

Movement Charter

The Wikimedia Movement is an international, sociocultural movement, whose mission is to bring free knowledge to the whole world. The Wikimedia Movement Charter (“the Charter”) states the values, rights, relationships, and mutual responsibilities of all participants in the shared mission of this movement. The Charter applies to all individual and institutional participants, movement entities, projects, and online and offline spaces officially associated with the Wikimedia Movement.

By defining the Wikimedia Movement and its values, the Charter aims to make it easier for movement stakeholders to collaborate with each other. This will help:

- provide a sense of belonging,
- produce shared strategy for growth, expansion, and future possibilities to secure continued creation and availability of free knowledge,
- safeguard donor rights, and financial interests of the movement,
- guide decision-making, and
- reduce conflict between movement stakeholders.

The Charter may be amended if needed, according to the Amendment section.

Values

The Wikimedia Movement embraces a factual, verifiable, open, and inclusive approach to knowledge. It is guided by shared values that guide all our actions. All decision-making needs to reflect these shared values. As a practice, it is important for the movement to balance the values in order to fulfill the fundamental mission and empower Wikimedia participants globally.

The values include the ones already present at our origin and extend to those that are necessary to develop for our future. These values recognize sharing of knowledge as a deeply collaborative endeavor.

Free knowledge

The Wikimedia Movement uses open licensing to share all content it produces, all its software, and access to all its platforms. Some external content is also included under varied licenses. It commits to deepening its mission by expanding the realms of free knowledge and by integrating new and evolving forms of capturing and sharing knowledge as well as a growing diversity of content.

Autonomy

The Wikimedia Movement strives to operate independently, guided by its free knowledge mission, and not obstructed by bias or favoritism. The movement refuses to compromise its mission in response to commercial, political, other monetary, or promotional influences.

Subsidiarity and self-organization

The Wikimedia Movement entrusts decisions to the most immediate or the lowest possible level of participation, starting with its base of volunteers. Online and offline communities across the world should generally make decisions for themselves, through the principle of subsidiarity. Supporting self-governance and the capability to be autonomous are crucial aspects of the global movement values.

Equity

The Wikimedia Movement recognizes the diverse challenges to knowledge equity that many free knowledge communities face and strives to empower them to overcome historical, social, political, and other forms of inequality and misrepresentation. The movement takes active measures to promote and achieve equity in knowledge, and establishes provisions to allocate resources through decentralized governance and community empowerment.

Inclusivity

The Wikimedia projects are developed in many languages, reflecting many regions and cultures. Mutual respect for the diversity of the movement participants forms the basis of all activities, and is enforced through measures to support safety and inclusion. The Wikimedia Movement is committed to provide a diverse common space, where everyone who shares in the mission and values can participate and co-create with others under a people-centered vision. This inclusive space promotes accessibility through assistive technology for diverse special needs.

Safety

The Wikimedia Movement prioritizes the well-being, security, and privacy of its participants. It ensures a safe environment that fosters diversity, inclusion, equity, and partnerships, which are necessary for participation in free knowledge in the online information ecosystem. It is a priority to ensure safety in both online and offline spaces. This priority is advanced through the implementation and enforcement of comprehensive codes of conduct, and the investment of resources necessary to support these activities.

Accountability

The Wikimedia Movement holds itself accountable through community leadership as represented within Wikimedia projects and Movement Bodies. This is implemented through transparent decision-making, dialogue, public notice, reporting of activities, and upholding a Care Responsibility.

Resilience

The Wikimedia Movement thrives through innovation and experimentation, and constantly renews its vision of what a free knowledge platform can be. The movement pursues effective strategies and practices, and uses meaningful metrics-based evidence to support and drive them where possible.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the human core of the Wikimedia movement, and have autonomy as individuals to contribute to the Wikimedia vision. A volunteer is a person who donates time and energy to Wikimedia activities, either online or offline, and does project editing, administrative duties, committee engagement, event organization, and other activities. Persons working in their volunteer capacity do not receive salary for these efforts, but may receive expense reimbursements, prizes, gadgets, support packages, allowance, and other forms of recognition and/or support.

Volunteers commit to individual or collective activities in the movement based on personal preferences, and should be empowered to participate whenever possible.

Responsibilities

- All volunteers must follow Wikimedia and project policies while contributing.
- All volunteers are accountable for their contributions to the Wikimedia projects and responsible for their individual actions.

Wikimedia communities

Wikimedia communities are groups of people who contribute online and offline to build and advance the Wikimedia mission. Communities are made mostly of volunteers, joined by paid staff and representatives from mission-aligned partners, and may create or be supported by committees. Wikimedia communities include different project communities, language communities, and technology/developer communities.

Wikimedia project communities have autonomy over the policies within their individual projects. These communities establish their policies within the framework of global policies, including the Terms of Use for the project websites.¹ This autonomy provides opportunities for experimentation to develop new social and technological approaches. Communities are expected to be open about their project and its governance, so that everyone in the movement can work together as a global community to ensure that our processes are fair and unbiased.² Almost all decisions made on individual Wikimedia projects are made by volunteer contributors, either individually or as interested groups.³

Rights

- Wikimedia communities have full editorial control of the content in their individual Wikimedia project as established by the framework of global policies, including the Terms of Use for the Wikimedia project websites.
- Wikimedia communities are in charge of their own dispute resolution and moderation processes, as long as the communities are not in violation of global policies.⁴

Responsibilities

- Wikimedia communities should be open to participation by the community, and in its governance. Anyone who adheres to the policies and has sufficient time and skills should be allowed, and encouraged, to participate.
- Wikimedia communities should ensure fairness and equity in governance and policy enforcement to maintain the overall health of the community.
- To allow for an open review process of the individual Wikimedia project, Wikimedia communities are responsible for providing truthful and honest information about the project's state of governance.

¹ Other policy examples include the Universal Code of Conduct (UCoC), Privacy, CheckUser, and licensing.

² An open review process should be possible for every community.

³ Meaning „those who show up“ to help make a decision, whether changing content or a policy.

⁴ Community policies may not conflict with global policies or legal obligations.

Wikimedia Movement Bodies

Wikimedia volunteers and communities form organizations to support and coordinate their activities. These organizations are referred to as Wikimedia Movement Bodies in this Charter and include Wikimedia Movement Organizations like affiliates and hubs, the Global Council, and the Wikimedia Foundation. The Global Council and Wikimedia Foundation are the highest governing bodies, both with their own specific purpose and responsibilities. All Wikimedia Movement Bodies have a Care Responsibility towards the Wikimedia communities with whom they work.

The Independent Dispute Resolution function will be¹ created to resolve conflicts that are unable to be resolved by existing mechanisms, or where there is an inability to handle such decisions for reasons beyond the control of the parties involved. In the absence of this function, the Wikimedia Foundation, or their chosen delegate, will take this role.

Wikimedia Movement Organizations

Wikimedia Movement Organizations are organized groups that exist to create conditions for open and free knowledge to flourish in a given geographic or thematic context. Wikimedia Movement Organizations are in line with the Wikimedia Movement's mission, and include Wikimedia affiliates, hubs, and other groups that have been formally recognized by the Global Council² or through its appointed committee.

There are four different types of Wikimedia Movement Organizations:

1. Wikimedia Chapters with a specified national coverage.
2. Thematic Organizations that have a global or cross-regional coverage but in a distinct theme.
3. User Groups that can be organized by region or theme.
4. Hubs that can be organized by region or theme.³

Wikimedia Movement Organizations are a key way in which communities can organize within the movement for delivery of activities and partnerships. Professional involvement at all levels in the Wikimedia Movement is intended to support the free knowledge mission of each organization that employs professionals. Most often, this is done by amplifying and supporting the work of volunteers.

Governance

Composition and governance of a Wikimedia Movement Organization is open for the body itself to decide, depending on the context and needs within which it operates. The decision-maker is an organization's board or a similar body, accountable to the group that they represent—for example, its membership body.

Responsibilities

Wikimedia Movement Organizations are each responsible for:

- promoting the sustainability of communities that the membership body supports,
- facilitating inclusion, equity, and diversity within their community,
- upholding the Universal Code of Conduct, and
- developing partnerships and collaborations within their areas of interest.

Wikimedia Movement Organizations are accountable for making their work and activities visible by providing publicly accessible reporting. Wikimedia Movement Organizations may choose to develop their financial sustainability through additional revenue generation, coordinating such efforts with other Movement Organizations when necessary.

The Global Council needs to consult an already existing Movement Organization when there are proposals for new Movement Organizations in the same area of operation (theme or region) as well as on issues regarding the movement's structure and governance.

¹ To be changed to "is created" once established.

² Prior to the start of and transition period of the Global Council, Wikimedia Movement Organizations are recognized by the Wikimedia Foundation Board of Trustees.

³ This Charter sees Language Hubs as a form of Thematic Hub.

Global Council

Purpose

The Global Council⁴ (GC) is the representative strategic body of the Wikimedia Movement. It empowers community participation in decision-making to better guide a coherent and visionary approach to advance free knowledge.

Functions

*Strategic Planning*⁵

The Global Council is responsible for the development of the Movement Strategy⁶ as well as communication about it within the Wikimedia Movement. The GC approves global strategy that enables the delivery of the Wikimedia vision and mission, including the Strategic Direction. It also develops, modifies, ratifies, and distributes the recommended annual global strategic priorities for the Wikimedia Movement.

*Administration of Wikimedia Movement Organizations and Communities*⁷

The GC functions to ensure proper standards are in place for the functioning of Wikimedia communities, affiliates, and hubs. To achieve this, the GC establishes and oversees processes for recognition/derecognition of affiliates and hubs, and simplifies access to resources (financial, human, knowledge, and others) for equitable empowerment of communities. The trademark licensing and contractual agreement components related to this process remains a responsibility of the Wikimedia Foundation.

A committee under the purview of the GC is responsible for managing and advising on the recognition or derecognition, compliance, and conflicts of affiliates and hubs. The committee ensures compliance with organizational standards and facilitates conflict resolution⁸ to maintain collaborative and harmonious relationships within the Wikimedia Movement.

Technology Advancement

The GC will establish a committee to provide advice to the Wikimedia Foundation, offering insights into the Wikimedia Movement's vision and priorities. The technical committee is established by the GC in collaboration with technical contributors.⁹

Resource Distribution

The GC establishes standards and guidelines for the equitable distribution of funds within the movement that comply with the Principles of Decision-Making. Additionally, the GC is responsible for grantmaking to the communities and Movement Organizations, based on the allocated budget. This responsibility comes from the delegation of authority from the Wikimedia Foundation to the Global Council to be in charge of the role of distributing resources within the Wikimedia Movement.¹⁰

Structure

The Global Council is a forum where various perspectives can come together for the greater good, and it functions as a complementary body to the Wikimedia Foundation and Wikimedia Movement Organizations. The Global Council is elected and selected, using procedures that safeguard diversity, by and from communities across the movement.

The Global Council is composed of the Global Council Assembly (GCA) and the Global Council Board (GCB) that are selected from the members of the GCA

- 4 In line with the legal reviews the Charter received in 2023, the Global Council will initially not be set up as a legal entity.
- 5 „Strategy“ is inclusive of major projects to change the Wikimedia brand.
- 6 By keeping the Movement Strategy recommendations at the core of GC discussions related to planning and prioritization of strategic initiatives, resource allocation, and general decision-making.
- 7 In this context, „administration“ refers to the management and oversight of the operational aspects of the Wikimedia Movement. It involves establishing and implementing processes, policies, and procedures to ensure the effective functioning of Wikimedia communities, affiliates, and hubs.
- 8 The Global Council is responsible for establishing and managing processes to support conflict resolution between different Wikimedia Movement Organizations, including affiliates and hubs.
- 9 Technology decisions will be taken by the entities primarily dedicated to the delivery of products and technology services, along with the appropriate community-led movement body associated with the Global Council.
- 10 The Global Council determines all aspects related to these responsibilities, in coordination with the Wikimedia Foundation. Such responsibilities can include i) setting funds dissemination policies, strategy, and standards for the movement, ii) setting regional, thematic, and other funding allocations, iii) determining movement-wide goals and metrics, and iv) reviewing global programmatic outcomes, among others determined by the Global Council.

Global Council Assembly

The Global Council Assembly (GCA) is the decision making body of the Global Council. Its members are selected, elected, or appointed to bring forward a diverse range of perspectives and experiences from the Wikimedia Movement as described in the Global Council Membership policy. Except as provided herein, the term of service for a GCA member shall be three years. GCA members may serve a maximum of two consecutive full terms (that is, six years). After having served any¹¹ consecutive two terms, they shall not be eligible for appointment to the GCA again until a period of at least 12 months has expired. The GCA is composed of at least 100 and at most 150 members.

At least one Global Council meeting shall be held annually and within six months of the end of the fiscal year, unless an extension of this period is granted by the GCA. At this Global Council meeting, the Global Council Board shall present its annual report on the affairs of the Global Council and the carried out activities. It submits the activities with an explanation to the meeting for approval.

Decision-making process at the GCA:

- All decisions shall be made by an absolute majority of the votes cast. If the votes are tied on matters, the proposal is rejected.
- If in an election between more than two persons no one obtains an absolute majority, a further vote shall be taken between the two persons who received the greatest number of votes, if necessary after an interim vote.
- A resolution may also be adopted outside of a meeting with the written approval of a majority of all GC members entitled to vote, and shall have the same force as a resolution of the General Assembly meeting, provided it has been passed with the prior knowledge of the board.

The responsibilities of the GCA include:

1. Making high-level decisions within the scope of the GC's purpose and functions
2. Holding the GCB accountable for their work
3. Taking seat in the GC's subcommittees

Global Council Board

The GC Board (GCB) shall be in charge of coordinating¹² and representing the Global Council, and for this, derives its mandates from the GCA decisions. The GCB is authorized to further decide on the activities in order to carry out these decisions.

The GCB is selected, elected or appointed by and from the GCA members following the process laid out in the Global Council Membership policy. The GCB is composed of at least 5 and at most 15 members.

The term of office for a GCB member shall be three years. Each GCB member will serve until the expiration of their term and until their successor has been appointed and qualified, or until their earlier resignation, removal from office, or death. After having served any¹³ consecutive two terms, they shall not be eligible for appointment to the GCB again until a period of at least 18 months has expired.

The responsibilities of the GCB include:

1. Drafting the initial Wikimedia Movement strategic plan, subject to approval by the GCA, as part of its strategic planning function,
2. Supervising and overseeing the processes of electing, selecting or appointing members to the GCA,
3. Serving as the representative of the GC in stakeholder engagement activities,
4. Coordinating the annual GC meeting,
5. Maintaining accountability for the execution of the functions of the Global Council, encompassing both the GCA and the GCB.

Committees of the Global Council

The Global Council Board decides on committees and their membership. Each committee will have the majority of its members drawn from the GCA. Committees may appoint additional members who are not members of the GCA.

Committee members who are not members of the GCA may serve a maximum of two consecutive full terms of three years each (that is, six years). After having served any¹⁴ consecutive two terms, they shall not be eligible for appointment to the GCA again until a period of at least 12 months has expired.

Support Structure

Advisors and Liaisons

Advisors and liaisons are appointed to support the work of the GC and its committees based on the need for specialized knowledge and guidance. Advisors may be called upon to offer insights, recommendations, and assistance in addressing complex challenges and opportunities within the Wikimedia Movement.

The Wikimedia Foundation assigns staff¹⁵ and other resources to support the GC's operations and help them function effectively.

¹¹ Any as in by selection, election or appointment.

¹² The GCB is the body tasked with making sure the processes within the GC are running according to plans and timelines; they coordinate with others where and when necessary, manage an overview of the functioning of the GC, etc.

¹³ Any as in by selection, election, or appointment.

¹⁴ Any as in by selection, election or appointment.

¹⁵ Staff will support GCA members in their need to actively participate in the GC. This includes, but is not limited to, supporting translations and providing support for

Wikimedia Foundation

The Wikimedia Foundation (“the Foundation”) is the nonprofit organization that serves as the main steward of the Wikimedia Movement’s free knowledge platforms and technology. Together with the other Wikimedia Movement entities, it pursues its mission as a nonprofit. It does so primarily by implementing its strategic direction. The Wikimedia Foundation should strive to align its work with the global strategy coordinated by the Global Council.

Governance structure

The governance structure of the Wikimedia Foundation is established in its bylaws, which are complemented by resolutions from the Board of Trustees, and by policies that apply to the Board of Trustees, Foundation staff members, and the Wikimedia projects it hosts.

The Board of Trustees is the ultimate decision-maker, with authority delegated to the Wikimedia Foundation Chief Executive Officer (CEO). As a nonprofit, the Foundation is accountable to the public at large, including Wikimedia communities, legislators and regulators, knowledge consumers, donors, and the general public.

The Foundation is advised and supported by committees as mentioned in its bylaws or established by resolutions from the Board of Trustees. These committees are composed primarily of volunteers with knowledge of and interest in the committees’ specific topic areas, and are supported in their roles by Foundation staff members.

Responsibilities

The Foundation’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Operating the Wikimedia projects, which includes hosting, developing, and maintaining core software; setting Terms of Use and other broad movement-wide policies; running fundraising campaigns; any other actions to ensure that the projects are available and mission-aligned; and, respecting and supporting community autonomy and stakeholder needs,
- Supporting programmatic activities for the movement,
- Legal obligations, including stewarding the brand, providing policies that allow projects to run, legislative compliance, addressing legal threats, and enhancing safety of volunteers.

Amendment

The Wikimedia Movement Charter is designed to endure for many years. Because of this, amendments to the Charter are to be made only in extraordinary circumstances. The exception to this are minor spelling and grammar changes that do not change the meaning or intent of the text of the Charter.

Categories of amendments

1. Minor corrections.
Spelling and grammar corrections that do not change the meaning or intent of the Charter.
2. Changes affecting only the working processes of the Global Council.
3. Changes that modify the overall responsibilities and membership of the GC.
4. Changes that modify the values of the movement; or the responsibilities and rights of volunteers, projects, affiliates, hubs, the Wikimedia Foundation, future Wikimedia Movement Organizations, and the wider Wikimedia Movement.
5. Changes proposed by the Wikimedia Movement.

Process for proposing Wikimedia Movement Charter amendments

The Global Council Board may propose Category 1, 2, 3 or 4 amendments. The Global Council Assembly may propose Category 2, 3 and 4 amendments. Category 5 amendments are proposed by members of the Wikimedia Movement.

Amendment Category	Process	Change Approval Body	Notes
1	Two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) support for proposed change	Global Council Board	
2	Two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) support for proposed change	Global Council Assembly	Community consultation recommended
3	Mandatory community consultation, two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) support for change in in vote following consultation	Global Council Assembly	
4	Movement-wide vote, majority support for change	Wikimedia Movement	Voting mechanism to follow the ratification process as closely as possible, including support vote from WMF Board of Trustees
5	Proposals must meet criteria to move on to voting. Movement-wide vote, majority support for change	Wikimedia Movement	Voting mechanism to follow the ratification process as closely as possible, including support vote from WMF Board of Trustees

Ratification

The Charter is ratified and comes into effect after a vote that has the following result:

- A majority (more than 50%) of participating Wikimedia affiliates votes to support the Charter,
- A majority (more than 50%) of participating movement-based voters votes to support the Charter, and
- The Wikimedia Foundation Board of Trustees votes to support the Charter.

Translations of this Charter may be provided in other languages. In the event of doubt or conflict between any translation and the original English language version, the original version shall hold.

