Preamble

OpenStreetMap is powered by its community. While originally supported by individuals, the continuing growth and popularity of OSM have also spawned organised mapping efforts by companies employing mapping teams and unpaid groups like school classes that are directed to work on OSM.

Organised mapping efforts are an integral part of today's OSM contribution landscape and, when done well, help make OSM better and more widely used.

The OSM Foundation has created the following guidelines that summarize expectations, consensus and established conventions based on discussions with the community, the OSMF advisory board and humanitarian mapping efforts. Their goal is to provide a framework to both organised mapping initiatives and the communities to encourage good organised mapping. They are not meant to apply to community activities like mapping parties between friends or doing a presentation on OSM at a local club. If you're not sure whether you should apply them, contact the local community for advice.

They are not a policy, but following them is the best way to make your organised edit successful and receive constructive community feedback.

Scope

The organised editing guidelines apply to any edits that involve more than one person and can be grouped under one or more sizeable, substantial, coordinated editing initiatives.

While primarily aimed at map editing, they can also be applied to other aspects of the project, e.g. the Wiki.

Process

It might not always be easy or possible to check all the boxes. A best-effort approach is expected and enough; more substantial initiatives are expected to spend a more substantial amount of effort.

Documentation on the wiki

Organised edits should have a Wiki page named [[Organised Editing/Activities/Name of the Activity]] for the particular activity, and record the page in the list under [[Organised Editing/Activities]]. (A sample Wiki page is [[here]]) This is not just useful in interacting with the community but also a good preflight checklist, and a way to get constructive feedback. This page should truthfully describe, where applicable:

- the coordinating person or organisation
- a way to contact the organiser
- a unique hashtag to be used in the changeset comments
- the goal of the activity, explaining also why the goal is being pursued
- the timeframe for the activity
- any non-standard tools and data sources used, and their usage conditions
- links where the community can access any non-standard tools or data sources used
- the accounts of participating persons that wish to be identified, with any details they wish to include

- if the success or performance of participants will be measured in any way, a description of the metrics used for this
- if participants will receive training material or written instructions, a copy of, or link to, these materials
- plans for a "post-event clean up" to validate edits, especially if the activity introduces new contributors to OpenStreetMap
- after the activity has completed, or at least once a month for ongoing efforts, a description of the results

If an organisation has many different activities, it can create one page for the organisation that lists the common elements, and point to that from each activity page.

Communication with the community

All related communications should use channels that are

- open (no non-OpenStreetMap registration required),
- public, and
- archived.

Discussions on the OpenStreetMap forum, mailing lists, wiki, or using OpenStreetMap changesets will typically fulfill all of these requirements. Private messages (for example OpenStreetMap messaging or email) can be used exceptionally. Discussions should not be "moved" from a public venue to a private conversation unless they concern personal matters.

Informing the community

After the Wiki page is set up, the affected OSM communities should be informed through a suitable post: the general-purpose "talk" mailing list or, if the activity is limited to one country or region, on a regional mailing list or other channels which the community uses the most. This should be done no less than two weeks before the activity is started. The community should have reasonable time to discuss, and any suggestions for improvement made by the community should be carefully considered. If the activity is a response to an emergency and no advance discussion is possible, the community should be informed as soon as is practical.

An explicit go-ahead from the community is not required, and implicit consensus or even silence is enough. Ignoring justified criticism and pressing on regardless can, however, lead to an activity being stopped and reverted.

Communication with other contributors

Contributors should respond to communication attempts made in good faith by other contributors. Communications can also be escalated to a person in charge of communication, for example a coordinator.

Messages should be answered within two working days while the activity is ongoing, and responses should actually answer any questions and not just say "thank you".

Duties and training of editors

Any person or organisation whose actions affect the OpenStreetMap project has the duty to care for the project, and should respect the community's consensus, mapping practices

and guidelines. They should make sure any person they instruct to contribute to OpenStreetMap is familiar with them.

An user's profile page should also include links to the wiki pages of the organised edits and organisations they participate in on an ongoing basis.

Edits to the map

People looking at individual changesets that are part of a organised mapping activity should be able to tell as soon as they look at a changeset. Changeset comments should include the unique hashtag described on the wiki page under Organised Editing/Activities/Name of the Activity (as described in [[the Process section]]), and link to that page.

What NOT to do

- Trying to hide activities or make them difficult to follow, for example by using many different accounts, selecting misleading user names or changing user names frequently
- Contributing very large or very small changesets
- being dishonest in discussions
- specifying wrong sources.

Possible actions on problematic edits

Problematic edits may be reverted. In cases of severe or repeated problems, individuals and organisations may be banned from editing OpenStreetMap.