



The Open Group Forum/Consortium/Work Group Operations Summary



Fundamentals

- The Open Group is Open
 - Standards Adoption Criteria define what it means to have an “open” specification
- The Open Group is a Consensus body
 - We operate with the support of the majority of our members
- The Open Group must at all times operate in accordance with US, EC and international anti-trust laws
 - Certain decisions must utilize the approved standards process



Operations

- There must be a chair – elected by the members
 - An acceptable alternative is to have two or more Co-Chairs to share the role of Chair in rotation or based on availability
- We use the consensus process (not other procedures such as Roberts Rules of Order)
- Meetings must be announced in advance
 - Four (4) weeks for face-to-face meetings
 - One (1) week for teleconferences
- Minutes must be recorded and published
- Forums/Consortia/Work Groups must operate within the charter of The Open Group and be lawful and not do anything to undermine the assets of operation of The Open Group



Forum/Consortium/Work Group Operations

- A Forum/Consortium/Work Group must operate within the procedures defined by The Open Group Standards Process at all times
- Workings of the Forum/Consortium/Work group must be open to all its members



Forum/Consortium/Work Group Operations

- The objective is to reach stable decisions
 - In general, that means supported by a consensus of members of the Forum/Consortium/Work Group
 - It also means not strongly opposed by a sufficient subset of the members to cause decisions to be revisited
 - No reply does not equate to consensus
 - See the following slides on consensus decision-making:



Consensus is a Principle of The Open Group

- To promote consensus, Chairs must ensure that Forums and Work Groups consider all legitimate views and objections, and endeavor to resolve them, whether these views and objections are expressed by the active participants or by others
- Decisions may be made during meetings (face-to-face or distributed) as well as through email.
- Consensus must be established over a time period sufficient to give any interested party an equal chance to participate.



Consensus decision-making

- Consensus decision-making is a decision-making process that not only seeks the agreement of most participants, but also to resolve or mitigate the objections of the minority in order to achieve the most agreeable decision
- “Consensus” is usually defined as meaning both general agreement, and the process of getting to such agreement. Consensus decision-making is thus concerned primarily with that process



What is consensus decision-making?

- **Inclusive**
 - As many stakeholders as possible should be involved in the consensus decision-making process
- **Participatory**
 - The consensus process should actively solicit the input and participation of all decision-makers
- **Co-operative**
 - Participants in an effective consensus process should strive to reach the best possible decision for the group and all of its members, rather than opt to pursue a majority opinion, potentially to the detriment of a minority
- **Egalitarian**
 - All members of a consensus decision-making body should be afforded, as much as possible, equal input into the process
- **Solution-oriented**
 - An effective consensus decision-making body strives to emphasize common agreement over differences and reach effective decisions using compromise and other techniques to avoid or resolve mutually-exclusive positions within the group



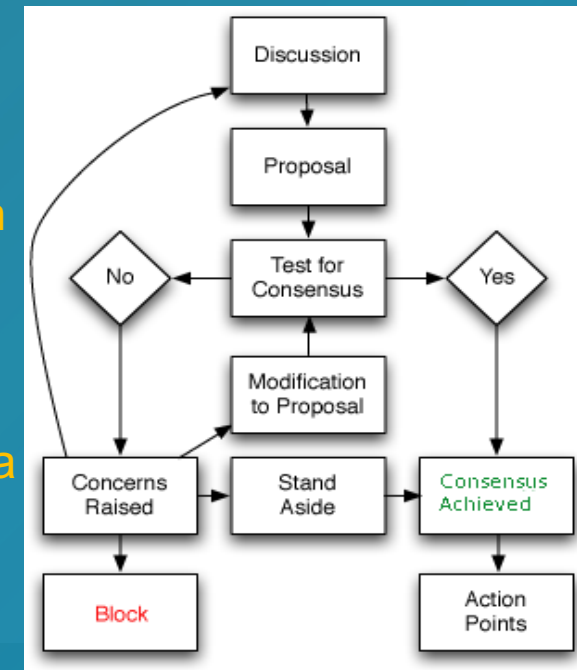
Consensus as an Alternative to Voting

- Voting is competitive, rather than co-operative, framing decision-making in a win/lose dichotomy that ignores the possibility of compromise or other potential solutions.
- A majority decision reduces the commitment of each individual decision-maker to the decision
 - Members of a minority position may have a sense of reduced responsibility for the ultimate decision.



The Process of Consensus Decision-making

- Since the consensus decision-making process is not as formalized as others, such as Roberts Rules of Order, the practical details of its implementation vary from group to group. However, there is a core set of procedures which is common to most implementations of consensus decision-making
- Once an agenda for discussion has been set and, optionally, the ground rules for the meeting have been agreed upon, each item of the agenda is addressed in turn. Typically, each decision arising from an agenda item follows through a simple structure





The Process of Consensus Decision-making

- **Discussion of the item**
 - The item is discussed with the goal of identifying opinions and information on the topic at hand. The general direction of the group and potential proposals for action are often identified during the discussion
- **Formation of a proposal**
 - Based on the discussion, a formal decision proposal on the issue is presented to the group
- **Call for consensus**
 - The facilitator of the decision-making body calls for consensus on the proposal. Each member of the group usually must actively state their agreement with the proposal, often by using a hand gesture or raising a colored card, to avoid the group from interpreting silence or inaction as agreement
- **Identification and addressing of concerns**
 - If consensus is not achieved, each dissenter presents his or her concerns on the proposal, potentially starting another round of discussion to address or clarify the concern
- **Modification of the proposal**
 - The proposal is amended, re-phrased or a rider is added, in an attempt to address the concerns of the decision-makers. The process then returns to the call for consensus, and the cycle is repeated until a satisfactory decision is made



Roles in the Consensus Process

- **Facilitator (usually the Forum Director)**
 - As the name implies, the role of the facilitator is to help make the process of reaching a consensus decision easier. Facilitators accept responsibility for moving through the agenda on time; ensuring the group adheres to the mutually agreed-upon mechanics of the consensus process; and, if necessary, suggesting alternate or additional discussion or decision-making techniques, such as go-arounds, break-out groups or role-playing
- **Timekeeper (usually the Chair)**
 - The purpose of the timekeeper is to ensure the decision-making body keeps to the schedule set in the agenda
- **Empath or 'Vibe Watch' (usually the Chair)**
 - The empath, or 'vibe watch' as the position is sometimes called, is charged with monitoring the 'emotional climate' of the meeting, taking note of the body language and other non-verbal cues of the participants. Defusing potential emotional conflicts, maintaining a climate free of intimidation and being aware of potentially destructive power dynamics, such as sexism or racism within the decision-making body, are the primary responsibilities of the empath
- **Notes Taker (identified at start of meeting)**
 - The role of the notes taker or secretary is to document the decisions, discussion and action points of the decision-making body. Unlike other forms of decision-making, consensus minutes often make a point of documenting dissenting positions



If consensus is not unanimous, who must agree?

- A healthy consensus decision-making process usually encourages and outs dissent early, maximizing the chance of accommodating the views of all minorities
- Since unanimity may be difficult to achieve, especially in large groups, or unanimity may be the result of coercion, fear, undue persuasive power or eloquence, inability to comprehend alternatives, or plain impatience with the process of debate, The Open Group may use an alternative benchmark of consensus
- **Unanimity minus two** (or U-2)
 - does not permit two individual delegates to block a decision, but tends to curtail debate with a lone dissenter more quickly. Dissenting *pairs* can present alternate views of what is wrong with the decision under consideration. Pairs of delegates can be empowered to find the common ground that will enable them to convince a third, decision-blocking, decision-maker to join them. If the pair are unable to convince a third party to join them within a set time, their arguments are deemed to be unconvincing
- *However, note that U-2 is not suitable for all size groups, see the Handbook for Consensus Decision-Making for more details.*



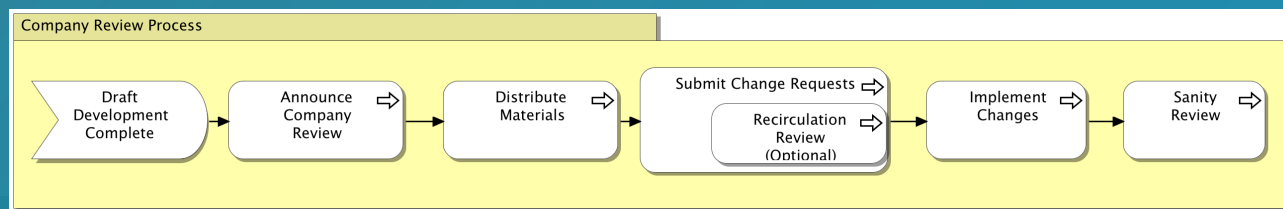
When consensus cannot be reached

- Although the consensus decision-making process should, ideally, identify and address concerns and reservations early, proposals do not always garner full consensus from the decision-making body. When a call for consensus on a motion is made, a dissenting delegate in The Open Group has one of two options:
 - **Declare reservations**
 - Group members who are willing to let a motion pass but desire to register their concerns with the group may choose "declare reservations." If there are significant reservations about a motion, the decision-making body may choose to modify or re-word the proposal
 - **Stand aside**
 - A "stand aside" may be registered by a group member who has a "serious personal disagreement" with a proposal, but is willing to let the motion pass. Although stand asides do not halt a motion, it is often regarded as a strong "nay vote" and the concerns of group members standing aside are usually addressed by modifications to the proposal. Stand asides may also be registered by users who feel they are incapable of adequately understanding or participating in the proposal



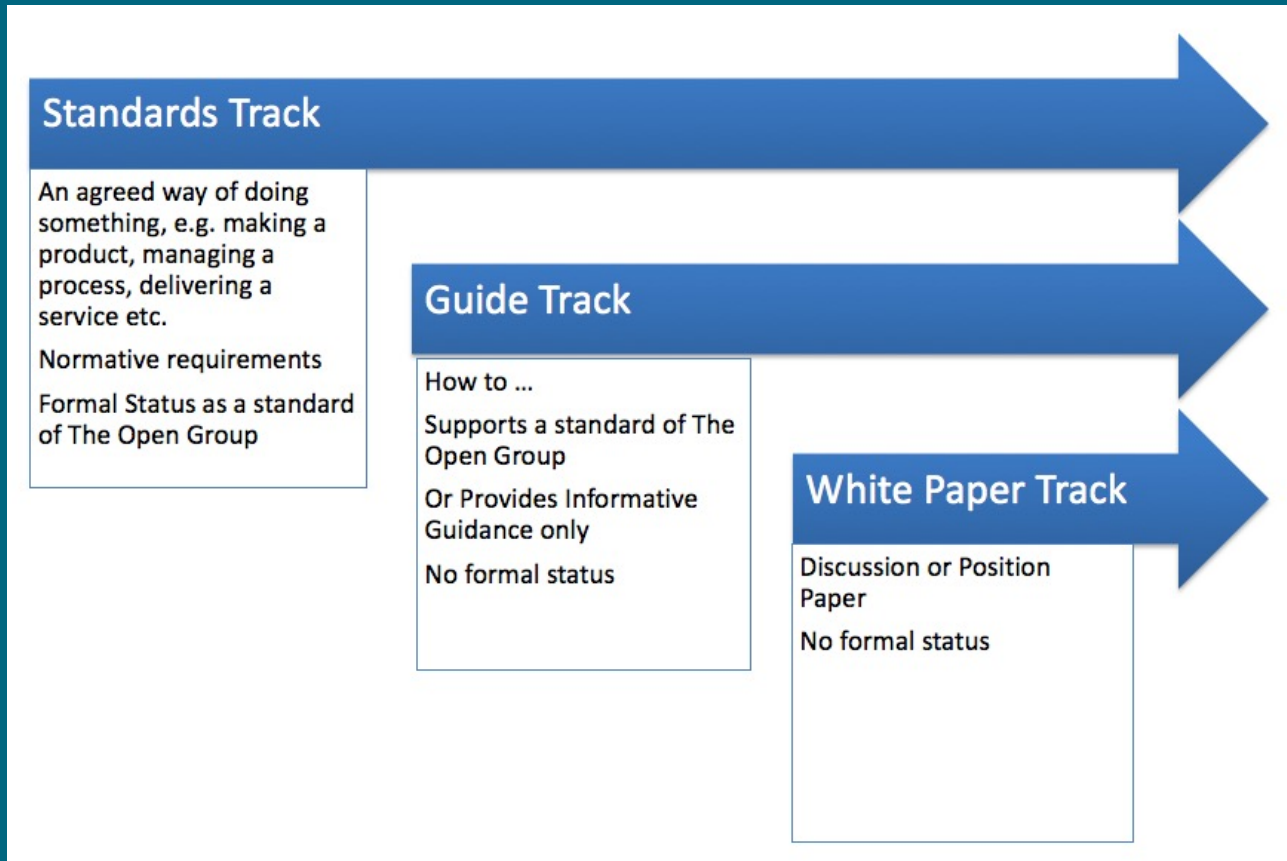
Forum/Consortium/Work Group Operations

- Guidelines are available for how to start a new project or new work item within The Open Group
- Decisions relating to approval of specifications MUST use the approved Company Review process
 - This is a useful tool for building consensus around other types of deliverable





Publications Tracks





Standards Development Lifecycle





Decision Making

- A Forum/Consortium/Work Group must use the Consensus Decision-Making Process for decision-making, except for the following:
 - Decisions relating to approval of specifications must use the Company Review Process
 - Election of officers *
- * A process for Chair elections is available in the sample charter



Decision Making

- By default, the set of members eligible to participate in a decision is the set of Forum/Consortium/Work Group members (one per company).
- The Standards Process does not require a quorum for decisions. Instead, the call for consensus is sent to all members eligible to participate.
- Where unanimity is not possible, a Forum/Consortium/Work Group is recommended to make consensus decisions where there is significant support and few abstentions.
- The Standards Process does not require a particular percentage of eligible members to agree to a motion in order for a decision to be made but there must be sufficient evidence to demonstrate the consensus.



Meetings

- Announce face to face meetings at least 4 weeks in advance
- Announce teleconferences at least 1 week in advance
- All meetings have to publish minutes



Planning and Roadmaps

- Develop a workplan/roadmap for each year (or two year period)
 - Based on member proposals
 - Based on member consensus



Recording Issues and Consensus

- Maintain an Issues List
 - A list of issues where no consensus has been reached.
 - A way to “park” an issue
 - For example,
 - Issue *identifier*: How to best organize the specification, should it be a singular document or split into modules?
- Maintain a Consent list
 - A list of key decisions
 - For example
 - *Identifier*: AGREED. New feature xyz would be incorporated into the specification



Collaboration Tools

- Maintain a document register
 - A repository of documents
- Maintain an email archive
- Use approved tools and technology platforms for collaboration



Confidentiality and IPR

- Member agrees to the following obligations of confidentiality with respect to information received through participation in the Forum(s):
 - “Any specifications, drawings, sketches, models, samples, data, computer programs or documentation or other technical or business information in written, graphic or other tangible or electronic form furnished or disclosed to The Open Group or any other party in the course of the Forums’ activities and/or as a result of Member’s use of any materials (“the Information”) should be deemed the property of The Open Group, and shall be returned to The Open Group upon request. Member agrees to maintain all Information in confidence, using the same degree of care Member uses to protect its own proprietary information of like importance, but in no event less than a reasonable degree of care.”

The Open Group Membership Agreement



Copyright Notices

- Materials developed as part of participation in a forum's activities must carry The Open Group copyright

Copyright © Year The Open Group, All rights reserved*

- And it is recommended that drafts carry the additional header or footer

Unapproved Draft, Subject to Change

* *First and each year in which the materials were created/amended/updated – e.g. "Copyright 1994-2025, The Open Group. All rights reserved"*



Liaisons

- Establishing Liaisons
 - Approval required from The Open Group Executive Management
 - Liaison Manager assigned by The Open Group Executive Management
 - Liaison representatives can be designated from the membership by an open nomination and election process
 - Governing Board notified and given opportunity to raise objections



Liaisons

- Approving Liaison Statements
 - Liaison statements must reflect consensus of a Forum/Consortium/Work Group
 - Must be approved by Liaison Manager
 - Must be copied to the VP, Standards



Invited Guests and Invited Experts

- Criteria defined for qualification of guests and experts with a Forum/Consortium/Work Group
- Process defined for obtaining approval for a guest or expert to participate
 - The Chair designates a Guest or Expert
 - The Open Group VP Membership & Events approves the designation
 - The individual provides a signed NDA to The Open Group Legal Counsel



Qualifying Invited Guests and Experts

Invited Guest	Invited Expert
<p><i>Term limit – a single meeting</i></p> <p>Should possess recognized expertise that a Forum/Consortium/Work Group needs for a specific activity</p> <p>Can be a prospect for membership</p> <p>Can be from a different category of membership</p>	<p><i>Term limit – until the specific activity concludes</i></p> <p>Must possess recognized expertise that a Forum/Consortium/Work Group needs for a specific activity</p> <p>Must not be a prospect for membership</p> <p>Must not be one category of member but enjoying the benefits of membership by invitation</p>

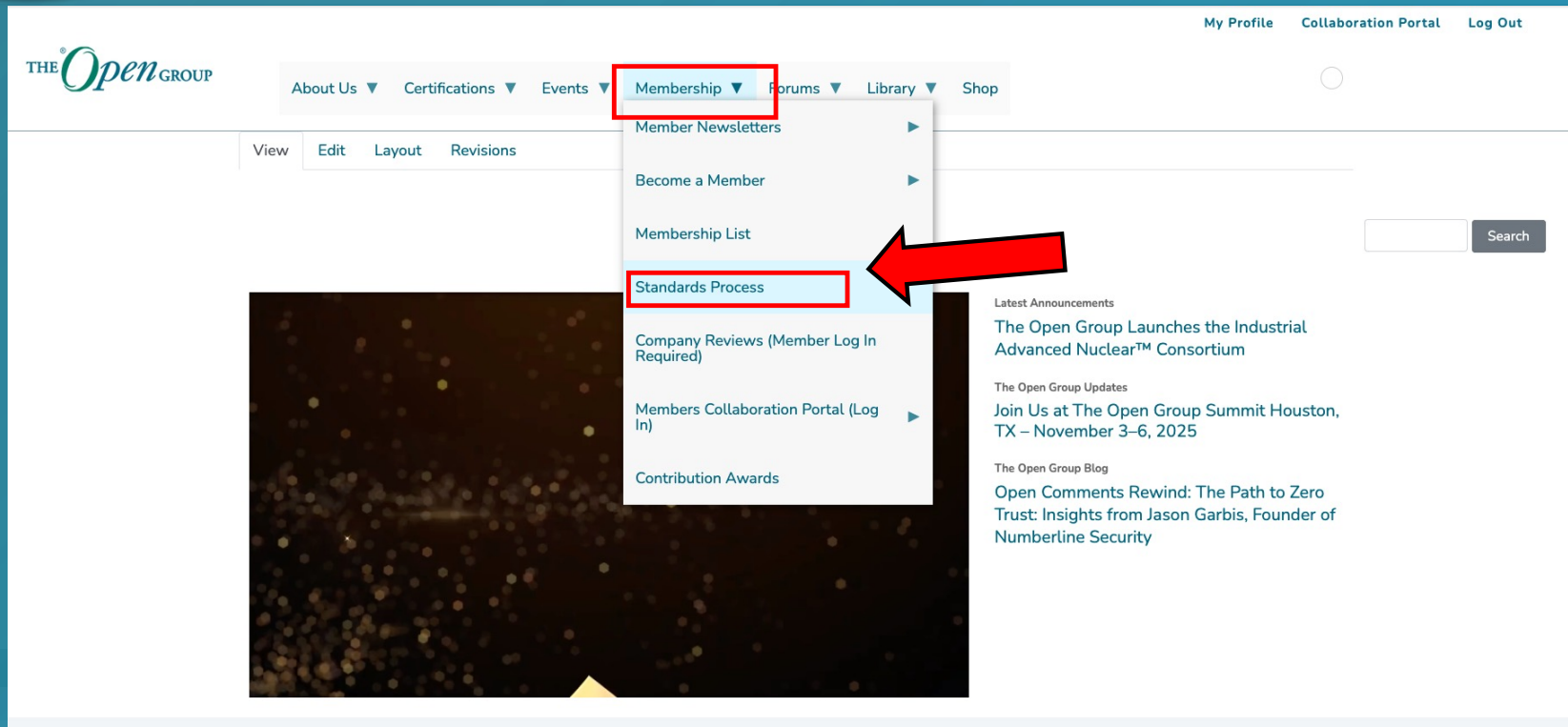


Resources

- We've developed specifications and standards before!
- <http://www.opengroup.org/standardsprocess>
- It's often better to build on the work of others than re-invent the wheel



The Standards Process Online

A screenshot of the The Open Group website's navigation menu. The "Membership" menu item is highlighted with a red box, and its dropdown menu is open. The "Standards Process" option within the dropdown is also highlighted with a red box. A red arrow points from the "Standards Process" option towards the right side of the page. The website header includes "My Profile", "Collaboration Portal", and "Log Out" links. The main navigation bar contains "About Us", "Certifications", "Events", "Membership", "Forums", "Library", and "Shop". Below the navigation bar, there are options for "View", "Edit", "Layout", and "Revisions". A search bar with a "Search" button is visible on the right. The main content area features a large image of a starry night sky and a section titled "Latest Announcements" with several news items.

My Profile Collaboration Portal Log Out

THE *Open* GROUP

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Become a Member ▶

Membership List

Standards Process

Company Reviews (Member Log In Required)

Members Collaboration Portal (Log In) ▶

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Latest Announcements

The Open Group Launches the Industrial Advanced Nuclear™ Consortium

The Open Group Updates

Join Us at The Open Group Summit Houston, TX – November 3–6, 2025

The Open Group Blog

Open Comments Rewind: The Path to Zero Trust: Insights from Jason Garbis, Founder of Numberline Security

The Open Group Standards Process



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The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL opengroup.org/standardsprocess/. The page features the Open Group logo at the top left and a navigation menu at the top right. The main heading is "The Open Group Standards Process" with a sub-heading: "This is where we begin to visualize your requirements and make them into Standards." Below this, there are nine numbered sections, each with an icon, a title, a brief description, and a "LEARN MORE" link.

- 1. Introduction** (Book icon): This section provides an introduction to The Open Group Standards Process describing its purpose and the principles upon which it is founded. [LEARN MORE](#)
- 2. Definitions and Glossary** (Magnifying glass icon): This section provides the definitions and glossary for terminology used in The Open Group Standards Process. It is organized in terms of the human actors (participants), processes, documents, and tools used within the Standards Process. [LEARN MORE](#)
- 3. The Standards Development Process** (Document icon): This section describes the procedures to be followed for the development of Open Group Standards. It includes the Core Processes, together with Supporting Processes. [LEARN MORE](#)
- 4. The Certification Development Process** (Document icon): The Open Group provides Certification Programs for The Open Group Standards in the areas of people, products, and services. [LEARN MORE](#)
- 5. Confidentiality** (Lock icon): This section describes the procedures to be followed when handling confidential material within The Open Group and within member companies when working with The Open Group. [LEARN MORE](#)
- 6. Standards Adoption Criteria** (Checklist icon): This procedure describes the criteria of openness which must be considered before any specification may be adopted by The Open Group as the basis for the development and possible publication as a standard of The Open Group or inclusion in the Standards Information Base. [LEARN MORE](#)
- 7. Patent Policy** (Document icon): This section documents The Open Group Patent Policy. [LEARN MORE](#)
- 8. Liaisons** (People icon): This section describes procedures for individuals who are elected to serve as The Open Group liaisons to other organizations. It defines the process for establishing liaisons, appointing Liaison Representatives, and approving Liaison Statements. [LEARN MORE](#)
- 9. Invited Guests and Invited Experts** (Head icon): This section describes the process for managing individuals who participate in a Forum or Work Group as Invited Guests or Invited Experts. It defines the criteria for an individual to be an Invited Guest or Invited Expert, and the process for invitation and appointment. [LEARN MORE](#)



Standards Process Guides: Downloads



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Standards Process Guides

7 items Sort By Published ▾

-  **The Open Group Technical Publications Style Guide**
This document is The Open Group Style Guide for technical publications. [Learn More](#)
-  **A Handbook for Publications Development using GitLab®**
This document provides a Handbook for individuals who are participating in Forums or Work Groups within The Open Group. It includes guidance on the development of The Open Group publications using AsciiDoc in a GitLab environment. [Learn More](#)
-  **The Open Group Standards Process**
This document defines The Open Group Standards Process, the procedures for key tasks within The Open Group standards development activities. [Refreshed September 2018]
[Read The Open Group Standards Process online here.](#)
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The Open Group Standards Process Guide



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Standards Process Guide

What are you looking for? Topics About Us Membership Library

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Home

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- Code of Conduct
- Publications Development
- Consensus Decision-Making
- Guidance for Liaisons
- Guidance for Elected Officers

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- Downloads

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- How to use this Guide

The Open Group Standards Process Guide

Welcome to the Standards Process Guide.

Purpose

The work of The Open Group relies on cooperation between a broad cultural diversity of organizations, peoples, ideas, and communication styles.

The Open Group Standards Process Guide is a set of resources to guide development of The Open Group standards and supporting deliverables. It provides guidance for individuals participating in The Open Group Forums and Work Groups as we work together to develop multiple, interoperable technologies for Boundaryless Information Flow™.

Summary

The following topics are described in this guide:

- [Guiding Principles for Forums and Work Groups](#): This set of principles guides the operations of Forums and Work Groups and are usually contained within the Forum/Work Group charter. They supplement The Open Group Principles.
- The [Code of Conduct](#): This contains practical guidance for the conduct of business and work in the Forums and Work Groups.
- Guidance for [Publications Development](#): An overview of the different tracks for document deliverables, including standards, guides, and white papers. This includes a detailed commentary on the standards process, how to develop standards text, as well as managing reviews.
- Guidance on the [Consensus Decision-Making Process](#): An overview of the process for consensus decision-making, the roles within the process, and guidance on how to manage situations where there is lack of consensus.
- Guidance for [Individuals Acting as The Open Group Liaison to Another Organization](#): This includes the roles involved in a liaison to another organization, how liaisons are established, including the selection and appointment of liaison representatives. It includes the responsibilities and tasks for appointed liaison representatives.
- Guidance for [Elected Officers of The Open Group Forums and Work Groups](#): This is written for individuals elected to serve as Chairs, Co-Chairs, or Vice-Chairs of a Forum or Work Group within The Open Group. It includes descriptions of the responsibilities for Elected Officers and guidance on leading meetings and the consensus decision-making process.

How to use this Guide

You can navigate various topics within this guide either using links on the left, the **Topics** pulldown in the top bar, or using the full-text search (also in the top bar). An explanation of how to use the full-text search is provided with the [Help page](#) for the guide.

Standards Process Guide v1.0

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Interactive Guide Search



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The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Open Group Standards Guide website. The search bar at the top right contains the word "consensus". The search results are displayed in a table with the following content:

Guidance for Elected Officers of The Open Group Forums and Work Groups 2023	
Guidance on Decision-Making	Consensus In general, Forums and Work Groups are encouraged to use the consensus decision-making process. The consensus decision-making process is a decision-making process that not only seeks the agreement of ...
Guidance for the Consensus Decision-Making Process 2023	
Managing Lack of Consensus	A healthy consensus decision-making process usually encourages and outs dissent early, maximizing the chance of accommodating the views of all minorities. Since unanimity may be difficult to achieve, especially in large...
Roles in the Consensus Process	As the name implies, the role of the facilitator is to help make the process of reaching a consensus decision easier. Facilitators accept responsibility for moving through the agenda on time; ensuring that the Forum/Work Group adheres to the mutually-agreed mechanics of the consensus process; and, l...
The Consensus Decision-Making Process	Call for Consensus Since the consensus decision-making process is not as formalized as others, such as Robert's Rules of Order, the practical details of its implementation vary from group to group. However, there is a c...
Managing Lack of Consensus	When Consensus Cannot be Reached



Any Questions?