

Draft Drupal Marketplace

Drupal Site Template Marketplace MVP Proposal

Executive Summary

The Drupal Marketplace Initiative aims to increase Drupal's adoption and strengthen the ecosystem by introducing a trusted platform for distributing high-quality, community-vetted site templates. This proposal outlines a phased approach, beginning with a pilot at DrupalCon Vienna offering 1-2 free starter-kit templates, followed by a more expansive MVP at DrupalCon Chicago, featuring up to 15 templates with both free and paid options.

Initial eligibility is limited to Drupal Certified Partners (DCPs), leveraging existing agreements to streamline governance requirements. Each template must meet stringent standards, including clear separation of content and presentation, adherence to Drupal coding standards, automated security checks, self-certified accessibility and GDPR compliance, and explicit documentation. Site Template Makers must commit to ongoing maintenance and regular updates aligned with Drupal CMS releases.

Monetization structures include an initial review fee (waived for the pilot), Site Template Maker-determined pricing, and a 10% revenue share to the Drupal Association. Future plans incorporate direct transactions through Drupal.org, structured revenue sharing (60% creator, 30% Drupal Association, 10% ecosystem support fund), and enhanced user experiences.

Governance and oversight during the MVP will be handled primarily by Drupal Association staff, supported by automated compliance tools. The Marketplace Working Group will continuously gather community feedback, refine governance policies, and plan the transition to a structured Marketplace Review Board to manage disputes and escalations transparently.

This structured approach ensures that critical questions around governance, equity, scalability, and contributor recognition are carefully addressed, laying the groundwork for a sustainable, trusted, and vibrant Drupal Marketplace ecosystem.

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Overview and Objectives

The Drupal Site Template Marketplace is a community-aligned initiative designed to simplify Drupal site building, increase adoption among new users, and create economic and visibility opportunities for contributors. The initiative responds to clear and repeated community needs: easier onramps, better trust signals, and more accessible, high-quality starting points.

The initiative is guided by the following objectives:

1. **Improve Accessibility and Adoption of Drupal:** By offering turnkey starter site templates that are easy to find, try, and customize, the Marketplace reduces barriers for new users and accelerates the path to a working site.
2. **Establish and Maintain Trust:** All listings will adhere to clearly documented technical, security, and accessibility standards. Trust will be earned through consistent quality, transparency, and community feedback mechanisms.
3. **Support Maker Sustainability:** The Marketplace provides both free and paid listing options, enabling contributors to earn revenue and gain visibility. Long-term governance includes mechanisms for attribution and revenue sharing that support both template creators and upstream maintainers.
4. **Ensure Governance and Quality Oversight:** Drupal Association staff and a forthcoming Marketplace Review Board will manage review processes, compliance, and dispute resolution with transparency and fairness.
5. **Test and Refine Through Pilot and MVP:** The pilot (Vienna) and MVP (Chicago) phases are structured to test assumptions, gather community input, and iterate on standards, workflows, and revenue models before broader rollout.

This approach is designed to ensure the Marketplace is aligned with open-source values, technically sound, and community-trusted, while enabling scalable growth and sustainability.

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Pilot and MVP Phases

With board approval, the Marketplace Initiative will continue exploration in two initial phases designed to test demand, validate assumptions, and refine implementation strategies:

DrupalCon Vienna Pilot (Q4 2025)

- Release of 1-2 free starter kit templates, via the installer bundled with Drupal CMS.
- Site templates will follow the emerging Recipes, Drupal CMS Design System and Experience Builder (XB) theme standards.
- This phase will be led by the **Drupal CMS Leadership Team**, which is responsible for:
 - Defining the structure and requirements for Site Templates and all components
 - Identifying and supporting pilot Site Template Maker
 - Reviewing and validating the pilot site templates
- Concurrent with this the **DA Staff** will be responsible for:
 - Identifying Drupal Certified Partners (DCPs) to be MVP Site Template Makers
 - Validating developer workflows and packaging requirements
 - Finalizing the technical requirements for the MVP with a final on-site vs off-site purchasing determination
- Objectives for this phase include:
 - Determining technical feasibility, a site template definition, and implementation standards
 - Identifying integration points with Drupal CMS
 - Capturing early Site Template Maker and technical stakeholder feedback
 - Identifying MVP participants and MVP technical planning.

DrupalCon Chicago Marketplace MVP (March 2026)

- Expansion to 10-15 templates, including both free and paid tiers.
- Marketplace Site Template Makers will be limited to selected Drupal Certified Partners (DCPs), allowing for focused feedback and streamlined governance to maintain quality control and minimize policy overhead.
- Paid templates must meet additional requirements including transparent pricing, disclosure of support and other service offerings, and commitment to maintenance.
- Key experiments during the MVP include:
 - Pricing models and willingness to pay
 - Site Template Maker experience and support expectations
 - Early revenue generation for the DA and site template creators
 - Initial governance and quality review processes
 - Discoverability and user behavior via Drupal.org analytics

Throughout both phases, participant feedback will be collected and reviewed by the Marketplace Working Group. These results will inform future phases, which may include broader Site Template Makers access, more formalized governance, and potential integration into Drupal CMS's installer.

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Eligibility and Participation

Participation in the initial Marketplace pilot and MVP phases will be limited to interested Drupal Certified Partners (DCPs). This decision ensures:

- Alignment with existing agreements and accountability structures
- High baseline standards for quality, support, and governance
- Operational feasibility for the Drupal Association during early rollout

Eligibility Criteria:

- Must be an active Drupal Certified Partner in good standing and maintain this certification.
- Must agree to the terms and conditions of participation, including:
 - Contribution of templates that meet the technical, accessibility, and security requirements outlined in this proposal
 - Transparent disclosure of all included modules, assets, and upsell or support services
 - Ongoing maintenance commitment, including timely updates (within 90 days) for new Drupal CMS major versions
 - Participation in review and feedback processes
 - Quarterly disclosure of anonymized customer and transaction data (see below)
 - Support of post-purchase feedback collection efforts (see below)
 - Adapt to changing requirements created as a result from knowledge gained in the MVP period
 - Adapt to post-MVP requirements, which may include but not be limited to: shifting to DA hosted payments, more formal licensing standards, additional technical requirements, etc.

Participation Commitments:

- Participating DCPs may submit a limited number of site templates during the pilot and MVP phases, as coordinated with the **Drupal CMS Leadership Team** and **Drupal Association staff**
- Participants must collaborate on validation processes and provide structured feedback on developer experience, design, tooling, and governance
- All submitted templates will undergo review to ensure adherence to Marketplace criteria and alignment with Drupal's emergent design and technical standards
- Participants acknowledge that this MVP is an agile process and requirements may evolve as we learn and adapt to real-time feedback loops
- In acknowledgement for MVP participation commitments under such uncertainty and emergent conditions, makers may also receive contribution credits for MVP participation

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Data Sharing & Reporting

To ensure transparency, data-informed iteration, and operational oversight, participants must share anonymized usage and revenue data with the Drupal Association on a quarterly basis. This data will be used solely to evaluate program performance and improve the Marketplace initiative.

Required Disclosures:

- Total number of template downloads and/or purchases by template
- Gross revenue from template sales and disclosed upsells (support, custom services, etc.)
- Volume and nature of support or issue requests
- Available user feedback or satisfaction indicators (when applicable)

Customer Feedback Collection:

To support user-focused evaluation, Site Template Makers must:

- Share DA-approved surveys for anonymized customer submission quarterly, **or**
- Provide an opt-in mechanism for customers to receive DA-issued surveys directly at the point of purchase

Privacy and Confidentiality:

- No personally identifiable information about purchasers will be collected or shared with the DA unless explicitly and voluntarily provided by the end user.
- Domain names are not PII and will be collected.
- All public reporting will be anonymized and aggregated for analysis and shared back with the community in summary form

Use of Data:

- Evaluate pricing models, adoption trends, and operational feasibility
- Inform governance refinements and trust signal development
- Contribute to transparency in community updates and retrospectives

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Submission and Template Requirements

To maintain trust, clarity, and interoperability, all site templates submitted to the Marketplace must follow specific technical, content, and licensing standards.

Required for All Submissions (Free and Paid):

- Must use the Recipes-defined schema and include a functional and/or configuration recipe(s), demo content, and XB-based theme.
- Must disclose all modules used, and all modules must be published and available on Drupal.org.
- Must self-certify adherence to WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility for the visitor-facing site and GDPR compliance (if applicable)
- Must commit to updating within 90 days of major Drupal releases
- Must include a licensing manifest identifying:
 - All Drupal derived code, that is any code that cannot be used independently of Drupal, must be licensed GPL v2+
 - All code and asset licenses
 - Any commercially licensed media or fonts
 - Which parts are GPL-compatible
- Must not:
 - Include hardcoded content or layout
 - Apply patches to core or contributed modules
 - Violate Drupal coding standards
 - Include obfuscated or non-extensible configuration
 - Contain advertising or tracking scripts without disclosure/affirmative opt-in where required by GDPR and similar regulations
- License Manifest: All submissions must include a machine-readable and human-readable license manifest. This manifest must:
 - Identify all included code, configuration, and asset packages
 - Indicate the license type for each component (e.g., GPLv2+, MIT, proprietary, CC BY)
 - Distinguish between GPL-covered and separately licensed assets (e.g., stock images, custom fonts)
 - Include links to upstream license files or license terms where applicable
 - Clarify redistribution rights and any commercial limitations (e.g., “can be used for up to 5 sites”)
 - **Format:** The license manifest must be included as a `license_manifest.yml`, `license.md`, `LICENSE.txt` in the root of the template package.

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Additional Requirements for Paid Templates:

- Must include a video walkthrough or interactive demo preview (where technically feasible)
- Must disclose all upsell or ongoing services related to the template

Variants:

Templates that are derived from another submission but include significantly different content or purpose must disclose their relationship to the original. Variants may be subject to refusal, reduced submission fees, and/or limited listing benefits at the sole discretion of the Drupal Association.

Evaluation and Review:

Initial reviews will be conducted by the Drupal Association using a combination of automated tools and manual screening. A more self-service or automated model, community reviews and/or a formal review board process may be piloted post-MVP.

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Documentation and Onboarding

Accessible, high-quality documentation is essential for both Site Template Makers and end-users. Each Marketplace listing must include comprehensive, plain-language materials that support use, customization, and compliance.

Template Documentation Must Include:

- Clear installation and activation steps (including screenshots or video, when possible)
- Description of use cases, features, intended audience, and sector focus
- List of included recipes, modules, theme, and third-party assets
- Any known limitations, assumptions, or configuration steps
- Demo links (when available) and guidance for replication or local evaluation
- A clearly-labeled license manifest, explaining which portions of the template are GPL, which are third-party, and what usage rights apply

Site Template Makers Support and Onboarding:

To lower barriers for participation, the Drupal CMS Leadership Team (pilot) and the Drupal Association (MVP and beyond) will:

- Provide a reusable starter template and skeleton site with Drupal CMS XB and Recipes pre-integrated
- Maintain a documentation portal with checklists, FAQs, and submission walkthroughs
- Offer periodic workshops and office hours to support new Site Template Makers

Governance Roles:

- During the Pilot, the Drupal CMS Leadership Team will manage the pilot onboarding resources and Site Template Makers support.
- During the MVP, the Drupal Association staff will take over management of the onboarding resources and Site Template Makers support.
- The Marketplace Working Group will propose evolving documentation standards based on Site Template Maker feedback and pilot learnings

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Quality Assurance and Compliance

Maintaining high standards for quality, accessibility, and security is essential to building trust in the Drupal Site Template Marketplace. The QA approach blends automation, Site Template Maker accountability, and community oversight.

Automated Compliance Checks (Required at Submission)

All submitted templates must pass baseline automated tests:

- **Code Quality:** PHPStan and PHPCS scans to ensure adherence to Drupal coding standards
- **Accessibility:** Axe DevTools or equivalent scans for WCAG 2.2 AA coverage
- **Licensing:** SPDX-tagged license analysis via FOSSology or similar
- **Performance:** Optional Lighthouse/WebPageTest reports (required for paid tier)

Where the submitter believes results are false-negatives, they must document the test and the reason why they believe the result does not apply.

Self-Certification (Required for All Templates)

Submitters must self-certify that their templates:

- Meet WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards for the visitor facing site, per our [coding standards](#)
- Whether any user data is collected and if so whether it is GDPR compliant
- Include a complete and accurate license manifest (code + assets)
- Include clear disclosure of all upsells, support models, and included services

Manual Review (MVP Phase)

During the MVP, all templates will receive an initial review by Drupal Association staff or an authorized contractor, with spot-checks of accessibility and architecture. The manual review scope will be guided by:

- Prioritized issues flagged by automated tools
- Risk factors (e.g., commercial templates, bundled third-party assets)
- Random audits

Trust Labels (Future Phase)

Templates may display badges based on compliance results and ongoing quality:

- Verified Accessibility
- Verified Licensing & Attribution
- Trusted Maintainer
- Popular Download
- Others defined as we learn from the MVP and early user feedback

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Templates with unresolved bugs, accessibility complaints, or license issues may be flagged or delisted at the discretion of the DA or, post-MVP, the Marketplace Review Board.

Maintenance and Lifecycle Management

To avoid abandonment and ensure long-term value, all Site Template Makers participating in the Marketplace must commit to active maintenance and responsible lifecycle planning.

Maintenance Commitments

All listed templates—especially paid ones—must:

- Update for **major Drupal versions within 90 days** of release
- Resolve critical security issues as quickly as possible, with a target timeframe of 3 days
- Acknowledge and begin resolution of critical accessibility issues as soon as possible, but in no event longer than **14 days**
- Maintain documentation and demo links for the life of the template
- Monitor and respond to user-reported issues in a timely manner

Deprecation Policy

Templates may be flagged as “unmaintained” and removed from search listings if they:

- Have no updates or Site Template Maker responses for more than 6 months
- Are no longer compatible with supported Drupal releases
- Have unresolved security issues
- Have unresolved critical accessibility issues beyond 90 days

The DA staff will notify a Site Template Maker before removal. A grace period and warning system will be in place. Deprecated templates may remain available for archival use but will be clearly marked.

Oversight Roles

- **Drupal Association staff** will manage compliance checks, template updates, and Site Template Maker notifications
- The **Marketplace Working Group** will review deprecation trends and suggest policy updates
- A future **Marketplace Review Board** will handle disputes, complaints, and contested removals

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Monetization & Revenue Sharing

The Marketplace MVP is designed to explore whether paid site templates can be a sustainable revenue stream for contributors, while also supporting the broader Drupal ecosystem. Monetization will be allowed under structured and transparent conditions.

Listing Fees (MVP Phase)

- **\$0 USD** per new template listing
- Listing (or Annual Review) Fees help offset manual review and platform operations and may be added post-MVP.

Revenue Share (MVP)

- Site Template Makers may *set their own price* for paid templates
- No ongoing subscription services may be required to use the template
- All upsell services (e.g., premium support, consulting) must be clearly disclosed at submission
- 10% of revenues from sales and upsell revenue will be paid to the Drupal Association as a referral fee quarterly.

Future Revenue Share (Post-MVP Option, not expected before 2027)

If post-MVP, the decision is made to build out the full marketplace platform with payments flowing through [Drupal.org](https://drupal.org), the pricing structure would be different to reflect the increased platform and transaction costs (as well as ecosystem support):

- **60%** to the template creator
- **30%** to the Drupal Association (platform operations, governance)
- **10%** to an **Ecosystem Support Fund**, potentially benefiting:
 - Module maintainers of high-use dependencies
 - Small Site Template Makers or accessibility reviewers
 - Community-led innovation projects
 - Distribution of these funds is to-be-determined (TBD) and contingent on adoption of this revenue share model post-MVP; the community would be involved in creation of the distribution policy.

This future model may continue to be refined and validated during the MVP phase to assess feasibility, sustainability, and fairness.

Transparency Requirements

- All fees and revenue must be disclosed in quarterly reports
- Site Template Makers must report all related upsell income and support interactions
- DA may audit listings for non-compliance with monetization rules

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Governance & Oversight

The Marketplace's success depends on clear, fair, and transparent governance. The model is designed to balance Drupal's open-source values with operational integrity and long-term viability.

Primary Governance Bodies

Drupal Association Staff

- Implement and operate the Marketplace platform
- Conduct template reviews, manage submissions
- Enforce policy, respond to reports, and manage support

Marketplace Working Group

- Define policy, recommend updates, and interpret feedback
- Analyze pilot results and propose permanent governance models
- Collaborate with other leadership bodies on technical standards

Drupal CMS Leadership Team

- Define and evolve site template architecture (Recipes, XB theme)
- Ensure compatibility with future versions of Drupal CMS
- Provide technical guidance on packaging and distribution

Future Governance Structures

Marketplace Review Board (Post-MVP)

- Resolve escalated disputes (maker-maker, user-maker, maker-DA)
- Review appeals of delisted templates or denied listings
- Oversee compliance for paid templates and trust labeling

This board will operate collaboratively with DA staff.

Community Consultation

- All significant governance or policy changes will go through:
 - Public drafts and feedback rounds
 - Optional real-time collaboration (RTC) or BoF sessions
 - Annual community review and revision cycle

Discoverability and User Experience of end-users

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The Marketplace must be easy to navigate and serve the needs of both newcomers and experienced Drupal users. Trust, clarity, and accessibility are foundational to its success.

Template Listing & Browsing

Templates will be listed on a dedicated **Marketplace landing page** on Drupal.org, relationship to the current Themes page TBD. All listings will include:

- Title and summary
- Preview image(s)
- Key features and compatibility tags (self-reported and reviewed)
- Demo link (strongly encouraged)
- Pricing and support information

Search and Filtering

Users will be able to:

- Filter by Drupal version compatibility
- Select by use case (e.g., nonprofit, e-commerce)
- View accessibility/self-certification badges
- Toggle between Free and Paid templates

Early Listing Order

Until sufficient usage data is available:

- Templates will default to displaying in **randomized** order
- "Featured" badges may be assigned by DA staff (e.g., for exemplary quality, coverage)
- Long-term: listings should be ranked based on usage data, reviews, and maker reputation once sufficient data has been collected

Trust Signals

Templates may display:

- Verified compliance badges (accessibility, licensing)
- Download counts
- Maintainer name and organization (linked to profile)
- User ratings and review summaries (future)

UX Expectations

Templates should support:

- A consistent install and activation experience through the Drupal CMS installer
- A simple "Try this template" preview (HTML), video walk through, or demo
- Future integrations with Project Browser and site deployment flows to hosting partners

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Strategic Decisions and Deferred Items

The MVP is intentionally limited in scope to test foundational assumptions. Several strategic areas have been intentionally deferred for further exploration based on pilot results and community consultation.

Pricing and Equity Models

- Pricing tiers are currently unregulated, allowing Makers to experiment
- A global pricing equity framework may be developed post-MVP
- Fee discounts or grants for under-resourced makers may be considered in future phases

Revenue Distribution Beyond Site Template Makers

- No revenue sharing currently exists for module or theme maintainers whose work is bundled into paid templates
- A future model may route a portion of marketplace revenue into an **Ecosystem Support Fund**, supporting:
 - High-use contrib projects
 - Community accessibility reviews
 - Innovation or maintenance stipends

SaaS-Like User Expectations

- The MVP assumes external, Site Template Maker-provided fulfillment
- No integrated hosting or site deployment will be offered initially
- Future phases may explore:
 - One-click deploy options
 - Partner hosting integrations
 - “Try before you buy” experiences

Certification and Trust Layer

- Marketplace “certified” templates and trust labels will be piloted only after establishing strong QA and maintenance tracking
- Review board structure and community escalation workflows will be tested first during MVP

Automation and Self-Service

- The MVP workflow is fully manual
- Future roadmap items may include:
 - Self-service submission flow
 - Automated CI-driven testing pipelines
 - Metadata-based filtering and license validation

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Risks and Mitigations

The Marketplace MVP exists to test high-value hypotheses while acknowledging risks to trust, sustainability, and alignment with Drupal's open-source mission. Below are the top risks identified through community input—and how the MVP structure aims to mitigate them.

Risk: Overhead Exceeds Value

The cost of reviewing, supporting, and governing the Marketplace could outweigh the direct or indirect benefits—especially if adoption is slow or automation is limited.

Mitigation:

- Limit scope initial roll out, especially in [Drupal.org](https://drupal.org) investment costs.
- Pilot phase limited to DCPs and a capped number of templates (15 max) to limit operational load.
- Submission fees cover 50–60% of review costs; balance should be made up in 10% referral fees.
- MVP will test whether further investment is warranted based on uptake, quality, and staff time.

Risk: Mismatch Between Site Template Maker Pricing and Market Willingness to Pay

Site Template Makers may price templates high (e.g., \$1000+) to recoup costs, while many site template users expect low-cost or free templates. This may suppress adoption or discourage maker investment.

Mitigation:

- Flexible pricing allowed during MVP to test demand.
- Quarterly data collection from Site Template Makers to evaluate price vs. purchase trends.
- Surveys of both potential Site Template Makers and buyers (including non-purchasers) to understand perceived value.
- Post-MVP exploration of regional pricing, sliding scales, or sponsored listings.

Risk: Low-Quality or Abandoned Templates

Poorly built or unsupported templates can erode trust, increase support burdens, and harm Drupal's reputation—especially for newcomers.

Mitigation:

- All templates must meet baseline technical, accessibility, and documentation requirements.
- Initial manual review by DA staff to screen for quality and violations.
- Templates will be reviewed for activity and support; unmaintained listings will be flagged after 6 months of inactivity.
- Future: certification and trust labels to reinforce quality.

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Risk: Fragmentation or Loss of Open-Source Spirit

The introduction of paid offerings may foster competition over collaboration, incentivize closed practices, and disincentivize community contributions.

Mitigation:

- Free templates launched first to establish a technical process.
- Only DCPs in good standing with the Drupal Association are included in MVP to limit risk.
- Clear governance process and feedback loops through the Working Group (later Review Board).
- Continued enforcement of GPL and module inclusion rules.

Risk: Unfair Monetization or Contributor Exploitation

Contributors or maintainers of underlying projects may feel exploited if their work is bundled into paid templates without attribution or support, undermining ecosystem trust.

Mitigation:

- Required license manifest and upsell disclosures.
- MVP will collect and display upstream dependencies.
- Site Template Maker onboarding and transparency around rights and reuse/attribution.
- Future phase revenue sharing models that include an upstream support fund.

Risk: Escalations, Dispute or Bad Actors

Conflicts (e.g., makers copying others' work, violating licensing, or failing to support users) may harm the Marketplace's reputation if unresolved.

Mitigation:

- Initial reports handled by DA staff with internal enforcement authority.
- DCPs (and later any contributors) must agree to a code of conduct and operating terms to list templates.
- Flagging system and policy violation paths are built into MVP planning.
- Future Marketplace Review Board to oversee formal appeals and escalations.

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Community Engagement and Feedback Loops

Ongoing community feedback is core to Marketplace design and governance. The MVP incorporates structured engagement at every phase:

Direct Feedback Channels

- **Purchaser Surveys:** Distributed quarterly, either by Site Template Makers or through DA opt-in mechanisms
- **Site Template Maker Surveys:** Shared at submission, post-approval, and after the MVP period
- **Common Module Maintainer Surveys:** An analysis of commonly included contrib modules, and survey of those maintainers for feedback

Real-Time Engagement

- Ongoing Slack channel
- Real-Time Collaboration (RTC) sessions during key planning phases
- Roundtables for DCPs and Agency partners (pre/post MVP)
- Issue queues

Transparent Governance

- Major changes to policy or revenue models will go through:
 - Draft publication
 - Optional feedback session or BoF at DrupalCon or online
 - Open comment period via issue queue

Post-MVP Retro

After the 3-6 month MVP period:

- Full community retrospective
- Public summary of lessons learned and proposed next steps
- Go/no-go recommendation for expanded rollout and additional investment

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Changes since community release:

- Listing fees removed from MVP
- Clarifications of responsibilities of DA staff prior to DrupalCon Vienna (pg 2)
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Process and Next Steps:

Is this proposal good enough for now and safe enough to try?

This proposal has been authored by the Marketplace Working Group based on the feedback received from over 500 community members through real-time collaboration sessions, feedback surveys and slack engagement. Prior to publication for comment, it has been shared with the Executive Committee of the Drupal Association Board as well as the Drupal CMS Leadership team.

The Community public comment period was open from **27 June 2025 through 13 July 2025**. The Marketplace Working Group met on **15 July 2025** to review feedback and identify final recommendations to the board for their decision on **24 July 2025**.