

# **A Framework for the Governing Bodies of the NEAR Digital Collective V1.3**

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## Assumptions:

The governance framework was originally based upon Illia's talk at ETH CC, and the original Constitution V1 Draft. Since that time, many new people have joined the NDC Governance Working Group. Here are some of our ongoing assumptions as we iterate upon the Governance Framework:

- All Funds are NOT Going On-Chain Immediately: The treasury is to be managed by Trustees, prior to being allocated into the Governing Body Framework.
- The Governing Bodies are threefold: A House of Merit, A Council of Advisors, and a Transparency Commission. This has been accepted as the starting point for the governance framework and Constitution of the NEAR Ecosystem.
- The goal of the NDC is to allocate the annual NEAR treasury in a decentralized, transparent, and fair manner, for the benefit of the NEAR Ecosystem. While that scope may grow and evolve over time, this is the current mission and task at hand.
  - To add: Quarterly sessions with the community (AMA,s Forums, Discussions, Polls) on an ongoing basis once the NDC has launched.
- The Governance Framework is originally based upon the V1 Constitution Draft: It is not the work of one person, but has been created after a lengthy process of feedback and critical analysis.
- Both the Constitution Draft and the Framework will grow iteratively over time. Nothing posted is final, however the goal is for it to be sufficiently foundational such that governance of the NEAR Ecosystem can get off the ground in a sustainable and robust manner.
  - On Iteration: Let's add that at each iteration, feedback and survey will be performed with the community to legitimize the update. Later, once on chain voting will be done, such decisions will HAVE TO be approved by the whole community. Only the NDC community in V2 will have a power to approve constitution changes.
- The goal of the governance framework is to provide a foundation for the governance of the NEAR Treasury - it is not expected to be a final product.
- The priority at this point in time is shipping an early stage model of governance of the NEAR Treasury - it is not expected to be a perfect system. This early model is structured in two parts: A V0 'setup design' and a V1 adoption design. If done correctly, V0 will naturally lead to launching V1.
- V1 of governance will not be the fully decentralized state of the ecosystem but rather an initial governance model with guardrails to begin to transition the ecosystem to be fully decentralized as an interactive and pragmatic process over time.

- This governance model does not contemplate campaigning, collusion, or other aspects of human behavior outside of the model. Instead, check/balances are used to enforce transparency, fairness, and conflicts of interest
- The scope of governance, in terms of (1) The powers of the different institutions, (2) The tasks and mission of the NDC as a whole, and (3) The mechanics and processes for elections, ecosystem wide participation, and rules surrounding who can run as well as punishments for bad actors *are expected to evolve over time*. Right now the goal is to create a self-enclosed system that works sufficiently to get it off the ground from V0 to V1.
- Budget Allocation from proposals approved in the HoM will be tranced such that full capital deployment of funds will not be sent all at once from the treasury. Rather treasury allocations are distributed over time, and preferably with milestones attached.
- All HoM proposals are fully visible to the public, including the details of the proposal, the amount to be disbursed, as well as the votes of the different members.
- Budget is allocated exclusively through the Governing Bodies in its current iteration and form.

### **Initial Launch Sequence: From V0 to V1.**

- **Set V0 term limits for governing bodies:** Clarify what transitional structure time frames are, as well as who is participating in the V0 ‘launch sequence’.
- **Define the voting mechanisms / criteria for each governing body in V0 to carry over into V1.** Set process by which the different bodies of the V0 are elected - confirm whether this process will carry over to the V1.
- **Elect Transparency Commission to ‘watchdog’ other candidates.** Elect TC first, using established voting mechanisms, as initial launch sequence. TC can then modulate the candidacy of other members of different houses.
- **Identify candidates for HoM and CoA.** Open candidacy for HoM and CoA according to established voting mechanisms and criteria for V0.
- **Hold V0 Elections** on nuanced congressional timeframe. Elect V0 candidates.
- **V0 - V1: Run V0 with elected candidates and preliminary budget until completion.** At the completion of congressional timeframe, run V1 - main governance frame elections for all positions with any iterations or updates form V0 learnings.

Long Term Goal:

We should have a community to be able to create proposals, vote and govern the chain. It's an evolution; It won't happen overnight. It means that the role of the Houses will be reduced and more power, active and direct democracy, given to the users.

## **Governance Framework Underlying Logic:**

- **Institution:** What is the governing body?
- **Role:** What is the purpose of the governing body?
- **List of Actions:** What actions can the governing body take?
- **Number of Seats:** How many members compose the governing body?
- **Composition of Seats:** Where do the members of the governing body come from?
- **Vote to Motion Requirements:** What are the requirements to put a proposal to vote, as a governing body?
- **Quorum Requirements:** What are the requirements to pass a proposal and officially enact it, as a governing body?
- **Eligibility:** Who is eligible to serve on the governing body in question?
- **Meeting Period:** How frequently / routinely does a governing body meet?
- **Term Length and Limits:** How long does one hold a seat in a governing body?
- **Compensation:** How much are members of a governing body compensated, on the monthly?
- **Election Voting Mechanism:** How are members of the governing body elected?
- **Guardrails:** Who watches / holds a check on the governing body in question?
- **Rogue Scenario / Worst Case Scenario:** What is the worst case scenario for a rogue version of the governing body?

## The House of Merit (HoM):

- **Institution:** The House of Merit.
- **Role:** Propose and Allocate. The HoM is the *only* governing body capable of implementing effective proposals which would transfer funds from the treasury into the ecosystem.
- **List of Actions:** The full scope of ‘motions’ which a member of the HoM could propose include the following:
  - **Proposal for budget allocation.** This includes the ‘setup package’ and ‘threshold’ limits for a congressional session. Proposal for budget allocation can be further divided as *recurring* or *singular*.
  - **Proposal for long-term strategy / focus.** A non-budgetary proposal focusing on priorities in the ecosystem and signaling to both the CoA and the TC on the HoM foci.
  - **Proposal to Hire.** To allocate budget specifically for the NDC and governing bodies, should a specific task be requested (i.e. census).
  - **Proposal for Mechanics change to NDC core design.** To motion to alter in some manner the structure of the NDC itself, the timelines for elections, or the rules and statutes of the governing bodies.

- **Number of Seats:** 15.
- **Composition of Seats:** Open to any community member, node, founder, or foundation member.
- **Vote to Motion Requirements:** Vote to motion, refers to who or how many people are required to bring a motion to vote. In the HoM at a minimum two people must sign onto a proposal, in order to bring it to a vote during the weekly meeting sessions.
- **Quorum Requirements:** Quorum refers to the number of votes required in order for a motion or proposal to be accepted and implemented. In the HoM, there are different processes for passing different types of legislation:
  - **The Setup Package (Item A):** Setup Package must pass a simple majority vote (8/15) and not be vetoed by the CoA strong majority before being implemented (1 month implementation time)
  - **Proposals Requesting Recurring Budget (Item B):** If Recurring Funding must pass weekly (simple majority - 8/15) and not be vetoed by CoA strong majority before being implemented (1 month implementation time).
  - **Big Budget Items Over The Individual Threshold (Item C):** If high budget (as set by HoM in initial session), must pass weekly (simple majority - 8/15) and not be vetoed by CoA strong majority before being implemented (1 month implementation time).
  - **Everything Else (Small Budget Items, Non-Recurring, and non-monetary items):** If not Items A,B, or C, then it must pass a weekly simple majority in order to be implemented (Immediate implementation after the weekly vote).
  - **Rejection Criteria:** Not a simple majority, or veto from CoA (where relevant). No Tie is possible. If a member is removed prior to the next election, then a simple majority must still be obtained, and grid-locked is taken as a rejected proposal.
- **Eligibility:** 2 or 1 year of service inside of the Ecosystem (TBD?)
- **Meeting Period:** Weekly.
- **Term Length and Limits:** 2 years per term, 2 terms total.

- **Compensation:** 5,000 USD per month.
- **Election Voting Mechanism:** Open Vote from Community - 1 vote, 1 account - top 15 names are elected.
- **Guardrails:** Members of the HoM are accountable to the Transparency Commission, and can be investigated by an investigation request from any NEAR voting body member and removed if deemed necessary. Proposals by the HoM are accountable to the Council of Advisors, if deemed unacceptable, fiscally irresponsible, or outside of the boundaries of their mandate.
- **Rogue Scenario / Worst Case Scenario:** The HoM rapidly passes small item proposals, and drains their annual budget before the TC can mount an investigation and remove the instigators. However, due to the limits on budget deployment, only one year of budget could be burned in such a manner, after which time the TC would be able to investigate and remove all irresponsible members. The result, is a punt to the next year from which new rules can be added or further safeguards from the CoA can be incorporated.

Quarterly budgets → **Let's change it to:**

**1. We will have quarterly budgets**

**2. Budget for any quarter can be surpassed if other house approves it, and the motivation is shared with community and appropriately survey is made.**

**^ challenge is more friction in passing things if a new budget has to be passed each quarter.**

## **The Council of Advisors:**

- **Institution:** The Council of Advisors (CoA)
- **Role:** Advise and Block / Reinstate.
- **List of Actions:**
  - **Set Priorities for HoM:** To publicly indicate what they believe is of importance for the HoM to focus on, as a mechanism of increasing communication between the governing bodies, and signaling what types of proposals are least likely to see a veto or retraction.
  - **Evaluate Performance of HoM and Identify Shortcomings:** To publicly signal how successful the HoM is performing, and to identify issues, blockers, and failures that should not be forgotten.
  - **Vote to Motion:**

- **(a) Against an active proposal.** This refers primarily to a proposal that is a recurring, threshold, or setup proposal (which would result in an immediate veto). (A) options automatically veto the proposal from the HoM.
  - **(b) Against an implemented proposal.** This refers to small budget, non-recurring, routine proposal (which would require a second vote to revoke or block). If these proposals are blocked after a second vote (in the second monthly meeting), the CoA can nullify any remaining tranches for the proposal, and specify against similar proposals in the future.
  - **(c) To reinstate a member removed by the TC, after the fact.** This refers to the removal of members by the Transparency Commission. With two passing votes in two recurring sessions, the CoA is able to reinstate a member - making them eligible to run again for any post they previously may have been removed from. Note: They are not automatically elected again to that post. So while the CoA reinstates them, they still must be elected once again.
- **Number of Seats:** 5.
  - **Composition of Seats:** Undetermined.
  - **Vote to Motion Requirements:** A minimum of 2 of the 5 members of the CoA must jointly put forward a motion in order for it to be considered for a vote.
  - **Quorum Requirements:** A strong majority of 4/5 members must vote in favor of a motion. For (B) and (C) motions this quorum must be met in two consecutive CoA meetings (in two separate months).
  - **Eligibility:** 1 years of active involvement in the NEAR Ecosystem.
  - **Meeting Period:** Minimum monthly. HoM may request extraordinary sessions.
  - **Term Length and Limits:** 2 years per term, 2 terms total.
  - **Compensation:** 5,000 USD per month.
  - **Election Voting Mechanism:** Open Vote from Community - 1 vote, 1 account - top 5 names are elected.
  - **Guardrails:** The CoA is not able to implement any single proposal, or remove any member. Therefore, the CoA is strictly a defensive modulator of the intentions of the HoM.



- **Rogue Scenario / Worst Case Scenario:** The CoA repeatedly blocks the setup package from the HoM, effectively neutering the entire congress and blocking the deployment of any funds whatsoever. The damage here is *time* and *inefficiency* to governance on NEAR. If this is deemed inappropriate, the TC would then investigate the CoA and remove them, from which new members could be elected.
- **Vote of Distrust:** Also, community should be able express a Votum of distrust (by getting sufficient support in near social or forum poll... TBD). In that case, a house must be disassembled and new election performed.

## The Transparency Commission:

- **Institution:** The Transparency Commission (TC)
- **Role:** Investigate, Report, and Remove.
- **List of Actions:** Importantly, each action requires a separate vote.
  - **Investigate.** Must specify in the investigation if the intent is to remove, or remove and ban from future participation. This is to be determined by the discretion of the TC. After any investigation, the TC automatically votes to either remove or retain the member under investigation.
  - **Motion to Remove / Motion to Ban.** If a simple majority approves the vote to remove the member, the member is removed from their position in the governing body. If the motion is to ban, then the member is removed and barred from ever serving again in the NEAR governance framework.
  - **Motion to Retain.** If a simple majority approves a motion to retain, the member is kept in their position.
    - **Question:** Should there be a limit on the number of times an individual can be investigated? Max 3 if no motion to remove was issued (Blaze)
- **Number of Seats:** 7
- **Composition of Seats:** Undetermined.

- **Vote to Motion Requirements:** 1 member of the TC is required to bring an item up to a vote.
- **Quorum Requirements:** In order for a vote to pass, it requires 4/7 members of the TC to vote in favor of that proposal.
- **Eligibility:** Any active ecosystem member with more than 1.5 years of experience in the NEAR community.
- **Meeting Period:** Ongoing - or as set by the TC themselves and according to the number of active investigations and complaints.
- **Term Length and Limits:** 2 year terms, maximum of 2 total.
- **Compensation:** 5,000 USD per month.
- **Election Voting Mechanism:** Open Vote from Community - 1 vote, 1 account - top 7 names are elected.
- **Guardrails:** The Transparency Commission is only able to investigate and remove members of the governing bodies - including themselves. They are not able to impact the deployment of the treasury, the proposals themselves, or any other mechanics of the NDC.
- **Rogue Scenario / Worst Case Scenario:** The TC ‘nukes’ the governing bodies by serially removing every member, until there is no NDC and no capacity to legislate. In which case the system fully stalls. Notably, no treasury can be deployed in this scenario.
  - Three open points here:
    - Should there be a limit on removals per year by TC? No (Blaze)
    - Should there be a check on removals after a certain threshold? (to modulate the power of the TC?) (CoA holds check)
    - Should there be a further check on the TC, in some way in order to ensure that the TC itself cannot become corrupted? (i.e. there is no favoritism played towards investigations and removals? → Make removals a process that must be voted on by house of stake / all governing houses? *Should removals from a position require a vote by all of the governing houses or solely the TC?*)
    - Should there be an external audit mechanism for oversight on the proposals passed by the HoM?

## Voting Procedures and Congressional Timeframes:

Election voting procedures refer to the process by which members of the different governing bodies are elected into their positions. Every voting procedure is connected with a congressional timeframe, such that Election 1, corresponds to Congress 1.

### Election Voting Sequence:

*Key Variables:*

- Election Week = EW = The week of elections held for the different governing bodies.
- Candidate Deadline = EW - 1 month = The deadline - 1 month before the election week- from which all candidates must announce their candidacy to be included on the ballot.
- Onboarding Month Between Elections = ML. The time between the election and the onboarding of the new congress.
- Rotation Day = RD = The day in which old members are removed, and new members are added to their respective governing bodies. Officially signaling the start of the congress.

### Election Timeline:

- **2 Weeks to Announce Candidacy:** During this time the TC checks the validity of any member and guarantees all members are eligible before election week begins.
- **Election Week:** When voting opens up, from which at the end of the week the top names are selected to onboard to the next congress.
- **Month before Onboarding of New Members.** The time in-between the end of the previous congress, and the start of the new one. Incoming members can use this time to prepare the setup package and align on priorities, prior to commencing.

### Start of New Congress:

- Passage of Setup Package: The setup package defines thresholds and the annual budget for both years of the congress. Thresholds refer to recurring items, individual item thresholds, and weekly thresholds (limits).
  - **Thresholds**
    - For Recurring Items: Items that are to be funding on an ongoing basis.
    - For Individual Items: One time, big ticket items.

- *For Weekly Passage of Items:* For the total amount of budget allocated on a weekly basis.
- **Annual Budgets for Entire Term:** Two budgets for each year - these budgets cannot be revised unless another package is passed by HoM with CoA approval.
- **Congressional Session for 2 Years.**
- **1 Month and 3 Weeks Before The End of the Congress:** The Election Sequence begins, comprising the candidacy deadline (2 weeks prior to election), election week, followed by month before onboarding.

## **Innovation Points and Open Questions:**

### **The Three Buckets of Decision Making**

- What is open for discussion / vote?
- What is not open for discussion vote / what has already been decided?
- What is to be decided in the future and by whom?

### **Including the House of Stake:**

- Define the scope of involvement of the collective body.
- Define a system of human verification of the collective body.
- Define a system to avoid monopolization of power via collective decision making due to whales and funds.
- Decide where to specifically integrate a collective voting mechanism beyond the election process:
  - In the passage of the 'Setup Package'
  - For approval of big budget items.
  - For approval of recurring funding.
  - For changes of protocol wide mechanics.
  - For changes to the constitution
  - For changes to governing body composition and rules.
  - For changes to the election process itself.
  - In the removal of members under investigation.
- Opening Up Decisions To Ecosystem Wide Votes:
  - For the removal of members from a governing body?
  - For a revision to the election or constitutional process?

- Crisis Moments and Atomic Scenarios:
  - Locking the treasury.
  - Hack Mitigation / Response Process.

#### **Transparency Commission Accountability:**

- **Should there be a limit on removals per year by the Transparency Commission?**
  - (A) Yes
  - (B) No
- **Should removals from a position in a governing body require a vote by all of the governing houses or solely the TC?**
  - (A) No, the TC is qualified and capable of determining for themselves who is fit to serve.
  - (B) Yes, if the TC wishes to remove someone from a position of power, they should need the governing body to approve their decision in order for the member to actually be removed.
- **Should there be an external audit mechanism for oversight on the proposals passed by the HoM, done on a quarterly basis?**
  - (A) Yes, and the treasury should finance the quarterly job in order to ensure proper budget allocation.
  - (B) No, the Transparency Commission and any interested community member can track proposals on-chain to verify conflicts of interest and effectiveness.
- **Should there be a mechanism by which any member of the house of stake can put forward a removal challenge for a member of a house? If so, what is the duration and minimum stake required in order for that challenge to succeed?**
  - (A) A member can motion to remove a member of any house, if that motion receives X% of governing body vote in Y time period, then the member is removed.
  - (B) No, governing body members should not be able to motion to remove elected members of NDC.

#### **HoM Allocations:**

- **How are allocation proposals from the HoM to be structured? Should they be tranching over time, as opposed to deployed in lump sums?**
  - (a) All allocation proposals should break up funding into milestones, such that the treasury allocation is not allocated all at once, but over time.
  - (b) All allocation proposals should be deployed in a single lump sum.
  - (c) Only allocation proposals of certain amounts should be deployed as lump sums, with larger amounts allocated in tranches for specific milestones.
- **TWE should the governing body be involved in (1) passage of the setup package and budget, (2) removal and banning of members, (3) veto on budget decisions from HoM?**
  - (A) governing body approval is required for all 1, 2 and 3.
  - (B) governing body can motion and vote on the removal of members.
  - (C) governing body can motion to nullify the setup package and reset the budget at any time.
  - (D) governing body can veto recurring and big ticket budget decisions by HoM at any time.
  - (E) all of the above.

#### **Governing Bodies Voting Power:**

- **Should the governing body be eligible to dissolve the Congress and hold new elections?**
  - (A) Yes, but only if a significantly high % of the governing body votes for it.
  - (B) No, because there are elections every X years anyway.
- **Should the governing body be eligible to surpass the HoM and pass their own budget allocation proposal for a large, small or recurring item, at any time?**
  - (A) Yes, assuming X% of the governing body approves it.
  - (B) No, the sole capacity to allocate budget should be vested in the HoM.
- **Should the governing body hold a final check on members of the TC, and have the sole authority to remove members of the TC?**
  - (A) Yes, this ensures proper overall checks on the TC power.
  - (B) No, the TC can self-regulate sufficiently to avoid this need.

#### **A few open items that have come up in addition to the opening questions:**

1. Updated Constitution
  - NDC Overview
  - Adding the Prelude Aaron put together on the forum

-- Any learnings / final language changes

2. Term limits remove or tie to the V1 timeline

3. Governing body members. General recommendation to increase

-- HOM 30 members

-- CoA 7 members

-- TC 5 members

#### **4. Proportionate Seat Growth Over Time**

Census style - as defined by x,y,z indicators.

### **Polling Results:**

**Should there be a limit on removals per year by the Transparency Commission?**

NO

**Should removals from a position in a governing body require a vote by all of the governing houses or solely the TC?**

No, the TC is qualified and capable of determining for themselves who is fit to serve.

**Should there be an external audit mechanism for oversight on the proposals passed by the HoM, done on a quarterly basis?**

NO - done by TC and Community.

**Should there be a mechanism by which any member of the voting body can put forward a removal challenge for an elected member of a house?**

NO -

**Should allocation proposals in the HoM be tranced over time, as opposed to deployed in lump sums?**

A - Tranced Funding.

**To what extent, should the governing body be involved in (1) passage of the setup package and budget, (2) removal and banning of members, (3) veto on budget decisions from HoM?**

(D) governing body can veto recurring and big ticket budget decisions by HoM at any time.

**Should the governing body be eligible to dissolve the Congress and hold new elections?**

(B) No, because there are elections every X years anyway.

**Should the voting body be eligible to surpass the HoM and pass their own budget allocation proposal for a large, small or recurring item, at any time?**

(B) No, the sole capacity to allocate budget should be vested in the HoM.

**Should the voting body hold a final check on members of the TC, and have the sole authority to remove members of the TC?**

(B) No, the TC can self-regulate sufficiently to avoid this need.

**Should a third party entity audit the work of the TC?**

NO

**Should the voting body possess the power to remove one or more members of the TC commission?**

No, the TC can self-regulate themselves sufficiently and investigate themselves if need be.

**Additional Questions:**



- FINAL CALL: How many seats should the HoM Comprise?
  - 15
  - 30
  - 15 at first, but iterate up to 30.
- FINAL CALL: How many seats should the Transparency Commission Comprise?
  - 7
  - 5
- FINAL CALL: How many seats should the Council of Advisors Comprise?
  - 7
  - 5
- Macro Direction of the Gov Framework: How would you like to see governance evolve on NEAR into the Future?
  - Towards enabling / moving towards more direct community involvement from the voting body (such that anyone can create a proposal, or help determine annual budget).
  - Towards strengthening the governing bodies such that governance is efficiently managed as an institution.
- Do you care if the NDC succeeds?
  - Yes
  - No
- What are you most worried about the NDC getting wrong?
  - Concentrating wealth in the hands of the few
  - Being inefficient and a nothing-burger
  - Making bad decisions for the ecosystem
  - Im not worried, I love the NDC
- What do you care more about in the rollout of the NDC?
  - Efficiency in getting the governing bodies established
  - Decentralization in the design
  - Proper and transparent management of the treasury
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#### **V0 to V1:**

- What is the V0 timeframe?

- How long are members elected in the V0 setup sequence?
- What is the maximum budget of the V0 sequence?
- Election terms will only begin in the V1.

### **Crisis Moments:**

- Under what circumstances should the treasury be locked until a new election cycle passes?

### **The Product Itself:**

- An interface to follow the timeline of the Session.
- Toolkit for putting together a proposal / Vote.
- Notification tool for voting and upcoming votes.
- Updates and Status on Past Votes and potential Vetos.
- Investigation Status and tracker.

## **V1 Launch Plan**

### **How are we going to legitimize V1?**

#### **Design Stages:**

1. Open call for comments (now)
2. Collect comments and opinions via polls, forum discussion, etc.
  - a. prepare a report based on the comments and polls. (Dec 17)
3. First Twitter Space using [@NEARgovernance](#) account (December 17-23)
4. Second Call for comments (starts after First Twitter Space)
5. Second Twitter Space (beginning of Jan)
6. Last Call (end of Jan)
7. Finalize (mid Feb)

**Action items:** Amplify the plan and get people working on different parts to collaborate. Implementation is already happening, and it's behind the design (as it should be).

**How are we going to appoint candidates?** Each candidate has to submit a detailed proposal, explaining why they are a good candidate. We consider two general options for the process:

1. One-stage process: Community DAO (v1 of i-am-human) to vote for the candidates
  - a. We can assign plural votes (so particular humans could get multiple votes).
2. Two-stage process:
  - a. First stage is to select top X candidates using Community DAO (as in option 1)
  - b. Second stage is a stake-weighted vote for selecting from top-ranked candidates

## v1 Requirements

- **V0: MISSION ~ open, fair, community-led processes**
  - **V0: meta governance ~ GWG (road to v2 and beyond)**
  - **V0: building consensus (on-chain polls)**
    - on-chain voting processes (to validate the Constitution, for example)
      - “Legitimacy DAO” / GWG members-only voting
      - stake-weighted voting (no identity verification)
  - **V1: elections / candidacy**
  - **V1: on-chain group membership**
  - **V1: proposal mechanisms**
  - **V1: feedback loops + 3rd-party audits**
  - **V1: transparency → accountability through compliance & reporting**
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- V2: identity verification (for quadratic / conviction voting mechanisms)
  - V2: reputation systems via Near Social