

Past and Future of the OpenStreetMap Foundation's Membership Working Group

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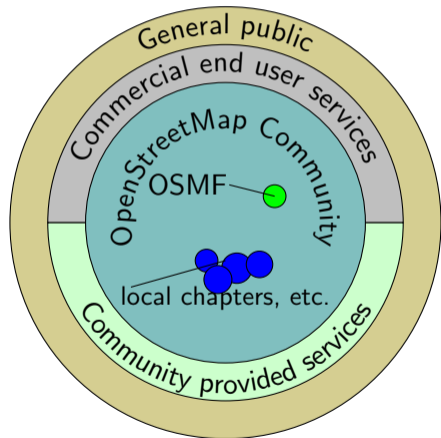
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The OpenStreetMap Foundation (OSMF) in the OSM eco system



- The OpenStreetMap Foundation (OSMF) is only a tiny part of the OpenStreetMap community.
- Supporting, but not controlling, the OpenStreetMap project



The Working Groups

- Doing the “work” inside the OSMF
- Almost all volunteers (only one paid part time position)
- Way of organizing the effort: group around a topic
- Control access to sensitive data and actions

conclusion: If no one wants to do it (for free), it does not get done.



Example: the Membership Working Group

Duties

- Tend to the membership register
- Answer routine membership questions
- Tallying votes at AGM
- Grow membership

Access

Membership register, adding members, renewing memberships, update member addresses (a non-disclosure agreement needs to be signed to get this access)



Other Working Groups

- Operations Working Group
- Licensing Working Group
- Data Working Group
- Engineering Working Group
- Communication Working Group
- StateoftheMap Organizing Committee



How does the MWG work

- Working procedures on the internal wiki
- Tracking of incoming mail via otrs, a support case tracker
- CiviCRM as membership register
 - Automatic reminders
 - Fully automatic sign up and renewal via Paypal
- Administring the osmf-talk mailing list (mailman)
- Discuss issues at online meetings



My involvement in the MWG

- Joined the Working Group in 2016.
- Answer routine enquiries, like: What is my membership status? Or: I changed my email address.
- Organize meetings
- Process payments by bank transfer
- Editing the join.osmfoundation.org website



Activities in the last year

- Fix a long standing CiviCRM mail problem
- Writing down procedures
- Otrs for handling of day to day tasks
- Improve the Membership Working Group page¹
- The fee waiver program

¹https://wiki.osmfoundation.org/wiki/Membership_Working_Group



Fee waiver

Based on resolution “Change to Membership Fees” from 2014

Never implemented, slow progress. What we had:

- An incomplete list of countries where Paypal is not available (lack of suitable money transfer)
- A form for people to apply.

But we were stuck on:

- The soft condition of “contribute something else of value”
- How to rule “financial hardship”



Fee waiver

Before the elections in 2018, someone insisted on being accepted under the fee waiver program. Our efforts were a bit hurried.

- The money transfer case was finalized.
- The “active contributor” definition was used as the minimum measure for contribution.

Having nothing ready for the financial hardship case, the board decided to rule on them case by case. Still an open issue!



A suspicious wave of new members

- A group of about 100 members joined on November 15th 2018
- Detected by chance by Guillaume
- OSMF board circular (vote) to reject those members fails²

The MWG, being tasked with keeping the register, decides on its own to investigate.

Conflicts between the board and its working group

- Contact to the suspected group organizer, GlobalLogic.
- Independence: May the MWG investigate without approval of the board?

²Only 7 days time, little information available



A suspicious wave of new members

Guillaume and Steve spent weeks investigating, because the evidence did not match the narrative from GlobalLogic.

- Sign-ups in a very short time frame
- Very uniform membership entries. All associate, same email provider, no osm username, no capitals in names.
- Unusual long time until Paypal transaction finished.

They produced a very detailed report.³ First presented to the board, then published to the community.

³<https://openstreetmap.lu/MWGGlobalLogicReport20181226.pdf>



How can we do better

This was a lot of work and an uncomfortable situation.

- Get more time for initial rejections
- Improve communication board – working group
- Regular reports on new members
- Resilience by numbers: get more members

Personally, I find the relative independence of board and working groups provides some safety for the community.



Outlook: There is lots to be done

- Improve the membership fee waiver program
- Regularly updated statistics.
- Grow the membership (very broad).
- Member self service area (CiviCRM)
- OSMF membership badge on openstreetmap.org (rails)



Want to join the MWG?

Would you like to work on one of the open topics? Or something new?

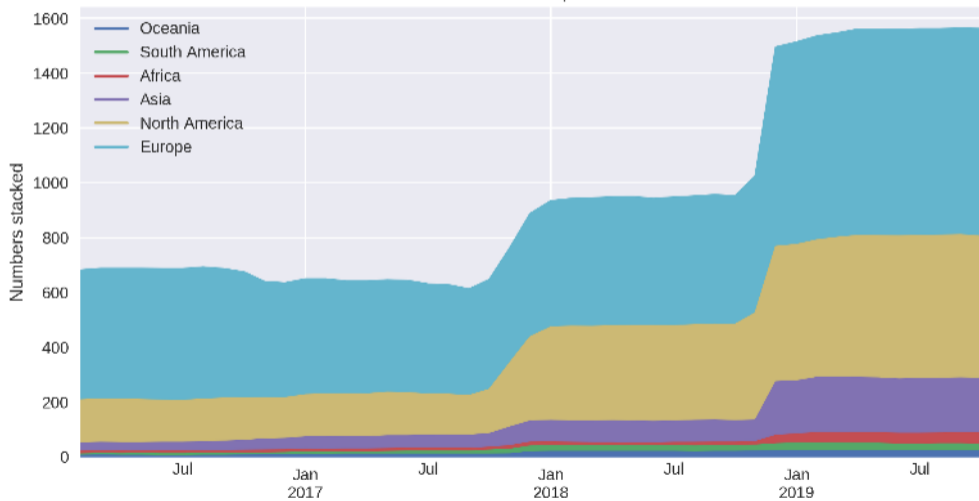
What we expect of regular MWG members:

- Have time to work on MWG topics at least 1 day a month
- Sign a non disclosure agreement for protection of private member data.
- Work out of your own initiative
- Participate in meetings

Contact mwg@osmfoundation.org if interested.



OSMF Membership Statistics



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Thanks to all members of the MWG for supporting this presentation.

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