Oxalis Community Founding Meeting

(Digital meeting)
November 19th 2020, Online

Background Document for Voting Item 1

Approval of preliminary governance model

Last updated 2. November 2020

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1 Introduction

The primary purpose of establishing an Oxalis community is to establish a not-for-profit platform for the continued maintenance of the Oxalis open source software. The platform shall be solid enough to ensure high quality and professionalism in the software development going forward – and with sufficient focus on Peppol compliance and openness (to ensure a user-driven approach).

With Voting Item 1 the organizations with voting rights can approve

- The overall purpose of the Oxalis Community

- The high-level strategy for establishing a robust-, scalable- and sustainable governance structure for the Oxalis Community.

To support the such approval, this document lays out the governmental ecosystem around the Oxalis software, the purpose of the Oxalis Community and a strategy for the implementation of a community governance model.

At the inauguration meeting the organizations with voting rights are kindly asked to approve the role of the community - as well as the proposed governance implementation strategy.

2 Background information

2.1 The Oxalis ecosystem

The Oxalis software surroundings is a complex landscape of stakeholder organisations and governance areas. In this landscape the Oxalis implementers need to identify the origin of an operational issue in order to address the right governance body, which often has proven difficult.

- Issues related to onboarding tests, PKI certificates, transport protocol specifications and Peppol compliance issues are to be addressed directly to OpenPeppol

- Issues related to access point agreements and national conditions for operating as a Peppol Access Point are to be addressed to the local Peppol Authority

- Issues related to functionality in the Oxalis software are to be addressed to the Oxalis software development body[1] implemented and run by NorStella.

In the past the Oxalis implementers had no direct impact on the development of the Oxalis software, and no possibility for getting software specific assistance from the Oxalis software provider. Establishment of an Oxalis community will gradually change this situation and the Oxalis implementers will now get:

- An official arena for defining both key criteria and a strategic roadmap for the development of the Oxalis software

- Indirectly a guarantee[2] that the Oxalis software components will be maintained and further developed.

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[1] For details please refer to section 2.3 The oxalis Governance Bodies
[2] Provided sufficient enough funding from the community - either by membership fees and/or by crowdfunding.

The ecosystem around the Oxalis software provides the optimal basis for supporting the Oxalis implementers:

- OpenPeppol and the Peppol Authorities: facilitate technical onboarding (PKI & Test), and manage Peppol compliance issues, sustainability of e-delivery specifications, establishment and control of service level requirements etc.

- The Oxalis Community: will provide a strategic roadmap for the Oxalis software, as well as prioritization, functional and non-functional requirements according to their operational needs

- NorStella: will facilitate the Oxalis Community legally, to organize and run the Oxalis development activities and to facilitate the development of Oxalis components - within the given direction and budget provided by the Oxalis Community.

Provided below is a high-level overview of the Oxalis ecosystem.
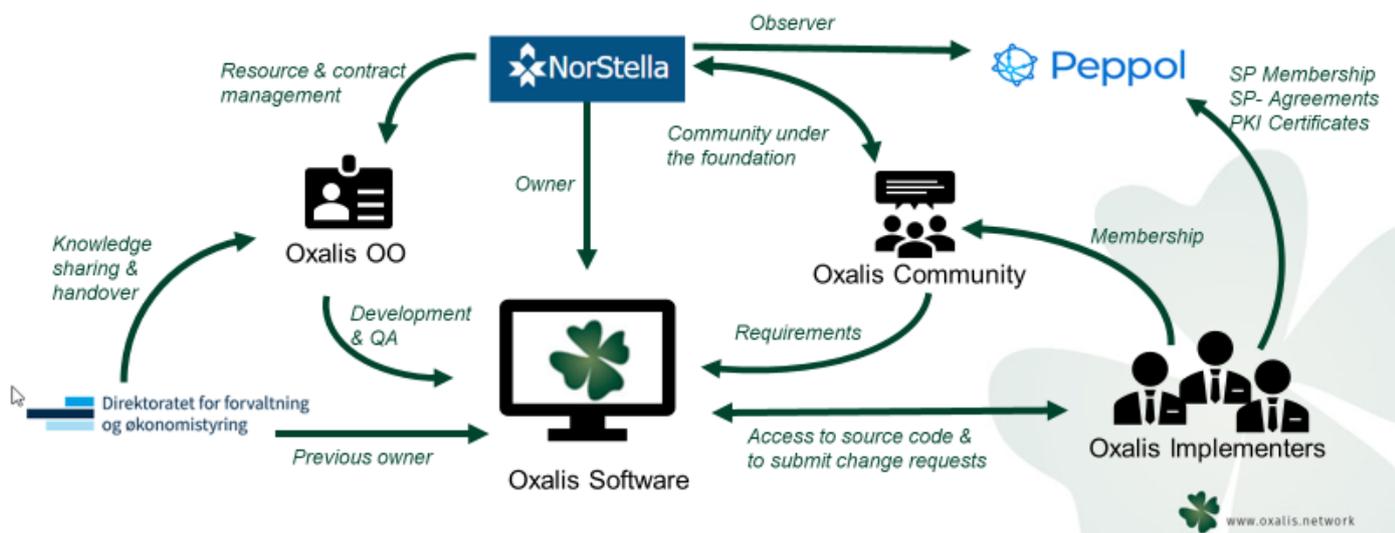
2.2 The governance landscape around the Oxalis software development

As mentioned above, the establishment of the Oxalis Community as part of the NorStella foundation - serves the purpose of establishing a not-for-profit platform for maintenance and further development of the Oxalis software. A platform that enables a structured and professionalized development of the Oxalis software according to needs and requirements of the implementers - without expecting Oxalis implementers to be directly involved in the software development process.

A high-level overview of the ecosystem planned is provided below.
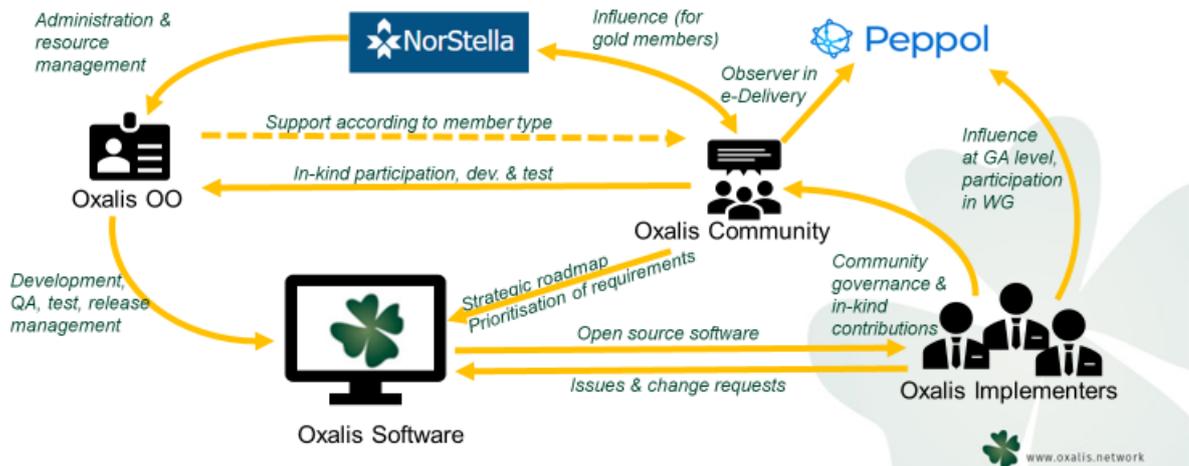
The dotted line between the Oxalis Community and the Oxalis Operating Office indicates that the type, level and structure of support to Community members are yet to be defined.

2.2.1 The Oxalis Community membership

The Oxalis Community is going to open to all Oxalis implementers[3] who want to sign up as a member. The ability to download the Oxalis software components, report issues and to submit change requests is open to everyone, but only Oxalis Community members are guaranteed responses to such request.

The Oxalis Community members fund the development of the Oxalis software and they will therefore be granted special rights to:

- Early releases, hot fixes and add-on components.

- A direct line to the Oxalis Operational Office (OO)

- (will over time be provided with) collaboration spaces, FAQ libraries and support options[4].

The current membership structures operate with 2 levels of membership;

- Gold members can influence the direction of- and further development of the Oxalis software by representation and voting rights

- Regular members get access to early releases, community specific documentation[5] and are informed directly about hotfixes and upcoming releases.

The current membership structure[6] has been formally defined by NorStella in collaboration with the Oxalis Advisory Board and the Interim Steering Committee. Any changes to this structure, will only be made after consulting the Oxalis Community management team.

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[3] To be eligible for membership (in the Oxalis Community) it is mandatory to have implemented the Oxalis software.
[4] Such options are to be defined and implemented according to available budget, available resources and maturity of operations.
[5] Strategic roadmaps, development plans, overview over prioritized requirements etc.
[6] Please refer to the Oxalis website for details (www.oxalis.network).

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1371 Asker, Norway

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number 977 143 330
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2.2.2 The OpenPeppol membership

There will be no changes, going forward, to the Oxalis implementers relation to OpenPeppol, or to the fact that influence on SLA's, specifications or compliance policies in the network are handled via the OpenPeppol AISBL organisation structure.

NorStellas OpenPeppol membership serves the sole purpose of ensuring NorStella access to- and timely information about OpenPeppol e-delivery requirements and specifications. This up to date information is a requirement to be able to predict the need for alteration of the Oxalis software - or development of new functionality. The membership of OpenPeppol will be as observer only and will leave no possibility for NorStella or the Oxalis Community to take part in the OpenPeppol decision making process.

2.3 The Oxalis governance bodies

To support the ecosystem described above the governance round the Oxalis software is divided into three separate areas:

- The strategic governance will be handled in- and by the Oxalis Community - and will focus on identification and the prioritization of requirements to the Oxalis software

- The operational governance will be handled by the Oxalis Operational Office (OO), assigned by NorStella and funded by the Oxalis Community. The operational governance will focus on daily operations, software development, change and release management, quality assurance etc.

- The legal governance is handled by NorStella as part of the daily operation of the foundation, and focuses on IPR protection, membership management, accounting and budget controlee, contracting and assignment of resources etc.

Please find below a high-level overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Oxalis governance bodies:

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3 The roles of the Oxalis Community

As mentioned above the incoming funds from the Oxalis Community (membership fees) is the economic basis for the Oxalis-specific parts of the ecosystem. The membership fees fund the continuous software development required to ensure Peppol compliance - both technical and performance related changes.

At first glance, it appears as though the Oxalis Community is mainly being established as a funding mechanism, but as the governance structure illustrated above shows, the Oxalis Community will be a much more significant player in the development of the Oxalis software. The Oxalis Community is the arena for defining:

- How to prioritize future development of functionality in the existing Oxalis components

- What new functionality to add (directly in the Oxalis software or as plug-in)

- How to manage the product strategy in general.

The primary role of the Oxalis Community is, in other words, to feed the development process with requirements and recommendations, to lay out the need of the implementers and to decide in which order to implement changes and new functionality.

4 The governance strategy and terms in office

In order to facilitate the establishment of a futureproof and solid governance structure for the Oxalis Community, in parallel with the handing over of the Oxalis software ownership - and the establishment of an operational office (OO), NorStella proposes that the Oxalis Community governance is implemented according to the timeline illustrated below:

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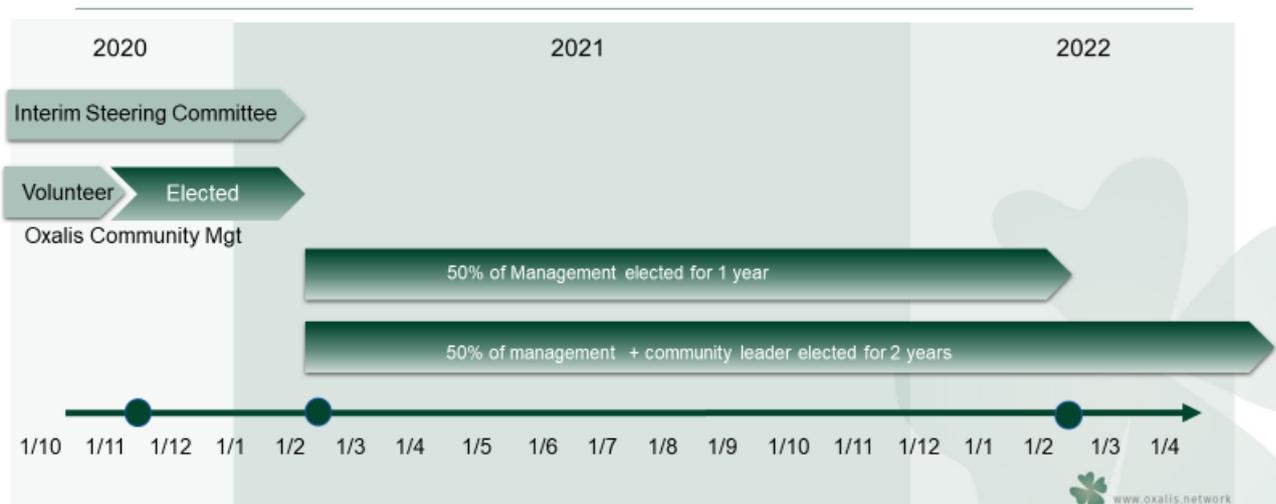
As illustrated in the timeline above, the Oxalis Community Management is elected at this meeting to handle community management obligations until a more formal management structure is in place. This team constitutes themselves, appointing a chair, a steering committee member and a Peppol e-delivery liaison, and defines how to take responsibility for strategic change management.

The primary task of the elected Oxalis Community Management will be as follows:

- Strategic change management; defining the strategic priority of suggested changes
- Defining and documenting the Oxalis Community governance bodies, to be implemented in 2021.
- Appointing a Chair
- Appointing a member to the Interim Steering Committee
- Appointing an observer to the e-Delivery Community in OpenPeppol.

5 Voting Item 1 - approval of the governance model

5.1 The role of the Oxalis Community

The Oxalis gold members assembled[7] on November 19th, 2020 are asked to approve that the role of the Oxalis Community is as follows:

- To fund activities related to the community administration and operation, as well as Oxalis software development, test and quality assurance - by use of membership fees.
- To self-organize the management of the Oxalis Community
- To define-, document- and maintain a product strategy for Oxalis
- To define-, document- and maintain a roadmap for development of functionality in the Oxalis software components
- To gather-, consolidate- and prioritise Oxalis software and support requirements.

5.2 The strategy for implementing the community governance

The Oxalis gold members assembled[6] on November 19th, 2020, will be asked to approve the following strategy for implementing the Oxalis Community governance:

1. An Oxalis Community Management Team will be elected at the meeting November 19th, 2020
2. The Oxalis Community Management Team elected in 2020 will remain in office until the first constitutional meeting in the Oxalis Community (planned for first quarter of 2021).
3. At the first constitutional meeting in the Oxalis Community a more detailed governance structure will be formally approved and implemented.

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[7] Assembled in order to inaugurate the Oxalis Community as a community under the NorStella foundation.