Dear FOSS4G 2014 Selection Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of our bid to host FOSS4G 2014. We've received your several questions, and our responses are provided below.

Questions Through May 19, 2013

Question Area #1

FOSS4G events (both global and regional) can be improved substantially by tapping into the knowledge of prior events. As such, I think it important to select events and committees which are not only successful, but which also collect information and processes which can be used by future events. How do you propose to contribute to the success of future foss4g events?

- The members of the Washington, DC LOC team have deep experience contributing to FOSS4G and other events. For example, we have two members from the OSGeo conference committee on this team and multiple team members who were part of past organizing committees for successful FOSS4G and related industry events. We have significant experience with event planning, programming, promotion and logistics.

- Additionally, the new FOSS4G planning schedule was based on material provided by a member of our team and will benefit all FOSS4G events to come. We plan to use the Drupal COD module for a significant amount of website functionality, which might enable some re-use by future events. Our team will look for additional opportunities to continue to share documents, tools, knowledge, and experience.

Question Area #2

You mention that no financial backing is required. Can you please expand on this. Usually someone is required to provide guarantees for such things as venues. How will that be addressed? If the conference is to make a profit, how do you propose the profit be distributed.

- Quoting our letter to clarify: "This bid does not require financial backing from OSGeo."

- Our LOC includes an organizing partner, the Eclipse Foundation, that underwrites multiple large technology conferences per year and is prepared to do so for FOSS4G 2014.

- We anticipate OSGeo will receive a similar positive return in-line with returns from the Denver and Nottingham events while keeping registration and sponsorship prices as low as possible for participants.

Question Area #3

Folks, instead of leaving the workshop selection open for experiments yet again I suggest we

simply prescribe how to do it. In simple words something like:
* Graduated OSGeo projects get precedence over incubating projects over others. * Each project is guaranteed to get the *chance* to apply for one slot.
* If a graduated project does not (convincingly) confirm until x weeks before the conference that they can pull it off and that there will be interest, then slots are filled up by other active projects.
* Individuals and parties / orgs may wish to collaborate on joint workshops.
* Ideally a few slots should be reserved for workshops that may be not tech related, like Edu and Data committee.

Final adjudication lies with the LOC!!!

Maybe we could even propose that rejections are issued a week before confirmations giving the rejected parties the opportunity to collaborate with accepted parties, complain, get all heated up with the LOC and then pacified so that we don't have this public discussion making look us just a bit foolish. And maybe this last idea is just completely insane and would only lead to WW 3...

- We realize there is a limited number of workshop and speaking slots at any conference, FOSS4G included. Registrants want the best program possible. Our program committee will leverage our experience to manage this issue. The program committee will need to consider cases where one project, or speaker, has numerous talks accepted and another has none. A pragmatic program committee will make the necessary balance adjustments.

- This process will require flexibility. A predetermined precedence model for talks, if enforced without proper LOC/ program committee discretion ,could lead to rejecting important content which could prove detrimental to the event if weaker or redundant material is selected and important material pushed to other events. We are committed to learning from previous approaches, such as the one being used for FOSS4G-NA 2013. This LOC combined a blind community vote and program committee to put together a well rounded program.

- Workshops spaces are especially limited and also reflect considerable investment on the part of those delivering the workshop. To avoid unduly rejecting a workshop, final selection of workshops might be deferred until we have early bird registration data which includes which workshops registrants actually plan to attend. Projects who have content that is not selected might still be supported with pre-scheduled Birds of a Feather (BoF) sessions, lightning talks, or office hours, code sprints or the like.

Question Area 4
How do you plan to distinguish this global conference from the very successful international regional conferences such as FOSS4G-CEE and FOSS4G-NA? Or, in other words - what are your plans to make this truly global, main FOSS4G conference?

- Our committee includes team members that work internationally as a matter of course and are distributed across 8 different cities and 3 continents.

- Our proposed site and venue offer convenient access to travelers from around the world, with multiple international airports nearby and excellent rail and motor vehicle access.

- Our committee had considerable experience in programming and conducting global events, including previous FOSS4Gs, EclipseCon, State of the Map, Geospatial World Forum, and others.

- We plan on leveraging our considerable experience with the other conferences to help make FOSS4G attractive to an international audience.

Question Set 5

Given the continuing complaints about the selection of workshops and presentations how do you plan to handle the submissions so that everybody feels welcome and participating rather than turned down and ignored. Do you have ideas for accommodating presentations/posters by many students and new developers who may have great ideas but are unknown in the community and may not get enough votes for a regular talk. Do you have any innovative ideas about the presentations and participation that will distinguish this conference?

- It is important for the program committee to consider a holistic view to ensure there is proper balance between mature and popular content while nurturing newer projects and ideas. In addition some accommodation on the conference program, lightning talks, BoFs, and similar provide a good way to give lesser known projects/concepts some visibility and help them grow.

- We may look to the technique practiced by EclipseCon for example, where the program committees strive to provide good feedback if asked by someone why their talk or workshop was rejected. This has been appreciated by the community and we suggest implementing it at FOSS4G. We could also consider the community voting aspect along with an "emerging technology" track, or "first time topics" etc. to try and give the newer topics exposure.