

Digital Commons EDIC
Attn: Director and Selection Panel
Paris, France

Laax, 6 September 2026

Expression of interest, Digital Commons EDIC Advisory Board

Dear Director, dear members of the selection panel,

I am writing to express my interest in serving on the Advisory Board of the Digital Commons EDIC. I am nominated by QGIS.org, whose Project Steering Committee I chair, with a letter of support from OSGeo, on whose Board of Directors I have served since January 2022.

The EU Open Source Strategy names cloud, workplace tools, secure e-mail and decentralised social media as the priority domains for European alternatives. I would like to make the case for a fifth: geospatial infrastructure. Public administrations across Europe run cadastre, land management, environmental monitoring, utility networks and spatial planning on it, the market is dominated by a single non-European vendor, and INSPIRE obligations sit on top. The alternative already exists and is European. QGIS is governed by a Swiss association with contributors across the continent and is in production use in administrations in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and beyond. It displaced proprietary software without a procurement mandate telling anyone to adopt it. I can explain how that happened and what it would take to repeat it elsewhere.

Where I can contribute

Sustainable business models for digital commons. This is where I am most useful to you. I am CEO of OPENGIS.ch, a company of around forty-five people whose entire revenue derives from open source geospatial software and which returns a substantial share of it to upstream QGIS development. We have tested most of the models the sector argues about: paid feature development for public bodies, long-term support contracts, and a hosted service (QFieldCloud) built as a commercial layer over freely licensed software. I set this out in a peer-reviewed account of QGIS governance and its financial model, published in Patterns in 2025 with two colleagues from the steering committee, and made the same argument on the FOSDEM main track in February 2026. I can speak about what worked and what did not, with numbers rather than theory.

Governance of digital commons. OSGeo is an umbrella foundation covering roughly fifty geospatial projects. QGIS.org governs one of the largest. I work on both sides: foundation-level policy on the OSGeo board, and the daily reality of paid maintainers and commercial stakeholders as QGIS.org chair. Our enhancement proposal process requires competing firms to review one another's proposals, so managing conflicts of interest in a mixed community and industry body is routine work for me.

Public procurement. Most of our clients are cantonal, municipal and national administrations. I negotiate public IT framework contracts and see where procurement rules quietly exclude open source: IP assignment clauses that conflict with upstream contribution, liability terms no community project can accept, and evaluation criteria written around proprietary product features. This is a practical obstacle to the EDIC's objectives.

Legal and regulatory. Open source licensing in practice, including relicensing an existing codebase and the CLA questions that follow. GDPR compliance for a European SaaS product, including Article 27 representation, sub-processor obligations and data residency.

Institutions and users. Six years advising the Global Earthquake Model Foundation, and six before that with the World Bank on InaSAFE, an open source hazard impact tool for local government disaster planning. On the user side, QField, our mobile field data collection app, has passed two million downloads among crews who are not GIS specialists. Open source is also the only reason software exists at all in small European languages: QGIS is localised into languages no commercial vendor would fund.

European framework. Italian is my first language, and I work in German, French, English and Spanish, covering the working languages of four of the five founding members. Switzerland is not a founding member, but I am nominated by international open source communities rather than a national administration, so I would not occupy a Member State's place.

Declaration of interest

I declare in advance that I am CEO and a shareholder of OPENGIS.ch GmbH, which provides commercial services around QGIS and has held contracts with public administrations in Switzerland and the EU. Should the Advisory Board consider any matter in which OPENGIS.ch has or could have a financial interest, including funding decisions touching the QGIS ecosystem, I will inform the Chair and abstain. I am aware of the professional secrecy obligations attached to the role and accept them.

Thank you for considering my application.

Yours sincerely,

Marco Bernasocchi
Chair, QGIS.org · Board member, OSGeo · CEO, OPENGIS.ch GmbH

Attachments: curriculum vitae; letter of nomination from QGIS.org; letter of support from OSGeo.