

DataSHIELD Community Constitution

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1 Introduction

The DataSHIELD Community is a voluntary association with common cause to create an infrastructure that aims to enable the federated analysis of sensitive data with active mitigation of disclosure risk. This document lays out the organisational structure of the DataSHIELD Community and what responsibilities are associated with the different roles. Furthermore, this document describes the formal process for decision-making of the DataSHIELD Community. However, it does not describe the goals of the DataSHIELD Community or how it achieves them, or contain any policies except those directly related to the decision-making process.

1.1 Foundational Principles

Principles of the DataSHIELD Community are described in detail in the following documents:

- The DataSHIELD Community Social Contract
- The DataSHIELD Community Diversity, Equality and Inclusion statement.
- The DataSHIELD Community Code of Conduct.

2 Overview

The purpose of the decision-making bodies of the DataSHIELD Community are to form and ratify policies which are thought to be of benefit to the DataSHIELD Community as a whole. It is expected that these policies will be under constant review and could change if felt beneficial.

Each decision in the DataSHIELD Community is made by one or more of the following:

1. The Voting Members by way of General Resolution or an election;
2. Steering Committee and/or its Chair;
3. The Core Groups;
4. Themes;
5. The individual Member(s) working on a particular task;

Most of the remainder of this document will outline the powers of these bodies, their composition and appointment, and the procedure for their formal decision-making. The powers of a person or body may be subject to review and/or limitation by others; in this case, the description in this Constitution about that reviewing body or person will state this. In the list above, a person or body is usually listed before any people or bodies whose decisions they can overrule or who they (help) appoint - but not everyone listed earlier can overrule everyone listed later.

3 General rules and structure

Participation in the DataSHIELD Community is voluntary. Nothing in this constitution imposes an obligation on anyone to do work for the DataSHIELD Community. **Most decisions should be made informally and through consensus of the involved parties;** a person would normally be involved in the decision about which tasks are to be performed by them. The formal decision-making rules outlined in this document are to be used only if there is disagreement and no other resolution is possible. Someone who does not want to do a task which has been delegated or assigned to them does not need to do it and should, if possible, undertake to communicate the reasons why they do not wish or are unable to do the task to the requester. However, they must not actively work against these rules and decisions properly made under them.

1. A person may hold several posts, except that the Chair of the Steering Committee and the Chairs of the Core Groups should be distinct.
2. A person may leave the DataSHIELD Community or resign from a particular post they hold, at any time, by stating so publicly.

Figure 1 shows the structure and relationships of Stakeholders to the community. DataSHIELD Community Stakeholders are individuals or organisations who, potentially unknowingly, are affected by or have effects on DataSHIELD Community. The DataSHIELD Community is comprised of Stakeholders who actively participate in constructing assets (including software, educational resources, etc) and are knowingly affected by or have effects on DataSHIELD Community.

DataSHIELD Community External Parties are individuals who are affected by DataSHIELD Community, without knowing of its existence.

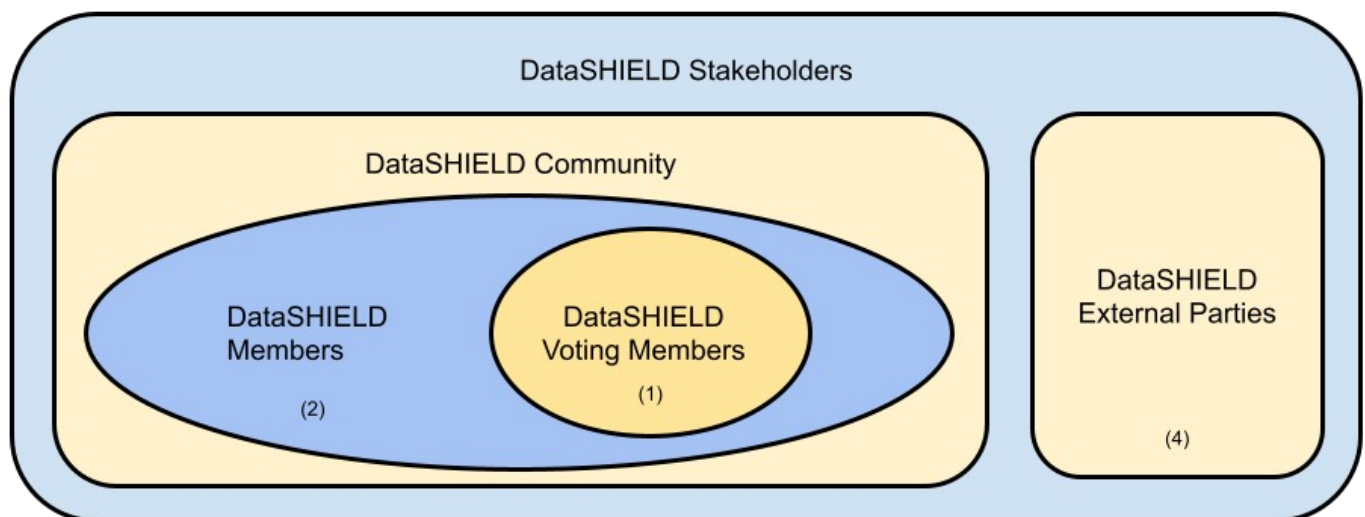


Figure 1: Structure and relationships of Stakeholders to the DataSHIELD Community

Within the community (Figure 2), different strands of work are organised into "Themes" to which both Voting Members and non-voting Members may belong. Each Theme is lead by a Voting Member who is the Theme Leader (see section 5.3, below). Theme Leads communicate with each other (i.e. between different Themes) in the Core Groups. There are two Core Groups: one for Technical aspects of the DataSHIELD Community, and one for Process/Community aspects of the DataSHIELD Community.

The Steering Committee provides overall direction for the DataSHIELD Community and is constituted from Voting Members of the community, as described in section 5.5 below. The Steering Committee receives recommendations from the Advisory Board but is not obliged to accept/follow them.

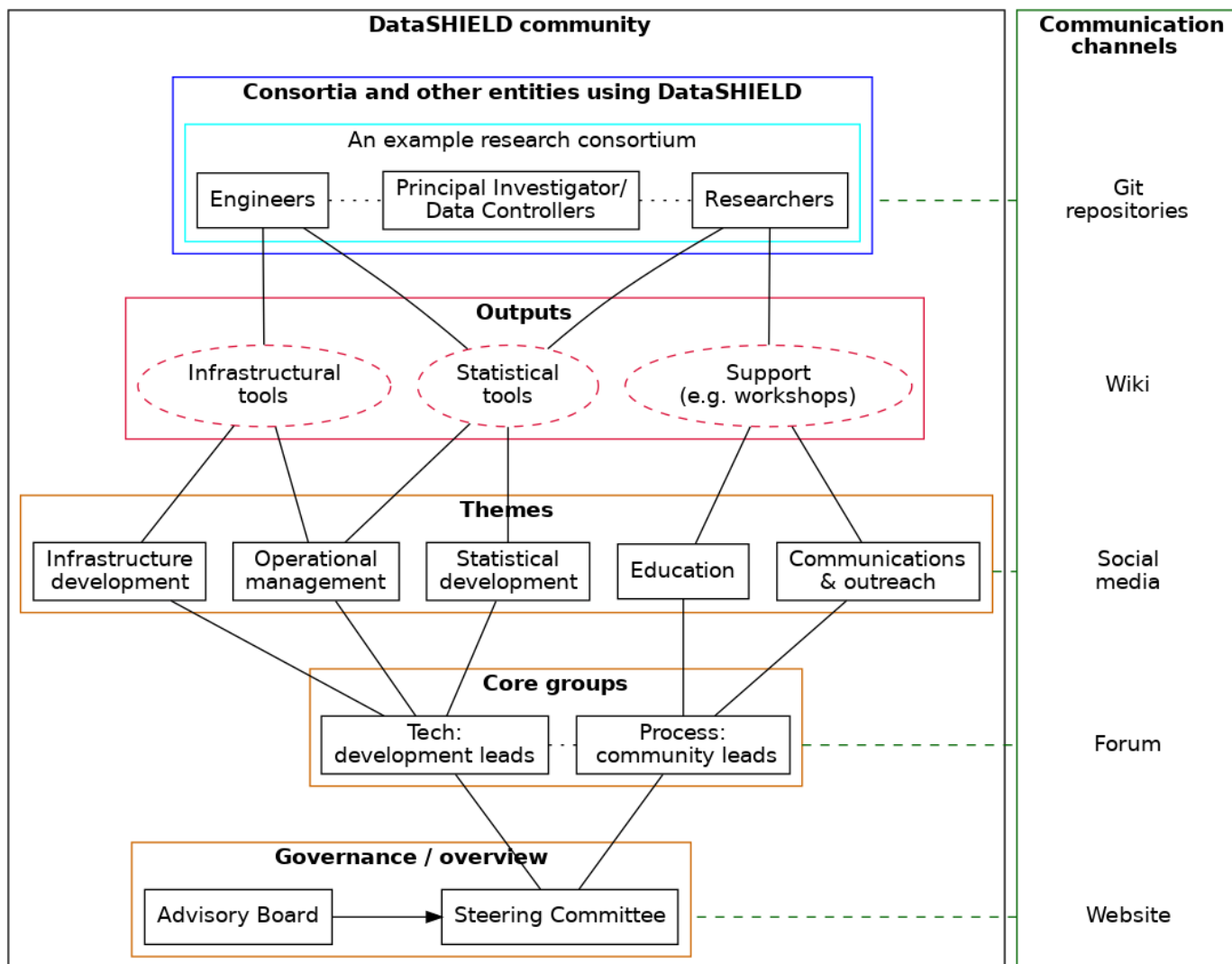


Figure 2: Structure of the DataSHIELD Community

4 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are the broadest grouping, and includes everyone who plays a part, either actively or passively, within the DataSHIELD Community. Below is a non-exhaustive list of key Stakeholders that have been identified; an individual or organisation may fit into more than one category of Stakeholder.

4.1 Funders

Funding is critical for enabling the development and deployment of DataSHIELD instances; funders therefore have an interest in the DataSHIELD project and should be considered as Stakeholders.

4.2 Data Providers / Data Custodians

We consider Data Providers and Data Custodians to represent people who have responsibility for research data in technical, metadata and legal capacities; these roles may have different names in other contexts, even if it means the same thing.

Data Providers and Data Custodians play a crucial role in implementing DataSHIELD Community software locally at an institution. They are responsible for remaining up to date with communications about DataSHIELD Community software and ensuring that DataSHIELD Community software infrastructure is deployed correctly (including ongoing maintenance and updates of infrastructure) in order to minimise disclosure risks and so that Users of their node can reliably conduct analyses. By doing so they help encourage the adoption of DataSHIELD Community software.

4.3 End User Organisations

End user organisations can be either individual institutions or broader, over-arching organisations such as research consortia. End user organisations are assumed to include one or more Principal Investigators (for research consortia) or other organisational lead, Data Controllers or Data Custodians (with legal responsibility for the data being analysed), engineers (to implement and maintain infrastructure) and other organisational members (who are involved in data preparation and/or analysis).

4.4 Data Subjects

Often, projects that host sensitive data have representation from individuals who have provided their data.

This should help with decision making in terms of ethics and governance as to whether it is acceptable to do something.

4.5 Members

Membership of the DataSHIELD Community is self-defined. Anyone can be a Member. Members can actively participate in the DataSHIELD Community and are encouraged to participate in the life of the project and the community as much as possible. There is no expectation of commitment to the DataSHIELD Community, no specific skill requirements and no selection process. They may work individually or as part of an organisation. Members are free to contribute to any of the "Themes" by participating in one or more of the working groups. They make valuable contributions, such as those outlined below, and submit these through the project's communication tools. Members' contributions enable the project team to ensure that they are satisfying the needs of those Members.

Notwithstanding the above, the DataSHIELD Community may choose to exclude someone from Membership if they are persistently acting against the principles of the community. This will be actioned by making a public statement on the website.

5 Roles and decision-making groups within the DataSHIELD Community

Roles are defined positions for individuals within the DataSHIELD Community, and have certain responsibilities to the project that they are expected to fulfill. People in defined roles also have certain privileges within the DataSHIELD Community in terms of helping steer the overall direction of the community - most notably, they have the right to participate in DataSHIELD Community decision-making processes, and to administer the relevant sections of the DataSHIELD Community wiki.

Decision-making groups are made of collections of individual roles. They may have certain tasks to complete, but exist mainly to take decisions for the community and steer the direction of the project (see Figure 2). The decision-making groups within the DataSHIELD Community are the Steering Committee, Core Groups and Themes. The DataSHIELD Advisory Board is intended to provide advice only.

5.1 Voting Members

Voting Membership is a role that DataSHIELD Community Members may have which confers certain privileges and obligations. Voting Members are those who:

1. Agree to further the aims of the DataSHIELD Community insofar as they participate in it;
2. Do work that is valuable for the DataSHIELD Community;
3. Agree to follow DataSHIELD Community principles;
4. Are eligible to participate in decision-making and decision-making groups;
5. Have trusted access to the wiki.

Procedures for gaining, suspending and revoking Voting Membership are detailed below in Section 7.

If a Voting Member is unable to attend a meeting, they are able to send a delegate (including non-voting Members) in their place who may vote on their behalf.

5.2 Themes

Themes are the way the day-to-day work of the community is organised. Themes are classified as either 'Process' or 'Tech' related - the Theme Lead will belong to the relevant Core Group as noted below.

Themes will have dedicated sections of the wiki related to their activities, where the Theme will state its agreed purpose, working practices and how it will communicate with other Themes. The Themes will also have a dedicated section of the forum, which should be used as the primary means for communication.

The Themes are shown in Figure 3 and listed here:

- **[Tech] Infrastructure development;** this might include, for example, working groups on:
 - Armadillo / Molgenis
 - Coral
 - Opal / OBiBa
- **[Tech] Operational management** (deployment and infrastructure management)
- **[Tech] Statistical development;** this might include, for example, working groups on:
 - "Base" functions
 - "Omics" functions
 - Disclosure control considerations
- **[Process] Education;** this might include, for example, working groups on:
 - Beginners workshops
 - Tutorial development
- **[Process] Governance**
- **[Process] Communications and outreach;** this might include, for example, working groups on:
 - Organisation of Project Conference
 - DataSHIELD Community promotion via social media channels

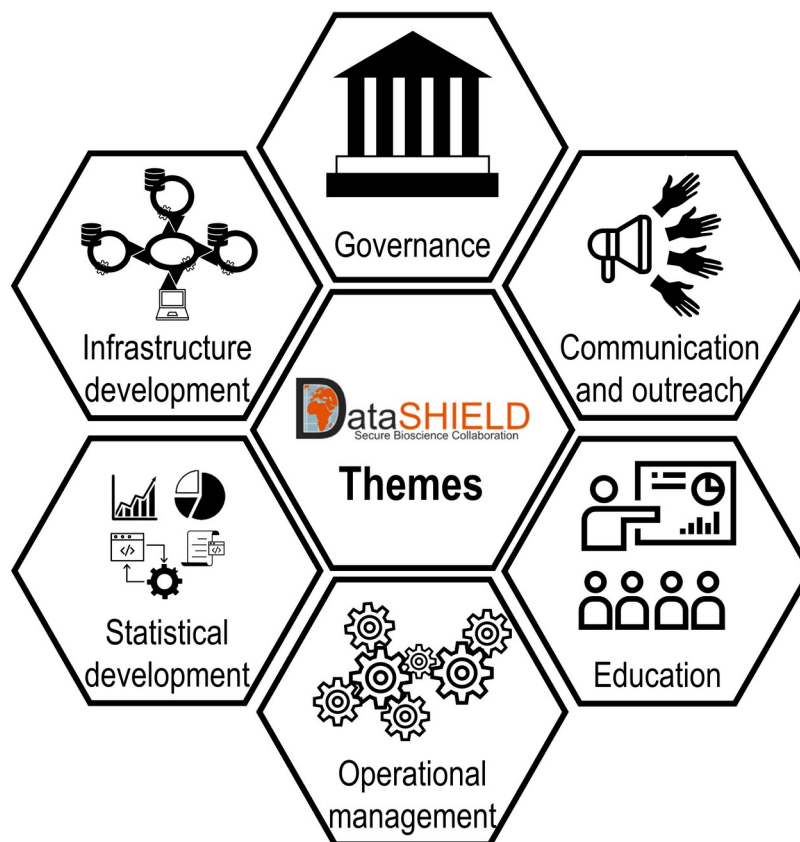


Figure 3: DataSHIELD Community Themes

If required, new Themes will be incorporated into the DataSHIELD Community over time, as a result of a resolution being passed and the Constitution being updated.

Themes may create dedicated working groups to achieve specific goals should that be deemed necessary. Themes may contain more than one working group - for example, the Statistical Development Theme may include separate working groups for different types of statistical functionality.

Themes will determine their schedule of meetings to suite their needs, but it is expected that Themes will convene a meeting at least once every 4 months. Theme Leads will be responsible for coordinating the scheduling of meetings, and the communication of the schedule.

Themes will be responsible for monitoring the needs of the community with respect to the Themes' area, and will endeavor to address those needs, and engage with Members of the community who can assist in addressing the issue in a timely fashion.

For Themes which are developing software, other Themes and Members should be able to expect that the software has been tested and documented.

5.2.1 Members of the Themes

Themes are made up of Community Members (i.e. Voting and non-voting Members of the DataSHIELD Community). **Each Theme will agree among the Voting Members to have one person who is the Theme Lead**; this person acts as the delegate to the Core Group. The role of Theme Lead **may be shared between a maximum of two Voting Members**.

Decision-making is by consensus, led by Theme Lead and other Voting Members of the DataSHIELD Community. Disagreements should be escalated to relevant parent groups (Core Groups or Steering Committee, as appropriate). Decisions which may have implications for other parts of the DataSHIELD Community should also be notified to the Core Groups to ensure good functioning across the community.

5.3 Theme Leads

Each Theme will have a Lead; this role may be a shared role as noted above. DataSHIELD Community Theme Leads are Voting Members and will be elected using the decision-making process; there is no term limit for Theme Leads.

They are responsible for ensuring constructive working practices among all the DataSHIELD Community Members in their Theme. They also act as the Theme representatives in the Core Group and are thus responsible for ensuring adequate communication and collaboration with other Themes.

5.4 Core Groups

There are two Core Groups for the DataSHIELD community: the Tech and Process Core Groups.

The primary objective of the Core Groups is to provide coordination across the different Themes. The Technical Core Group is responsible for overseeing the Themes which are categorised as having a predominantly technical purpose, whereas the Process Core Group focuses on overseeing Themes with a non-technical purpose (see section 5.2). These bodies have responsibility for ensuring that Themes are complementary to each other and do not overlap or duplicate work. They are also responsible for arbitrating decisions or conflicts between different Themes within their domain; problems may be escalated to the Steering Committee if required.

5.4.1 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Core Groups are:

1. To maintain oversight of the activities, progress and issues within their area
2. To provide leadership for DataSHIELD Community-related activities within their area, by reviewing current activities and proposing new ones, with the aim of avoiding duplication of efforts and promoting the improvement of existing ones
3. To improve communication across the DataSHIELD Community. Particularly, to ensure adequate communication with the other Core Group to ensure coherence between different aspects of the DataSHIELD Community

5.4.2 Members of the Core Groups

Core Groups are comprised of the Theme Leads from each of their respective areas. Each Theme has an equal voice in the Core Group (this is particularly relevant if any of the Theme Lead roles are shared). Theme leads may send a substitute to the Core Group if they are unable to attend a meeting. Theme Leads are automatically appointed to the Core Group.

5.5 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee provides overall leadership to the DataSHIELD Community and has day to day responsibility for the DataSHIELD Community. The Steering Committee will be quorate if greater than 50% of members are in attendance. Decisions will be made by consensus, but where this is not possible a simple majority of members present will suffice.

5.5.1 Responsibilities

Below are responsibilities of the DataSHIELD Community Steering Committee:

1. To provide leadership and foster a respectful, inclusive, and collaborative environment in the wider DataSHIELD Community.
2. To promote strategies for the implementation and use of DataSHIELD Community-based research among existing research networks.
3. To advocate for and represent the DataSHIELD Community at external meetings and events, including leading the organisation of the annual DataSHIELD Community meeting, incorporating both scientific and administrative (“routine”) business.
4. To be the penultimate body for adjudication of disputes and conflict.
5. To effectively progress the vision and purpose of DataSHIELD Community and the wider DataSHIELD Community.
6. To meet on a regular basis, at least quarterly (i.e. every three months), and additionally when a situation arises that needs addressing urgently.

5.5.2 Role of the Steering Committee

The major role of the Steering Committee is to ensure the sustainable operational functioning and communication of the DataSHIELD Community. Specific roles are detailed below.

1. **Responsibility for community policy ratification and implementation:** Example: new policies developed in the community to be reported to Steering Committee, who will decide how to and what policies to ratify/implement in a sustainable way.
2. **Authorise DataSHIELD Community events:** top level decision making, delegating responsibilities to training, communications and events working groups to ensure the events happen. E.g. training, Annual Conference.
3. **Ratify decision-making presented by the Core Groups.** Themes report to Core Groups and Core Groups present decisions to Steering Committee who ratify the decisions.
4. **Appoint new members to itself or remove existing members.**
5. **Community conflict resolution:** arbitrate on disputes that may be escalated to the Steering Committee by Core Groups.
6. **To keep an overview of the activities, progress and issues in the DataSHIELD Community.**
7. **Report at least annually, both internally to the DataSHIELD Community and externally, on the progress of the DataSHIELD Community.**
8. **To communicate externally about the work and activities of the DataSHIELD Community when required.**
9. **The Steering Committee may request that a working group is created to achieve a specific goal.** For example, the Steering Committee may suggest that a working group is created to organise the Annual Conference.

5.5.3 Members of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is constituted of the Steering Committee Chair PLUS a minimum of FIVE and a maximum of EIGHT Voting Members representing three constituencies:

- AT LEAST two members of the DataSHIELD Community Steering Committee should be Contributors participating in the Technical Core Group;
- AT LEAST two members of the DataSHIELD Community Steering Committee should be Contributors participating in the Process Core Group;
- AT LEAST one member of the DataSHIELD Community Steering Committee should be a Voting Member not involved in either of the Core Groups.

5.5.4 Appointment

When the above thresholds are not met (i.e. when there are fewer than two members from either of the Core Groups, or no member who is not involved in a Core Group), the Steering Committee may appoint new members until the threshold for each constituency is met.

When the number of members of the Steering Committee is fewer than eight

1. If there are at least two members from either of the Core Groups, the relevant Core Group is able to recommend new members to the Steering Committee who may then choose whether or not to accept the proposed new members.
2. If there is already at least one member who is not involved in a Core Group, Contributors who are not members of either of the Core Groups may self-nominate themselves as a new member to the Steering Committee who may then choose whether or not to accept the proposed new member.

A Voting Member is eligible to serve a maximum of TWO consecutive terms.

If a Voting Member has previously been re-appointed to the Steering Committee (i.e. they are finishing their second of two consecutive terms), they are only eligible to stand for re-election if they have not been a member of the Steering Committee within the previous 12 months.

5.5.5 Term limit

1. On January 1st of each year the term of any Steering Committee member who has served more than 42 months (3.5 years) and who is one of the two most senior members is set to expire on December 31st of that year.
2. A member of the Steering Committee is said to be more senior than another if they were appointed earlier, or were appointed at the same time and have been a member of the DataSHIELD Community longer. In the event that a member has been appointed more than once, only the most recent appointment is relevant.

3. Members may voluntarily leave the Steering Committee at any time and for any reason. In the event that the departure is planned, i.e. not the result of a force majeure, a notification of the intention to leave should be made to the Steering Committee at least 2 months prior. This will allow the Steering Committee to fill the vacant position.

5.5.6 Removal of members

The Steering Committee may remove an existing member of the Steering Committee if there is agreement of two thirds of members other than the member to be removed. In this situation, the Chair is equivalent to the other members of the Steering Committee and there is no casting vote. In situations where the Chair is the member to be removed, this will immediately trigger a new election for the Steering Committee Chair.

5.5.7 Special members

The Steering Committee will elect a Chair and Secretary from among their members. These roles are unique and may only be occupied by one person at a time. Each role will be confirmed on an annual basis, normally at the first meeting of each calendar year. Decisions will be made by consensus, but where this is not possible a simple majority of members present will suffice. In the event of a tie, the outgoing Chair shall provide a deciding vote.

The role of the Steering Committee Chair is to:

1. Adjudicate any disputes about interpretation of the constitution.
2. May delegate part or all of their authority to someone else within the Steering Committee, or withdraw such a delegation at any time.

Specific responsibilities of the Steering Committee Chair

1. The Chair ensures that the Steering Committee functions properly, that there is adequate participation at meetings, that all relevant matters are discussed and that actions or decisions are made and carried out
2. Plan and run meetings in accordance to the DataSHIELD Community
3. Bring impartiality and objectivity to meetings and decision-making
4. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall provide a deciding vote
5. In the event of absence from a Steering Committee meeting, the Chair will nominate one or more other Board members to organise a deputy. Any person who deputises shall temporarily assume the roles and responsibilities of the Chair.

The role of the Steering Committee Secretary is to:

1. Take votes amongst the Voting Members, and determines the number and identity of Voting Members, whenever this is required by the Constitution.
2. Stand in for the Steering Committee Chair if there is no other delegated Member or the Steering Committee Chair is otherwise unavailable.

3. If there is no Chair then the Secretary may make any decisions if they consider it imperative to do so.
4. When the Steering Committee meets, in conjunction with the Chair, ensure there is an agenda, and that minutes and actions are captured and recorded.

5.6 DataSHIELD Advisory Board (DAB)

The DataSHIELD Advisory Board (DAB) brings together a cross-section of DataSHIELD Community users with a wide range of expertise to discuss matters relating to the project and advise the Steering Committee on the overall direction of the project.

The DAB's role is advisory only, and there is no responsibility upon the DAB for implementation of software or ideas. The DAB may help adjudicate conflicts or indecision in the DataSHIELD Community Steering Committee if requested to do so. The DAB may also contribute to identifying the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the DataSHIELD Community. The DAB aims to reach any necessary decisions by consensus among its members. However, if the DAB is required to vote, it will do so on the basis of a simple majority vote of the members present.

Specific Responsibilities of the DataSHIELD Advisory Board Chair are as follows:

1. The Chair ensures that the DAB functions properly, that there is adequate participation at meetings, that all relevant matters are discussed and that actions or decisions are made and carried out.
2. Plan and run meetings in accordance to the DataSHIELD Community constitution.
3. Bring impartiality and objectivity to meetings and decision-making.
4. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall provide a deciding vote.
5. In the event of absence from an Advisory Board meeting, the Chair will nominate one or more other Board members to organise a deputy. Any person who deputises shall temporarily assume the roles and responsibilities of the Chair.

Specific Responsibilities of DataSHIELD Community Advisory Board members are:

1. To take a proactive role in the DAB.
2. To attend DAB meetings regularly (approximately 3 - 4 meetings a year).
3. To contribute to projects, initiatives or activities agreed by the DAB.
4. To provide advice to the DataSHIELD Community Steering Committee if requested or if otherwise appropriate.
5. To feedback or liaise with the wider DataSHIELD Community where necessary.
6. To inform the board if they can no longer commit time to the DAB.

5.6.1 Mode of Operation

1. Membership of the DAB is reviewed every 2 years. A call for new members to the board will occur when a member steps down, giving opportunity for any member of the DataSHIELD Community to

apply.

2. The Chair will engage with non-contributing board members. If not satisfactorily resolved, the member can be asked to leave the advisory board.
3. The DAB will meet *at least* three times per year (i.e. every 4 months).
4. The presence of 6 full board members (including the Chair) are required for a meeting to be quorate and to go ahead. In the event that the Chair is unable to attend, the Board will deputise a member to chair the meeting. The Secretary will identify a minute-taker in the event of their absence.
5. Decision making will be taken by a majority vote within the Board meetings. In the case of time-urgent decisions, a poll will be conducted by email of all members of the Board.
6. The DataSHIELD Advisory Board will provide an annual report back to the wider DataSHIELD Community at the annual DataSHIELD Conference (or equivalent).
7. Minutes from the DAB meetings will be made available via the DataSHIELD wiki.
8. The DataSHIELD Advisory Board follows the DataSHIELD Community Code of Conduct.

6 Membership

Voting Members will be publicly listed on the wiki (including date on which they become a Voting Member). If suspended this will also be noted. If removed then the person's name will be moved to a section of "ex" Voting Members.

6.1 Procedure for becoming a Voting Member:

1. Become a member of the community (i.e. become a participant in a Theme)
2. Demonstrate good work ethic
3. Get "sponsored" by one existing Voting Member
4. Confirm agreement to membership principles / rules (see section in Roles) by posting publicly on the forum or sending a publicly archived email
5. Application reviewed by a Voting Member from a different Theme who doesn't work regularly with Member applying to join the DataSHIELD Community. The Voting Member who is reviewing the application should be requested to do so by the original sponsoring Voting Member.
 1. **If supported:** Voting Member who is reviewing application recommends acceptance to the relevant Core Group (go to point 6)
 2. **If not supported,** Voting Member who is reviewing application should advise applicant what they need to do to be supported in future application. The applicant is permitted to reapply after a delay of 3 months. There is no right of appeal but the sponsoring Voting Member may choose to have a different Voting Member from the first time as a reviewer for the second (or subsequent) application.
6. Core Group approves application. If they do not approve the application, the Core Group must specify reasons why not and what needs to be done for a new application. The Applicant is permitted to reapply after a minimum delay of 3 months, once the conditions have been satisfied. They may alternatively appeal this decision to the Steering Committee.
7. Right of appeal (in case of rejection by the Core Group): the application is reviewed by the Steering Committee.

6.2 Procedure for suspending and revoking Voting Member status:

Voting membership may be suspended or revoked for different reasons, as listed below.

- When a Voting Member is suspended, their Voting Membership may be reinstated.
- When Voting Membership is revoked, reinstatement will necessitate going through the procedure for becoming a Voting Member described in section 6.1.

A Voting Member may of course resign at any time: their only obligation is to inform the Core

Group/Steering Committee.

1. **Actions against DataSHIELD Community principles:** a Voting Member is suspended by the relevant Core Group if proposed by two Voting Members and majority support by the Core Group. This decision must be confirmed by the Steering Committee at the next Steering Committee meeting. The suspended Voting Member has a right to present the reasons why they disagree with the suspension to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may either reinstate Voting Membership or revoke Voting Membership completely.
2. **Failure to respond to communication:** if there is no response to communication by a Voting Member over a prolonged period (at least 3 months), then Voting Member status is suspended. An application can be made for reinstating Voting Membership by the suspended Voting Member to the relevant Core Group with an explanation for reason why there was a lack of communication.

7 Assets held in Trust

In most jurisdictions around the world, the DataSHIELD Community project is not in a position to directly hold funds or other property. Therefore, property has to be owned by any of a number of organisations as detailed in section 7.3 below.

7.1 Relationship with Associated Organisations

Voting Members do not become agents or employees of organisations holding assets in trust for the DataSHIELD Community, or of each other, or of persons in authority in the DataSHIELD Community, solely by the virtue of being [Voting Members]. A person acting as a Voting Member does so as an individual, on their own behalf. Such organisations may, of their own accord, establish relationships with individuals who are also Voting Members.

7.2 Authority

1. An organisation holding assets for the DataSHIELD Community has no authority regarding the DataSHIELD Community's technical or non-technical decisions, except that no decision by the DataSHIELD Community with respect to any property held by the organisation shall require it to act outside its legal authority.
2. The DataSHIELD Community claims no authority over an organisation that holds assets for the DataSHIELD Community other than that over the use of property held in trust for the DataSHIELD Community.

7.3 Trusted organisations

1. Any donations for the DataSHIELD Community must be made to any one of a set of organisations designated by the Steering Committee Chair (or a delegate) to be authorised to handle assets to be used for the DataSHIELD Community.
2. Organisations holding assets in trust for the DataSHIELD Community should undertake reasonable obligations for the handling of such assets.
3. The DataSHIELD Community maintains a public List of Trusted Organisations that accept donations and hold assets in trust for the DataSHIELD Community (including both tangible property and intellectual property) that includes the commitments those organisations have made as to how those assets will be handled.

8 Decision-making procedure

1. The Voting Members follow the Standard Resolution Procedure (section 9 below). A resolution or ballot option is introduced if proposed by any Voting Member and sponsored by at least K other Voting Members, or if proposed by the Steering Committee. [NB: see item 8 and section 9.7 for explanation of variables 'K' and 'Q']
2. Votes are taken by the Steering Committee Secretary (or appropriate other neutral person agreed by the Steering Committee or Advisory Board; hereafter referred to only as the Steering Committee Secretary). Votes, tallies, and results are not revealed during the voting period; after the vote the Steering Committee Secretary lists all the votes cast.
3. Votes are cast by email or in a manner suitable to the Steering Committee Secretary. The Steering Committee Secretary determines for each poll whether voters can change their votes.
4. The Steering Committee Chair has a casting vote. There is a quorum of 3Q. The default option is "None of the above."
5. The voting period is 2 weeks, but may be decreased by 1 week or increased by up to a maximum of 2 weeks (i.e. a maximum of 4 weeks in total) by the Steering Committee, except that they may not do so in a way that causes the discussion period to end within 48 hours of when this change is made.
6. Delaying a decision by the Steering Committee:
 1. If the Steering Committee has made a decision, then Voting Members can override them by passing a resolution to do so.
 2. If such a resolution is sponsored by at least 2K Contributors, or if it is proposed by the Steering Committee, the resolution puts the decision immediately on hold (provided that resolution itself says so).
 3. If the original decision was to change a discussion period or a voting period, or the resolution is to override the Steering Committee, then only K Contributors need to sponsor the resolution to be able to put the decision immediately on hold.
 4. If the decision is put on hold, an immediate vote is held to determine whether the decision will stand until the full vote on the decision is made or whether the implementation of the original decision will be delayed until then. There is no quorum for this immediate procedural vote.
 5. If the Steering Committee withdraws the original decision, the vote becomes moot, and is no longer conducted.
7. Proposals, sponsors, ballot options, calls for votes and other formal actions are made by announcement on a publicly-readable forum designated by the Steering Committee; any Voting Member may post there.
8. Q is half of the square root of the number of current Voting Members. K is Q or 5, whichever is the smaller. Q and K need not be integers and are not rounded.

9 Standard Resolution Procedure

These rules apply to communal decision-making by committees and plebiscites, where stated above.

9.1 Proposal

1. The formal procedure begins when a draft resolution is proposed and sponsored, as specified in section 8 (Item 1).
2. This draft resolution becomes a ballot option in an initial two-option ballot, the other option being the default option, and the proposer of the draft resolution becomes the proposer of that ballot option.

9.2 Discussion and Amendment

1. The discussion period starts when a draft resolution is proposed and sponsored. The standard discussion period is 2 weeks. The minimum discussion period is 1 week and the maximum discussion period is 4 weeks.
2. A new ballot option may be proposed and sponsored according to the requirements for a new resolution.
3. The proposer of a ballot option may amend that option provided that none of the sponsors of that ballot option at the time the amendment is proposed disagree with that change within 24 hours. If any of them do disagree, the ballot option is left unchanged.
4. The addition of a ballot option or the change via an amendment of a ballot option changes the end of the discussion period to be one week from when that action was done, unless that would make the total discussion period shorter than the minimum discussion period or longer than the maximum discussion period. In the latter case, the length of the discussion period is instead set to the maximum discussion period.
5. The proposer of a ballot option may make minor changes to that option (for example, typographical fixes, corrections of inconsistencies, or other changes which do not alter the meaning), providing no Contributor objects within 24 hours. In this case the length of the discussion period is not changed. If a Contributor does object, the change must instead be made via amendment under section 9.2, item 3.
6. The Steering Committee may, at any point in the process, decrease the minimum discussion period by 1 week or increase the maximum discussion period by up to a maximum of 2 weeks from their original values in section 9.2, item 1, except that they may not do so in a way that causes the discussion period to end within 48 hours of when this change is made. The length of the discussion period is then recalculated as if the new minimum and maximum lengths had been in place during all previous ballot changes under section 9.2, item 1 and section 9.2, item 4.
7. The default option has no proposer or sponsors, and cannot be amended or withdrawn.

9.3 Withdrawing ballot options

1. The proposer of a ballot option may withdraw. If they do, new proposers may come forward to keep the ballot option alive, in which case the first person to do so becomes the new proposer and any others become sponsors if they aren't sponsors already. Any new proposer or sponsors must meet the requirements for proposing or sponsoring a new resolution.
2. A sponsor of a ballot option may withdraw.
3. If the withdrawal of the proposer and/or sponsors means that a ballot option has no proposer or not enough sponsors to meet the requirements for a new resolution, and 24 hours pass without this being remedied by another proposer and/or sponsors stepping forward, it is removed from the draft ballot. This does not change the length of the discussion period.
4. If all ballot options except the default option are withdrawn, the resolution is canceled and will not be voted on.

9.4 Calling for a vote

1. After the discussion period has ended, the Steering Committee Secretary will publish the ballot and call for a vote. The Steering Committee Secretary may do this immediately following the end of the discussion period and must do so within seven days of the end of the discussion period.
2. The Steering Committee Secretary determines the order of ballot options and their summaries used for the ballot. The Steering Committee Secretary may ask ballot option proposers to draft those summaries, and may revise them for clarity at their discretion.
3. Minor changes to ballot options under section 9.2, item 5 may only be made if at least 24 hours remain in the discussion period, or if the Steering Committee Secretary agrees the change does not alter the meaning of the ballot option and (if it would do so) warrants delaying the vote. The Steering Committee Secretary will allow 24 hours for objections after any such change before issuing the call for a vote.
4. No new ballot options may be proposed, no ballot options may be amended, and no proposers or sponsors may withdraw if less than 24 hours remain in the discussion period, unless this action successfully extends the discussion period under section 9.2, item 4 by at least 24 additional hours.
5. Actions to preserve the existing ballot may be taken within the last 24 hours of the discussion period, namely a sponsor objecting to an amendment under section 9.2, item 3, a Voting Member objecting to a minor change under section 9.2, item 5, stepping forward as the proposer for an existing ballot option whose original proposer has withdrawn it under section 9.3, item 1, or sponsoring an existing ballot option that has fewer than the required number of sponsors because of the withdrawal of a sponsor under point section 9.3, item 2.
6. The Steering Committee Secretary may make an exception to section 9.4, item 4 and accept changes to the ballot after they are no longer allowed, provided that this is done at least 24 hours prior to the issuance of a call for a vote. All other requirements for making a change to the ballot must still be met. This is expected to be rare and should only be done if the Steering Committee Secretary believes it would be harmful to the best interests of the project for the change to not be made.

9.5 Voting procedure

1. Options which do not have an explicit super-majority requirement have a 1:1 majority requirement. The default option does not have any super-majority requirements.
2. Super-majority is required when changing the DataSHIELD Community Governance Policy Document. The super-majority requirement is 2:1, unless otherwise specified
3. The votes are counted according to the rules in section 9.6.
4. In cases of doubt the Steering Committee Secretary shall decide on matters of procedure.

9.6 Vote Counting

1. Each voter's ballot ranks the options being voted on. Not all options need be ranked. Ranked options are considered preferred to all unranked options. Unranked options are considered to be ranked equally with one another. Details of how ballots may be filled out will be included in the Call For Votes.
2. If the ballot has a quorum requirement R any options other than the default option which do not receive at least R votes ranking that option above the default option are dropped from consideration.
3. Any (non-default) option which does not defeat the default option by its required majority ratio is dropped from consideration.
 1. Given two options A and B , $V(A,B)$ is the number of voters who prefer option A over option B .
 2. An option A defeats the default option D by a majority ratio N , if $V(A,D)$ is greater or equal to $N * V(D,A)$ and $V(A,D)$ is strictly greater than $V(D,A)$.
4. From the list of undropped options, we generate a list of pairwise defeats.
 1. An option A defeats an option B , if $V(A,B)$ is strictly greater than $V(B,A)$.
5. From the list of [undropped] pairwise defeats, we generate a set of transitive defeats.
 1. An option A transitively defeats an option C if A defeats C or if there is some other option B where A defeats B AND B transitively defeats C .
6. We construct the Schwartz set from the set of transitive defeats.
 1. An option A is in the Schwartz set if for all options B , either A transitively defeats B , or B does not transitively defeat A .
7. If there are defeats between options in the Schwartz set, we drop the weakest such defeats from the list of pairwise defeats, and return to step 5.
 1. A defeat (A,X) is weaker than a defeat (B,Y) if $V(A,X)$ is less than $V(B,Y)$. Also, (A,X) is weaker than (B,Y) if $V(A,X)$ is equal to $V(B,Y)$ and $V(X,A)$ is greater than $V(Y,B)$.
 2. A weakest defeat is a defeat that has no other defeat weaker than it. There may be more than one such defeat.
8. If there are no defeats within the Schwartz set, then the winner is chosen from the options in the Schwartz set. If there is only one such option, it is the winner. If there are multiple options, the elector with the casting vote chooses which of those options wins.

9.7 Notes and definitions

- Options which the voters rank above the default option are options they find acceptable. Options ranked below the default options are options they find unacceptable.
- When the vote counting mechanism of the Standard Resolution Procedure is to be used, the text which refers to it must specify who has a casting vote, the quorum, the default option, and any super-majority requirement. The default option must not have any super-majority requirements.
- The Standard Resolution Policy is based on that used by the Debian Free Software Project (described at <https://www.debian.org/devel/constitution>) for which specific adjudication software has been developed (see <https://www.debian.org/vote/>).

Definitions (taken from above descriptions):

A is a voting option

B is another voting option

D is the default option ("None of the above")

K is Q or 5, whichever is the smaller. K need not be an integer and is not rounded.

N is a majority ratio

Q is half of the square root of the number of current Voting Members. Q need not be an integer and is not rounded.

R is the quorum requirement (if the ballot has one)

$V(A,D)$ is the number of votes difference between A and D; similarly, $V(D,A)$ is the number of votes difference between D and A. $V(A,D)$ and $V(D,A)$ are inverse (opposite) to each other.

10 Changelog

10.1 (2022-03-17)

AM: Andrei, Becca, Elaine, Olly, Angela, Florian, Stuart, Alex, Demetris, Gonçalo, Katrine, Kim, Tom, Yannick

PM: Paul, Gonçalo, Simon, Angela, Alex, Yannick, Florian, Becca, Elaine, Andrei, Stuart, Kim

10.2 (2022-05-17)

Present: Alex, Andrei, Angela, Stuart, Florian, Justina Ronkainen, Michaela Faye, Serena Fossati (ISGlobal), Gonçalo, Paul Burton, Marieke (LifeCycle)

10.3 (2022-05-24)

Present: Andrei, Alex, Angela, Madeleine, Paul, Demetris, Elaine, Gonçalo, Marieke, Michaela Faye, Stuart, Tom, Florian, Yannick

Discussion about purpose / name

10.4 (2022-06-07)

Present: Andrei, Alex, Stuart, Paul, Florian, Angela, Elaine

Alex provided intro based on organisational chart/diagram.

We then started to discuss document structure using the new (essentially blank) document for the constitution.

10.5 (2022-06-14)

Present: Andrei, Alex, Stuart, Florian, Becca, Michaela Faye

10.6 (2022-06-21)

Present: ???

10.7 (2022-07-05)

No meeting: presentation at EUCAN-Connect GA in Rotterdam, Netherlands to raise awareness and get further participation.

10.8 (2022-07-12)

Present: Andrei, Michaela Mayrhofer and Michaela Faye, Tom Bishop, Stuart, Gonçalo, Alex, Florian (later)

10.9 (2022-07-30)

Present: Alex and Andrei

Alex and Andrei reviewed members / membership process on 26 July

Need to discuss with others and continue...

Need to:

- integrate processes above into main document
- read through entire document to find consistencies / inconsistencies / duplications / missing sections etc

10.10 (2022-08-02)

Present: Alex, Andrei and Stuart

- Reviewed discussion from last week (particularly, members)
- Reviewed first section of document down to and including Individual community roles.
- Reviewed diagrams that Stuart has been developing

10.11 (2022-08-09)

Present: Andrei, Florian and Stuart

- Started from "Theme leads"
- Exercises matching - members / themes / forum areas
- Talked a lot about Themes. Agreed that we should use this terminology and be precise/consistent throughout the documentation but explain in more detail in the Glossary (e.g. that 'Themes' is the DS terminology but is also equivalent to what people might call 'Working Groups')
- NB: plan is to FINALISE the document by 4th October. Then, a clean pdf version will be mailed to all conference
- Added names of people who attended previous meetings (but not detail of what was discussed)

10.12 (2022-08-16)

Present: Stuart, Alex and Florian

- Started/Extended from Themes onwards
- Discussed whether we should have a clean Version 2 of the document (i.e. without colours) with clear structure in order to see where changes are still necessary
- Some paragraphs still seem to be not intuitively sorted
- Started discussing decision-making part: Q => Is the DAB considered a decision-making body since it is advisory only?

10.13 (2022-08-23)

Present: Andrei, Alex, Florian and Stuart

- Reset author colors
- Renumbered/releveling headers
- Restructure "Decision-making"
- Reworded description of DAB
- "Decision-making procedure" section added
- Discussed creating feedback form.
- Discussed timetable for the future

10.14 (2022-08-30)

Present: Andrei, Alex, Florian and Stuart

- Discussion on decision-making procedure (Section 10)
- Change on having a standard period for discussion (2 weeks), a minimum period (1 week) and a maximum period (4 weeks) subject to delaying/bringing the vote forward
- deadlines for proposals before a physical meeting, such as a DataSHIELD Conference / General Assembly need to be publicly announced
- Explanations for "K" and "Q" necessary (reference to variables pulled forward)
- Worked through voting period, discussion period, procedures for making proposals.

10.15 (2022-09-06)

Present: Andrei, Florian and Stuart

- Vote Counting Procedures
- For now: All voting issues should be a simple majority (1:1 majority) except for changes to the Project Governance Policy Document where there should be a super-majority of 2:1. Other specific defined circumstances
- Adding definitions of variables from the voting sections
- Discussion of who Founding Voting Members should be

- Discussion of how to set up initial Steering Committee - this is dependent upon who are in the Core Groups (which is dependent on the Themes!)
- Started to fill in Theme appointments / members etc. (Section 7.3)
- DAB section (6.4) needs to be reviewed

10.16 (2022-09-13)

Present: Andrei, Alex, Florian and Stuart

- Cleaning up DAB Section
- Cleaning up Steering Committee Responsibilities (Core Groups / Themes points put into the relevant sections); changed order to reflect importance properly
- Overhauled the Core Group + Themes Section
- Converted Bullet Points into structured Item List of how to become a Voting Member

10.17 (2022-09-19 to 2022-09-21)

Present: Florian, Stuart and Andrei

- Harmonising the wording around the community project name (DataSHIELD Community) so that it is consistent and can be replaced easily once a proper name has been found
- Merging sections in order to avoid duplication (specifically around SC / Core Groups / Themes)
- Re-phrasing Suspending and Revoking Voting Membership
- Adding section for the "Assets held in Trust"
- Conversion to LibreOffice document and tidying up (including formal section numbering).
- Corrected/added cross-referencing section links etc
- Export to PDF for review by community members after checking section numbering (highlighted); delete timetable for adoption; circulate!

10.18 (2024-08-05 to 2024-09-10)

Governance Theme: Andrei, Florian, Marije, Stuart and Tom, and Simon Parker (DAB Chair)

- Change wording of name from '[Community Project]' to 'DataSHIELD Community'
- Reduced suggested frequency of Theme meetings to once every 4 months minimum.
- Minor corrections throughout document.
- Revised Advisory Board section slightly.