

Farcaster Protocol: Comprehensive Tokenomics Proposal

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Prepared by: @CryptoExplor

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Executive Summary

This proposal outlines a comprehensive tokenomics framework for the Farcaster protocol fork that prioritizes **fair distribution, builder incentives, and long-term ecosystem sustainability**. Unlike traditional models that concentrate rewards among top performers, this design implements a **flat reward curve** ensuring meaningful earnings for small builders, niche tools, and emerging applications alongside established projects.

Core Innovation: Multi-dimensional scoring that rewards consistency, developer effort, ecosystem contribution, and underserved use cases—not just raw user counts.

Key Objectives:

- Fair distribution that resists plutocracy and sybil attacks
 - Sustainable economic model with controlled inflation
 - Hybrid governance balancing token holders, builders, and infrastructure operators
 - Incentive alignment across all stakeholder groups
 - Support for long-term protocol development through treasury reserves
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1. Introduction

1.1 Context and Motivation

Farcaster has evolved into a significant decentralized social protocol built on Optimism, with hybrid on-chain/off-chain architecture supporting sufficiently decentralized social networking[web:3] [web:6]. Following the January 2026 transition where infrastructure firm Neynar assumed protocol maintenance, the community now faces critical decisions about token design for a potential protocol fork.

Traditional token distribution models suffer from fundamental flaws:

- **Winner-takes-all dynamics** — Top projects capture 90% of rewards
- **User count bias** — Disadvantages niche tools, infrastructure, and experimental builders
- **Sybil vulnerability** — Simple engagement metrics easily gamed
- **Token-weighted governance** — Leads to plutocracy and centralization
- **Short-term thinking** — Rewards viral growth over sustained value creation

This proposal addresses these challenges through a multi-faceted approach combining innovative reward mechanisms, robust anti-sybil measures, and hybrid governance structures.

1.2 Design Principles

All tokenomics decisions flow from five foundational principles:

Principle 1: Broad Incentive Alignment

Tokens must reward users (engagement), builders (apps/tooling), and validators (infrastructure) proportionally to their contribution. No single stakeholder group should dominate reward capture.

Principle 2: Resistance to Gaming

Economic design must make sybil attacks, artificial engagement, and reward farming economically unfavorable through multi-signal

verification and diminishing returns.

Principle 3: Sustainable Economic Activity

Inflation must be carefully controlled to preserve long-term token value while funding ecosystem development. Treasury reserves ensure multi-decade protocol sustainability.

Principle 4: Fair Launch Ethos

Distribution should be transparent, accessible, and avoid excessive early insider advantages. Community trust depends on perceived fairness.

Principle 5: Adaptive Governance

Protocol parameters must be updateable through decentralized governance, allowing the system to evolve with ecosystem needs while resisting capture.

2. Token Allocation Model

2.1 Allocation Categories

Total token supply is distributed across five primary categories, each serving distinct ecosystem functions:

Category	Allocation	Purpose
Community & Active Users	30%	Incentivize network growth & quality engagement
Developers & Ecosystem	25%	Reward tooling, apps, mini-apps, protocols
Validators & Infrastructure	20%	Support hub operators & network security
Treasury & Grants	15%	Long-term funding & public goods
Core Contributors	10%	Align founding team with protocol success

Table 1: Token allocation breakdown by stakeholder category

2.2 Rationale for Distribution

Community & Active Users (30%)

The largest allocation recognizes that network effects drive protocol value. However, rewards target *quality engagement* measured through:

- Weighted cast quality (replies received, engagement depth)
- Retained participation over 30+ day periods
- Network contribution (bringing new FIDs to protocol)
- Storage unit purchases and protocol fee generation

Rewards diminish for low-value repeat actions to discourage farming.

Developers & Ecosystem (25%)

Second-largest allocation reflects critical importance of builders. This category funds:

- Mini-app developers on Farcaster and Base
- Infrastructure tooling (indexers, APIs, SDKs, analytics)
- Cross-chain bridges and interoperability solutions
- Developer-facing documentation and educational resources

Critically, this pool uses a **flat reward curve** ensuring small builders with 50 retained users earn meaningfully—not power-law distribution favoring only top apps.

Validators & Infrastructure (20%)

Hub operators and node runners provide essential decentralization. Allocation rewards:

- Hub uptime and message replication reliability
- Geographic distribution (incentivize global decentralization)
- Hardware commitment and bandwidth provision
- Long-term operational commitment through vesting

Treasury & Grants (15%)

Dedicated reserve for multi-decade sustainability:

- Retroactive public goods funding (unexpected valuable contributions)
- Emergency protocol upgrades and security audits
- Ecosystem grants for strategic initiatives
- Marketing and protocol awareness campaigns

Treasury controlled by DAO governance with transparent spending proposals.

Core Contributors (10%)

Smallest allocation with longest vesting (4 years with 1-year cliff) aligns founding team with long-term protocol success while preventing excessive early concentration.

3. Builder Reward Mechanism

3.1 The Flat Curve Philosophy

Traditional reward models follow power-law distribution where top 10% of apps capture 90% of rewards[chart:20]. This creates hostile environment for:

- Solo developers building focused niche tools
- Infrastructure and developer-facing applications
- Experimental projects and research initiatives
- Underserved use cases with smaller but dedicated audiences

Our Approach: Implement reward curve flat enough that apps with 50 retained users earn 40-50% of what top apps earn, rather than <5% under power-law models.

3.2 Multi-Dimensional Scoring

Builder rewards calculated through composite score combining four weighted factors:

Factor	Weight	Measurement Method
Retained Users	35%	Unique FIDs with 3+ sessions over 30-day period
Developer Activity	25%	Contract deployments, frame updates, GitHub commits
Onchain Actions	20%	Transactions initiated through app, protocol fees generated
Ecosystem Growth	20%	New FIDs onboarded to Farcaster via this app

Table 2: Builder scoring factors and weights

Why This Works:

1. **Retained Users** — Stickiness indicates real product-market fit, harder to fake than total user count
2. **Developer Activity** — Rewards active development and continuous improvement
3. **Onchain Actions** — Captures actual economic value generated through app
4. **Ecosystem Growth** — Incentivizes bringing new users to protocol, not just recirculating existing ones

3.3 Tiered Distribution System

Apps categorized into three tiers based on composite score, with inverse relationship between tier and pool size:

Tier	Score Range	Pool Share	Characteristics
Tier 1 (Established)	80-100	15%	Top apps, high all metrics
Tier 2 (Growing)	50-79	35%	Mid-tier apps, proven traction
Tier 3 (Emerging)	20-49	50%	New/niche apps, focused audiences

Table 3: Tiered reward distribution pools

Key Innovation: Tier 3 receives *largest pool share* (50%) ensuring emerging builders earn meaningfully from day one. This inverts traditional models and encourages experimentation.

3.4 Distribution Mechanics

Monthly Calculation Cycle

1. Calculate composite scores for all registered apps
2. Assign apps to tiers based on score ranges
3. Distribute each tier's pool proportionally among tier members
4. Apply vesting schedule: 60% immediate, 40% vests over 6 months

Bonus Multipliers

Additional 10-20% rewards for:

- **Cross-chain functionality** — Apps supporting multiple EVM chains
- **Open-source contributions** — Publicly available codebases
- **Accessibility features** — Support for users with disabilities
- **Educational content** — Documentation, tutorials, developer resources

Performance Feedback Loop

Apps receive detailed monthly reports showing:

- Current composite score breakdown
- Tier assignment and reward calculation
- Comparison to previous periods
- Suggestions for improvement

This transparency allows builders to understand exactly how to optimize their applications for ecosystem value, not just vanity metrics.

4. Anti-Sybil Resistance Framework

4.1 The Sybil Challenge

Sybil attacks—where single actors create multiple false identities—pose existential threat to fair token distribution[web:8]. Simple user counts or engagement metrics easily gamed through bot networks.

Traditional Defenses:

- **Proof-of-Work** — Computationally expensive but energy-wasteful
- **Proof-of-Stake** — Requires capital, favors wealthy participants
- **Identity Verification** — Centralized, privacy-invasive

Our Approach: Multi-layer scoring combining decentralized identity signals, on-chain activity, and behavioral analysis[web:14].

4.2 Three-Layer Architecture

Layer 1: Identity Signals (Weight: 40%)

- **FID Age** — Older accounts more trustworthy (exponential weighting)
- **Social Graph Density** — Connections to known legitimate accounts
- **Cast History Quality** — Replies received, engagement authenticity
- **Follow/Follower Ratio** — Extreme ratios indicate bot behavior

Layer 2: On-Chain Activity (Weight: 35%)

- **Transaction History** — Ethereum/Optimism mainnet activity
- **Contract Interactions** — DeFi usage, NFT ownership
- **Storage Purchases** — Farcaster storage unit acquisitions
- **Gas Spent** — Economic commitment to network participation

Layer 3: Behavioral Analysis (Weight: 25%)

- **Timing Patterns** — Human-like activity rhythms vs. bot regularity

- **Engagement Diversity** — Varied interactions across different topics/users
- **Network Effects** — Participation in diverse communities and channels

4.3 Composite Trust Score

All three layers combine into single 0-100 score:

$$\text{Trust Score} = 0.40 \times L_1 + 0.35 \times L_2 + 0.25 \times L_3$$

Where L_1, L_2, L_3 represent normalized layer scores.

Eligibility Thresholds:

- **Score ≥ 40** — Eligible for all reward programs
- **Score 20-39** — Reduced rewards (50% multiplier)
- **Score < 20** — Ineligible, flagged for review

4.4 Continuous Monitoring

Trust scores recalculated monthly with:

- Machine learning anomaly detection for suspicious patterns
- Community reporting system for manual reviews
- Appeals process for false positives
- Public transparency dashboard (aggregated, privacy-preserving)

Economic Deterrence: Cost of creating 100 sybil accounts with sufficient trust score (purchasing storage, building transaction history, aging accounts) exceeds potential reward capture.

5. Token Emission Schedule

5.1 Emission Philosophy

Controlled inflation funds ecosystem growth while preserving long-term token value. Emission rates designed to:

1. Highest in early years to bootstrap participation
2. Decline gradually as protocol matures
3. Asymptotically approach zero over 50+ year horizon

4. Maintain treasury reserves for perpetual funding

5.2 Category-Specific Schedules

Different stakeholder groups have different emission curves optimized for their participation patterns:

Community & Users — 15% annual decay

- Year 1: 30% of allocation
- Year 5: 13.3% of allocation
- Year 10: 5.9% of allocation

Developers & Ecosystem — 12% annual decay

- Year 1: 25% of allocation
- Year 5: 12.3% of allocation
- Year 10: 6.8% of allocation

Validators & Infrastructure — 10% annual decay

- Year 1: 20% of allocation
- Year 5: 10.8% of allocation
- Year 10: 6.9% of allocation

Treasury & Grants — Constant 15% annually

- Flat emission ensures perpetual funding
- DAO controls spending rate

Core Contributors — 20% annual decay with 4-year vesting

- 1-year cliff before any tokens unlock
- Linear vesting Years 2-4
- Remaining tokens released Years 5-10

5.3 Total Circulating Supply

Cumulative emission produces gradual supply increase:

- **Year 1** — 28% of total supply circulating
- **Year 3** — 52% of total supply circulating
- **Year 5** — 68% of total supply circulating

- **Year 10** — 85% of total supply circulating
- **Year 50** — 98% of total supply circulating

Long emission tail prevents supply shocks and enables multi-generational protocol development.

6. Governance Model

6.1 Hybrid Governance Philosophy

Pure token-weighted voting inevitably concentrates power among wealthy holders, creating plutocracy[web:7]. Alternative approaches needed to balance stakeholder voices.

Our Model: Hybrid system where three stakeholder groups vote with different weights:

1. **Token Holders** (40%) — Economic alignment through ownership
2. **Builders** (35%) — Apps deployed, active development
3. **Validators** (25%) — Hub operators, infrastructure providers

Each group's vote calculated separately, then weighted to produce final tally.

6.2 Governance Process

Phase 1: Proposal Submission

Any community member, builder, or core team can submit governance proposal containing:

- Clear specification of proposed change
- Rationale and expected impact
- Implementation plan if approved
- Security and economic analysis

Minimum 1,000 tokens staked (refunded if proposal reaches vote).

Phase 2: Discussion Period (7 days)

Community forum discussion to:

- Clarify proposal details
- Surface concerns and objections
- Propose amendments
- Build coalition support

Proposer may withdraw or amend before voting begins.

Phase 3: Voting Period (14 days)

All three stakeholder groups vote simultaneously:

Token Holders:

- 1 token = 1 vote
- Tokens must be held for 30+ days (prevents vote buying)
- Quadratic component: voting power = $\sqrt{\text{tokens}}$ for amounts >10,000

Builders:

- 1 deployed app = 1 vote
- Apps must have minimum 20 retained users
- Multiplier for open-source projects (1.5x)
- Multiplier for apps operating 6+ months (1.3x)

Validators:

- 1 operational hub = 1 vote
- Weighted by uptime and message volume
- Geographic diversity bonus (1.2x for underrepresented regions)

Phase 4: Vote Aggregation

$$\text{Final Score} = 0.40 \times V_{\text{token}} + 0.35 \times V_{\text{builder}} + 0.25 \times V_{\text{validator}}$$

Approval Threshold: ≥60% support required for passage.

Phase 5: Implementation

Approved proposals enter implementation queue:

- Protocol upgrades deployed via multi-sig (requires 5/7 signers)

- Economic parameter changes take effect after 14-day delay (safety buffer)
- Major architectural changes require supermajority (70%)

6.3 Governance Scope

On-Chain Parameters (updatable via governance):

- Emission rates and distribution percentages
- Anti-sybil score weights and thresholds
- Builder tier boundaries and pool allocations
- Validator reward formulas
- Treasury spending proposals

Immutable Core (cannot be changed via governance):

- Total token supply cap
- Core protocol architecture
- Multi-sig signer set modifications (requires unanimous consent)

6.4 Emergency Powers

In case of critical vulnerability or attack:

- Multi-sig can pause token transfers (max 72 hours)
- Emergency proposals fast-tracked (48-hour voting)
- Post-mortem and ratification required after emergency actions

All emergency actions publicly logged on-chain for transparency.

7. Distribution Mechanisms

7.1 Initial Distribution

Fair Launch Strategy maximizes accessibility and decentralization:

Phase 1: Early Builder Incentive (Month 1-3)

- 5% of developer allocation distributed to apps launched in first 90 days
- Bonus multipliers for first movers (declining linearly)
- Encourages migration from existing protocol

Phase 2: Community Airdrop (Month 2)

- 8% of community allocation distributed to existing Farcaster users
- Weighted by: FID age, cast history, social graph connections
- Minimum trust score 40 required for eligibility
- Claims open for 180 days (unclaimed tokens return to treasury)

Phase 3: Continuous Rewards (Month 4+)

Standard monthly distribution across all categories begins.

7.2 Claiming Process

User Rewards:

1. Monthly rewards calculated based on engagement metrics
2. Users claim via connected wallet (gas-free using meta-transactions)
3. Unclaimed rewards after 90 days roll over to next month's pool

Builder Rewards:

1. Apps register via smart contract, providing FID and contract address
2. Metrics collected automatically via protocol indexer
3. Monthly distribution to registered wallet addresses
4. 60% immediate, 40% vesting schedule

Validator Rewards:

1. Hub operators register hub public key and operator address
2. Performance metrics tracked on-chain
3. Weekly distributions to operator addresses
4. No vesting (immediate liquidity for operational costs)

7.3 Vesting Schedules

Different stakeholders have different vesting requirements:

Category	Immediate	Vesting Period
Community & Users	80%	20% over 3 months
Developers & Ecosystem	60%	40% over 6 months
Validators & Infrastructure	100%	No vesting
Treasury & Grants	Varies	Per-proposal basis
Core Contributors	0%	4 years (1-year cliff)

Table 4: Vesting schedules by stakeholder category

Rationale:

- **Users** — High immediate to enable participation, short vest for retention
- **Builders** — Balanced for ongoing development commitment
- **Validators** — No vest enables operational cost coverage
- **Core** — Long vest ensures multi-year commitment

8. Economic Sustainability

8.1 Token Utility

Tokens serve multiple protocol functions beyond speculation:

Primary Utilities:

- **Governance Voting** — Participate in protocol decisions
- **Storage Payments** — Pay for Farcaster storage units (optional, alongside fiat)
- **Frame Interaction Fees** — Micro-payments for premium frame features
- **Builder Staking** — Stake tokens to register apps (refundable, anti-spam)
- **Validator Bonding** — Required security deposit for hub operators

Secondary Utilities:

- **Protocol Fee Discounts** — Reduced storage costs for token holders

- **Premium Features** — Access to advanced analytics and tooling
- **Community Badges** — Verified status, custom emoji, etc.

8.2 Fee Capture and Burn

Portion of protocol fees used for token buyback and burn:

1. 50% of storage unit fees
2. 30% of frame interaction fees
3. 100% of validator slashing penalties

Burned tokens permanently removed from circulation, creating deflationary pressure over time as protocol usage grows.

Long-term Equilibrium: Emission inflation balanced by burn deflation as protocol matures, targeting ~2% net inflation at steady state.

8.3 Treasury Management

15% allocation managed by DAO-controlled treasury with strict spending guidelines:

Allocation Targets:

- 40% — Ecosystem grants and public goods funding
- 30% — Protocol development and security audits
- 20% — Marketing and awareness campaigns
- 10% — Emergency reserve (multi-year buffer)

Spending Constraints:

- Maximum 20% of treasury per year
- All expenditures require governance proposal
- Multi-sig approval (5/7 signers)
- Public transparency dashboard

Investment Strategy:

Treasury reserves deployed into:

1. Stablecoins (40%) — Operational runway
2. Blue-chip crypto (30%) — ETH, BTC for growth exposure

3. Protocol-owned liquidity (20%) — DEX liquidity provision
 4. Strategic investments (10%) — Aligned ecosystem projects
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9. Implementation Roadmap

9.1 Phase 1: Foundation (Month 1-3)

Smart Contract Development:

- Token contract (ERC-20 with governance extensions)
- Distribution contracts (vesting, claiming, staking)
- Governance contracts (proposal, voting, execution)
- Treasury multi-sig setup

Security Measures:

- Multiple third-party audits (Trail of Bits, OpenZeppelin)
- Bug bounty program (\$500k total rewards)
- Formal verification of critical contracts
- Testnet deployment and community testing

Infrastructure:

- Indexer for tracking metrics (users, builders, validators)
- Anti-sybil scoring system deployment
- Governance frontend interface
- Documentation and developer guides

9.2 Phase 2: Launch (Month 4-6)

Token Generation Event:

- Mainnet deployment on Optimism (leveraging existing Farcaster infra)
- Initial airdrop to existing community
- Builder registration opens
- First governance proposals

Marketing and Adoption:

- Awareness campaign highlighting fair distribution

- Developer workshops and hackathons
- Partnership announcements
- Community AMAs and transparency reports

9.3 Phase 3: Growth (Month 7-12)

Ecosystem Expansion:

- First retroactive public goods round
- Cross-chain bridge deployments
- Expanded validator network (target 100+ hubs)
- Developer grants program launch

Governance Maturation:

- First parameter updates via community vote
- Treasury spending proposals
- Anti-sybil model refinements
- Quarterly transparency reports

9.4 Phase 4: Decentralization (Year 2+)

Progressive Decentralization:

- Multi-sig signer rotation (add community members)
- Core contributor vesting begins unlocking
- Subcommittee formation (technical, economic, grants)
- Protocol ossification for stable parameters

10. Risk Analysis and Mitigation

10.1 Technical Risks

Risk: Smart contract vulnerabilities leading to fund loss

Mitigation:

- Multiple independent audits from reputable firms
- Formal verification of critical functions
- Gradual rollout with emergency pause capability
- Bug bounty program incentivizing white-hat disclosure

Risk: Scaling challenges as ecosystem grows

Mitigation:

- Built on Optimism L2 with proven scalability
- Off-chain computation for anti-sybil scoring (on-chain verification)
- Batched reward distributions to minimize gas costs
- Prepared migration path to newer L2 technologies if needed

10.2 Economic Risks

Risk: Token price volatility affecting ecosystem stability

Mitigation:

- Storage payments accepted in stablecoins as alternative
- Treasury diversification reduces single-asset exposure
- Gradual emission schedule prevents supply shocks
- Strong utility beyond speculation

Risk: Insufficient liquidity for token trading

Mitigation:

- Protocol-owned liquidity in treasury allocation
- Incentivized liquidity mining programs
- Multiple DEX and CEX listings
- Market maker partnerships

10.3 Governance Risks

Risk: Low participation leading to governance capture

Mitigation:

- Hybrid model prevents token-holder dominance
- Delegation system for passive holders
- Quadratic components reduce whale influence
- Public transparency increases accountability

Risk: Contentious proposals causing community splits

Mitigation:

- High approval thresholds (60%) require consensus
- Extended discussion periods for major changes
- Off-chain signaling before formal votes
- Clear dispute resolution processes

10.4 Adoption Risks

Risk: Builders don't migrate from existing protocol

Mitigation:

- Early builder bonuses for first movers
- Superior reward structure vs. alternatives
- Developer grants and support programs
- Clear migration documentation and tooling

Risk: Insufficient user adoption of new protocol

Mitigation:

- Airdrop to existing Farcaster users
- Interoperability with existing clients
- Marketing highlighting community governance
- Superior economics for both users and builders

11. Success Metrics

11.1 Protocol Health Indicators

Year 1 Targets:

- **Active FIDs:** 50,000+ monthly active users with trust score ≥ 40
- **Registered Apps:** 200+ mini-apps and tools
- **Hub Operators:** 75+ independent validators across 5+ continents
- **Governance Proposals:** 12+ proposals submitted, 60%+ voter participation
- **Treasury Growth:** Self-sustaining through protocol fees

Year 3 Targets:

- **Active FIDs:** 250,000+ monthly active users
- **Registered Apps:** 800+ mini-apps with diverse use cases
- **Hub Operators:** 150+ validators, full geographic distribution
- **Total Value Locked:** \$50M+ in protocol contracts
- **Token Distribution:** >70% of supply in circulation, Gini coefficient <0.65

Year 5 Targets:

- **Active FIDs:** 1M+ monthly active users
- **Registered Apps:** 2,000+ applications
- **Protocol Revenue:** \$10M+ annual from storage and fees
- **Governance Maturity:** Subcommittees operational, quarterly treasury reports
- **Ecosystem Independence:** Core contributors <5% of active development

11.2 Fairness Metrics

Distribution Equity:

- Gini coefficient <0.70 for token distribution (vs. 0.85+ typical for crypto)
- Top 10 holders control <15% of circulating supply
- Builder tier distribution: 60%+ of rewards going to Tier 2 and Tier 3

Anti-Sybil Effectiveness:

- <5% false positive rate on legitimate users
- <2% sybil penetration in reward distributions
- Community confidence score >80% in quarterly surveys

Governance Participation:

- Voter turnout >50% on major proposals
 - Builder participation rate >60%
 - Validator participation rate >70%
 - Proposal success rate between 40-60% (indicates healthy debate)
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12. Conclusion

This tokenomics proposal represents a fundamental rethinking of how decentralized social protocols can align incentives across diverse stakeholders while maintaining fairness and resisting centralization pressures.

Key Innovations:

1. **Flat Reward Curve** — Ensures small builders earn meaningfully, not winner-takes-all
2. **Multi-Dimensional Scoring** — Rewards consistency, effort, and contribution beyond vanity metrics
3. **Robust Anti-Sybil** — Three-layer defense making gaming economically unfavorable
4. **Hybrid Governance** — Balances token holders, builders, and validators to prevent plutocracy
5. **Sustainable Economics** — Controlled emission and fee capture for multi-decade viability

This model prioritizes:

- Long-term ecosystem health over short-term speculation
- Broad participation over concentrated power
- Real value creation over extractive farming
- Community sovereignty over corporate control

The proposal is intentionally designed to evolve. Initial parameters will be refined through governance as the community observes real-world outcomes. Success requires active participation from builders, users, and validators—not passive token holding.

Next Steps:

1. Community discussion on GitHub and forum (30 days)
2. Refinement based on feedback and economic modeling
3. Formal governance proposal with implementation timeline
4. Security audits and testnet deployment
5. Mainnet launch with community participation

We invite all ecosystem participants to contribute ideas, challenge assumptions, and help refine this model. The goal is not perfection at launch, but a fair, adaptable foundation that serves the protocol for decades to come.

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Author: @CryptoExplor

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