GOVERNANCE ACTION REVIEW

Cardano 2030: Vision, Mission, Strategy Framework and KPIs

GOVERNANCE ACTION
TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Governance Action Title	Cardano 2030: Vision, Mission, Strategy Framework and KPIs
Governance Action Type	Info Action
Governance Action ID	gov_action18fd7jwa06fksmwumlcvlft8v4g uvaa672qsp6xgenekvs4kmvcqsq8cqks4
Legacy Governance Action ID (CIP-105)	3a5be93bafd26d0dbb9bfe19f4acecaa38ce f75e50201d19199e6cc856db6601#0
Autor	Intersect
Governance Action Submission Date	17th Dec 2025
Governance Action Submission Epoch	601
Governance Action Expiration Date	19th Jan 2026
Governance Action Expiration Epoch	608
Proposal External Link	Abstract on GovTool
Governance Action Metada Link	ipfs://bafkreifxxz6n33l5umvgxdoxzp35gs nbzvi63slmeqnwg3pj4gsrwnzr4e
Anchor Hash	4fbbbd12cf0f2a4be498627a5c99d9576269 0eb57e276089f5d646877f95cf59

SUMMARY

Governance Action Summary

Submitted as an Info Action to signal ecosystem alignment around a Cardano 2030 Vision, Mission, Strategy framework, and an initial KPI set. The work was facilitated by Intersect's Product Committee across late 2024 and 2025, using surveys, focus groups, remote and in-person workshops (700+ participants), and consultations with IOG, Cardano Foundation, and EMURGO. The process is positioned as repeatable for future Vision/Strategy updates via subsequent Info Actions.

The Vision emphasizes a secure, reliable, censorship-resistant base layer for mission-critical applications. The Strategy framework is organized into five pillars (Infrastructure & Research Excellence; Adoption & Utility; Governance; Community & Ecosystem Growth; Ecosystem Sustainability & Resilience) and is intended to provide DReps with a strategic reference for evaluating initiatives.

About Agora

Agora is an independent initiative focused on improving the quality and decentralization of decision-making in the Cardano ecosystem. It brings together research, education, and community advocacy to foster a more transparent, informed, and accountable network.

Agora Research Bureau is its analytical arm, organized into two branches: Agora Research Voltaire, which analyzes governance actions and on-chain voting, and Agora Research Catalyst, which evaluates funding proposals and milestones.

This report was produced by Agora Research Voltaire to promote transparency and accountability in Cardano's decentralized governance.

Agora publishes open-access reports with clear rationale and critical assessments — complementing the on-chain vote metadata submitted by Agora as a registered Voltaire dRep, and offering context to support informed participation and public scrutiny.

UPSIDES

The importance of a shared vision and strategic orientation for a highly decentralized ecosystem is recognized. The pillar set, in its general formulation, is treated as essential, relevant, and broadly aligned with the core areas of the ecosystem, without an explicit major domain being relegated to a secondary or neglected position.

A broad feedback process is acknowledged, including multiple workshops held across different regions, with workshop inputs largely reflected in the final output. A relatively mature strategic definition process is supported, with refinement prioritized over re-foundation, and the overall effort treated as fundamentally positive.

Workshop macro-alignment is noted across core themes such as infrastructure/security, adoption/UX, governance, ecosystem growth, and economic sustainability.

During the first year of Cardano on-chain governance, there was a severe funding bottleneck for small teams, small builders, and emerging contributors. In practice, the vast majority of treasury resources were allocated to founding entities and large, consolidated actors, while smaller initiatives faced extremely limited access to funding.

This was amplified by a governance posture where many dReps prioritized what was labeled as "core" work without sufficient pushback against multi-million-ADA budget requests that lacked acceptable levels of detail, KPIs, or accountability criteria. The systemic effect is damaging: it signals permissiveness toward established actors while eroding trust among small and mid-sized contributors who lack political leverage, visibility, or social capital.

This is especially concerning in an ecosystem that does not benefit from strong Venture Capitals/private investment backing. The treasury is therefore a critical instrument for decentralized innovation. Yet rising bureaucratic barriers — high deposits to submit Governance Actions, complex budgeting processes (e.g., Ekklesia), and popularity-driven dynamics — further excluded competent but less visible teams. The outcome was frustration, disengagement, and, ultimately, brain drain, precisely when the ecosystem should be attracting and retaining talent.

For this reason, I welcome the explicit inclusion of incubators, accelerators, grants, and community programs in the Vision 2030 text. Without these mechanisms functioning effectively, governance risks becoming formally decentralized but materially concentrated.

DOWNSIDES

Blockchain space is a highly dynamic environment due to narratives, macro conditions, regulation, and technological paradigms, making evolving priorities and revisions reasonable expectations.

While the pillars can function as high-level strategic guidance, the current framework, including KPI design, target-setting approach, governance parameters, and supporting accountability mechanisms, remains insufficient to create the pressure, accountability, and institutional discipline required over a five-year horizon.

The proposed KPI set is treated as insufficient given the scope and systemic relevance of the 2030 framework. Metrics such as USD-denominated TVL, address-based MAU, and raw transaction counts are treated as highly sensitive to market cycles, speculative inflows, technical artifacts, and non-human activity, allowing targets to be met without corresponding structural improvement in adoption, real utility, ecosystem quality, or user experience.

The acknowledgment that more granular and actionable KPIs are expected in 2026 is treated as positive but insufficient to justify approving under-specified instrumentation at this stage, given the signaling power and intended five-year reference role.

Several workshop-raised areas are treated as not explicitly articulated, increasing execution risk through deprioritization of implicit topics. Accountability, quality assurance, and reputation systems are treated as notably under-reflected despite explicit workshop discussion. Alternative voting models discussed as mechanisms to address plutocracy and perceived fairness are treated as lacking observable instrumentation.

The absence of any meaningful framing for AI (Artificial Intelligence) in the Vision 2030 is concerning. For a cutting-edge technology project articulated in 2025, this omission is difficult to justify. AI is not a buzzword; it is a transversal capability that can materially improve productivity, coordination in decentralized systems, developer tooling, onboarding, security monitoring, and execution quality. AI could be used as an assiting tool to every single pillar described on the stratgic plan for 2030.

The lack of even a minimal strategic framing for AI — including principles and boundaries — is therefore a notable downside.

RISKS AND CONCERNS

Accountability, audit, quality assurance, delivery performance, historical track record, and reputation systems for proposers, executors, and governance actors are treated as missing strategic priorities, weakening ex-post evaluation, consequences, and institutional learning. Without mechanisms and metrics capturing quality, execution reliability, and long-term performance, macro-level KPIs risk remaining aspirational rather than operational.

Treasury Withdrawal practice in 2025 included dozens of approvals with weak cost definitions, generic or absent KPIs, and poor ex-ante and ex-post criteria. In that context, a small number of ecosystem-wide KPIs are insufficient to create systemic pressure for proposal-level rigor. System-level KPIs are non-substitutes for mandatory minimum standards on cost breakdowns, milestones, outcome metrics, and auditability.

The governance decentralization KPI targeting 50% + 1 of effective voting power being controlled by more than 22 dReps is a minimal anti-collusion threshold rather than a meaningful decentralization objective, setting a low bar that can be satisfied without substantial improvement in stake dispersion or governance pluralism. Limited incentive is created for broader delegation, emergence of new influential dReps, or reduction of concentration beyond a narrow safety margin.

Treasury funding concentration per entities/groups and development decentralization are insufficiently instrumented. Thresholds limiting treasury funding concentration by a single entity or related group are absent, alongside metrics evaluating decentralization of development and execution. A "two or more nodes" diversity measure is insufficient to mitigate systemic risk; development decentralization, executor diversity, and funding dispersion are requiring explicit instrumentation.

A five-year horizon is incompatible with weak and sparse KPIs amid observed treasury withdrawal pace and limited replenishment mechanisms, increasing the risk of institutional complacency. A longer horizon require stronger targets, more granular instrumentation, and periodic recalibration.

A funding bottleneck for small teams and emerging contributors is relevant risk, with the practical effect of allocating most treasury resources to founding entities and consolidated actors while smaller initiatives face limited access.

Bureaucratic barriers (high deposits to submit Governance Actions, complex budgeting processes, popularity-driven dynamics) are exclusionary pressures that can drive frustration, disengagement, and brain drain—especially in an ecosystem without strong VC backing—undermining material decentralization even when formal decentralization exists.

A shared vision and strategic orientation are supported, and the pillars are treated as broadly relevant as an organizing framework. However, the KPI set, targets, and parameters are treated as inadequate as a five-year reference for governance and resource allocation. Market-sensitive metrics (USD-denominated TVL, address-based MAU, raw transaction counts) are vulnerable to vanity outcomes and capable of being satisfied without structural improvement in adoption, real utility, ecosystem quality, or user experience.

Accountability, auditability, execution quality, delivery performance, and reputation systems are insufficiently prioritized, despite being raised in workshops. System-level KPIs are non-substitutes for minimum proposal-level standards for Treasury Withdrawals (cost breakdowns, milestones, outcome metrics, ex-ante and ex-post evaluation criteria).

Governance decentralization instrumentation is weak and poorly suited to incentivize real decentralization, while funding concentration and development decentralization remain insufficiently instrumented.

A vote change to YES is conditioned on a revised version that adds more KPIs per pillar and sub-items; strengthens and normalizes targets (e.g., TVL in ADA and/or TVL/market cap); reinforces minimum standards for Treasury Withdrawals; and introduces explicit anti-concentration thresholds for treasury funding plus accountability, reputation, execution-quality, and development-decentralization metrics.

CONCLUSION

Endorsement is withheld because the five-year framework lacks sufficient KPI ambition and governance instrumentation to create accountability, proposal-level rigor for treasury spend, and meaningful decentralization and anti-concentration pressure. Support is conditioned on a revised version that strengthens targets, expands KPIs, and adds explicit standards and metrics for execution quality and dispersion.

REFERENCES

Vision and Mission
ipfs://bafkreigvrlerhlh5a3ushxoldp4rplhek2ew2hk5qih6gymozmsxybqgce

Strategy Framework and KPIs
ipfs://bafkreiaodc3h2wcvzwputnpsl5yildfgj7jc776aomkkjaiedeqrvqifxm

Live version of Vision and Mission
https://product.cardano.intersectmbo.org/vision/vision-2030

Live version of Strategy Framework and KPIs
https://product.cardano.intersectmbo.org/vision/strategy-2030

SIGNATURE

Disclosure Statement

The author declares no relevant affiliations, partnerships, or incentives related to the Governance Action discussed in this report.

About the author

Independent insights and research on Cardano Governance Actions and Catalyst proposals. Focused curation and public rationale for dReps and delegators.

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