

Question: To what extent will club interactions be driven by agenda and programs from the Global Pairing Program and to what extent will the clubs be expected to define and initiate their own interactions?

Answer: We realized in our first pairings that it is best to have the two clubs decide on any agenda, or programs. This ensures the programs are suited for the members of the two clubs. More on this later.

Question: Are all observing interactions expected to be through AWB facilities?

Answer: No. AWB will act as the matchmaker for the initial pairing, will monitor successes and address issues and if necessary find other suitable pairs. After that we expect the two clubs to take over and hopefully keep AWB informed of the level activities and actions being taken. We won't forget the teams supporting the program.

Question: What commitment in terms of members, events, and time is expected or projected for participating clubs?

Answer: The commitment and extent of the engagement between clubs is 100% determined by the mutual interest of the clubs. AWB would expect the interested members meet with the paired members at least once per month and perhaps more if desired. We expect your club board and officers will have little if any actions needed to support the program and it should be driven by the interest of the individuals participating. A monthly report in your newsletter on sister/brother pairing activities would be beneficial for the club. AWB would also like to hear about the activities.

Question: Is our application a request for an initial expression of interest with details to be defined later?

Answer: We have an urgent need to pair North America clubs with 24 international clubs. So please consider it an urgent plea to participate. We contact clubs about the program and expect them to act as the conduit to pairing up small groups within the club for mutual exchange of learnings, cultural exchange, guidance and support on observing, outreach as well as many other topics in science and astronomy.

Question: How will we meet with the international club members?

Answer: We expect paired club meeting to be small groups (1-5) of club members who have a common interest. For example, we have a club which is trying to develop a public outreach observatory and is wanting guidance on equipment selection and design. Clubs that have such experience would be a great pair for this club's interest. We expect meetings to be via SKYPE or Google Hangouts or other agreed upon technology. The tools are free and available worldwide. Additionally you may wish to communicate by emails and simple SKYPE phone calls.

Initial meetings may be a challenge to overcome the technology issues and connection challenges, bandwidth and the use of SKPYE for those who have not used it. Plan for some extra time in first meetings or meet in a trial run, one on one, to make sure SKYPE works.

Question: How do we agree on a topics of discussion and exploration?

Answer: We propose the first meetings cover getting to know each other and finding if you are good potential pair. This should include learning about our cultures, our clubs and interests common and otherwise. AWB has some background information as provided via the pairing application. This can help AWB find a potential pair for your club. However many factors enter into the pairing process. Both clubs need to be good matches or the program will fall apart. If you find the pairing is too divergent we can attempt to find a better club pairing.

Question: What is the range of interests for the clubs making application to pair?

Answer: The interests of the clubs vary widely, from novice observers to University clubs doing cutting edge exploration. In Africa we have some clubs building scopes from Pringle's potato chip cans, in Pakistan we have club members doing advance astrophotography, in India we have clubs doing outreach to schools and groups in the thousands. Some clubs are startup clubs and some may be primary school clubs. This is why initial meetings are needed to find some common interest or come common way to support each other.

Question: Are time zones a challenge in meeting with paired clubs?

Answer: Time zones can be a problem or can be an advantage. Example: If the club is in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh the time zone difference in the North America may be 8-10 hours or so. If the club in India is doing outreach to schools (during day hours) it might be possible to do real time observing from the N.A. observatory of a member or to do outreach from your armchair during evening hours. If the paired club is in South America the clubs might be able to meet on more common activity hours. Again this needs to be explored in the initial meetings between the paired clubs.

Question: What about language challenges?

Answer: The great majority of clubs making application today are English language capable and in a few cases some may rely on an interpreter from the paired club for members not speaking English, but this is rare. We have a few clubs desiring to meet in French and are trying to align them with clubs in France and Quebec.

Question: What other perks might entice my club to be involved?

Answer: In addition to the public recognition which is likely to be expressed in publications about the success of the program, we are also pairing with other institutions for great learning experiences. The Las Cumbres Observatory Global Telescope Network has agreed to free up some telescope time for this program to allow observing from anywhere through the pairing program. see <http://lcoqt.net/>. This could be an opportunity for a small research project with a high school or college through collaboration with the paired club. While this program is not fully launched we are working through a trial program in the fall. This could be a big advantage for clubs in challenged locations and during poor seeing times of the year. It's also a great opportunity to learn about remote robotic observing.