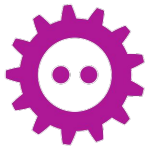
Building Sustainability: A Case Study in Funding Diversification for Decidim

Nil Homedes
Director TO - Decidim Free Software Association



FOSDEM

Structure

1. Introduction to Decidim
2. The origin: Why we develop a Sustainability Plan
3. Developing a SP
4. Key aspects of our SP
5. How is it going
6. Learnings and challenges

decidim
free open-source democracy

Decidim is a digital platform for citizen participation

Free/libre, open and safe technology.
With all democratic guarantees.
Reprogramming democracy is now possible with Decidim.

+450

democratic organizations are using decidim today

30 countries
240 cities and govern organizations
180 social organizations

The origin

A funding crisis that nearly jeopardized the project

- ➔ 2019: Creation of the Decidim Association
- ➔ 2022:
  - Two workers paid
  - Two public grants (50k each one)

- ➔ Barcelona City Council does not pay us a grant that was due to us.
- ➔ That gives us a negative balance of 50k.

We realize that...
we should diversify our income sources.

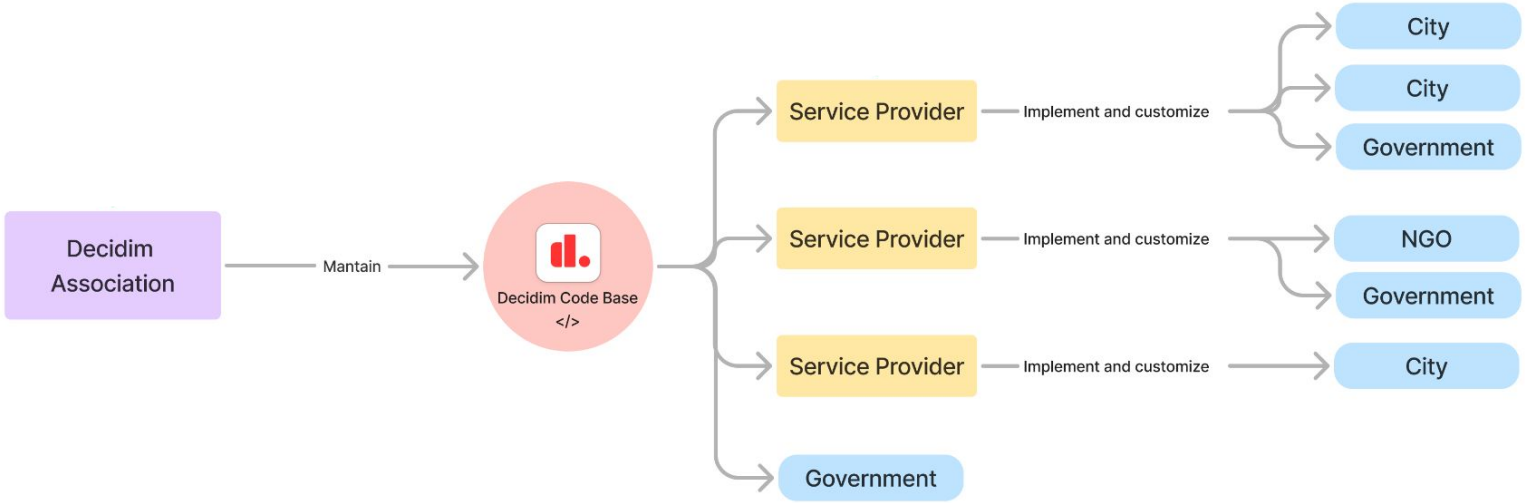
Partnership policy

Why?

To ensure the sustainability of decidim as a digital commons

Conditions:

- Contribute back to the Decidim Association
- **Fee of the 3% of the yearly income** generated by Decidim activities.
- Every Decidim Partner will be made publicly visible in the Decidim website


Decidim Association
Mantain
Decidim Code Base
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Service Provider
Implement and customize
City
City
Government
Service Provider
Implement and customize
NGO
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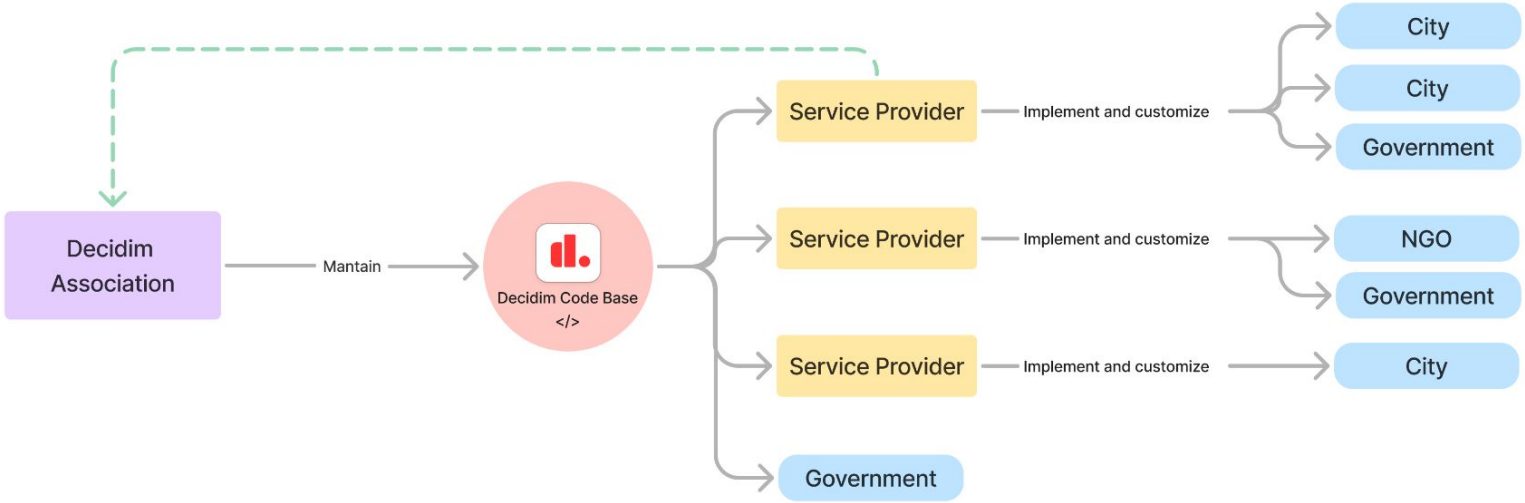
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PokeCode

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PIPELINE
TO POWER

CodeandoMéxico

Opensourcepolitics
l'expérience démocratique

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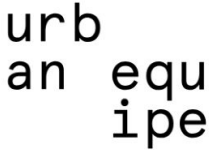
Partizipationsbüro

Code for
Japan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DIGIDEM LAB

aLabs*

KOMUNIKATIK:
KOMUNIKAZIOA ETA PARTAIDETZA

Developing a Sustainability Plan

Main goals

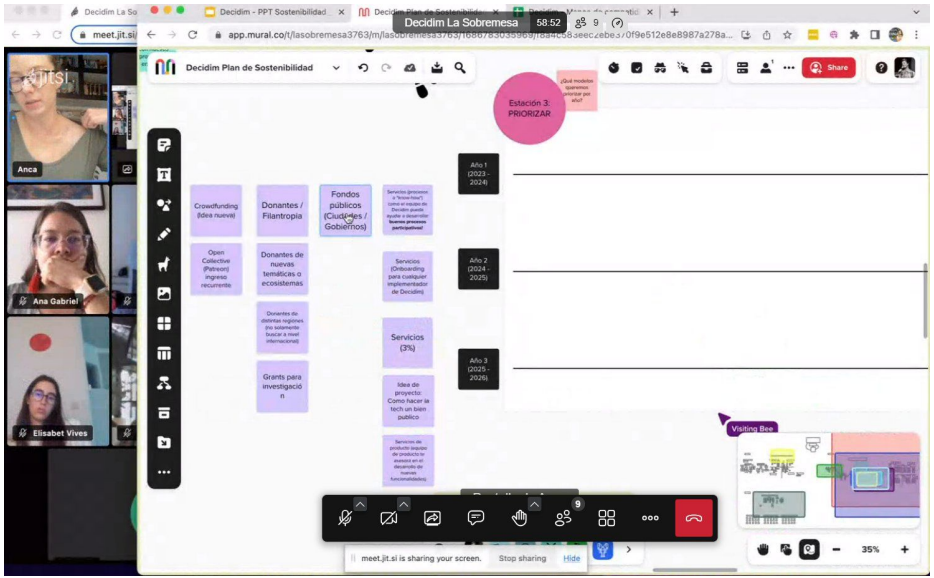
- Explore sustainability strategies that make us **resilient** by having different income avenues
- Define an Action Plan for a 5 year span
- Prepare projects and programs to be ready to apply for new funding opportunities
- Knowledge on how the funding world works

Acompañamiento en el Plan de sostenibilidad y desarrollo de alianzas estratégicas de Decidim

Diseñado por La Sobremesa, Marzo 2023

5 workshops

- Workshop #1: Internal diagnosis
- Workshop #2: External analysis
- Workshop #3: Donor analysis and sustainability models
- Workshop #4: Definition of goals and activities
- Workshop #5: Reviewing the Action Plan



Sustainability Plan

Needs

- 💰 Reduce dependence on public funding and diversify funding sources.
- 💰 Achieve a stable income base in the medium to long term.
- 👩‍💻 Overcoming the limitations of the current development model, dependent on public contracts.
- ⚙️ Have a team that allows to gain operational capacity.
- 📢 Improve external communication and storytelling.
- 🧩 Encourage participation in the community.
- 🌱 Fostering the project's alliances with its environment.

Strengthening the operational capacity of the Association's Team is an urgent necessity in order to be able to fulfil all its responsibilities, ensure sustainability and allow Decidim to grow.

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Income alternatives

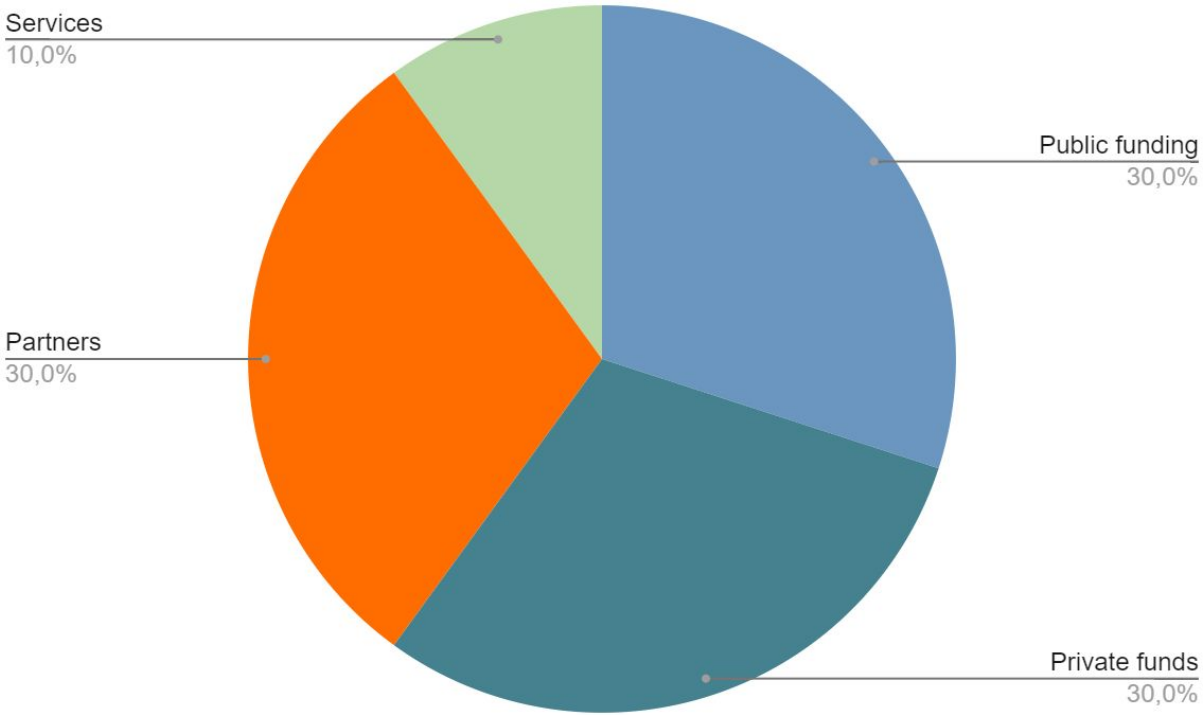
🏛️ Public funding

🧩 Private funds (Philanthropy, research and other funds)

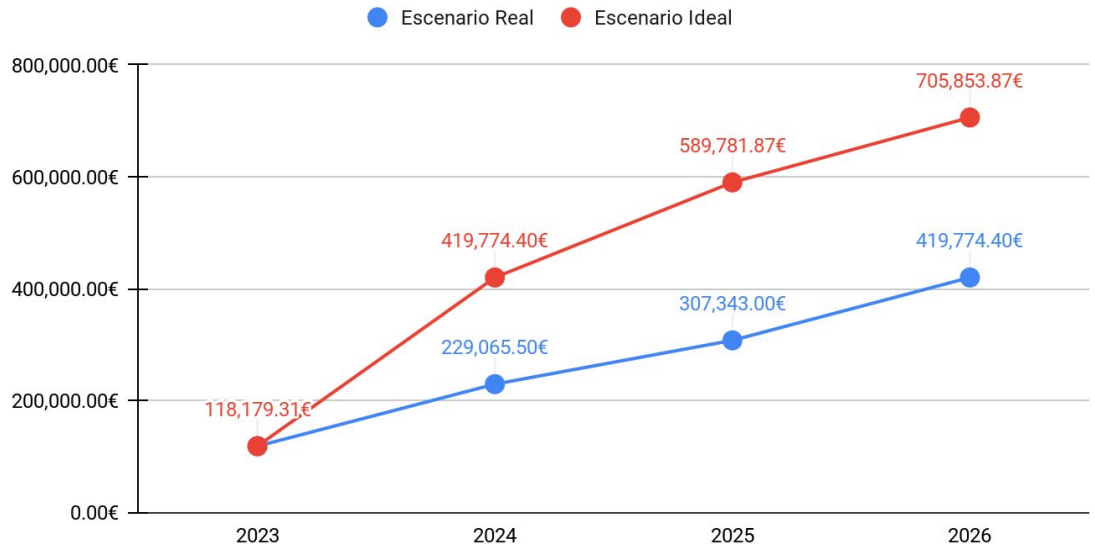
🎯 Services

🌱 Donations and partners

Ideal distribution outlined in the sustainability plan



Costs escenarios



Realistic scenario

- The aim is to reach a budget of around **400,000 euros** by 2026**.**
- With a team of **6 people** paid by the Association

Ideal scenario

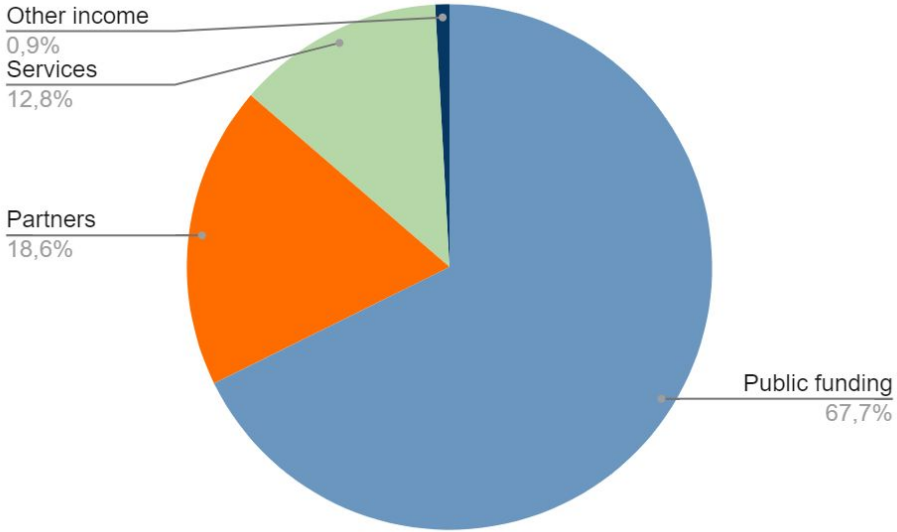
- The aim is to reach a budget of around **700,000 euros by** 2026.
- With a team of **10 people** paid by the Association

How is it going

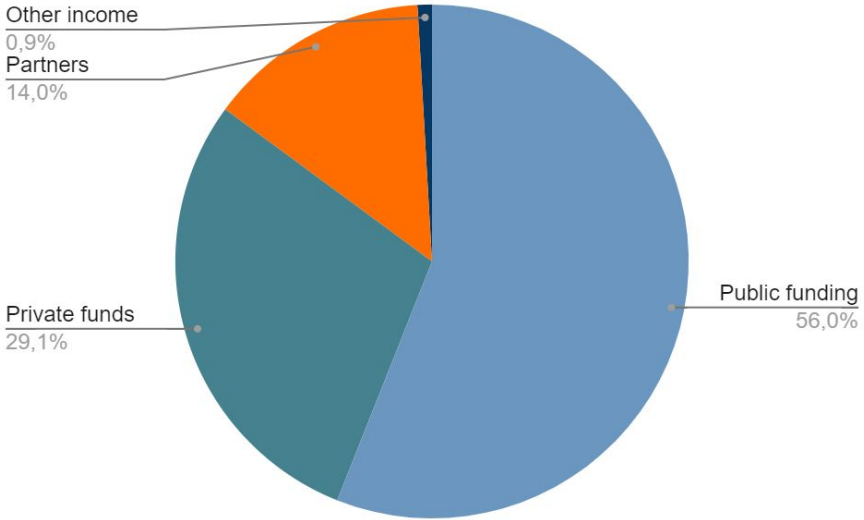
Reviewing the SP two years after

Evolution in the distribution of income sources

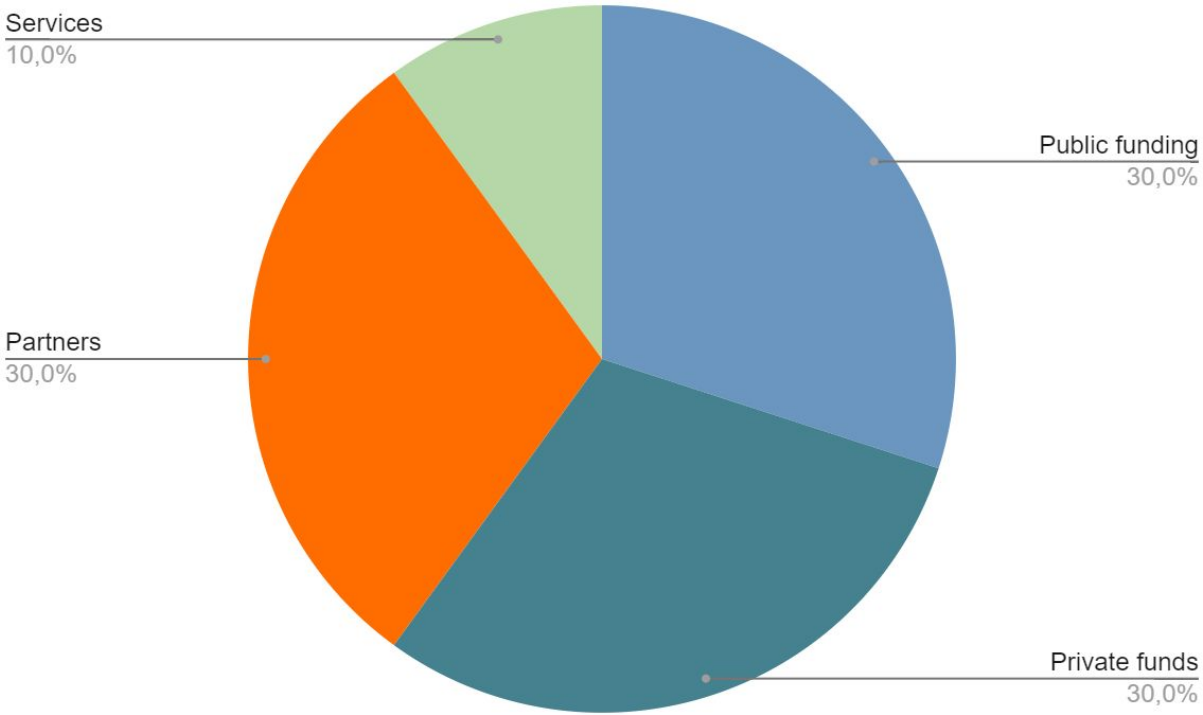
2023



2024



Ideal distribution outlined in the sustainability plan



Accepted projects

Total = **213.000 Euros**

- People Powered DDA - *Public Money, Open Software (15k)*
- Metagov Interoperable tools - *CSV interoperable exports/imports for participatory objects like on Decidim (30k)*
- BSC VCity Project - *API and Open data enhacements (50k - 2 years)*
- MultiPoD (EU Project) - *Political participation in multilingual spaces (100k - 3 years)*
- NGI Zero Commons Fund - *Decidim Revamp (18k)*

Barcelona Supercomputing Center
Centro Nacional de Supercomputación

Metagov

PEOPLE POWERED

NGI ZERO COMMONS

European Commission

Challenges and learnings

Funding FLOSS

1. From a local-based project to an global community
2. Receive grants from public organisations from other countries.
3. How do we finance maintenance work?
4. Submit projects that do not divert you from your core mission.
5. We need to internationalize our legal and financial structure

Thanks!

More info at: decidim.org
Contact: hola@decidim.org

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Nil Homedes Busquets
Director
Decidim Free Software Association

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