

# Governance Framework The Open Data Cube Project

Version 1.0, 28 July 2017

## Introduction and Purpose

This document defines the governance framework that will be applied to **The Open Data Cube (ODC) Project** (The Project). The Project aims to develop open source software and supporting materials that provide users with a new, easy-to-use, easy-to-deploy, approach for organising and analysing vast quantities of satellite imagery and other Earth observation data - making it quicker and easier to use for diverse applications.

The document aims to provide a framework to define the establishment, and guide the evolution of the Project, and to manage the day-to-day contributions to it. It also seeks to provide agreed processes for the development of the Project, its membership, its leadership, as may be required, as the objectives and status of the Project evolve.

The foundations of the Project governance are: openness and transparency; active contribution; institutional neutrality; and consensus.

This document is intended to provide a short, clear overview of the ODC governance and processes in support of clarity of management internally and communication externally. Annexes provide further detail on the specifics relevant to each of the bodies described in the main text.

## Structure of the Project

The Project is undertaken by a community of distributed developers, called **Contributors**. Contributors are individuals who have contributed code, documentation, designs or other work to one or more Project repositories. Anyone can be a Contributor. Contributors can be affiliated with any legal entity or none.

**The efforts of Contributors are governed** through the **ODC Steering Council**. The Steering Council consists of Project Contributors who have produced contributions that are substantial in quality and quantity, and sustained over at least one year. The role of the Steering Council is to manage the long-term well-being of the Project, both technically and as a working community. Initial membership of the ODC Steering Council is documented in Annex A. Governance and procedures for the Steering Council are elaborated in Annex C.

## Fostering the community

Five agencies have agreed to work together, through a **Partners Forum**, to foster a vibrant and active development community to drive the Project, and to ensure Project governance is established and sustained. These Partners are:

- Analytical Mechanics Associates (AMA);
- The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS);
- The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO);
- Geoscience Australia (GA);
- United States Geological Survey (USGS).

The Partners Forum has no formal role in governance of the Project or community. Rather it will comprise of senior decision-makers from the Partners with an interest in ensuring a common understanding as to the context, strategic directions and progress for the Project, and that resources are available as needed. Initial membership of the Partners Forum is documented in Annex A. The Partners participate in the Project, and contribute to Project governance and

decision-making, in the same manner as any other institution or individual, through the contributions of their staff to the development effort.

The Partners Forum will appoint and resource an ODC Secretariat, which will support the effective operation of the ODC Steering Council, as well as that of the Partners Forum.

The Partners Forum may invite other organisations to join that have shown commitment, not just to contributing to the Project, but also interest in fostering the growth and sustainability of the Project itself.

### Participation

No outside institution, individual or legal entity has the ability to own, control, usurp or influence the Project other than by participating in the Project as Contributors and members of the Steering Council. However, because institutions are the primary funding mechanism for the project, it is important to formally acknowledge institutional participation in the Project. These are **Institutional Partners**.

An **Institutional Contributor** is any individual Project Contributor who contributes to the project as part of their official duties as an Institutional Partner. An **Institutional Partner** is any recognised legal entity that employs at least one Institutional Contributor or Institutional Council Member. Institutional Partners can be for-profit or non-profit entities.

Institutions become eligible to become an Institutional Partner by employing individuals who actively contribute to The Project as part of their official duties. To state this another way, the only way for an Institutional Partner to influence the Project is by actively contributing to the open development of the project, on equal terms with any other member of the community of Contributors and Steering Council Members. Merely using Open Data Cube Software or Services in an institutional context does not allow an entity to become an Institutional Partner. Financial gifts do not enable an entity to become an Institutional Partner. Once an institution becomes eligible for Institutional Partnership, the ODC Steering Council must nominate and approve the Partnership.

An Institutional Partner is free to pursue funding for their work on The Project through any legal means. This could involve a non-profit organisation raising money from private foundations and donors or a for-profit company building proprietary products and services that leverage Project Software and Services. Funding acquired by Institutional Partners to work on The Project is called **Institutional Funding**. However, no funding obtained by an Institutional Partner can override The Steering Council. If a Partner has funding to do Open Data Cube work and the Council decides to not pursue that work as a project, the Partner is free to pursue it on their own. However, in this situation, that part of the Partner's work will not be under the Open Data Cube umbrella and cannot use the Project trademarks in a way that suggests a formal relationship.

### Changes to the ODC Project Governance Documents

Changes to ODC structure and processes require consensus decision by the Partners Forum. Changes to technical governance and processes will typically be by consensus decision of the ODC Steering Council – being closer to the community of developers. The Steering Council encourages such changes to be submitted via a GitHub pull request to The Project's governance documents GitHub repository at <https://github.com/opendatacube/governance>. The pull request is then refined in response to public comment and review, with the goal being consensus in the community. After this open period, a Steering Council Member proposes to the Steering Council that the changes be ratified and the pull request merged (accepting the proposed changes) or proposes that the pull request be closed without merging (rejecting the proposed

changes). The Member should state the final commit hash in the pull request being proposed for acceptance or rejection and briefly summarize the pull request. A minimum of 80% of the Steering Council must vote and at least  $2/3$  of the votes must be positive to carry out the proposed action (fractions of a vote rounded up to the nearest integer).

## ANNEX A

### The Open Data Cube Project Initial Membership of the ODC Steering Council

Analytical Mechanics Associates (AMA):	Andrew Cherry, Syed Rizvi
The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS):	-
The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO):	Matt Paget
Geoscience Australia (GA):	David Gavin, Damien Ayers
United States Geological Survey (USGS):	Brian Sauer, Hank Sunne

## ANNEX B

### The Open Data Cube Project Initial Membership of the Partners Forum

Analytical Mechanics Associates (AMA):

Sanjay Gowda

The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS):

Brian Killough (NASA)

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial  
Research Organisation (CSIRO):

Alex Held

Geoscience Australia (GA):

Adam Lewis

United States Geological Survey (USGS):

Steve Labahn

## ANNEX C

### The Open Data Cube Project

#### Governance and Procedures for the Steering Council

ODC Project leadership is provided by the Steering Council – which consists of Project Contributors who have produced contributions that are substantial in quality and quantity, and sustained over at least one year. The role of the Steering Council is to manage the long-term well-being of the Project, both technically and as a working community. Initial membership of the ODC Steering Council is documented in Annex A of the ODC Governance Framework Document.

#### Steering Council Chair

The Project will have a Chair of the Steering Council. The Chair has the authority to make all final decisions for The Project. In practice the Chair chooses to defer that authority to the consensus of the community discussion channels and the Steering Council (see below). It is expected that the Chair will only rarely assert his/her final authority. Because rarely used, we refer to the Chair's final authority as a “special” or “overriding” vote. When it does occur, the Chair override typically happens in situations where there is a deadlock in the Steering Council or if the Steering Council asks the Chair to make a decision on a specific matter. To ensure the integrity of The Project, The Project encourages others to fork the project if they disagree with the overall direction the Steering Council. The Chair may delegate his/her authority on a particular decision or set of decisions to any other Council member at his/her discretion.

The Chair will be selected from amongst the Steering Council membership and reside in that role for a period up to 6 months in duration, at which time the position will rotate to another member of the Steering Council (where possible from an alternative Institutional Partner).

#### Steering Council Activities

During the everyday project activities, **Council Members** participate in all discussions, code review and other project activities as peers with all other Contributors and the Community. In these everyday activities, Council Members do not have any special power or privilege through their membership on the Council. However, it is expected that because of the quality and quantity of their contributions and their expert knowledge of the Project Software and Services that Council Members will provide useful guidance, both technical and in terms of project direction, to potentially less experienced contributors.

The Steering Council and its Members play a special role in certain situations. In particular, the Council may:

- Make decisions about the overall scope, vision and direction of the project.
- Make decisions about strategic collaborations with other organizations or individuals – in collaboration with the Partners Forum.
- Make decisions about specific technical issues, features, bugs and pull requests. They are the primary mechanism of guiding the code review process and merging pull requests.
- Make decisions about the Services that are run by The Project and manage those Services for the benefit of the Project and Community.

- Make decisions when regular community discussion doesn't produce consensus on an issue in a reasonable time frame.

### **Steering Council Membership**

To become eligible to be a Steering Council Member an individual must be a Project Contributor who has produced contributions that are substantial in quality and quantity, and sustained over at least one year. Potential Council Members are nominated by existing Council members and voted upon by the existing Council after asking if the potential Member is interested and willing to serve in that capacity. Initial membership of the ODC Steering Council is documented in Annex A of the Governance Framework Document, and comprises the set of existing Core Developers who, as of early 2017, have been significantly active over the last year.

When considering potential Members, the Council will look at candidates with a comprehensive view of their contributions. This will include but is not limited to code, code review, infrastructure work, mailing list and chat participation, community help/building, education and outreach, design work, etc. We are deliberately not setting arbitrary quantitative metrics (like "100 commits in this repo") to avoid encouraging behaviour that plays to the metrics rather than the project's overall well-being. We want to encourage a diverse array of backgrounds, viewpoints and talents in our team, which is why we explicitly do not define code as the sole metric on which council membership will be evaluated.

If a Council member becomes inactive in the project for a period of one year, they will be considered for removal from the Council. Before removal, the inactive Member will be approached by the Chair to see if they plan on returning to active participation. If not, they will be removed immediately upon a Council vote. If they plan on returning to active participation soon, they will be given a grace period of one year. If they don't return to active participation within that time period, they will be removed by vote of the Council without further grace period. All former Council members can be considered for membership again at any time in the future, like any other Project Contributor. Retired Council members will be listed on the project website, acknowledging the period during which they were active in the Council.

The Council reserves the right to eject current Members, if they are deemed to be actively harmful to the project's well-being, and attempts at communication and conflict resolution have failed.

### **Conflict of Interest**

It is expected that the Chair and Council Members will be employed at a wide range of companies, universities and non-profit organizations. Because of this, it is possible that Members will have conflict of interests. Such conflict of interests include, but are not limited to:

- Financial interests, such as investments, employment or contracting work, outside of The Project that may influence their work on The Project.
- Access to proprietary information of their employer that could potentially leak into their work with the Project.

All members of the Council, Chair included, shall disclose to the rest of the Council any conflict of interest they may have. Members with a conflict of interest in a particular issue may participate in Council discussions on that issue, but must recuse themselves from voting on the issue. If the Chair has recused his/herself for a particular decision, they will appoint a substitute Chair for that decision.

## **Private Communications of the Council**

Unless specifically required, all Council discussions and activities will be public and done in collaboration and discussion with the Project Contributors and Community. The Council will have a private mailing list that will be used sparingly and only when a specific matter requires privacy. When private communications and decisions are needed, the Council will do its best to summarise those to the Community after eliding personal/private/sensitive information that should not be posted to the public internet.

## **Subcommittees**

The Council can create subcommittees that provide leadership and guidance for specific aspects of the project. Like the Council as a whole, subcommittees should conduct their business in an open and public manner unless privacy is specifically called for. Private subcommittee communications should happen on the main private mailing list of the Council unless specifically called for.

## **Licenses**

The Open Data Cube project, as the name suggests, adopts licenses that reflect our open approach. This applies both to the code in this repository but, ideally, also to data used within Open Data Cube deployments. Code within the Open Data Cube repository will be available via the [Apache License Version 2](#). Open Data Cube deployments should clearly identify the usage conditions under which data can be used. The recommended open data licence is the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license [CC BY 4.0](#). Licenses for commercial data will vary.

## **Steering Council Rules of Procedure**

Governing communication and decision-making around change requests, their debate, their agreement or rejection, the changes needed to documentation, the announcements to partners, repo management activities etc..... **TO BE DEFINED BY THE COUNCIL**

ODC Secretariat will support the Chair of the Steering Council in convening and coordinating telcons, meetings and consensus processes using the agreed channels (email, Slack...) in support of effective operation of the council and application of the rules of procedure. And in ensuring good communication between the Steering Council and the Partners Forum.



## ANNEX D

### The Open Data Cube Project

#### Governance and Procedures for the Partners Forum

The Partners Forum is comprised of senior representatives from the Partners with an interest in ensuring a common understanding as to the context, strategic directions and progress for the Project, and that resources are available as needed. The Partners participate in the Project, and contribute to Project governance and decision-making, in the same manner as any other institution or individual, through the contributions of their staff to the development effort. The Partners Forum has no formal role in day-to-day governance of the Project or community, but will adjudicate on changes to ODC structure and processes. The Partners Forum will operate by consensus on decisions. Changes to technical governance and processes will typically be by consensus decision of the ODC Steering Council – being closer to the community of developers.

The Partners Forum will appoint and resource an ODC Secretariat, which will support the effective operation of the ODC Steering Council, as well as that of the Partners Forum.

#### **Partners Forum Chair**

Partners Forum meetings/telcons will have a rotating Chair responsible for coordination of the agenda and preparatory materials. The Chair will be supported by the Secretariat in preparing and executing meetings. The Chair and Secretariat will take responsibility for communication with the Steering Council and its Chair during their rotation period. Partners will share responsibility for Chairing the Annual ODC Conference and will agree assignments to lead sessions therein.

#### **Partners Forum Representation and Membership**

Partner Forum members will each nominate a Principal representative to represent their institution on the Forum. The Principal may nominate an Alternate as necessary to contribute to specified meetings or topics.

The Partners Forum may invite participation in the Partners Forum by ODC Institutional Partners (any recognised legal entity that employs at least one Institutional Contributor or Institutional Council Member) that have shown commitment, not just to contributing to the Project, but also interest in fostering the growth and sustainability of the Project itself.

Potential Forum Members are nominated by existing Forum members and voted upon by the existing Forum after asking if the potential Member is interested and willing to serve in that capacity. Initial membership of the ODC Partners Forum is documented in Annex B of the Governance Framework Document, and comprises the set of the founding partners for the ODC Project.

If a Forum member becomes inactive in the project for a period of one year, they will be considered for removal from the Forum. Before removal, the inactive Member will be approached by the Chair to see if they plan on returning to active participation. If not, they will be removed immediately upon a Forum vote. If they plan on returning to active participation soon, they will be given a grace period of one year. If they don't return to active participation within that time period, they will be removed by vote of the Forum without further grace period. All former Forum members can be considered for membership again at any time in the future.

The Forum reserves the right to eject current Members, if they are deemed to be actively harmful to the project's well-being, and attempts at communication and conflict resolution have failed.

## ANNEX E

### **The Open Data Cube Project Terms of Reference for the Secretariat**

The Partners Forum will appoint and resource an ODC Secretariat, which will support the effective operation of the ODC Steering Council, as well as that of the Partners Forum. The Secretariat will support the Chairs of the Partners Forum and Steering Council in the coordination and execution of the telecons, meetings, and decision-making processes required for effective and efficient operation and progress of the ODC. The Secretariat will support effective communication between the Partners Forum and Steering Council. The Secretariat will coordinate the planning and execution of the ODC Annual Conference with guidance from the Chairs.

The Secretariat may employ a range of tools such as email listservers, scheduling planners, etc for the effective routine operation of ODC. The Secretariat may maintain a master Work Plan and schedule with which to monitor and report overall progress towards ODC objectives.