

Date: December 22, 2023

Credit to Vitalik for prompting Dall-E for this one.

Hello Ethereum community, the PBS Foundation is now accepting grant applications as part of the pilot phase. On September 15, 2023, the one-year anniversary of the Merge, the PBS Foundation was established as an independent, non-profit initiative to support research collaboration across the ecosystem pertaining to proposer-builder separation (PBS). PBS is a large design space on the Ethereum roadmap with significant impact on the Ethereum proof-of-stake consensus's ability to remain robust and decentralized. The Foundation will focus on issuing grants that can support research, development and infrastructure operations in this spirit.

What is Proposer-Builder Separation (PBS)?

Proposer-builder separation (PBS) is a protocol design philosophy for the maintenance and operation of public blockchains [first proposed](#) by Vitalik Buterin in 2021. The purpose of PBS is to alleviate the pressure of centralization on the Proof of Stake (PoS) consensus layer, by creating an explicit separation between (low-economies-of-scale) proposers and (high-economies-of-scale) block builders. PBS R&D includes both extra-protocol designs, such as MEV-Boost, and in-protocol designs such as but not limited to "enshrined PBS" (ePBS). Today, PBS is an important topic as protocol researchers investigate ways to support a decentralized PBS ecosystem, as well as exploring possible PBS implementation within the Ethereum protocol.

Our Mission and Goals

PBS Foundation's mission is to protect the decentralization of the Ethereum consensus layer by advancing present and future research within the PBS protocol design philosophy. This collaborative effort stretches across the frontline; including active industry participants, researchers within academia, as well as independent developers and researchers. The goal is to surface the most pressing challenges to PBS design to ensure a healthy and dynamic market for all validators.

Pilot Phase Grants Opportunities

In order to work towards this mission, the PBS Foundation will issue the following grant types during an initial 6 month pilot phase starting January 1, 2024:

Infrastructure Grants - supporting independent relays and R&D innovation on relay designs. Apply by emailing pbsguild@gmail.com and expressing interest in the grant

Research Grants - supporting researchers seeking to advance our understanding of PBS. Apply [here](#) in response to one of the [RFPs](#) or by suggesting a new idea

Data Transparency Grants - supporting those researching or building tools to increase data transparency. Apply [here](#).

Community Education Grants - supporting community events and research-related content around PBS education. Apply [here](#).

The grants issued by the Foundation are intended to support research and infrastructure underpinning a more decentralized and resilient Ethereum. Additionally, the scope of the problems at hand makes it difficult to effectively tackle. Large problems require coordination, and independent efforts such as the PBS Foundation enable community coordination to work on solving the greatest research challenges and how to bring solutions to bear.

These four categories touch on some of the most pressing problems facing the space, and were inspired by [a forum post](#) from one of the early contributors of the Foundation. However, this is only a starting point and we intend to revisit our grant categories as the ecosystem evolves. We are interested in receiving feedback across the board, whether about our RFPs or our grant processes. Feel free to email us on pbsguild@gmail.com.

Learn More & Stay In Touch

The PBS Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation registered in the Cayman Islands. The pilot phase of the PBS Foundation is seeded by Coinbase, Consensys, Fenbushi Capital, Flashbots, Paradigm, Uniswap Foundation, and Vitalik Buterin. You can learn more about the organization [here](#).

Stay tuned for more updates, including additional funding organizations, in the coming days.

Stay informed by filling out [this form](#) (which is also embedded below) to get periodic updates from the PBS Foundation.

Contribute and engage with PBS related research on the [EthResearch](#) forum, the [Flashbots Collective](#) forum, and follow the [MEV-boost community calls](#).