

Guidelines for Open Organizations

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Abstract

This document provides an overview of some practical guidelines for organisations using the Open Organizations framework.

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1 Status of this Memo

This memo provides information for the Internet community. It does not specify an official standard of any kind, and does not necessarily represent the views of anyone other than its authors. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

2 An Open Organization

One of definitions is that an organization is a tool to collectively do work and achieve something. Here we are extracting from practice what it is that makes an organization open. An Open Organization should set, or distill from its practice, its objectives, scope, functional principles and decision making.

Objective is what an organization is there for. (the framework itself has certain objectives outlined in Open Organizations: A Framework¹)

Scope is the range of activities that the organisation is intended to engage in.

Functional Principles are core principles on which work in an organization is based. They can be based on Guidelines for Volunteer Working Groups². Other principles can be added as long as they do not contradicte xisting ones.

Decision Making can be based on Guideliness on On-line Consensus Decision Making³.

Optionally geographical location and geographical work area can be set too:

Geographical Location is where an organization is based.

Geographical Work Area is where people involved can come from. For example, an organization can be based in Belfast, but because of functional principles and decision making used in an Open Organization, it is not necessary that people live in close proximity, so geographical work area can be Nothern Ireland, Nothern Hemisphere, Europe or whatever one likes.

¹ <http://www.open-organizations.org/twiki/bin/view/Main/OpenOrgFramework>

² <http://www.open-organizations.org/twiki/bin/view/Main/OpenOrgGuideWgr>

³ <http://www.open-organizations.org/twiki/bin/view/Main/OpenOrgGuideConsensus>

3 The Written Charter

An Open Organization must have a written charter that must be posted to a publicly archived mailing list. For example, implementing some guidelines from the set of documents that describe this framework in a single document should suffice to form a charter.

4 Participation

An Open Organization is open to anyone who agrees to its objectives and charter. Diversity of working practices (how to conduct work) is a matter of individual choice as long it does not hinder other members of the organization from doing work.

5 Context

This document is part of a set that describes *The Framework of Open Organizations*:

- [On Cultural Capital: recognition, accessibility and non-scarcity of power](#)
- [Open Organizations: A Framework](#)
- [Guidelines for Open Organizations](#)
- [Guidelines for Volunteer Working Groups](#)
- [Guidelines for Online Consensus Decision Making](#)

6 History

Patterns presented here were recognized while working on the [Indymedia](#) network in 2000 and 2001, and then used and drafted into a charter in December 2001 for the [imc-london working group](#). A proposal for [ATTAC London](#) was presented in February 2002, and documented at <http://www.open-organizations.org>.