

**JOHAN LINÅKER**

**What to Share, When, and Where**  
**- Creating a Distributed and Efficient Contribution**  
**Process While Balancing Value and Risk**

# Why need a contribution strategy?

- Answers if, why, when, and how something should be open sourced
- Help to execute the overarching open source strategy
- Promotes and support contributions in line with business objectives
- Highlights potential costs and risks upfront
- Enables the balancing between objectives and complexities



# Enable critical assessments

- Support individuals posting contribution request to make their case
- Support decision makers to make informed decisions
- Reduce doubts and make contribution process more efficient
- Enable a proactive planning on contributions



# Provide clarity on process

- Lower barrier and remove uncertainties
- Decision options
  - Reject, conditional accept, or accept
- Contribution options
  - Existing community, new community in specific external entity, or new community “in the wild”
- Needs to be weighed against potential objectives and complexities



# Systematic approach needed in the design

- Lay out a plan and involve all stakeholders early on
- Do not take objectives or complexities for granted
- Consider different types of projects, contexts, and scope



# Contribution Objectives and Complexities

- Contribution objectives explicate different types of benefits that may be gained because of a contribution
- Contribution complexities exemplify aspects that may complicate the contribution, or in other ways imply cost or risk for the organization
- Basis for designing Contribution Strategy guidelines and related contribution process
- Paper: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10664-020-09855-2>





# Contribution Objectives

- Reputation-centric objectives
  - Prove skill and influence
  - Be a good open source citizen
  - Improve employer branding
  - Increase transparency
- Supplier-centric objectives
  - Create price pressure
  - Outsource infrastructure operation



# Contribution Objectives

- Strategy-centric objectives
  - Collect data
  - Standardize a solution
  - Build a software ecosystem
  - Improve partner collaboration
- Engineering-centric objectives
  - Open up innovation process
  - Extend development resources





# Contribution Complexities

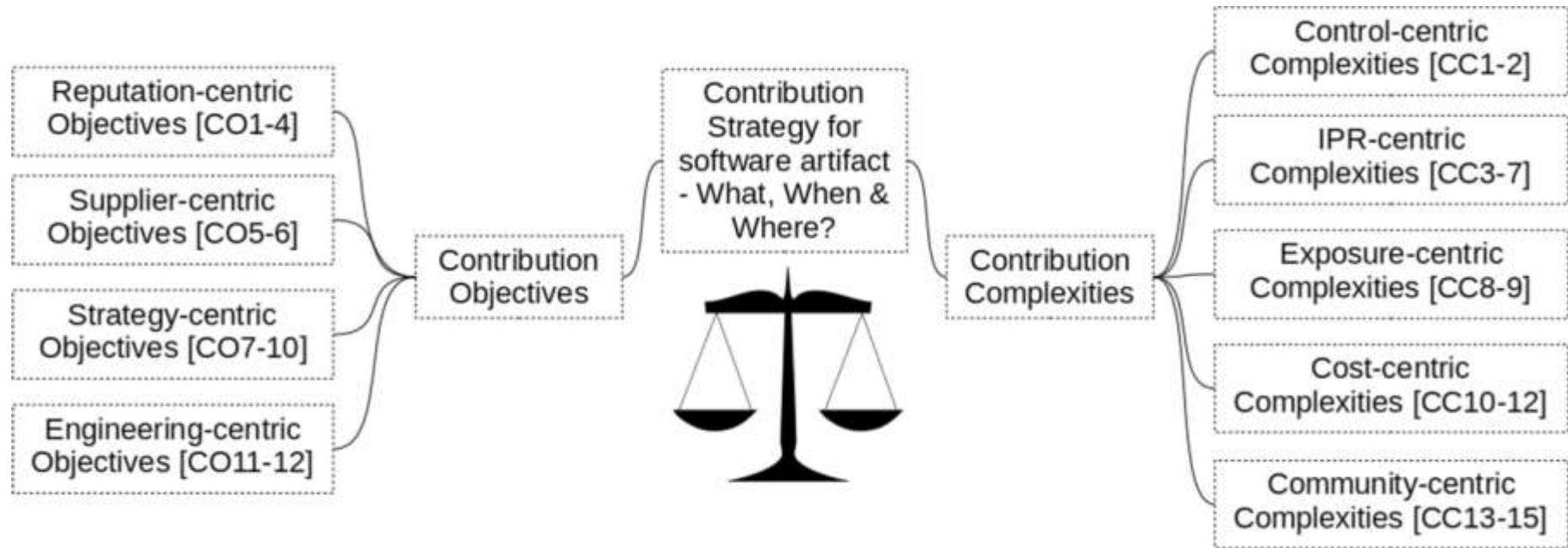
- Control-centric complexities
  - Impact on value proposition
  - Impact on internal operations
- IPR-centric complexities
  - Differentiating functionality
  - Commoditization
  - Sensitive IPRs
  - Substitutes
  - License compliance



# Contribution Complexities

- Exposure-centric complexities
  - Ethical use
  - Security threats
- Cost-centric complexities
  - Budget and resource constraints
  - Modularity and architecture
  - Code alignment
- Community-centric complexities
  - External interest
  - Influence in community
  - Community health

# Balancing objectives and complexities



# An (example) contribution process

- Pass basic open source training
- Submit contribution request form
  - Example questions:
    - <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.21104167>
- Basic review by nearest Contribution officer
  - E.g., architect, senior engineer, or engineering manager



# Basic review

- Initial check if contribution is motivated
- Potential complexities and how they are proposed to be addressed
- Complexity and size of contribution
  - Trivial
  - Medium
  - Major
- Trivial approved by contribution officer
- Technical review for cleared contributions



# OSS Review board

- Medium and major contributions managed by open source review board
- Cross functional board with relevant stakeholders
- Major with explicit OK from senior mgmt. and patent review
- Can be broken down into a “fast-track” and “standard track”



# Whitelisting communities

- Enable community engagement
- Align with a specific community strategy
- Dedicate community representative responsible for community strategy and related contributions
- Revise and follow-up of whitelisting and community strategy



# General notes

- Ensure basic OSS training
- Educate on business goals and perceived risks and costs
- Decentralize decision making
- Support and empower teams directly
- Fast-track trivial and white-listed contributions
- Identify bottlenecks and remove friction
- Automate process (where possible) and enable follow-up of the contributions
- Consider if and how to manage private employee engagements





# TODO Group outbound guide

- Rich and in-depth knowledge developed through TODO Europe
- <https://todogroup.org/guides/outbound-oss/>



**TODO (OSPO) Group**  
TODO Group  
108 followers <https://todogroup.org> @todogroup info@todogroup.org

Overview Repositories 25 Projects 3 Packages

README.md

 **A Worldwide Community and Resource Practitioners**

