswell-Schulte excels in planning and developing approaches and tools for communications and outreach to GIS user communities and to management personnel.

GIS program outreach and promotion can benefit from well-designed communications plans and activities. In many cases, it is effective to apply private sector concepts of marketing and product "branding" to increase awareness of the GIS program and the opportunities for different GIS user communities. A structured GIS "communications and promotion plan" defines the GIS program as a valuable resource with specific products and services to be provided to an expanded user community. It helps to provide a positive identity for the program and describes a systematic approach to increase awareness, participation, and wider use of GIS products and services.

Croswell-Schulte prepares communications and promotion plans that include the components shown below.

GIS COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTION PLAN COMPONENTS

- Description of the GIS Program (mission, goals, organizational context, system resources)
- "Branding" of the GIS Program Name and Promotional Elements
- Characterization of User Community, Audience, and "Customers"
- GIS Products and Services
- Information and Promotional Pieces and Media Tools
- Communication Channels and Mechanisms and How to Use them
- Promotional Devices and Events
- Communication and Promotional Actions and Timing

GIS outreach is dependent on a variety of educational and promotional events, tools, and media that target specific groups of users, management personnel, and elected officials. Croswell-Schulte will design and develop presentation materials, briefing guides, and plan events that capture the interest of specific groups and which increase awareness, participation, and support for the GIS Program.

Many enterprise GIS programs have a goal to increase and sustain working relationships and GIS resource sharing with outside organizations. This may include open or more of the following types of collaborations:

- Formal GIS program consortium or collaboration,
- License agreement for GIS data or products,
- Cost-sharing for a GIS development project,
- Subscriptions/sales of GIS data, products, or custom services
- On-line services for GIS access

Croswell-Schulte offers the following services for GIS program outreach and promotion:

- Education and training plans for management, technical staff and users
- Set-up and support in organizing and conducting training sessions and educational events
- Development of GIS program communications and promotion plans
- Evaluation of external demand and "market" for GIS products and services
- Development of programs for external distribution and sales of GIS products and services
- Facilitation and preparation of formal GIS collaborations and agreements between organizations
- Design and execution of special programs, tools, and events for GIS program promotion

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