COVESA Team, Group and Project Guidelines
Approved 23 September 2024

Abstract

This document describes the structure and procedures of COVESA Teams, Groups and Projects. If any item below conflicts with the bylaws of COVESA, the bylaws will supersede this document on the conflicting point.

Introduction

The work of COVESA is directed by the COVESA Board of Directors and is performed through a structure of Teams and Groups. Groups may or may not have Projects within them to develop and maintain specific deliverables of the Group. The purpose of this document is to describe general guidelines for creating, managing and sunsetting COVESA Teams, Groups and Projects.

Teams

Teams manage and provide specific services required by the Alliance to fulfill its mission. Unless otherwise noted, Teams report directly to the COVESA Board of Directors. Team Leads are Board-appointed and are responsible for aligning the Team with Board-approved strategic initiatives as well as overseeing the COVESA work they are chartered to manage. Team Leads are responsible for regular reporting to the Board, may bring major or problematic decisions to the attention of the Board, may make requests for Board involvement, and shall act as the primary communications link to their Team. The Bylaws require COVESA to maintain technical and marketing Teams.

Technical Steering Team (TST)

The COVESA technical work is overseen by the Technical Steering Team (TST) and is performed by various Groups and related Projects. The TST is the primary technical steering body of COVESA and interfaces with the COVESA Board of Directors on strategic, operational and funding topics. On matters of licensing, Intellectual Property, or other legal matters, the TST will work with the Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors to resolve the matters.

The TST is populated by representatives of Founding Charter, Charter or Core Members and participation by eligible Members is voluntary. Members that appoint a representative to the TST should expect active and recurring participation in discussions and decision-taking. Appointed representatives who do not regularly attend TST meetings will be asked to resign.

The COVESA Community Director shall serve as the TST Lead unless otherwise determined by the Board. The Community Director shall be responsible for communication about TST meetings, developing meeting agendas and recording meeting notes. The TST may appoint a secretary to support the Community Director in these matters.

Based on the inputs of the Board, Groups and members of the Alliance, the primary deliverables of the TST include:

- Serve as the primary body in COVESA to set technical strategy, with Board's input and consent
- Research and propose approaches to Board-delegated technical topics and group/project processes
- Track technical trends, standards and solutions provided by other collaborative or regulatory bodies and report relevant information to the Board and to group/project leaders
- Review and give input to group/project charters for consistency to COVESA's mission and technical scope
- Ensure groups/projects adhere to best practices of openness and COVESA-approved licensing models
- Serve as an escalation point for groups/projects needing additional input to resolve issues
- Perform other duties as determined by the Board of Directors.

The TST will use a rough consensus model of decision-taking except where no consensus can be reached and/or the Team Lead calls for a formal vote.

The agenda, general discussion highlights, and decisions taken during each TST meeting shall be recorded in minutes and made available to all TST members in a timely fashion and on an accessible channel (i.e., either via email and/or on the COVESA Wiki).

A meeting of the TST will follow similar quorum requirements as the Board (60% of the total number of vote-eligible members is present). When a formal vote is called for, the TST must have met quorum and decisions are determined by a simple majority of those present. For absence of doubt, consensus decisions may be taken at TST meetings where quorum is not met; however, these decisions are not considered final until not less than one week after the minutes of the meeting without quorum have been made available to the TST and no opposition to the decision(s) are raised by a member of the TST.

Marketing Team (MT)

The COVESA marketing, communications and industry event work is organized by the Marketing Team (MT). The MT is the primary marketing and communications decision body of COVESA and aligns with the COVESA Board of Directors on outbound messaging, press/media/analyst relations, industry event activities and funding topics. The MT develops and executes a communication strategy for COVESA. The MT also interfaces with other Teams and Groups on marketing topics derived from the Team's or Group's deliverables.

The MT is populated by the following parties, each of which is eligible to vote on MT matters when a vote is requested:

- A Board-approved Team Lead or co-Leads (Marketing Lead)
- Representatives of any COVESA member in good standing.

The MT may appoint a secretary to document and announce Team decisions. The secretary may be a member of the MT or a contracted resource of the Alliance. In the case of a contracted resource, the secretary will not be eligible to participate in votes taken by the MT.

Based on the inputs of the Board of Directors and Member representatives, the primary deliverables of the MT include:
- An annual Marketing Plan for the Alliance
- An annual event calendar indicating targeted participation and resourcing by COVESA
- Printed and electronic collateral that supports COVESA's mission and deliverables
- A public website containing information/materials useful to industry participants not familiar with COVESA's mission and deliverables
- Consistent and relevant member communications that inform members of COVESA progress and solicit greater engagement by member representatives
- Supporting materials for outreach to prospective members
- Other deliverables as defined by the Board of Directors.

The MT will use a rough consensus model of decision-taking except where no consensus can be reached and/or the Team Lead calls for a formal vote.

The agenda, general discussion highlights, and decisions taken during each MT meeting shall be recorded in minutes and made available to all MT participants in a timely fashion and on an accessible channel (i.e., either via email and/or on the COVESA Wiki).

The MT does not have a quorum requirement; however, strategic decisions (as defined by the Team Lead) taken during a meeting where a significant number of participants who consistently attend MT meetings are not present should go through a review period (not less than five business days) to allow for comments and/or opposition to be voiced.

Groups

Scope

Groups (also known as Expert Groups or EGs) are responsible for a set of work defined by their Group Charter document approved by the Board. Group Charters set and limit the scope of the Groups. Group Charters shall include a licensing model for all Group deliverables. Group Charters should set an expectation of how long the Group lives (i.e., permanent or ending with a specific accomplishment). Generally, Groups are launched to manage a well-defined piece of the overall technology agenda of the alliance (e.g., Data Expert Group) or are launched to serve a particular geographic region (i.e., Regional Expert Group). Short-term projects or other activities with a shorter duration may not require a Group but could be performed as a Project within an existing group. The Community Director helps Groups form, remain within scope and help define and manage Projects within a Group.

Responsibilities

Within the scope defined by the respective Group Charter document, each Group has the following responsibilities:

- Engage a critical mass of experts to successfully complete stated deliverables in their respective Charter documents
- Collects and aligns requirements for the deliverables in their respective Charter document
- Explores the open source community for suitable components to meet the aligned requirements
- Launches Projects for a variety of reasons including adapting a selected open source component in an upstream project; evaluating a member-contributed component, or creating a component to meet the aligned requirements in their chartered scope
- Launches "innovation projects" to explore a new or related technology
- Conceives and develops proofs of concept with their charted scope
- Perform other activities as defined in the Board-approved Group Charter document.

The deliverables of each Group are defined in the Board-approved Charter document. The scope and delivery schedule for Group deliverables are coordinated under the oversight of the Community Director and the TST.

Within its assigned charter, a group has the freedom to launch Projects to tackle specific issues, develop code or explore a particular need. These Projects may be of varied lengths. Code development projects are expected to adhere to COVESA's Project Practices. The work products of a Project is for discussion and approval within the Group. Generally, rules that apply to the group for participation, decision making, and so forth also apply also within the project. If a Project requires funding from the COVESA budget, a Project Charter including a scope of work and candidates for performing the work must be submitted to the Board for approval, prior to launching the project.

Participation

Representatives from any COVESA member company in good standing may join a Group, attend the Group meetings and subscribe to the Group communications. Representatives of any member in good standing can both contribute to works in progress (within the guidelines of the COVESA IPR Policy) and vote on Group decisions. In keeping with the spirit of openness and collaboration, voting will only be used in situations where a consensus cannot be reached. Each company that wishes to formally join a Group must register itself with the Group by providing a key contact name to the Chair of that Group or join the group's roster through the alliance selected collaboration tool. If the member company lapses in its COVESA membership, then that company will be removed from participating in all Groups.

Some Groups may allow participation by non-member companies. Non-member companies have no voting rights in any Group and all contributions must be made in adherence to the guidelines of the COVESA IP Policy, which requires a non-member to sign a contributor license agreement.

Group Leadership

Each Group shall be led by one or more Group Leads - subject to the membership benefits documented on the alliance website - appointed by the Board through the approval of the Group Charter. The Group may elect a secretary to document Group meetings and maintain the Group presence on the Wiki.

In the unlikely event that a Group Lead is not meeting his or her responsibilities, the Board may vote to remove the Lead and appoint a new Lead for the Group.   The removal of a Group Lead shall be strictly limited to situations in which the Lead is neglecting his or her duties, is displaying a conflict of interest that is detrimental to the alliance, is not responding to requests and is not calling or attending meetings. A Lead shall not be removed for political reasons or matters of disagreements regarding policy. Removal of a Lead is seen as a serious situation and should be taken only in extreme circumstances after other actions have failed to remedy the situation.

Group Leadership Replacement or Reappointment

Replacement or reappointment of a Group Lead will occur when a Group's Lead resigns, is removed by Board vote or is no longer an employee of a member with sufficient rights to serve as a Group Lead (by virtue of the Member either terminating its membership or renewing its membership at a lower member level). The Board will appoint a replacement based on the outcome of an election process which includes an open call for nominations within the respective Group. The Board may also wish to consider a recommendation from the current Group Lead to fill a vacant leadership role.

Group Voting

A consensus model of decision-making is preferred and is the normal mode of operation of the Groups. Voting is used only when needed to break deadlocks where a consensus approach is not working.

All COVESA members in good standing that have registered with that Group may cast a single vote within the Group. A quorum for a Group meeting requires 50% participation of the active (as defined by regular Group attendance) member companies. Non-members are not allowed to vote.

Decision Escalation

From time to time, Groups may encounter issues that require additional feedback from the TST or from the Board. Technical issues shall be escalated to the TST. Issues regarding resourcing or participation shall be escalated to the Community Director. All other decisions shall be escalated to the Board.

Creating new Groups

Process

Any Founding Charter, Charter or Core member company may request the formation of a new Group. As a preliminary step to group formation, the Board, with approval from the TST and the Community, may launch a "Birds of a Feather" (BoF) to explore the topic of the proposed group and to develop a draft Charter document. A BoF begins with submitting a short description of the opportunity for the new group and its potential value to the alliance. This short description must be reviewed by the Community Director, TST and Executive Director. The BoF must have a facilitator and may use an alliance-provided email list and wiki pages to generate interest in the topic and to collaborate on a draft Charter for the group. If a BoF develops a draft Charter, it may submit the Charter to the Board for approval. If the Board approves the Charter, then a new Group is formed. If during a period of 18-months, a BoF cannot gain Board approval of a draft Charter document, the BoF will be terminated.

Request for a new Group

A request for a new Group must include the following:

- Company name, contact name and e-mail address of the requester
- Proposed name of the Group
- Statement of business or technical problem being solved by the Group
- Proposed scope of the Group
- Proposed deliverables of the Group
- Expected benefits of the Group to the Alliance
- Open license model for Group deliverables
- A list of other member companies interested in the topic of the prospective group.

Dissolving an Existing Group

A Group may be dissolved by the Board, based on the following criteria:

- The Group has completed its assigned goals, and no new goals are to be assigned, or
- After numerous requests, it still does not have enough support to complete its goals, as judged by the Community Director or by the Board of Directors or
- Due to changes in the Alliance, its goals are no longer valid, as judged by the Board.

If at any time the Lead of a Group feels that a Group should be dissolved, based on the above criteria, that person may present their request to the Board. If the Board votes against dissolving the Group, the Board may recommend an action to the Group Chair to remedy the situation.

Projects

Scope

Projects are launched when a Group has a portion of their chartered work that requires dedicated attention in terms of meeting cadence, infrastructure and participation. Projects remain under the oversight of the Group in which they are launched and regularly report progress as part of the Group's meetings. A Project may be formed for a variety of reasons including:

- Development of open source code (e.g., proof of concept, reference implementation, tool)
- Documentation of requirements for a chartered activity of the Group
- Development of a draft specification, model or documentation
- Development of a white paper, technical brief or other educational document
- Exploration of or exploitation of an existing technical solution in the open community.

Responsibilities

Projects shall function as a work stream within a Group's charter. Expected outcomes of that work stream shall be defined in the Project's documentation, which shall be prominently displayed within the Project tooling infrastructure (e.g., Github).

Projects may have a short lifecycle or may produce long-term deliverables such as a cadence of open source code releases. Code development Projects must adhere to the COVESA Project Practices. Projects must have a specified license model used for development and distribution of Project deliverables. This model normally fits within the selected model of the Group but can vary if approved by the Group.

The work products of a Project are for discussion and approval within the Group. Generally, rules that apply to the group for participation, decision making, and so forth also apply also within the project. However, a code development Project may use the best practices of project management documented in the Project Guidelines document. If a Project requires funding from the COVESA budget, a Project Charter including the scope of work and candidates for performing the work must be submitted to the Board for approval, prior to launching the project.

New projects that are publicly visible may be assigned an "incubating" status until the project matures into a steady state of operation and contribution, at which time it shall be designated as "active".

Participation

Registered participants in a Group may join and actively participate in any Group Project. As with Groups and in keeping with the spirit of openness and collaboration, consensus-based decision-making will be employed, and voting will only be used in situations where a consensus cannot be reached.

All Project contributions, whether by Member or non-Members, shall be subject to the Project's selected license and the COVESA IP Policy.

Project Lead

Project leadership may vary based on the purpose and longevity of the project. Code development projects require one or more Maintainers, as specified in the Project Guidelines document. Short-term projects may be led by a Group Lead or appointed by the Group. Board approval of Project Leads is not required.

Decision Escalation

Project Leads generally escalate issues to the leadership of the Group in which they were formed.

Creating new Projects

Process

A Group may decide to launch a Project and may seek input from the TST or the Community Director. It is expected that similar information gathered for a Group Charter, especially the business or technical problem being solved, is also required for the new Project. Special care should be taken to clearly document the license(s) under which a Project will develop and distribute its output. Projects do not require Board approval. However, at the Community Director's discretion, the public status of that Project may appear as "incubating" prior to it being fully functional. New projects should have sufficient buy-in from the Group including, when possible, a "coach" or "mentor" from a Charter or Core member that is committed to the success of the Project.

Dissolving an Existing Project

A Project may be dissolved for the same reasons as Group are dissolved including:

- The Project has completed its assigned goals, and no new goals are to be assigned, or
- After numerous requests, it still does not have enough support to complete its goals, as judged by the Group Lead or Community Director or
- Due to changes in the Alliance, its goals are no longer valid, as judged by the Community Director.

If public artifacts of the project remain (e.g., code in a repository) the Group Lead and the Community Director shall develop a plan for archiving the artifacts or keeping them in the public as unmaintained.

Other Topics

COVESA is founded on an open and transparent basis for doing its work. Teams and Groups will be diligent to communicate openly and proactively to the COVESA membership using alliance-approved collaboration tools.

Mailing Lists

Teams and Groups may do business on-line using mailing lists. With a few exceptions (TST, Board), mailing lists are available to representatives of all COVESA members in good standing. Each Team and Group may have a mailing list on which notice of meetings and meeting minutes will be posted. Technical discussions shall be held on a designated email list or Slack channel.

Wiki & Issue Tracker

COVESA shall provide Teams and Groups a variety of collaboration tools on which they shall document discussions, preserve important artifacts, and generally communicate the scopes and statuses of their respective chartered work. Each Team and Group is encouraged to make use of the COVESA Wiki and website to keep other members informed and to solicit participation in the work. While not a requirement, each Team and Group is encouraged to have a secretary that manages communication both within the Team or Group as well as to the general membership. The combination of the Wiki and mailing lists will be the primary channels for this communication.

Meetings

Teams and Groups may call virtual meetings (i.e., teleconferences with videoconference support) at the discretion of the Lead. The Lead shall take care to give sufficient notice of meetings (minimum five business days) including both regularly scheduled meetings and meetings occurring "off" the regular cadence. Except for the TST (which has limited participation), representatives from any member in good standing may participate in virtual meetings.

For physical (face-to-face) Team and Group meetings, whenever possible and practical, a host company will be chosen from those who volunteer. Normally, each company with Team membership will rotate hosting responsibilities; however, any COVESA member company participating in the Team or Group may volunteer to host. The host will work with the Lead to organize meeting facilities, provide wireless internet, and arrange for such equipment as projectors, whiteboards and extension cords for laptop computers. The host will coordinate with the Lead to send invitations, hotel information and directions to the mailing lists or Wiki section associated with the meeting. The host will also organize lunch, snacks and beverages. The host will determine whether costs can be covered by the host or whether a fee should be charged. In no case should a host attempt to make a profit from the event.

Teams and Groups may also meet at alliance sponsored All Member Meetings. Expenses for meeting space, rented equipment, lunch, snacks and beverages associated with Team and Group meetings will be paid by COVESA upon approval by the COVESA Board of Directors. An attendance fee may be charged by COVESA to cover these costs. The amount of the attendance fee shall be set by the Board for each meeting. COVESA is not responsible for any transportation or lodging costs associated with the meetings.