

## **Activity Report of OSGeo-India at Map World Forum 2007**

OSGeo-India actively participated and was well represented at the Map World Forum 2007, held in Hyderabad, during Jan 22-25, 2007. The major activities that the organization organized at this premier international forum of geospatial community were – (i) OSGeo Workshop and (ii) OSGeo Exhibition Booth. In addition, the first meeting of the Executive council of OSGeo-India was held.

The OSGeo workshop was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> Jan, during the afternoon session. The main aim of this workshop was to provide for a platform to disseminate and educate the geospatial community of the enormous opportunities that FOSS4G provides, the advances and the level of technology development in order to provide effective geospatial solutions. During the workshop different models of development and use of FOSS tools and its potential in the domains of academia, government (mainly for organizations mandated with national development, and e-governance), and business were presented. The workshop also had the presence of other countries from Asia – China, Japan and Vietnam.

Prof. Deekshatulu giving the inaugural address mentioned the advantages that FOSS tools provide for a large country like India, and in particular emphasized the advantages of the use of FOSS4G tools in the different decision making bodies of the country using these tools with remote sensing. He also applauded the timing of this effort and hoped that it will help mobilize the geospatial community in the country to spread the use of these technologies to a much wider public audience. Mr. Geoff Zeiss of Autodesk shared the changes in the business ideas and how partnering with Open Source is of mutual benefit. He also emphasized the need for concerted efforts towards Open Standards and Open Content in addition to Open Source, which can help create further business opportunities and how it can help in building a Spatial IT ecosystem. Dr. Roy informed the audience about the efforts in the establishment of OSGeo-India and the plans including outreach, which it has set for itself in the short and mid-term. Some of the ongoing Indian initiatives taken up by organizations like NRSA/DOS, GSI, SACON. NIC, KELTRON, etc were also shown in the presentation. He also mentioned the challenges and opportunities in the Indian context, especially with the establishment of Village Resources Centers and Krishi Vigyan Kendras, which are mandated to provide a range of services and information including geospatial information. He encouraged all the participants of the workshop to actively participate and contribute in developing a shared vision for the community. Representatives of China, Japan and Vietnam gave an overview of the efforts of their respective chapters. Prof. Chen of China showed the example of the work being carried out at localization, GRASS C-API, and the proposal to setup a GridGIS. While, Mr. Mori of Japan gave a good example of how open source model is a good business proposition too. Prof. Raghavan in his closing remarks mentioned what future has in store for the community and the long road ahead.

The workshop had an overwhelming response, with the room overflowing with participants/audience, and was estimated at over 95persons.

OSGeo-India put up an Exhibition Booth during the Map World Forum, to showcase its efforts, the launch of the India Chapter, disseminate information on OSGeo-India, demonstrate some of the ongoing projects, and provide for a personal interaction

between Chapter members and the geospatial community. It had a great response and had a continuous stream of visitors from all sectors. It is worth mentioning that a lot of them commended this effort and our objectives, and shared their views on its relevance to their respective work or organizations. A few of them also invited the Chapter to organize some events like tool demonstration and training in different parts of the country. A sizeable number responded positively and have agreed to continuously interact with OSGeo as users, partners, developers or promoters in their own respective organizations.

The other important event that took place on the sidelines of the Map World Forum was the first meeting of the Executive Council of OSGeo-India. The council had a good discussion on how it would like to take the efforts forward and develop on the response at this first major activity. It has bought on board representatives of academia, government and industry to help make it an inclusive effort and has also consciously provided for a pan-India representation to the Chapter. Representatives of China, Japan and Vietnam attended the meeting as observers, and there was a discussion on how to build interaction and synergy between the different Chapters.

All these efforts of OSGeo-India were made possible by the generous financial support that was extended by GNOME Foundation and OSGeo.org. OSGeo-India would like to thank these organizations for the support, that not only made the logistics of the event possible but also helped provide travel support for the delegates from Asia. It is hoped that such efforts will go a long way in fulfilling the objectives of our respective organizations, while looking forward to a continued interaction in the future.

- Reported by K S Rajan, Treasurer, OSGeo-India