

Bugfix accelerator program 2022/2023 – v2.0

Introduction

This is a proposal for hiring developers for a fixed amount of hours during the bug fixing season for Inkscape 1.3 (tentatively Q1 2023).

The design of this proposal is decidedly different from that of a “bug bounty” program. Instead, it relies on the self-management of the contractors, who were chosen from the set of trusted and experienced core developers. They have already demonstrated that they have the project’s interests at heart and are (by nature of FOSS contribution) not driven by money, but they still need to cover their expenses. If this proposal is enacted, it would free them from other (paid) work during the bug fixing season and allow them to focus on Inkscape. In return, they commit to prioritizing bugs that prevent the project from releasing Inkscape 1.3 to its users.

Persons, financials and payment

All GitLab users that have contributed more than 20 Merge Requests at inkscape/inkscape containing the word “fixes” were contacted (12 people were asked, and all 12 responded) and suggested a contractor position under the terms of this proposal. Of those contacted, three expressed interest and two were selected for this proposal. The selected contractors are:

- Martin Owens (@doctormo). He contributed several important features for Inkscape 1.3, notably delivering the shape builder tool (started during a GSoC project), various improvements to the Objects Dialog and multi-page documents as well as PDF import refactoring (WIP at the time of writing).
- Rafał Siejakowski (@S-Rafael). He contributed dozens of bugfixes and UX improvements for the 1.2.x series and master, and is particularly invested in the geometry library 2geom. He also contributed a new color selector for the OKLab colorspace.

Both selected candidates have demonstrated their skills for both UI/UX and backend/library work, ensuring that issues in those crucial areas can be fixed.

For both contractors, the budget of one month of full time work, using the SFC standard rate for developers (USD 70/hr), is allocated. This amounts to a total of USD 11 200 for each contractor.

The payment details may be negotiated between the SFC and each contractor individually. The hourly rate is not subject to negotiation. This proposal covers the following modalities:

Type A: Fixed volume contract

The SFC and the contractor agree upon a total number of hours a priori, which is multiplied by the hourly rate to yield the contract value. This value must not exceed the allocated funds for a contractor, but may be lower. The contractor may request that up to a half of the compensation

be paid upfront. The remainder is paid out after successful completion of the project.

Type B: Time-Tracking

Instead of agreeing on a fixed contract volume, the contractor may choose to time-track their work and bill the SFC for the time spent on the project (at most 160 hours).

The details of the contract negotiation and payment are handled by the SFC.

Schedule & Selection of issues

The proposal will be voted upon in January 2022, following by contract negotiation, so that work could start at the latest on Feb 15 (1.3 feature freeze is scheduled for Jan 31, so this should coincide with an Alpha release and possibly first feedback on it).

Before then, a list of blocker issues for 1.3 will be created by the Bug Management team, which will be continuously updated during the period of the contract, as feedback from Alpha testers comes in. Issues in this list should be prioritized by the contractors; otherwise, they will responsibly select issues from the list of open issues in the bugtracker, with emphasis on regressions, crashes, (UX) bugs in new features and other Importance::High bugs, in particular those within the knowledge domain of the contractor.

It is in the contractors' own interest to perform this selection (and their work in general) responsibly, to maintain their good standing and prove the effectiveness of the program overall.

License

The work done by the candidate will be licensed as GPL2+, and the copyright will be with the SFC.

Evaluation

Merge Requests financed by this proposal will be assigned a unique tag by the contractor to make the allocation of users' donations visible and to facilitate evaluation.

The progress of the project will be a (potential) discussion item at the weekly developer meetings.

A brief report on the project will be written by the Vectors team (with input from the contractors) and presented as news article.

Changes compared to the v1.0 proposal

The previous proposal additionally featured Tavmjong Bah as third contractor. A PLC vote didn't result in a majority; some board members felt that the number of contractors was too high. After analyzing the vote, Tav voluntarily removed himself from the list. However, the consensus in the Dev Meeting (Jan 5, 2023) was that more than one contractor is desired, for the following reasons:

- They can split work based on familiarity with the affected code, which makes their work more

time-effective.

- There are certain synergies; for example, they can review each other's Merge Requests.
- If there is only one contractor, and that person fails to meet the expectations that were put in the program, it is difficult to evaluate whether the contractor simply didn't perform as expected or the program itself needs changes. If two contractors both fail to meet the expectations, that's a strong indication the fault lies with the program.