ITAV in Practice Beta Testing Materials: Resources

Welcome!

The ITAV in Practice toolkit includes an adaptable set of tools, templates, exercises, checklists, and resources for practical use in planning and managing sustainability for open source software (OSS) initiatives serving cultural and scientific heritage organizations.

Expand the sections below for beta testing instructions and useful background material.

General Instructions for Beta Testing the ITAV Toolkit

Your program has been assigned one facet to beta test and provide feedback on the toolkit activities.

1. If you haven’t already, please review the pertinent parts of the ITAV Guidebook.
   a. Introductory materials, pp. 5-10
   b. Resources section, pp. 26-29
2. Next, identify what phase your program is in; see What Phase Is Your Program below for details.
3. Then, review the activities for Phases 1, 2, or 3.
   a. Resources Activities Table of Contents
4. Decide which activities your program would like to test. Typically your program will select activities from within your phase, but you are welcome to test activities from other phases if they sound pertinent.
   a. Identify someone to serve as facilitator for each activity
   b. Determine whether you will complete the activity virtually or in person
   c. Download the instructions for local use, or copy the Google doc if you would like to collaborate with others online.
5. Determine a timeline for conducting the activities. The Resources beta testing period runs from January 10th through February 11th, 2022.
6. Complete the activities and fill out the preliminary evaluation sheet by the deadline provided.
   a. Word version
   b. Google doc
7. Fill out the full beta testing evaluation instrument by the deadline provided (will be sent in early February 2022).

What Phase Is Your Program?

For each facet, give your program a score from 1-10 based on your knowledge of your program’s strengths and weaknesses in that area. Scores between 0-3 will align most closely with Phase I, between 4-7 with Phase II, and 8-10 with Phase III.

Follow along on the wiki to select your phase, or download the worksheet.

Facet: Resources

In order to launch, grow, and thrive, OSS programs need resources both human and fiscal. Human resources encompass engineers writing code, community members providing use cases, or organizational homes with fiscal stewardship. Financial resources come in and go out in a wide variety of ways - in via contributions, grants, dues, sponsorships, etc., and out via salaries, servers, overhead, etc.

- Phase 1, Creating Consistency: Typically funded by a single organization, and may not have a plan for ongoing support. Staff may be grant-funded, and therefore not permanent members of the team.
- Phase 2, Diversification: Programs have generally moved to distributed resourcing, and are able to meet day-to-day expenses, but may be reliant on a small number of organizations and have trouble funding out-of-the-norm expenses.
- Phase 3, Stable, but not Static: Generally have diverse staff support and income streams covering daily operations, and can focus on long-range strategy. Money is available for R&D, and programs have paid staff and a strong contributor model.

General Facilitation Instructions

The tools in the ITAVIP Toolkit are designed to be done by your program without help from an outside consultant. For many of the activities, it is beneficial to have someone serve as facilitator. Below are some general facilitation guidelines helpful across the tools and activities. In the instructions for some activities, there are additional specific facilitation notes.

Facilitation can be defined as “guiding the process of discussion amongst a group (more than 2 people) towards a certain outcome”. https://medium.com/@saahilsood/what-are-the-4-key-traits-of-an-excellent-facilitator-2909661f8ad2

Facilitation Guidelines

Facilitator Qualities: Good qualities for a potential facilitator include:
• Effective communication skills - probing, listening, etc.
• Open to change
• Ability to synthesize
• Keen observation skills
• Maintains constant neutrality
• Promotes constructive feedback
• Asks versus tells
• Managing energy and time
• Patience

**Facilitation:** Ideally, the session should be facilitated by someone from outside the current governance model.

**Format:** Sessions can be conducted online or in person. In person sessions require a deeper commitment to the process and often engender more trust and fuller discussion, but in person meetings are not always feasible.

**Note Taking:** For in person meetings, a specific note-taker (separate from the facilitator) should be assigned and should document responses on whiteboards or large pads. This helps underscore the discussion and enables participants to see if something was misunderstood. For online meetings, the note-taker should take notes via a shared doc so all have access to the notes during the session. Notes should be distributed afterwards for review and approval.

**Participation:** Make sure to encourage broad suggestions from the entire group. Some participants will be more comfortable if they are given preparatory materials. Some are best “on the fly”. There is also a mix of comfort level in group discussions. Consider how to best encourage everyone’s participation.

**Define Rules of Engagement:** Confirm expectations around behavior during activities, such as: checking ego and titles at the door, no interruptions when someone is talking, sticking to schedule (if it’s a long one), using a “parking lot” for topics that are either irrelevant for the meeting or too big to discuss right now.

**Re-framing:** Before diving in to find solutions, it may be helpful for the facilitator or the team to re-frame their “problems” into actionable questions. This may also broaden the range of solutions. For example, if the problem were “the developers are scaring the non-developers away.” It can be rephrased to “How might we enable the non-developers to contribute meaningfully?”

**Decisions and Gaining Consensus:** For each session, clarify - are you looking for a decision in the session or consensus. If a decision, identify a decider (who or what can be a tiebreaker)? If consensus, suggestions are often made in the activity, or you can consider additional options.

**Materials/Supplies:** if in person, group activities would require a room, whiteboards or large pads, sticky notes, dot stickers, and markers. If online, make sure to send materials in advance. [Download our planning worksheet here.](#)

Some beta testers have asked for suggestions for tools or platforms to facilitate online meetings.

Online tools that ITAV program staff and our LYRASIS colleagues have used include: GroupMap, Mindmeister and Miro.

Please note, we are NOT endorsing these options, only including them here as potential resources that have been used and suggested by community members.