

FHIR Community Process

Why is it important for you

Diego Kaminker

HL7 International

Deputy Chief Standards Implementation Officer

DCSIO

diego@hl7.org

HL7 FCP Coordination Committee, Member

Who am I?

Diego Kaminker diego@hl7.org
HL7 International – Deputy Chief Standards
Implementation Officer

With Input From

- Grahame Grieve (HL7 FHIR Product Director, FCPCC Co-Chair)
- Reuben Daniels (HL7 Deputy Product Director, FCPCC Member)
- Daniel Vreeman (HL7 CSDO)



Learning Objectives

- Describe the HL7 FHIR Community Process (HL7 FCP)
- What's in it for you
- Describe the Guidelines for Specification Development
- Describe the Additional Guidelines
- Describe the Governance Body for the HL7 FCP
- Describe the Responsibilities of HL7 FCP Participants

Disclaimer

This is a **review** of the HL7 FHIR Community Process Guidelines and Processes.

The FHIR Community Process **was approved by the FMG and Board of Directors.**

There was a previous version of the document (2024)

The HL7 FHIR Community Process (HL7 FCP)

Goals

ensure a **consistent overall framework** for the community
allow for a **variety of approaches** to developing FHIR sub-communities

minimize incompatibilities in outputs and processes between the different projects

We thought we would have this:



But the real world is like this:



Tapestry from the Muider slot Castle, Muider, Netherlands.

What is in it for you?

For Output and Process

alignment with what the rest of the community is producing



has better **acceptance** and **uptake** by the community



is **labeled** with the **HL7 FCP icon**

an acknowledgement of their adherence to the HL7 FCP

Logos

For participants, projects, and specifications



Logo is not enough, you also need to be in the registry...

The role of HL7 International

- Serves as the **organizational home and governance** authority for the FCP
- Serves as the **organizational steward of the FHIR Platform**, including the specification, the supporting tooling, and the community
- Defines the **guidelines and rules** of the FCP
- Defines the **workflow to register a project** and verify compliance with the guidelines
- Issues and assigns the **FCP compliant label/icon**
- Owns and protects the **FHIR trademarks**

Who can become an HL7 FCP Participant

Any organization who wants to produce publicly available FHIR Implementation Guidance can join the HL7 FCP as a FCP Participant.

We consider a **FCP Participant** as an organization **complying with the FCP Guidelines** that has an active, ongoing project.

(FCP participants may also have other activities that are not part of the FCP)

HL7 FCP Participation and HL7 Membership

HL7 Membership is **not required** but is **encouraged**

Membership in HL7 helps **support the ongoing development of the FHIR standard.**

Membership also fosters **better relationships within the community** that manages FHIR and the tools that support it.

HL7 FCP Guidelines (I)

- ✓ **License:** The license and IP contribution requirements must be clearly documented. Open-source licenses such as Creative Commons Public Domain are preferred but not required.
- ✓ **Openness to comment:** There must be a documented way for anyone to comment on the specification and contribute content to the project.
- ✓ **Rules for issue resolution:** Rules for issue resolution, formal ballot (if this technique is used), work prioritization decision-making, and project leadership must all be clearly documented.

From:

<https://hl7.org/permalink?FCPRequirements>

Please remember that the HL7 FCP is a framework with guidance for your process.

YOU need to define your OWN process, compatible with the FCP guidelines

HL7 FCP Guidelines (II)

Ensuring community participation: Engagement strategies must be clearly documented, and how all stakeholders are notified of significant project events.

Community support: How the community support (particularly the secretariat) is provided and funded must be clearly documented.

Conflict of Interest (COI): Potential conflict of interests of participating entities must be made public to the community.

Defining project scope and intent.

Recruitment of interested parties: FCP Participants are encouraged to help each other in this process.

HL7 FCP Guidelines (III)

Discussion and testing cycles: Includes publishing draft specifications, open community discussion, and testing the specification at a community event.

Formal Review or Ballot Cycle (optional): Last call for comments.

Publication of milestone release: Usually, this is a FHIR Implementation Guide, but other outputs are possible if they better capture the community agreements.

Maintenance: How the process supports ongoing maintenance updates over time.

HL7 FCP Guidelines: Project Development Cycle

✓ **Project steps clearly and concisely documented**

Defining project scope and intent

Recruitment of interested parties

✓ **Discussion and testing cycles**

Publishing draft specifications

Open community discussion

Testing the specification at a community event

Formal Review or Ballot Cycle (optional): last call for comments

HL7 FCP Guidelines: Project Development Cycle

✓ **Publication of milestone release:**

FHIR Implementation Guide, but other outputs are possible if they better capture the community agreements

✓ **Maintenance**

How the process supports ongoing maintenance updates over time

HL7 FCP Guidelines for FHIR Specifications

✓ **FCP Icon**

The Implementation Guide should prominently display the FCP Icon (on the home page).

✓ **FHIR Implementation Guide Publishing Requirements**

The Implementation Guide must conform to the rules documented for FHIR Implementation Guide publishing Requirements for Non-HL7 Specifications.

HL7 FCP Guidelines for FHIR Specifications

✓ **License**

The license must be clearly documented in the Implementation Guide. If other encumbrances exist, these must be documented.

✓ **Inclusion in the FHIR Registry**

Any FHIR Implementation Guide or other implementation collateral must be registered in the FHIR registry.

HL7 FCP Guidelines for FHIR Specifications

✓ **Publication at the Canonical URL**

The Implementation Guides should be published at their canonical URL (or linked to from there).

✓ **Quality Assurance Criteria**

The Implementation Guide should produce a QA Report, as included in the HL7 FHIR IG Publisher output, with 0 (zero) errors.

HL7 FCP Guidelines for FHIR Specifications

✓ **Versioned Releases**

All formal releases of an HL7 FCP compliant specification must have a version identifier associated with the release, and this version identifier should be set in all the conformance resources included in the guide.

Version identifiers should not be re-used and must have the format major.minor.patch (this is an NPM package rule). Versions must be serially incrementing. Consumers of the specification must be safe to assume that a change in patch number does not represent any intentional change to software in order to conform to the specification. Note, though, that technical corrections always change something, that is why they are made.

HL7 FCP Guidelines for FHIR Specifications

✓ **Version Strategy**

The following version strategy, related to semver (Semantic Versioning), is recommended, but variations that are consistent with NPM versioning are allowed

The versioning strategy is a variant of semver as followed by HL7. Each version has 3 numerical parts:

Publication: the major publication number (e.g. the 1st milestone release is 1.0.0).

Release: the sequence of this milestone within the Publication cycle.

Patch: incremented when technical corrections to an existing published milestone are made.

Ballot/draft/candidate specifications have the version with a label “-ballot”

Governance Body for the FCP

Role of the FCP Coordination Committee

The role of the committee is to act as a clearing house for the FCP process: all new FCP projects are proposed to the committee for review, to ensure that all FCP Participants are informed about what work is taking place.

The coordination committee does not have veto rights over any FCP Participant project, but FCP Participants commit to doing their best to minimize overlaps.

Governance: The FCP Coordination Committee

Integration

All deliberations are open to the public (minutes, proposals, discussions etc. on publicly available web resources), yet only FCP Participant representatives can take part directly as members. The Committee maintains its own processes to describe how proposals are submitted and reviewed, etc.

As the steward for the HL7 FCP, HL7 International will maintain a website where FCP participants are listed and approved projects are published.

Note that the Coordination Committee will (and should) have overlapping membership with other collaboratives (such as the [HL7:IHE Project Gemini](#)) and groups in the broader FHIR community.

The FCP Coordination Committee Leadership

Current HL7 International FCP CC membership

Meets monthly:

- Graham Grieve (FHIR Product Director) - Chair
- Reuben Daniels (FHIR Deputy Product Director)
- Dan Vreeman (HL7 CSDO)
- Diego Kaminker (HL7 DCSIO)
- Chris Carr (IHE)



FCP CC (Coordination Committee) Confluence Page:

<https://confluence.hl7.org/spaces/FCPCC/overview>

Responsibilities of HL7 FCP Participants

✓ **Project Proposals**

New projects may be brought forward by any entity (individual, company, government agency, NGO) whether they are a FCP Participant or not. Typically, candidate projects are identified and brought forward to whichever FCP Participant is nearest, whether or not it is the most appropriate.

FCP Participants should maintain active outreach with the community around them to ensure early discovery of potential projects. Once a candidate project is identified, the appropriate FCP Participants bring it to the FCP Coordination Committee.

Content of Project Proposals

- Project description
- Realm or jurisdiction
- Proposed licensing arrangements
- Open-source licenses such as Creative Commons Public Domain are preferred but not required
- Identified dependencies, overlaps, and other related projects
- Long-term maintenance plan (see below)
- Any identified security, safety and privacy/consent implications (must be specifically called out)
- Project management documentation (see below).

Responsibilities of HL7 FCP Participants

✓ **Project Documentation**

Many (most) FCP participants have their own existing policies and procedures they must follow - in this case, their policies are considered implementations of the FCP requirements.

In such cases, their FCP Project documentation will be a short web page that maps from the requirements in this section to existing organizational documentation.

Most FCP participants will publish a single document that covers all their FCP projects, but this is not required.

ANSI Accredited standards organizations such as HL7 are automatically compliant with these requirements.

Responsibilities of HL7 FCP Participants

✓ Project Transfer

Projects may be transferred between FCP Participant members (or shared amongst them). This might be done because:

- a project is growing beyond the capacity of the initiating FCP Participant to provision support for it,
- a project initiated at a national level proves to have strong international or global - interest
- the project has entered a different stage of it's natural life cycle, and a different FCP Participant is appropriate (e.g.: HL7 might be the last resort for long term maintenance)

Responsibilities of HL7 FCP Participants

✓ Ongoing Maintenance

FCP Participants are responsible for providing ongoing maintenance of their projects and published Implementation Guides. If FCP Participants close projects, or if the FCP Participant itself ceases operations or ceases to act as a FCP Participant, it is expected to make arrangements internally or with other FCP Participants to take over management of the project and/or its outputs (e.g.: through public source repository, escrow or other mechanisms).

FCP Participants are responsible for ensuring that details of their current products are published to their FHIR publication feed, and that as products are superseded a history of prior version is maintained as part of their publication pack (follow HL7 requirements detailed in FHIR Implementation Guide publishing Requirements).

Three Key Questions

1- Role of the Affiliates

HL7 International Affiliate Members are candidates to become FCP participants, and we encourage them to do so. HL7 Affiliate Members that are FCP participants lead a jurisdictional-based sub-committee of the FCP Coordination Committee that provides comment on the suitability of projects within their jurisdiction and/or relevant collaborations within their domain.

More questions

2- How much does joining the HL7 FCP costs?

HL7 does not want to profit from the FCP, but a minimal fee may be established in a few cases in the future, to fund the operating expenses of the program.

FCP Organization Type	Join the FCP (USD)	Per Project (USD)
[A]-HL7 Affiliates	Waived	Waived
[G]-HL7 Gold / Benefactor members	Waived	Waived
[J]-Joint Projects defined by Organizations with HL7 SOU/MOU signed (Example: IHE Gemini, WHO, PAHO)	Waived	Waived
[L]-Low- and Medium-Income Countries	Waived	Waived
[O]-Other organizations or individuals (HL7 International / Affiliates Members)	Waived	Waived
[N]-Other organizations (non-HL7 Members)	TBD	TBD

More questions

3a- How is the HL7 FCP different from the ANSI process that HL7 uses?

Not all organizations producing FHIR Implementation Guides require or can sustain the level of rigor as the ANSI Accredited Process for Standard Development that HL7 uses, or they may be government organizations subject to different requirements than standards development organizations. That's where the HL7 FCP comes in.

For the FHIR community to understand the robustness of a specification, they must trust the process that produced the specification. Therefore, some level of documentation and consistency is required. The FCP defines these minimum requirements for the process, workflow, and outputs of each project.

More questions

3b- How is the HL7 FCP different from the ANSI process that HL7 uses?

Through the FCP, we recognize that FCP Participants may have different maturity and life cycle models. To be clear, the HL7 FCP is not under the governance umbrella of HL7's [Technical Steering Committee](#) as HL7's usual [standards development process](#).

Therefore, specifications created by FCP Participants under the FCP guidelines will have a different label and logo to differentiate them both from HL7 International-published specifications and non-FCP specifications.

Reference Material

FCP Requirements:

<https://hl7.org/permalink?FCPRequirements>

FCP Confluence Page:

<https://confluence.hl7.org/plugins/viewsource/viewpagesrc.action?pageId=248875608>

FCP Template:

https://confluence.hl7.org/download/attachments/281283950/FCP_Compliance_Policy_Template_1.0%E2%80%94DRAFT-20240827-1.docx?api=v2



Final note: [FCP Requirements] vs. the [FCP Template]

How they relate?

FCP Requirements are labeled FCPnnn

FCP201
FCP Project notification

FCP Participants **shall** formally notify the FCPCC of new projects covered by the FCP Participant's FCP Compliance Policy which they deem to be FCP Projects.

Notes

- Projects based on an FCP Participant's FCP Compliance Policy are regarded as approved FCP Projects.
- The FCPCC will maintain a publicly accessible online registry of all approved FCP Projects.
- FCP Participants should maintain active outreach with the community around them to ensure early discovery of candidate FCP Projects.
- The FCPCC reserves the right to assess projects covered by an FCP Participant's FCP Compliance Policy and, if necessary, revoke the project's status as an FCP Project.



The template has a placeholder to explain how YOUR process fulfills each requirement (FCPnnn)

2 FCP Projects

FCP Requirement	Policy statement
FCP201 FCP Project notification	
FCP202 FCP Project approval	
FCP203 FCP Project assessment request	
FCP204 FCP Project transfer	
FCP205 License	
FCP206 Open participation	
FCP207 Documented rules	
FCP208 Engagement and collaboration forums	

Q&A

Questions?