June 20, 2011

To whom it may concern:

Since 2007 the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has utilized a customized version of the Sahana Disaster Management Software to help coordinate Coastal Storm Plan (CSP) shelter operations. Sahana enables OEM to coordinate the over 500 facilities, 130,000 staff and the over 600,000 people anticipated to seek shelter in the NYC sheltering system. This would have been nearly impossible without the Open Source nature of Sahana which has enabled OEM to adapt it to meet the challenges of scale and complexity unique in New York City.

To further enhance the Sahana application NYC OEM partnered with the City University of New York (CUNY) in 2009. This new project led to the creation of the 2.0 version of Sahana, which could be shared freely through the Sahana Software Foundation under a Free and Open Source Software license allowing others to benefit from the work done for NYC. This tool was designed to work with another version of Sahana, Vesuvius, a product also used by NYC OEM, and developed through the collaborations of the National Library of Medicine at the National Institute of Health (NLM/NIH), CUNY, and with a worldwide consortium of volunteers.

NYC OEM's confidence in the Sahana applications has lead us to pursue deploying it throughout the region as a project through the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) for NY, NJ, CT and PA. OEM has also worked with like minded organizations both domestically and internationally (e.g. – LA Office of Emergency Management, Australian Red Cross, etc.) to demonstrate the value of the Sahana applications and freely share them as resources for any organization looking to enhance emergency preparedness.

The Sahana Software Foundation has been an important partner in NYC OEM's efforts to serve the citizens of New York City and beyond. Its technical guidance and expertise in the world of humanitarian software development has established it as a valuable organization for sharing ideas and software with the emergency management community at large.

Sincerely,

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