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2013 OPERATIONAL FACTS

We, the undersigned, have made within HOT of 2013 an amazing year for OSM in the Humanitarian Development (Hum/Dev) fields. We ensured an unprecedented high level of remote/on-the-ground crisis response (Mali, CAR, DRC, Philippines, Sudan and South Sudan) as well as widening and deepening the OSM presence in the form of self standing/autonomous local groups in 9 countries (Haiti, Senegal, Chad, Burkina Faso, Togo, Burundi, Kenya, Cameroon, Mongolia).

By doing so, we constantly paid attention to growing HOT internal capacities in terms of tools ([HOT Exports](#), [Humanitarian rendering](#)), documentation (French translation of [LearnOSM](#)), exposure of HOT and OSM individuals to remote response as well as field work in HOT projects (mix of paid/voluntary work), massive trainings of all local actors as well as mentoring of local mappers during and after operational projects, development of robust relations with global and local actors/donors.

2013 marked a major breakthrough in terms of our impact and liaison with on-the-ground humanitarian actors in remote crisis response. This is true of Philippines, but also of CAR, Mali,

DRC. They do use OSM data now and have taken the habit to contact us for their Areas of Interest; this is a real step forward!

2013 showed in the abovementioned countries regular and tremendous successes in combining paid project (often modestly resourced) and voluntary work to boost the growth of autonomous local OSM groups with post project sustainable OSM activities, representing all the models of project run by HOT. This has been coupled with timely and extremely satisfactory completion of project requirements.

EUROSHA (October 2012 - April 2013): a EU-funded program with African and European volunteers promoting, training and mapping with OSM in Chad, CAR, Burundi and Kenya, along with Communities, Academics, Government and local and international Organizations.

CAP103 in Haiti (March - July 2013) : a funded OSM mapping program as an opportunity to build new tools and community spirit in Northern Haiti

- training and organizing a group of 60 mappers to successfully map Areas Of Interests
- joint working and field experience for 8 HOT active contributors who took part as Junior and senior staffs with 12 locals Advanced mappers from various local Haitian groups
- Creation of the HDDM rendering (JOSM and web), HOT Exports improvements and contribution to HOT IT fees
- Specific Community building program led by two Creole-speaking consultants leading to the creation of a local OSM organization in Northern Haiti

OSM Senegal (May 2012 - May 2013) and Espace OSM Francophone program (June 2013 - Dec 2013): a new low-cost/high-impact model to strengthen/build OSM ecosystems and communities in Senegal, Chad, Togo and Burkina Faso by bridging local tech groups and Academics to serve Local/Central Government, NGOs, IOs. It combines with a South-South approach through common activities and fields between the OSM communities. The model harnessed on talented young volunteers from the EUROSHA and OSM Senegal projects and fostered sustainable and long-lasting activity around OSM in those countries.

2013 ISSUES & BOTTLENECKS

HOT governance within the Board

One would have expected from HOT (its Organization Board and ED), full support in the undertaking of these actions and in the achieving of most of the strategic goals set forth in the [HOT Strategy document](#). Sadly, we experimented quite the contrary and had to wrestle with the Organization in carrying out our actions. Designing and implementing a project in challenging environments within HOT has been unnecessary painful and sadly demotivating. Running successful remote activations in HOT is surely demotivating when none or little appreciation is being made about the results, when the Board/ED started to intervene in communicating, partnering, designing strategy and projects outside of the core coordinators/mappers at the origin of such an activation and without informing them adequately.

The [May 2012 HOT Strategic Retreat](#), the temporary adoption of two Acting positions (Executive Director and Project Director), the production of a business-driven strategic vision for

the organization, marked a change for HOT. Since then, HOT has slowly, gradually but surely become this not enabling environment we have experimented while volunteering or participating to paid projects (from talks - design - implementation - financial/technical wrap up). This shift has happened with an of a top-down, control-oriented ED-centric organizational model coupled with an operational vision and its associated procedures which overall care more about seeking large grants and ensuring compliance with freshly forged policy/guidance and optimizing paid staff working time than the impact of HOT projects in countries of deployment.

- Choice of a hierarchical business and governance model with an excessive concentration of powers for the Executive Director. In August 2013, this model has been imposed by the majority of the Board, voted without any justification other than saying that we need like private corporations a stronger organization. This has never been submitted to the membership for discussion and validation. The ED is now holding all powers in HOT from press relations, project design and implementation, project direction, HR, to any operational matters. It became impossible to do anything without asking the ED the permission to do so. There is no control from the Board on the ED, whose work is never evaluated. The Board has almost no knowledge of HOT Operations outside of the ED. The official (voting) members are not included in any decisions; there is no bridge with the voluntary community deeply engaged with HOT, and no share of decisions about hiring process; no clear protocol to hire the HOT volunteers. There is nothing more opposite to OSM as well as our HOT culture and practices than such a pyramidal model and such a personal concentration of powers. This is not only contradictory to OSM practices and ethos but also dangerous, counter productive and hinders any organizational innovation that HOT can bring into the Hum/ Dev classic organizations.
- Strategic vision focused on achieving projects that prioritize the growth and sustainability of HOT US Inc instead of OSM project where the projects happen through local, long term community empowerment. Other models, especially low-cost, and/or voluntary-based have been consistently criticized. Last, it has been proposed by the ED for the Organization not to consider projects below a certain threshold (USD 10K) and discourage voluntary work on paid projects.
- Emphasis on short sighted Result-Based Management (RBM) approaches for project and individual evaluation, when these methods are more and more criticized for degrading well-being at work and social interaction among teams and for their ineffectiveness to evaluate individual, team or project performances and the long term impact of projects.
- Shortage of knowledge regarding the reality of humanitarian operations in the field and working in tough conditions combined with a lack of confidence in experienced Hotties. This has constantly slowed us in our work, it has surely made our work even more complicated and in some cases worked just as a blocker.
- Lack of overall strategy and specifically in terms of consolidating OSM presence where HOT has developed projects.
- Unclear strategy regarding some potential activities like the use of imagery drones that

had been strictly forbidden for the project in Haiti (despite strong technical and legal expertise plus the opportunity of a donation of 1 Sensefly Ebee), and now seems to be strongly considered after Haiyan Activation and humanitarian real interest, without anyone being informed about goals, contacts and potential projects.

- Setting up framing, hierarchical codes and rules where the membership has no decisive role except voting once a year, and does not focus on growing and supporting members' concrete activities for achieving the strategic goals
- Lack of transparency regarding activities, fundraising, outreach and projects with the HOT voting membership that is almost never consulted on any topic and informed only by skinny meeting minutes

HOT and its autonomy

What makes of OSM unique, precious, and highly impactful in the Hum/Dev field is its immense, stand-alone, self-relying, voluntary mapping/empowering force.

This force is uniquely able to create the Information Management Commons (Maps/Data) that the Humanitarian/Development actors need so much, had failed to create, and could not create with their own resources.

There are conditions which affect the OSM impact in the Hum/Dev field though, and any organization using OSM in this field, HOT in the first place, needs to think about how its action create/consolidate/strengthen the OSM autonomy in this field.

- OSM, as a project/a field of practices/products, needs to remain identified by Hum/Dev actors as neutral and autonomous; relations of OSM-based groups with militaries/national government need to be approached very carefully so that any OSM action remains neutral.
- OSM has to be fully understood in its community dimension by its supporting actors/donors, this may force OSM groups to keep an autonomy from actors and donors of the Hum/Dev field. More and more hum/dev GIS professionals will be using OSM on their own, or using HOT tools and HOT communities to create data/products without necessary attention to the community dimension of OSM. This calls for HOT to find its place in this new Hum/Dev professional field and make sure the community dimension of the project is well taken care of so that its strength is not weakened and that the OSM communities and HOT in the first place continue to keep their autonomy and capacity of initiatives.

HOT and external evaluations

The HOT volunteers have built strong relationships with OCHA and humanitarian organizations in 2013. This was built with confidence, moving prudently in trying to integrate various activities from one Activation to the other. For the Haiyan Activation in November 2013, OCHA, Red Cross, and HOT started to coordinate right from the beginning. This was a very challenging Activation with the extent of the damages, the deaths and the lack of electricity and communications, and all the remote areas calling for help. For the teams to deploy the first 10

days of such Activations, it is essential to provide rapid evaluations of the population's needs, how many persons are involved and their distribution. Decision was taken collectively that HOT should help to assess the damages, even if we had never done this before. Once such a mission has ended, debriefing should be done among those who participated to this operation, to identify the actions and any possible necessary correctives. This could be about assuring to have imagery for all the places, to have better monitoring tools for imagery available, to have the option to use aerial or drones, to have a better methodology and tutorials. While activating, you respond to the emergency the best you can. And surely, afterward, we collectively need to share our experiences and try to progress to be more effective. But this should be done with respect and confidence and surely not addressed on the public lists. To this regard, ARC should not have addressed critics publicly like they did without prior discussions with the other organizations involved in the Activation.

HOT as a component of OSM for Humanitarian and Development

Currently, for practitioners of the Humanitarian/Development fields, for OSM members and even for some HOT volunteers/members, Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) is a name which encompasses into one single entity three different and autonomous layers :

1. **a community component:** HOT is the name of a community, the community of OSM mappers active in Humanitarian and Development contexts. It involves individuals through remote activations and field work far beyond the HOT US Inc (the official registered name of the organization) voting members and the stable core of active contributors (non-voting members). A community is a self-standing entity of its own.
2. **an associative, voluntary component:** HOT works also like a kind of humanitarian chapter of OSMF for voluntary activity around OSM in the Humanitarian and Development fields in the form of mapping, training, outreach, documentation and tools creation.
3. **an economical component:** HOT US Inc makes proposals, calls for bids and raises funds, uses the business mechanisms to support the use of OSM in the Hum/Dev Fields.

But this distinction between these three components has not been made clear and leads to the following consequences:

- for the stake-holders in the humanitarian/development field, HOT US Inc is seen as an organization getting together with these three components and running them
- the Board of Directors' and Executive Director's leading and deciding roles go beyond the economical component to encompass as well the associative, voluntary and the community components
- in the economical field, HOT US Inc benefits from a "de facto monopoly", aiming at imposing a unique vision (the one of Directors' majority), economical model and business/organizational practices for funded projects. This pattern would deploy globally as a company under the parental control of HOT US Inc and its Board of Directors.

In order to allow HOT to reach its full potential, it is instrumental to formally distinguish between, Community, Association and Business where many possibilities shall happen and where HOT US Inc has to find a business way which is respectful of communities.

In order to allow for this organizational shift to happen in a modality which is respectful of the diversity on this Earth, it is equally important to foster the regionalization of HOT and the emerging of regional/cultural different self-standing and autonomous entities able to cooperate on the HOT Commons (Tools, Documentation, Services) to serve the OSM communities and the Hum/Dev actors, as well as promoting, setting, and supporting South-South cooperation. Such a movement is nothing new, but a well proven and respectable track that groups like the Red Cross or Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) have taken way before with great benefits in terms of .

As a living part of the OSM project, of the Open Data and of the Open Source movements in crisis response and economic development, HOT has the potential to change not only the way maps and data are created, used, and maintained by hum/dev practitioners, but to change radically how the Humanitarian/Development fields work.

HOT is bringing a revolution in humanitarian data, but the current vision, practices, and organizational/governance models of HOT are roughly replicating the worst models at play in the humanitarian/development field. One will not change a field of practices by remaining into its main organizational paradigm. In other words, the current model is hampering HOT's ability to efficiently fulfill its mandate and objectives.

To harness on the results of 4 years of work and continue expanding HOT as per its mandate in a way which is both faithful and efficient, it is necessary to get HOT back on its feet and resume with the ethos and practices of OSM. The way HOT is currently organized was said as temporary (read [this blog post](#) after May 2012 Retreat) and is being slowly established without any discussion within the membership. This can change. We propose what follows.

2014 PROPOSITIONS

The Membership: a melting pot at the centre of the organization

Our vision of the HOT membership, its dynamic and the one of the Organization builds on the idea of the *melting pot*. We see HOT (community, ethos, and practices) as an experience that has to be shared over time by any individual interested in becoming a member of HOT or playing a role in its Board and the Organization. HOT as a cohesive collective is taking shape through the many rich and joyful interactions implied by its numerous activities. The trust, the understanding, the commons that emerge from these regular interactions over time are the necessary concrete of HOT as a collective. This cement is cornerstone to the autonomy and resilience of the organization.

Anyone should have at least one year of involvement in HOT activities prior to gaining

membership, as a proof of interest and knowledge in the project. This time period will allow for new individual(s) and HOT to really know each other and overall ensure tested interest, knowledge and acquaintance with HOT as a community and a project.

In the current HOT Membership Code, elections and vote apart, the involvement of members is limited to “receive notice of upcoming meetings, votes, and discussion of sensitive, not-quite-public, information” and “Vote on matters affecting the organization”. This restrictive approach is responsible for the lack of transparency and activity of the HOT membership as a group. **The membership is the core of HOT and as such it should be the centre of the organization**, at the origin or strongly associated with any initiative, action undertaken by HOT.

Everything related to ongoing and future activities as well as strategy and organizational matters should be first discussed, carried out and communicated in tight association with the membership. HOT has to revise the body of policies and Codes already established within the above vision in order to tighten them as much as possible and have an agile Organization driven by the wisdom of its members and the documentation of the collective expertise/lessons it has acquired from its years of rolling OSM in the Hum/Dev fields.

The Working Groups: the core of HOT activity, to be expanded and strengthened

“Participate in or lead a HOT Working Group” is currently the last suggested contribution of HOT members listed in the Code of Conduct.

Working Groups have and ***must have*** a key role in HOT internal work. This needs to be consolidated, strengthened, and amplified so that any WG is working based on HOT needs (Core and Field) to achieve short term burning needs as well as contribute to addressing mid/long term needs. No more of only regular meetings about who did what individually in between two WG meetings, but rather WG people working together to identify and specify needs as well as providing direct assistance or contributing to long term solutions.

Technical

As for now, it essentially deals with individuals doing fixes and slight improvements, there is much room for this WG that should:

1. Evaluate the concrete needs expressed in Remote activation and Field operations to provide technical expertise regarding how tools should be technically built and estimate the cost for coding, hardware, etc.
2. When projects or grants provide funds to develop those tools, monitor the ToRs of applicants and test the beta versions that will be delivered.

Remote Activations

It is one of the activities where HOT makes a real difference and changes deeply the humanitarian landscape. We do good, but we could do more. As of now, it is totally based on

voluntary commitments of a few individuals with no support from the Board. Though the largest crisis are covered (except Syria), we could respond to more crisis (**more specifically the many forgotten crisis out of the news**), involve more contributors, reach out to more partners from the humanitarian/development world and deepen our bi-relational engagement with them (MSF Spain/CAR, MSF FR/DRC, ARC in Philippines). This is really crucial, considering Humanitarian Organizations like MSF or ICRC are requesting us more and more to provide data not only for crisis response, but also for preparedness or field operations.

We are well set in terms of remote response capacities, with agile workflows and a rich body of practices and documents (still can improved) that need to be further appropriated by members and mappers active in hum/dev setups. We fundamentally see remote activations as **a learning/organization building experience**. As a matter of fact, Crisis Monitoring (or pre-Activations if not yet defined as a major crisis) and Activations involve **a lot of actions that would benefit of members acting like a team** according to availability, skills, experience and will: monitor crisis media, connect with the Humanitarian relief workers or imagery providers, create and document TM jobs, promoting the TM jobs in social medias or through potential group of contributors (VTCs, Academics), validate the edits, create HOT Exports jobs, updates wikipages and uMaps, find data that could be imported, connect with others VTCs, report to the OSM community, etc.

Field Operations

Small is beautiful: we proved that really **small grants can make great benefits**. This opens a large potential of field projects driven by locals with scholarships leading OSM animation within the local VTCs and Academics. Like large projects involving Hotties deployed on the field, experience with the Support Team showed that a distant support from HOT community is a tremendous help.

We are **equally capable of running large projects** like the Haiti CAP103 mapping project within our vision - practices - governance with long-standing impact in terms of OSM communities that would harness on our smaller long term OSM presence and strengthen its presence after the project.

Evaluation

We definitely need evaluation, or rather put more work into our various operational reports, associate interested members and mappers into this task to better collect our operational lessons learned. This agile method shall help us provide a better response both in remote activation and field deployments.

Short Weekly Reports, especially the Achievement of Goals and Lessons Learned sections, could be an easy way to inform the Membership and to get feedback from an Evaluation WG.

Asides, we shall work with Evaluation Groups like Groupe Urgence Rehabilitation Disaster (GURD) for Eurosha, or Operational entities (ARC) or Academics to deepen this understanding of our practices but as well make sure that the Evaluation frameworks that will come from this dialogue are relevant and adequate to our emerging/innovative ways of operating in the Hum/Dev field.

Network (partnership and coordination with VTCs or local communities)

There are more and more VTCs involved in the humanitarian field, and in the [Digital Humanitarian Network](#) (DHN), this loose network linking the traditional humanitarian relief organizations and the VTCs. It is not organized (yet) to allow connections between VTCs, so this is something we need to work on, in order to find if there is an **opportunity to work with some VTCs, for various purposes**: joint work, participation to TM jobs, use of OSM data, documentation support, etc. or simply make them realize the importance to produce open, redistributable data. As there is nothing formal or organized so far, current experiences have been made at individual level, and actually show potential with eg GISCorps, SBTF or Translators Without Borders.

Regarding local communities, this could encompass creating links between these emerging communities and not only the HOT Community, but also national ones which most of HOT members are also involved in, through remote advices or mapathons.

HOT and local OSM groups through their **territorial base** present a unique comparing advantage over most of the VTCs: any crisis or preparedness activations undertaken by HOT/OSM groups is more and more undertaken by global and local volunteers and through this last anchorage will endure, last locally, and reinforce local OSM groups and local VTCs or classic Hum/Actors. The widening and the deepening of the VTCs territorial base is surely an area where HOT played a good role and will have to deepen its impact. Through GIS and VTCs, what is at stake is the use of OSM data into map-related products for informing public debate and support decision making processes by **all actors** of a territory.

This relation with the VTCs in the relevant fora, including the DHN, has to be organized through a dedicated Working Group with regular updates to the membership.

Documentation

This area of work has been well covered in 2013 with rich documentation produced around OSM (LearnOSM) and HOT tools made available in different languages; translation also rightly spans interfaces of main tools. This effort needs to be continued but emerging limitations need to be addressed. Contributions to stable documentation has to be thought in terms of scope (when wiki starts), in terms of platforms (GitHub is good for code but a blocker for non tech persons and prose.io does not alleviate this), in terms of meta_documentation (LearnOSM GitHub project has to be thoroughly described to allow easy access), in terms of governance (it is not possible to have an overall one or few persons with editorial controls over original contents as well as translations).

Outreach and communication

As the membership has been poorly involved in HOT activities so far, outreach is currently made by first the ED then if not available by Directors or Project Leads in international events; by Members in local events, based on personal materials vaguely shared through personal slideshare accounts.

Experience and skills regarding the debated topic should be the first criteria rather than hierarchy or mother tongue. In the case the spoken language could be an issue, a duo can be organized. In the case of an international event, the local members should be systematically

involved in order to share their experiences. All the outreach events must be put in a common agenda for an open discussion within the membership regarding who should speak. A short report and social media advertising should be systematically done by the speakers.

A communication set should be designed after a review of what is existing, covering the various topics a presentation can be based on, and encompass only free material.

Fundraising and grant writing

This is an area which is necessary to the Organization and where we have so far registered mixed results: we developed ways to get HOT Operations funded with different types, sizes of grants from a wide variety of donors, we failed at obtaining funds to support HOT Core Functions.

Collectively, we will revise/redefine the span of functions necessary for the HOT Core to support the Operations and the required budgetary resources (taking into account what can be contributed as in-kind and voluntary contributions) that we will need to ask for.

We will continue engaging with all our traditional partners/donors but also try as much as possible to rely on outreach/fund-raising actions lead with the OSM Community (Foundation and Chapters) as well as with global and local ICT (Open Source/Open Data groups).

We shall also rely more through the Fundraising Working Group on crowd-sourced fundraising platforms to support different projects like the Translation Sprint of the OSM Manual into Haitian Kreyol.

The Advisers: a new role for experts interested in supporting the HOT project

An important recommendation from the HOT Strategic Retreat and Strategy Document has been to stress the need for HOT to benefit from **Advisory support**. There is a need for an advisory function in HOT, but we do not think that it has to be fulfilled by a Board of Advisers like proposed in the HOT Strategy document. This function has to be undertaken in a much more agile manner through a light voluntary project framework bringing in one or many domain experts as per identified HOT needs. Those advisory support projects would be initiated by Board, Working Groups (WG) and members. We would then create a new category of people involved in HOT, interested by the project and its goals, and who, in association with members-WG-Board, can provide opinions, advices or support considering their skills, experience and/or position.

Clearly, **HOT does not need famous names as a fancy flag (for both parties)** who, concretely, will never have the time to do anything for HOT. We do not need either a motionless Board of Advisers where Experts would be supposedly requested as per HOT emerging needs or have a meeting once a year to give their opinion. **Expert support needs to be triggered by specific needs**. Then an advisory project will be set up for one or many Advisers to jump in. Advisers could be either people involved in partnering organizations whose positions do not make them able to run for membership or people with specific skills or experience that is not covered within the membership. This can be a one shot as a long term advisory, encompassing topics like autonomy, evaluations, codes and documentation, technique, security, assurance, logistics, etc.

There is a **strong learning dimension** in this HOT voluntary project frameworks for any Hotties involved in such projects, these advisory projects will truly work as a **capacity-building moment for the Organization**. Furthermore, we are expecting that through those projects a strong relation will be built between the Advisers and HOT which can eventually lead the Adviser to express her/his willingness to become a HOT member.

The HOT Board: skilled, involved and experimented peers acting as animators ensuring HOT goals are fulfilled

Clearly our vision of Board of HOT is specific, innovative and meant to introduce changes in the way a humanitarian/development organization works.

We see the Board as the emanation of the Assembly of the Members, operating in an open and inclusive manner under the control of the Assembly of the members.

It is fundamental to seek constant and maximal participation/inclusion from the members and to mitigate the **hiatus** between Board/Strategy and Operations. This is specifically required in a new and innovative organization like HOT which first is building over time a completely new field of practices and the associated expertise and second is rooted into OSM and Open Source, Open Data.

This is why we propose a **flat inclusive model** in the form of a **board of peers coupled to Members organized in Working Groups and supported (when needed) by Advisers through light voluntary projects**.

The function of the overall is to ensure that the HOT project is smoothly furnished with the right resources to maximize its impact and achieve its mandate which is ultimately the **growth of OSM in the Hum/Dev world in the form of actionable, stand-alone, autonomous OSM global and local capacities**. It is not about making HOT grow but about amplifying its actions.

This implies supporting the forging of a vision, the setting of clear humble objectives tied to flexible work plans over time as well as organizing for actions to be taken in the broad areas covered by the Working Groups (tech, outreach, network, activation, evaluation, field operations, financial) as per HOT needs. **The Board members will be acting alongside with interested members as animators of the Working Groups and act to ensure the best level of animation in the state of current resources of the Organization**. Overall the Board will make sure that HOT actions are in line with its model.

These vision and actions imply a continued contact with HOT activities which is not at all undertaken by the majority of the HOT Board and to see the Board active with the upcoming flow of HOT reality/materiality/actions. This is why **field experience and domain expertise are so crucial to this Board**.

As emphasized, **such a vision of the organization harnesses on limited but proven and functional experiences** (OSM, HOT from 2010 to 2012 and the working environments set in 2013 field and remote activations).

The hired staff for operational and day-to-day tasks

Our vision of an acting Board of peers within a flat organization of members does not rely on a hierarchical organization of some of the funded positions needed for HOT Core Functions and HOT Projects. HOT is not a company and does not need an Executive Director.

HOT will rely on Project managers for HOT Projects and for Operations, HOT will seek as much as possible to foster the merging of Regional Desk Project Manager rooted into regions and territories; in this, HOT would follow common organizational models of the Hum/Dev fields.

HOT will continue to rely on funded positions for its Admin/Finance and IT needs.

Once again, we will revise the Pay Staff policy of the organization and the type of work entailed by the various work positions in HOT with the aim to define for HOT staffs the lightest reporting obligations in the accomplishment of their duties.

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