Governance of the VHE Open Data Forum (VODF)

1. VODF Mission

The Very-High-Energy (VHE) Open Data Format forum is an initiative with the primary objective of defining and curating specifications for a reference data model, and a reference data format, for science-ready and higher-level data products from current and future VHE and Ultra-High-Energy (UHE) facilities, i.e. neutrinos instruments, imaging Cherenkov telescopes, gamma-ray satellites, and particle shower detectors. The initiative, that builds on the specifications proposed by the gamma-astro-data-formats (GADF) forum, will organize the effort to realize open and reproducible science in multi-instrument, multi-wavelength and multi-messenger astronomy. The specifications of the reference data model and data format will be publicly available on an open-format platform and released in the form of documents. This initiative will work in collaboration with the International Virtual Observatory Alliance (IVOA) to identify within the IVOA data models those aspects that prevent the correct description of the VHE/UHE data.

The initiative is community-driven, i.e. the community can openly propose modifications and extensions to the specifications or format through an issue tracking system. Proposals will be discussed, reviewed and possibly included after formal acceptance by the governing bodies of the initiative.

2. Governance of the VODF

This initiative is supported by a certain number of parties that share their knowledge and are aiming to keep their data models, and formats as much as possible aligned to the specifications published by the VODF initiative. The participating parties will nominate one representative person with no predefined temporal mandate who will represent the party in the Steering Committee (SC), the decision-making authority of the initiative: at least initially, all SC members have the same voting weight.
The SC is chaired by one person and one deputy who are members of the SC itself. The SC chairs are elected by majority, i.e. requiring 51% of the votes, and remain in charge for two years.

The steering committee is in charge of:

- defining the roadmap of the initiative
- approve all specs releases
- release all document versions
- admitting new participating parties
- admitting observing facilities/organizations/people

- take decisions on matters where consensus is not reached after having considered recommendations from the Lead Editors
- nominate and vote the chair of the Steering Committee
- nominate and vote the Lead Editors

The SC can decide to admit observing facilities/organizations that in turn nominate their representative person, who can participate in the discussions but has no voting right.

The SC will meet at least 2 times per year, or under request of one of its member.

The governance of the initiative can be changed on consensus of the SC

3. Lead editors: technical executive lead

The daily work of the VODF is orchestrated by the **Lead Editors**, a team of technical experts covering the main instrumental techniques of pointing instruments, slewing instruments and neutrino detectors. They are appointed by the SC and reporting to it. They are the technical executive leads of VODF. The team of lead editors shall cover the expertise from all the different above-mentioned categories.

The team of lead editors is in charge of:

- organise and drive all technical aspects of the project on a day-to-day basis. Keep the overview of ongoing activities, schedules and action items and follow up to make sure all important things get done
- implement the decisions taken by the SC
- manage the VODF developer/editor/maintainer/contributor team. Distribute tasks and assign responsibilities to other VODF core contributors
- ensure that anyone interested in contributing to VODF development has good resources (documentation, communication, mentoring) to get started. Specifically: maintain the VODF 'Contributing documentation' that describes all aspects of VODF development (code, testing, documentation, processes)
- evaluate suggested modifications
- moderate any discussion triggered by proposed changes to the specifications trying to reach consensus within the VODF participants
    - if consensus is not reached decision has to be scaled up to the SC
- coordinate and organize technical meetings
- prepare all releases and their corresponding document

Appendix A: list of the participating facilities as of April 4, 2022

Participating facility	Type of instrument	Representative Member
ASTRI	Pointing γ-ray instrument	Fabio Pintore
CTAO	Pointing γ-ray instrument	Roberta Zanin
FACT	Pointing γ-ray instrument	Maximilian Nöthe
Fermi-LAT	Slewing γ-ray instrument	Nicola Omodei
HAWC	Slewing γ-ray instrument	Xiaojie Wang
H.E.S.S.	Pointing γ-ray instrument	Bruno Khelifi
IceCube	Neutrino detector	Marcos Santander
KM3Net	Neutrino detector	Kay Graf
MAGIC	Pointing γ-ray instrument	Cosimo Nigro
SWGO	Slewing γ-ray instrument	Andrew Smith
VERITAS	Pointing γ-ray instrument	Amanda Weinstein