

Decision Making within the SG-OBPS

Version : 3.0 2021-05-12

1. Decision Making

Decisions of the Steering Group will occur throughout the project.

1.1 Decisions by the SG-OBPS

Decisions will be reached by consensus (Consensus is achieved when there are no objections to the proposed solution, even though it may not be their most preferred solution. (Gray 1989)¹, built through

1. discussion at monthly Steering Group virtual meetings;
2. discussion at annual Steering Group meetings.
3. In urgent cases either:
 - a. an exceptional meeting of the SG can be called (subject to quorum, described below) or
 - b. an email calling for consensus building and signatures on a shared document (GDoc) of a proposed decision. The text can be revised until a fixed date and time, after which it will be considered final. After that time, the SG members will be asked to sign their approval on the final text. If quorum is reached, the decision may be made.
 - c. In the above cases, decisions made will be recognized/noted in a regular SG meeting and recorded in the minutes, and announced by the SG meeting chair at the beginning of the meeting

Decisions to be made by SG:

- Decisions on commitment of OBPS monetary funds
- Decisions about the formal structure of OBPS project at or above WP level
- Decisions on strategic directions
- Decisions on official and formally documented partnership (a partner who wishes to be an OBPS partner and/or for whom we will commit resources to undertake actions)

In general, other decisions which are not included in the above list and have no funding impact on the OBPS project or its perception/optics should not be brought to the SG. If in doubt Work Package leads should check with the co-chairs or project manager.

¹ Gray, B. (1989). Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Once a decision is made by the SG, implementation is delegated to a Work Package. Decisions on implementation are done at the Work Package level except where the decisions impact funding or strategic direction. Recommendations for decisions on funding or overarching strategy will be brought to the SG for consideration and resolution.

1.2 Quorum for a decision

The minimum quorum to debate a proposed decision for approval/rejection is reached when a majority (>50%) of the SG members are present. The minutes will record whether a quorum is present.

As the proposed decision text will be available before the meeting (see below), those that cannot attend the meeting (e.g. due to timezones) will have the opportunity to comment on the decision text and work with the proposer to amend the text in order to remove any objections prior to the meeting. This exchange will be linked in the agenda, so all attending the meeting are aware of it.

If the decision or course of action relies on actions from one or more WPs, at least one lead, or their nominated proxy, from those WPs must be present to achieve a quorum. The choice of the preferred lead WP(s) should be stated when the proposed decision is created and circulated (see below). The nominated proxy should be identified in the minutes of meeting when attendance is noted.

2. Decision methodology

Each of the actions below will be documented in the minutes and/or proceedings of meetings, and/or by archiving related electronic communication in the meeting folder in GDrive. The following shall be considered in preparing decisions through consensus during SG-OBPS meetings .

2.1 Placing the motion for decision on the agenda of any formal SG Annual, monthly, or exceptional meeting

Any other meetings involving SG members have limits on decision-making power consistent with section 1 above.

- a. The opportunity to call for discussion, consensus, and decisions by the SG can occur
 - i. prior to (a minimum of 3 working days) any SG meeting, by adding points to be discussed and the time needed for the discussion to the annotated agenda of the meeting and
 - ii. As an SG meeting begins, when the chair calls for the acceptance of the agenda, if it is a matter of urgency and subject to 2.1.b.
- b. In the case of 2.1.a.ii, time will be allocated only if there is unallocated time in the agenda, or if time is ceded on another point. Due to their consequential nature, decisions at the SG level (see Section 1) shall not be included in the “miscellaneous” or “any other business” sections of the agenda.

- c. Agenda points should be clearly and concisely framed, and always accompanied with text which captures the motion and which will be added to the agenda. Only what is recorded, in the minutes, will be considered or treated as binding.

2.2 Debating and amending the proposed course of action:

- a. Following presentation of the issue and proposed decision on a course of action, the SG will have a defined amount of time to debate and amend the motion, if needed. If the time does not allow for a decision, an SG meeting will be called within one week.
- b. Any reservations or substantive comments will be noted in the minutes
- c. As the proposed course of action and draft decision will be included - prior to the meeting - in the annotated agenda, any comments made by SG members unable to attend the meeting will also be discussed during this phase.

2.3 Acting on the outcomes of the debate:

- a. At the end of the debate, members shall actively voice either
 - i. Approval
 - ii. Abstention or
 - iii. Objection (accompanying text in minutes)

2.3.1 Deferring a decision:

If the debate is inconclusive (e.g. objections are not resolved) and a consensus has not been reached, the motion is deferred until the next meeting or an alternative process is agreed upon.

2.3.2. Achieving consensus:

If the debate concludes in a consensus (as defined at the start of this document), the decision and associated course of action is declared as provisionally accepted, subject to Section 3 below.

2.3.3 Delegating a decision:

If consensus is not achieved and deferral is not an option (e.g. due to deadlines which require that decision), a working group can be formed and empowered to make decisions on the issue, ensuring those that wish to engage on the issue are included.

3. Recording the consensus and decision:

3.1 Each motion, decision and agreed course of action will be clearly and concisely recorded in the minutes of the meeting, as the meeting proceeds.

3.2 At the end of each meeting, sufficient time will be allocated (min. 5 minutes) for the SG to review the final text of each motion made during that meeting. If no objections are lodged this time, it will be understood that the SG has approved those decisions.

3.3 Only the text recorded in the minutes will be considered as a valid reflection of decisions and agreements endorsed by the SG.

A suggestion was made that in the future, the SG should look at the concept of an Executive Committee to address inter-meeting decisions.

Average attendance at meetings Jan-Apr 2021 = 17