

Hydra Financial Vision 2016

Financial Vision – July 2016

Introduction

Samvera Partners are the backbone of the project. Their contributions of time, effort and in kind for the good of the project are the resources that power project administration, its community coordination, and advances in the technical framework. Becoming a Partner does not require making financial contributions—and in fact for many years the project actively avoided direct financial contributions by strategy (to help build a strong network of grassroots ownership) and by necessity (it technically had no means to bank money).

In 2015, the Samvera Partners resolved to start building a centralized financial capacity to help administer the project's growing activities, and specifically to manage funds associated with core project activities—such as legal services, or the annual Samvera Connect conference. The Samvera Steering Group engaged DuraSpace to serve as its fiscal sponsor, to provide banking and other services requested by the Project, and made a one-time call for seed funding which collected \$21,000 to fund these services (including trademarking the project) from voluntary contributions of current Partners.

This is a financial vision for the Samvera Project, produced after discussions among the Samvera Steering Group in 2015 and at its January 2016 face-to-face meeting in Atlanta, and at Samvera Power Steering in March 2016. It is meant to articulate a longterm vision for the project's financial strategy, and also provide a near term plan and position paper for how the project will manage its finances in the coming quarters and years.

Vision

The Samvera Project seeks to build its financial capacity—the ability to gather, manage, and spend money, all with appropriate governance, controls and transparency—in order to support the project's activities. As the project grows in size, sophistication and spread of interests, centrally pooled and managed funding will be essential to efficiently supporting the community's coordination (organizing Samvera connect and other meetings, e.g.), communications (project website, marketing materials, conference presence, e.g.), technical coordination (release planning, technical writing for for Samvera components, etc.), adopter support (possibly commissioned work to fund next generation technology development, or last generation technology stability), and directed work (expansion into related communities—such as DevOps, archives or repository managers, or coordination in grant proposals or responding to RFPs from others on behalf of the project, e.g.).

This somewhat substantial list of representative financial activities indicates that Samvera needs to grow its ability to bank and spend money responsibly, systematically, predictably, with appropriate revenue streams, financial governance, controls, and transparency. Financial capacity with a demonstrable track record is an end in and of itself, and may in fact make the project attractive to new adopters, communities and supporting vendors, thus enriching the overall ecosystem.

To build this capacity, the Samvera Project has set an initial target of collecting \$50,000 per year from appropriate revenue streams that may arise from any of various strategies: annual fund raising and/or membership drive, hosted services, fees paid by RSPs (registered service providers), training, grants, surplus from conference fees, industry sponsorships or other. Following good agile principles, the project will reassess its needs over time to see if a larger amount of pooled funding would be desirable, how it might be used, and how it might be best managed.

After extensive conversations throughout 2014 and 2015 within the community, the Samvera Steering Group in 2016 identified four areas for potential spending at the initial level of \$50,000 per year:

1. Project administration
2. Community communications / marketing
3. Technical coordination
4. Building a financial reserve

If and when the project builds a larger annual budget, spending items and categories would evolve. (It's quite possible to imagine hiring dedicated staff to support the project with a large enough budget, for example.)

Specific Services / Expenses Identified as High-Yield and/or High-Priority

(listed in no priority order; the number of \$ indicating rough estimates on relative expense)

1. Project Administration
 - a. Banking & financial management
 - b. Fundraising
 - c. Legal services (holding IP, e.g.)
 - d. Contract service administration (administering contracts and paying for other services / staff efforts described below)
 - e. Domain registration, wiki hosting, etc.
2. Doing Community Communications & Marketing Better
 - a. conference sponsorship – \$
 - b. pay someone to redo projectSamvera.org website – \$ to \$\$
 - i. includes viz design, information architecture, content assembly / generation, new platform (different than WP-hosted WP...)
 - ii. and ensure adequate hosting/patching - \$
 - c. someone to do ongoing updating of website & social media – 16-40 hours / month - \$ to \$\$
 - i. Think about and edit regularly. Get content. Make updates. Needs to be continuous effort. Could be student, even, or a professional.
3. Doing Better Technical Communication
 - a. contract someone to help with technical documentation, with priorities defined by community / HPS – \$
 - i. but make sure we're not doing docs for docs sake, and generating a Sisyphean task.

- b. contract with someone to produce documentation and diagrams that reflect project "roadmap" – \$ to \$\$
This would require somewhat substantial technical and domain knowledge of Samvera components. One model could be to pay someone to churn through a SOW with predefined scope and objectives. Another would be to pay someone to do continuous doc writing (16-40 hours / month, e.g.). This would require ongoing participation in the community.
 - 1. where are different projects in relation to each other?
 - 2. what is the component diagram / future?
 - 3. etc.
- c. tracking and advocating for resources to encourage redundancy of contribution & expertise (reduce SPOF--single points of failure)
- d. delivering training - either provide or contract. Could (should be) revenue neutral to positive, but there may be start up fees – \$ to \$\$
 - i. developing & maintaining Samvera curriculum
 - ii. doing train the trainers – especially on the latest components and methodology, and standard "Samvera Way"
 - iii. funding travel for training
 - iv. varied flavors of training – including on legacy components and "advanced training"
- 4. Building a reserve.
 - a. At whatever financial level the Project ends up operating, an appropriate financial reserve will both serve to smooth cash flow as well as a contingency fund for extraordinary events / expenses.

Financial Status to Date

Based on funding gathered in 2015 and community conversations, the Project has made the following steps in the financial realm as of July 2016:

- [MoU with DuraSpace 2016/17](#) for 2016-17 for financial and administrative services to the project. (~\$6,000)
- Established a finance committee and [Samvera financial governance](#).
- Retained attorneys for TradeMark registration of the project. (~\$12,000)
- Retained a web design/development contractor to redo the [projecthyrda.org](#) website (~\$5,000)
- Initiated a preliminary call for funding to previous (2015) Samvera community contributors, soliciting contributions of \$1,000 to \$5,000.

The next steps are to...

- circulate a full call for funding to the community, with a goal of reaching the target amount of \$50,000
- explore additional revenue streams and fundraising strategies (referenced above)
- conduct more detailed exploration for investment and commitment to funding in the above categories, to refresh the
- establish an ongoing mechanism for assessing the Project's financial status and determining priorities for spending
- ensure good awareness of these plans, and to solicit Partner and community input for both funding and priorities via the normal communications channels (including email, Partner calls, community events, and Samvera Connect)