



# The Open Source Robotics Alliance (OSRA)

An OSRF Initiative

February 2024

# Questions that we will answer

- What is the OSRA and why are we creating it?
- How will the OSRA work?
- What will the OSRA provide to open-source robotics?
- Why should you join the OSRA?



# The what and why of the OSRA



# What is the Open Source Robotics Alliance?

- A new initiative of the OSRF to reorganize and strengthen project governance and community involvement
- Aims to represent stakeholders from various parts of the community
- Create and promote a sustainable business ecosystem around the development and application of open source software in the robotics industry
- Support the OSRF's goal of providing a vendor-neutral home for open-source robotics projects
- Provide technical governance of OSRF open-source projects

# Why a new governance model?

- Move away from the BDFL model that the OSRC represented
  - Greater involvement of industry and the community in decision making
  - Encourage community contributions and maintenance, in addition to use
- Complement and support, not replace, the OSRF's mission and structure
  - Maintain the independence of the OSRF while giving members a voice in technical direction setting
  - Provide financial support for OSRF activities and open-source projects

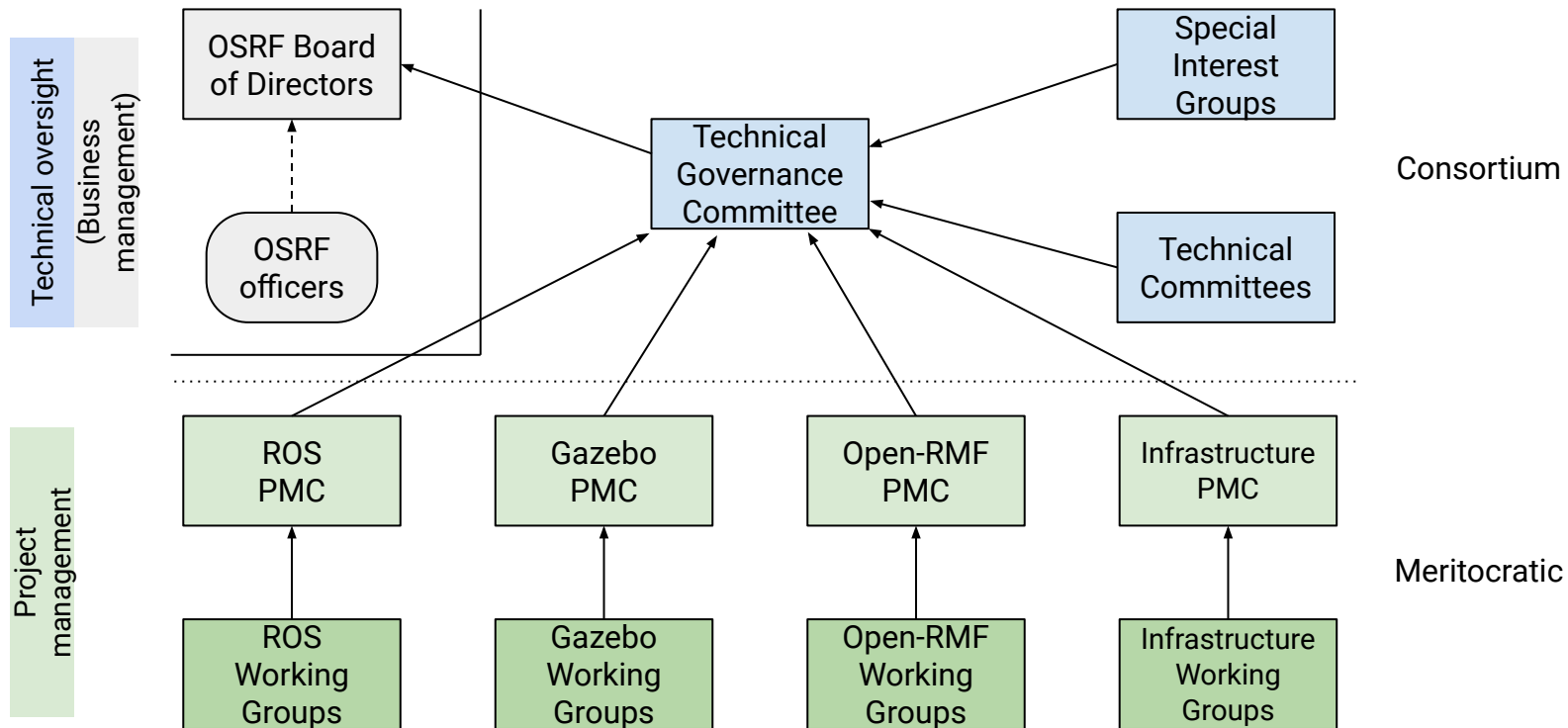
# What will become of the OSRF?

- The OSRA is an initiative of the OSRF
- The OSRF will continue as a 501(c)(3) independent non-profit organisation
- The OSRF will continue to pursue its mission to support the development, distribution, and adoption of open source software in robotics
  - Provide a vendor-neutral, independent home for relevant IP, including trademarks
  - Organize community activities, including ROSCon, and partner programmes, including TurtleBots
  - Develop educational programs to promote open source software adoption

# How will the OSRA work?



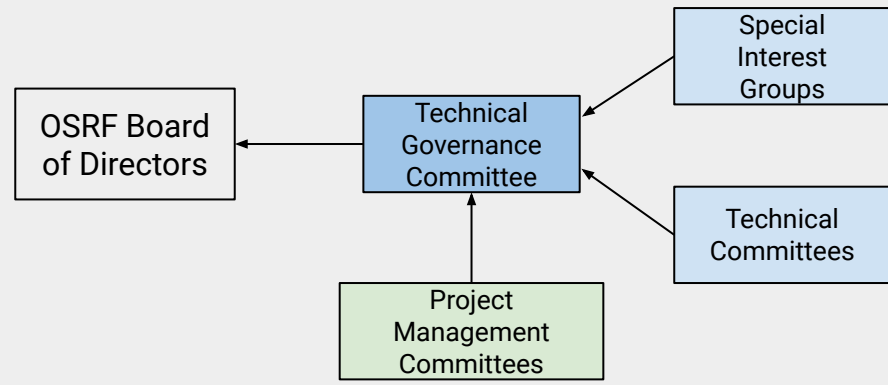
# OSRA: The 10km view



→ indicates "reports to"

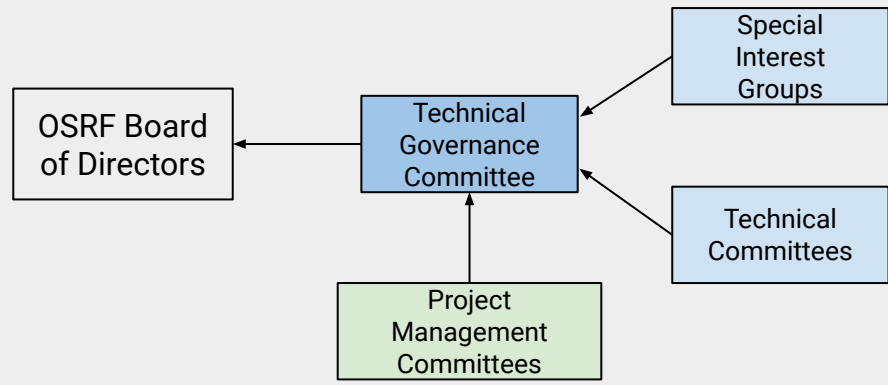


# Technical Governance - Structure



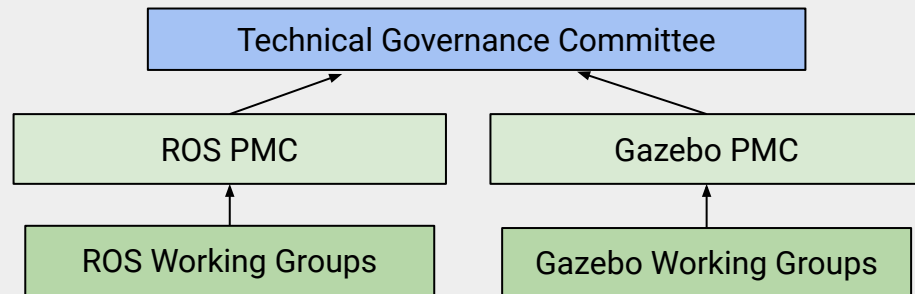
- Central committee for management and oversight of technical affairs of OSRF projects
- Consists of:
  - Representatives of all OSRF projects
  - Representatives of paying members
- Sets up sub-committees as needed
  - Special Interest Groups for open discussion on topics of interest to the OSRF projects
  - Technical Committees to perform specific, focused tasks within a set timeframe

# Technical Governance - Scope



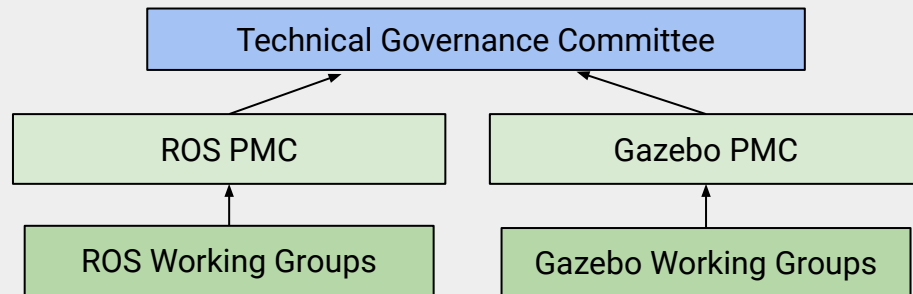
- Meets at least quarterly
  - Closed meetings, open (anonymised) minutes
- Responsible for technical activities of the OSRF
  - Defining and maintaining the overall technical vision and technical roadmap of the OSRF
  - Defining required and expected practices common to all OSRF projects
  - Managing budget provided by the Board of Directors for the use by OSRF projects
  - Ensuring the correct management of OSRF projects by their respective PMCs

# Project Management - Structure



- Projects managed using a meritocratic approach
- Each project has a Project Management Committee
  - Consists of all committers for that project, along with representatives of the community
  - Led by the Project Leader, who is elected from and by the committers
- PMCs may set up working groups to focus on specific tasks
  - WG for preparing the next ROS release
  - WG for determining the default RMW for the next several ROS releases
- Working groups have relatively open membership to allow wide participation

# Project Management - Scope



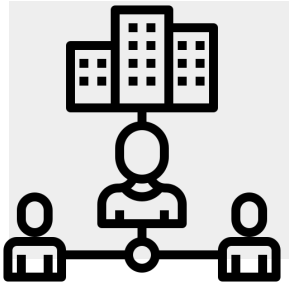
- Each PMC is responsible for all technical management and execution of its project
  - Setting project-specific policies
  - Discussing and resolving design decisions
  - Managing the project's repositories and assets
  - Making release readiness decisions
  - Making requests for budget to cover project costs
- PMCs meet every two weeks, at least, in meetings that are open or closed at the discretion of the Project Leader

# Individual contributors and access rights management



- **Users**
  - Any individual who uses the project
  - Not an official position, an unofficial designation
- **Contributors**
  - Any user to contributes to the project
  - Source code changes, new features, documentation writing, ...
- **Committers**
  - A contributor who has the right to commit to a Project's repositories
  - Status achieved based on merit and according to a well-known process
- **Project Leader**
  - A committer who coordinates the work of all other committers and manages the project
  - Nominated from amongst the committers by the committers

# Types of paid membership in the OSRA



- Organisations
  - Platinum
  - Gold
  - Silver
  - Supporter



- Individuals
  - Supporter



- Non-profit organisations and academic institutions
  - Associate

What will the OSRA  
provide to OSRF  
projects?



# Technical support for OSRF projects

- Technical infrastructure for community use: buildfarm(s), continuous integration systems, package distribution, community forums, websites, ...
  - Funded by OSRA income
  - Developed and maintained by a team of OSRF staff and volunteers
- Guidance and policies for technical management of projects
  - e.g. Investigating best practices for software quality maintenance and providing that knowledge to committers
  - e.g. Support project life cycles and release management
  - e.g. Assistance with security policies and compliance



# Operational support for OSRF projects

- Well-known, vendor-neutral governance structure and processes for OSRF projects that cannot be suddenly and unilaterally changed
  - e.g. Clear process for how to become a committer to a project
  - e.g. Project management guidelines and support
- Administrative support to Project Leaders
  - Meeting organisation support
  - Website management
- Business adoption - help projects support commercialization opportunities by members
- Coordination of evangelism and outreach activities to increase project usage and contributions
- IP management, including trademark management and protection

# Financial support for OSRF projects

- Infrastructure
  - Cloud computing costs for build and CI infrastructure
  - Staff costs for maintaining
  - Various site hosting costs
- Core and feature development
  - Identifying and recommending priorities and appropriate expenditures for each project will be one of the PMCs' duties, with the TGC making funding decisions based on the needs of all Projects
- Any other needs as identified by the PMCs and TGC

# Community involvement and stability

- Protection of the community and its involvement is ingrained into the entire governing structure
  - Individual Supporter membership class
  - Community representatives on the TGC to be involved in governance
  - Community representatives on each PMC to be involved in project management
- Traditional community focus of open-source software is a core principle of project management and execution
  - PMCs are meritocratic to ensure coal-face decisions are being made by those people who will enact them
  - Well-known, PMC-led process to obtain committer privileges, open to anyone

# Why should you join the OSRA?

Participate and  
advocate

Benefit

Contribute and  
collaborate

Be visible

# Direct benefits of membership

- Participate in the technical management of open-source robotics
  - Representation on the Technical Governance Committee
  - Help set OSRF technical policies
  - Direct participation in TGC sub-committees
- Benefit from investment in the project via continued development and maintenance of software you depend on
- Contribute to the long-term sustainability and viability of a core part of your products or services

# Indirect benefits of membership

- Demonstrate, to the robotics community, your commitment to open-source robotics
  - Show your involvement in open-source robotics projects to top talent
- Increase your opportunities for collaboration with other members, contributors to OSRF projects, and like-minded supporters of open-source robotics
- Be a part of promoting the use of open-source software in robotics



**Thank you for your time.**