



The Foundation for Public Code

The Case for Support

Heading into the 21st century, modern societies across the globe have been transformed by network digital services. From transportation to commerce, to healthcare, to the social fabric of everyday life, **software has redefined the way we live.**

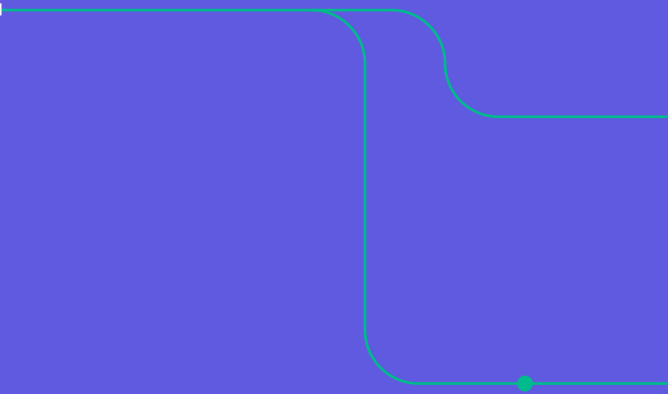
After decades of disruption have generated massive societal change and wealth in the private sector, this digital service transformation is arriving in one of the most vital and fundamental segments of society: public organizations.

Unless we approach this process intentionally, the disruptive forces of the “move fast and break things” philosophy will cause real damage to our societal institutions.

Contents

6	The core problems
8	About the Foundation for Public Code
15	Codebase stewardship
17	The Standard for Public Code
22	Examples of our work
28	Supporting our work

Our foundation
empowers cities
to collaborate on
and run their
core functions on
democratically
accountable
public code.





From left to right:

Leonardo Favario

Team Digitale Italia

Marilise Boeve

City of Amsterdam

Rasmus Frey

OS2 - Danish Public
Digitalisation Network

Photo by
Lotte Dale

Core problems

Modern government digital services now implement (and even modify) policies that became legal code after a democratic approval process.

While software code increasingly equals legal code, it lacks the same democratic accountability.

CODE == CODE

Legal and Software code are increasingly integrated, with policy acting as the framework with which software must comply. They share many qualities: Iteratively built, with complex dependencies which decay when expert originators can no longer maintain it.

The software running our society is often hidden in proprietary codebases, producing and harboring **data not publicly owned** or accessible.

Software is too often treated as an isolated purchase, **licensed at ever-increasing cost** from private companies, while institutional will and expertise decays.

The struggle

Seeking alternatives, many cities turn to open source software, yet when they seek to implement open solutions, they struggle to:

Discover existing open software they can adopt

Build open software flexible enough for future reuse

Support successful co-development of their software by other public organizations

Attract a community of developers to maintain software they build

The most successful open source projects have many collaborators, which brings down costs and diffuses risk.

Despite the benefits, no one public organization has the responsibility to support others in using open public code.



The Foundation for Public Code enables public purpose software and policy that is open and collaborative.

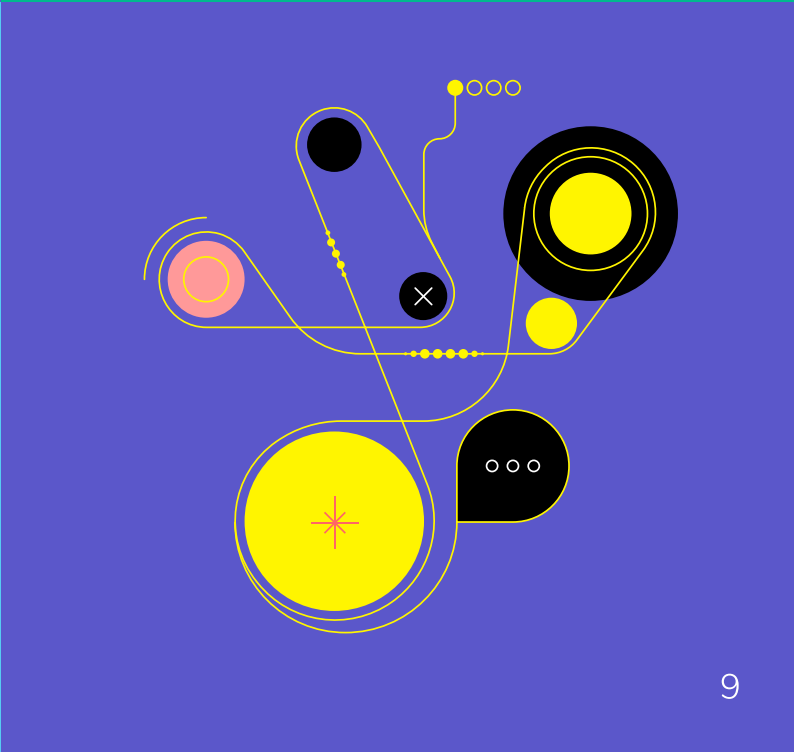
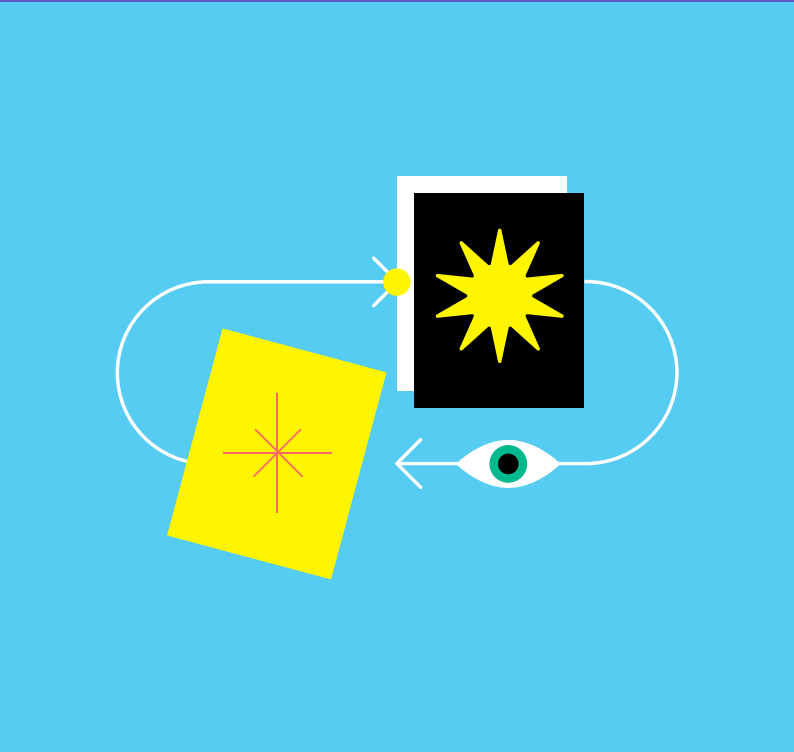
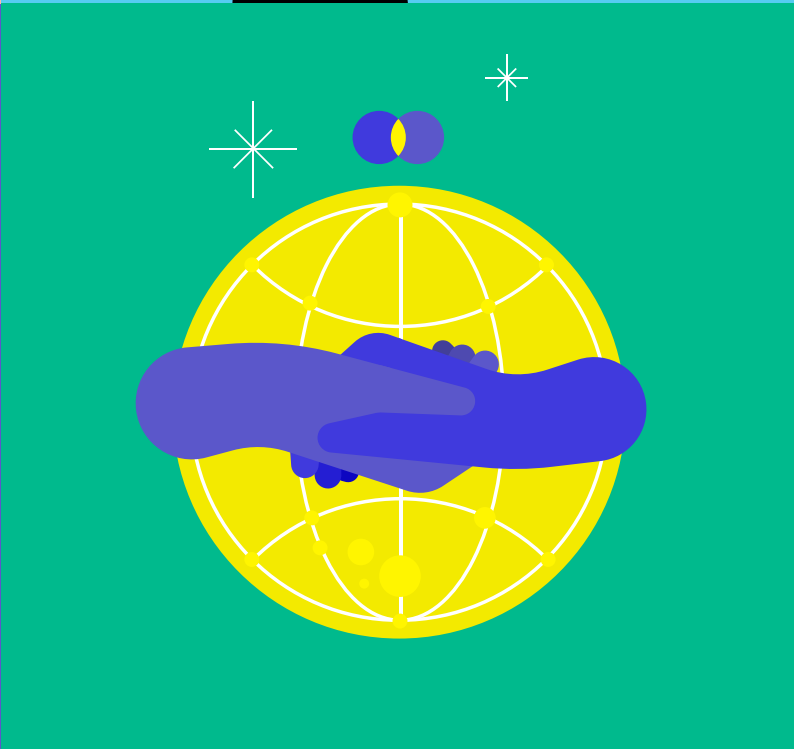
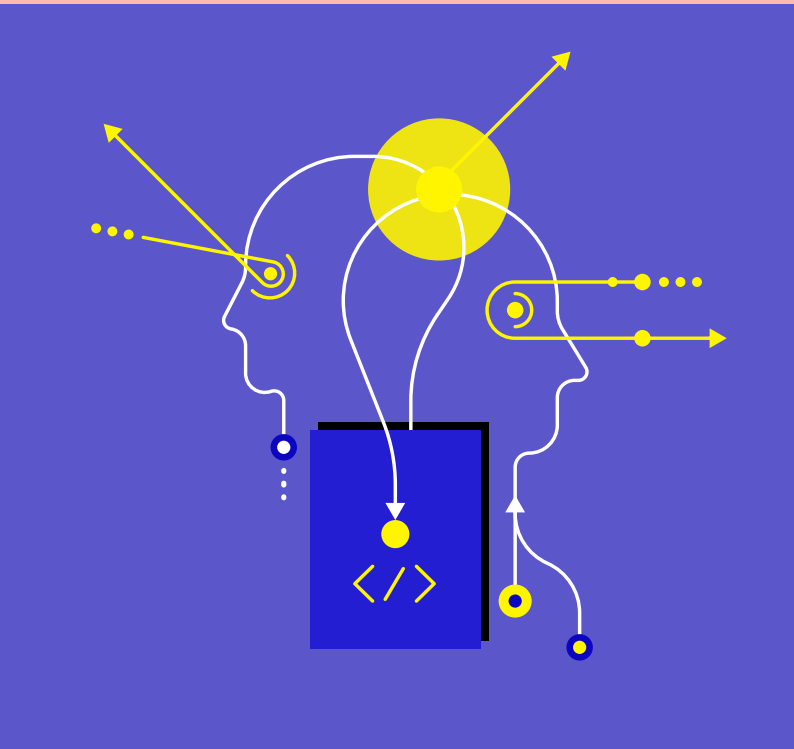
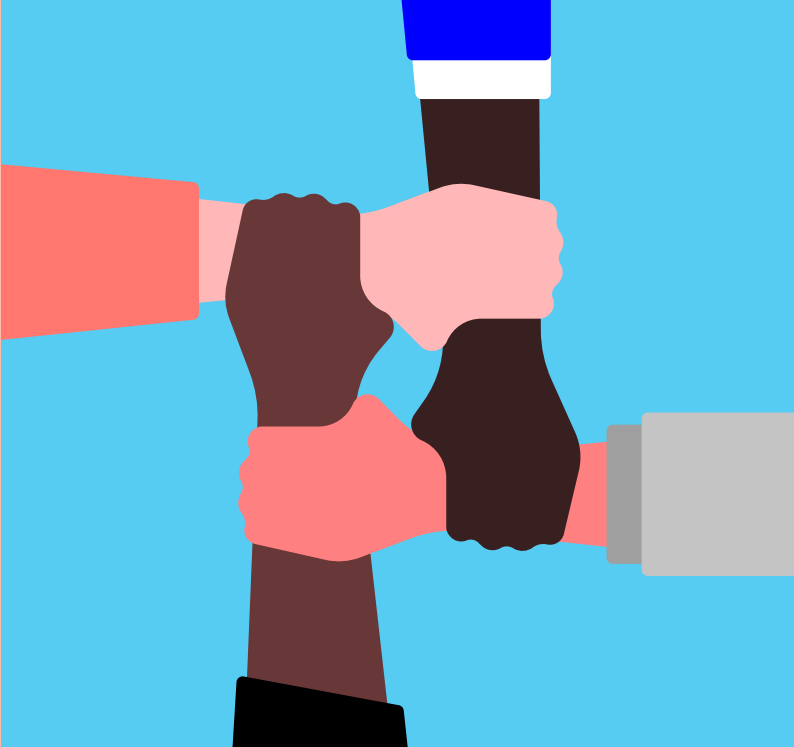
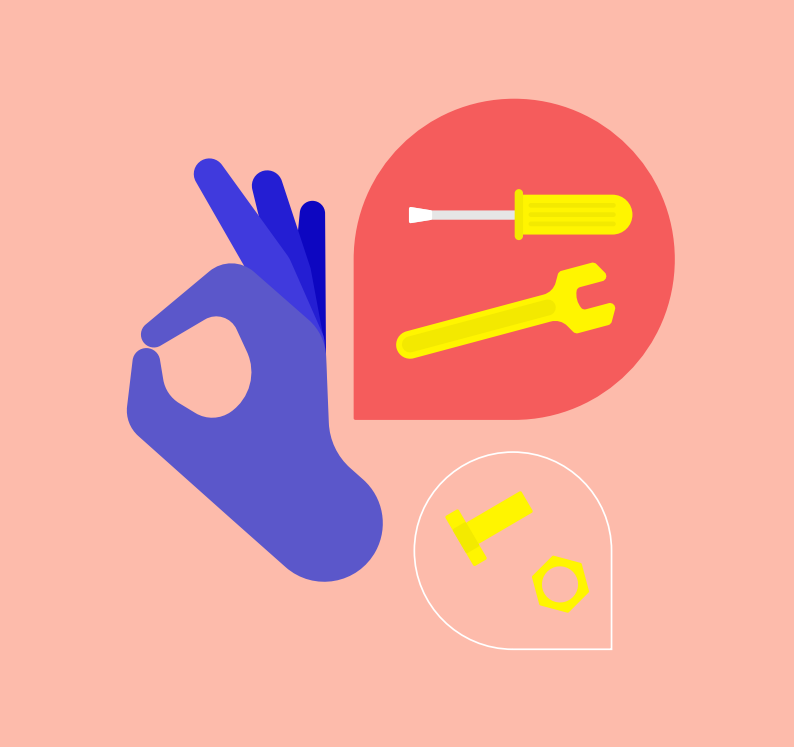
We are building a unique association of ambitious public organizations that share codebases for the benefit of citizens, and understand the importance of Codebase Stewardship for scaling open source projects.

This distinguishes us from:

- Organizations providing open source stewardship for private sector projects

- Vendors selling open source software development to public organizations

- Activist groups lobbying governments to only spend taxpayer money on open source software





Ben Cervený, Boris van Hoytema and Arnout Schuijff founded the Foundation for Public Code in 2019 to guide international collaboration among public organizations around codebase design, quality and governance.

Leveraging 30 combined years of experience working with cities and technology-enabled collaboration, Boris and Ben recognized policy and whitepapers were ineffective catalysts in this space. Their landscape analysis revealed that stewardship was the key to converting the massive public investment in open source and collaboration into long-term, sustainable implementation.

Based on their experience of technological innovation in a traditional industry, Arnout and Pieter van der Does (co-founders of the Adyen payments platform) agreed with Ben and Boris that public organizations deserved better software. They joined the Board of Directors to share their expertise and connections.

The Foundation has been recognized by the Dutch government as a non-profit public benefit organization (ANBI).

Our team includes experts in **municipal collaboration**, **open source development** and **government digital transformation**. Together, we're designing and testing our Codebase Stewardship resources and approach.



Alba Roza

Codebase steward

Tech communication and marketing since 2011, specializing in building developer communities for the last six years



Ben Cervený

President

Executive, strategist, and designer in the context of operating systems, media applications, web services, digital products, and the built environment for 25+ years



Boris van Hoytema

Chief Executive

Manager of public sector transformation, including setting up open source for cities like Amsterdam



Claus Mullie

Codebase stewardship and member relations coordinator

Supported 25+ cities and the EU with open collaboration, open procurement and innovation policy



Deborah Meibergen

Operations & resource coordinator

20 years in digital human rights, open-source and the arts, with a focus on digital security and OSINT investigation techniques



Elena Findley-de Regt

Communications coordinator

Led UK Government Digital Service content design teams working on GOV.UK and the Service Design Manual



Eric Herman

Lead codebase steward

Open source developer and evangelist since his first MySQL code contribution in 2004



Felix Faassen

Codebase steward

Created open standards as part 20+ year career founding and scaling non-profit and commercial products and services.



Jan Ainali

Codebase steward

Founded and was CEO of Wikimedia Sverige, and has worked with digital policy in the European Parliament



Laura Scheske

Membership developer

Passionate tackler of wicked problems, previously through design and implementation of international development programs

Goals of the Foundation for Public Code

1 Enable a **public code software ecosystem**, developed by and for public administrations to solve real problems for citizens

2 Build a **collaborative community of cities and developers**, to continuously improve and maintain Public Code products

3 Provide a **certification system for software** as meeting the standard set by the Foundation For Public Code

4 Build a **trusted brand** and an awareness of the value of Public Code

How the Foundation supports cities

We provide ecosystem-level **Codebase Stewardship** of both digital and civic policy, and guidance using **The Standard for Public Code**.



Codebase Stewardship

Focuses on quality auditing of source code and nurturing of developer communities, while strengthening marketing and product management.

Stewardship increases code reusability, and helps public organizations and their vendors understand how they can best use public code with their existing systems.



The Standard for Public Code

Operationalizes our mission, providing concrete standards and best practices for making public code:

- Reusable
- Maintainable
 - Findable
 - Procurable



Codebase Stewardship

We help public source code and policy code products become successful by guaranteeing their quality and marketability. Trustworthy, usable, maintained and sustainable code for your city.

Ensuring code, tests and documents are always up to the standards

We check every merge request for code, policy and documentation quality in our codebase auditing process, enabling agile development for trustworthy codebases for public institutions and their collaborators.

Equipping the community to grow, organize and build amazing things together

By developing the community we help organizations within it process feedback and contributions, organize events, and build and execute effective governance.

Adding stories and details a codebase needs to be noticed and re-used

Through product management we grow adoption and help a mature codebase to the point where it can shine on its own.

In order for potential re-users and future contributors to notice and adopt it, we assist its evolution into a product with needed branding and communications, plus support on development and design.

Providing users, vendors and developers with tools, skills and answers they need

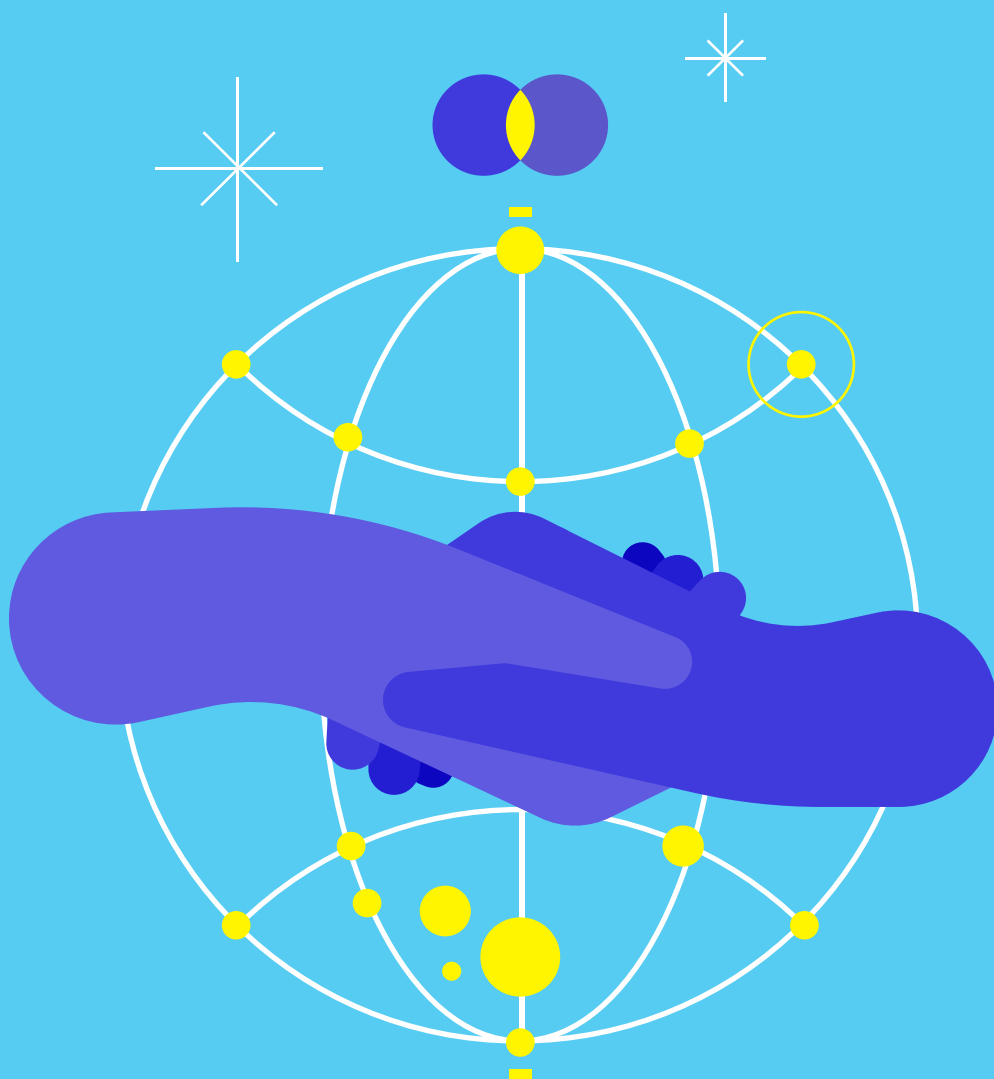
To drive developer success we help with end-user support, packaging, distributing official versions as well as developing training materials and certifications. We also help vendors such as cooperatives, NGOs and for profit companies to sell, implement and support the product.

Taking care of operations and legal affairs for the product and codebase

To effectively steward a codebase, we provide operations support such as infrastructure and process management, plus legal services like license support, IP management and trademark protection.

Maintaining the global ecosystem

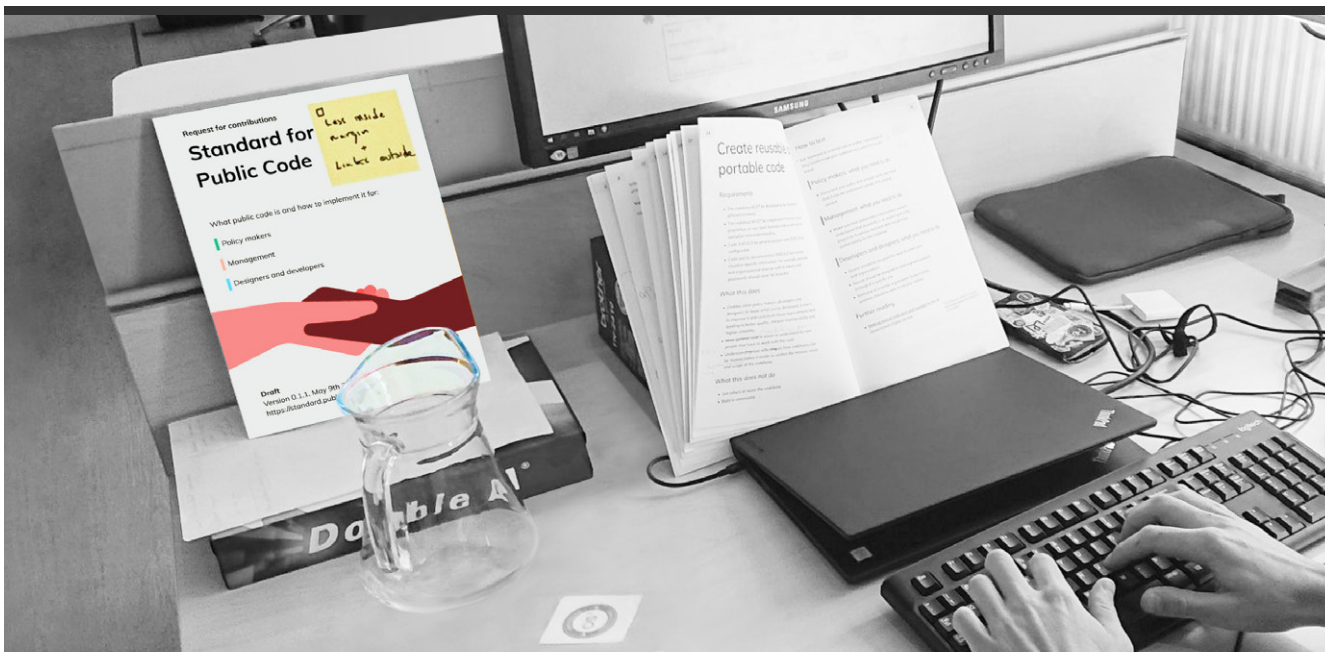
We provide services explicitly at ecosystem level—not national or city—to ensure context-specific code and policy do not become a barrier to global implementation. As we collaborate with local partners on integrations, we ensure feasibility of future implementations by other organizations.



The Standard for Public Code

The Standard is a guidance document that gives cities a model for building open source solutions to enable successful reuse by other cities.

It includes guidance for **policymakers, city administrators, developers and vendors.**



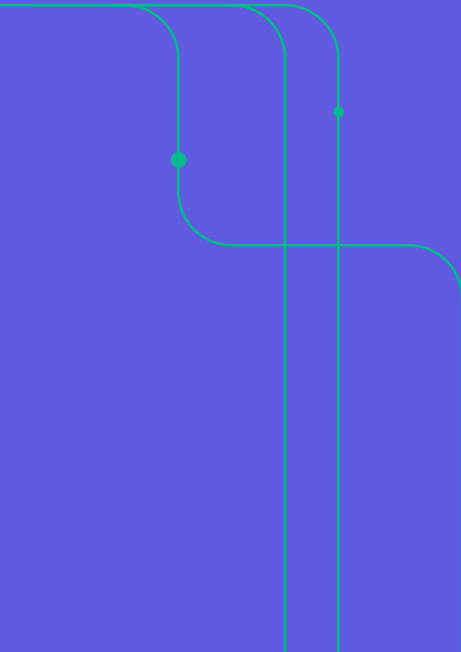
To give a sense of its usefulness, listed below is the Standard's core criteria for sustainable open source codebases.

It is always accessible at standard.publiccode.net

- | Code in the open
- | Bundle policy and source code
- | Create reusable & portable code
- | Welcome contributions
- | Maintain version control
- | Require review of contributions
- | Document your objectives
- | Document your code
- | Use plain English
- | Use open standards
- | Use continuous integration
- | Publish with an open license
- | Use a coherent style
- | Pay attention to codebase maturity

The Foundation's expertise in collaborative software maintenance brings private-sector best practices to the public sector.

We enable cities to focus on local implementation and residents' needs. We mobilize resources where they need support.

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of three overlapping rounded rectangles. Each rectangle has a small dot at its top-left corner. From each dot, a thin line extends downwards and then turns to the right, ending at the bottom edge of the page. The rectangles are arranged in a staggered, overlapping fashion.

The Standard for Public Code

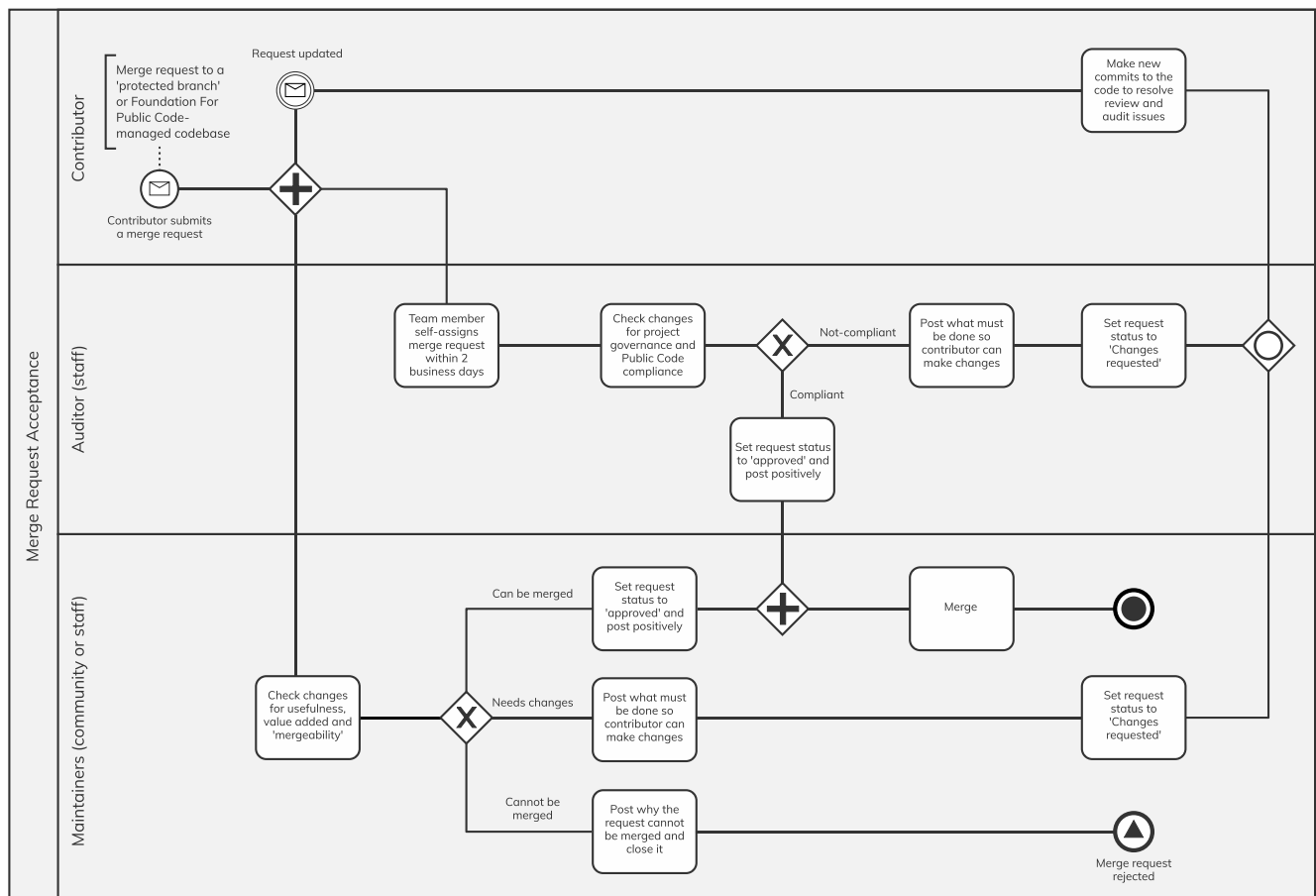
Excerpt from “Standard compliance or certification process”
in The Standard for Public Code

How the process works

Each time a codebase contribution is suggested (e.g. via merge request), our codebase stewards audit it for compliance with the Standard for Public Code.

New contributions can only be adopted into the codebase after approved as compliant, and reviewed by another contributor.

The audit is presented as a contribution review, in which the steward gives line by line feedback, helping the contributor to improve their contribution. The merge is only fulfilled once stewards approve the contribution.

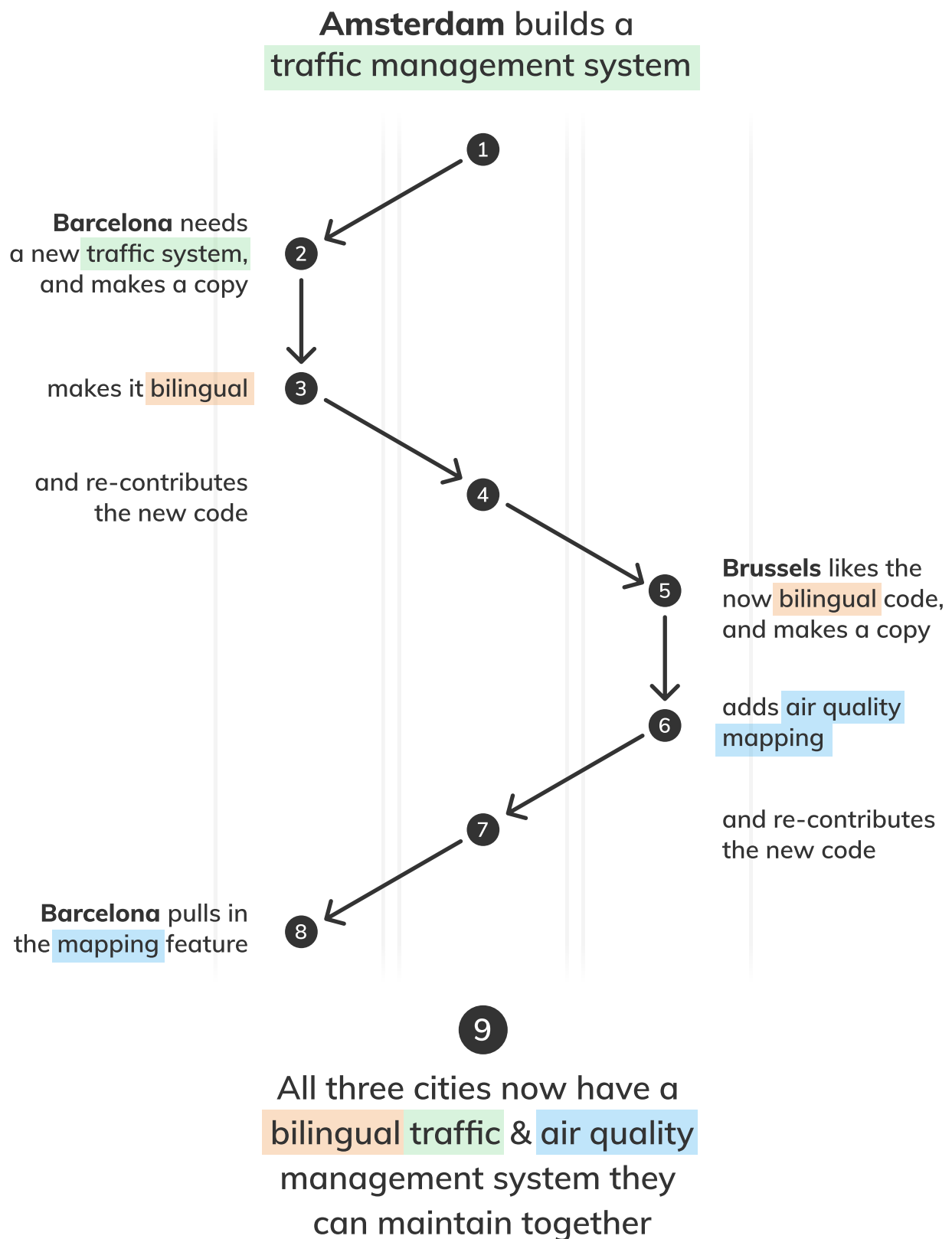


Collaboration enables digital transformation at scale.

It boosts learning, trust and confidence, and accelerates the spread of best practices.

During the industrial revolution, the assembly line led to an exponential increase in productivity. In the current revolution, we see that parallelized code has a similar effect.

An example of collaborative software development between public organizations



Why the Foundation for Public Code?

Public organizations need our services.

Since launching in 2019, The Foundation has achieved considerable momentum and inbound interest.

We are in active membership conversations with:

20

Municipalities

1

Province

4

National
governments

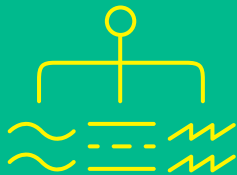
2

European
directorates

4

National frameworks for
municipal collaboration

We steward many types of public digital infrastructure



Infrastructure management



Digital democracy platforms



Library and museum media systems



Citizen communication platforms



Outpatient health care services



Routing and journey planning

Following are several examples of codebases our members have developed, and are now refactoring as public code for our stewardship





Photo by
Kian Lem

OpenZaak

We're helping a coalition of 45+ Dutch municipalities launch the OpenZaak ecosystem, an open source case management platform for delivering citizen-friendly services online.

This ready-to-use backend solution acts as a directory of case registration and metadata. It implements the Dutch national API standards developed by the Dutch Association of Municipalities (VNG).

Category

Case management



Stewardship

Stage 2, Incubation



Creator	Coalition of 45+ Dutch municipalities (2019)
Replication	The commissioning municipalities are preparing to procure services using OpenZaak, based on their spring 2020 market consultation
Scaling potential	Other Dutch municipalities, or industries using a case management system (like hospitals or hotels)
Relationship	Project maintainers see meeting the Standard for Public Code as integral to achieving their vision.

How we're helping:

Running a market consultation to co-create codebase governance and community dynamics, and better understand vendor business models and risk sharing

Advising on decentralized procurement

Building community through events, mailing lists and marketing



Photo by
Charl van Rooy

Signalen

We're helping Amsterdam and Den Bosch set up governance and feature roadmaps for Signalen, a platform enabling residents to easily message their city while freeing up staff to respond to critical issues.

Civil servants are excited about Signalen's algorithmic processing of nuisance reports, automated status updates to complainants, alerts based on combined report analysis, and easy report transfer to other city workers and subcontractors.

Since Signalen's introduction, customer satisfaction with report handling in Amsterdam has increased by more than 30 percent.

Category

Citizen communications



Stewardship

Stage 1, Assessment



Creator

Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2018)

Replication

Den Bosch (the Netherlands), Ghent (Belgium) and the Association of Dutch Municipalities (representing 355 municipalities) are interested.

Scaling potential

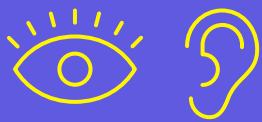
Other Dutch municipalities. The Association of Dutch Municipalities wants to make it 'one click deployable' from their Common Ground appstore.

How we're helping:

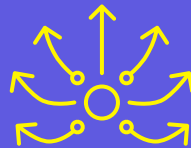
Co-defining a governance structure, including shared feature roadmaps and technical steering

Making the codebase more conducive to collaboration with clearer branching and gitflow models, automated unit tests and integration testing, engineering guidelines, and helping to prepare the community to empower market parties to offer the solution as a service (SaaS)

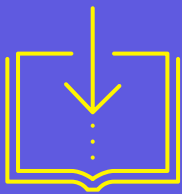
We need your support in building up these areas:



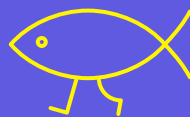
Raising Awareness



Growing the Ecosystem



In-depth Education



Evolving our Toolset

We launched June 2019 thanks to a philanthropic gift. Funding secured to 2022 is enabling us to maintain the integrity of our core activities, while exploring new ideas, expanding our service offering, and reaching new potential members and partners.

By donating, you will empower us to consolidate our membership, scale faster, and create the most value for current and potential member cities.

Please note: The Foundation is a member-owned association. Only wholly publicly-owned organizations qualify for membership.

Join us in building a flourishing public code ecosystem!

2020

Research and development.

Philanthropic support covers core costs, enabling testing and iterative refinement before requiring long-term support from member organizations.

2021

Core stewardship activities on track to be sustainably covered by member dues.

Philanthropic support will enable growth to new markets, awareness campaigns, and research of additional core services.

"I think we can all recognize the challenges that governments face when developing public digital infrastructure: out of control costs and timelines, quality and product issues, opaque relationships with suppliers, and limited reusability/shareability between different public organizations.

The Foundation for Public Code aims to address those challenges through codebase stewardship, applying the Standard for Public Code, and helping governments to realize the digital transformation needed. We are already seeing very positive results with our members and other public organizations."

Arnout Schuijff
CTO, Adyen



Our 3 year roadmap is focused on:

Ecosystem Growth

2019–20

Growth	Organizational research and process development to support a diverse founding membership base
Awareness	Generating case studies / Articulating our value proposition

Awareness & Education

2020–21

Growth	Organizational research and process development to scale operations / Adding partners and affiliates
Awareness	Professionalizing our communications (developing a trusted brand) / Deepening connection with the open source ecosystem / Diversifying channels
Education	Producing training materials and how-to guides on stewardship / Sponsoring academic research

Toolset Evolution

2020–22

Growth	Organizational research and process development for international expansion (including translation)
Awareness	Geographically-targeted outreach
Infrastructure	Building our own tools to refine stewardship and administer our members more delightfully

Additional funding will enable us to:



Develop better financial modelling based on codebase typologies, allowing more accurate costing of stewardship for any codebase



Create short public code explainer videos to build awareness



Expand network of collaborative experts
(e.g. *lawyers consulting on open source procurement workshop*)



In-depth training and workshops for vendors



Build our own FOSS toolset for the codebase communities we serve



Beyond 2020, we plan for:

International expansion and localization beyond Europe
(e.g. *the Standard for Public Code, workshops*)

Our mission is to enable public-purpose software and policy that is open and collaborative.

Accelerating social progress via a flourishing ecosystem of democratically accountable, open source public code running core public functions.

Radically reducing cost & increasing efficiency for public administrations via tools and resources to run peer-vetted open source public code.

Technological sovereignty of local governments via the control granted by public code.

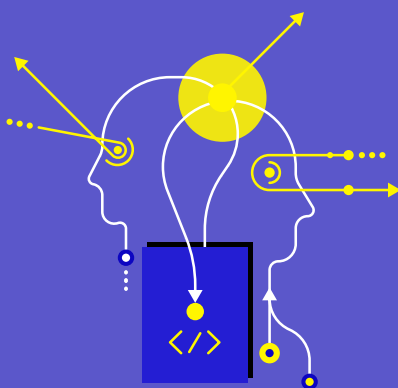
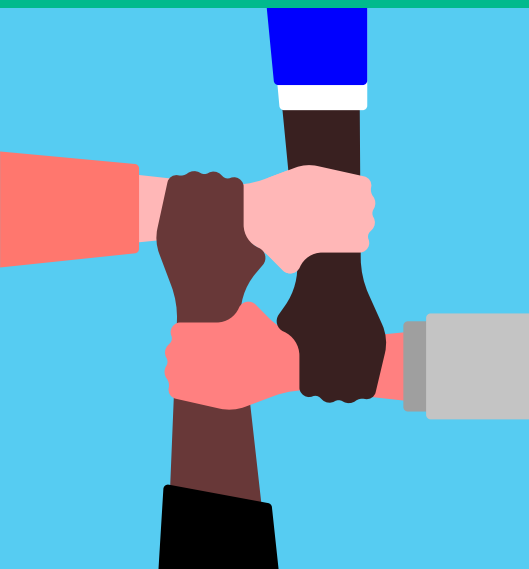
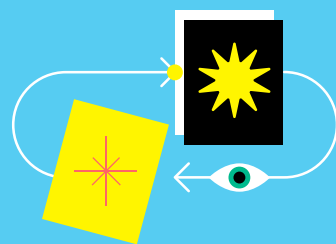
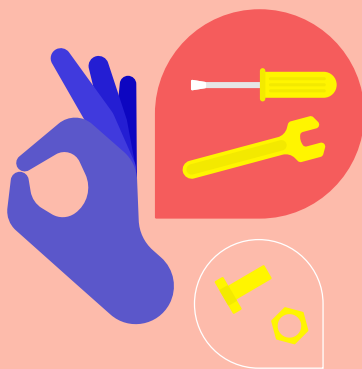
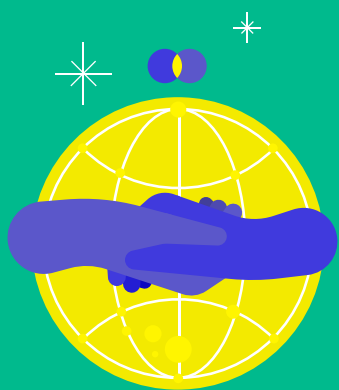
Thank you.

To continue the conversation about supporting the Foundation for Public Code, email us at giving@publiccode.net.

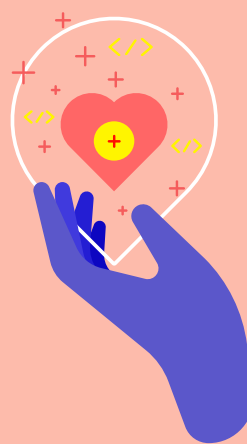
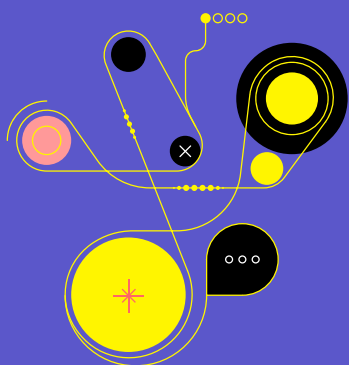
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 ID number (RSIN) 860102294

We're recognized as a public
 benefit organization (ANBI)
 by the Dutch Tax and
 Customs Administration.

