

Local Chapters Guidelines

Chapter Roles

Open Source software has come to be a proven environment for building stronger software through open global collaboration. The Open Source Geospatial Foundation, hereafter referred to as OSGeo, has been created to support and build the highest-quality geospatial software.

The OSGeo's goal is to promote the use OSGeo projects globally by fostering strong localized OSGeo partnership and presence in different geographic and linguistic domains. Apart from being a strong local voice for the OSGeo, some of the major tasks whereby localized OSGeo partnership and presence could enrich and enhance global geospatial initiatives would be;

- Provide member networking opportunities for support and job opportunities
- Software Internationalization and Localization
- Development of prototype applications to demonstrate Open Source geospatial capabilities to local and regional audiences
- Software Packaging and Customization for local and regional needs
- Training, Support and Development of e-Learning Contents in local languages
- Support Open standards and Open access to geospatial data in region
- Promoting OSGeo and enhancing visibility in various forums

The above activities would complement and strengthen the efforts of OSGeo in increasing awareness about available Open Source Geospatial solutions and stimulating adoption in education, industry, government and non-profit organizations in various geographic and linguistic domains.

Chapter Responsibilities

OSGeo does not differentiate between a geographic or linguistic grouping and strongly encourages self-organization similar to "User Groups" or "Special Interest Groups" in other Open Source Projects. "User Groups" or "Special Interest Groups" do not formally represent OSGeo but can avail some of the services such as the use of OSGeo Wiki. "OSGeo Chapter" offer a more formal framework for self-organization based on a few simple guidelines listed below;

- "OSGeo Chapter" officially represents OSGeo and is formally recognized as OSGeo Project.
- "OSGeo Chapter" must support the OSGeo Mission and Objectives of OSGeo.
- "OSGeo Chapter" must hold regular meetings (at least annual) and provide annual report of activities to chapter membership and OSGeo Board.
- "OSGeo Chapter" will not entail any financial commitment from or on-behalf of OSGeo. OSGeo will also not provide any budget assistance to the "OSGeo Chapter".
- "OSGeo Chapter" is encouraged develop and maintain "Directory Listing" of companies, people, universities and organizations involved with or using OSGeo projects.
- "OSGeo Chapter" must strive at networking with organizations to enlist participation and support for OSGeo.
- OSGeo reserves the right to terminate its relation with an "OSGeo Chapter" if OSGeo has reasons to believe that the activities of the "OSGeo Chapter" are contrary or detrimental to the Mission and Objectives of OSGeo.

Chapter Benefits

- "OSGeo Chapter" is permitted to use OSGeo Logo and other branded resources for promoting the Mission and Objectives of OSGeo.
- OSGeo will provide necessary infrastructure to promote communication and visibility of "OSGeo Chapter". The infrastructure will include mailing list, hosting of wiki pages, domain service for "OSGeo Chapter".

Chapter Formation

In order to form a chapter, the following steps should be taken:

1. "OSGeo Chapter" should self-organize (for instance in the OSGeo wiki, via OSGeo mailing list, etc), seeking to determine if a critical mass of interest exists to justify a chapter.
2. "OSGeo Chapter" should prepare a mission and objectives indicating the scope of the planned chapter (geographic or linguistic extent for instance).
3. "OSGeo Chapter" should propose an official representative to liaise with the OSGeo Board. If accepted by the board, the representative will be an officer of OSGeo.
4. "OSGeo Chapter" should submit an official expression of interest to form a chapter to the OSGeo board, listing initial members, mission, representative, legal form (incorporated?) and other supporting information.
5. The OSGeo board shall then consider passing a motion forming the chapter, and designating the liaison officer.

In considering the formation of new OSGeo chapters, the board will consider issues including:

- Does the mandate (geographically or linguistically) conflict with other existing chapters or chapters-in-formation?
- Does the chapter appear to have sufficient interest to justify official formation?
- Does the chapter appear to be open to broad membership, and representative of the target geographic or linguistic community? (eg. if a chapter had the objective to cover all Spanish speakers, it would be inappropriate if the only interest demonstrated was from one country)

UK Local Chapter Draft Terms of Reference:

Mission:

The UK local chapter of OSGeo wishes to establish a focal point for developers and users of open source geospatial software within the UK, for networking and advice, and to raise the profile of open source geospatial development within the UK. It wishes to promote open source geospatial software as a viable choice for all types of user. While it has been suggested that a separate local chapter could better serve the particular geographic and logistical requirements of Scotland, the UK chapter wishes to include all regions and countries within the UK and Ireland. If there is significant interest in forming geographically separate chapters, then the UK chapter will promote these, assist with formation and growth, and collaborate in the holding of international events.

Objectives:

- To provide a forum for discussion and promotion of Open Source Geospatial Software in the UK
- To help more UK organisations discover the opportunity of open source geospatial tools, and collate business studies of successful transitions

- To raise awareness of the benefits of public access to geodata in the UK by collating links to sources of legitimate free data

In addition we would like to work towards the following:

- A fully-featured open access UK SDI
- Someday hosting the FOSS4G conference in the UK

Official representative

Joanne Cook
Senior IT Support and Development Officer
Oxford Archaeology
j.cook@thehumanjourney.net
+44 (0)1524 880212

If the majority of chapter members wish, the post of official representative will be elected on a periodic basis. This will be agreed via the mailing list in the first instance, and at the AGM once the chapter is officially formed.

Local Chapter work to date:

The chapter has been in formation as an idea since the FOSS4G conference in Lausanne, 2006. In 2007 and 2008, the chapter has become more active through attendance at various conferences throughout the UK, including the largest industry conference in the UK- the AGI (Association for Geographic Information) conference in Stratford in 2008. Further promotion has been undertaken in the form of presentations to interested groups in academia and local government. In 2009 the local chapter will co-organise the UK's first open source geospatial conference, in conjunction with the University of Nottingham. Recently, the chapter has been involved in a successful two-day training course in open source GIS at the University of Lancaster.

The chapter has a mailing list of approx 35 members, of which 3 or 4 are very active and have assumed roles within the nascent group. In particular, Bill Wilcox has taken on the role of collating a list of freely available geospatial data sources, Suchith Anand has been instrumental in organising both the 2009 conference but also a very successful workshop on geospatial web services in 2008, and Rob Newnham kindly presented a report on the local chapter at the FOSS4G 2008 conference in Cape Town.

There has been considerable interest and support from a number of places- in academia the Universities of Nottingham, Lancaster and UCL all have staff who are active or have expressed an interest in the chapter. Several businesses involved in the support and development of open source geospatial software have also expressed an interest in further involvement within the chapter. Furthermore, the AGI are keen to have further involvement with OSGeo by either representation at their existing Technical Special Interest Group (SIG) or by setting up a separate Open Source SIG. Representation within the AGI is an important step in raising the profile of open source geospatial software within the UK.