Helping people make a living around KDE

Research, plans and next steps

Background

- We want people to stay around longer in KDE and have a bigger impact
- We need to make it easier to make a living around KDE

What we did

- Interviews with people from inside and outside KDE
- Aggregated and expanded input based on our experience and past discussions

Options

KDE e.V. hires people to work on specific apps and Plasma

We would need to:

- Find ways to decide which apps and features/bug fixes to spend limited money on
- Make this attractive and secure
- Make this sustainable
- Have enough of an impact with limited resources
- Manage expectations

+ Our products would improve
+ Increased momentum in the project
+ Possibility to do product-specific fundraising

- Suitable people might not be able or willing to jump on this for shorter periods of time
- We need to deal with hiring/contracting people and manage them

KDE e.V. hires people to work on base software

Base software meaning Qt, Linux, KDE Frameworks, non-end-product components

We would need to:

- Find ways to decide which features/bug fixes to spend limited money on
- Make this attractive and secure
- Make this sustainable
- Have enough of an impact
- Manage expectations

+ Developing our products will be easier
+ Increased momentum in the projects

- Impact might not be immediately visible
- Suitable people might not be able or willing to jump on this for short periods of time
- We need to deal with hiring/contracting people and manage them

KDE e.V. supports applying for light-weight grants

We would need to:

- Have someone help with administration and grant application support
- Research grant opportunities

+ We would not need to decide on which projects to work on
+ Administrative overhead is minimal
+ We only have projects that at least one contributor is excited about

- Usually short-term
- Might not be able to attract more senior people
- We're pushing risk and administrative overhead to the person applying for the grant

KDE e.V. applies for heavy-weight grants and joins consortia

We would need to:

- Consider our past experience on the topic which had limited success and impact on our products
- Have people researching opportunities that fit our needs and community
- Spent significant resources in applying for grants, which we might never receive

+ Improve the professional image of our organisation and products in the long-term
+ Possibility of pushing our products into new areas and get us to try new things
+ Creates opportunities for collaboration with external partners

- Requires dedicated resources for the paperwork involved
- The topics of the grants might distract us from areas of importance to us, as grants that fit our particular interests are probably not always available
- Probability of getting a grant seems generally low

KDE e.V. invests in building out the company ecosystem around KDE

We would need to:

- Intensify our current efforts in this area
- Ensure there are enough business opportunities going around
- Get someone to do business development
- Create a place for consultancies to become aware of opportunities and potentially pool resources together for larger projects

+ Our products and organisation would be taken more seriously
+ We would not have the burden of administration, taxes, hiring, etc.

- There is currently not enough business going around to make this attractive for several consultancies

We invest in ways for community members to fundraise directly (Patreon, ...)

We would need to:

- Find a solution to do this that aligns with our vision
- Help contributors build up their donor base

+ Rather easy to set up

- Contributors will still need to put effort in fundraising instead of doing the tasks at hand
- Bureaucracy and taxes are off-loaded to contributors
- We're effectively making KDE contributors compete among ourselves
- Focus on fast gain rather than long-term
- Constant parallel fundraising initiatives

KDE e.V. offers bounties

We would need to:

- Define very clearly what work we want to get done
- Agree on a process for how to decide what we put out as a bounty
- Have maintainers available to evaluate the submissions
- Create very thorough criteria on how this is supposed to work

+ We can clearly request what we need to get done
+ Easy to start small and scale later

- Very piecemeal, making it hard to make a living off it
- It may be complex to coordinate
- The line of acceptability of a bounty and the warranty that it's fulfilled is not clear

Income

- Invest in spaces that will bring revenue that sustains efforts to improve KDE, not to fundraise further
- Options:
    - dedicated fundraising campaigns
    - general fundraising campaigns
    - drive-by donations
    - supporting membership fees
    - Patronships
    - purchases in app stores
    - grants

Recommendation

Proposal

3 key areas worthy for KDE e.V. to invest in going forward:

1. Hardware integration
2. App stores support
3. Base software development

Proposal

Driving KDE products forward

- increasing **momentum** around our efforts
- create **opportunities** for **community** members to join these efforts.
- **drive revenue** to sustain the positions and support these efforts in the long-term.

Hardware integration

Development work on **integrating** KDE's software better in different form factors together with our **partners**.

Existing hardware partners:

- Pine64 (Pinephone & Pinebook)
- Slimbook

Hardware integration

By caring for our hardware partners and the KDE products they ship we can improve our current position and **build further partnerships**.

- Reach bigger actors
  => make a larger impact.

- Be involved in the creation of products
  => active role in the conversation with end users

App stores support

Making certain key products **available on leading app stores** and start **selling** them for a fee.

Goal
Be reachable outside-of-FOSS world

App stores

- Google Play
- Windows
- Apple
- Other

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App stores support

Outcomes

- Allow people to benefit from our apps rather than investing in competitors.

- Create an entry point for people on other platforms to use FOSS solutions.

- Expand our brand to a broader audience.

- Create a new revenue stream that will be directed to making our software even better.

Base software development

Development of the base software that KDE products are built on.

Pay attention to important parts of our software stack:

- Qt
- KDE Frameworks
- Other libraries

Base software development

These are parts of our software stack that are very important but not overly attractive for volunteers to work on.

As the base of everything we build, these areas need special attention and care.

Investing in having these parts worked on will help free the rest of the KDE Community to create better products with them.

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Other options

Bounties

- It seems like there could be good ways of integrating them.

- We think the idea needs maturing with proper processes set in place before proceeding.

Other options

Grants

- Currently running a Blauer Engel program for environmentally friendly software products.

- It is a remunerated way for contributors to work on KDE products.

- Depending on how it's done it could be distracting and the impact on our users might be less noticeable.
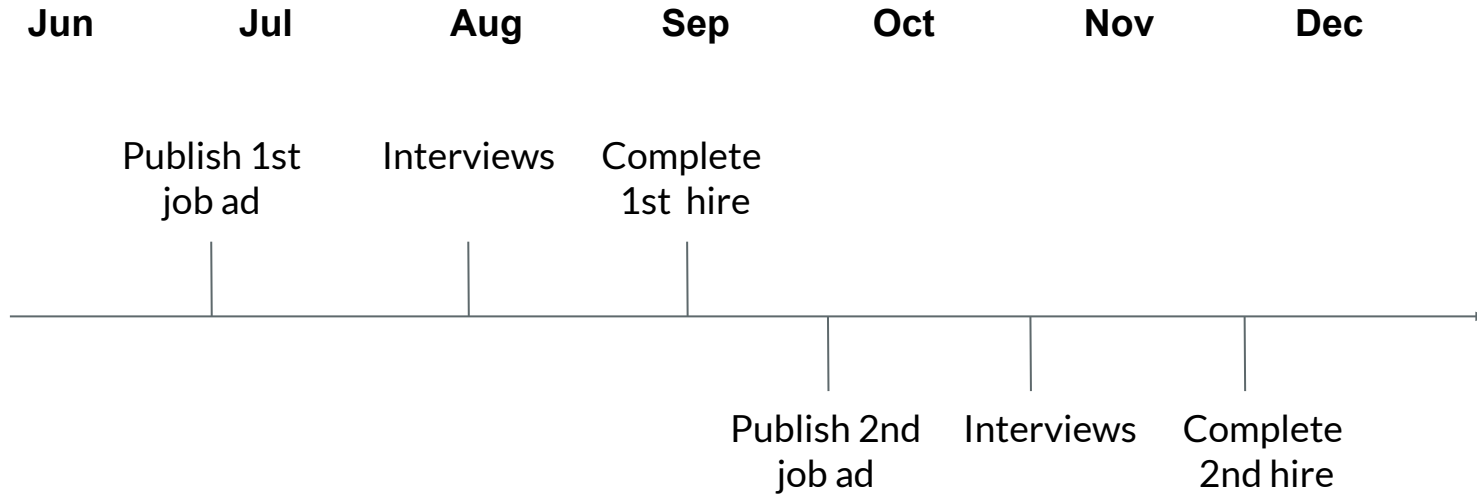
Next Steps

Next steps

To move forward we will:

1. Discuss with the membership ✔
2. Include income and costs in the 2021 budget ✔
3. Prepare job descriptions and publish job positions ⌛
4. Find the right persons
5. Profit

Time - plan

Jun   Jul   Aug   Sep   Oct   Nov   Dec

Publish 1st job ad   Interviews   Complete 1st hire

Publish 2nd job ad   Interviews   Complete 2nd hire

* Might change depending on quantity and quality of applications

How you can help

1. Apply to the positions!

2. Conduct interviews with the board members.

3. Spread the word.

Let's discuss more!

- Join us at the Akademy 2021 BoF to discuss more on next steps and our thoughts on each position.

- Send your questions to kde-ev-board@kde.org