

# Contribute documentation to Inkscape (reStructuredText)

This page is also available on

[https://wiki.inkscape.org/wiki/Contribute\\_to\\_Documentation\\_with\\_reStructuredText](https://wiki.inkscape.org/wiki/Contribute_to_Documentation_with_reStructuredText)

To contribute to recent Inkscape documentations, we have to write our docs in [reStructuredText](#) file format (`*.rst`). It's similar to Markdown, but still different.

The Inkscape documentation is built up on [Sphinx](#), which is some kind of special engine. To easily contribute without being a professional developer, we can use VSCode and some plugin to edit those `*.rst` files and preview (render) them.

## Install VS Code or VSCode

With VSCode we can edit `*.rst` files with ease. There's native syntax highlighting. But we cannot render the final result by default (needs a separate extension).

Downloads:

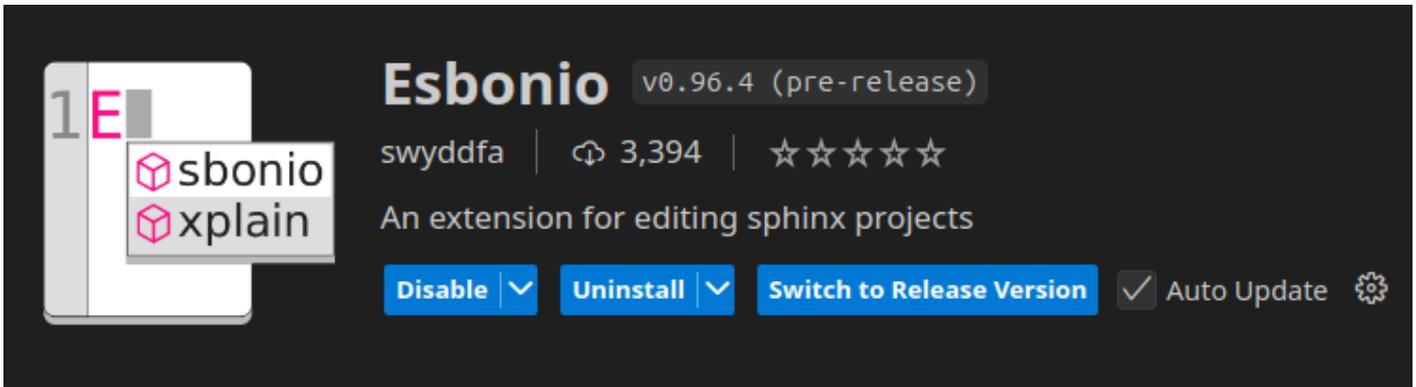
- <https://code.visualstudio.com>
- <https://vscode.com> (same like Visual Studio Code, but fully Open Source!)

## Install Esbonia Extension

This extension is required to render `*.rst` files. Rendering helps to validate, that the code we wrote is valid before we commit and push to Inkscape repositories. It can show a live HTML preview of the documentation, so the preview contents change whenever the document is updated. Synchronised scrolling between the source and preview is also supported.

Download/Install:

<https://marketplace.visualstudio.com/items?itemName=swyddfa.esbonia>



## Install additional requirements

### Ubuntu:

We install Sphinx globally to system, that's why we use the `python3-*` packages:

```
sudo apt install python3-sphinx python3-doc8
```

After this, we have following commands available for CLI also:

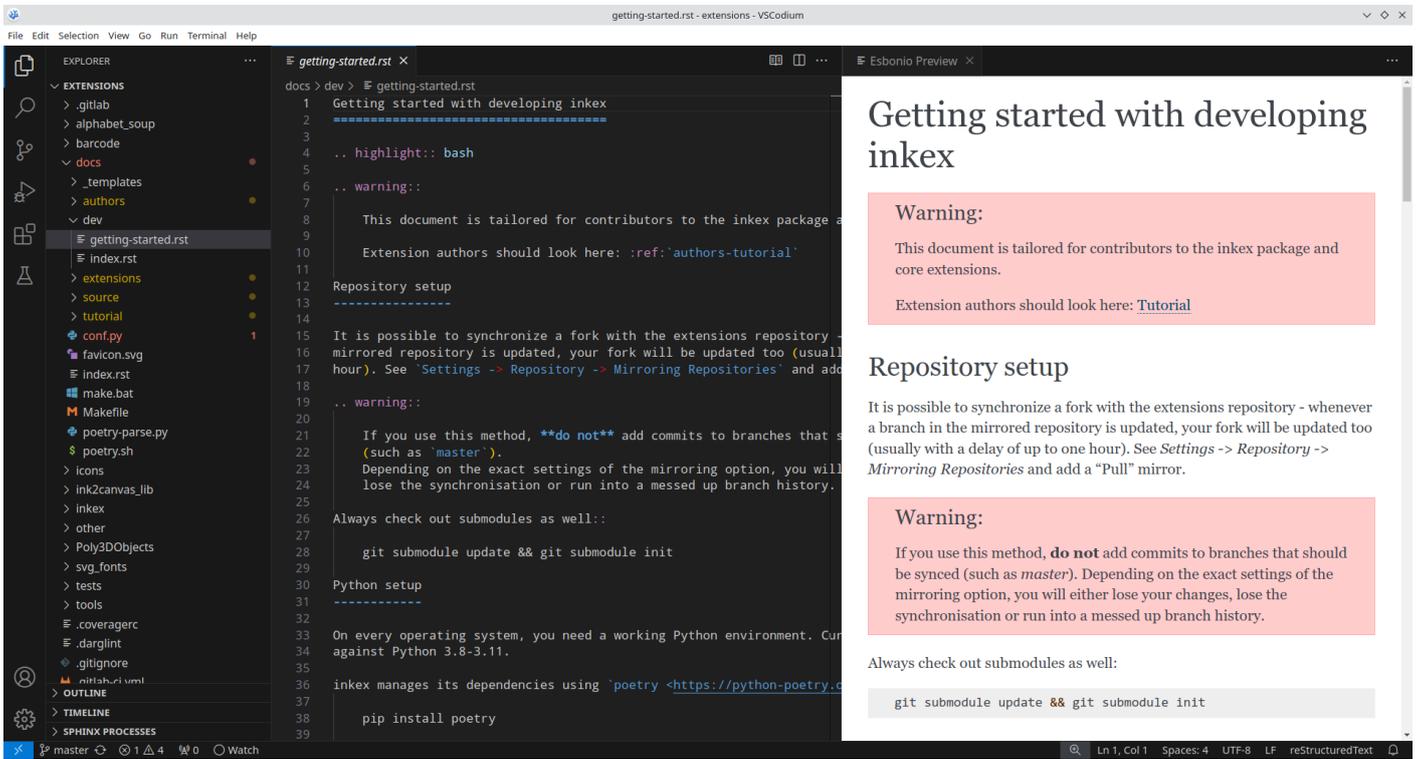
```
sphinx-apidoc  
sphinx-autogen  
sphinx-build  
sphinx-quickstart
```

See also <https://www.sphinx-doc.org/en/master/usage/installation.html>

## Clone the documentation

```
cd ~/  
git clone https://gitlab.com/inkscape/extensions.git
```

Open the folder within VSCodium and begin contribute



# Troubleshooting

## My opened \*.rst file is not rendered

Opening a single file without an active workspace is not currently supported and will lead to errors, which might not be communicated to the user visually. Open the folder containing your documentation project in VSCode instead!

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