

# AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

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## **American Geographical Society Announces Endorsement of the "Geo for All" Initiative**

*Description: The American Geographical Society announces its endorsement of the "Geo for All Initiative", developed by the International Cartographic Association (ICA) and the Open Source Geospatial Foundation (OSGeo). "Geo for All" aims to provide expertise and support for the establishment of Open Source Geospatial Laboratories and Research Centers across the world for supporting development of open-source geospatial software technologies, training, and expertise.*

[New York City, NY] – [July 14, 2015] — The American Geographical Society (AGS) announced today the endorsement of the "Geo for All" Initiative, created through a partnership between International Cartographic Association (ICA) and the Open Source Geospatial Foundation (OSGeo). The "Geo for All" initiative was created to ensure that students from economically poor backgrounds worldwide will be able to get geospatial education (without the need for high cost proprietary GI software), by having access to having free and open GIS software. Since its founding in 2011, over 102 Open Source Geospatial Labs have already been established in universities around the world. By the end of 2015, "Geo for All" aims to have 50 Open Source Geospatial Labs established in universities in Africa alone, making GIS courses available to hundreds of students. "Geo for All" will also be starting work on the international "Train the Trainer" GIS program for school teachers in 2015.

"With this amazing momentum there are many opportunities being created and the ever increasing availability of spatial data is accompanied by increasing availability of open source geo software" stated ICA President Georg Gartner. Since the "ICA-OSGeo Labs" have been founded, they have gained high numbers of followers, demonstrating the great interest and demand for evaluating and using Open Source Software in the area of Cartography, GIScience and Geospatial Information Management. "OSGeo believes that education plays a very important role in sharing spatial information, and the Geo For All initiative has quickly become a strong force for this sharing between educators and students all around the world," added OSGeo President, Jeff McKenna.

Free and open-source software for geospatial applications have now made it possible for a large number of private, academic, and government agencies in both developed and developing countries to make use of geospatial software for applications in GIS, spatial database management, and remote sensing. This can contribute to planning in areas like environmental protection, transportation, urban poverty, town planning, waste management, rural development, public policy and administration, and education. By combining the potential of elearning tools and open source geospatial software, the academic community can strengthen education in GIScience providing students with holistic education covering open source, open standards, and open data in geospatial technology. "Free and public access to geospatial tools is critical in enabling stakeholders in the world's future, including the youth, to create solutions for the problems we are facing" stated AGS Councilor and Chairman of the AGS Endorsement Committee, Jared Novick. For more information on "Geo for All", visit: [www.geoforall.org](http://www.geoforall.org) .

Established in 1851, the American Geographical Society is the oldest professional geographical organization in the United States. It is recognized worldwide as a pioneer in geographical research and education in geography for over 163 years. The mission of AGS is to advance geographic knowledge and the recognition of its importance in the contemporary world. AGS promotes the use of geography in business, government, science, and education with a goal to enhance the nation's geographic literacy so as to engender sound public policy, national security, and human well-being worldwide. AGS is the only organization focused on bringing together academics, business people, those who influence public policy (including leaders in local, state and federal government, not-for-profit organizations and

the media), and the general public for the express purpose of furthering the understanding of the role of geography in our lives. AGS provides leadership to frame the national discussion of the growing importance of geography and geospatial tools. The Society maintains its headquarters in Brooklyn Heights, New York.

Open Source Geospatial Foundation is a not-for-profit organization founded in 2006 whose mission is to support and promote the collaborative development of open source geospatial technologies and data. For more information go to: [www.osgeo.org](http://www.osgeo.org) .

The International Cartographic Association is the world authoritative body for cartography and GIScience. For more information go to: [www.icaci.org](http://www.icaci.org) .

**Contact Information:**

American Geographical Society  
32 Court Street  
Brooklyn Heights, NY 11201-4404  
917-745-8354  
[ags@americangeo.org](mailto:ags@americangeo.org)  
[www.americangeo.org](http://www.americangeo.org)



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