

# Introducing Arbitrum Fellowships

## Lore/Intro

There's a need for a more streamlined way to push initiatives forward in a more structured and timely manner. While we have a lot of talented people in the DAO who have a lot of context of what's going on and what the DAO needs are, it isn't easy to go from identifying a need to working on a solution.

Through the [Onboarding Working Group initiative that we announced at the end of March](#) we now have a list of potential contributors to the DAO. We now want to experiment with how we can provide a streamlined way of kickstarting initiatives in the DAO and going from discussion to action in a timely manner.

To that end, inspired by how things work in other DAOs, and borrowing nomenclature from Lord of The Rings, we're introducing Arbitrum Fellowships.

## Arbitrum Fellowships

Fellowships are groups of people united by their pursuit of a desire. Desires are basically needs that the DAO has — think incentives, game development, community growth, etc.

The purpose of each fellowship is to ideate, discuss, research, and establish a plan through which we can address the DAO's desires. To better understand the concept of fellowships, and how a fellowship should work, let's use the Short Term Incentives Program (STIP) as an example. The program started after a group of people discussed, in a Telegram chat, the need for an incentives' framework on Arbitrum. Tnorm lead the charge and formed a working group tasked with creating the incentives framework which we now know as STIP.

The goal of Fellowships is to create a streamlined process to facilitate discussions around a desire that eventually leads to some sort of actionable result. Initially, we propose each fellowship has at least 5 calls discussing its respective topic of interest. Our assumption is that after 5 calls of discussing a topic, either something comes out of it, or we know there's not as much interest in it.

## Gandalf

The Fellowship of the Ring had Gandalf to guide them through the dangerous paths on their way to Mordor. While we do not have to face Ringwraiths and orcs, working toward an initiative in a DAO setting has its own set of challenges, one of which is [diffusion of responsibility](#). Simply put, when we're part of a group, we tend to not claim responsibility for something, in the hopes that someone else will.

In Arbitrum Fellowships, that someone is our Gandalf.

While not necessarily acting in a leader's capacity, a Gandalf is supposed to be the coordinator of the group, and the person who pushes the needle forward. Gandalf doesn't have to make decisions on behalf of the group, neither is he responsible for the output of the fellowship. What they are responsible for, however, is making sure the fellowship has the opportunity to discuss the topic at hand and produce an output.

Some of the responsibilities of Gandalf include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinating the efforts of the fellowship.
- Narrowing down the desire the fellowship is going to work on.
- Assembling the fellowship.
- Organizing a series of 5 meetings for the fellowship over a reasonable amount of time (e.g. 5 meetings in 2 months).
- Drafting, publishing, and maintaining a forum thread that describes the fellowship and summarises the work they're doing.

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## Mines of Moria

After a fellowship has been formed, and their meetings have been setup by their respective Gandalf, they'll begin their work in the Mines of Moria. That's a geek way of saying they'll begin working towards the completion of the desire they were originally assembled to work on within a somewhat specified timeline.

Fellowships are meant to push things forward in a streamlined way but at a fast pace. Ideally, there shouldn't be more than 2 months from the assembly of a fellowship before we know whether there's something there.

If a fellowship spends more time than that in the Mines of Moria without delivering anything actionable, we should consider the fellowship was lost to the Balrog (more hardcore DAO nerds, you can compare Balrog to Moloch) and we should disband the fellowship and look for opportunities elsewhere. The purpose of the Mines of Moria and the Balrog analogy is to avoid spending time and effort in perpetuity towards an initiative that will start becoming increasingly harder to achieve as contributors lose interest.

It's important to clarify that the disbanding of a fellowship doesn't constitute a failure. If anything, it informs the DAO that there's no interest in the particular desire the disbanded fellowship was working on.

## Rivendell

If the fellowship survives the Mines of Moria, defeats the Balrog, and comes out with a clear approach to fulfilling a desire, they should seek refuge in Rivendell.

What that means is basically summarising the discussion - it doesn't necessarily have to be too specific, but it has to be clear enough so delegates can express their support and other contributors can start ideating or working on proposals to address that desire. You can think of it as a loosely structured RFP that describes what's needed but not necessarily how to achieve it.

At this point, the fellowship has discussed the topic long enough to have something to move forward with, ideally summarised in a forum post, that they can present to delegates who hold significant voting power in Arbitrum DAO and can provide feedback to the deliverable brought forward from the fellowship.

The fellowship should reach out to delegates that have significant voting power, and seek to get formal support from at least 3 of them. There's no expectations from those delegates who provide their support other than to signal that it's something that the DAO is interested in - it can be a single response in a thread saying something like "yes, I think it's important and I am willing to help those who put up a proposal move forward with it". Obviously, we expect those delegates to later on be available to provide feedback and discuss proposals associated with the topic.

The reason we suggest the process of having delegates express their support is to avoid having contributors working on well structured proposals that there's no tangible interest in.

## TL;DR

1. A fellowship is formed and appoints a coordinator/Gandalf.
2. Fellowship's Gandalf schedules 5 calls to discuss the fellowship's topic.
3. Following those 5 calls the fellowship describes the desire in a forum post.
4. The fellowship seeks written support from at least 3 delegates with significant voting power.
5. If a fellowship gets the support, it basically means that any individual or group (including the fellowship itself) can start working on a proposal to fulfil the desire in a way they see fit. It's not guaranteed that any proposal will be approved, but it's a strong indication that proposals addressing the desire are needed and will be seriously considered and discussed.

## Index

- Fellowship = working group
- Gandalf = working group coordinator
- Mines of Moria = the time period when the working group is working to deliver an actionable result
- Balrog = failure of the working group to produce results within a reasonable timeframe after which the fellowship disbands
- Rivendell = top delegates