Steps to Getting Started with GISCorps–HOT Projects

GISCorps–HOT Projects are announced via emails to GISCorps members who have indicated that they have OpenStreetMap experience. Those who respond to specific project emails will receive instructions on how to proceed with the project.

This document provides you with some general information on how these projects work, and allows volunteers to get up to speed prior to the initiation of a project. These projects are conducted remotely, so you will need access to the internet in order to participate. For advanced projects, you may need to install free software onto your computer or possibly need access to ArcGIS.

HOT projects typically involve capturing vector data from an imagery backdrop. The types of features to be captured and the imagery sources to be used will vary between projects. Some advanced GISCorps-HOT Projects may involve batch loading of GIS data from outside data sources, or from datasets derived from GIS analysis.

Step 1. Set up an OpenStreetMap account.

Go to the OpenStreetMap home page. You will see a map and some buttons. Click on the Sign Up button at the top right corner of the page. You will need to enter an email address, a display name, and a password. After you submit this information, OpenStreetMap will send you an email asking you to click on a link to confirm the account information.

OpenStreetMap has a Help system called LearnOSM; for more information on creating an account, you can go to the LearnOSM webpage for creating an account.

Step 2. Choose an OSM editor and learn how to use it.

There are two editors that are recommended for creating OSM data, the iD editor and the JOSM editor. The iD editor is a simple web application built into OSM (the iD editor largely replaces the older Potlatch 2 editor; Potlatch 2 may still be used, but the iD editor is more intuitive and powerful).

JOSM (Java OSM editor) is a very powerful editor that is tightly integrated into all OSM functionality. It is software that must be downloaded and installed onto your computer (Windows, Mac OS X, or Ubuntu). There is a free ArcGIS extension called the ArcGIS Editor for OpenStreetMap, but this extension is aimed more at using OSM data within ArcGIS rather than for creating OSM data for import into OSM, and this extension should not be used for updating the OSM database.

For volunteers who have limited time available but wish to participate in times of humanitarian crisis, the iD editor is a good choice; it also is a good first editor to use before you move on to the more complex JOSM editor. To learn how to use the iD editor, follow the link on our webpage for “Using the OSM iD editor”.

For volunteers who wish to be “power users” or who wish to participate in more technically-advanced project activities, the JOSM editor is required. To learn how to use the JOSM editor, follow the link on our webpage for “Using the JOSM editor”.

**Step 3. Update your GISCorps Volunteer record to indicate that you have OSM experience**

Once you have read this document and have begun to learn about OSM, you should update your GISCorps Volunteer record to indicate that you have some OSM experience. Go to the [GISCorps website](#) and click on “Access Your Record” on the top menu; enter your email address and GISCorps password, and click on Login. When you see the form with your info, look at the text box (just below your Contact info) that is labeled “Identify your GIS Software Expertise”, and add “Open Street Map (OSM)” to your selected expertise (hold the <Ctrl> key while you click on this additional selection so that your existing skills are not un-selected). If you also have begun learning iD and/or JOSM, go down about four input boxes to the input box labeled “Do you have expertise in Open Source software”, make sure the “Yes” box is checked, and add “iD” and/or “JOSM” to the list of software that you know (the types of software can be entered on the same line, separated by a space or comma). After you have modified your record, scroll to the bottom of the form, check the box that says “I have read the GISCorps General Policies…”, and then click on the Submit Information button.

Now when GISCorps recruits for GISCorps—HOT projects, you will get an email asking if you would like to participate. We welcome beginners—working with other more experienced volunteers on a project is the best way to quickly learn new skills!

**Step 4. Become more proficient by participating in HOT projects, and in GISCorps—HOT Projects**

HOT Projects and GISCorps—HOT projects are managed through the [Tasking Manager](#). You login to the Tasking Manager with your OSM account credentials.

Once you are logged in to the Tasking Manager, you can view lists of All Jobs, Featured Jobs, or My Jobs (jobs in which you have participated). Now that you are a member of OSM, you can as an independent individual work on any of the jobs listed in the Task Manager. Click on the title of any of the jobs to go to the webpage for that job.

When you sign up for a GISCorps—HOT Project, you will be given the link to go directly to the webpage for that job. A GISCorps—HOT Project may be conducted exclusively by GISCorps volunteers, or it may be conducted by GISCorps volunteers working in tandem with other HOT volunteers. A GISCorps—HOT Project generally will have additional web resources, such as Google documents and spreadsheets, which are used to help coordinate and support the work of GISCorps volunteers.

The Tasking Manager page for a specific job has five tabs and a map:
● The Description tab gives general info about the purpose of the job and which agency requested the work.
● The Instructions tab lists the types of vector data to be collected and the imagery to be used as the backdrop.
● The Task tab allows you to: choose an area to work on; release an area that is unfinished; mark an area as Done; and choose an area to Validate.
● The Users tab lists the volunteers that have worked on the project, and shows how many areas they have worked on.
● The Stats tab shows a time graph of how the project is progressing.
● The Tasking Manager map shows the project area divided up into work areas (square task areas). The tasks are color coded according to their status.

To learn more about the Tasking Manager, visit the OSM Wiki page about it. Note that the Tasking Manager is actively under development, and its appearance and functions may change without notice.