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AGI and USGS Provide Unique Tsunami Disaster Relief

ALEXANDRIA, VA – In light of the recent tsunami disaster in Indonesia and other parts of Asia, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the American Geological Institute (AGI), is providing copies of the Global GIS DVD-ROM to U.S. Department of State-led teams traveling to Humanitarian Information Centers in affected areas.

The Global GIS, a large digital map database, provides datasets of historical seismicity, topography, geology, population density, roads, political boundaries, airfields and utility lines, among others. These datasets will benefit teams working in areas struck by the tsunami by supplying basic reference points for people working on the relief effort. The base maps are manageable at a nominal scale of 1:1 million and are easy to manipulate.

“It’s relatively low resolution, but it’s far better than any huge atlas you have on your shelf,” says Paul Hearn, a senior scientist with the USGS Regional Investigations Team, which has already sent copies of the Global GIS DVD-ROM to the Department of State. AGI, who through a development CRADA with the USGS helped complete the DVD-ROM and provides distribution of the database is providing additional copies to the USGS as part of the relief effort.

“It’s useful for strategic work,” Hearn says, pointing out that the database is convenient because users can load it onto a laptop and zoom in on particular crisis areas to see a detailed view of the region. Thus, the disaster-relief teams can take the reference directly into the field and manage the data without having to access individual maps, books, or online archives.

More information about the Global GIS DVD is available at:
<http://www.agiweb.org/pubs/globalgis>.

The American Geological Institute is a nonprofit federation of 43 scientific and professional associations that represent more than 120,000 geologists, geophysicists, and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in our profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society’s use of resources and interaction with the environment. More information about AGI can be found at <http://www.agiweb.org>.

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