

CONCEPT G – Top Level Governance But No Dedicated Organizational Structure

G. 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. There would be no formal nonprofit organization or company “owning” ODK (e.g. controlling the ODK name, website), neither in the transition period nor in the long-term. ODK would be an open source project passing to the control of the TB, which would oversee the TSCs. The TB would also decide on whether a permanent governance structure to replace it at the end of a transition period should exist or is not necessary.

G.1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ODK would not have an overall organizational structure so no “organization” of any type would “own” the name, domain, IP, code, etc. This option assumes ODK would not join an existing non-profit foundation or become part of a company, nor would a new one be created for ODK. For the purposes of “concept note” differentiation, this option proposes no “organization” for both a transition period *and beyond*. Instead it is envisioned that 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. This means how community costs (e.g., website hosting, domain registration, demo server hosting, Google Play registration fees, analytics charges) will be paid and who will manage those things will be left to “community members” to coordinate.

G.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 for a period of up to a year. 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 Governance Structure (determining if a new post-transition “ODK Governing Board” should exist and what form it should take) and processes for updating/revising the membership of the TSCs.

G.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.

G.4. FUNDING

With no central organization, structural funding needs are minimal. However, the ODK project does have 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). Funding to cover those needs would be sought by the community as either cash or services (e.g. hosting).

Greater funding of ODK development, maintenance and support, etc. could be sought by one or more individuals, companies, and/or organizations. The likely source of funding identified by the convening was grants, which have been the primary source of ODK support thus far. Donations are possible, but without a non-profit home, other organizations may have less incentive or ability 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). Note that for this concept note, with any of these possible avenues of funding there would be no centralized structure or organization coordinating fundraising and disbursement, neither during the transition period nor beyond.

G.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.