

FLOSS/fund

Lessons from a no [] attached funding experiment

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whoami

- Communities X Sustainability in FOSS
- Maintainers Program @FOSSUnited
- Volunteer @FLOSS/fund

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FLOSS/fund

$1 million a year for free and open source projects

For individuals and orgs, big and small.

Started in 2024 at Zerodha, FLOSS/fund is dedicated to supporting critical, impactful, and valuable Free/Libre and Open Source projects globally. We give up to $1 million per year to support developers and communities that create and maintain projects, big and small. **Read the announcement**.

Much of the foundation underlying the modern technology landscape and the internet itself is built on the fruits of labour of individuals and communities in the form of free and open source software. We aim to contribute our tiny bit to this enormous global effort of passion, innovation, and freedom.

FLOSS: Free/Libre and Open Source Software / For the Love of Open Source Software / The Floss flower (Ceiba speciosa) in the logo, because why not!

Apply now

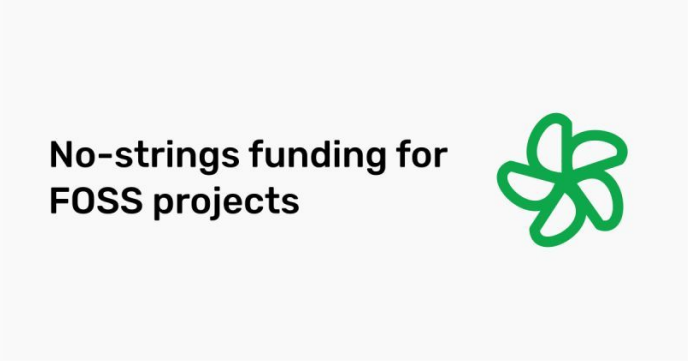
Ecosystem partner

FOSS UNITED

Why

- While there are no doubts about the prevalence and significance of Open Source Software, it’s financial sustainability (or the lack thereof) has been a hot topic.
- The rise of the “open core” model has been a cause of concern.
- VC funding in open source isn’t looking like a healthy situation.
- “For us, FLOSS/fund is about hacker goodwill, reciprocity, and common sense business strategy. “
- “Structure”

- Upto $1 million annually
- A structured approach towards funding FOSS
    - Dedicated team - OSFO
    - With a plan to make this community run in the future!
    - Funding range: $10k-$100k per project
    - Global sourcing of applications
    - fundingjson mechanism



funding.json



funding.json

```
{
  "version": "v1.0.0",
  "entity": "",
  "projects": "",
  "funding": ""
}
```

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{
  "entity": {
        "type": "",
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        "name": "",
        "email": "",
        "phone": "",
        "description": "",
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            "url": "",
            "wellKnown": ""
        }
    }
}
```

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{
  "projects": [{
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            "url": "",
            "wellKnown": ""
        },
        "repositoryUrl": {
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            "wellKnown": ""
        },
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}
```

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{
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            "type": "",
            "address": "",
            "description": ""
        }],
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            "currency": "",
            "frequency": "",
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        }],

        "history": [{
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            "income": 0,
            "expenses": 0,
            "taxes": 0,
            "currency": "",
            "description": ""
        }]
    }
}
```

funding.json

- python.org/funding.json (Render)
- openstreetmap.org/funding.json (Render)
- ffmpeg.org/funding.json (Render)
- ziglang.org/funding.json (Render)
- f-droid.org/funding.json (Render)
- matrix.org/funding.json (Render)
- github.com/openssl/openssl/blob/master/funding.json (Render)
- github.com/WorldHealthOrganization/godata/blob/master/funding/funding.json (Render)

Platform integrations - GitHub, F-droid, thanks.dev,

Tranche 1 (May 2025) — $325000

Project	Amount
ImageMagick	$50000
Krita	$50000
LibreTranslate	$10000
libjpeg-turbo	$25000
Network Time Protocol	$60000
OpenSSL Library	$100000
Weblate	$10000
x64dbg	$10000
XZ tools	$10000

Tranche 2 (Oct 2025) — $645000

Project	Amount
Blender	$25000
Crystal	$15000
Dokku	$10000
dotenvx	$10000
Ente	$25000
F-Droid	$50000
FFmpeg	$100000
freeCodeCamp	$10000
Gleam	$15000
Graphile	$10000
HOTOSM	$50000
KDE e.V.	$25000
Kiwix	$15000

LFortran	$10000
Matrix	$25000
OCaml/Tarides	$10000
OpenRefine	$25000
OpenStreetMap	$30000
pgmpy	$10000
postmarketOS	$25000
quic-go	$10000
Rethink DNS	$25000
Sequoia PGP	$25000
tus	$10000
vale	$10000
Wireshark	$25000
Yjs	$10000
Zen Browser	$10000
Zig	$25000

- Some of the biggest and most important FOSS projects in the world applied to FLOSS/fund - Blender, OpenSSL, OSM, FFmpeg, Krita, and Python Software Foundation..
- There is great diversity in projects. We saw everything from developer tools, programming languages and libraries, critical FOSS infrastructure, to humanitarian and social-impact projects.
- There is great diversity in entities—individuals, communities, non-profits, for-profits.
- Applications have come via word of mouth and volunteer outreach from within FOSS communities, despite no campaigns, advertisements, or even social media presence.
- The funding.json experiment has done really well.

But..

Total for 2025

Total	complete	Pending
$970000	$555000	$415000



- Have only been able to disburse ~50% of the amount committed in 2025.
- Disbursal timelines of 4 to 16 weeks!
- Extraordinary amount of redtape and paperwork just to donate to FOSS projects from India.
- GitHub sponsors, Open Collective, Stripe etc.

LESSONS

Non-thematic funding is hard!

- Critical/foundational infrastructure
- Usage, Alternatives
- One of many in a crowded space? What makes it special?
- The only FOSS effort of its kind? The only FOSS alternative to a proprietary system?
- Dependency that cannot be swapped out easily?
- It is a niche project, but within that niche, how important is it? And how important is that niche overall?
- It is a very domain-specific project like scientific computing. How important is it within the domain?
- Is the project an institutional, community, or individual effort?
- Is it R&D that may become important to the FOSS ecosystem tomorrow?
- It is a consumer application. What is the demographic of its userbase? Individuals, just businesses, or a wide range of diverse users?
- Beyond being standalone technology, does it serve as a means for social impact? How significant is that impact?
- Does the project already receive funding? Does it have significant industry backing? Does it have a surplus or a deficit? If it is a deficit, how bad is it?

Community

- FLOSS/fund has been a voluntary effort, and the community has played a huge role in it.
- We have spoken to users, contributors, maintainers etc. for help with decision making and evaluations.
- Anyone setting up similar initiatives should account for community involvement.

Lack of fiscal clarity in projects

- We assume a lot when working with FOSS projects!
- Small projects - just a few devs (how to send/split funds?)
- Foundations decide where to direct funding, which leads to a chicken and egg problem with contributor sustainability.
- Can a contributor solicit funds on behalf of the project for their own work?
- Legal structures around for profit companies that maintain FOSS projects.
- There is a significant gap in the understanding of cross-border payments, and a lot of US-centricity
- LOTS of tax laws
- It can take upto 3 months to obtain certain tax documents. Projects ought to keep this in mind when applying for funding.

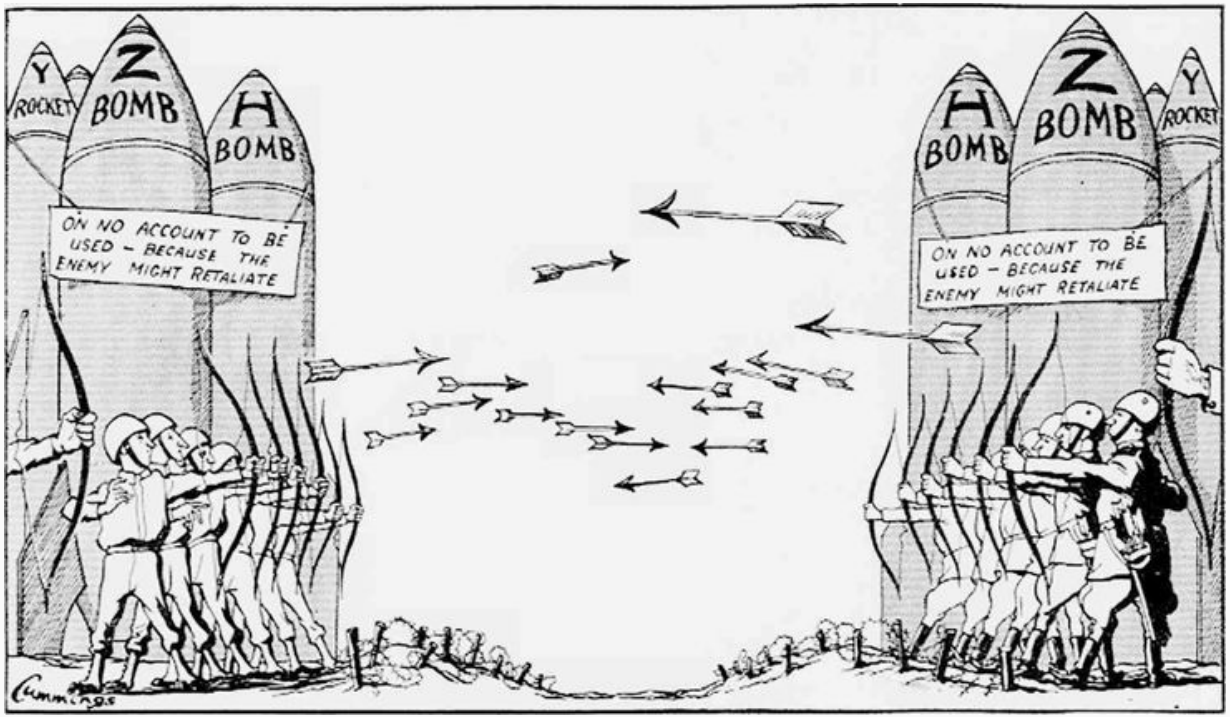
The biggest lesson

Even the most critical and popular FOSS projects are still not doing okay. XKCD 2347 continues to be relevant.

What’s next?

- We’ve allocated a fresh $1mn pool for 2026.
- Push harder to reduce the logistical and process delays, and obtain regulatory precedent for making processes smoother.
- Explore partnerships with global platforms that make disbursements simpler.
- Explore corporate outreach for encouraging companies to set up similar funds.
- More fundingjson outreach

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)



Mutual Assured Sustenance (MAS)

- Unlike international trade relations, which can be abruptly halted through legal action, FOSS collaboration is abstract and driven by entirely different motivations and incentives.
- FOSS is produced and maintained by people who do it because they want to, isolated from political and state-level priorities and incentives. However, FOSS underpins infrastructure that has far-reaching consequences.
- You can procure Diet Coke via alternative supply chains, but imagine having to create your own Postgres!
- “FOSS is produced and maintained by people who do it because they want to, isolated from political and state-level priorities and incentives.”
- No amount of resources can enable governments to develop and maintain high quality FOSS.

Indian Sovereign FOSS Fund

- The world has gone through massive geopolitical changes in the last few months
- Tech sovereignty is the talk of the hour
- Taxpayer money is being utilised to create DPG and DPI - which is deeply intertwined with FOSS, ignoring the openwashing.
- FOSS is the engine behind DPI/DPG. Linux, OSM, Wikipedia are the ultimate DPGs.
- GOI is strategically pro-FOSS
- Given the focus on tech sovereignty, now feels like the most opportune moment to establish a sovereign FOSS fund.
- A well thought out setup where the fund is administered by the FOSS community in collaboration with the government, could position India as one of the global pioneers of MAS in the modern technology landscape.

If you’re a FOSS project, please apply

If you’re a company benefiting from FOSS, pay up.

If you’re an individual who wants to contribute, check out rupeefund.org

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info@floss.fund