

Suggestions for Improving OSGeo

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Motivation

- Associations can help balancing commercial efforts
 - Misconceptions about OS, visibility, ...

- To have even more impact, OSGeo might consider organizational improvements, suggested here

- About myself:
 - OSGeo Charter Member
 - Executed project incubation procedure with rasdaman
 - Since 2008 engaged in open-source software

Issue 1: Organizational Maturity

■ Process definition

- “I think it would be a really nice win to be able to go to one place to see a list of all the decisions that OSGEO ever tabled, who voted, what they voted and what the outcome was. Do you have that now? If so I couldn't find it doing a quick search. Email and +1 / 0 / -1 is really an intolerably bad solution for back referencing decisions.” - Tim Sutton, OSGeo Board list, 2016-sep
- Charter members stay forever

■ Process implementation

- PyWPS: 8 years; rasdaman incubation: 6.5 years
- Apply incubation criteria to itself (first)
- In elections, typically insiders recommend each other

■ Quality management

- Graduated OSGeo projects never inspected again while bar raising for newcomers

Issue 2: Focus on Core Mission

- Branding „good software“, not conquering project
 - Documentation, recognizable project management still ok
- Substantially more discussion on Code of Conduct than on project incubation criteria

Issue 3: „Software Socialism“

- Tendency towards narrow dogmatism
 - „all software should be free“ - why?
 - OSGeo narrowing on one extreme (free and only (!) free), missing out all the potential allies

- Pragmatic voices exist, but are generally of little influence
 - “The best way to have a more generous grant program is to have more paying customers” - Michael Turner, FOSS4G conf committee, 2016-sep
 - Dirk Frigne’s attempts on bridging OSGeo and businesses

- Main damage is to small enterprises!
 - Large companies not effected much, SMEs vulnerable
 - Cannibalizing likeminded efforts

Example: rasdaman (non-) Graduation

- 2010-apr-05: Incubation ticket created
- 2014-oct-30: voting closed by Oct 29 midnight, Jody Garnett unilaterally cancels result (graduation) on Oct 30
- 2015-sep: noticed that OSGeo has hijacked rasdaman ownership on OpenHub
 - *severe intervention for correction*
 - *CoC Committee approached, refused to consider*
- 2015-09-14: Bruce Bannerman (mentor) finds new tasks
 - *“This is something that we'll need to work on before we put Rasdaman up for graduation again. I'm still buried in my priority task, so I have not had time to look at incubation issues yet. Sorry.”*
- Following controversial discussion, chosen not to become OSGeo project (but OSGeo Live)
 - *reason: PSC under PB lead, avoid „design by committee“*
 - *Although Jody Garnett states "a PSC is not required" (2014-oct-10)*

Conclusion

- OSGeo can play an important role,
but danger of getting lost in dogma & discussion
 - Niche position with less impact than desirable
 - some consider it „unprofessional“

- OSGeo needs
 - More **professional** self-tuning
 - More **transparency & clarity** in decisions & positions
 - More **inclusive** approach towards OS-related ecosystems

- ...following mission statement:
“being an **inclusive** software foundation devoted to an **open philosophy**”

- Strong, respected OSGeo fills important gap, plays important role!