Section 3b: Creating a new working group / circle / project / micro-enterprise

Creating something new is always an exciting process. The CoLab's ethos is to encourage collaboration and new activity.

The only overarching requirement for creation is centered around agreement with the CoLab VMAs.

For more formal set-ups there are some additional requirements to protect CoLab, working groups, projects, and micro-enterprises.

Creating a new working group / project

Working groups and projects are the most informal set ups. To start a working group, all one would need is to find other members interested in the topic to work on. It is recommended to include a member of the CoLab who has been a member for some time in order to access guidance when support is needed.

Working groups can exist within circles or outside circles.

In order not to duplicate work, we encourage members who want to start working groups and projects to communicate their intentions and remain open to collaboration with other groups which may be able to contribute towards their efforts. The extent to which working groups do this is up to them.

If a working group / project is reaching out to people outside the CoLab and presenting themselves as from the CoLab, it is a requirement that the general circle is notified simply by sending a message on the #general-circle channel *before* this is done. This is not to limit activity but to increase awareness around how the CoLab is interacting with others externally.

Creating a new circle

Circles are defined by clear domains, documented vision, mission and aims, named members and representation on the general circle.

If there is already a circle with the same domain, it is encouraged for the circles to consider how their work is overlapping and whether expanding the circle may be beneficial.

We accept that membership may fluctuate with time, however circles are generally expected to have relatively stable membership.

All permaculture domains are possible domains for circles. Circles may also be subsets of these domains.

The general circle should be informed about the formation of a new circle, not to limit the creation of a new circle, but to:

- onboard a representative to the general circle
- communicate about support / collaboration opportunities with other parts of the laboratory
- assess how this change may impact other active groups / circles

Creating a new micro-enterprise

A micro-enterprise can be created within a circle, project or working group as a product or service derived from their activities.

However a micro-enterprise can also be created as a free-standing offer.

Anyone who would like to offer services, please come forward so they can be included on the website. Please include:

- a picture of you
- a blurb about you and your experience
- the service you are offering and some information about that
- your hourly rate, and
- which fiscal host/Open Collective within the CoLab you will be using

Fiscal Hosting for receiving donations / payments options

For individuals or very young startup micro-enterprises

The current option for micro-enterprises without starting a new collective is through the #funding-circle or #digital-circle. The fiscal host in this case is “Stichting Reculture Foundation”, which means you will pay a 5% of any income earned for fiscal host fees + a 10% min income sharing

contribution + any bank transfer fees on outgoing payments.

Important to note that as an individual there is no contractual relationship between the fiscal host and yourself and you retain full fiscal responsibility to fulfill your fiscal obligations within your country of residence.

For groups and more established micro-enterprises

If multiple people are interested in co-offering a service and starting a micro-enterprise as a Permaculture CoLab related collective, the option exists to set up your own “Services Circle”, with its own Open Collective, with a permaculture-aligned fiscal host of your choice. You will need to get this through the General Circle consent process before your service is included on the website.

If you have other open accounting options in mind, other than Open Collective, these could also be considered and you could bring them up as alternative options. The key to any choice is a system that cannot be manipulated and edited after the payments are made; it must be public and easy to access for transparency.

Being a freelancer within the CoLab comes with a responsibility to the rest of the CoLab to maintain the reputation of being a reliable, good-quality service provider.

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