

The Open Protocol Grant Reviewers Handbook



Welcome Grant Reviewers both New and Old

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Introduction

Grant funding has historically been **a cornerstone of Web3 innovation**, enabling decentralized communities to support growth, diversity, and experimentation. Pioneers like Gitcoin and Optimism RPGF have shaped the landscape, demonstrating how **effective grants foster vibrant ecosystems**. This handbook leverages valuable lessons and best practices providing guidance specifically designed to assist reviewers from younger, less experienced grant-giving programs. **Our goal is to equip you with insights and frameworks** that allow for the selection of impactful grants; **accelerating growth and sustainability across your community**.

Introduction

- Healthy crypto projects with long time horizons understand that **their futures are dependent on the success of their community**. This community doesn't just consist of users, hodlers, whales, and memers, but developers and newcomers excited to utilize their existing skills to contribute to the protocol. **DAOs are faced with a unique juggling problem. How do you** maintain a community of builders, foster a culture of diversity and inclusivity while supporting protocol growth across multiple metrics and ensuring that the DAO is innovating at or beyond industry standards?
- **The solution...establish a robust, well funded grants program** that is nimble enough to seize opportunities, yet structured enough to ensure that the grants selected always push forward the goals of the protocol.

Aave Grants DAO: The Handbook's Motivation

We've spent 2 years reviewing grants for the Aave Grants DAO, one of the most trusted grant programs in Web3, from 2022-2024,. Through that journey, we learned first and about what works and what doesn't. **We see this handbook as an opportunity to share the valuable lessons we learned at Aave with newer, less experienced DAOs to help them avoid common pitfalls.** Our goal is to make it easier for young grant programs to build effective reviewing processes, helping them contribute faster and more effectively to their ecosystems. We wanted to create a practical, approachable guide that could serve as a reference point for quality and transparency in grant reviewing across the community. At its core, **this handbook is about empowering reviewers giving you the clarity and confidence to make impactful decisions.**



Grant Reviewing in Theory and Practice

Reviewers Roles and Responsibilities

Building a squad of responsible stewards

- Grant reviewers have an important role as the forward operating team that curates the projects that will ultimately receive funding and be promoted by the DAO.
- Aside from just being available, reviewers should fit the following criteria:
 - Be knowledgeable about the underlying protocol. This includes the products and services, the user base, the leadership, culture and the community at large.
 - Have a stellar reputation hinged on truthfulness and trustworthiness.
 - Ideally, they will be aware of the feature or capability gaps within the protocol. With an understanding of the shortcomings, they can be on the lookout for projects that will address these deficiencies.
 - Visionaries who can see how the current projects and future projects will build towards securing the network over the long term.

Grant Reviewing in Theory and Practice

Having an observant eye for the intangible, future realized gains

- **Sometimes the benefits are less tangible**, but no less important in the long run...
 - Does seeding this project further **incubate the spirit of goodwill** being fostered in the community?
 - Does it create a potentially mutually beneficial partnership between two communities?
 - Though the deliverables may not move KPIs now, would granting this project **bring in a small but underserved niche demographic**?

Grant Reviewing in Theory and Practice



“Consider the second order effects” - Ken Ng from Uniswap

- What does funding (or not funding) this grant signal to the community?
- Upside creation is obviously important and where most people think funds should be spent, but what about downside protection?
- What about this project makes it sufficiently unique and relevant enough to be funded by this grant program vs another funding avenue?
 - another way of framing this - does funding this take away funding from another opportunity with a smaller horizon of funding opportunities?
 - Would funding this grant through our program specifically amplify strategic goals or values unique to our DAO, as opposed to general ecosystem funding sources?

The Grant Review Process: Applications



We just got a new application!

- An email goes out to them confirming the receipt of the application. Applications are assigned to a reviewer from the AGD Review Committee at random. The reviewer would be notified via email. In case it's an event/community related grant application, it would necessarily be sent to the grant's lead for review. This was an AGD procedure to ensure reviewers didn't accept too many event grants.

The project has been reviewed, now what?

- If the project receives a negative review from the reviewer, a general email goes out to them notifying them of their rejection, encouraging them to apply again and that it'll be checked with fresh eyes. In case of a positive review,
 - if it's a small grant of <\$20K, we'll instantly approve and start grant onboarding,
 - if its a larger grant, we'll invite them for an interview with a member of the AGD Review Committee picked at random

The Grant Review Process: Interviews



Hello, what are these interviews on my calendar?

- A randomly picked interviewer's calendar link is sent over to positively reviewed large grant applicants. We want every large project to be reviewed by two people, so you'd mostly not have reviewed this project before (both reviewer and interviewer selection is random so sometimes you might end up doing both). Before the interview, do read the original application available [here](#).
- If you don't know which account it is, check [here](#). These interviews are important since they're big grant amounts, and a face to face (zoom) conversation can help with any red flags that could've been suppressed in the application. E.g., not having any engineers, project not really benefiting Aave, not being a bet-worthy team with zero relevant skills or experience, etc.
- Fill in your feedback into the Interview Feedback Form.

Interview done, process my feedback please!

- Grants from \$20-70K will be processed automatically based on a positive interview. Grants from \$70-100K will be subject to discussion/veto process by the AGD open for 24 hours. Grants of more than \$100K will go through snapshot.

The Grant Review Process: On-Boarding



What is this grant onboarding you mention?

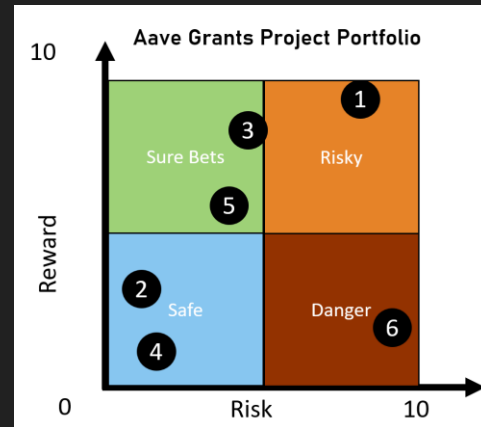
- If you say fund it then we start their grant onboarding; if you say drop it then we reply to them with a general rejection. In case you have specific feedback for them, or any modifications provided which you'd be okay to accept then, please write to them from your personal email address, after your interview, but before you fill in your review. As part of the interview feedback form you will have the final ability to decide what the right grant amount is.
- Once a grant is approved, we send the team an email starting the process of receiving the grant. This includes a 1) KYC link, 2) restating their obligations to make their project open source, 3) their payment milestones, and 4) their social media details. For this they fill in this Grant Onboarding Form. Once they do this a payment is added to our payment pipeline in the following manner:
 - If $\leq \$15K$, complete payment in one tranche,
 - If $\$15-70K$, payment in two tranches,
 - If $> \$70K$, payment in three tranches.

Grant Reviewing in Theory and Practice



Questions to ask yourself as you review a grant:

- What does our overall project portfolio look like?
- Do I understand what we have already funded and the current gaps in the Aave core feature set?
- Does this grant provide a clear benefit to the Aave community?
- How does this grant provide that value?
 - Increased engagement? Increased awareness?
 - Increased the capabilities of the protocol?
 - Expands the feature set of some community owned product?
 - Improves antifragility through increased decentralization?
- What will be the total impact of this project?
- Do you believe the team will be able to execute on the project?
- Where does the project lie in the Risk Reward Matrix?
 - How does it compare to the other projects in the grant queue?
 - How does it compare to previously funded projects?
- Is the project structured in a modular manner where benefit is extracted after every milestone?
- Are they asking for too much money? ... enough money?
- Upon successful completion, would this team/project be a strong candidate for follow up funding through a phase 2 or a new grant?



Conducting Video Interviews



Conducting video interviews

How to conduct a video interview:

- Set forth an agenda:
 - Mutual greetings
 - Have the grantee describe their project
 - Ask any clarifying questions
 - Have the grantee walk through their milestones and deliverables
 - Explicitly ask about their justification for their budget request
 - Have them conclude with an explicit discussion of the benefit of their project to the Aave ecosystem
 - Give the grantee an opportunity to ask you questions
- Things to consider:
 - Pay close attention to the grantee's body language. Are they nervous? Respectful? Anxious? Overly talkative?
 - If possible, ask as many technical questions as possible. Their level of comfort at answering these questions can be an indicator of their ability to execute on their idea.
 - Be aware that the language barrier can affect an otherwise strong candidates ability to describe their project clearly and confidently
 - Sometimes multiple members of the team will be on the call. Attention should be given to their teamwork and interactions as another indicator of their ability to execute.
 - Unorthodox questions can be great indicators of a team's true intent. A solid question of this type is "If Aave Grants DAO were to give you 2x the money you requested how would you use it? What if we were only able to give you 50%, how would you scale down the scope."
- After you've completed your interview you can submit your feedback here in a Google form.

Grant Review Training in Real Time



Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a good grant review live!



Project Description

Please see the demo at this link

<https://www.loom.com/share/7d4e5c3dfa8f48d2b4f3f38849f25033>

<https://eth.dodao.io> - DoDAOs onboarding platform enables DAOs to create interactive onboarding content in the form of guides. Our guides are far better than normal documentation in a number of ways

- 1) Guides are to-the-point and are meant to onboard users for a specific role or task.
- 2) Information is presented to the user in a piece-by-piece way i.e. in steps.
- 3) Guides have evaluation steps that force the user to go through the contents carefully
- 4) Guide completion is tracked i.e. we know the user's wallet address, completion date, and score.
- 5) This data can be queried to apply smart logic like: gating of discord channels, gating of product boards, and proposal voting
- 6) Guides can be used to capture user information
- 7) Multiple guides can be combined into guide bundles

We will create a white labeled site for AAVE
for e.g. <https://aave.dodao.io>

- DoDAO is a onboarding platform that seeks to bring people into Web3.
- They want to create a white labelled educational site for Aave.

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a grant review live!



Relevant Links

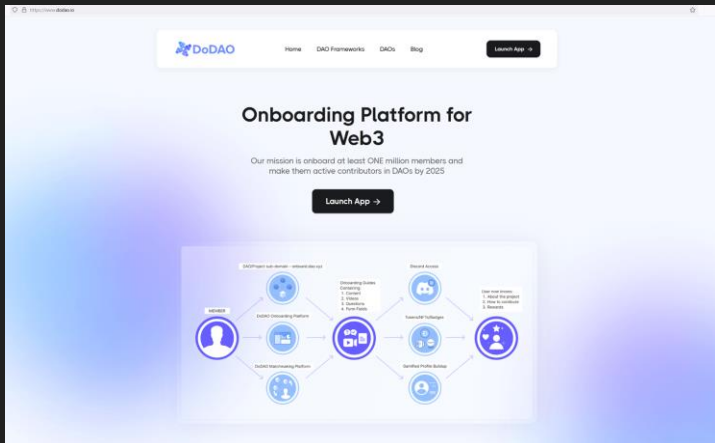
<https://aave.dodao.io>

<https://dodao.io>

Please see the demo at this link


<https://www.loom.com/share/7d4e5c3dfa8f48d2b4f3f38849f25033>

- They provide links that we check.
- We can see a working high quality website that is aligned with their description.



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Walking through a good grant review live!

 Project Goals

Four "Onboarding" Guides and Four "How To" Guides

We will set up a white labeled website.

Each of the guide will contain

- High Quality Thumbnails
- Educational Content
- Video for each step
- Relevant questions


Using the platform is completely free.

We don't have any funding in place and are purely working out of our passion, so any monetary help will help us move 10x faster on our mission

These guides

- 1) Will increase active participation by 2-3 times at least as the new members will be clear about the how to contribute
- 2) Will increase the project awareness as it will be very easy to know about the project with the informational guides on specific topics

This video very well explains why guides are such a great value add
<https://youtu.be/t4vKPhjcMZg?t=821>

 Milestones

We can do it in two steps i.e. four "Onboarding Guides" or four "How To" Guides first

- They are promising to create written and video guides to explain the Aave platform to newcomers to their platform.

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Walking through a good grant review live!

Funding Request and Budget Breakdown

Create a white labeled site for AAVE e.g. <https://aave.dodao.io>

Each of the guide will contain

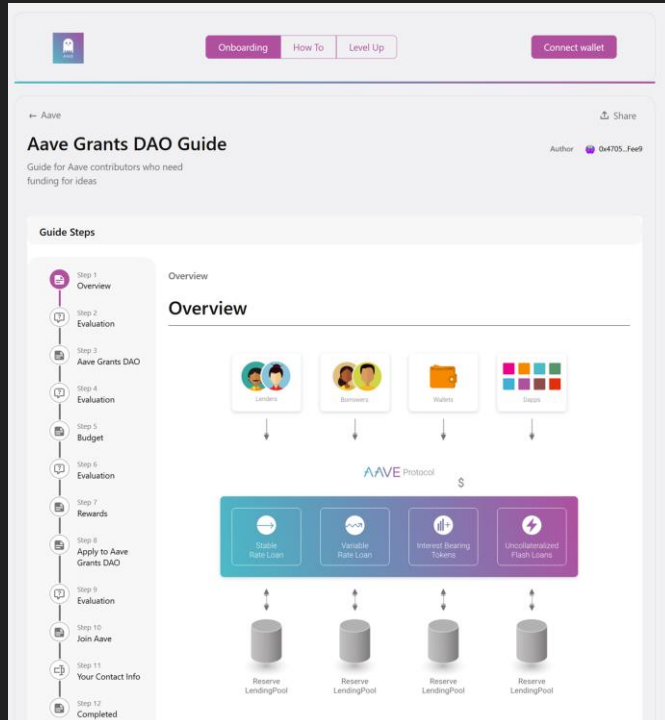
- 1) High Quality Thumbnails
- 2) Educational Content
- 3) Video for each step (3-5 videos per guide)
- 4) Relevant questions

* 1200 * 8 guides = \$9600

- Their ask is reasonable and within the \$20k single reviewer approval limit.

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a good grant review live!

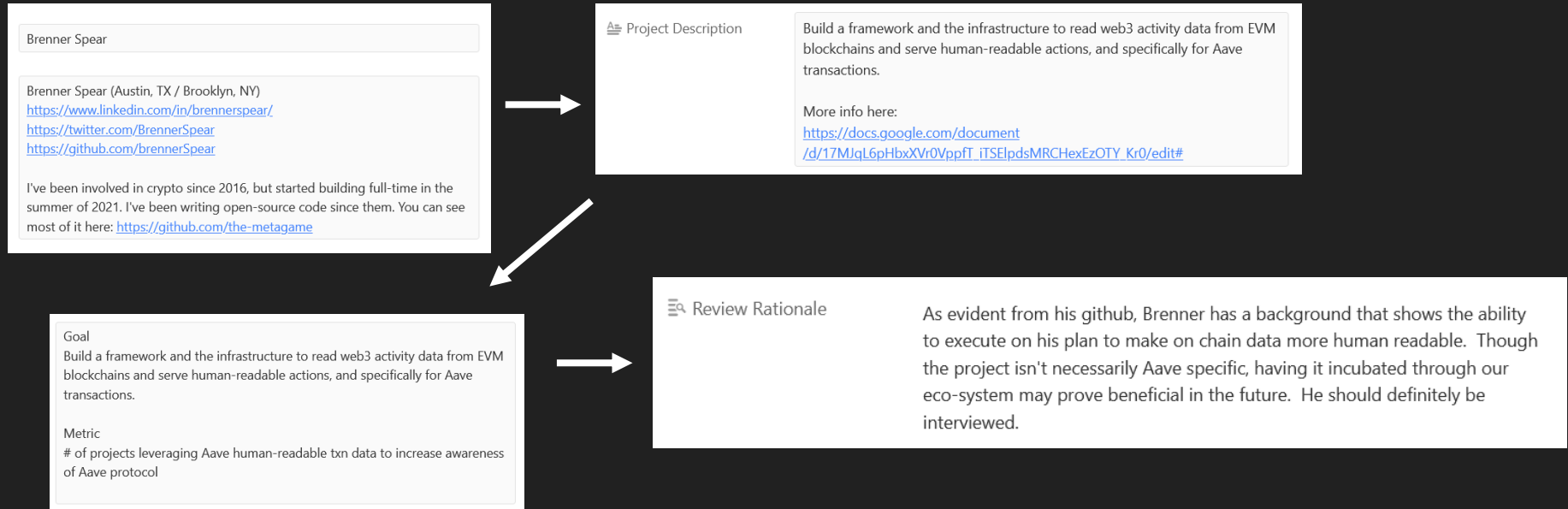


- DoDAO's proposal was approved and they created a solid Aave introductory guide as promised.
- A neat highlight... One of the past reviewers actually used these guides to prepare for their Aave analyst interview! By approving this high quality project, we directly benefited our own efforts!

Grant Reviewing in Real Time


Walking through a good grant review live!

- Some projects are valuable, but traditionally unorthodox in the sense they benefit the overall Ethereum ecosystem though not exclusively beneficially to Aave.




Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a good grant review live!

 Milestones

Milestone 1
System wide: use whatever centralized APIs (Covalent) needed to make a working demo for some transactions
Aave: translate all functions / transactions for Aave v2


Milestone 2
System wide: move to open-source infrastructure for pulling down ABIs and storing them, to remove reliance on Covalent
Aave: translate all functions / transactions for Aave v3

 Funding Request and Budget Breakdown

\$40,320

breakdown here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/17MlqL6pHbxXVr0VppfT_iTSElpdsMRCHexEzOTY_Kr0/edit#bookmark=id.pkje43fxpvZ



 Interview Rational

Brenner reaffirmed the fact that he is both technically sound and sufficiently motivated to execute on his vision to create a translation code base that turns on chain contract activities into human readable data. He's proposing a first of its kind standard for converting contract events into more easily interpretable data. Having Brenner develop this set of scripts, with Aave being its initial test case, will likely result in some interesting datasets, smart contract development tools and educational material that will reduce some of the overall complexity in the current practice of smart contract development and analysis.

- The milestones are technically sound and outline clearly the steps required to bring the project to completion.
- The funding request is on the expensive side for a single developer, but our ½ and ½ milestone policy prevents us from being overexposed the development risk posed.
- This grantee was sent on to be interviewed.

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a good grant review live!

main 10 branches 65 tags Go to file Code

BrennerSpear v0.3.6 ✓ 0011694 3 days ago 320 commits

.github/workflows	add rpc node url to gh action	13 days ago
docs	bs/docs (#32)	19 days ago
src	limit big airdrop txs	3 days ago
.all-contributorsrc	docs: add carlosdp as a contributor for code (#36)	11 days ago
.babelrc	Interpretation testing flow plus Aave and Compound contract specific ...	last month
.eslintignore	Interpreter work: double-sided and multical txs (#16)	last month
.eslintrc.json	lowercase addresses	4 months ago
.gitignore	more contract interpreter stuff	4 months ago
.prettierrc	Interpreter work: double-sided and multical txs (#16)	last month
.prettierrc.json	prettier	3 months ago
CONTRIBUTE.md	update contribute.md	11 days ago
LICENSE	Initial commit	5 months ago
README.md	docs: add carlosdp as a contributor for code (#36)	11 days ago
package.json	v0.3.6	3 days ago
tsconfig.json	wtf tsconfig	3 days ago
yarn.lock	onoma	12 days ago

README.md

About
a library for making EVM-based blockchain data more human-readable

Readme
GPL-3.0 license
72 stars
4 watching
7 forks

Releases
65 tags

Packages
No packages published

Contributors 6

Languages
TypeScript 99.8% JavaScript 0.2%

- This project was ultimately approved and meaningful development has been accomplished since it has received its first tranche payment.
- With 72 stars and 7 forks, this project is proving to be useful for Ethereum developers.

Training: Grant Reviewing in Real Time



Walking through a not so good grant review live!

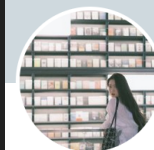
- Nothing out of the ordinary. Sometimes I will Google the contact.

Project Name

ThePASS

Name

Mia Bao



Mia Bao (Non Fungible)

@mialalala2

Serial Entrepreneur/Founder @beep_crypto & @thepass_to /Chief Partner
@whale_community /Crypto enthusiast: weibo.com/u/6128064102

📍 浙江, 中华人民共和国 🔗 beepcrypto.com 📅 Joined January 2018

306 Following 652 Followers

Not followed by anyone you're following

- She's an entrepreneur in the crypto space. No red flags.

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a grant review live!



About You

Background on The PASS

*The founding team of ThePASS is a combination of NFT OGs and DAO pioneers in the industry

*Founded by:

Mia Bao, founder of ThePASS and BeepCrypto, chief partner of WHALE

Pablo Li, co-founder of The PASS, tech advisor of CryptoArt

James Li, co-founder of The PASS, Singapore serial entrepreneur, founder of BBLabs

*What we have accomplished before: BeepCrypto is the first batch of the company focusing on NFT and related directions in late 2019 in China. It is a deep-dive research investment and PR company, serving for several well-known projects including The Sandbox, REVV, Yield Guild Games, Aavegotchi, Unicly, YGGSEA, BreederDAO, etc. With a deep NFT background, BeepCrypto is also the chief partner of WHALE DAO, the largest NFT vault collection in the industry. Mia, the founder of BeepCrypto and ThePASS, is also one of the most influential NFT KOL in China with over 100,000 fans on social media and communities.

*More about the team:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T-](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T-5qv5MI8M3PkYGKlm_D17cveg8_VtbWnX6rhombpc/edit)

[5qv5MI8M3PkYGKlm_D17cveg8_VtbWnX6rhombpc/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T-5qv5MI8M3PkYGKlm_D17cveg8_VtbWnX6rhombpc/edit)

- Background is about the “thePASS” team, which is fine, but this indicates that this is an existing project the team is looking for additional funding for.
- As a team it appears they have interacted with plenty of projects in the space, but to what degree, that is unknown.

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a grant review live!



Project Description

What's The PASS?

The PASS is a new DAO launcher and management platform, helping creators and DAOs create, display, manage, and govern DAOs ,especially through NFT PASSes.
(Beta)

The PASS offers a full suite of service tools for creators, including DAO creation, Financing through FT launch and NFT PASSes launch, Engagement and Governance, which helps them mainly in the following details:

*Creation: DAO launch and information aggregation

*Financing: Get support from communities through FT or NFT PASSes (Bonding Curve NFT PASSes/Fixed priced NFT PASSes and Staking Token Based NFT PASSes)

*Engagement: The PASS is a key to vanilla ecos like Townhall, Squad or other third party platforms including Discord, Telegram, metaverse, etc though The PASS bot

*Governance: Voting through NFT PASSes and DAO treasury analytic tool

- Unfortunately, once they get down into what they intend to build or do, they rely heavily on sharing marketing material about thePASS.
- Their software / platform doesn't appear to offer any new features or capabilities to the core Aave product offering, nor does it enhance the community or DAO in any meaningful capacity.
- The above is true, but also, the platform's services are designed to help with DAO tooling, which isn't an immediate need of the Aave community.

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a grant review live!

Relevant Links

Related Links

Web: <https://thepass.to>

Social medias: https://twitter.com/thepass_to
<https://twitter.com/0xSaya>

Wiki: <https://thepass.gitbook.io/the-pass/>

Deck: <https://docsend.com/view/s8rygdbu8dkqtiyj>

Github: <https://github.com/The-PASS>

Discord: <https://discord.gg/N6f25tPs9W>

Medium: https://medium.com/@thepass_to

More: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tepdqkPko-YLR9uCtJ_dZc12MR86bPw?usp=sharing



- Relevant links are all related to their existing service...

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a grant review live!

Project Goals

What we will accomplish:

- *Creator & DAO Aggregator
- *Creator & DAO Launcher
- *Creator & DAO Management Platform
- *DAO data analysis

How will it improve Aave:

*In the fundraising part of ThePASS, especially bonding curve NFT PASS section, up to 20% of the raised revenue will go into creator fund while the others will be reserved on the curve. In order to maximized the benefits, we will transfer the fund (on polygon) to AAVE to earn interests, the earnings will goes into the creator fund as well. Check the detail here:

Wiki:<https://thepass.gitbook.io/the-pass/>

Github:<https://github.com/The-PASS>

eg.

DAO: <https://thepass.to/#/dao/Good%20Luck%20PandaO>

Bonding Curve NFT PASS Claim Page: <https://thepass.to/#/claim/bonding-curve?dao=Good%20Luck%20PandaO>

Txid page (how we stake onto AAVE): <https://polygonscan.com>

/tx/0x8335546dc30503ee9b1addaff1dd419cd10b8d4b6e8453b262f6ba9a9022007e

*DAO knowledge integration. Besides the typic tech function involving AAVE, we will speed DAO theme to the community involving AAVE info and activities as well.

- The project goals are reasonable to describe further development of their ThePASS platform, unfortunately none of it is relevant or beneficial to Aave.
- They mention that they will put funds into Aave, increasing the protocol TVL. This is the only tangible benefit to Aave listed.

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a grant review live!

Milestones

Stage 1: DAO Aggregation/DAO Creation/Fundraising(NFT minting and gated community)-Staking Token Based NFT PASS, Bonding Curve NFT PASS, Fixed Price NFT PASS
Stage2: Dashboard, FT Launch, Directory, DAO Analysis
Stage3: Voting system and integration, DAO Onboarding
Stage4: Grants system

Funding Request and Budget Breakdown

Funding Request: \$45000
It is mainly for :
*Monthly budget for the team (13 members)
*Operation budget (giveaways and promo activities)

- Milestones are reasonable, unfortunately the project still isn't relevant nor beneficial to the Aave ecosystem.
- The budget is reasonable for development of their platform, but again, this isn't the proper avenue for funding this type of work.

Grant Reviewing in Real Time

Walking through a grant review live!

Funding Request and Budget Breakdown

Funding Request: \$45000

It is mainly for :

*Monthly budget for the team (13 members)

*Operation budget (giveaways and promo activities)

Grant Amount*

How big should their grant be?

Fill this in and proceed to giving your review.

- \$0 ... they shouldn't be granted any money from the Aave treasury to work on this project.

Training: Grant Reviewing in Real Time



What do the really bad grant applications have in common?

- They are often unrelated to Aave, ask for exorbitant amounts of money, or don't include sufficient details to assess the actual proposed work.
- Some are even clearly spam! ... and be weary of sob stories...

A Applicant Name	Cody Allen anderson
About You	me and my family
Grant Category	Other <small>Aave Weekly Analytics 58 \$176,300</small>
Reviewer ID	fig@flipsidecrypto.com
Project Description	good living
Relevant Links	youtube.apple
Project Goals	fadter speeds and better updates
Milestones	one step
Funding Request and Budget Breakdown	getting my family a place to live other then my truck my dad left me when he passed away
Other Information	its no dough lays and gentlemen
Milestones for Payment	
Month	2022 - 06 - June
Application Date	June 26, 2022

A Applicant Name	Saviour Archibong
About You	A team of 7, undergraduates and graduates from university of Uyo, Nigeria
Grant Category	Developer tooling <small>Aave Weekly Analytics 58 \$176,300</small>
Reviewer ID	corbin.page@gmail.com
Project Description	A decentralised next generation application for the Nigeria Music industry.
Relevant Links	
Project Goals	The project will seek to level the gap between artists and fans, making sure that fans get a slice of the pizza.
Milestones	The team and community members are standing by to work on delivering a masterpiece. We understand the ease and working efficiency which the Blockchain technology provides.
Funding Request and Budget Breakdown	\$10000000
Other Information	How do Aave give out these grants without getting collateral

A Applicant Name	Nicholas davis
About You	We are hard working emagenative people who could benefit from a grant to grow our company
Grant Category	Developer tooling <small>Aave Weekly Analytics 58 \$176,300</small>
Reviewer ID	aleks@blockchaincapital.com
Project Description	We are working on a tool to make it easier and more efficient to buy and sell crypto currency's
Relevant Links	
Project Goals	It will improve all aspects of how the system operates
Milestones	We have one step
Funding Request and Budget Breakdown	10000 to employ and support the improvement of our service
Other Information	
Milestones for Payment	
Month	2022 - 07 - July
Application Date	July 17, 2022

Training: Grant Reviewing in Real Time



What do the really bad grant applications have in common?

- Many are just of general low quality...

Project Description	Texochat is a blockchain based message. We are planning to integrate Aave to our app.
Relevant Links	https://twitter.com/chat_texo https://texochat.com/
Project Goals	By implementing Aave staking protocol to Texochat our aim is to allow our users to stake their coins and monetize their unused coins by staking in Aave protocol. It will increase the TVL in aave ecosystem.
Milestones	1. Integrating Aave to Texochat 2. Connecting Texochat wallet to Aave staking dashboard
Funding Request and Budget Breakdown	3500 - For integrating staking protocol and then connecting it with Texochat wallet.
Other Information	We are not good in English hence I suggest to check aim behind project instead of situation and language.
Milestones for Payment	
Month	2022 - 06 - June

Project Description	Parking sensors can tell if a car without placard is parked in that parking spot. Or for red zones.
Relevant Links	By reading this info from me, you know have to disclose in full disclosure in confidence my idea. Date 6/2/22
Project Goals	Aave will help by its platform and work with you to get it done. Thanks. The grant will fund the research and development of Aave support to work with Curb market management systems.
Milestones	How it will become effective, is if Aave development will implement software development timetables and investment development software development into this new device. When a vehicle is parked in a no parking area the sensor is triggered if or not to say it can park there. services will be notified when they have parked in that area
Funding Request and Budget Breakdown	Hard to say budget, but should be five faze projected to complete with design, patent, and triles
Other Information	After we get it off the ground, city's and police and private parties will use it.
Milestones for Payment	
Month	2022 - 06 - June

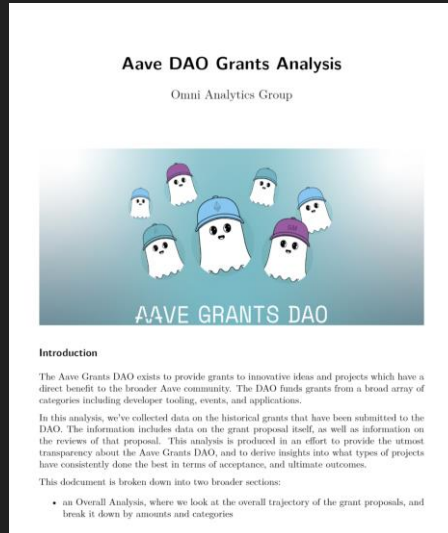
Project Description	Creating easier programs for others to enjoy
Relevant Links	Sluggish.Com
Project Goals	More happy customers, more money in savings
Milestones	Few milestones, I need financial assistance to get over these rough spots
Funding Request and Budget Breakdown	I would start with new computer, also really need assistance with purchasing programs
Other Information	I will need a tutor just to speed up the process
Milestones for Payment	
Month	2022 - 07 - July
Application Date	July 15, 2022

Grants Program Big Picture Considerations



Grants DAO KPI and Metrics Brainstorming

To improve stats tracking, Aave Grants DAO created a robust report that characterized performance of the DAO overall and the individual reviewers.



Grants Program Operational Considerations



Special Topics

Processes and Procedures

- How do we handle projects with tokens or proposed tokens?
- How do we forward grant proposals to other reviewers better suited to scrutinize a grant?
- How do we initiate the process for \$100k+ grants to go through governance?
 - Does their funding come directly out of Aave Grants DAO?
- Should we have reviewer specializations or have everyone answer what types of grants they like to review? Education, DAO collab, analytics, wallet profiling
- How do we request a committee vote for a proposal we are unsure about?
- How do we restructure the proposal for the candidates? Let's say we restructure it and ask them if they agree...

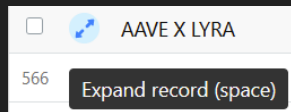
Special Topics: The AirTable



The Aave Grants DAO AirTable was the central nervous system of operations.

<https://airtable.com/appaRxFAe60G0zJJH/tblTo9YFEL3FyypwZ/viwT2pgWOn9Dkjh2q?blocks=hide>

- A full record of all the grant applications and their statuses can be found in the database.
- It also includes “views” for:
 - Open applications
 - Pending payments
- Note there is a option to “expand record” to see the full record of grant



Name	Status	Date
1. [Grant Name]	[Status]	[Date]
2. [Grant Name]	[Status]	[Date]
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97. [Grant Name]	[Status]	[Date]
98. [Grant Name]	[Status]	[Date]
99. [Grant Name]	[Status]	[Date]
100. [Grant Name]	[Status]	[Date]

Special Topics: The Gnosis Safe



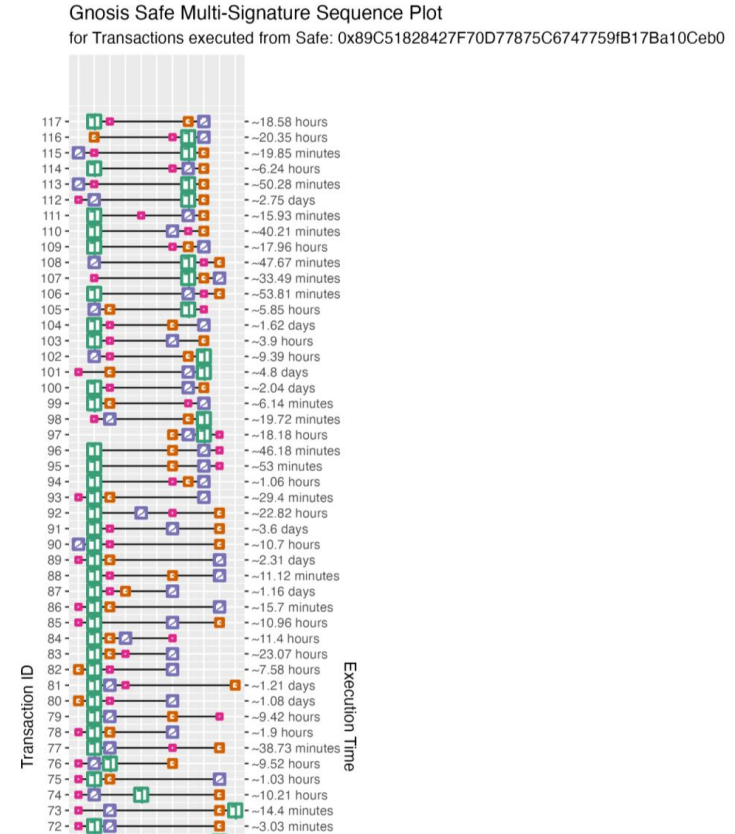
Aave Grants DAO's funds were secured within a multi-sig Gnosis Safe.

- The Gnosis address was [here](#).
- Transactions are created by exporting pending payments from the Airtable.
- After being converted into a .csv format, they are uploading into the “CSV Airdrop” Safe App.
- From there the multi-sig owners sign and execute the transaction in a timely manner to ensure payments are made without substantial fluctuations in the value of the Aave dispersed.

Special Topics: The Gnosis Safe



Cat herding is important to keep the “Time to Execute” transactions reasonable. Coordinate through Telegram, using integrations, to generate alerts for when new transactions are ready to be signed.





Special Topics: Decentralization

A grants DAO mandate should be to bring greater value, spur innovation, and attract more users to their ecosystem through the creation of a best of class and truly decentralized grants program. If done correctly, the network effects can establish.

Central Path (Committee-driven Grants):

- Recruit reviewers and set up back-end infrastructure, retroactive, and Quadratic Funding (QF) rounds.
- Document internal processes, create Request For Proposals (RFPs), and initiate DAO marketing.
- Begin processing applications, approve proposals, and document procedures.
- Solidify centralized grant awarding while mapping a path to decentralization.
- Establish streamlined decentralized governance for funding.
- Test, document, and finalize decentralized grant approval.

Left Path (Retroactive Funding Program):

- Establish retroactive funding mechanisms.
- Experiment with novel project nomination methods (community/self-nomination, Twitter search, GitHub search).
- Document advantages and disadvantages of each experimental method.
- Refine and redeploy successful retroactive granting processes.
- Document final procedures and build infrastructure for community deployment.

Right Path (Bitcoin Allo-inspired Funding Rounds):

- Establish Bitcoin Allo-inspired funding rounds.
- Document and launch initial test rounds.
- Run alpha rounds, focusing on user experience (UX/UI) and resource allocation feedback.
- Operate beta rounds, emphasizing bug fixes and community documentation.
- Finalize operational documentation, establish funding cadence, and market rounds.



Special Topics: Conflict of Interest Management

Reviewers should openly disclose any personal, financial, or professional connections with the committee and there should be clear guidelines for reviewers to recuse themselves when conflicts arise. To effectively do this, the committee should regularly educate reviewers on identifying and reporting potential conflicts.

Special Topics: Transparency

Strive to maintain detailed, public records of decisions, rationales, and funded projects. The committee should be willing to share anonymized summaries of grant reviews publicly for community oversight. To ensure continued improvement, conduct regular audits of reviewer performance, process adherence, and funded outcomes. Though rare, there are sometimes community grievances, in those cases it is best to have clear channels in place for addressing these inquiries. Publish periodic public reports summarizing grant outcomes, spending, and reviewer performance.

Special Topics: Fraud Detection and Sybil Resistance

When possible Implement identity or reputation verification mechanisms (e.g., BrightID, Gitcoin Passport) that would help identify duplicate or fraudulent submissions. The Grants DAO should train reviewers on common indicators of spam, fraud, and Sybil attacks. These appear when the same application come in under different names. Through your transparency effort encourage community input on suspicious applications. In the end, have well defined explicit steps to handle confirmed fraudulent activities or attempts at manipulation.

Special Topics: Reviewer Incentivization and Reward Structure

It is important to offer clear and competitive remuneration to attract and retain skilled reviewers. AGD paid \$150/hr with a maximum of 10 hours per week for part time reviewers and \$100k/yr to the lead reviewer. Implement non-financial recognition, such as badges or public acknowledgment to highlight reviewer contributions and provide bonuses or tiered incentives for reviewers who consistently provide high-quality evaluations and approve high ROI projects. A committee should offer opportunities for reviewer skill development, networking, or advancement within the DAO and create incentive programs aimed explicitly at rewarding long-term reviewer commitment and high engagement.

Special Topics: Ecosystem Collaboration

A grants DAO should prioritize and actively seek grant proposals fostering collaboration between different protocols and DAOs. The committee should develop evaluation criteria that measure the mutual benefits of inter-protocol cooperation. Partnerships should be sought to co-fund high-impact, multi-ecosystem projects. This can be established through ongoing communication channels with other grant programs to share learnings and best practices. When possible, publicly highlight successful collaborations as case studies to encourage similar proposals.

Important Links (Sample)

Aave Grants Process Explainer:

- <https://aavegrants.notion.site/Grant-Process-Explainer-beb966539a4d42bb999555785b72da33>

List of Outstanding Reviews by Reviewer Name:

- <https://airtable.com/appaRxFae60G0zJJH/tblTo9YFEL3FyypwZ/viwLqTUBCA4WMrQwo?blocks=hide>

List of Applications:

- <https://airtable.com/shrDmHquvwSo0xp81/tblTo9YFEL3FyypwZ>

Reviewer Feedback Form:

- <https://airtable.com/shrDt9QnQeUgUCVpj>

Interviewer Feedback Form:

- <https://airtable.com/shrf3422xzfJB7Kev>

Gnosis Multi-sig:

- <https://gnosis-safe.io/app/#/safes/0x89C51828427F70D77875C6747759fB17Ba10Ceb0/balances>

FIN

Did you find this handbook useful? – If so, support open source knowledge sharing by purchasing a few \$IACS on BASE:

CA: 0x46e69Fa9059C3D5F8933CA5E993158568DC80EBf

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