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A Message from the Presidency, May 2022

- News - General news -



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Dear colleagues,

At the end of April, we gathered for three days of discussions about our organization, our operations, roles to be filled, and—last but not least—the financial conditions of our activities. This group included individuals from General Management, Operations Management, and the NGO's Resource Center, working in permanent (part-time or full-time) positions.

Although this workshop was initially designed to discuss changes due to my upcoming departure from the role of Director of Operations for France, the discussion quickly expanded to consider how we might consolidate all the missions of these three main departments to ensure an effective redistribution of tasks among our various colleagues.

Here are the people with whom you'll be interacting on various topics as part of this new arrangement:

- Myself, until the end of June
- Dominique,
- Benoît,
- Marie, gradually starting this summer
- Céline,
- Nellie,
- Chloé,
- Thomas,
- Jeremy and Thomas, for IT-related questions
- Christa

In the coming weeks, you will be informed about the projects or needs for which one of these colleagues may reach out to you, or for which you might need to reach out to them.

This workshop was also an opportunity to work on schedules, service formats for constituent members, team members, educators, and volunteers, as well as to clarify the formats expected in return from all these individuals so that we can all carry out our work calmly and efficiently.

Therefore, you can expect some adjustments to our working habits. Ideally, we would like to reaffirm certain procedures, adhere to certain mutual deadlines, and improve everyone's understanding of how the NGO operates. Our system strives to be both horizontal (creative collaboration) and vertical (direction and operational instructions). I believe this is a great opportunity to embrace both working modes at once. These are the elements that have made our shared project so rich and robust—and indeed, they align with modern management trends.

In addition, budgetary concerns regarding the sustainability of our activities also occupied our discussions during the workshop. Regarding the NGO's financial health, it's essential to understand that the savings set aside up until 2019 allowed us to sustain our activities through the difficult and complex two years of the pandemic. Unfortunately, these savings have been fully depleted by maintaining all operations, including those with slight deficits. You may anticipate the consequence for 2022: this year, and likely part of 2023, no deficit, however minor, will be permissible.

Accordingly, the Executive Committee has issued the following instructions: activities must be limited to operations with balanced budgets or those that can achieve balance through prorated funding. An important conclusion on this point: no more subsidies will be provided for deficit operations.

This challenging period ahead should not discourage us; rather, it should encourage us to develop and improve our working tools: tutorials, methodological guidelines, and other resources that deserve updating are ready for enhancement. We count on the whole team to share the workload collectively.

Looking to Africa, it's worth noting that several countries have begun the process of creating Local Groups, and this year several operations are organized under OSI TOGO and OSI RDC groups. These participatory science operations serve local and/or international audiences, just like the operations organized by OSI SWITZERLAND and OSI FRANCE groups. They are already creating direct and indirect jobs, as are our operations worldwide. OSI's entrepreneurial approach has again proven its ability to generate income for individuals and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in just a few months. Additionally, it is with great pleasure that we see educators from OSI joining pre-camps or African operations from Europe, or vice versa, pre-camps and operations in Europe from Africa. This opens the door to promising new possibilities! Finally, OSI RDC has already pioneered new tools for collaborative management of the Local Group by its members. These tools will be shared with other OSI groups at the upcoming OSI International General Assembly.

All of this demonstrates a strong resilience within OSI; the crisis cost us, but it also made us stronger. Let's take a moment to look back and appreciate all that we have achieved together!

Now, summer and the high season of citizen science are upon us, bringing their own challenges, joys, and yes, moments of fatigue. I hope that the next step in the development of OSI's Resource Center will make our path smoother for everyone, in all roles and at all levels.

In just a few days, I will have the pleasure of reconnecting with several of you meeting in local groups across French-speaking Europe for your General Pre-Camps. However, I hope to see even more of you from all local groups at our next Geneva Forum, where I will be delighted to welcome you.

If, in the meantime, you would like to bring my attention to any improvement or innovation that could help develop or consolidate our project, I am, of course, at your disposal.

See you soon,

Anne OUVRARD, OSI President 2022