AOFS Governance & Non-Profit Strategy

AOFS is designed as an **open, community-driven standard** for smallholder farms, NGOs, and local agricultural projects. To maximize adoption while **protecting the open standard from commercial hijacking**, AOFS recommends governance under a **non-profit organization**.

1. Legal Ownership & Trademark Control

- The non-profit **owns the AOFS name, logo, and certification marks**.
- Official AOFS branding may only be used by **implementations certified** to follow the standard.
- Open licensing applies to specifications and core modules:
  - Documentation: **Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 (CC BY-SA 4.0)**
    - Details & Legal Code
  - Software modules: **GNU GPL v3 or similar strong copyleft licenses**
  - Hardware / Controller designs: **CERN Open Hardware License (OHL)**

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2. Governance & Community Trust

- **Steering Committee / Advisory Board** oversees the standard:
  - Representatives from NGOs, universities, and community organizations
  - Approves contributions, updates, and certification rules
- Transparent and open decision-making ensures **AOFS remains aligned with humanitarian and low-resource farming goals**.

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3. Modular & Federated Architecture

- Core AOFS modules (irrigation safety, livestock, poultry) remain **open, auditable, and standardized**.
- Optional extensions may be added by communities or organizations, but **must comply with licensing rules to remain AOFS-compatible**.
- **Federated controller network** ensures data and operations remain **local, secure, and independent** of any commercial vendor.

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4. Certification & Branding

- Only implementations following the AOFS standard and passing audits may use:

    - AOFS logo
    - "AOFS Certified" branding
- Certification ensures **community and NGO trust**, even if optional proprietary extensions are added.

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5. Preventing “Embrace, Extend, Extinguish”

- AOFS encourages adoption (**embrace**) and local customization (**extend**) while legal, governance, and licensing mechanisms **prevent hijacking or closing the standard** (**extinguish**).
- Key safeguards:
    - Strong copyleft licenses (CC BY-SA 4.0, GPL v3, OHL)
    - Controlled trademark and certification marks
    - Transparent governance through a steering committee
    - Federated, modular architecture with auditable core

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6. Neutrality & Community Adoption

- Being a **non-profit signals neutrality**, encouraging adoption by:
    - NGOs
    - Local government projects
    - Community farms in low-resource regions
- Ensures AOFS remains **humanitarian and accessible**, rather than commercially driven.

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7. Sustainable Funding & Extensions

- Non-profit may fund operations via:
    - Grants and donations
    - Certification and training programs
    - Optional commercial extensions or services
- Core AOFS remains **fully open and auditable**, while funding supports **community support, training, and governance**.

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Summary

- AOFS under a non-profit framework ensures:

- Legal protection of **name, logo, and certification**
- Strong **copyleft licensing** for core modules
- Transparent, community-driven governance
- Federated and modular architecture for **resilient, offline-first operation**
- Protection against commercial hijacking while encouraging **open adoption and local extensions**

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