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DRAFT

Policy to Consider the Limited Usage of LGPL APIs in Eclipse Projects

The following policy outlines procedures for considering the limited use of APIs obtained under the terms of the Lesser General Public License (the "LGPL") in projects hosted at Eclipse.org.

The Eclipse Foundation Intellectual Property Policy ("IP Policy") states that, in limited circumstances, there may be instances where Eclipse Content based on Non-Eclipse Content may be approved for distribution under terms and conditions other than the Project License(s). In accordance with the IP Policy, this policy describes the processes under which the use of LGPL APIs will be considered. This policy pertains solely to the use of APIs, and does not apply to functional code. As described more fully below, APIs licensed under the LGPL may only be used when:

a) A supermajority of the Eclipse Board of Directors determines, along with the PMC and EMO, that the functionality, usability or consumability of an Eclipse project would be severely restricted or reduced absent the use of such APIs, and there is no feasible alternative available under a more permissive license;

b) There is a technical requirement to create and maintain as Eclipse Content (as that term is defined by the Eclipse IP Policy) an LGPL-licensed binding to such APIs; and

c) The underlying LGPL-licensed software libraries are "pre-reqs," as defined in the "Eclipse Foundation's Guidelines for the Review of Third Party Dependencies".

This policy is inapplicable where there is no requirement to maintain any LGPL-licensed Eclipse Content. Nor does this policy in any way imply that the LGPL is approved as a Project License (as that term is defined by the Eclipse IP Policy) for use by any Eclipse Project. This policy is not intended to be a statement of interpretation with regard to the LGPL.

Conditions of usage

Each of the following conditions must be met to use LGPL APIs in an Eclipse project as a method for invoking an LGPL software library:

i)   The request must solely pertain to the use of APIs made available under the LGPL, and not functional code.

ii)   The project must create a binding to the APIs that contains portions of the API, thus permitting users of the binding to leverage familiarity with the API.

iii)   The underlying software library invoked by the APIs must be deemed "prerequisite software," as defined in the Eclipse Foundation's Guidelines for the Review of Third Party Dependencies:

http://www.eclipse.org/org/documents/Eclipse_Policy_and_Procedure_for_3rd_Party_Dependencies_Final.pdf.

iv)   The APIs cannot be obtained under a more permissive open source license (e.g., the BSD).

v)   The LGPL APIs must be maintained in a separate module that will form the binding. The binary code for the binding must be dynamically linked by any modules that use it and must be accompanied with notices that make it clear that the file is licensed

under the LGPL. The source code for the binding must contain notices that make it clear that the file is licensed under the LGPL.

vi)   The binding must be licensed pursuant to terms and procedures posted by the Eclipse Foundation, which will include guidance concerning compliance with the pertinent sections of the LGPL.

vii)   The Eclipse Board must approve each and every usage of LGPL APIs in Eclipse projects by a supermajority vote (consisting of two thirds of voting members), and may do so only if it finds that the following conditions are satisfied:

    a)   there is no alternative open source software that provides the same or similar function to the underlying software library invoked by the APIs that can be obtained under a more permissive license; and

    b)   the functionality, usability or consumability of an Eclipse project would be severely restricted or reduced absent the use of such LGPL APIs.

In determining that such conditions are satisfied, the Board may rely on information compiled by the PMC for the project requesting usage of LGPL APIs and vetted by the EMO.