

USGS Establishes New 3D Elevation Programme



The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), along with other federal, state, local and private agencies, is establishing a new 3D Elevation Programme (3DEP) designed to respond to the growing needs for three-dimensional mapping data of the United States. This co-ordinated partnership can help to meet the country's needs for high-quality, 3D elevation data.

Current and accurate 3D elevation data is essential to help communities cope with natural hazards and disasters such as floods and landslides, support infrastructure, ensure agricultural success, strengthen environmental decision-making and bolster national security. The primary goal of the 3DEP partnership is to systematically collect 3D elevation data across the nation, using [Lidar](#), a remote sensing detection system that works on the

principle of radar but uses light from a laser.

The USGS is excited about working with partners to apply the game-changing technology of Lidar to benefit many critical needs of national importance, said Kevin Gallagher, USGS associate director of Core Science Systems. For example, [FEMA](#) and [NOAA](#) are some of their strongest partners because they rely on this type of data to significantly improve floodplain mapping and to better communicate flood risks to communities and citizens.

The 3DEP initiative is based on the results of the [National Enhanced Elevation Assessment](#) that documented more than 600 business and science uses across 34 Federal agencies, all 50 States, selected local government and Tribal offices, and private and non-profit organisations. The assessment also shows that 3DEP would provide more than [USD690 million annually](#) in new benefits to government entities, the private sector and citizens.

A recent [White House fact sheet](#) described how accessibility of accurate, high-quality 3D elevation data provides the foundation to the Administration's overall plan to assist populations in the areas of flood risk management, water resource planning, mitigation of coastal erosion and storm surge impacts, and identification of landslide hazards.

The USGS will host a briefing on Capitol Hill on 25 July to further describe the importance, benefits and growing needs for 3D elevation data.