



# From passionate chaos to more or less grown-up: governance in smaller affiliates

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# What is “a smaller affiliate”?\*

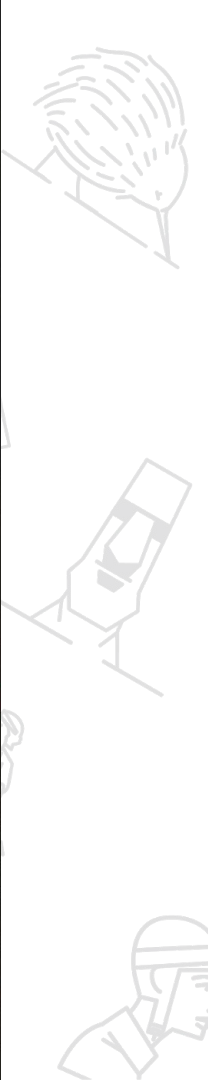
- less than 120k USD annual budget;
- no staff or up to 5 people.

\* just an ad hoc definition by us, can be challenged :)

# **And that means:**

- not a lot of projects done (or they are small);**
- and a lot of work is done by volunteers.**

# What is governance?



**“Establishment of policies, and continuous monitoring of their proper implementation, by the members of the governing body of an organization. It includes the mechanisms required to balance the powers of the members (with the associated accountability), and their primary duty of enhancing the prosperity and viability of the organization.”**

<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/governance.html>

**In other words...**

**Governance = how to  
make decisions, how to  
implement them and  
who is involved and  
what are the limits**



# Lessons learned

**Understanding the role of the Board,  
duties and responsibilities of Board  
members is not something people  
are born with...**

**...you have to be trained or explained  
to.**

**\*Board members tend to be elected because they “do stuff” — like Wikipedia administrators are often elected, because they write articles...**

**...and that does not mean you “fit the role”...**

**Identifying lack of knowledge / skills  
is important...**

**...to train people to “fit the role” or (if  
you have budget) hire people you  
need**

**\*Transition is always painful...**

**...so “buckle up” and think of things  
you can change to lessen the  
damage.**

**If your board consists of members of the organisation (or mostly of them)...**

**...you need to think of training your members how to govern, how to read financial reports etc., ideally BEFORE they are elected.**

**\*Board members should understand that they cannot do everything...**

**..you have to delegate, and that comes with rights and duties — volunteers or/and staff have to know what they can(not) do.**

**Micromanagement can be a thing at first, but it is important to let it go..**

**..otherwise you will reach limits of what you can do very soon.**



**\*Feedback is important...**

**...that is the only way for you to know what went wrong... or what was done right. To repeat. To avoid.**

**Try to think (and act) in roles, not people...**

**...create “organisational” emails for roles (chairs, executive directors etc) and subscribe them to important mailing lists.**

**\*Documentation is very boring..**

**...but also very important. Budget some time and efforts to do it. To help your volunteers/staff to accept it.**

**The Board's work should not be engaging in conflicts...**

**...if there is a conflict influencing the activities, you might need to establish rules and policies (Code of conduct, team-building, trainings etc.), thinking strategically**

# Ideas



- **Board handbook, a must-read document for prospective board members**
- **Have a place for Q&A 's for new board members during their first weeks (or have a Board buddy assigned, if you have an experienced Board member)**
- **It might be good to have transition period for key positions (chair, treasurer, secretary), if your Board changes a lot**

- **Team-building may be needed and it is a good investment**
- **Train Board members to perform their duties**
- **Have on/off-boarding protocol (access to google docs, accounts, mailing lists etc.)**

- **Invest money / time / efforts in your community (and members of the organisation) by having them to understand more about what the organisation is doing, how, how to govern**
- **Run a community survey to get answers (and probably new questions : ) )**



# Tools & Resources

- **Human resources (volunteers/  
permanent staff/contractors)**
- **Financial resources (grants,  
donations)**

- **Information resources (learning patterns, useful templates for press release etc)**
- **Technical resources (tools for tracking tasks, collecting data etc)**

**For example:**

# Tools for tracking tasks and time:

- OTRS (yes, your organisation can request to have an OTRS queue)
- Phabricator (yes, you can use it for tracking tasks, not only bugs :) )

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_issue-tracking\\_systems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_issue-tracking_systems)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_time-tracking\\_software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_time-tracking_software)

**To sum it up:**

- **Be Bold :)**
- **Make mistakes → document them**
- **Make decisions → document how and why**
- **Get experience → share it**

# Дякуємо! Danke! Thank you!

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**Any current  
members of affiliates  
present?**



**Who is responsible  
for the  
implementation of  
the decisions in your  
affiliate?**



**Who is involved in  
making decisions?**

