

# Application Letter to OSMF Local Chapters Committee

OpenStreetMap Ethiopia (OSM Ethiopia)

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**Date:** July 19, 2025

**To:** OpenStreetMap Foundation – Local Chapters Committee

St John's Innovation Centre, Cowley Road

Cambridge, CB4 0WS

United Kingdom

**Subject:** Application for Official Local Chapter Status – OpenStreetMap Ethiopia

**Dear Members of the OSMF Local Chapters Committee,**

Greetings from Ethiopia. On behalf of OpenStreetMap Ethiopia (OSM Ethiopia), we are pleased to formally express our intent and enthusiasm to become an **official Local Chapter of the OpenStreetMap Foundation (OSMF)**. OSM Ethiopia is a registered non-profit association in Ethiopia, and we have been actively working to build and unite the OpenStreetMap community in our country. We believe that recognition as an OSMF Local Chapter will greatly support our efforts to further the OpenStreetMap project and align us more closely with the global OSM community.

**Organizational Background and Objectives:** OSM Ethiopia was legally registered in Ethiopia on [registration date] under the National Civil Society Organizations Proclamation (as a non-profit association). Our organization's purpose is fully aligned with the mission of OSMF – we are dedicated to encouraging the growth, development, and distribution of **free geospatial data** in Ethiopia for anyone to use and share. In practical terms, our objectives include mapping the entirety of Ethiopia on OpenStreetMap with high-quality data, promoting the usage of OSM data in various sectors, and growing a skilled network of local mappers. We aim to engage citizens, universities, government agencies, and NGOs in the mapping process, thereby **empowering communities through open geographic knowledge**. Our mission statement, in summary, is to have a *vibrant OpenStreetMap*

*community in Ethiopia – united, organized, and contributing to national and global development goals.* In pursuit of these goals, we conduct regular mapathons, training workshops, and outreach programs, and we have already hosted events like our first State of the Map Ethiopia conference. These activities underscore our commitment to the OSM principle that open map data can spur innovation and positive change.

**Legal Status and Structure:** We confirm that OSM Ethiopia is **legally incorporated** as a non-profit association under Ethiopian law. We operate as an independent local entity, with our membership structure, elected Board, and constitution. Enclosed with this letter, please find copies of our Articles of Association/Constitution and proof of registration, which outline our governance, membership rules, and non-profit status. Notably, our Constitution enshrines that the organization is not-for-profit and that all assets and income are used solely to further our objectives (with no dividends to members). We have also incorporated provisions to ensure alignment with OSMF's values and policies – for instance, our objectives explicitly echo the OSMF's mission of providing open geodata, and we have agreed to abide by the OSMF trademark guidelines and local chapter requirements. OSM Ethiopia's structure is a membership organization (open to all interested contributors) with a Board of Directors elected by members, by OSMF's preference for participatory, member-driven chapters. We currently have 200 registered members, comprised of mappers and open data enthusiasts from across Ethiopia.

**Current Board and Leadership:** Our founding Board of Directors consists of five members who are longstanding contributors to OpenStreetMap and leaders in Ethiopia's geospatial community. The board members are: **Binyam Dele, Hiwote Tadesse, Samson Warkaye, Asnake Gizaw, and Rani Mesele.** Together, they bring experience ranging from software development and GIS expertise to community organizing. For example, Binyam Dele (our acting Chairperson) is a software engineer and YouthMappers regional ambassador who has been instrumental in organizing mapping initiatives in Ethiopia. Each board member is passionate about OpenStreetMap's mission and has been volunteering their time to grow our community. This leadership team will oversee the implementation of OSM Ethiopia's programs and ensure good governance, with regular elections planned to incorporate more community members into leadership roles over time. We believe our governance model is robust, and we have processes in place for financial oversight (our Treasurer maintains transparent financial records and we plan to submit annual financial reports to OSMF as required).

**Alignment with OSMF Mission and Values:** OSM Ethiopia's activities and values are closely aligned with those of the OpenStreetMap Foundation. We share OSMF's core belief

in keeping the OpenStreetMap **community-driven, free, and open to all**. For instance, one of our core values is that OpenStreetMap data should remain free for anyone to use, which reflects OSMF's principle of a free and open geodata license. We uphold the ethos of the OSM community – “Do-ocracy”, inclusivity, and respect – and have adopted the OSM etiquette guidelines to ensure positive engagement among Ethiopian mappers. We are also deeply committed to the idea of **“ground truth” mapping**, encouraging our volunteers to collect data through local knowledge and surveys, which resonates with OSMF's approach that our best map emerges from on-the-ground contributors. Our goals explicitly echo OSMF's mission: as stated, we focus on **encouraging the growth of the map, fostering the development of mapping skills, and broad distribution of map data** in Ethiopia. We have carefully ensured that none of our activities diverge into areas outside of OSMF's scope – for example, while we collaborate with the government on using OSM data, we remain non-partisan and purely focused on map data improvements. We believe this faithful alignment will make us a strong local chapter.

**Community Consultation and Support:** The Ethiopian OpenStreetMap community strongly supports this application. Over the past few months, we have consulted the local community through our Telegram group and the [talk-et](#) mailing list (which we set up for Ethiopian mappers). We organized a community meeting to discuss becoming a Local Chapter and received unanimous encouragement to proceed. As evidence of this support, we have attached a **Community Endorsement Form** with signatures and messages from local OSM contributors, affirming that OSM Ethiopia is the representative OSM organization for our country. This list of endorsements demonstrates that we have a critical mass of active contributors behind us, far exceeding the minimum of “ten to twenty active participants” often expected for a viable chapter. Many in our community see official Local Chapter status as a natural next step that will open doors to closer collaboration with OSMF and other countries' chapters, and help us access resources (like fundraising opportunities or advisory support) to amplify our work. We are confident that we represent the broader OSM community in Ethiopia, having engaged volunteers from various regions (Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, etc.) and mapping groups like YouthMappers chapters at universities. There is excitement here about OSM Ethiopia formally joining the global network of OSMF Local Chapters.

**Commitment to OSMF Guidelines:** We hereby confirm our willingness to **follow all OSMF guidelines and policies** relevant to Local Chapters. This includes signing the official Local Chapter Agreement with OSMF and adhering to its terms. We have reviewed the template agreement and are fully prepared to comply with its stipulations, such as: maintaining our not-for-profit status and independent membership, avoiding misuse of OSM trademarks,

and refraining from any activities that would conflict with the Foundation's mission or bring it into disrepute. We will also ensure ongoing communication with the OSMF's Local Chapters & Communities Working Group, providing annual updates on our activities and promptly notifying OSMF of any major changes in our organization. In essence, OSM Ethiopia seeks to be a model Local Chapter – one that OSMF can point to as an effective local partner furthering the common goal of a free, worldwide map.

In terms of practical coordination, we intend to foster close ties with the OSMF and other local chapters. For example, we plan to participate in the OSMF Local Chapters mailing list and calls, share our local experiences, and learn from others. We are open to any guidance the Local Chapters Committee may offer to new chapters, and we are eager to contribute our perspective (such as mapping in developing countries and community growth in Africa) to the global OSM community. Additionally, we acknowledge the importance of OSMF initiatives such as the Working Groups (Data Working Group, etc.) and the importance of the OpenStreetMap etiquette and community health. Our chapter will encourage members to engage constructively in these wider conversations.

**Enclosures:** Along with this application letter, we have enclosed the following documents for your review:

- **Constitution and Bylaws of OSM Ethiopia** (in English, with an Amharic summary) – detailing our purpose, governance structure, membership provisions, financial controls, and commitment to OSMF alignment as highlighted above.
- **Proof of Legal Registration** – a copy of our registration certificate from the Ethiopian authorities, confirming our status as a legal entity (non-profit association) in Ethiopia.
- **List of Board Members and Officers** – with brief biographies, to introduce the individuals who will be liaising with OSMF and leading the chapter.
- **Community Endorsement Form** – signed by numerous local OpenStreetMap contributors (with their names, OSM usernames, and messages of support), evidencing community consultation and endorsement of OSM Ethiopia as the representative OSM organization in Ethiopia.
- *(Optional)* **Activity Report** – a short report or presentation highlighting key activities we have undertaken (mapathon stats, training events, partnerships, etc.) to give

context to our current scope of work and impact.

We trust that these materials will demonstrate our readiness and eligibility to become an official Local Chapter. Please let us know if any additional information or documentation is required; we are happy to provide whatever is needed and to answer any questions the Committee or the OSMF Board might have.

In closing, we want to emphasize our strong conviction in the OpenStreetMap project and the value that a Local Chapter status will bring. Ethiopia has a growing and vibrant mapping community, as evidenced by initiatives like **State of the Map Ethiopia** and various HOT projects in the region. By becoming an OSMF Local Chapter, OSM Ethiopia will be better positioned to coordinate these efforts, avoid duplication, and serve as a single point of contact for anyone (be it government, NGOs, or new mappers) interested in OpenStreetMap in Ethiopia. We also look forward to contributing to OSMF's global efforts, for example, by sharing our lessons in community building or participating in OSMF working groups if appropriate. Our team is excited at the prospect of joining the family of OSMF Local Chapters and deepening our collaboration with the international OpenStreetMap community.

Thank you very much for considering our application. We appreciate the time and effort the Local Chapters Committee and the OSMF Board invest in supporting communities like ours. We are hopeful for a positive response and are ready to proceed with the next steps (such as co-signing the Local Chapter Agreement).

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any clarification. You can reach our interim Chairperson, Binyam Dele, at [binyamdele23@gmail.com](mailto:binyamdele23@gmail.com), or our Secretary, Hiwote Tadesse, at [hiwotetadesse1710@gmail.com](mailto:hiwotetadesse1710@gmail.com). We are at your disposal for any follow-up discussions or interviews that might be helpful.

**Sincerely,**

*Binyam Dele*

Chairperson, OSM Ethiopia  
(on behalf of the Board of OpenStreetMap Ethiopia)

*Hiwote Tadesse*

Secretary, OSM Ethiopia