ODI Solid Advisory Committee (AC)

Terms of Reference (25th March 2025)

1.0 Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

1.1 Purpose and objectives

- To inform the strategic direction and governance structure of the project
- To support the project to meet its aims reimagining data use, reuse and sharing by giving everyone the option to share that personal data, securely, for social and economic benefit. With applications across digital health, AI, and financial inclusion, of creating the conditions to mitigate online harms, data misuse and data siloing, for individuals and communities and ensure that individuals and communities are empowered by their own data.
- Ensure Solid caters for everyone ensuring the core technology is accessible to a diverse range of groups and adoption is promoted globally.

1.2 Domain responsibilities

Advisory domain (including via committees):

- Support the development of the Solid strategy (short-, medium- and long-term).
- Support the development of governance structures and operating models.
- Support the development of the Use Case design and selection process, and vertical focus.
- Support the development and communication of the mission.
- Support fundraising efforts.
- Support prioritisation of core infrastructure development and maintenance

Delivery domain:

- Acting as ambassadors for the project, guiding and advising on the direction.

1.3 Membership

- Lead of the Solid Projet - Tim Berners-Lee
- ODI Representative - ODI
- W3C Group Representative - W3C Group Chair
- Solid Community Group Representative - Solid Community Group Chair
- Solid Practitioners Representative - Solid Community Group Chair
- Government - citizen data - TBA
- Sustainability representative - TBA
- Social good representation - TBA
- Representatives from the commercial or research sector - 2 TBA positions
- Server implementors - 2 TBA positions
- Open source representative - 2 TBA positions
- Civil society organisation to challenge positions - TBA
- Inclusion advisor - TBA

- Major funders (at least $1m per annum funding) - 2 TBA positions
- Chapter leads - Country representatives - Not established as yet

The selection process is defined here.

1.4 Attendance

- All of the above members
- 1 secretariat to provide all documentation, take notes, and assign actions, provided by the ODI.
- Guests who have been invited to present on specific topics scheduled on the agenda.

1.5 Subs and Representatives

- Members of the Advisory Committee are elected as individuals through a process of fair and open competition, based on a combination of skills and expertise evaluated by a panel of representatives (defined here in our process documents). Therefore no subs or member representatives are permitted to attend in the absence of a member. Pre-briefings and follow-up meetings can be requested via the secretariat.

1.6 Out of scope

- Budgetary or spend accountability of any grants however there will be full visibility of funding priorities and financial performance.
- The advisory committee is not responsible for the delivery of funded activities.

1.7 Meetings

- There will be four meetings per year (March, June, September, December). Three half day meetings (3 hours) will be online and the fourth meeting will be in person, full day focusing on strategy. Initially once we establish the Advisory Committee we will have an in person meeting for a full day of orientation (May 2025). In person meetings will be subject to available funding.

1.8 Core responsibilities

- Develop, maintain and share short-, medium- and long-term strategic considerations for the project.
- Develop, maintain and share an understanding of the Solid landscape'.
- Input into the development of a framework for creating and sharing an evidence base for Solid.
- Identify potential future applications of Solid, future partners for the project, and funding opportunities, and initiate work to explore these.
- Ensure balance in the direction of the project, considering both present and absent stakeholders.
- Solicit views from – and share views with – community members.
- Solicit advice from – and engage with – external experts.
- Consult – and share updates – with external stakeholders.
- Be a champion for the Solid project.

- Acting in the best interests of all Web end-users through the Solid project.

1.9 Reporting and monitoring

- The AC will work transparently.
- We work in the open. We will publish papers considered at meetings along with meeting recordings and minutes subject to 1.10. This will include on the Github solid/odi-governance repository.

1.10 Confidentiality

The importance of matters discussed at the AC requires a high level of transparency, and so the assumption is that all matters discussed in AC meetings - and between AC members should happen, where possible on open channels.
However, there are times when a confidential discussion is required, the AC will convene a closed session, and emails discussing the matter should be appropriately marked. Records kept in the same way as for other sessions, but not released. If confidential sessions are held, the existence of the sessions should be made public and, if appropriate, the broad topic discussed.

1.11 Review of the Advisory Committee

Though membership may vary, the AC will exist in this format. Should there be a requirement to amend the structure this will take place through an open consultation process with the AC as part of the annual review period. This review will take place no earlier than May 2026.
There may be a requirement to review membership prior to May 2026 to ensure access to the relevant skills and network to progress the project for a particular Use Case in line with 2.7. However, this will be done in consultation with the AC.

1.12 Advice and wider structures

The AC should actively maintain a network of expert and trusted advisors from a range of related sectors and organisations who are able to provide input on specific matters, and who have a standing invitation to raise matters with the AC for consideration. The AC should proactively share summary notes from AC meetings with this network.
The AC should willingly receive input and representations from members of the wider Solid community who wish to express a view, raise a concern or make a suggestion about how Solid could work. Anyone who would like to raise an item can do so by contacting the chair. The AC will give consideration at each meeting to any advice received, whether solicited or not, and decide on a response.
This group is a strategic group. Technical or operational matters are dealt with in the other technical groups and forums.

1.13 Interactions with other Solid forums

The AC has a formal role to review and respond to monthly reports from:

- The Operations Advisory Committee (OAC) and other stood up advisory groups
- The Linked Web Storage Working Group (W3C WG)

- The Practitioners Group (PG)
- The Solid Community Group (W3C WG)

2.0 Advisory Committee member roles and responsibilities

2.1 Role purpose

To support the ODI in the development of the Solid project by providing insight, leadership and expertise to the AC.

2.2 Duties

- Ensuring the AC is:
    - Carrying out its work for wide sector benefit.
    - Acting in the best interests of all Web end-users through the Solid project.
    - Acting with due care and skill.
    - Accountable to its stakeholders and the wider community.
- To provide strategic expertise – for the benefit of the project.
- To facilitate and support research and analysis - for the benefit of the project.

AC members are not appointed as 'representatives' and do not have constituencies to represent. They are always required to act for the collective benefit of the whole Solid project (and 'the sector' more broadly).

2.3 Managing conflicts of interest

- AC are required to act in the sole interest of Web end-users through the Solid project. When there are conflicts from an AC member's own work, relationships or interests then to continue to take part in the AC they must remove themselves from these activities.
- If this is not possible for any reason, AC members must declare a conflict of interest to the AC chair and recuse themselves from all related discussions.
- AC members are required to complete a conflict of interest form reviewing their activities and any potential for conflicts on a 6 monthly basis. Where a conflict arises, in the interim period, the AC member is required to update the form and send it to the chair within 2 weeks for review and action.

2.4 Time requirements

- 1 day per quarter for preparation and attendance at AC meetings (with the exception of the in person meeting in September which will likely require 2 days)

2.5 Chair

In the first instance, ODI will chair this committee up until the review point stated in 1.11 (May 2026)

2.6 How to apply to be part of the AC

When there are vacancies arising during the term, we will openly advertise these positions. Applications for the Advisory Committee are reviewed by the panel described in the selection process (see here).