

0-02

Kickoff Questionnaire

Written questions with a default for each, so no kickoff session is needed. It also lists the context that helps most.

Axdale. Software engineering by Michael Lip, Warsaw, Poland (CET).

Version 1.0. 23 October 2026. Website <https://www.axdale.com>. Code record <https://github.com/theluckystrike>.

This questionnaire replaces a kickoff call. Your answers give me what a call would give me, in a form your team can keep. Answer in the reply, in a document or in an issue in your tracker. Short answers are fine.

Each question has a default in brackets. If the default is right, write "default". Questions marked R are required before day 1. The others can wait until day 2.

Context helps me most

The more context you can share, the better and faster the work. I work in writing, so your documents, tickets and notes do the job a meeting would do, and they let me start from your real system instead of my guesses. Everything below is optional. Share what is easy, and skip what is sensitive or not ready.

What to share	Why it helps
Repository access, or the files that matter most	I read the code before I plan, so the plan fits how your system works today.
Architecture notes, diagrams or a README for new hires	I learn the boundaries and naming your team already uses.
Open tickets, the backlog and any bug reports	I see what your users and your team have already reported.
Past incidents, postmortems or error logs (redacted is fine)	I find the failure patterns that matter most to you.

What to share	Why it helps
Examples of good and bad output, for agent or LLM work	I turn them into the first evaluation cases, so you and I measure the same thing.
Limits and rules, such as data you cannot share, compliance needs or banned tools	I design around them from day 1.
A short screen recording you make of the problem, if that is quicker for you than writing	I watch it on my own time and reply in writing.

If something is unclear, I ask in writing and keep my questions short and grouped, so they take you little time to answer.

A. The goal

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
A1 R	What must be true at the end of week 1 for you to count it a success?	(the acceptance criteria in the Order Form)	_____
A2 R	Who uses the change first, and what do they do with it?	(internal staff on staging)	_____
A3	Which number would show it worked, such as error rate, latency, cost per request or pass rate on an evaluation set?	(pass rate on an evaluation set I build in week 1)	_____
A4	Is there a date that matters, such as a launch, a customer promise or a board review?	(no fixed date)	_____
A5	What is the size of the whole job after week 1?	(2 to 4 paid weeks, as in the plan)	_____

B. The system

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
B1 R	Which repositories are in scope, and which branch do I start from?	(the repositories in the Order Form, from main)	_____
B2 R	How do I run the project locally? Link the README or the setup script.	(the README in the repository)	_____
B3	Which environment can I deploy previews to?	(none, I test locally and in CI)	_____
B4	How does CI run, and which checks must pass before review?	(all required checks on the pull request)	_____

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
B5	Which AI models and providers does the product use today, and on which account?	(none in production yet)	_____
B6	Where are the logs, traces and errors I may read?	(none needed in week 1)	_____
B7	Which parts of the code are fragile or owned by another team?	(none)	_____

C. Limits and rules

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
C1 R	Which systems, data or files must I not touch?	(production, customer data, billing)	_____
C2 R	Which AI providers may see your code? This repeats section 5 of the Order Form.	(as ticked in the Order Form)	_____
C3	Do you have a security policy, a coding standard or a style guide I must follow?	(I follow my Security and Access Policy and your linters)	_____
C4	Are there legal or compliance rules, such as GDPR, HIPAA, SOC 2 controls or data residency?	(none beyond GDPR basics)	_____
C5	May I add new dependencies? Is there a license rule?	(yes, permissive licenses only, each listed in the pull request)	_____
C6	Do you need a mutual NDA or a data processing agreement?	(no)	_____

D. People and approvals

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
D1 R	Who is the Decision Maker who approves the plan, paid weeks and sign-off?	(the person named in the Order Form)	_____
D2 R	Who reviews pull requests, and in what time?	(the Decision Maker, within 1 Working Day)	_____
D3	Who grants and removes access?	(the technical contact in the Order Form)	_____

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
D4	Who should get the daily update?	(the Decision Maker and the reviewer)	_____
D5	Who is the contact if a security issue appears?	(the Decision Maker)	_____

E. Working in writing

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
E1	Where do you want the daily update, email or a tracker comment?	(email)	_____
E2	Which tracker do you use, and which project or label is mine?	(GitHub Issues in the main repository)	_____
E3	May I merge my own pull requests after approval?	(no, you merge)	_____
E4	Which time zone is your team in, and which hours are you online?	(US Eastern, 09:00 to 17:00)	_____
E5	Are there public holidays or freezes in your company during the week?	(none)	_____

F. History and risk

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
F1	What have you tried already, and what happened?	(nothing yet)	_____
F2	Has this part of the system had incidents? Link the write-ups.	(none)	_____
F3	What is the worst outcome you want me to avoid?	(a regression in production)	_____
F4	What would make you stop after week 1?	(criteria not met)	_____

G. Procurement

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
G1	Do you need a supplier form, a vendor security questionnaire or a tax form from me?	(no)	_____

No.	Question	Default	Your answer
G2	Which legal entity pays the invoices, and to which email do invoices go?	(the Client in the Order Form, to the Decision Maker)	
G3	Do you need a purchase order number on invoices?	(no)	

What I do with your answers

I read them on the day they arrive. I send back one grouped message with any follow-up questions, each with a default. I add the answers to the written plan, so the plan and the answers stay in one place. Nothing in this questionnaire changes the acceptance criteria unless your Decision Maker agrees in writing.

Axdale, Michael Lip. Warsaw, Poland (CET). michael@axdale.com.
www.axdale.com. Code record github.com/theluckystrike. Version
1.0. 23 October 2026.