Expert Group Profile

Description of the Expert Group

Related Committee	*Supply Chain & Quality*
Name of the Expert Group	*Product Approval*
Association Contact	*Thibault Grandemenge*

Description / Challenge / Initial Situation:

The production process and the product approval granted by the customer to the supplier constitute essential prerequisites for the supplier to begin series production and to deliver serial parts to the customer. Consequently, product release is of central importance for securing stable deliveries within the supply chain and for enabling the successful execution of business relationships between customer and supplier throughout series production.

Today, however, the documents required for obtaining customer approval—such as process descriptions, test reports, control plans, or capability analyses—are typically uploaded manually as PDF files into various customer-specific portals. This results in significant administrative effort, inconsistent data structures, and limited transparency. Moreover, manual handling increases the risk of outdated, incomplete, or erroneous information, which can lead to delays in approval, production interruptions, and avoidable coordination loops. A standardized and automated approach to exchanging product-release information would therefore offer considerable potential to increase efficiency, data quality, and supply-chain reliability.

Goals:

The objective is to optimize the complex data-exchange processes associated with product and production-process approval in response to rising efficiency, quality, and innovation pressures in the automotive industry. A fully digitalized data exchange is intended to ensure complete transparency and traceability of all approved products and associated process evidence. This strengthens trust between OEMs and suppliers and simplifies validations, verifications, and audits throughout the product lifecycle.

By reducing manual activities—such as repeatedly uploading documents to different customer portals—the approval workflow becomes significantly faster and more reliable. This not only shortens time-to-market but also frees valuable resources for higher-value tasks. Structured, machine-readable communication facilitates earlier detection of deviations and risks, enabling potential issues to be addressed before series production begins. As a result, product quality increases and production disruptions are minimized.

Transparent, interoperable data exchange also enhances collaboration across the value chain. When both OEMs and suppliers have access to consistent, up-to-date information, misunderstandings are reduced, communication becomes more efficient, and strategic partnership is strengthened. Ultimately, the digitalization of product release processes contributes to a more resilient, efficient, and innovation-driven automotive ecosystem.

Deliverables

- **Catena-X Standard:**
  A Catena-X standard will be developed based on the VDA recommendations 231-300 / -301. This standard will define the data models, structures, and interoperable exchange mechanisms required for digital product and production-process approval across the supply chain.

- **Aspect Models:**
  Corresponding aspect models—fully aligned with VDA 231-300 / -301—will be created to provide the semantic foundation for standardized data exchange. These models will ensure consistent interpretation of approval-relevant information across all participants in the Catena-X ecosystem.
- **Tractus-X KIT:**
  A KIT (Knowledge, Implementation & Tools) package will be provided within Tractus-X. It will include reference implementations, example payloads, onboarding guides, API specifications, and test artifacts that support developers and business users in adopting and integrating the standard and aspect models efficiently.

New standard for which release:

- 26.09

Adaptation to standards for which release:

- -

New KIT for which release:

- 26.09

Adaptations to new KITs for which release:

- -

Don't forget to work with Tractus-X regarding the implementation and alignment with other initiatives. For further information on the roles, have a look at the Working Model.

Why should I participate?
Participating in this initiative allows companies to significantly reduce manual effort and associated costs in the product and production process approval workflow. Faster approvals enabled by digital exchange contribute to shorter time-to-market, giving participants a competitive edge. Early identification of risks and deviations improves product quality and reduces the likelihood of rework and customer complaints. Transparent and standardized communication fosters trust and strengthens collaboration between OEMs and suppliers. Companies gain access to a scalable, interoperable solution within the Catena-X ecosystem, aligned with industry standards and best practices. By joining the initiative, participants actively shape future standards in the automotive industry and benefit from shared innovation and collective learning.

What is expected of me?
You are expected to share your expertise and actively contribute to defining models, concepts, and technical requirements. Regular engagement in meetings and deliverable development will be essential to achieving impactful results.

For more information on the responsibilities of an Expert Group, have a look at the Working Model.

Organisation

Selection Framework:
The expert group selection framework and criteria is aimed at selecting members who possess the right blend of expertise, commitment, and diversity to foster expansion. Please find below an outline of requirements for Expert Group members (section "Competence description expert group member"). When applying, please make a statement on the following criteria to outline your best fit.

- Minimum availability of 10 hours per month, more is a plus.
- Commitment to regular, active participation and active contribution.

- Agile mindset highly welcome

We are searching for max. 10-15 members across the industry (suppliers of different sizes and materials, OEM, SME).

Additionally, we are searching for a lead and co-lead of this expert group, enabling the expert group to achieve the deliverables (internal and external alignment, preparation and steering of meetings). Please notify us via the application forms. The estimated amount of additional time for that role is around 4h per week.