Local Chapters and Communities Working Group 2020 Survey

The newly [Local Chapters and Communities Working Group](), reestablished in 2019, recently sought feedback from Local Chapters and local communities with the goal of improving the relationship between the OSM Foundation and Local Chapters.

This survey was conducted in English using the OSM Foundation's LimeSurvey account during the first half of 2020. Five current Local Chapters, six communities that are in the process of becoming a Local Chapter and nine that are not at this time seeking Local Chapter status responded to the survey. The results in randomized order are available in the link below.

The survey looked at areas covering the Local Chapter creation process, responsibilities, improvement opportunities, and demographics. Demographics are not included in this report.

Members of the Working Group involved with the survey were:

- Ben Abelshausen
- Maggie Cawley
- Rob Nickerson
- Joost Schouppe
- Clifford Snow
- Eugene Alvin Villar (WG chair)

Results

Respondents recommended the following to aid in the create of new Local Chapters:
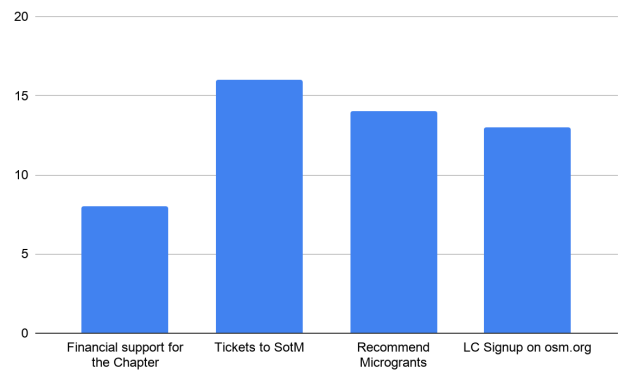
- Create a Local Chapters application checklist
- Have a group of individuals review applications instead of the Board Secretary
- Provide website hosting and membership management software

A number of Local Chapters were late to submit their annual report. We recommend that the Board send a reminder just prior to the annual report due date.

The majority of the respondents did not feel the OSMF Board was making good use of the Advisory Board. One suggestion was to require the OSMF Board to seek advice from the Advisory Board on key issues. The LCCWG thinks this is sound advice and we urge the OSMF Board to consult with the Advisory Board on how to best utilize their time.
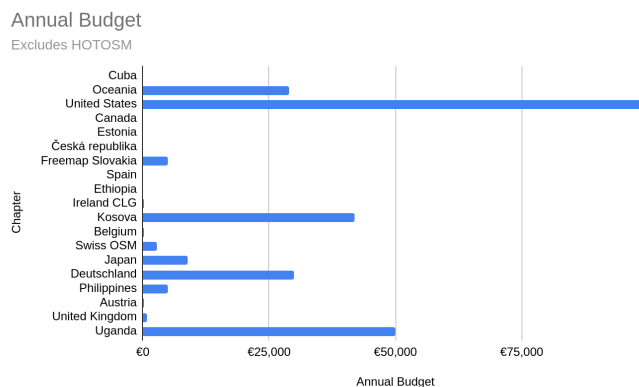
On the question of how the Foundation could improve support for Local Chapters, the top three recommendations were:

- Tickets to SOTM
- Microgrants
- The ability to join a Local Chapter on osm.org

Some of the other benefits the Local Chapters would like to receive are:

- Tools to organize community events
- More prominence of Local Chapters and communities on the OSM website
- Help organizing regional events
- Financial needs varied considerably in the responses. Most Chapters are adequately funded but there are some that would welcome financial support.
- There was a strong desire for community building and IT infrastructure support. The OSMF could support local communities with more visibility of community groups, easy membership signup, welcome messages, and group emailing. IT support could include hosting of Chapters and communities websites, and membership and similar software applications. Big Blue Button is a good example of a service the Foundation could offer.

In response to *What can the Local Chapters and Communities Working Group do to help?* participants suggested:

- Help with the Local Chapter Application process
- Provide guidance on how to become sustainable
- Create an agreement for thematic Local Chapters

LCCWG Recommendations

After reviewing the survey we recommend the following actions by:

OSMF Board

- Provide website hosting and membership management software to Local Chapters
- Allow signup to local chapters from our website
- Fund a limited number of participants to attend the annual State of the Map Conference
- Better utilize the Advisory Board
- Send reminders to Local Chapters to submit their annual report

LCCWG

- Support creating of tools to organize community events
- Recommend a process for creation of thematic chapters to the OSMF Board
- Create a local chapters applications checklist
- Provide initial review of Local Chapter applications
- Help Local Chapters find ways to become sustainable

The final question of the survey was *What is the one thing OSMF should change to be more useful for you and other local chapters and communities?* Key takeaways were:

- More support for Local Chapters and communities
- More Diversity needed
- OSMF needs a Code of Conduct

Report by: Clifford Snow, Local Chapters and Communities Working Group Member

Link to: Randomized results