

Metadata Standard

This information describes how the NBN metadata standard is compatible with other key national and international standards.

What is metadata?

Metadata is the information about your data. It describes who collected it, why it was collected, how it can be used and the methods used to collect it, amongst other things. This is important as it will provide all the information a data user needs to assess if your data are fit for their specific purpose. This information is made available to all NBN Atlas users when they view your data.

In some cases you may have concerns about misinterpretation or misapplication of the wildlife data you provide. A good metadata description can help minimise the likelihood of unintentional misuse by better informing the user and referring to sources of additional information. We ask that you use the metadata to explain the reasons behind any restrictions placed on access to or the use of your data. In this way your dataset metadata can be used to manage the understanding and expectations of users.

The NBN Standard

The NBN metadata standard was first drafted in August 2002. It provided editorial guidance specifically tailored to define the level of contextual information to describe a wildlife data resource. The NBN standard adopted the metadata model of the Glgateway standard (previously referred to as the National Geospatial Data Framework [NGDF]). The Glgateway Standard was selected for two main reasons:

- Glgateway metadata had been developed specifically to document geo-spatially referenced datasets for use within Geographic Information Systems (GIS). In doing so the standard covered information important to most biological datasets, and was aligned with international GIS standards.
- The Association for Geographic Information (AGI) responsible for developing the Glgateway standard were working closely with the developing national and international standards. This provided a level of assurance that the standard would remain compatible or be easily mapped to the main national and international standards.

Ongoing collaboration between standards

The Geo-spatial Metadata Interoperability Initiative (GEMINI), an alliance between key metadata players in the UK, has developed core metadata elements to support the creation of geo-spatial metadata across the United Kingdom. The ISO 19115 standard for geo-spatial metadata, which was approved in March 2003, served as the source for these elements.

The GEMINI Committee comprises representatives from the Office of e-Envoy (responsible for the e-Government Metadata Standard), the UK Data Archive, and the Association of Geographic Information (AGI). The GEMINI Stakeholders Group comprises representatives of organisations from divergent sectors and disciplines. This includes the geo-spatial community and other organisations with experience in developing standards and metadata practices.

The Office of the e-Envoy is part of the Prime Minister's Delivery and Reform team based in the Cabinet Office. The e-Envoy was responsible for ensuring that all government services were available electronically by 2005 with key services.

The first version of the GEMINI profile was released 12th October 2004. [More information can be found here.](#)

Compatibility of Standards

The NBN Secretariat has taken steps to ensure the NBN metadata standard is compatible with other national and international standards. This has had to be balanced against the need to provide adequate information when describing wildlife datasets. We believe this has been achieved successfully.

GEMINI is a collaborative UK metadata standard sufficient to describe geo-spatially referenced datasets. The standard has been developed to comply with the emerging ISO metadata standard. Work has also taken place to indicate how existing e-GMS and Glgateway standards can be mapped to GEMINI and the broader ISO standards.

The concept is a hierarchy of standards. The ISO metadata standard is being viewed as the parent standard. The others are working to ensure they meet this standard whilst tailoring to meet the needs of their own specific audience.

The e-Government Metadata Standard (e-GMS) lays down the elements, refinements and encoding schemes to be used by government officers when creating metadata for their information resources or designing search interfaces for information systems.

The GEMINI standard is developing a new core of metadata elements to support the creation of geo-spatial metadata across the United Kingdom. GEMINI is based upon the ISO standard but specifically tailored to meet the particular needs of geospatial datasets. The standard is being developed with close involvement of the Office of e-Envoy to ensure compatibility with the e-Government Metadata Standard.

The GEMINI standard will ultimately replace the Glgateway standard to which the NBN Metadata Standard is mapped. The involvement of AGI has ensured that metadata produced to the Glgateway standard can be mapped to the GEMINI standard.