To: Inkscape Project Leadership Committee
From: Hiring Committee
Subject: Hiring Committee Report
Submitted: September 3, 2022

Background

The following is a report that, for the sake of brevity, summarizes the involvement of the Hiring Committee within the Inkscape Project for the position of Project Administrator in the spring of 2022. It contains background information, a timeline and a review and recommendations.

Inkscape Project Leadership Committee (PLC) member Martin Owens set up the Hiring Committee (HC) to work with Daniel Pono Takamori from the Software Freedom Conservancy (SFC) to collaborate on filling the position of Inkscape Project Administrator.

The HC was composed of three Inkscape contributors who were invited to participate: Mihaela Jurković, Tim Jones and Michèle Thibeau.

The HC's initial tasks were to respond to applicants by email, develop and send questions to applicants, review applications, shortlist the top three candidates for interviews, and participate in interviews via videoconference.

This process changed along the way, including extensions of the deadline to apply for the position. In the end, the HC members completed the following tasks: reviewed anonymized applicant documents, met to develop questions to be sent to applicants by the SFC, and developed an applicant ranking tool.

Timeline

March 3, 2022: the job email ready for applicants to interact; however, the job posting process was changed and the SFC was to receive all applications directly instead of the HC and Inkscape job email list.

March 25: the original deadline for applying for the position. This was extended twice (for a total of 30 days) to allow for more applicants and for internal issues within the SFC. The HC worked with the changing deadlines.

May 12: the HC received anonymized applications.

May 28: the HC sent interview questions and the applicant ranking tool to the PLC and SFC.

June 10: the PLC asked the SFC about the delay in getting questions to the applicants.

July 1: the PLC held its monthly meeting and SFC staff shared during the meeting that over 80% of the applicants were no longer available. There was a discussion about whether to continue or stop the hiring process. It was unclear who was in charge of the process.

July 2: the HC sent feedback points to the PLC and SFC with respect to the process and some of the issues that members had identified.

July 9: HC members shared with the PLC their unanimous recommendation to stop the hiring process entirely after discussing potential challenges that the project could face down the road in managing a paid employee. The HC offered to submit a report with its recommendations on the entire process.

August 13: the PLC voted in favour of closing the job hiring process on the recommendation of the HC to the PLC.

September 3, 2022: the HC delivered its report via email to the PLC.

Review and Recommendations

While the Inkscape project sought to prepare, plan, and implement a hiring process, there were gaps in planning, changes to the process and a lack of clear communication in certain phases between the PLC and the HC and the SFC.

Given that the Inkscape Project is not a legal entity, it must rely on the SFC for hiring and remunerating any employees. During the process, the exact details of how this would work became less clear to the HC. The HC took the responsibility of hiring an individual to work with the project very seriously and identified this lack of clarity as an important barrier in the hiring process.

By June, given the extended process, changes that occurred midway, and a lack of timely communication, the members of the HC were uncomfortable in moving forward with the entire process.

After the July PLC meeting, the HC also had questions about communication to the applicants and that remaining applicants had not yet received the interview questions, and that the SFC would be conducting interviews without input from the HC.

The HC met and discussed next steps. It then recommended to the PLC that the hiring process be stopped. It further recommends that the project not embark on another hiring process until the following steps have occurred:

1. The legal relationship between Inkscape's PLC and the SFC is clarified with respect to all steps in a hiring process, hiring, pay, and supervisory conditions.

2. The Inkscape Project creates a robust hiring process and a job posting promotion strategy. This might require support from a human resources specialist to assist with guidance, including on job posting text.

3. The Inkscape Project has discussed and planned in detail how to integrate an employee (legally employed by the SFC) and manage an employee in collaboration with the SFC.

Respectfully submitted by the Inkscape Hiring Committee
September 3, 2022