

# Background

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**GeoNetwork opensource** is a standardized and decentralized spatial information management environment, designed to enable access to geo-referenced databases, cartographic products and related metadata from a variety of sources, enhancing the spatial information exchange and sharing between organizations and their audience, using the capacities of the internet. This approach of geographic information management aims at facilitating a wide community of spatial information users to have easy and timely access to available spatial data and to existing thematic maps that might support informed decision making.

Maps, including those derived from satellite imagery, are effective communication tools and play an important role in the work of various types of users:

- Decision Makers: e.g. Sustainable development planners and humanitarian and emergency managers in need of quick, reliable and up to date user-friendly cartographic products as a basis for action and better plan and monitor their activities.
- GIS Experts in need of exchanging consistent and updated geographical data.
- Spatial Analysts in need of multidisciplinary data to perform preliminary geographical analysis and reliable forecasts to better set up appropriate interventions in vulnerable areas.

The main goal of the **GeoNetwork opensource** software is to improve the accessibility of a wide variety of data, together with the associated information, at different scale and from multidisciplinary sources, organized and documented in a standard and consistent way.

The challenge is to enhance the data exchange and sharing between the organizations to avoid duplication, increase the cooperation and coordination of efforts in collecting data and make them available to benefit everybody, saving resources and at the same time preserving data and information ownership.

## Software and flyer

The GeoNetwork opensource desktop and server 2.0.3(! old release) software, a flyer and all the required supporting software and manuals are available on a DVD with a printed Quick Start Guide. The Flyer gives a good overview of the capabilities of GeoNetwork opensource software.

The DVD also includes a wide range of other Free and Open Source Software of interest to the geospatial community (among others GeoServer, MapServer, gvSIG, uDig, QGIS, GRASS, MapBuilder, MapLab, ka-map, PostGIS and NASA World Wind) for Windows, Linux and Mac OS X.



The flyer can be downloaded [here](#) (1.3MB).

You can obtain the GeoNetwork opensource DVD in three different ways:

- By browsing the content online [here](#).
- By downloading the ISO image [here](#) (2000MB!)(hosted at OSGEO). You can then burn your own DVD from the ISO image.
- We ran out of printed of the package, so they cannot be requested at present. Sorry for that.

## History

FAO joined by [WFP](#), [UNEP](#) and [UN-OCHA](#) combined their research and mapping expertise to develop **GeoNetwork opensource** as a common strategy to effectively share their spatial databases including digital maps, satellite images and related statistics. The agencies make extensive use of computer-based data visualization tools, known as Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) software, mostly to create maps that combine various layers of information. **GeoNetwork opensource** provides them with the capacity to access a wide selection of maps and other spatial information stored in different databases around the world through a single entry point.

**GeoNetwork opensource** has been developed to connect spatial information communities and their data using a modern architecture, which is at the same time powerful and low cost, based on the principles of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and International and Open Standards for services and protocols (a.o. from [ISO/TC211](#) and [OGC](#)).

The **GeoNetwork opensource** architecture, in fact, is largely compatible with the **Geospatial Portal Reference Architecture**, which is the **Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) Guide** to implement a standardized geospatial portal, and is made available as an opensource project on the SourceForge.net site (<http://geonetwork.sourceforge.net> and <http://sourceforge.net/projects/geonetwork>). As a result the GeoNetwork opensource software can be used by any interested party as a straightforward and cost-effective means of publishing geographical metadata and data on the web.

The **GeoNetwork opensource** software has been deployed at a number of organizations around the world, the first ones being **FAO-GeoNetwork** (<http://www.fao.org/geonetwork>) and **VAM-SIE-GeoNetwork** in WFP (<http://vam.wfp.org/vamsie>), both at their Headquarters in Rome - Italy. Furthermore, WHO, UNEP, UNHCR, the CGIAR and the Global Change Information and Research Centre (GCIRC) of China have **GeoNetwork opensource** implementations as their spatial information management capacity. The software has been deployed in many countries around the world by administrations at all levels of government. Numerous international projects also use GeoNetwork opensource as their geospatial information sharing platform.