



## DOCUMENT

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### Azimuth - Facilitating International Exchange in Scouting and Guiding

Final Report

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## Languages

*The official languages of the Joint Conference are English and French. The European Regions of WOSM and WAGGGS will make all Conference Documents available in both languages. In the event of a conflict arising out of the interpretation of this Conference Document or any other official document, the English text shall prevail.*

## Background context

In 2022, at the European Guide and Scout Conference (EGSC) in Rotterdam, the Member Organizations of WOSM and WAGGGS adopted two resolutions in the WOSM and WAGGGS conferences (Resolution (24ESC-04) / Motion (M\_EGC\_07) named Facilitating International Exchange in Scouting and Guiding).

The Azimuth platform was created by the German Federation in 2021, with the help of an external developer, to facilitate international exchanges between members of Scouts and Guides Member Organizations in Europe. By the end of 2022, it had 766 users.

Actions taken in the 2022-2025 Triennium by the Joint Committee:

Following the resolutions of the 17th European Guide and Scout Conference 2022, the Joint Committee oversaw the recruitment and nomination of a team of five people (four team members and one team lead) who started working in early 2023 by taking over the Azimuth platform. In 2024, the composition of the team was partly changed when two members left for personal reasons, after which one new member joined the team.

- The recruitment took into account both the recommendations of the previous platform manager regarding skills and competencies needed for further development of Azimuth, as well as competencies in the international dimension of Scouting and communications.
- A handover process was facilitated at the beginning of the Triennium, and the challenges and opportunities assessed by the previous team were taken into account in the joint Azimuth team's planning work.
- The team's work was overseen throughout the Triennium on behalf of the committees by the "Joint Work" portfolio holders from WOSM and WAGGGS (Diana Slabu, European Scout Committee, Filomena Grasso, followed by Evelyn Dick on behalf of the WAGGGS Europe Committee).
- The team also received staff support from the WSB - Europe Support Centre.
- The Azimuth Team had two in-person meetings throughout the Triennium, in 2023 and 2024.
- The Azimuth platform received IT support through the volunteer work of the members of the team and staff support, and the European Scout Region and the WAGGGS Europe Region supported costs for hosting services.
- The Azimuth platform was promoted regularly in social media and joint communications throughout the Triennium, but also at in-person joint events (The Academy, Roverway 2024, European Scout and Guides Centre Managers network) and events for International Commissioners to raise awareness of the opportunity, address challenges and assess needs for further training of Member Organizations activators and facilitators.

## Actions taken in the 2022-2025 Triennium by the Azimuth Team:

The team developed a communications strategy to recruit new users and new Member Organizations. To achieve this, they:

- Joined WOSM and WAGGGS events, such as International Commissioners Forums, to promote the platform.
- Emailed all International Commissioners, explaining to them what the platform is and how to join.
- Joined regional and local events, such as AGESCI's "Route Nazionale" and Scouts en Gidsen Vlaanderen's Herfstontmoeting.
- Posted on WOSM and WAGGGS social media profiles promoting the platform.
- Created an Instagram account, @azimuth\_europe, with 400+ followers as of February 2025.
- Took over and rebranded the Go Guide and Scout Abroad Facebook page and group.
- Created a game of cards and other promotional materials for Azimuth workshops and online promotion.
- Launched a survey to all 120 users who had posted on the platform to identify success stories of exchanges that took place but had limited responses (4 confirmed exchanges).
- Provided online webinars and training at request for members of international teams who needed tailored support.

## Current status of the platform

### User Engagement

From the beginning of 2023 to the start of 2025, the number of users on the platform grew from 766 to 2140 due to the work of the Azimuth team through the communications strategy.

According to the team's numbers, 49 out of 92 Member Organizations have an activator, indicating that more than half are actively engaged.

However, this growth in numbers is still insufficient to produce a "critical mass" effect that would generate enough answers to calls for the platform to become relevant to its users. Considering the regions' current membership, and despite our efforts in the past years, the number of Scouts and Guides using the Azimuth platform is still below 0.1% of membership, indicating a low interest in the platform from our members or Member Organizations.

Moreover, the team had difficulty measuring the impact of online platform interactions between users in real life. According to the responses provided by users, only four international exchanges have been confirmed to have happened out of 120 posts online on the platform.

### Technical Challenges of the Platform

The Azimuth Team reviewed the codebase and existing documentation at the beginning of the Triennium and managed the platform from a technical point of view in the past years. According to their final report:

*"We outlined some key issues the platform needed to address (bug fixes, security concerns, spam). Most critical faults were resolved without requiring the developer's external help.*

*We began implementing translations into the website, but the implementation method makes it inconvenient to manage and add more languages besides manually entering each phrase.*

*Upon examining the platform's underlying code, we determined that advancing new functionalities on this existing system is impractical. The Cocorico software suite operating on the Symfony framework was discontinued several years ago, and its creator, Cocolabs, is defunct. This codebase is not open-source, resulting in minimal available documentation."*

Additionally, regarding potential paths forward for the platform, significant human and financial resources would be needed if a new platform were developed to transition to an open-source platform.

The team has provided the regions with a ballpark estimation of what moving to an open-source platform would entail, and the summary can be found below:

*"With optimisations applied, the ballpark estimate for a complete rewrite of Azimuth is about 60 days (8 hours/day). An external contractor should have an hourly rate between 90 - 120 €, excluding taxes. This would result in estimated costs of 43.200 - 57.600 €. Please note that this is a conservative estimate, and some tasks will be completed more quickly while others will take longer unexpectedly.*

*It is also imperative in projects like this to avoid expanding the scope repeatedly.*

*Furthermore, many aspects of Azimuth's status quo can be improved during a rewrite without additional costs, most notably responsive design and user experience, provided we can find a contractor experienced in these areas.*

*Other improvements that are outside the scope of this estimate but would incrementally improve the user experience and efficiency of Azimuth or expand the vision itself include:*

- Provide an API to connect to Member Organizations databases and automatically approve/deactivate members.
- Make selected posts public and automatically share them on social media to attract new members.
- Provide integrations for Member Organizations to display select posts on their own websites and in newsletters.
- Expand details provided by campsites and allow for more promotion, e.g., events or specials.

- Provide extra functionality for events: basic registration, sharing approval status to automate Safe from Harm checks, requesting endorsements and replying.
- Promoting funding opportunities based on the post location."
- Considering taxes and additional features needed to improve the platform, the final estimated cost of the transition to an Open-Source platform is around 95.000 €.

## Online Safety and Accessibility

During the development and management of the online platform, one of the objectives of our work has been to ensure the online safety of our members. For this reason, every platform user has had to be validated and reconfirmed as a member of one of our Member Organizations by a Member Organization activator. This system has admittedly posed significant challenges for small and medium-sized associations, which have limited time and human resources allocated to the international/membership management departments or teams, and this work has to be done by volunteers with adequate access to internal membership data and adequate training.

In addition to these managerial challenges, the **discontinuation of Cocorico Software** means the platform's safety can no longer be guaranteed, and vulnerabilities will continue to deepen as years pass. In 3 to 5 years, the platform will no longer be functional due to the impossibility of updating the software.

## The Joint Decision of the European Scout Committee 2022-2025 and WAGGGS Europe Region Committee 2022-2025

Taking into account:

- The renewed commitment, as regional structures, to the online safety standards established through our WAGGGS Safeguarding and WOSM Safe from Harm World Policies, and protect the interests and rights of children and young people, in everything that we do, including when promoting international opportunities for exchange.
- The firm believes in a data-based approach to decision-making, which prioritises and effectively uses resources available at the regional level and effectively proactively manages risks.
- The limited impact the platform has managed to have, despite extensive promotion and communication done by the Azimuth team and European Scout Region and WAGGGS Europe Region, working to engage only <0.1% of our membership and with only four in-person confirmed exchanges that took place as a result of engagement within the platform.
- The reluctance of Member Organizations to engage with the platform, with only 53% of associations having integrated the platform in their ways of working with international departments, despite the platform being promoted at three International Commissioners Network Meetings/Forums after the EGSC in Rotterdam, and the availability of the Azimuth team to offer tailored support.
- The significant risk to our members' data protection and online safety posed by the Cocorico software's discontinuation cannot be solved by continuing to use the platform in this form.
- The cost-benefit ratio of the Azimuth platform is very low. The German Scout and Guide Federation and, subsequently, the European Regions of WOSM and WAGGGS have already invested significant financial, human, and time resources with limited impact. As explained above, a significant increase in investment is needed if the platform is to be redesigned to be updated and safe.

The Joint Committee **highly appreciates the work of the Azimuth team** in the 2022-2025 Triennium as a successful joint team that followed the best interests of Scouts and Guides in Europe, being proactive as well as responsive in its approach, and collaborating with both regions and Member Organisations in its work.

The Joint Committee decided, in this context:

- To discontinue the Azimuth platform at the end of the 2022-2025 Triennium.
- To continue and to enhance the promotion of international exchange opportunities between Scouts and Guides in our Member Organizations (both events and opportunities offered by Scout and Guide centres) using other online platforms (WeConnect, Social Media, chat groups or other platforms such as Treehouse or Campfire).