

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.*

Initiative	KSM Art & Social Experiments Initiative
Network	Kusama - on-chain via Asset Hub
Token	ROOTS - non-transferable, no monetary value
Duration	3 months - 5 phases
Rate	1 DOT = 1.30 EUR (February 2026 average)
Budget	57,405 DOT gross - IRPEF 33% included
Payment	M1 25,832 DOT - M2 22,962 DOT - M3 8,611 DOT

ROOTS - KSM - 2026

"You cannot transfer your roots."

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 required.

OpenGov Referendum. A real community decision, gated exclusively to attested identities. Vote weight is modulated by ROOTS Reputation through $\text{weight} = 1 + \log_2(\text{reputation} / 50)$. Results are presented to the local municipality as a formal expression of community will.

The ROOTS NFT

Every attested family receives a generative NFT deployed on 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.**

3 / MOTIVATION LETTER

Why this project, why this Initiative

I have been an active and publicly known member of the Polkadot and Kusama ecosystem since 2021, as a governance participant, a bounty curator, a community organizer, and a DV Guardian appointed by the Web3 Foundation. I have a precise understanding of what this infrastructure can do. ROOTS is the project where that understanding meets something I care about equally: the real world, the people who live in it, and the question of what decentralized technology is actually for.

The KSM Art and Social Experiments Initiative is the only funding context capable of hosting this project, not because it funds blockchain projects, but because it funds experiments that are genuinely trying to understand something and are willing to document failure as honestly as success. I have no interest in producing a demonstration of Kusama's capabilities. I want to ask whether a centuries-old oral identity system can become the foundation for a working governance mechanism, and be honest about what happens when we try.

My governance work in the ecosystem, as curator of the Games Bounty V1 and the Meetup Bounty, as contributor to Marketing Bounty V2 accounting and reporting, and as DV Guardian in Cohort 5 of the Web3 Foundation DV Program, has given me direct experience of the tension between decentralized ideals and the human realities of trust, accountability, and community.

My community organizing work, events in Romania and Italy, and a partnership with the Politecnico di Milano approved by the Polkadot community via OpenGov, has shown me that the most interesting thing about this ecosystem is not the technology. It is the people who are not yet in it, and what they already know. A Southern Italian village has been solving the Sybil problem for four hundred years without a single line of code. ROOTS is my attempt to build a bridge between that knowledge and the infrastructure we have spent the last decade constructing.

This project makes no claims about token value or market dynamics. It asks whether a community can govern itself better by encoding what it already knows about itself. The answer will be documented honestly, including the parts that do not work.

"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. Directed acyclic graph visualization of the oral house-name tradition, with family branches, etymology annotations, and village quarter attribution. Available as PDF and interactive web visualization.

Prototype NFT Renders. Three generative artwork prototypes: root family (depth 0), mid-lineage (depth 3), new branch (depth 6).

Field Notes. Excerpts from preliminary oral collection sessions, demonstrating the richness 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 elder panel protocol.

Interactive Presentation. Web-based interactive presentation of the full project concept with animated lineage graph and on-chain architecture overview.

5 / PREVIOUS WORK

Selected Community and Governance Work

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

6 / BUDGET OVERVIEW

Total request: 57,405 DOT

The total budget of **57,405 DOT** covers all five project phases over three months, calculated at a reference rate of **1 DOT = 1.30 EUR** (February 2026 average). The net operational budget is 38,461 DOT. Italian income tax IRPEF (33%) of 18,944 DOT is reported as an explicit line item and is included in each milestone payment, so that the full gross amount is available at each disbursement stage. The actual DOT conversion rate will be agreed with the curators at the time of each transfer, eliminating price slippage risk per the Initiative's terms.

	PHASE	DUR.	NET DOT	IRPEF 33%	GROSS DOT
Phase 1	Oral Ethnography and Book of Names	4 weeks	7,692	3,789	11,481
Phase 2	The Attestation Ceremony	2 weeks	9,615	4,736	14,351
Phase 3	On-Chain Identity Registration	2 weeks	6,923	3,410	10,333
Phase 4	The Social Experiment	4 weeks	8,462	4,167	12,629
Phase 5	Report and Replication Framework	2 weeks	3,846	1,895	5,741
Buffer	Contingency		1,923	947	2,870
<i>Net operational</i>			<i>38,461</i>		
<i>IRPEF income tax (33%)</i>				<i>18,944</i>	

Payment Milestones

Funding is disbursed in three milestone-based installments. Each milestone payment explicitly includes both the operational cost and the corresponding IRPEF income tax for the phases it covers. Payment is released upon submission and acceptance of the deliverables by the curatorial committee.

	TRIGGER	DELIVERABLES	NET DOT	IRPEF	TOTAL DOT
M1	Project start	Signed agreement with the Initiative. Kusama Asset Hub address registered and on-chain identity verified. Field coordinator engaged. Phase 1 oral collection sessions underway.	17,307	8,525	25,832

M2	Phase 3 complete	100+ ROOTS tokens live on Kusama Asset Hub. Book of Names printed and deposited. Attestation ceremony held and fully documented. OpenGov referendum launched.	15,385	7,577	22,962
M3	Final delivery	OpenGov referendum concluded and result submitted to municipality. Final documentary film delivered. 30-page bilingual research report published on Mirror.xyz. Facilitator handbook published. Financial statement with receipts submitted to the Initiative.	5,769	2,842	8,611

***Note on budget scope.** This project's budget of 57,405 DOT exceeds the Initiative's typical range of up to 10,000 USD equivalent. This reflects five distinct phases combining ethnographic fieldwork, public event production, on-chain implementation, a governance experiment, and a publishable research output, all within three months. The budget has been constructed conservatively, with all major line items supported by prior project experience.*

7 / PROJECT TIMELINE

Work Plan: 3 Months

WEEKS	PHASE	KEY ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLE
1-4	Phase 1	Oral collection sessions · lineage graph drafting · Book of Names layout and print	Book of Names (100 copies) · lineage graph · video footage
5-6	Phase 2	Ceremony production · elder panel preparation · attestation event · documentary filming	Attestation certificates · documentary film rough cut
7-8	Phase 3	Wallet setup · identity registration · token minting · IPFS pipeline · onboarding sessions	100+ ROOTS tokens live on Kusama Asset Hub
9-12	Phase 4	Deliberation sessions · OpenGov referendum · data collection · film post-production	OpenGov result · final documentary · data report
12-14	Phase 5	Research report · Mirror.xyz publication · replication handbook	30-page report · Mirror.xyz post · facilitator handbook

8 / CV AND SHORT BIOGRAPHY

The White Rabbit

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

You cannot transfer your roots.

ROOTS - From Proof of Family to Proof of Personhood
Application to the KSM Art & Social Experiments Initiative - 2026

Budget: 57,405 DOT - 1 DOT = 1.30 EUR - IRPEF 33% included - 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.