

Draft Open Health Tools Development Policy and Process

1. *Project Charter*

Every Open Health Tools Project must conform to the basic open source rules of engagement: meritocracy, transparency, and open participation. Every Project has a charter that sets out its Mission and Scope, the expected contributions of the project, any potential IP issues, as well any requests for project specific deviations from the normative Open Health Tools Development Process and other Open Health Tools policies. The project charter is a living document that will be updated to reflect the evolution of the mission and development processes over time. The charter is approved by the Board of Stewards when a new project is created, and any changes must also be approved by the Board.

2. *Project Management Committee*

Projects are managed by a small Project Management Committee (PMC), led by the PMC Lead or Project Lead (both usages are correct). The initial PMC Lead is approved by a majority vote of the Board; the CTO is responsible for ensuring that one or more qualified individuals are available to fill this position. The PMC Lead can only be changed by a majority vote of the Board. The initial PMC members for a project are selected by the CTO and the Lead. Subsequently, a new member of the PMC must be nominated by a member of the PMC or the CTO, and unanimously approved by all PMC members and the CTO. In practice this is normally a collaborative, consensus based process. PMC members, including the Lead, *must* be Committers (see below). In the unlikely event that a member of the PMC becomes disruptive to the process or ceases to contribute for an extended period, the member may be removed by a unanimous vote of remaining PMC members and the CTO.

PMCs are expected to ensure that:

- All Projects operate effectively by providing leadership to guide the Project's overall direction and by removing obstacles, solving problems, and resolving conflicts.
- All Project plans, technical documents and reports are publicly available.
- All Projects conform to Open Health Tools By-Laws and Policies, and operate using open source rules of engagement. Any technically qualified individual can participate in a Project. Open interaction ensures that code contributions are properly recognized, evaluated, and utilized.
- Projects have adequate resources to meet their commitments.

The PMC is responsible for maintaining and updating the project charter. All members of the PMC must unanimously recommend changes, which are approved by the Board. The PMC is the external voice of the project, responsible for representing the project to the outside world.

PMCs and the PMC Lead in particular are accountable to the CTO for the success of their project.

3. *Subprojects*

A PMC can if it wishes create and approve subprojects. A new subproject must be consistent with the charter of its parent Project and be approved by the CTO. Subprojects have a Lead but there is no subproject PMC. The PMC in collaboration with the CTO appoints the initial Lead. Thereafter, the PMC and CTO may appoint a new subproject Lead from time to time as required, but the new Lead must be confirmed by a majority of the other Committers of the subproject. Subproject Leads are accountable to the PMC for the success of their project. The PMC in collaboration with the CTO also approves the initial set of Committers for a subproject; after which Committers are elected by the usual process. Once a subproject is created, the PMC or the CTO can recommend that it be terminated, but actual termination requires Board approval. This allows the PMC to be flexible and responsive while ensuring that the Board continues to be the final arbiter of the integrity of the development process and the strategic direction of Open Health Tools.

Subprojects will typically target the current stable release of the parent project. In some cases where a subproject needs to investigate new features or function, it may decide to create a fork in the development stream. The PMC is responsible for ensuring that forks are kept to a minimum, and that subprojects synchronize on a common release whenever possible. It is recognized that there may be cases where this is not feasible.

4. *Contributors and Committers*

A person who contributes software or other IP to a project is a Contributor. Contributors are encouraged to participate in the user newsgroup(s), and should monitor the developer mailing list associated with their area of contribution. When appropriate, Contributors may also contribute to development design discussions related to their area of contribution. Contributors are expected to be proactive in reporting problems in the bug tracking system.

Contributors who make frequent and valuable contributions to a (sub)project, can have their status promoted to that of a "Committer" for that (sub)project. Committers have write access to the software repository for the associated (sub)project, and gain voting rights allowing them to affect the future of the (sub)project.

In order for a Contributor to become a Committer, another Committer for the (sub)project must nominate that Contributor, or the Contributor can ask for Committer status. Once a Contributor is nominated, the Committers for the (sub)project will vote for, against, or abstain (+1, -1, 0). If there are at least 3 positive votes and no negative votes, the Contributor is recommended to the PMC for commit privileges. In cases where (sub)projects have fewer than 3 Committers, a unanimous vote of the Committers is required.

The proposed Committer must then fill out the Individual Committer Questionnaire. If the person is an employee of a Member, the Member must sign the Member Committer Agreement. If the proposed Committer is not a Member, then that person must sign the

Individual Committer Agreement and, if employed, have his/her employer sign the Committer Employer Consent Form. If the Operations Director and the PMC approve, the Contributor is converted into a Committer and given write access to the software repository for that (sub)project.

Becoming a Committer is a privilege that is earned by contributing and showing discipline and good judgment. It is a responsibility that should be neither given nor taken lightly. An Open Health Tools Project is a meritocracy -- the more a person contributes, and the higher the quality of his/her contribution, the more he/she is allowed to do. However with this authority comes increased responsibility.

Active participation in the user newsgroup and the appropriate developer mailing lists is a responsibility of all Committers, and is critical to the success of the project. Committers are required to monitor and contribute to the user newsgroup.

Committers are required to monitor the developer mailing list associated with all projects and subprojects for which they have commit privileges. This is a condition of being granted commit rights to the (sub)project. It is mandatory because Committers must participate in votes (where minimums are sometimes required) and must respond to the mailing list in a timely fashion in order to facilitate the smooth operation of the project. When Committers are granted commit rights they will be added to the appropriate mailing lists. Committers must not be unsubscribed from a developer mailing list unless their associated commit privileges are also removed.

Committers are required to track, participate in, and vote on, relevant discussions and technical decisions with respect to their associated (sub)project. There are three voting responses: +1 (yes), -1 (no, which constitutes a veto), and 0 (abstain).

Committers are responsible for proactively reporting problems using the bug tracking system, and annotating problem reports with status information, explanations, clarifications, or requests for more information from the submitter. Committers are responsible for updating problem reports when they have done work related to the problem.

At times, Committers may go inactive for a variety of reasons. The decision making process of the (sub)project relies on active Committers who respond to discussions and votes in a constructive and timely manner. The PMC is responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the project and its subordinate subprojects. A Committer that is disruptive, does not participate actively, or has been inactive for an extended period may have his or her commit status removed by a unanimous vote of the PMC and CTO.

5. Infrastructure

The infrastructure required to support the development process is the responsibility of the PMC. Open Health Tools has standardized on the CollabNet Community Edition infrastructure, and all Projects are required to use it and do their development work in the

assigned repository. CollabNet is widely used by open source communities, and provides the standard development facilities including repository (Subversion), bug/issue tracking, project website, mailing lists, and forums.

6. *Development Process*

In this section the phrase “release cycle” will refer to a significant block of development activity, which culminates in an actual release of software.

Each (sub)project Lead must produce a plan for the release cycle; the plan must be approved by the Committers of the (sub)project; the plan must be submitted to the PMC for review. The PMC may provide feedback and advice on the plan but approval rests with the (sub)project Committers.

Each (sub)project must identify, and make available on its web site, the requirements and prioritizations it is working against in the current release cycle. In addition, each (sub)project must post a release plan showing the date and content of the next release, including any major milestones, and must keep this plan up to date.

The Committers of a (sub)project decide which changes may be committed to the master software base of a (sub)project. Three +1 ('yes' votes) with no -1 ('no' votes or vetoes) are needed to approve a change. Vetoes must be followed by an explanation for the veto within 24 hours or the veto becomes invalid. All votes are conducted via the developer mailing list associated with the (sub)project.

Special rules may be established for (sub)projects with fewer than three Committers. For efficiency, changes from some Contributors may be approved in advance, or approved in principle based on an outline of the work, in which case they may be committed first and changed as needed, with conflicts resolved by majority vote of the Committers of the (sub)project.

The master copy of the software repository must reside on the project web site where it is accessible to all developers and Committers. Committers must check their changes and new work into the master software repository as promptly as possible (subject to any check-in voting rules that may be in effect) in order to foster collaboration among widely distributed groups and so that the latest work is always available to everyone. The PMC is responsible for establishing a release engineering and build process to ensure that builds can be reliably produced on a regular and frequent basis from the master software repository and made available for download from the project web site.

(Sub)Projects are responsible for establishing test plans and the appropriate level of testing.

All technical discussions are conducted using the development mailing lists. If discussions are held offline, then a summary must be posted to the mailing list to keep the other Committers informed.

7. *Reviews*

The Development Process includes three formal reviews. Creation Reviews are required for any new project or subproject proposal. Checkpoint Reviews are required 6 months after creation of a new project, annually if the project has had no release reviews within the past year, or at the discretion of the CTO. Release Reviews are held prior to any major or minor release.

For any Review, the CTO forms an Advisory Board consisting of the CTO, the project Lead, at least one other PMC member, and a senior Committer who is not a project member. Projects Pass or Fail their review based on the usual voting scheme (3 +1s, no -1), such vote to be compiled within 24 hours of the review. In the case of a Fail Vote the Advisory Board must provide their reasons in writing. Fail votes can always be appealed to the Board.

Creation Review: To assess the community and membership response to a (sub)project proposal, to verify that the Project Charter is consistent with the mission and goals of Open Health Tools, and to verify that appropriate resources (including a qualified Lead) are available for the (sub)project to achieve its plan. Required documents are a Project Charter, Initial Project Plan and a brief bio of the proposed Lead. If initial PMC members and/or Committers have been identified then bios are required for them as well. The bios are used to assess the adequacy of resources and also to justify the initial Lead, PMC and Committer appointment in an elected meritocracy. A Pass results in a recommendation to the Board (PMC for subprojects) to create the new (sub)project; a Fail results in the opposite recommendation.

Checkpoint Review: To assess whether the (sub)project is/has:

- a working and demonstrable code base of sufficiently high quality
- active and sufficiently diverse communities: adopters, developers, and users
- operating fully in the open following the Principles and Purposes of OHT
- brings credit to OHT and is functioning well within the larger OHT community

A Pass results in a recommendation in the continuation of the (sub)project; a Fail results in a recommendation to the Board to terminate.

Release Review: To assess and summarize the accomplishments and quality of a release; to verify that the IP Policy has been followed and all approvals have been received; to highlight any remaining quality and/or architectural issues; and to verify that the (sub)project is continuing to operate according to the Principles and Purposes of OHT. A Pass grants permission to release the code; a Fail withholds that permission. In cases where a subproject has synchronized its release with the parent project, a single Release Review will suffice for both.

8. *Project Life Cycle*

A **Proposed** project is one that meets the following conditions:

- it has been formally or informally described (e.g. by a Draft Project Charter, Concept or Position Paper, or Slide deck);
- the project sponsor(s) have identified the project to OHT staff as a possible new Charter project;
- the sponsors are promoting the project to other OHT members and generally trying to muster support for it.

Either the sponsors or the OHT staff can at their discretion bring to the Board a motion to grant a Proposed project Approval-in-Principle status. Note that there is no requirement that projects spend time in the Proposed state prior to being put forward for Approval-in-Principle.

OHT uses a two phase commit process to actually create new projects. Projects which demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that they have the potential to become successful OHT Charter projects are given **Approval-in-Principle** by a Board vote. Generally, to achieve this status projects need to have:

- Project Charter
- Project Lead
- Initial project Plan (High Level Development Plan)
- Minimum necessary resources (initial committers)

However the Board at its discretion may waive any or all of these.

Projects that are granted Approval-in-Principle generally use the next 1-3 quarters to explore opportunities to partner with other members to grow the community around the project; attract additional sponsors; refine project goals and create a detailed development plan; establish a project web site; and generally demonstrate that they are successful and fully functioning projects. Projects that have successfully reached this fully formed stage are recognized as such by being granted **Approved** status by the Board. The OHT staff will normally organize a Creation Review confirm that the pre-conditions for Approved status are met.

Projects which have been dormant for at least one full quarter (i.e. there has been no project activity) become **Suspended**. Note that Suspended is not an assigned status, it simply recognizes a reality, that there has been no activity related to the project, and the situation seems unlikely to change. Consequently no vote by the Board is required to assign the Suspended status; this can be done by OHT staff. To reactivate a Suspended Project requires a successful Creation or Checkpoint Review as appropriate, and a positive vote by the Board confirming that the project has regained its status prior to suspension (Approved-in-Principle, or Approved).

9. *Licensing*

All licensing conform to the Open Health Tools IP Policy.

Each of the three reviews, (i) Creation Review; (ii) Checkpoint Review; and (iii) Release Review [collectively, the “Reviews”] includes the completion of a questionnaire in which the developers provide information on any third party IP which they have used, or plan to

use, or had access to, during the development process. The Operations Director, working with the Project Lead, will determine whether the Project Team has acquired the necessary rights to all such additional Content to permit the distribution of such Content under the terms of the EPL.