

Report: Financing QGIS national associations / user groups

author Michał Żugajewicz

This report summarizes information contained in three emails concerning funding methods for national QGIS associations in Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, Denmark and Poland. The presented solutions indicate similarities and differences in approaches to obtaining financial resources, with particular emphasis on membership fees, sponsorship, crowdfunding, and other income sources.

1. Sweden (source: Karl Magnus Jönsson)

In Sweden, membership fees are the primary source of income. This solution is straightforward and convenient for both members and the association's management. Attempts were made to finance activities through crowdfunding; however, this proved difficult due to budget constraints and procurement procedures of public institutions, which constitute the primary target group. Additional funds appeared when sponsoring an international conference, but the association does not rely on this type of support on a daily basis. While theoretically it is possible to generate financial surplus during national meetings and events, organizers have so far attempted to balance costs.

2. Switzerland (source: Andreas Neumann)

The situation in Switzerland is similar to that in Sweden-membership fees are the primary source of income. The association comprises approximately 130 members in various categories:

- A: provinces (cantons), large cities, large companies – 1.000 CHF per year (appr. 1073,28 EUR)
- B: smaller cities and companies - 500 CHF
- C: private individuals - 100 CHF
- D: students and retirees - 50 CHF

Members enjoy additional privileges, such as reduced fees for courses during annual events and voting rights regarding the allocation of financial resources. There is also a grant system through which members can submit project proposals for funding by the association. Membership is also required for accessing certain application modules (e.g., those concerning water management). Approximately two-thirds of Swiss provinces are members of the association, as are many cities and engineering firms. Similar to Sweden, public institutions find it easier to pay for membership than donations or crowdfunding; however, several successful crowdfunding campaigns have also been recorded.

3. Netherlands (source: Raymond Nijssen)

In the Netherlands, the funding model is also based on membership fees. Companies pay 500 EUR per year, individual persons - 25 EUR, while students pay nothing. Currently, the association comprises approximately 30 companies and 140 individual members, a number that has been growing rapidly since its establishment in 2020. No differentiation in fees based on company size has been

introduced-a flat rate applies to both freelancers and large enterprises. A conscious decision was made to call the fee "membership" rather than "sponsorship," as it is easier for public institutions to finance participation in the association in this form. Additionally, a discussion group (Signal "super user group") was created to facilitate the exchange of experiences and ideas among QGIS users and associations.

Presentation from the latest QGIS conference in Norrköping on the activities of the Dutch user group: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blezzpPaSqM&list=PLi6mvse6ZEOx3REy1Dr0JFOWxVOxkqEY7&index=25>

4. Denmark (source: Bo Victor Thomsen)

In Denmark, the funding model is based primarily on organizational membership. The Danish QGIS user group has convinced numerous public institutions (municipalities, government agencies) and companies to support QGIS by paying membership fees. The standard fee is approximately 500 EUR per year, which is considered a symbolic amount compared to the costs of commercial GIS software licenses.

The group comprises over 100 such organizational members, generating annual revenue of approximately 55.000 EUR. About 50% of this amount is transferred directly to the international QGIS organization, representing over 6% of its total revenue. The remaining funds are used locally for plugin development, events (online and in-person meetings), maintaining an active Facebook group, funding student participation in QGIS and FOSS4G events, and other activities promoting QGIS in Denmark.

Additional communication channels include a website (qgis.dk) featuring an event calendar, blog, and newsletter sent several times per year.

5. Poland (source: Michał Żugajewicz)

The financing model of QGIS Polska Association is based on two primary sources: membership fees and revenue surplus from the annual QGIS Users Meeting (Polish edition). Membership fees are structured as follows: ordinary members pay an annual fee of 200 PLN (approx. 47,50 EUR), while supporting members pay 2.000 PLN (approx. 475 EUR). These membership fees provide a stable and recurring source of funding, enabling the association to cover its basic operational costs and administrative expenses. Currently (10.01.2026), there are 29 ordinary members in the association.

Annual national QGIS Users Meeting serves as an additional significant revenue source through conference fees and sponsorship packages. The event attracted an estimated 400–500 participants (based on 2025), including specialists from government institutions, private companies, research organizations, and developers of open-source geospatial software. Conference participation fees generated the following revenues:

- plenary session tickets: 300 PLN net /per. (~70 EUR) – 114.600 PLN net in total (~27k EUR net)
- discussion panel tickets: 120 PLN net/ per. (EUR) – 20.880 PLN net in total (~ 5k EUR net)
- workshops: 200 PLN net/ per. (47,50 EUR) – 61.400 PLN net in total (~14.5k EUR)
- sponsorship packages (offered in three tiers: Gold - 6.000 PLN net, Silver - 3.000 PLN net and Bronze - 1.000 PLN net): generated revenue of PLN 35.000 PLN (~8.3k EUR)

The financial surplus generated from event participation fees and sponsorship contributions supports the association's initiatives, including community engagement, conference organization, and promotion of QGIS within Poland.

Summary

The analysis indicates that in all described countries—Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Poland—membership fees are the primary source of financing for QGIS associations, although the organization of these fees varies by country. Sweden and Switzerland attempted crowdfunding; however, difficulties were encountered due to public institution constraints. Switzerland has developed an elaborate membership category system and a grant mechanism that engages members in decision-making regarding project financing.

Netherlands has opted for a simple membership model with a flat rate for companies and dynamic growth of the membership base.

Denmark stands out for its effective engagement of public institutions and companies in financing group activities, achieving annual revenue of approximately 55.000 EUR, half of which goes to the international QGIS organization, while the remaining funds are allocated to local development, events, and student support.

Poland combines modest membership fees with significant event-based revenue streams, creating a diversified financing model that supports both core operations and community activities. All associations emphasize that membership is easier to accept by public institutions than sponsorship or donations, making it the preferred funding mechanism across regions.