Building the Greenhouse / Building the Commons Conservancy

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Scaling Open Source Projects is Hard

- An 'embedded' open source project with a closely knit group of collaborators doesn't always turn into a comprehensive, cooperative program supported by a lively ecosystem?

- People don't easily trust each other with money
  - And donations can be very difficult to put in the books of most existing organisation.

- Legal requirements / financial requirements
  - getting a bank account to pool money
  - means going to a notary to start a legal entity
  - means filing quarterly tax statements
  - and that is just the start…..

- *(but at some point the project has to enter the post-project stage)*

What does the GÉANT Community Want?

- Trusted intermediary;

- Known jurisdiction;

- Light-touch;

- Community appropriate;

- Socialised.

https://wiki.geant.org/display/GREEN/

Open Source Software Greenhouse?

- A place to cultivate;

- A place for support and growth;

- A transparent structure.

~~GÉANT as a Conservancy~~

- Legal set up of GÉANT Association means we are not well structured to support projects in this way – we are an association for the members.

- Need to look for a partner to support conservancy aspects.

- HOWEVER…

- We do have the ability to provide support, advice and community sharing (Greenhouse SIG). …

- And to work with a partner.

Enter NLnet

"A world wide open competitive call for microgrants facilitating independent contributions to internet technology and internet standards, based on open source."

The Commons Conservancy

- An 'organisation hypervisor' that can spawn and support virtual open source foundations .

- Each Program runs independently from all the others, in perfect isolation.

- Each Program determines its own operating environment (such as bylaws) with templates provided, and has full connectivity to the outside (own site, etc).

- Donations handled completely externally through dedicated fund, e.g. NLnet.
    - no money = no risk of financial contamination.
    - every Program profits from charitable tax recognition for donations from day one.
    - audited, professional financial environment open mechanism invites fresh blood.

Benefits?

- No 'end of budget year' syndrome.
  - money stays in place, like a Swiss bank account donations can have a multi-year release span.
  - donations can come from anyone with an interest in the technology and its goals (public, private, academic, civil society, etc.).
  - Only achieved results are paid out.

- [The Commons Conservancy] is a safe place for contributors to keep source code + other assets – if so desired.

- Program may decide to add another license on top of an existing license.
  - newer version of the current license.
  - merging with another free software/open source project with an incompatible license.

Terms of Reference

- Open to anyone acting in the public interest.

- Constructive, positive and inclusive approach.

- License agnostic.
  - Limited to Free Software/Open source efforts without commercial provisions.

- No lock-in.
  - A Program is free to go at all times to upgrade and run its own 'bare metal' organisation.

- Every Program appoints an entry point for Responsible Disclosure handling

- No sketchy stuff.

- That is it, really.

Next Steps?

Thank you and any questions

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