

Samvera Governance Recommendations

Overview

Below are a series of recommendations from the Group 3 of the Samvera Governance Working Group. The recommendations are organized into three major groupings:

- Recommendations for Staffing
- Recommendations for Component Support
- Recommendations for Partner's Roles and Responsibilities

Note that this group does not recommend re-defining the roles of Partners within the Community, but these recommendations provide flexibility so that the Community may redefine that role as the project progresses.

Recommendations for Staffing

Problem statement. Community members have expressed concerns around staffing and resourcing for the Community's components. Many within the Community see a need for dedicated staff to provide central coordination for the Community.

Solution. Hiring of staff to work with the Samvera Community can ensure coordination for the various kinds of work that happens within the Community.

Hire a Community Manager

A Community Manager will be hired to coordinate Community work including, but not limited to writing annual reports, planning the annual Samvera conference, coordinating communication, organizing partner meetings, facilitating partner calls, coordinating working groups, etc.

This role would act as a communication pathway between working groups, task forces, affiliated projects, etc. to both Steering and to the Samvera Community at large and acts as the primary conduit for Community-wide information collection and distribution.

Hire a Technical Lead

A Technical Lead will be hired to coordinate development, Community sprints, resourcing, setting the technical road map, etc.

This role acts as a communication pathway between the Products Council, Steering, and other appropriate working groups, task forces, and other members of the Community. This role will serve on a number of related projects of interest to Samvera including, but not limited to: Fedora, IIF, etc.

Implementation

This solution will likely require a modification to the existing agreement with DuraSpace in order to articulate expansion of the existing relationship and expectations. Additionally, in order to hire staff, the Community will need to raise funds, develop job descriptions, recruit, and hire for the position.

Recommendations for Improvement to Components Support

Problem statement. Community members have expressed concerns around the churn and lack of coordination for various components, projects, and sprints within the Community. Many within the Community see a need to coordinate across the various components to ensure that the Community better coordinates upgrades, backward compatibility, etc.

Solution. The Community will need to begin to take a more cohesive approach to components development. This includes creating processes that help components coordinate communication, development, and roadmaps.

Identify Community Owned Components

Community owned Components is in the process of being defined by the Components Maintenance Working Group. This document should point to that deliverable once the group completes their work.

Implementation

Currently, the [Components Maintenance Working Group](#) is in the process of identifying what constitutes a software component of the Samvera Community. This work should continue.

Associate Product Owners to Community Owned Components

Each Component must have an identified Product Owner; the need for this role may vary depending on the Component. Individuals serving as Product Owner do not need to be permanently assigned to the role, however it must be clear who occupies the role for each of the Community owned Components. In addition to identifying who fills the roles of Product Owner, it

should be made clear how much time and attention a Community member taking on this role must dedicate to the component.

When an identified Product Owner takes a step back from the role, the Community must acknowledge this change and identify another member of the Community to continue the work. The Technical Lead should work with the Community to identify who will fill the vacant Product Owner role.

Implementation

Steering in conjunction with the Technical Lead, should develop a process for identifying Product Owners and discerning the amount of time an individual must spend to fill the roles.

Steering should work with the Technical Lead to clearly delineate roles and responsibilities for the Product Owners and Tech Leads. The goal would be to ensure that these roles are empowered to make the best decisions for the components based on the Community's needs.

Establish a Components Council

Currently, the Component Maintenance Working Group is working to develop the following for the Samvera Community:

- Report on criteria for what makes a “core” supported component.
- Report on effects of self-nominated Product Owners process
- Proposal for component sunset (inventory and process)
- Prospective Product Owners and a small list of development priorities for supported core components
- Measurement of and process for determining the use of Samvera components.

To facilitate communication across components, the Components Maintenance Working Group should be established as a permanent group called the Components Council. The Components Council would include Product Owners each of the Community owned Components. Once established, the Components Council would coordinate product road maps, arrange development sprints, and coordinate communication to the community about the components.

The Components Council would be facilitated by the Technical Lead. In the event there is no Technical Lead, the Components Council will elect a facilitator from within its ranks.

The Components Council will at least monthly to discuss roadmaps, maintenance sprints, development sprints, and communications to the community. The facilitator of the Components Council will report out to the Samvera Tech Call.

Recommendations for Partners' Roles & Responsibilities

Problem: Community members express confusion around roles and responsibilities, specifically around decision making. Additionally, it is unclear to many in the Community what the benefits of being a Partner within the community is.

Solution: Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities of Steering, Community Manager, Technical Lead, and the Components Council. Establish a process for electing the membership of Steering.

Elect Partner Representatives to Steering

Seven (7) Steering members will be elected from within the Partners. The Community Manager and Technical Lead will be ex-officio members of Steering.

Each Partner organization will have one vote when electing members to Steering. Steering members are elected to 3-year terms. Members of Steering may serve up to two consecutive 5-year terms. Steering members who reach their term limit must wait three years before running for another term on Steering. Former members of Steering may be invited back to attend Steering Meetings in an ex-officio capacity to help facilitate knowledge transfer.

Steering will meet virtually at least once a month with additional virtual meetings as needed. Steering will meet in-person at least once a year, likely in December or January for budget and financial reasons. Steering may elect to meet in-person more often, depending on attendance, as desired.

Implementation

At the time of the first election, each candidate up for election will be volunteering for a 1, 2, or 3, year term so that we can eventually have a consistent number of people rolling off/on.

Three (3) existing members of Steering will serve on Steering for the purposes of on-boarding, knowledge transfer, and succession planning. Existing Steering members will choose from within their ranks who will serve on the reconstituted Steering Committee. Existing members of Steering who are rolled onto the new Steering committee will roll off in year 1, 2, and 3. Current members of Steering are eligible for re-election for a second term.

If a member of Steering changes institutions resulting in more than one person from the same institution serving on Steering, one member will need to step down and a special election will be held to finish out the term of the originally elected individual.

Delineate Roles and Responsibilities

For each of the various groups identified as part of the governance model Steering should work with the groups to develop consistent and clear charters. The charters should identify what activities are in scope and out of scope for the groups, how often the groups should meet, and what the roles and responsibilities are within the group (i.e. facilitator, chair, etc.). The charters for these groups should be ratified by the Community via a vote, similar to the method identified for electing Steering.

Additionally, Steering should identify how the various groups communicate with each other. Steering should identify how:

- **Working Groups and Interest Groups** report out about their activities to Partners
- **Components Council** reports out about work accomplished and product roadmaps.
- **Steering** reports out about finances, budgets, fundraising efforts, etc.

Ideally, these activities would happen via multiple streams (i.e. a partner meeting and the Annual Report) to ensure the Community members have the ability to ask questions and engage with the Community's work.

Implementation

Steering will first need to update its [bylaws](#) to reflect the changes to Steering that are outlined throughout this document. Once the bylaws for Steering have been updated, Steering should then develop a charter for each of the remaining groups.

