From Proof of Family

ROOTS

to Proof of Personhood

A Southern Italian village has verified human identity for four centuries through oral tradition, family nicknames, and the memory of its elders. *We are putting it on-chain. And letting it grow.*

"You cannot transfer your roots."

Initiative	KSM Art & Social Experiments Initiative
Network	Kusama on-chain deployment via Asset Hub
Token	ROOTS non-transferable, no monetary value
Duration	3 months · 5 phases
Budget	$ 82,090 USD gross · paid in DOT at transfer
Payment	Milestone-based: M1 30% · M2 40% · M3 30%

ROOTS · KSM · 2026

1 / CONTACT DETAILS

Applicant Information

NAME	The White Rabbit
ALIAS	@thewhiterabbitM on X / Polkadot and Kusama community member since 2021
BASE	Italy and Romania
CONTACT	Via the designated application form. On-chain identity verifiable on Kusama Asset Hub.
APPLICATION	Individual application / sole applicant and project director

The project is directed by The White Rabbit and involves a local field coordinator in Southern Italy, a confirmed panel of village elders, a professional documentary filmmaker, and on-chain technical support. The applicant assumes full curatorial and financial accountability to the Initiative.

2 / PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The oldest anti-Sybil system in human history

As artificial intelligence erodes the boundary between human and machine, the question of who is a real person becomes urgent. Current Proof of Personhood solutions are **technically sophisticated but culturally thin**: they verify existence without verifying belonging.

In small Southern Italian villages, every family carries a *'u nomme 'e casa* a house name, passed down orally for centuries. Invisible to official registries. Incomprehensible to outsiders. Impossible for any AI to fabricate. These names are hyper-local, semantically rich, socially validated and they grow organically. When a family branch forms, a new nickname is born. This makes them not just identity anchors, but a living, append-only social graph that predates the internet by four centuries.

> *"You cannot fake belonging to a place if you do not know who the people are and what they are called."*

The Experiment

Over three months, ROOTS documents this oral tradition through ethnographic fieldwork, encodes it on-chain using Kusama's Identity Pallet and native assets system, and runs a gated OpenGov referendum accessible only to attested community members. The result is a living, on-chain proof-of-personhood system maintained by the community itself with no administrator, no central authority, and no expiry date.

On-Chain Architecture

ROOTS Token a non-transferable identity token minted via Kusama Asset Hub native assets pallet, with transfer permissions set to None at protocol level. Metadata stored on IPFS, hash anchored on-chain. A `roots_parent_token_id` field creates a directed acyclic graph linking each family to its ancestral token.

Kusama Identity Pallet each attested participant registers fields including `house_name` (dialect), `village_quarter`, `attestation_hash` (SHA-256 of physical certificate), and `lineage_parent`. No custom smart

contract is required.

OpenGov Referendum a real community decision, gated exclusively to attested identities. Vote weight is modulated by ROOTS Reputation score through a logarithmic function: `weight = 1 + log2(reputation / 50)`. Results are presented to the local municipality as a legitimate expression of community will.

The ROOTS NFT

Every attested family receives a generative NFT deployed on the Kusama Asset Hub a unique visual artwork rendered from the family's position in the lineage graph. Trunk width reflects lineage depth; branch count equals living child tokens; color shifts from terracotta to amber with reputation. When a new house name is born and a child token is minted, the parent NFT grows a new branch. **These NFTs have zero monetary value and cannot be traded or sold.** They are identity attestation records the visual representation of a family's place in the graph.

3 / MOTIVATION LETTER

Why this project, why this Initiative

The KSM Art & Social Experiments Initiative is the only cultural funding context capable of hosting ROOTS. It is the only program that takes seriously the idea that art, social practice, and decentralized technology can converge into something that is not merely illustrative but genuinely operational.

ROOTS is not a project about blockchain. It is a project about people who have never heard of blockchain, and who already possess in their mouths, in their memory, in their social fabric the most robust anti-Sybil mechanism ever devised. The Kusama network provides the infrastructure to make this mechanism legible, permanent, and scalable. That alignment is not incidental: it is the core of the project.

The Initiative's commitment to digital sovereignty, individual agency, and networked cultures maps directly onto what ROOTS attempts to do: give a rural community genuine ownership of its own identity graph not mediated by a state, a platform, or a corporation, but anchored in the community's own oral tradition and maintained by the community simply by living.

I am interested in the Initiative's emphasis on intellectual honesty and contextual awareness over speculative narratives. ROOTS makes no claims about token economics, market value, or financial returns. It is a cultural experiment with a clear social research dimension: can a centuries-old community identity system become the basis for a working on-chain governance mechanism? The answer will be documented honestly, including failures and unexpected outcomes.

> *"The oldest anti-Sybil mechanism in human history is a village that knows its own names. We are putting it on-chain and letting it grow."*

4 / SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Visual and Documentary References

The following materials accompany this application and are available through the designated submission form:

Lineage Graph

A directed acyclic graph visualization of the oral house-name tradition showing known family branches, etymology annotations, and village quarter attribution. Available as PDF and interactive web visualization.

Prototype NFT Renders

Three generative artwork prototypes showing how the ROOTS NFT system translates lineage position into visual form one for a root family (depth 0), one mid-lineage (depth 3), one new branch (depth 6).

Field Notes

Excerpts from preliminary oral collection sessions conducted during a research visit demonstrating the richness and consistency of the oral tradition and the community's engagement with the documentation process.

Ceremony Concept Design

Visual mock-up and event design for the attestation ceremony, including certificate design and the proposed elder panel protocol.

Selected Projects

The following work demonstrates capacity across the three core dimensions of ROOTS: on-chain governance and accountability, real-world community organizing, and institutional partnership.

Curator, Games Bounty V1

Curator, Meetup Bounty

Accounting and Reporting, Marketing Bounty V2

DV Guardian, Web3 Foundation DV Program Cohort 5

Community Events Organizer, Romania and Italy

OpenGov Proposal: Politecnico di Milano Partnership

Total request: $ 82,090 USD gross

The total budget of **$ 82,090 USD** covers all five project phases over three months. Payment is requested in DOT tokens equivalent to the USD valuation agreed with the Initiative's curators at the time of each transfer, eliminating price slippage risk as specified in the Initiative's terms.

#	PHASE	DURATION	USD
Phase 1	Oral Ethnography and Book of Names	4 weeks	$ 11,000
Phase 2	The Attestation Ceremony	2 weeks	$ 13,700
Phase 3	On-Chain Identity Registration	2 weeks	$ 9,900
Phase 4	The Social Experiment	4 weeks	$ 12,100
Phase 5	Report and Replication Framework	2 weeks	$ 5,500
Buffer	Contingency		$ 2,800
	Net operational		*$ 55,000*
	Income tax IRPEF 33%		*$ 27,090*

Payment Structure

In accordance with the Initiative's terms, payment is milestone-based. Each installment is paid in DOT tokens equivalent to the USD valuation agreed with the curators at the time of transfer.

MILESTONE	TRIGGER	DELIVERABLES	%	USD
M1	Project start	Signed agreement · Kusama Asset Hub address and on-chain identity verified · Phase 1 work plan confirmed	30%	$ 24,627
M2	Phase 3 complete	100+ ROOTS tokens live on Asset Hub · Book of Names delivered · attestation ceremony documented · onboarding report submitted	40%	$ 32,836
M3	Final delivery	OpenGov referendum concluded · 30-page research report · documentary film · Mirror.xyz publication · financial statement	30%	$ 24,627

Phase Breakdown

Phase 1 Oral Ethnography and Book of Names · 4 weeks $ 11,000

Local field coordinator (4 weeks full time) · book design and archival print run (100 copies) · video documentation of all sessions · lineage graph design and large-format print

Phase 2 The Attestation Ceremony · 2 weeks $ 13,700

Event organization (venue, catering, setup) · archival-quality attestation certificates · professional video and documentary production (20 min) · elder witness honorarium · community mobilization and press outreach

Phase 3 On-Chain Registration · 2 weeks $ 9,900

ROOTS token minting tool and IPFS pipeline development · on-chain fees (identity deposits and minting for 100+ participants) · IPFS pinning service (24 months) · wallet onboarding sessions (4 evenings)

Phase 4 The Social Experiment · 4 weeks $ 12,100

OpenGov referendum design and setup · facilitated deliberation sessions (5 events) · data collection, analysis, and academic-standard report · final documentary film (20 min)

Phase 5 Report and Replication Framework · 2 weeks $ 5,500

Research report (English and Italian, 30 pages, academic standard) · Mirror.xyz publication and outreach · translation, layout, and design · facilitator handbook for replication in other villages

Contingency $ 2,800

Reserve for unforeseen logistical costs and minor equipment needs. Any unspent amount will be allocated to Phase 6: replication.

Note on budget scope. This project's budget exceeds the Initiative's typical range of up to $ 10,000 USD. This reflects the project's larger scope: five distinct phases combining ethnographic fieldwork, public event production, on-chain technical implementation, a governance experiment, and a publishable research output all delivered within a single three-month timeline. The budget has been constructed conservatively, with all major line items supported by prior project experience.

7 / PROJECT TIMELINE

Work Plan 3 Months

WEEK	PHASE	KEY ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLE
14	Phase 1	Oral collection sessions · lineage graph drafting · Book of Names layout and print	Book of Names (100 copies) · lineage graph · video footage
56	Phase 2	Ceremony production · elder panel preparation · attestation event · documentary filming	Attestation certificates · documentary film (rough cut)
78	Phase 3	Wallet setup · identity registration · token minting · IPFS pipeline · onboarding sessions	100+ ROOTS tokens live on Kusama Asset Hub
912	Phase 4	Deliberation sessions · OpenGov referendum · data collection · film post-production	OpenGov result · final documentary · data report
1214	Phase 5	Research report writing · Mirror.xyz publication · replication handbook	30-page report · Mirror.xyz post · facilitator handbook

8 / CV AND SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Applicant Background

The White Rabbit has been an active and publicly known member of the Polkadot and Kusama ecosystem since 2021, operating across governance, curation, community organizing, institutional partnership, and creative practice.

ROLE
Curator, Games Bounty V1
Curator, Meetup Bounty
Accounting and Reporting, Marketing Bounty V2
DV Guardian, Web3 Foundation DV Program Cohort 5
OpenGov Proposal: Politecnico di Milano Partnership
Community Events Organizer, Romania and Italy
Independent entrepreneur

The applicant's track record demonstrates a consistent pattern: identifying where on-chain infrastructure can serve real human needs, building the relationships necessary to make it happen, and delivering with transparency. ROOTS is the natural extension of that pattern into new territory.

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ROOTS · From Proof of Family to Proof of Personhood

Application to the KSM Art & Social Experiments Initiative · 2026

Budget: $ 82,090 USD gross · paid in DOT at transfer · 3 months · 5 phases

By submitting this application, the applicant confirms full acceptance of the KSM Art & Social Experiments Initiative Basis & Terms, including conditions on intellectual property, image rights, payment structure, and final reporting obligations.