Addendum to Denver Proposal

2010 Free and Open Source Software for Geospatial (FOSS4G) Conference Presented by the Open Geospatial Foundation (OSGeo)

December 6-12, 2010

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2010 FOSS4G

SUMMARY

We are pleased to provide this addendum to our original proposal, containing additional information requested by the OSGeo Conference Committee, including:

1) Budget
   a) Provide budget estimates for an attendance of 600 (or describe how you would scale your estimates down for a lower attendance).
   b) Explain the reasoning for a low workshop cost.

2) Venue
   a) Describe Internet connection plan for workshop and conference attendees.
   b) Describe workshop venue and computer facilities.

3) Marketing
   a) Describe how you are going to maximize visibility of the conference (marketing plan).
   b) Provide a breakdown of expected local, regional and international attendance, how this will affect the budget, and how you are going to approach this aspect of marketing.
   c) Would you be prepared to use the existing OCS package to manage the website and conference files?

We have prepared a budget for a more conservative attendance of 600 people, which shows that we can still meet the profit desired by OSGeo at this level. We continue to believe though that we will attract a significantly larger attendance than this, and that close to 1000 is a realistic target, not an overly optimistic one. Some of the reasons for this include:

- The attendance of 700 people at Victoria in 2007 is a good "base case" as the last North American conference.
- For many U.S.-based employees it is significantly easier to obtain permission to attend a conference in the U.S. than abroad, so we expect a substantial increase in US attendees relative to Victoria (where the US-Canada ratio was 51% to 49%). Given that the population of the US is approximately nine times that of Canada, we expect the growth in U.S. attendees to greatly exceed the likely drop in Canadian attendees.
- Denver is more easily (and cheaply) accessible than Victoria from North America as a whole, with its central location and a very large number of direct flights, since it is a large airline hub.
- Interest in open source geospatial software continues to grow in general (building on the success of Victoria and Cape Town, as well as other factors), which gives us a larger target audience than Victoria.
- The Denver area has a very large and active local geospatial community, as evidenced by the regular attendance of 600 or so people at the annual "GIS in the Rockies" conference, which is substantially more than most other local geospatial conferences in the U.S.
- Local interest in open source geospatial software is shown by the interest in FRUGOS events, including the upcoming "FRUGOS for Managers" event, for which attendees from over 30 organizations have registered.
- We plan more aggressive outreach to attract new attendees than we have seen at previous conferences, and the contacts and background of both GITA and members of the LOC will contribute to the effectiveness of this.
- Last but not least, we believe that the opportunity to add on some skiing in the Rockies will be another incentive to attend for a significant number of people!

We also wanted to briefly discuss the philosophy behind our budget, which was mentioned by the OSGeo Conference Committee but not included in the questions sent to us. We took as a starting point the registration fee guidance, and desired profit levels, provided by OSGeo. We discussed

whether or not to include the main social event within the standard registration fee. Overall our philosophy here was that "networking" and social interaction is an important element of conferences in general, and even more so for FOSS4G since we feel that the community building aspect of the conference is very important. So we had a preference for including social events within the main registration fee, if we could achieve this within the budgetary guidelines, in order to maximize participation and encourage social interaction between attendees. Because of this, we have included both a welcome reception and a gala dinner in the main price. Another philosophical aspect is that we want to use the conference for outreach to a broader range of potential users of open source geospatial software, and in this regard we feel it is important for the conference to appear "professional" - aspects of this include the level of refreshments provided during the conference, the social functions, etc. Since we could achieve all these things within the budgetary guidelines provided by OSGeo we elected to do so. Of course though, these are all things that we have the option to change, and if OSGeo preferred us to reduce the basic registration fee and make some of these aspects optional, that is certainly something which we could accommodate. We also have room to cut some costs if attendance is lower than expected through squeezing expenditure in these areas.

However, while open to making changes, the Denver LOC remains comfortable with the approach we have proposed, and feel that this will provide an outstanding conference experience for a reasonable cost.

In regard to the budget, we also wanted to reiterate the extensive experience that GITA brings in managing conferences, and in working to a budget. An important advantage of having GITA as part of our team, which we did not mention in our previous proposal, is that multiple members of the LOC have attended many GITA conferences over the past 15 years or more, have worked with GITA in comparable roles to this, as organizing committee members on both the GITA annual conference and the GeoWeb conference, and have served as directors of GITA. This extensive experience in working with GITA, and the close working relationships we have with them, gives the LOC absolute confidence that they will do an outstanding job in terms of the conference organization. We would not be able to have the same degree of confidence in any professional conference organizing company that we had not worked extensively with before, however careful the selection process, so we feel this is another aspect of our proposal which significantly reduces risk. We also wanted to point out that unlike most professional conference organizing companies, GITA is a non-profit organization, dedicated to education on geospatial information and technology, so we feel that using them aligns better with the general spirit of OSGeo than using a for-profit conference organizing company.

BUDGET

Q1a: Provide budget estimates for an attendance of 600 (or describe how you would scale your estimates down for a lower attendance).

The Denver LOC and conference planners GITA have prepared budget estimates for an attendance of 600, and we are sending that document directly to the selection committee. Whether the attendee size is 600 or 1,000, we can create and manage a budget to ensure there is at least a $20,000 surplus after all expenses are incurred. GITA has extensive experience in being able to manage to a budget and adjust costs depending on conference registration.

Q1b: Explain the reasoning for a low workshop cost.

Workshop costs are set low in the budget for two main reasons: 1) This is a per workshop cost, not a daily cost. So the daily cost is actually $200. 2) This assumes most attendees will bring their own laptop, but laptops will be available for rent at an additional cost.

VENUE

Q2a: Describe Internet connection plan for workshop and conference attendees.

Denver, Colorado, is a major telecommunications hub in the southwestern United States with downtown Denver being the nexus of several major networks. Both of the venues proposed as possibilities for FOSS4G 2010 boast impressive Internet connectivity. The Colorado Convention Center maintains dual OC48 circuits to the Internet from their gigabit Ethernet backbone. The convention center currently has 71 Cisco wireless access points throughout the facility and at least one 100Mbit Ethernet port in each room with the ability to drop switches and create VLANs on demand. The Convention Center is capable of expanding capacity on demand from its contract provider and can accommodate other bandwidth providers. The Sheraton is currently undergoing a major renovation. The current networking facilities have proven more than adequate for geospatial conferences, such as the ASPRS and AAG annual meetings. These facilities will most likely be expanded greatly by December 2010. Exact specifications from the Sheraton are not available yet.

It is the intent of the Denver LOC to ensure that gratis wireless Internet be available throughout the conference facilities to FOSS4G participants. Rooms used for Workshops and Code Sprints will add local switch capability to provide each participant with wired Ethernet. Each presentation room will also feature at least one wired Ethernet connection. We have set a goal of live Webcasting at least some, and perhaps all, presentations during the conference. Our network planning will ensure that we can support these needs in addition to those of participants.

Q2b: Describe workshop venue and computer facilities.

Workshops will be designed to be run on participants' own laptop computers. There are multiple approaches that could be used, depending on the content of the workshop. These include a "LiveCD" approach of providing a bootable system on a CD, DVD, or memory stick; guiding users through installing required software, where this is a part of the instruction; requiring users to have pre-requisite software installed beforehand; accessing code or applications on networked servers or remote Web sites; and probably others. The LiveCD approach was used successfully in Cape Town. We will provide a means to rent laptops for participants who do not bring their own. Space used for workshops, code sprints, and elsewhere needs ample power and networking. Efforts will be made to ensure that every workshop and code sprint seat is matched with at least one 110V AC power outlet and adequate networking (either wireless or hard-wired). We will also strive to provide power converters either as loaners or to purchase for participants coming with equipment that does not run on 110V AC.

CONFERENCE MARKETING

Q3a: Describe how you are going to maximize visibility of the conference (marketing plan).

The LOC together with GITA will develop and implement a marketing plan for the 2010 FOSS4G based both on GITA's previous and existing event marketing campaigns, and research and

lessons learned from past FOSS4G events, to target both seasoned open source practitioners and those who are new to open source technology. GITA's 30 years of conference planning and marketing exhibit a stellar track record of successfully marketing and building attendance for conferences of all sizes.

A Proven Track Record
There are two GITA conferences that have similarities to FOSS4G in size (GIS for Oil & Gas Conference) and content (GeoWeb). Both events have consistently experienced record breaking attendance since GITA's involvement. GITA has worked with Galdos Systems on the GeoWeb conference since 2006, since when the conference has experienced a 300% attendance growth from its predecessor, GML Days. Based on lessons learned from past FOSS4G events, the marketing approach GITA has used for GeoWeb has been very similar, focusing more on online marketing, with very little or no direct mail marketing. GITA's GIS for Oil & Gas Conference is a great example of GITA working with a conference committee to build a relevant and timely program, and building awareness around strong conference content to increase attendance. We will use marketing and communications strategies like these and more with the FOSS4G event.

Marketing Plan Summary
We will create a comprehensive, customized marketing plan for the FOSS4G event which will employ strategies consistent with OSGeo's overarching mission and goals. The plan will employ tactics that are appropriate to the open source market, such as targeted e-mail marketing, blog campaigns, advertising and promotional trades, public relations and print articles, value-added messaging, direct contact at various geospatial and open source events, and Web marketing.

Web and E-mail Marketing
GITA understands the importance of prospecting to new and previous conference attendees in a targeted way that relates specifically to their interests in a format they respond to. A compelling and aggressive Web and html/text e-mail campaign will be created to show the open source community why this is an absolute must-attend event.

Blog Campaigns
Denver LOC members publish a number of well-read geospatial blogs. We plan to use these and others out in the blogosphere as one marketing channel.

These include:
- James Fee, Spatially Adjusted - http://www.spatiallyadjusted.com/
- Andrew Turner, High Earth Orbit - http://highearthorbit.com/
- Sean Gorman (FortiusOne), Off The Map - http://blog.fortiusone.com/
- Geoff Zeiss, Between the Poles - http://geospatial.blogs.com/
- Charlie Savage, CFIS - http://cfis.savagexi.com/
- Steve Coast (Cloudmade) - http://blog.cloudmade.com/
- Mikel Maron - http://brainoff.com/weblog/
- Peter Batty, Geothought - http://geothought.blogspot.com/

Advertising and Promotional Trades
The Denver LOC and GITA are well connected to geospatial and open source media contacts and organizations. GITA will work to secure advertising and promotional partnerships with these groups as a cost-effective way to spread the word about FOSS4G.

Public Relations and Print Articles
GITA takes pride in the strong relationships that have been carefully fostered with the press for many years, and most major geospatial media consider GITA a premier source for industry

articles and commentary. Members of the LOC also have strong relationships with a number of publications. This ensures that FOSS4G's public relations campaign will go well beyond just press releases.

Presence and Publicity at Other Geospatial and Open Source Events
We will develop a plan to have a presence and generate publicity at other targeted geospatial and open source events. Members of the LOC and GITA will be at many other events for other reasons, and we will leverage this in our plans.

Local marketing
As mentioned elsewhere in our proposal, the Denver area has a very strong geospatial community. We will have specific marketing activities to attract good attendance from this community, including working with local geospatial groups including FRUGOS (Front Range Users of Geospatial Open Source), local chapters of GITA and URISA, and the local geospatial networking group Rocky Mountain Rogues. We will also actively solicit support and participation from the many geospatial technology companies in the area.

Attracting new attendees
As mentioned in our proposal, a major focus area for us will be to attract existing users of geospatial technology who are not yet using open source. We will develop conference content specifically targeted at this group, and will develop appropriate marketing materials aimed at these users to complement that.

Preliminary Marketing Timeline Overview

Legend		Development
		Impact

2010 FOSS4G Conference Dec. 6-12, 2010	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Marketing Plan Development	░	▓																	
Web site Development	░	░	▓																
Cross Marketing (Related Orgs/Events/Pubs.)	░	░	░	░	░	░	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Advertising & Promotion	░	░	░	░	░	░	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Attendee Marketing		░	░	░	░	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓			
Sponsor/Exhibitor Marketing		░	░	░	░	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓				
Onsite Marketing																		░	▓
Post Event Survey																		░	▓

Q3b: Provide a breakdown of expected local, regional and international attendance, how this will affect the budget, and how you are going to approach this aspect of marketing.
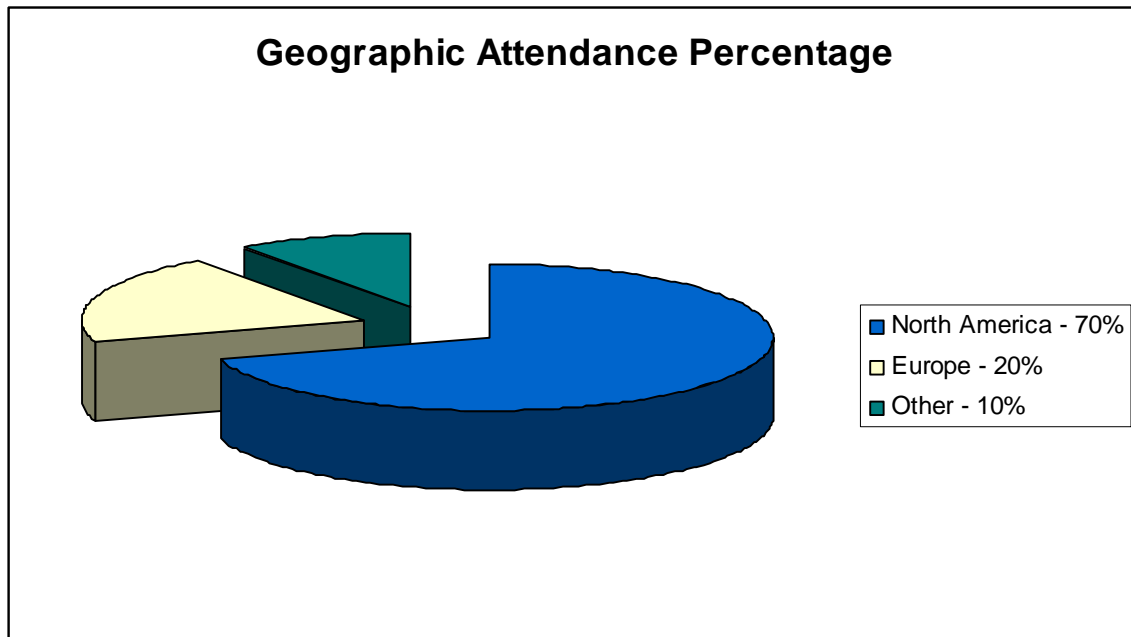
The Denver LOC is expecting the geographic representation of attendees shown above based on:

- Attendance from previous FOSS4G events held in North America.
- Attendance at similar events GITA has worked on, such as GeoWeb.
- More than 20,000 contacts in GITA's prospect database, which will be a core target audience for marketing.

The marketing budget prepared assumes that most if not all prospecting/registration marketing materials will be pushed out through online media, so the effects of this geographic breakdown are minimal. This would not be the case if the marketing was focusing more on direct mail.

Q3c: Would you be prepared to use the existing OCS package to manage the website and conference files?

GITA is prepared to use OSGeo's existing OCS package, and also has existing registration and Web software which may or may not be used to complement the OCS package. OCS will most certainly be used to handle abstracts and other documentation. GITA has an existing, proven, and secure system for handling registration and payment, whereas it appears that this functionality in OCS is new and has not been used by OSGeo before. We will evaluate both systems in this regard to decide on the best option – we are open to using OCS in this area too, but feel it is prudent to do more evaluation on the pros and cons versus our existing system.