CVE® Working Group Operations Handbook

Effective 17 August 2022

Version 1

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1 Introduction

Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE®) Working Groups (WGs) are advisory in nature and established to effectively address specific areas or issues of interest to the CVE Program. They provide the resources and a forum for the detailed work necessary to advance the objectives of the CVE Program. Within a WG's area of focus, they identify (or are notified of) problems or service gaps in program strategy and supporting technology and processes that they can address. To address a problem, they investigate and analyze it, develop recommendations and proposed actions, and present a proposal to the Board for approval.

Any Board member may recommend a new WG, but establishment of a new WG requires consent of a majority of the Board and the Secretariat. If the Secretariat does not approve the WG, the Board may call a vote if it disagrees with the Secretariat's decision. The result of the Board vote will override the Secretariat's decision.

1.1 Document Purpose

This document is intended to provide consistent operating guidelines for use by all WGs.

1.2 Working Group Roles and Responsibilities

1.2.1 Working Group chair

- Provides primary WG leadership and solicits a volunteer to serve in his or her absence.
- Develops and gains approval of the WG charter, leads updates to the Charter.
- Recruits WG members and manages on-boarding and off-boarding.
- Prepares agendas and schedules and facilitates periodic meetings where WG members collaborate, identify problems or issues that deserve attention, devise plans to remediate those problems, execute those plans, and provide status.
- Reports to the Board on WG progress and recommendations, either at Board meetings or using the Board email list as appropriate. Reporting can be on an ad-hoc, Board-requested, or routine basis.
- Solicits Board approval before making changes or decisions that adversely or favorably affect the program. In these cases, notify the appropriate Board email list (public or private).

1.2.2 Working Group members

- Participate in WG meetings, and other ad-hoc WG communications/collaborations.
- Lead or support analysis and documentation (of findings) of identified WG focus area problems and service gaps.
- Lead or support development and documentation of recommendations to address problems and service gaps.

- Lead or support execution of actions approved by the Board to address problems or service gaps.
- As needed, support the WG chair in reporting and presentations to the Board.

1.3 WG Charter

The intent of the charter is to provide the guidelines by which the working group will operate. Every WG must have a charter as required by the CVE Board Charter. The WG charter must be based on the template in Appendix A. It is intended for Chair(s) of a new working group to modify the template to create a draft WG charter to document the rules, guidelines, and other aspects of managing the WG to support the WG goals. The charter must be approved by a majority of working group members shortly after the new WG is established. It should be the first item taken up by a new WG. Once the charter is documented and approved by a majority of the WG members, the WG may begin to work toward its goals.

1.4 WG Factsheet

Each WG should have a factsheet that includes the following:

- Purpose/goals of the WG, as documented in the Charter
- WG Chair name and contact information
- Location of the WG document repository
- WG mailing list email addresses
- Other resources as appropriate
- This information is managed by the Secretariat

2 CVE Program-Supplied Collaboration Tools

The CVE Program and Secretariat provide email, virtual meeting capabilities and document storage that all WGs may choose to use. These tools provide access to communications and documents created and used by the group and simplifies the job of the Secretariat. WGs may choose to use other means of communication but must carefully consider privacy and security and must inform the Secretariat. WG artifact handling and sharing follow the traffic light protocol (TLP) (https://www.cisa.gov/tlp).

The WG mailing list is managed by the Secretariat, and the WG Chair must notify the Secretariat to add new members or delete members who have left the group.

The Secretariat provides access to the WG document storage location for all WG members, and any folder/organizational structure in place. At a minimum, final documents are stored there. The WG Chair must provide access and the location of final documents to the Secretariat and CVE Board members. Optionally, working drafts can be stored for group collaboration.

3 Membership Management

3.1 Membership Eligibility

Working Group membership eligibility is based on the WG Participation Model as defined in the WG Charter (see Appendix A – Charter Template for more information). Options are:

- Open only to participants in the CVE community who meet defined requirements (e.g., a CNA).
- Open to the general CVE community and public at large with restrictions (e.g., the size of the group is too large for effective collaboration).
- Open to the general public with no restrictions.
- Open to specific CVE program participants as appointed by the Board.

Before any member begins participating in WG activities/meetings, the WG Chair is responsible for vetting the member's eligibility.

3.2 Membership Size

WG membership size considerations are defined in the Charter. See Appendix A for the template.

3.3 New Member On-boarding

The Secretariat, in support of the WG Chair, is responsible for providing on-boarding information to new members to help bring them up to speed. At a minimum, this includes:

- Access/link to the WG website (if appropriate)
- Copy/link to the WG Charter
- Expectations of WG participation
- Summary (verbal or written) of current WG efforts and leads, status, and planned upcoming activities
- Calendar invitation to regularly scheduled WG meetings
- Access/link to the WG document repository, and any instructions about folder/organization protocols
- Instructions about document and information sharing
- Copy/link to the WG Factsheet

The Secretariat should notify the WG Chair when new members are requesting to join the WG. The WG Chair should introduce new members to the rest of the WG by email or at a subsequent WG meeting. The introduction should include:

- Member's name and organization
- Background in CVE
- If known, initial tasking

3.4　Member Removal

3.4.1　Voluntary Resignation

Any member of a WG may voluntarily resign for any reason. Out of professional courtesy, the resigning member should notify the WG chair in writing regarding the effective date, and the status of the member's current tasks so the WG can minimize disruption to WG progress. The Secretariat will remove access to all WG resources previously granted. Members who resign in an orderly and professional way may apply for membership in WGs in the future.

3.4.2　Involuntary Removal

In rare cases, a member may be asked by the WG Chair to resign, due to, for example:

- Inactivity (e.g., not attending meetings or not participating in assigned tasking)
- Repeated complaints from other members about lack of cooperation, rudeness, or violations of the CVE Professional Code of Conduct

Generally, the type of behavior that may lead to removal is noticed by WG members who bring it to the attention of the Chair. Involuntary removal is a last resort, and the WG Chair is expected to have had at least one prior conversation with the member to discuss corrective action. If this conversation(s) does not yield an improvement after a reasonable period of time, the WG Chair may initiate the removal process as determined by the WG. If this process results in a removal decision, the Chair will communicate the decision to the member in question and the Secretariat. Both the WG member and the Secretariat must be informed of the reason for removal, the removal process (e.g., a vote, a decision by the Chair), and permissions that will be revoked.

3.5　WG Chair Replacement

3.5.1　Voluntary Resignation

Like regular members, WG Chairs may voluntarily resign for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Inadequate time to devote to WG leadership
- Change in organization

Out of professional courtesy, the resigning Chair is expected to notify the Board in writing regarding the effective resignation date, and the status of current tasks so that the Board and the WG can minimize disruption to WG progress. The out-going Chair may identify in the resignation notice any potential replacement(s) from the WG membership.

The CVE Board is obligated to accept the resignation, and the out-going Chair is expected to inform the WG membership of the decision to resign and effective date. The Secretariat is responsible for removing the Chair's access to WG resources if the resigning Chair will no longer be participating in the WG as a member.

3.5.2　Involuntary Removal

In rare cases, a Chair may be asked by the CVE Board to resign, due to, for example:

- Not performing at the level expected of a leadership role
- Repeated complaints from members about lack of cooperation, rudeness, or violations of the CVE Professional Code of Conduct
- Inadequate WG results, e.g., not achieving objectives

Generally, the type of behavior that may lead to removal is noticed by the CVE Board, or WG members who bring it to the attention of the Board. Involuntary removal is a last resort, and the CVE Board is expected to have had at least one prior conversation with the Chair to discuss corrective action. If these conversations do not yield an improvement after a reasonable period of time, the question of removal is brought up in a scheduled Board meeting for a vote. If voting results in the decision to remove, the Board notifies the Chair of the decision and effective date, and also reports the removal of the Chair to the WG membership. WG Chairs removed involuntarily are removed from the WG entirely.

3.5.3 Temporary Replacement

A temporary Chair replacement may be needed in cases where the Chair's absence, permanent or otherwise, would disrupt WG progress. In the event of an extended absence, the WG Chair may delegate a temporary replacement Chair for the WG. If there is a need for a permanent Chair replacement, the Secretariat will appoint a temporary chair while the search and selection for a more permanent WG chair is in process. Alternatively, the WG may appoint a temporary chair if one is identified. When the Secretariat, Board, and a majority of WG members agree on a permanent Chair, the temporary Chair will be replaced by the selection.

4 Meeting Management

4.1 Meeting Frequency

The WG Chair establishes an on-going meeting schedule with a defined frequency. The frequency may vary over time depending on group progress, current and planned workload, and membership size. For example, the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) initially met on a monthly schedule, but over time, as membership grew and workload increased, it became necessary to meet bi-weekly, and ultimately weekly. Initially and periodically after that, the WG Chair should poll the members to assess the frequency, and if needed, establish a new one.

4.2 International Participant Consideration

The CVE Program is international in scope, and the WG Chair, when considering the scheduling of WG meetings, is expected to take into consideration international members of the WG and their geographical locations. Trying to find a meeting time across global time zones is challenging, but full member participation is important. Below are some options for the WG Chair to consider, each with their pluses and minuses:

- Conduct multiple identical meetings on a single day to cover all the time zones of interest. For example, one meeting to support Asian-Pacific members, another to support European members, and a third to support South/Central/North American members.

- o Pluses: Opportunity for all members to participate
  - o Minuses: Even discussing the same topics, it is difficult to "stick to the script" perfectly; time consuming for the Chair (scheduling and meeting facilitation); interferes with the WG Chair's personal life.
- Establish a rotating meeting schedule to cover all time zone of interest over time. For example, Meeting 1 may be scheduled to support Asian-Pacific members, meeting 2 may be scheduled to support European members, and meeting 3 may be scheduled to support South/Central/North American members.
  - o Pluses: Opportunity for all members to participate, but realistically most participants will be from the target time zone(s) (e.g., it is unlikely that a member will attend a meeting scheduled for 2am his/her local time).
  - o Minuses: High likelihood of low participation rates of members outside the targeted time zones; interferes with the WG Chair's personal life.
- Conduct a single meeting at a time that supports the greatest number of members, record it, and place the recording on a web site accessible by all members. Then notify the membership of its availability.
  - o Pluses: Consistent messaging (everyone hears the same conversations); much less interference in the WG Chair's personal life.
  - o Minuses: Requires administrative support to record the meeting and place on the designated web site; requires the WG Chair to stand ready to field questions from members not in attendance at the original meeting.
- Conduct a single meeting at a time and day that accommodates all time zones of participants. This could happen, for example, when there is no, or limited, international participation.

The option selected may need to be evaluated periodically to determine whether it is still the best option, e.g., as membership grows and becomes more geographically dispersed.

4.3 Meeting Planning and Execution

4.3.1 Meeting Venue and Invitation

The geographical location of WG members requires that meetings be held virtually. The WG Chair is responsible for working with the Secretariat in assuring the meeting invitations are created and sent to WG members. The scheduled WG meeting invitations will include instructions and links on how to join the meeting.

4.3.2 Agenda and Material Preparation and Distribution

Not all WG meetings require a formal documented agenda, but the WG Chair is expected to have one or more topics for discussion or presentation and be prepared to facilitate. For meetings that warrant a documented agenda, the WG Chair should create and distribute it ahead of the

meeting, or at minimum, include the topics in the invitation to the meeting. Providing the agenda or topics ahead of the meeting allows members to prepare if necessary.

Meeting materials, such as slides, reports, or other artifacts, that are planned for group discussion should be distributed ahead of the meeting. The WG Chair should coordinate before the meeting with the member(s) responsible for the material.

4.3.3 Meeting Facilitation

The WG Chair is expected to lead and facilitate meetings. If the Chair cannot attend, a designated replacement from the WG membership should lead the meeting. If that is not possible, cancel the meeting. It is up to the Chair to determine how to run the meeting. The Chair (or designee) should allow the agenda to be amended or modified (as needed) to include other topics. After the agenda is covered, and if there is time, the WG Chair (or designee) should ask members if they have additional topics for discussion.

4.3.4 Meeting Presentations

Materials are presented by the responsible WG member(s) or Chair as agreed to prior to the meeting. The presenter is expected to observe appropriate time limits.

4.3.5 Meeting Reporting

The WG Chair (or designee) is expected to record vote results, key meeting notes and action items for later distribution to the WG. This is particularly helpful to those members unable to attend the meeting.

4.3.6 Consensus Determination

It is the responsibility of the Chair to facilitate the consensus process. Once consensus is reached, any recommendations of the WG are submitted to the CVE Board in written form, indicating the result of the consensus.

While most times consensus can be accurately determined at a WG meeting, there are cases where consensus is split. In such a case, both points of view are documented, and the CVE Board will make the final determination by vote, if necessary.

The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) Requests for Comments (RFC) 7282 is a good resource on how to conduct a useful consensus process. While the use of humming will not be a useful tool for the virtual nature of the CVE WG meetings, the other guidance in the RFC applies well to this scenario.

4.3.7 Post Meeting Activities

- **Meeting Notes Documentation.** The rough notes taken during the meeting (by the Chair or designee) to capture decisions, key notes, and action items should be cleaned up and documented in a shareable form. When complete, the document is shared with the WG membership, or a link provided to its location.

- **Meeting Notes and Artifacts Storage**. Meeting notes, recordings, and any artifacts (e.g., presentations, reports) presented at the meeting should be uploaded to the document storage area provided by the Secretariat.

5 Reporting Requirements

5.1 Working Group Artifacts (Chair role)

WGs are required to provide the Secretariat with all final artifacts produced by the WG. The artifacts are to be marked with the date and whether they are draft or final.

5.2 Members - meeting notes and recordings (Chair role)

WG meeting notes are a requirement of all WG Chairs. A summary of the meeting, decisions and actions items is expected to be documented and tracked. Working Group members unable to attend a meeting should be able to get meeting updates, whether the notes are posted to the WG artifact location or the meeting notes are sent out following the meeting.

5.3 Secretariat – status updates

WG Chairs are required to provide regular status updates to the Secretariat so that the material is provided to the Board and other interested stakeholders (e.g., other WGs) in a timely fashion. The Secretariat will work closely with WG Chairs to determine the best communication mechanisms, reporting processes, and time frames that are as efficient as possible.

5.4 Board reporting – status updates

WG Chairs are required to keep the Board updated on activities, progress, and decisions by the WG. The Board requires that the WG Chair provide updates monthly at CVE Board meetings. If the WG Chair is unable to attend or send a designee to the meeting, an email about WG activities and decisions are to be sent to the Board private mailing list (cve-private-eboard-list@mitre.org).

6 WG Coordination

From time to time, WGs collaborate with one another in the pursuit of a program objective. For example, a proposed update to data requirements for new CVE records requires collaboration between the Quality Working Group (QWG) to define the requirement and the Automation Working Group (AWG) to support tooling for the requirement. Since both WGs have a stake in the decision to include or reject the requirement, communication between the WGs is important. If WG coordination reaches an impasse, the Secretariat must be informed so the Board can work with stakeholders to break the impasse.

6.1 Responsive to requests from other WG Chairs

In the interest of efficiency, coordination between WGs is facilitated between WG Chairs. Each WG Chair should be aware of any coordination between WGs and be prepared to report to both their WG and the CVE Board on any progress made or roadblocks encountered.

Working Group members are allowed to confer directly with members of other involved WGs. In this case, the members are expected to inform their respected WG Chairs of progress and current status.

6.2 Responsive to Secretariat/Board requests

The CVE Board may initiate a request of a WG(s). The request comes via a communication from the Secretariat to the WG Chair(s). WG Chairs are expected to respond in a reasonable time and manner, and the responses do not necessarily imply acceptance of the request. WG Chairs are expected to make a reasonable effort to accommodate these requests. As work on the Board request progresses, the Secretariat may ask for updates from the WG Chair to pass along to the Board. These updates may by informal (email, phone call) or be added as an agenda item in an upcoming Board meeting.

7 Board Approval Process

From time to time, WGs need to communicate with the CVE Board to seek approval of a change or update to some aspect of the CVE Program. These communications originate from the WG Chair and represent consensus of the WG, using the consensus mechanism adopted by the WG (e.g., voice vote, online poll).

7.1 What Requires Board Approvals

WGs exist to support Program objectives and therefore report directly to the CVE Board. Recommendations by WGs are approved by a majority vote of Board members.

This does not imply that all recommendations by a WG must be socialized with the Board. Recommendations that must be approved by the Board prior to implementation include items: intended for public consumption; that affect CNAs and their operations; that affect CVE stakeholders or consumers directly, or: that modify established policies, rules, or processes.

The specific methods of WG governance and operations need not have approval from the Board, provided they are consistent with the guidelines presented in this document. If there is a valid reason to deviate from the guidelines, the WG chair(s) is expected to bring the reason for deviation to the attention of the Secretariat for appropriate resolution.

7.2 When to Request Board Approvals

Working group requests for approval from the Board should be infrequent and are first directed to the Secretariat for inclusion in a Board meeting agenda once consensus on the topic is reached

in the WG. In some cases, consensus needs to be reached among multiple stakeholders across working groups, as some topics span several WG scopes.

Except in emergencies and other extreme circumstances, the Board does not officially approve a given change/update introduced in an ad-hoc fashion during a Board meeting, over email, or other communication mechanism. Topics are free to be discussed at any time, but CVE participants shouldn't expect Board approval of a given change until a WG Chair (or Board member) introduces that topic at a Board meeting for a vote.

7.3   Recommendations to the Board

From time to time, the CVE Board tasks a WG with reaching a consensus opinion or finding on a topic of interest to the Board. These requests can come at any time and are directed to the WG Chair for dissemination to the broader WG membership for research and discussion. Once that opinion or finding is reached, the WG Chair reserves time at the next convenient Board meeting in order to deliver the opinion or finding.

Appendix A   CVE Program Working Group Charter Template

This Appendix provides the minimum information all Working Groups are expected to use to document their Charter. It is recommended that new WG Chairs also review existing WG Charters to better understand what is expected in each section. Below is a high-level summary of each of the topics to be addressed in the WG Charter.

Introduction

This section explains why the WG was formed (area of focus), date of approval for formation, target objectives and outcomes.

Participation/Membership Model

This section defines who can participate in an WG. Options are:

- Open only to participants in the CVE community who meet defined requirements.
    - An example is the Strategic Planning WG (SPWG), which sometimes deals with controversial pre-decisional discussions on sensitive aspects of the CVE Program that are not (yet) appropriate to share with the entire CVE community.
- Open to the general CVE community and public at large with no restrictions.
    - An example is the Automation WG (AWG).
- Open to the general CVE community and public at large with restrictions.
    - An example is the Outreach and Communications Working Group (OCWG) which sometimes works with sensitive data or artifacts, such as the outreach target list (names specific companies the OCWG is targeting to recruit). In this example, the WG may need a selective approach to how it shares data or artifacts with its members.

Membership Size

A rule of thumb is that no membership size limit is needed, unless membership grows to the point that WG progress is negatively impacted. At that point, the charter can be revised to specify a maximum number.

Handling of WG Materials

This section defines the level of handling of WG data, artifacts, recordings, etc. The CVE Program uses the Traffic Light Protocol (TLP), and any materials supplied to, or generated by, the WG must be treated at one of the levels specified by TLP. The TLP Definitions and Usage can be found here. Violating TLP is grounds for removal from the WG and potentially from the CVE Program.

Meetings/Discussions

This section is applicable to WGs with restricted participation (e.g., SPWG), and may not be needed if the WG is open to anyone with no restrictions. It explains how the WG handles WG

meeting conversations and other discussions and focuses on attribution (who said what) and what was said.

In a restricted participation WGs, it may be necessary to note specific conditions and exemptions about how discussion-related information is shared or used. For example, the Strategic Planning WG specifies the following: *"All discussions during meetings or via the SPWG mailing list or other channels shall be subject to the Chatham House Rule,[1] with an exception when coordinating with other CVE-sanctioned WGs, and when communicating with members of the CVE Board."*

This is just one example. The point of this section is for the WG Chair and members to give thought to, and define, how they will share and use information from WG meetings and discussions.

CVE Professional Code of Conduct

This section informs the WG membership of the need to follow the CVE Program Professional Code of Conduct and provides the link to the CVE Professional Code of Conduct that applies globally across all participants in the CVE Program.

Change in Member Affiliation

This is a potentially optional section. In a WG not open to public participation, if a member has a change in organizational affiliation that renders the member unable to meet the WG membership qualifications, that member must notify the WG Chair and Secretariat of the change. The Secretariat will remove the member from the WG mailing list, and the member's access to other CVE WG resources (e.g., SharePoint).

Removal of a Member

This section defines the process for removing a WG member. Removal can happen because the member requests it, or for cause, such as violating the Professional Code of Conduct, data handing restrictions, or other Charter conventions. The Secretariat will remove the member from the WG mailing list, and the member's access to other CVE WG resources (e.g., SharePoint).

Consensus Determination (Decision Making)

This section defines the process the WG uses to reach consensus on WG-related decisions, as well as any threshold as appropriate, e.g., 51%, 60%, no disagreement. It should cover the means by which consensus is reached, e.g., teleconference voice vote, email vote, or lack of disagreement, other (e.g., SurveyMonkey). It should also define next steps in cases where the consensus is inconclusive. Adequate advance notice should be given to the members to improve participation rate in decision-making.

Meetings

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[1] "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chatham_House_Rule.

This section defines the WG meeting frequency (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly, other), who is responsible for developing and distributing the agenda, who is responsible for setting up the video/teleconference meetings and sending the invitations, and who is responsible for documenting and distributing meeting decisions and action items. It may also include the review/approval process for any materials planned for discussion at the meetings.

Progress

The section defines the frequency (e.g., weekly, monthly, Board-requested) of reporting WG progress to the CVE Board. It includes how progress is communicated (e.g., email, Board meeting video/teleconference), and defines who is responsible for delivering or presenting progress results.

Charter Development, Review and Approval (and Updates)

Charter development should be the first activity of a new WG, and the WG chair takes the lead author role, with input from initial WG members. An internal review(s) is conducted by the WG, and when satisfied, the Charter is forwarded to the Board for awareness, however, the Board may request changes. If the Board has no change requests, the Charter is considered final and approved. The steps required to make changes to the Charter need to be documented in the Charter itself.

Subsequent updates or changes to the Charter may be recommended by any WG member or Board member. Change recommendations are considered and voted on by the WG members. If approved, the change(s) is implemented, and the updated Charter is forwarded to the Board for awareness. In the absence of Board requests for edits, the updated charter is considered final and approved.