

Hello Arbitrum DAO!

The [Arbitrum Ventures Initiative](#) has been focused on building the foundation for Arbitrum's ability to leverage its treasury in DAO led strategic investment deals. This work reflects the efforts of a dedicated team, and we'd like to take a moment to introduce the contributors who have been driving this initiative forward. Their collaboration, expertise, and commitment are central to shaping the strategies and structures that will empower the DAO to unlock new opportunities for ecosystem growth.

Who is Farstar?

Farstar is the culmination of projects and team collaborations dating back 15 years, specialising in ecosystem development through venture instruments. The Farstar team is a global community of entrepreneurs and changemakers, brought together by shared values and a commitment to creating positive impact. Together, we have collaborated on a wide range of impact-driven projects, expanding from supporting UK and EU-funded initiatives to fostering startup ecosystems in over 25 countries and partnering with institutions such as Royal Academy of Engineering in the UK and the European Investment Fund.

In 2017, Farstar was officially incorporated by Lino Velev after receiving a mandate, in relation to the then newly-formed £375m Newton Fund, for startup ecosystem development. While much of our work initially took place in a more traditional context, we recognized early on the potential to leverage DAO structures and onchain solutions to empower these efforts. In 2015, we launched an EY-backed project to tokenize advisory equity in startups, creating incentives for talent to contribute to the success of both individual companies and the broader ecosystem. Building on this foundation, we continued refining and iterating across multiple initiatives.

Pursuing these efforts in a publicly funded context provided valuable lessons, revealing challenges such as limited flexibility, misaligned incentives, and bureaucratic constraints. While these obstacles made onchain and DAO-based solutions infeasible within the context, they offered critical insights into designing scalable and impactful decentralized systems.

That's why we pivoted the company towards serving the DAOs and communities of Web3 infrastructure providers and protocols, a shift which led to the creation of Farstar DAO in 2024.

Why Arbitrum?

We see a tremendous opportunity to bring expertise from CVC, economic development funding, sovereign wealth funds, and academic and startup education into the Web3 space. By combining this with our experience as founders and investors, we aim to push the boundaries of product development and capital allocation in decentralized ecosystems and beyond.

After speaking with dozens of builders, it is clear that Arbitrum is highly preferred in the market. This preference appears to be driven organically by trust in its community-driven initiatives, rather than reliance on incentives. This reinforces our confidence in Arbitrum's strong technological foundation. It is one of the few examples of true decentralisation, supported by a real DAO at this scale in the market.

Furthermore, Arbitrum has been a true pioneer since its inception, as early as Ethereum's conceptualisation. With its unrivaled tech stack and the most advanced L2, Arbitrum stands out as a leader in the space. It boasts one of the strongest builder ecosystems, has solidified its reputation as the "Home of DeFi," and is a top choice for a wide range of builders across various domains.

Recognizing its potential, the Farstar team (particularly Lino and Nickolay) began contributing to Arbitrum in November 2023, playing a central role in the setup of the RnDAO research fellowship, co-authoring the proposal, and providing expertise in venture development, research and startup mentorship. The involvement expanded during the Betting on Builders proposal, where Farstar was to provide capacity on program development and fund management.

As Farstar's involvement has continued to deepen, their work has expanded into the AVI initiative and the exploration of creating university incubators through Farstar's network of universities in 20+ countries and the team's legacy of innovative capital deployment and ecosystem development. All other contributions connected to Arbitrum-related investment initiatives transitioned to focus exclusively on supporting the launch and success of the AVI pilot.

Team

Our team brings decades of entrepreneurial and venture capital expertise spanning a wide array of industries, with over a decade of experience building on blockchain. We've delivered billions in successful exits, secured hundreds of millions in startup investments, and managed additional hundreds of millions in venture capital fund allocations. Ultimately translating our expertise into becoming the 'people from industry' in a variety of ecosystem development initiatives.

Over the years, Farstar has operated with a flexible, DAO-like structure, engaging over 100 contributors across various mandates and 30+ countries. For AVI, a select group of individuals from this network was carefully chosen, bringing

specialized expertise to the creation of an in-house organization that is native to Arbitrum. We are thrilled to share our vision for the Web3 space and channel our expertise into driving the success of the Arbitrum ecosystem. Our goal is to execute this vision effectively and efficiently, delivering impactful results within the shortest possible timeline.

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Lino

Lino has a background in software engineering and is a 3 startup founder. He also co-founded Bulgaria's first startup accelerator and university incubator and was a core team member of the country's first tech conference. With the European Investment Fund (EIF), he contributed in positioning Sofia as one of seven EU growth hubs selected for strategic development. This led to him advising President Rosen Plevneliev's administration and Chief Economic Advisor Evgeny Angelov on the ecosystem development strategy for a €200M Fund of Funds (FoF). Over the next decade, these structures expanded to over €2B AUM, produced unicorns and drove a significant percentage of the economic growth of the country.

Ana

Ana led the investment team at Outlier Ventures, personally leading the closing of 80 investment deals and overseeing more than 200 additional deals in the Web3 space. Her expertise in navigating the Web3 investment landscape provides valuable insights for Arbitrum in building a strategic approach to venture funding.

Her involvement has been instrumental in guiding Farstar's pivot to Web3, using her deep knowledge of venture investments to shape the organization's strategic direction.

Paul

Paul Burmester is a veteran technology executive with over 30 years of experience. At Singtel Innov8, the corporate venture capital arm of the Singtel Group, Burmester served as Operating Partner & Head of Innovation, managing a \$350 million CVC fund that achieved five unicorn exits and building an ecosystem to drive innovation across the group through startup engagement. Also drove the launch of new lines of business in FinTech, HealthTech and Gaming, including the groups first blockchain based initiatives and making the funds first investments in blockchain based startups.

Burmester's extensive career includes significant roles such as COO at Private AI, CEO at ValidSoft and CRO at SpinVox and Paragon Software. He has operated globally to consistently contribute to the market adoption of new technologies, particularly in the areas of deeptech, cybersecurity and innovation. Executing growth strategies that have led to market leadership and the profitable exits of innovative deeptech businesses, delivering in excess of \$4.7B in investor RoI.

Anish

Dr. Anish Mohammed is co-founder, chief scientist and CTO of Panther protocol, which provides privacy for DeFi. He has more than 20 years of experience in security and cryptography, half of which was dedicated to researching cryptographic algorithms and protocols at research groups including at Microsoft.

Anish was an early advisor to Ripple and Ocean protocol, as well as an early member of Ethereum swarm (orange) team, becoming a reviewer of its orange paper. He was also the principal architect for Boson protocol. He has also worked as a strategy consultant for Accenture and Capgemini. He has advised and worked for various banks and financial institutions including Banko Azteca, AIB, HSBC, Lloyds and Zurich.

Konstantina

Konstantina Voynova is the head of equity financial instruments within a €1.3 billion Fund of Funds (FoF), focusing on venture capital ecosystem development. Under her leadership, the FoF established and backed numerous investment funds and programs, similar to what is described as Captive Vehicle in AVI. This includes a €100m Web2 investment fund and a deeptech tech transfer oriented €60m fund and accelerator. As well as other more standard LP positions in VCs.

Others

The Farstar team also includes accomplished contributors who have supported its global initiatives and innovative projects, each offering specialized expertise that can be tapped into as needed.

Relevance to Arbitrum DAO

In addition to our expertise as builders and our experience in capital deployment for ecosystem growth, we've undertaken initiatives that closely align with Arbitrum's objectives. The projects below showcase the team's specialized expertise in executing initiatives aligned with AVI's proposed approach. These examples highlight the unique qualifications and experience of the proposed team.

- EY-backed project to tokenize equity:

Aimed to create incentives for top tier talent in early stage startup ecosystems and communities, enabling them to participate in both the success of individual companies and the broader ecosystem.

- Significance:

Since Arbitrum Ventures will emerge from and be fully owned by the Arbitrum DAO, it's not enough to simply design a competent organization. Success also requires seamless integration with the DAO to fully leverage its extensive access and expertise. Creating effective incentive mechanisms is a crucial area where many approaches, especially token-based models, have historically struggled to succeed. Over the past decade, we have been deeply engaged in thinking about and experimenting with solutions to these issues in real-world contexts, building a foundation of insights to address them effectively.

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- Leaders in Innovation Fellowship (LIF) program:

Working in 17 countries across the Global South, facilitating support and investment in deep tech spinouts from academic institutions, increasing collaboration between academia, industry, and investors. This created a more interconnected and dynamic innovation ecosystem which not only drove local economic growth but also enhanced the capacity of these regions to address global challenges through cutting-edge technology

- Significance:

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- Impact measurement framework:

In collaboration with the Behavioural Insights Team, Farstar developed an impact measurement framework for the LIF program, evaluating broad ecosystem effects of education, network development and investment initiatives done over 6 years.

- Significance:

One of the most challenging problems is developing a clear theory of change and establishing ways to attribute the impact to the various interventions in a fair and transparent manner. Our team has first-hand experience with how difficult this can be at scale and have gained valuable, practical insights through collaborating with leading experts on these topics.

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- Additional ecosystem development initiatives:

Our team has led and contributed to a range of relevant ecosystem-building efforts across diverse regions and sectors,

showcasing our ability to foster innovation and drive impactful collaborations. Some of these initiatives include:

- Economic development projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.
- Advancing Food Tech and Circular Economies in the Netherlands.
- Supporting the Oxford University Innovation Cluster.
- Driving economic cluster development in collaboration with academics from the Michael Porter Institute at Harvard.
- Driving the creation of various ecosystems such as: Southeast Asia's first cybersecurity ecosystem ICE71 (Innovation Cybersecurity Ecosystem in Block 71), Indonesia's first gaming ecosystem Dunia Gaming, the UK's first cybersecurity ecosystem CyLon, SyncML (now the global standard for the synchronisation of PIM data) & the first WAP (Wireless Application Protocol or mobile data in today's parlance) ecosystem.
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