

## **CONCEPT H – Top Level Governance And “Keeping Options Open” On Long-Term Dedicated Organizational Structure**

### **H. OVERVIEW**

In this option, control over ODK governance decisions would change from the existing PMC to a Transition Board (TB) and separate Technical Steering Committees (TSCs) for ODK 1 and ODK 2. During the start of the transition period, there would be no formal nonprofit organization or company “owning” ODK; ODK would be an open source project with the TB acting as the steward overseeing the revision of the governance documents and the TSCs. However, a key point of differentiation between this note and Note G is that the TB would be given a “directive” when formed to evaluate options on organizational structures that ODK could join by the end of the transition period decide and enact any possible changeover to a long-term organization home. This is an acknowledgement that it will take time to properly evaluate these options and gain the support of the community on any such choice. The TB would also decide on whether a permanent governance structure to replace it at the end of a transition period should exist or not.

#### **H.1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Although there would not be an organization structure at the start of the transition period, the TB would evaluate various potential organizational structures to house ODK and which would “own” the ODK name, domain, IP, code, etc. The possible structures for evaluation would be joining an existing non-profit software foundation such as the Software Freedom Conservancy or a recently started foundation focused on “software for social good”. The TB could also explore getting management services from one or more foundations rather than formally joining one. In evaluating the “non-profit” options the TB would build upon the feedback already received at the ODK Convening and the ODK Community for and against these options.

If the TB does decide that ODK should join a non-profit software organization for purposes of centralized ODK “ownership”, fund-raising, and coordinated efforts among the community, then it would join such a structure by the end of the transition period. The TB will also determine if a new post-transition “ODK Governing Board” should exist and what form it should take. The form of the new “ODK Governing Board” will likely depend on the requirements of a non-profit organization (that ODK may or may not join).

As with Note G, in the interim before a possible decision is made and acted upon, one or more entities (individuals, companies, institutions) would continue to work on ODK and be free to raise money to support it, without any a centralized “entity” acting as the official home or steward of ODK. If the TB elects to join a non-profit software foundation the community costs (e.g., website hosting, domain registration, demo server hosting, Google Play registration fees, analytics charges) should be handled by the chosen structured. The TB could still end up deciding that no structure is necessary.

## **H.2. GOVERNANCE**

Recognizing that there are still important decisions to be made and processes to be established to expand representation in ODK decision making, the governance will pass from the current PMC to a new Transition Board. The TB will be appointed by the current PMC with a size of 7-9 people. It is possible one or more positions on the TB may be filled via community-solicited applications.

The TB will act as a bridge to oversee the transition of ODK from UW-support and PMC management to long-term management and sustainability by the community. The TB will handle any coordination between the Technical Steering Committees (TSCs) for ODK 1 and ODK 2, joint ODK 1 and ODK 2 development efforts, branding, and funding. The TB will be responsible for leading ODK through the transition, revising the governance documents for long-term management, sustainability, continuity as active ODK participants come and go, and adjusting membership of the TB if needed. The TB will have authority on Organizational Structure, Governance Structure, and processes for updating/revising the membership of the TSCs.

## **H.3. TECHNICAL ROADMAP**

ODK 1 and ODK 2 will each have Technical Steering Committees determined by either the current PMC or the subsequent TB. Each TSC will have oversight and determination of the respective ODK project's codebase (e.g. control of committer lists) and be responsible for determining the technical roadmap for each project – the *un-forked* versions of ODK 1 and ODK 2. Each TSC's roadmap responsibilities include determining the scope of their roadmap, how frequently is updated, how to incorporate community feedback into roadmap development, and defining overarching visions and directions for the projects, which includes not just the addition of features/components but removal of such when deemed appropriate.

## **H.4. FUNDING**

In the short-term transition period, the ODK project's recurring costs (e.g., website hosting, domain registration, demo server hosting, google play registration fees, analytics charges) as well as any new online services for web hosting, community and software management tools (although free options for these services are possible) would be covered either by the community, either through existing or newly acquired funds. In the long-term, if the TB chooses to move ODK to an organizational structure then it is expected these relatively small costs would be paid by the non-profit with funds likely obtained via donations or grants. If the TB chooses no structure then the community will need to determine how to share costs (e.g., website hosting, domain registration, demo server hosting, Google Play registration fees, analytics charges) and decide what entity will pay and what entity will manage those resources.

Post-transition, greater funding of ODK development, maintenance and support, etc. could be sought by the new organizational structure (if one is chosen), although this does not preclude individuals, companies, and/or organizations from directly seeking funds. Depending on the structure, it could try to coordinate fundraising among the community or directly raise money and either spend it internally or disburse it via subcontracts. The most likely source of funding identified by the convening was grants, which have been the primary source of ODK support thus far. Donations are possible, and if a non-profit organizational structure is selected by the TB then it may increase the incentive or ability of other ODK organizations to support this outside of a “give back” of worker/developer time (e.g., companies and organizations in this space subsidizing the activities of their staff to spend some of their time on ODK). As a non-profit creates tax incentives and may be a requirement for certain funders.

## **H.5. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

It is expected that the TB and the TSCs will seek community feedback on major changes to both the governance and the codebase direction. The TB and TSCs should provide outlines to the community on how the committees plan to keep the projects moving forward and sustained. Discourse forums will likely be used in the solicitation of this; it is possible low-frequency email announcements will also be sent to community members to announce important changes, seek input, etc. Being responsive is important for ODK to thrive as an unfunded open source project, and as such, the TB and TSCs should be strongly incentivized to seek and balance input both for continued project success and to avoid forks from unheard community members. Setting procedures and feedback structures in place to increase community participation will be a priority during this transition period.