

Response to the Open Knowledge board request dated 17th of May, 2019

Deadline: 31 May 2019

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Note to authors:

This document represents an opportunity for the CKAN Community to come together with a single purpose and design a sustainable model for the ongoing development of CKAN as both a software product and a thriving community of contributors. Please contribute in good faith and with shared optimism. There is much we can achieve if we all pool our resources and act as one. There is significantly more we can lose if we fail to come together, so let's spend the majority of our time and effort on the areas where strong consensus exists.

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Definitions

Core CKAN Community: Those who are most active and vocal in current CKAN issues over public CKAN community channels - Gitter Chat for CKAN, virtual Tech Team calls, collaborative document discussions, etc. It includes but is not limited to those who are active members of the CKAN tech team, the Govt Working group and the CKAN Association Steering group.

CKAN Developer Community: Those individuals and organisations who use, extend and maintain CKAN as a technical product for use in projects.

CKAN Contributor Community: A subset of the CKAN Developer Community, distinguished by being comprised of those individuals and organisations who are actually contributing via GitHub.com/CKAN, CKAN extensions and/or important CKAN project deliberations.

CKAN User Community: Those individuals and organisations who are using CKAN as a data management solution, or are considering its use in relation to projects they are involved in. Used objectively to also reference 'prospective' users, or 'target' users.

CKAN Vendors: Those organisations who provide commercial services surrounding CKAN and make a significant contribution to CKAN core.

CKAN Stakeholders: Key individuals and organisations who, either through direct or indirect influence within the project, require their perspectives to be considered when matters relating to the project are under deliberation.

Background

On the 17th May, the Chairman of Open Knowledge (Tim Hubbard) addressed the Core CKAN community with the following email,

“It is clear that the role of resourcing, chairing the steering committee and shepherding this important project into the future could be done better by others than Open Knowledge at this point. As the current stewards of the CKAN website, trademark and code, we are looking for ways for how CKAN can be supported and invested in going forward.

The consultation found that there was interest in the community (the current CKAN steering group, technical team and any other CKAN association) in taking this on and to self-organise and determine together the future of CKAN and the CKAN association members. As a consequence, the board voted last week for us to get in touch with you in the hope you are up for preparing a proposal.”

Upon receipt of the above email, the Core CKAN Community came together with a series of calls and jointly formed the proposal that follows.

It is important to recognise the necessity of a community venture, within the Open Community we have consistently seen independent companies and ventures come and go, CKAN has become a globally recognised tool, adopted by governments globally. As guardians of future users and generations, it is our responsibility to ensure that CKAN can never be lost in corporate assets.

Approach for this response

Suggestion:

1. CKAN assets are held in trust in a non-profit organization (e.g. OKI), with best practice policies on governing openly and for use of the trademark
2. Ensure that a viable community and product development model is adopted, securing the future of CKAN as a sustainable and relevant option for the (open) data management community.
3. Secure a solid roadmap for the future development of CKAN
4. Put in place the commitments needed to effect changes
 - a. Governance
 - b. Finance
 - c. Community

Governance of processes, stakeholder representation and participation.

Trustee Organization

The CKAN 'assets' - including trademark and ckan.org domain-name - are the identity of CKAN. We wish to see these managed most effectively for the benefit of the open data goals:

- the objective is agreed and published - e.g. "to support the publication and use of open data, to empower citizens through open knowledge"
- managed by volunteer trustees who are respected by the open data community to further those aims - voted in for 3 year terms by members from across the open data community
- work is done in the open - open proposals, open votes, open consultations, open decision-making, open accounts
- publishes a policy of use of the trademark, based on [Apache's](#) and defends abuse when necessary (e.g. DKAN)
- commercial partners are treated fairly

The CKAN community offers to create a non-profit entity to achieve these aims. Alternatively we wish to see Open Knowledge adopt these practices.

CKAN Association

We will re-form a new CKAN Association, as a non-profit organization.

We acknowledge that the formation of a new CKAN Association will take time, will face challenges and will require a clear model of Governance and contribution to be in active use prior to its formation. We will therefore re-form the new New Association over the existing practices of the current CKAN Association. The model and practices of the current CKAN Association are found at CKAN.org. Changes to these practices, as are indicated throughout parts of this community proposal, will be formalised via Steering Group approval and only then published on CKAN.org.

Within a reasonable timeframe, we will base the new CKAN Association articles of association on the [OSM Articles of Association](#), which offer an established set of processes for furthering the aims of the association, voting, membership and dispute resolution. The Association's "OBJECTS" (aims) will be the long-term support, growth and protection of the "assets" mentioned above.

Forming of members

The forming members that are CKAN Vendors will have to contribute the 'joining fee' at a level of their choosing as based on the proposed fee structure in this document at the time of formation of the new CKAN association.

Government Member Organisations may also be required to contribute a joining fee. The details of any such fees will be arranged with key representatives of the existing Government working group before being implemented.

It is expected that future interest groups will form and at such time joining fees will be discussed and developed in collaboration with petitioning members via minuted Steering Group meetings.

Steering group

This group oversee the CKAN Association, with wide representation from across the CKAN community, but with a relatively low expectation of time commitment - e.g. monthly meetings. They set the goals, create the strategy, set-up working parties and make decisions on the difficult issues. This ensures that key stakeholders are in overall control.

The steering group will be made up of volunteer representatives from across the CKAN community, looking to include **one** representative from each stakeholder group:

- Technical Team
- Government Member Organisations (The Govt Working Group: Canada, USA, Australia, etc)
- Open Knowledge - as founder
- Commercial Member Organizations (vendors, with the current set including OpenGov, Link Digital, Datopian and Keitaro)
- Additional supporters, as agreed e.g. Open Knowledge Ethiopia
- Any other wider groups stakeholders (e.g. civil society groups, journalists, cultural organisations and others)

In reaching out to the wider community we will draw on ongoing work by a network of researchers in US, Canada, France, Italy, Austria, Netherlands and other countries who are currently mapping the CKAN software ecosystem and how it is used. Wider representation informs the governance process and this could also help to identify new opportunities and challenges for the CKAN project.

Incorporation: Once the association is agreed we would establish the association as a non-profit organisation based in a country that would be agreed by a majority of the association. The first suggestions based upon users would be either the UK or the USA.

Initial roles: Upon formation, an initial interim Chair and Vice Chair would be voted and placed in an Interim role. Once initial Member Organizations members are agreed and made payments, a first General Meeting will take place, at which official nominations would be taken and voted upon for the official Chair and Vice Chair. Each officer would serve a period of one year and elections would be held at each Annual General Meeting (AGM). An elected officer can only hold office for a maximum of two subsequent terms.

We propose the interim Chair to be Steven De Costa of Link Digital.

Further, as funded roles are introduced it would be determined by the SG whether these roles will be represented on the SG as voting members. Roles which would be considered as growth in the project is achieved include:

- Executive Director
- Administrative Officer
- Marketing and Community Manager
- Product Owner

Member organizations

Organisations (whether Government or Vendor) are each invited to become a "Member organization".

They contribute:

- **financially** - for the common good of CKAN. They agree with the Steering Group the principles of how to spend that effectively for benefit of the association's aims, and the Members execute the initiatives and spending associated.
- **their time** - they are expected to volunteer efforts to support the Steering Group, Tech Team and work towards joint promotional activities.

Fee structure (proposed Vendor fees only, Govt fees TBD):

Each member pays a joining fee and an annual subscription:

- Gold member - joining fee \$30,000, annually \$15,000
- Silver member - \$20,000 and \$10,000
- Bronze member - \$8000 and \$4000.

Membership gives benefits, in proportion to the value of the tier joined:

- marketing - prominent display of logos on the ckan.org website and events. And use of endorsement e.g. "CKAN Association Gold Member".
- access to sales leads generated via ckan.org and CKAN Association outreach

The money raised is for:

- Hiring a Product Owner
- Sustaining the CKAN Association (admin costs)
- Communications - marketing, sponsorship, presence at selected conferences
- (Eventually) Sustaining CKAN software - paying for help to do releases, essential fixes

It does not pay for new feature development.

Member Organizations may well influence the overarching direction of CKAN through the Steering Group. However it offers them no extra privilege in having pull requests accepted, which continues to be coordinated by the Technical Team.

New membership applications after the initial formation would be by application and voted upon by the current membership at the time of application. If membership should lapse due to non-payment of subs, a new application would have to be lodged.

Technical Team

The CKAN Tech Team will continue to work for the best long-term interests of CKAN. With the relaunch of the association, with greater resources, we expect increased activity and contributions, but will otherwise operate as before.

The operation of the Tech Team, with detail of governance processes, is written on the [CKAN Technical Team page](#). Here is a summary:

- meeting frequently (currently 2x per week) to discuss and allocate design decisions, issues and pull requests
- work with the Steering Group to agree overarching strategy and get support/funding for essential works
- working in the open - discussions are on gitter, open email list and in Hangouts open to anyone
- "committers" are required to contribute their time to reviewing issues & PRs and in return have a say in the technical direction
- "tech lead" and "committers" are appointed by agreement of existing committers.

Funding for the CKAN technical team can come from, but not limited to, the CKAN Association directly or indirectly through its members. Funding requests must be approved by the Steering Group. Any disputes that the CKAN technical team can't resolve can be escalated to the Steering Group.

Product Owner role

A key change is to fund a central Product Owner role - someone who can devote some time to leading and coordinate efforts to further CKAN.

What:

- Paid contractor, initially part-time.
- Reporting to the Member Organizations (because they are funding it and will be involved week to week), with goals agreed with the Steering Group (because they are ultimately in charge but less time to be involved).

Responsibilities:

- Community coordination with User Community
 - drive engagement in social networks, community events and other meet-ups
 - outreach
- Deeply understand the users and their needs, and represent them to the CKAN Association to help it serve them
- Product management
 - coordinate regular meetings with stakeholder, dispute resolution, product updates etc.
 - drive future roadmaps
 - lead the tech community meetings
 - release manager

Why: As we start to realise the size of the physical user base of CKAN we must not allow the community to drift any further apart.

Leadership is an emergent quality of a highly collaborative team effort, rather than the driven result of a person or organisation engaged in a leadership role. As such, the Product Owner will lead *from within* the CKAN Contributor Community.

The Product Owner would also be a new hire within the association, reporting into the Steering Group Chair, the role would be responsible for managing and assigning tasks on the road map and ensuring the general health and well being of CKAN.

Resourcing, both in terms of time and money, and how this work will be done.

The initial resourcing as funded roles would be the Community Officer and the Product Officer, we see these starting as two part-time positions. These part-time positions would be funded from the initial association joining fees. We would envisage that the roles would command the following salaries. PO \$70,000 FTE and the Community Officer \$50,000 FTE.

We have looked at the initial funding route and expect a startup in the following levels.

Gold Members = 4 \$120,000

Silver Members = 2 \$40,000

Bronze Members = 1 \$8000

Start up fund of **\$168,000**

The division of work would initially continue as it is today, however, the PO would plan and allocate tasks within the contributor community. All members of the existing community have agreed to continue supporting the development efforts to ensure the sustainability of CKAN.

Furthermore, the association would agree to a royalty payment to The Open Knowledge Foundation as long as it remains a Non-Profit Organisation of a sum of 5% of annual subscriptions to a maximum of \$50,000 per annum.

Scale and pace of CKAN core development (in particular progress on roadmaps and migration to Python 3)

There is a strong need to accelerate the pace and scale CKAN core development. Through our proposal, we have highlighted and outlined how to structure governance, leadership and resourcing.

The current scale and commitment in terms of who is committed and to what measure is:

- OK Ethiopia - 120 hours per week, (less experienced contributors)
- Sergey (Link Digital) - 8 hours per week (minimum)
- Adrià (Open Knowledge Foundation) - ~4 hours per week
- David, 8 hours per week (OpenGov)
- Ian 8 hours per week (OpenGov) ~4 hours per week (Canada)
- Jay Guo ~4 hours per week (OpenGov)
- Konstantin (Keitaro) - 24 hours per week (minimum)
- ? (Datopian) - x hours per week

The volume of experienced core contributors totals to 56 hours per week over four primary funding sources (Note that the opportunity cost of Ian's time is taken from Canadian Government is not being factored)

Taking that into consideration and seeing the outstanding need to act quickly, we propose the following:

- Datopian raise their commitment to 16 hours at minimum
- LinkDigital raise their commitment to 16 hours at minimum
- OpenGov keep their commitments (20 hours)
- Keitaro keep their commitments (24 hours)

The above should take effect immediately upon acceptance of this proposal and should go on until the new CKAN Association and governance is in place, after which the Steering Group can decide on any update or changes.

Additional information about organizations and entities listed in the document

Link Digital

Link Digital was founded in 2001 with the guiding ideology that there was a better way to approach web services - a more transparent and open way to create meaningful interactions for society in an information age. From that initial determination, Link Digital has grown its operations covering an entire range of support for open data workflows in CKAN (Comprehensive Knowledge Archive Network). In particular Link Digital's services cover the development of custom CKAN extensions, custom data analysis and curation, cloud hosting of open data infrastructure and consultation/thought leadership surrounding data governance and discoverability. Although today the company is larger in scope and size, Link Digital has maintained its ambitious goals and continues to deliver world class open data workflow solutions to clients all over the world.

Although there are now a number of different options for implementing an open data solution, including others that are also open source, CKAN (Comprehensive Knowledge Archive Network) is a data management system that maintains an entirely open source code base with an unparalleled diversity of extensions, enhancements, and options, ensuring that the greatest range of flexibility and scalability is available to our clients to best fit their specific needs and purposes. Indeed, CKAN has been designed and developed to be robustly modular with a well-defined API (Application Programming Interface) so that it can securely and effectively integrated into any data ecosystem with a minimum amount of development overhead. From the user experience perspective, CKAN's powerful API and UI templating system gives a client the freedom to choose any CMS (Content Management System) to act as a seamless front-end augmentation to CKAN's data handling capabilities, that can also work with any client-specific branding/theming customisations. Finally, with a vibrant community of active developers and coding events like gov hack highlighting new innovations in open data solution engagement, the possibilities for CKAN are near endless and promise to be at the leading edge of tools and applications for the information age.

A key aspect of any Open Data initiative is data federation. In this regard, CKAN is unrivalled in its capability to federate with almost any data source or processing platform, and this federation can happen in one of several ways. The primary method used in CKAN federation is harvesting: which is where the CKAN portal pulls down data from a specified endpoint on a periodic schedule. The CKAN harvester then maps this data into datasets and resources compatible with the metadata schemas deployed on the portal. Harvesters can be configured to set security options and organisational associations. Harvesters already exist for a wide variety of data endpoints, as this is an active part of the CKAN community development effort. Data federation can also happen via syndication, where the CKAN data portal pushes any dataset updates to another CKAN endpoint configured to receive the syndication update. This is particularly useful for when there is an internal IAR (Information Asset Register) setup to facilitate the internal review of datasets before being pushed

(syndicated) out to a publicly accessible open data portal. The final option for search federation between CKAN data portals. This is a project Link Digital was the first to develop in the CKAN community, which enables one data portal to merge its own search results with other search federated CKAN data portals. So, a user searching on one data portal can see results from not only local results but also results from, say, a national data portal. Clicking on any such result will take the user to the dataset page on the external portal. All these options allow Link Digital to offer clients innovative data federation architectures that are optimised to their own data workflows and infrastructure.

In terms of install base, CKAN is the official data management solution for the US, UK, and EU governments, as well as being used for official governmental sites from Canada to the Netherlands, Iran, Saudi Arabia, China, South Africa, and Nepal. CKAN is also used for global organisations like The World Bank. An evolving list of CKAN portals can be found at Datashades.info, but below is a list of some of the more prominent Open Data portals that use CKAN:

- WorldBank: <https://datacatalog.worldbank.org>
- Africa (federated): <https://africaopendata.org>
- Australia: <https://data.gov.au>
- Austria: <https://www.data.gv.at>
- Beijing: <http://www.bjdata.gov.cn>
- Canada: <https://open.canada.ca/en>
- Croatia: <https://data.gov.hr>
- Denmark: <http://www.opendata.dk>
- EU: <https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/home>, <https://www.europeandataportal.eu/en/>
- Finland: <https://www.opendata.fi/en>
- France: <https://www.data.gouv.fr/fr/>
- Germany: <https://www.govdata.de>
- Hong Kong: <https://data.gov.hk/tc/>
- Hungary: <http://www.opendata.hu>
- Iran: <http://new.iranopendata.org>
- Ireland: <https://data.gov.ie>
- Israel: <https://data.gov.il>
- Malta: <http://www.opendatamalta.com/wp/>
- Nepal: <http://data.opennepal.net>
- The Netherlands: <https://data.overheid.nl>
- New Zealand: <https://data.govt.nz>
- Norway: <http://data.norge.no>
- Romania: <http://data.gov.ro>
- Russia: <https://opengovdata.ru>
- Saudi Arabia: <https://www.saudi.gov.sa/wps/portal/sn/p/main>
- Singapore: <https://data.gov.sg>
- Slovakia: <http://data.gov.sk/>
- South Korea: <https://www.data.go.kr>
- Sweden: <https://oppnadata.se/>
- Switzerland: <https://opendata.swiss/en/>
- Taiwan: <https://data.gov.tw>
- The Philippines: <https://data.gov.ph>
- US: <https://www.data.gov>
- UK: <https://data.gov.uk>
- South Africa: <http://data.gov.za>

Open Knowledge Ethiopia

Open Knowledge Ethiopia is a local group, under the Open Knowledge Foundation, which is established to work on open government data and open science. The group has run various workshop and training on open data and open science in collaboration with Addis Ababa University (AAU) attracting participants from academia, CSOs, and policymakers. OK Ethiopia with support of LinkDigital have also hired three CKAN contributors who are working on a full-time basis for CKAN project and other activities related to openness. AAU has been very supportive to our group providing a venue for training and workshop free of any cost and they have also agreed to provide an office for OK Ethiopia.

Team members

- Solomon Mekonnen

Solomon Mekonnen is an Academic Staff with the rank of Assistant Professor and Open Access Coordinator at the Addis Ababa University (AAU). Apart from his role at AAU, In addition, Solomon coordinates nationally Open Access Programme of an international network called Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) representing Consortium of Ethiopian Academic and Research Libraries. He is also a local organizer in Ethiopia for an international network called Open Knowledge. As part of his role as local organizer, he coordinates the Open Knowledge community in Ethiopia focusing on open data and open science. Solomon has participated in a number of projects related to open data and open access at the national and institutional level including a project on opening and visualizing Ethiopian election 2015 data, , Ethiopian Journals online (as Project Manager), National Digital Repository (NDR). Solomon has graduated with MSc. in Information Science from AAU and completed his PhD in Information from the University of South Africa.

- Ruth Bekele

Ruth Bekele is first full-time CKAN contributor in Ethiopia, currently working as a contributor too. Before devoting her work full time to CKAN Ruth was a full-time teacher at Akaki Adventist Academy and part timer at school of language and basic computer skills. Ruth studied her elementary, high school and preparatory at Ethiopia Adventist College and she used to volunteer in summer training given in the school. Graduated her BSc in Computer science from the University of Gondar. She is highly motivated to learn new things.

- Bati Taye

Bati studied BSc in Computer Science at Jigjiga University and he is in a graduate class of MSc in computer science specializing in cybersecurity. Bati worked as a Junior IT expert at Hawasa Industrial park in Ethiopia. He is currently working as CKAN contributor for Open Knowledge Ethiopia.

- Nehemiah Amanuel

Nehemiah has worked in Ethiopian AI pioneer iCog before and after graduation from Addis Ababa University with BSc in information system. Nehemiah has worked on two different project of which one was an android tablet application and the other flask web app. Nehemiah is currently working as fulltime CKAN developer for Open Knowledge Ethiopia.

Keitaro

Keitaro is an Open-source software company, developing ground-breaking solutions, empowering governments, non-profit organisations and fortune 500 companies across the globe.

Since its start in 2012, Keitaro has become a trusted advisor in the Open Source community, delivering full turn key solutions to its clients, standing together every step of the way, from start to finish and beyond.

While you focus on what you know best, we are here to “take the strain”, by developing solutions that will make a major impact on the way you achieve your goals. No matter if you have just an idea or a detailed specification, Keitaro can help.

Innovation empowers our lives, we live and breathe innovation, here at Keitaro we follow the market and stay on top of the latest trends and cutting edge technologies in a technical world that changes by the second. Our goal is to provide best-of-class services and deliver solutions that go beyond our customer's dreams.

Our international team of over 60 members, based in Macedonia, Sweden, Germany, the UK and the USA provides best in class solutions such as:

1. **Managed cloud services**

The premium managed cloud services enables the development of a secure cloud strategy, improvement and extension of capabilities, and the implementation and utilization of the clients' plan. By reducing the time spent on data management and continuous monitoring, the managed cloud services enable the implementation of business opportunities, such as improved agility and cost reduction.

2. **Open-source consultancy**

We provide consulting services across leading open-source technologies, utilizing various models that follow our clients through every step of the way for development and deployment of open source solutions.

What's more, our direct involvement in and contributions to the open source community afford us a deeper level of knowledge of the technologies, thereby enabling Keitaro to continually develop and implement new features, functionalities and opportunities for our customers. Not only do we share our code on [GitHub](#), but we also continuously improve our skills and promote knowledge sharing.

3. Modern apps delivery

At Keitaro, we design and build modern apps in a platform-independent way. Our modern applications support all types of devices, on all platforms. We provide applications that solve customers' problems and improve secure data accessibility, data entry automation, and testing and customer service at scale.

Core values and vision

We love what we do and we take a great sense of pride and joy in our work: from discussing technology and designing solutions, to the simple fix of a nasty software bug. Our passion for Linux and open-source defines and motivates us to create a unique customer experience and deliver outstanding software solutions.

Through continuous integration and deployment, we make sure that everything works in the best way Possible.

We make sure to give back to the community, by investing our knowledge, time and resources to support the open-source community. Every member of Keitaro shares this passion and is committed to the values of openness and community.

Passion and expertise are not enough to secure a successful project, perseverance is what allows us to endure and go above and beyond the call of duty to successfully secure a projects' completion.

Company's experience and structure

We are proud of our proficiency in providing solutions, flexible technology, and quick innovation. Our team consists of committed, experienced professionals who work together with the final goal to improve the world of technology, help other businesses grow and support our clients in achieving their goals.

We believe in teamwork, but also in the strength of the individual. Each member of our team provides their personal mark, which builds a sustainable working environment. As a flat organization, our company is structured in several groups per area of responsibility: project management, development, DevOps, design, and marketing.

We like learning new skills and experimenting with technologies. Docker, Kubernetes, Python, CKAN, Golang, PostgreSQL, JavaScript, HTML and CSS are the top technologies we use.

Through our customer projects and open source engagement, we have acquired vast knowledge and experience that has contributed to our members being involved

and contributing to the CKAN Core team. Keitaro's team members actively participate and add additional value to the development of this open-source technology.

Our clients are our partners. Their success is our success. Helping them reach their goals is our primary aim.