

So How Do You Make Decisions?

Governance in open source software projects

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PERSPECTIVE 2

About Me

- RIOT contributor since 2022
- Public administration & Education
- Aim to bridge between non-technical and FOSS world

Perspective 2

- Improving FOSS community processes
 - Governance
 - On-boarding
 - Developing learning materials

Why this talk?

You want to write code!

- Have clear community rules and roles.
- Spend as little time as possible on process management.
- Be able to focus on core activities.

Content

- **Definition**
- Why
- How
- What
- RIOT recommendations

Definition governance

"Any activity or process of deliberately **using power** in order to **coordinate** sizable **groups of people's performances** to bring about desirable aggregate **results** and avoidance of risk and undesirable outcomes" (Hoppe, 2013, p. 10)

Licenses vs governance model:

"Open Source **licenses** provide the **legal framework** within which parties collaborate. A **governance model** provides the **social framework** for that collaboration." (Brock, 2022, p. 53)

Definition governance

Rules & Roles:

“Operationalization of institutions in “rules of the game” and “roles in the game”” (Edelenbos, 2005, p. 116)

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Why governance



- What is your destination?
- With whom?
- How do you decide on your direction?
- What tools do you have to steer to that direction?
- How do you resolve problems?

So what boat do you need?

Clear governance → clear answers → basis for a well functioning project!



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How governance

- Define goal:
 - Where are you heading, what problem are you solving?
- Define rules:
 - Existing & wanted organizational structures (Edelenbos, 2005, p. 116)
- Define roles:
 - Action and interaction patterns of actors (Edelenbos, 2005, p. 116)

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What: governance model

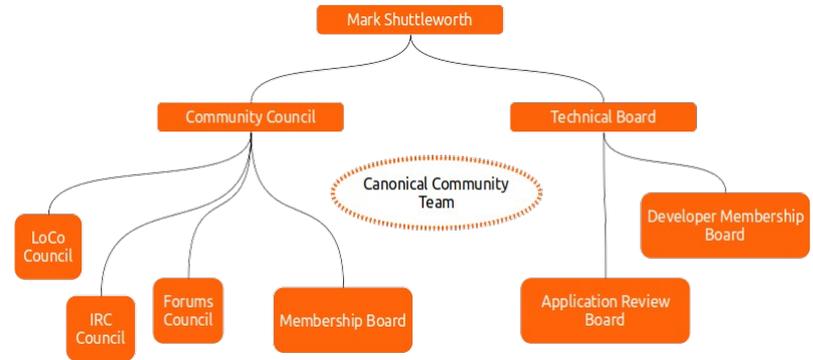
- Founder-leader
- Self-appointing board/council
- Elected board
- Do-ocracy
- Meritocracy (Brock, 2022, p. 55-56)
- - ...

- Mix-ins possible!

What: examples

- **Ubuntu:** mix of founder-leader, meritocracy and boards model:
- **Django Project:** elected council (clear roles described!)
- **Python:** steering committee model
- **Linux:** mix of founder-leader and do-ocracy

- Clear description of decision making processes
- Shared openly with community



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RIOT recommendations

- 1) Describe current governance: goal, rules and roles.
- 2) Set up GOVERNANCE.md document
- 3) Improve iteratively
 - Wanted organizational structures
 - Governance model?
 - Different roles?

Tools:

- SustainOSS governance readiness checklist
- CNCF templates for GOVERNANCE.md
- CommunityRule governance toolkit

See what goes well!

There is a good base, so...

Be proud of what you have achieved so far!

And let's improve from there :)

Thank you

Questions?

Want to know more?
Contact me!

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E-mail: contact@perspective2.eu

References 1/2

Literature:

- Brock, A. (Eds.)(2022). *Open Source Law, Policy and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Edelenbos, J. (2005). Institutional Implications of Interactive Governance: Insights from Dutch Practice. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*. 18(1), 111-134.
- Franken, J.C.M. (2024). *Group Capabilities and Process Quality in Complex Problem Solving*. Enschede: GildePrint.
- Hoppe, R. (2013). *The governance of problems. Puzzling, powering and participation*. Bristol: the policy press.

Pictures:

- Rescue boat by [Fonsi Fernández](#) on [Unsplash](#)
- Wooden boats by [Andrew Ly](#) on [Unsplash](#)

References 2/2

Projects:

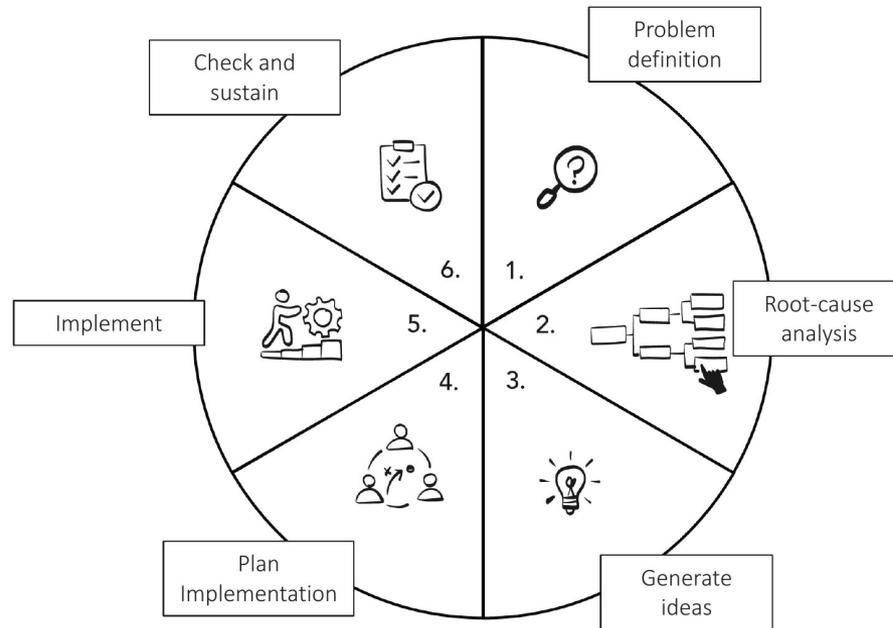
- Django <https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/dev/internals/organization/>
- Python steering committee model <https://peps.python.org/pep-8016/>
- Ubuntu governance <https://ubuntu.com/community/governance>

Tools:

- CommunityRule <https://communityrule.info/>;
- SustainOSS Initiative governance readiness checklist <https://sustainers.github.io/governance-readiness/>;
- governance templates CNCF <https://contribute.cncf.io/maintainers/templates/governance-intro/>

Problem solving process

“Kaizen Practitioners’ Representation of a Six-phased KE [Kaizen Event]” (Franken, 2024, p. 14)



KE Process Factors

“Conceptual Model of KE [Kaizen Event] Process Factors in Relation to Operational Performance Improvement, Mapped onto the KE Phases” (Franken, 2024, p. 106).

