

# External funding at W3C

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Previous version: <https://www.w3.org/2017/03/external-funding.html> ; see [diff](#) .

## 1. Introduction

W3C is principally a Member funded organization. It generally receives approximately 70-80% of its funding from Member dues, with the rest coming from all other sources including Sponsorships, education programs, donations, and government funded programs. ~~↓Similarly to↓~~ ↑To quote ↓ the [Conflict of Interest Policy for W3C Team Members Engaged in Outside Professional Activities](#) , " W3C's role as a decision making body with control over fundamental Web architecture requires that Members, the Web development community, and the general public have a high level of trust in our activities and the integrity of W3C staff. In order to preserve this trust, W3C must assure that Team members make technical and management decisions free from possible conflict or even appearance of conflict arising from commitments to other organizations or individuals. " This document sets out the parameters and practices for externally funded ~~↓programs.↓~~ ↑programs, consistent with those that W3C has followed since its inception. ↓ These Best Practices ensure that the W3C Team effectively fulfill its [functions](#) , including [technical coordinator](#) and [neutral facilitator](#) , and that there is transparency to the Membership about the nature of the funded programs.

~~↓As we introduce these Best Practices in 2017, we point out that the intent of this document is to record explicitly the practices and expectations W3C has followed since its inception.↓~~

## 2. Benefit of external funding

External funding generally provides the following benefits to the W3C community:

- It increases the total funding available for W3C programs.
- It strengthens the W3C community. Often the funds are for joint projects with other participants in the web community or government agencies and it strengthens those partnerships.
- It gives the W3C team some insight into advanced technology development in the web area. Some of the key expansions of focus within W3C started as externally funded work - including web payments, web of things, and automotive.
- It may permit research, such as into areas that are not yet viewed as standards-ready.
- It helps with global harmonization. Funding from the US Government and EU has helped harmonize accessibility standards around W3C Recommendations.
- It grows the community through sponsored workshops.

### 3. Typical characterization of most external contracts

Most external contracts fund W3C to do three types of work:

1. Some contracts will explicitly fund W3C to facilitate standards development in an area by providing funding for staff thereby supporting a Chartered W3C Group that is proposed by the Director and is reviewed by the Advisory Committee. In other words, it is broadening funding sources for roles that are precisely ordinary Team Contact roles. An example verbatim is: "Within Task 1 the vendor shall provide staff support and technical expertise within a Working Group of Web accessibility experts, representing different stakeholder groups, who have knowledge of the latest technologies under development at W3C." Some contract requirements are similar in nature, but less explicit.
2. Some contracts ask W3C and partners in the contract to develop a piece of technology or some content (a paper, a piece of educational material) in a particular emerging area with the objective of that potentially being leveraged by a Working Group at some time in the future.
3. Some contracts will fund W3C Staff to do work that is outside of a Working Group context: to create informational pages about our work on our website, to organize workshops, to formally validate a specification, outreach (e.g. such as the Mobile Web Roadmap), or software development (e.g. mobile checker).

### 4. Best Practices

1. External contracts, once granted, MUST be listed on the [W3C website](#), together with duration, partners, scope of work and a description of the deliverables of the contract. This information must also be maintained after the contract period has ended. If the contract supports a Chartered W3C Group or may relate to a Working Group at some time in the future, the information MUST also be communicated to the Group participants and SHOULD be referenced from the Group homepage.
2. External contracts SHOULD NOT direct W3C staff to take particular technical positions in W3C Working Groups that are contrary to or may limit their role as [technical coordinator](#) and [neutral facilitator](#).
3. If an external contract explicitly funds W3C to take particular technical positions in W3C Working Groups that time should be represented as "member participation" from the relevant Host Member. The W3C Management SHOULD avoid nominating Team Contacts that are under externally funded contracts in the case that they represent particular technical positions. Otherwise, the W3C staff MUST announce in advance that they will remove their team contact "hat" at that time in order to participate in technical discussions.
  - o The Director MUST have personally approved it before any such contract is ~~taken~~ committed to.
4. Considerations may favor contracts that are 1:1 contracts with government partners, or subcontracts of larger multi-party ~~contracts, to avoid the perception that W3C as~~ contracts. In circumstances where a ~~prime contractor of~~ funding opportunity requires a ~~large multi-party contract~~ W3C prime, multi-partner approach, it is ~~choosing one partner for a contract to~~ incumbent upon the ~~exclusion~~ Director to ensure fair consideration of ~~another partner~~ any eligible member organizations with relevant expertise to contribute.
5. If an external contract requires W3C to be a prime contractor for a multi-party contract, all deliberations should be performed with the maximum transparency possible.
  - o "maximum transparency possible" recognizes that disclosure may not be possible in a competitive situation, or where the funding agency does not permit this prior to a contract being granted.
  - o When W3C is the Prime Contractor, the Director should be personally asked to review whether the contract proposal work should proceed.
  - o When W3C is the Prime Contractor, the CEO should review such circumstances with the W3C Advisory Board at the earliest possible time.
6. Externally funded work must always follow the W3C Process.

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~~↑\$Id: external-funding.html,v 1.2~~

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