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for

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الهيئة العامة للمساحة
والمعلومات الجيومكانية
General Authority for Survey
and Geospatial Information
(266)



المركز الجيومكاني الوطني

OSGeo Conference Committee
9450 SW Gemini Dr. #42523
Beaverton, Oregon 97008
United States

Dear OSGeo Conference Committee,

Sub: Proposal for hosting FOSS4G 2025 in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information (GEOSA), represented by the National Geospatial Center (NGC) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) are pleased to submit our proposal to host the global FOSS4G 2025 conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. As the regulator and the premiere geospatial agency of the Kingdom, we are convinced that we can provide an excellent experience for all conference attendees and would appreciate having the opportunity to promote the usage, distribution, and development of free and opensource technology in KSA and beyond, including the whole Middle East and all Arabic-speaking countries. KSA is a country in transition and shares the values of openness and communitydriven development. We are excited with prospect of hosting the international FOSS community to dive into an intense week of exchange, experimentation, knowledge transfer, and joint experiences.

We look forward to welcoming the FOSS community to Saudi Arabia and are convinced that our hospitality, warm and welcoming culture, and the magnitude of potential opportunities will make FOSS4G 2025 an unforgettable moment for all participants and attendees.

Please find in the attachments, our thoughts on hosting the planned event for your consideration, in anticipation for favorable response. For further communication on this subject, please communicate with Eng. Asim AlGhamdi (Head of the National Geospatial Center) on his email a.alghamdi@geosa.gov.sa or mobile phone +966-555-509-565.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eng. Mohammed Yahya Alsayel
President, General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information

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Conference Chair

Dr. Eng. Mohammed Yahya Alsayel, President of GEOSA.

Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information (GEOSA), the regulator as well as the premiere geospatial agency of Saudi Arabia, will lead the LOC of the event. GEOSA's core team comprises of Asim AlGhamdi (Head of the National Geospatial Center), Bader Alharbi (Executive Director of the National Geospatial Platform), Ali Alawaji (Executive Director of Geospatial Governance), and Dr. Saad Alhamlan (Member of BOD of GEOSA).

The LOC is in contact with key national organizations, academic and research institutions, and the private sector entities that are driving transformation in digital and geospatial sectors in the country to secure their support for FOSS4G 2025. The LOC is also in negotiations with international partners such as the Open Geospatial Consortium, represented by Joana Simoes and Ingo Simonis, has extended its support to hosting of the FOSS4G 2025 in Saudi Arabian.

About Members of the Core Organizing Committee

The committee members, together with their prospective partners, have outstanding experience organizing large-scale events. These include the LEAP and DeepFest 2024 (<https://onegiantleap.com>), the Global Smart City Forum 2024, or the Global AI Summit 2022. The OGC team has organized over 120 member meetings, each a full-week event with several parallel threads. Thus, the LOC is experienced in organizing events that bring together more than 1000 people worldwide.

Proposed Venue

The LOC has identified two potential venues and has started discussions with their respective managers. Both the identified venues have the necessary infrastructure for hosting full-week events with 1000+ attendees, with the possibility of conducting multiple parallel sessions in separate rooms. Both venues have expressed flexibility with the room design, as large halls will be separated as necessary, allowing rooms of different sizes. Both centers are excellently connected, thanks to Riyadh's international airport. The journey from the airport to the conference center is 15 minutes, served by taxi and Uber. For attendees travelling to Riyadh for this event, a number of reputed hotels are located in close proximity to the venues. Currently, both venues have sufficient free capacity in October and April 2025.

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The first venue in consideration is the Rivadh Front Exhibitions and Conferences Center. The center is located near Riyadh's international airport, next to the Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University. The second venue, The Arena is located near Granada Mall, about 10 minutes' drive further towards the city center of Riyadh. Both venues have wireless internet access and can host more than 5000 people each. Both venues allow for the option to livestream all sessions. There is plenty of space for exhibitions as well.

A decision on the final venue can be made in coordination with OSGeo.

Provisional Dates for the Conference

The most attractive time of the year in Saudi Arabia is outside of the hot summer, from May to September. Our recommendation is to hold the conference, preferably in October 2025. Alternatively, we recommend November 2025, as both months provide an excellent experience of Saudi Arabia.

Thoughts on prices of conference attendance

After initial consultation with GOESA and the local sponsors, the LOC is happy to offer that the attendees will not be charged for attendance to the event. Charges could be levied on exhibitors and that will be decided in due course.

Price range and general location of proposed accommodations

Riyadh offers a wide range of hotels in all price categories, starting as low as USD 40/night. Both venues are accessible from a number of hotels in north-east Riyadh. Uber is very reliable and cheap in Saudi Arabia, so conference attendees are invited to stay at any distance to the conference center, which can be reached within 30 minutes from any place in town.

Potential Partnership with other organizations

The LOC has started discussing co-hosting a member meeting with the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC). Based on initial feedback from possible sponsors, the LOC anticipates further opportunities for co-hosting side events.

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A compelling case for hosting FOSS4G in Riyadh

The Middle East does not have a long-standing free and open-source culture. Still, it has started to develop a local FOSS community to support the growing demand for geospatial technology in the country. Saudi Arabia's "Vision 2030" is a strategic framework aimed at reducing the country's dependence on oil, diversifying its economy, and developing public service sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, recreation, and tourism. All of these domains are directly linked to and depend on geospatial data. The requirements for FOSS are growing daily in our region. The FOSS4G 2025 conference will catalyze innovation, providing a platform for sharing ideas, tools, and technologies to spur technological advancement and creativity within Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and Arabic-speaking countries.

We see the FOSS4G 2025 as an excellent opportunity to introduce a new market to FOSS developers, providers, and enthusiasts and want to boost our local community in Saudi Arabia and beyond. The LOC wants to use FOSS4G 2025 as the starting point for an active Middle East FOSS community development. The goal is to establish an active Arabic chapter with solid connections to international projects and initiatives.

However, the most compelling reasons to host the FOSS4G 2025 conference in our country go far beyond plain technology and knowledge exchange. The most compelling reasons are indeed found in Saudi Arabia's warm and welcoming culture. We treat our guests with utmost respect and generosity. We offer attendees the opportunity to experience the rich Saudi heritage and traditions firsthand. This includes traditional cuisine, cultural performances, and the chance to visit historical sites and landmarks, providing a memorable experience beyond the technical aspects of the conference.

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Contingency and safety plan for COVID 19 like event — financial strategy to make the event sustainable in such situation

The LOC has sufficient financial resources to deal with a possible pandemic / emergency situation. In a pandemic that only restricts the number of participants but allows the organization of an in-person conference, we would switch to a highly hybrid conference. The loss of revenue associated with the reduced number of participants is acceptable for the LOC, thanks to the resources available. In the event of a complete travel ban, however, we do not see ourselves in a position to hold an entirely virtual conference, as it can be assumed that the travel ban will also have far-reaching effects locally, such as contact restrictions or the closure of meeting places.

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