

Letter of Intent to Promote DID Method Standardization

Release date: July 30, 2024

Context and Goal:

Leaders of the Decentralized Identity Foundation (DIF), Trust Over IP (ToIP) Foundation, W3C Credentials Community Group, and W3C Decentralized Identifier Working Group (DID WG), recognize the importance of Decentralized Identifier (DID) method standardization in ensuring interoperability, security, and user control in decentralized digital identity systems. With the rechartering of the DID WG, the leaders of DID-related work streams believe that now is the right time to extend standardization to DID Methods, with an initial focus on methods that have proven useful to multiple implementers over the past several years. In that spirit, we are proposing that we start the standardization process for a few selected DID Methods, subsequently informing standardization and conformance criteria across categories of DID methods.

To achieve this goal and ensure broad participation amongst DIF, ToIP Foundation, W3C CCG, and W3C DID WG, we intend to establish collaboration agreements to form DID method standardization working groups with the initial goal of promoting standardization in the following DID method categories:

1. **Self-resolvable / single key methods** — such as `did:key` and `did:jwk`.
2. **Web-based methods** — such as `did:web` and `did:tdw`.
3. **Decentralized methods** — such as `did:dht`.

A collaboration agreement will allow members of each organization to collaborate on DID Method standardization.

This letter will follow with a broader outreach to relevant companies and organizations, including DID method creators, DID standards incubators, and DID adopters, as we elaborate a detailed roadmap and plans.

Scope and Additional DID Method Standardization:

DID Method standardization **does not** imply endorsement. This letter of intent captures our joint commitment to the success of DIDs by ensuring maturity of a cross-section of commonly-used methods.

This collaboration will lead to the development of shared conformance standards, test vectors, test suites, and other deliverables, with the intent of developing artifacts useful across categories of DID methods (e.g. DID traits or capabilities). This will benefit all DID methods, wherever they are being developed, and the broader DID ecosystem in promoting shared rigor and broad interoperability.

Whether, and in which organization, to standardize a DID method is up to the authors of the method and its specific requirements. Authors of DID methods are invited to reach out to any of these organizations, or others they prefer, to advance standardization of their DID methods.

Deliverables

This initiative's output will conform to those of W3C's existing DID Working Groups, including DID Core v1.1 and DID Resolution v1.0. The following will be developed for each DID method:

- Specifications in conformance with DID Core v1.1 and DID Resolution v1.0.
- Test vectors.
- Test suites with at least two independent implementations.

Timeline

Milestone	Date
Meeting with co-signers to work on collaboration agreement	Aug 1, 2024
Multi-organization collaboration agreement proposed	Aug 31, 2024
Pre-draft specifications proposed	Sep 15, 2024
Working Group charter(s) proposed	Oct 1, 2024

Conclusion:

We believe this collaborative relationship between DIF, ToIP Foundation, W3C CCG, W3C DID WG, and other standards organizations will significantly advance the adoption of these foundational DID methods, ultimately benefiting the broader decentralized digital identity ecosystem. We look forward to working together to achieve these objectives.

Signed:

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