

Software infrastructure is one of the two funding priorities of the Prototype Fund.

Software is more than concrete applications such as programs or apps – these only form the part visible to users, so to speak. Below these lies the software infrastructure, which consists, for example, of implementations of protocols and which is **required by developers as a tool to write programs for users and make these usable**. Software infrastructure projects are therefore not usually aimed at end users, but primarily at developers.

The same infrastructure elements are often used for a wide variety of applications. They are versatile modules that can be exchanged, modified and reused via repositories. At best, this saves developers a lot of work. Examples of such elements of software infrastructure are code libraries or network protocols. With these, software infrastructure makes up the **foundation for all those applications from messengers to map services that users encounter on a daily basis**.

Numerous applications depend on individual infrastructure components and the often voluntary communities of developers who keep them up to date and maintain them. This harbors a **potential for dependency** that becomes problematic if individual modules cannot be adequately maintained due to a lack of funding, for example, resulting in security vulnerabilities.

Therefore, it is important to the Prototype Fund that funding projects **contribute something back to the ecosystem** in the spirit of open source by helping to maintain and further develop the infrastructure used.

As these projects are the reason that digital innovation can be developed cost-effectively in the first place, it is crucial that they also **receive funding in the long term** in order to maintain them and develop them further.