

A Guide to Your Role: Obligations and Tasks as an Eclipse Foundation Committer

Good morning! As a newly elected or prospective committer at the Eclipse Foundation, understanding your role is crucial for the health and success of your project. Your responsibilities extend beyond simply writing code; you are a steward of the project, entrusted with maintaining its quality, fostering its community, and upholding the principles of the Eclipse Foundation. Here's a detailed look at your key obligations and tasks.

Core Obligations: The Pillars of Your Role

As a committer, you are bound by a set of core principles that ensure the integrity and openness of Eclipse projects. These are not just suggestions, but foundational expectations.

1. Upholding the Eclipse Development Process (EDP): The EDP is the guiding document for all Eclipse projects. It outlines the principles of open, transparent, and meritocratic development. Your primary obligation is to understand and adhere to the EDP in all your project activities. This includes everything from how you manage contributions to how you conduct project discussions.

2. Intellectual Property (IP) Diligence: This is a critical responsibility. To protect the project and its downstream users, you must ensure that all contributions are properly licensed and that the project's IP is clean. This involves:

- **Verifying Contributor Agreements:** Before committing any code from a contributor, you must ensure they have a signed Eclipse Contributor Agreement (ECA) on file.
- **Due Diligence for Third-Party Libraries:** You are responsible for following the Eclipse Foundation's IP Policy and Due Diligence process for any third-party libraries or code your project uses. This often involves creating a "Contribution Questionnaire" and getting approval from the Eclipse IP Team.
- **"Signed-off-by" Requirement:** Every commit you make must include a Signed-off-by: line in the commit message, which legally certifies that you have the right to contribute the work under the project's license.

3. Fostering a Healthy and Inclusive Community: Eclipse projects thrive on community participation. As a committer, you are a community leader. This means:

- **Being Welcoming and Respectful:** You are expected to maintain a professional and welcoming environment in all project communication channels, including forums, mailing lists, and bug trackers.
- **Mentoring Contributors:** A key aspect of your role is to encourage and guide new contributors. This includes providing constructive feedback on their contributions and helping them navigate the project's processes.
- **Promoting Meritocracy:** Decisions should be based on technical merit and community consensus, not on affiliation or personal preference.

4. Open and Transparent Communication: All project-related discussions and decisions must happen in public project communication channels. This ensures that everyone has access to the same information and can participate in the process. Private email discussions about project matters are strongly discouraged.

Key Tasks: Putting Your Obligations into Practice

Your day-to-day tasks as a committer are varied and directly reflect your core obligations.

1. Code Contribution and Review:

- **Writing and Committing Code:** You have direct write access to the project's source code repository. Your contributions should be of high quality, well-documented, and adhere to the project's coding standards.
- **Reviewing Contributions:** You are responsible for reviewing patches and pull requests from other contributors. This involves not only assessing the technical quality of the code but also ensuring it aligns with the project's goals and that the contributor has a signed ECA.
- **Maintaining Build and Test Infrastructure:** You will likely have access to the project's continuous integration and build systems. It's part of your role to ensure that the builds are stable and that tests are passing.

2. Bug Triage and Management:

- **Monitoring Bug Reports:** You should actively monitor the project's bug tracker, triaging new reports, and helping to prioritize them.
- **Fixing Bugs:** You are expected to contribute to fixing bugs, both those you introduce and those reported by the community.

3. Release Engineering and Management:

- **Participating in Release Planning:** As a committer, you will be involved in planning the project's release schedule and scope.

- **Executing Releases:** This is a significant task that involves ensuring all code is ready, the build is stable, all IP checks are complete, and the release is properly documented and announced.

4. Documentation and Communication:

- **Improving Project Documentation:** Good documentation is vital for users and contributors. You should contribute to improving the project's documentation as you work on the code.
- **Participating in Project Discussions:** Your active participation in mailing lists and forums is essential for a healthy community.

5. Electing New Committers:

- When a contributor has demonstrated a sustained and high-quality level of contribution to the project, it is the responsibility of the existing committers to nominate and vote for them to become a new committer. This is a crucial step in ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of the project.

In essence, being an Eclipse Foundation committer is a position of trust and responsibility. It's an opportunity to have a significant impact on an open-source project and its community. By understanding and embracing your obligations and tasks, you can contribute to the continued success and vibrancy of the Eclipse ecosystem.