

Polkadot Ambassador Fellowship: Initial Funding Request and Validation of the Advisory Board

Date: 11 November 2024

Proposer(s): Lucy Coulden, DonDiego Sanchez

Amount Requested: USDT 640,000.00

The Advisory Board:

Basti Köcher, Chrissy Hill, Christoph Kampitsch, Felix-Swarm, Joe Petrowski, John Linden, Kai C. Chng, Mister Cole, Otar Shakarishvili, Radha Dasari, Rob Wood, Seraya Takahashi, Shawn Tabrizi.

Multi-Sig Wallet Address:

Basti Kocher, Felix-Swarm, Joe Petrowski, John Linden, Kai C Chng, Mister Cole, Otar Shakarishvili, Radha Dasari, Seraya Takahashi, Shawn Tabrizi. Plus Lucy Coulden and DonDiego Sanchez and to oversee the administration and technical processes, respectively, for the Advisory Board.

Overall Purpose:

Establishment of the Polkadot Ambassador Fellowship Advisory Board and deployment of an interim funding phase.

Overview

This proposal outlines the funding strategy for the launch and initial phase of the Polkadot Ambassador Fellowship, focusing on two areas: an interim Phragmèn Funding System and the Ambassador Fellowship Sub-Treasury.

Phragmèn Funding System

NB: we have changed the name of the Fund from 'Optimistic Fund to Phragmèn Funding System' to 'Phragmèn Funding System' to avoid confusion with any other payment initiatives currently operating within the ecosystem.

Establishing a program based on optimistic funding will ensure that the Polkadot ecosystem has immediate access to funds.

An optimistic funding scheme proposes that the main Polkadot Treasury periodically transfers a predetermined sum of funds, whether in DOT tokens or fiat denominations, to an agnostic 'optimistic treasury' on a pro-rata basis. We suggest that a sensible starting point would be to handle monthly funding requests and treasury top-ups. On this assumption, during the prior month, any person, group, or collective within the Polkadot ecosystem may request a portion of the following month's treasury to cover their needs for that period.

During each pro-rata period, the community can vote on which person, collective, or scheme each portion of the optimistic fund will be used to finance during the next allocation period. If voters choose not to cancel or alter their previous voting preference, their vote will continue indefinitely (as long as the same entity is requesting funding). This approach allows voters to redirect resources each interval without burdening the voter base, should they be satisfied with the status quo.

All ecosystem participants have the right to apply for Optimistic Treasury funding, and the token holders can vote for their preferred applicants. While funding requests are not restricted to Ambassador-related activities, if the program performs as intended, we expect the community to prioritise and allocate resources to the necessary elements to push the program forward (optimistically). We suggest using a Phragmén voting system to determine the allocation of the Optimistic Treasury pot, as explained in section 5.3.2.

Establishing a funding mechanism open to all ecosystem participants will ensure that both the funding mechanism and any Ambassador program remain as resilient as possible.

Establishing a funding mechanism can introduce significant social and programming complications and is often a major barrier to entry for new programs. Additionally, when a program is created with inbuilt funding, if the program fails, the funding mechanism is often rendered useless and collapses. The friction in creating funding mechanisms can often lead to programs continuing past their useful lifespan and also inhibit valuable new programs from materialising.

By decoupling the Ambassador program from this new optimistic funding mechanism, we hope to create an enduring program. Should the time come when the community decides that this version of the Ambassador program is no longer fit for purpose, we believe any subsequent community-supported program must be swiftly created and have immediate access to funding through the independent optimistic funding mechanism.

This is how the Phragmén Funding System process will work when it is actively used by the Ambassador Fellowship:

- Each OpBlock is valued at USD 10,000.00.
- The community votes periodically on how many OpBlox should be available each month, which will then be filled out automatically by the main Polkadot Treasury.
- All DOT holders can apply to the Optimistic Fund with Phragmén Voting. The applicant should be from Rank I-VI for a proposal related to the Ambassador Fellowship programme.
- Applicants can apply for multiple OpBlocks at one time.
- Elections happen at equal intervals. The length will be determined as necessary to benefit Polkadot's needs.
- Those elected get access to spend up to USD 10,000.00 from the treasury during their election period.
- Each spend has a required text memo field where the Ambassador describes what the funds are used for.
- Elected individuals do not need to spend all the money, and spending the money is not a default operation.

- Elected individuals can send money to their verified wallet for payment, salary, compensation or reward.
- Elections occur on-chain, so Ambassadors need not appeal to anyone except DOT holders.
- DOT holders can update their nominations based on the memos and spending history of individuals.
- DOT holders can update any parameters based on the ecosystem's needs.

Funding Requirements

We are requesting USDT 640,000.00.

The interim Phragmén Funding System- USDT 600,000.00

This will fund a test run to replicate the future Phragmén Funding System, which will provide financial support to key initiatives within the Polkadot Network. During this initial phase, 15 Opblocks will be allocated to various initiatives. The process for distributing these funds will be overseen by the advisory board.

Funds will be held on a multisig composed of Basti Kocher, Felix-Swarm, Joe Petrowski, John Linden, Kai C Chng, Mister Cole, Otar Shakarishvili, Radha Dasari, Seraya Takahashi, Shawn Tabrizi. Plus Lucy Coulden and DonDiego Sanchez and to oversee the administration and technical processes, respectively, for the Advisory Board.

All unused funds will be returned to the treasury at the end of the four month period.

This funding plan is designed to support the initial establishment of the Polkadot Ambassador Fellowship while also testing its long-term operational needs. By funding key areas such as operations, leadership, and vertical initiatives, the plan lays the groundwork for a sustainable and impactful program within the broader Polkadot ecosystem.

The Interim Sub-Treasury: USDT 40,000.00

This will cover essential operational needs, such as tools (G-Suite, Discord), ambassador merchandise and emergency expenses.

All unused funds will remain in the sub-treasury and roll over for the following quarter if the programme is deemed a success and is continuing. If it is not and the Ambassador Fellowship is ceasing activity, all unused funds will be returned to the treasury at the end of the four month period.

Funding

Implementing the new Ambassador Fellowship pallet and the Phragmén election-based funding mechanism will require time and careful deployment. To maintain momentum within the Ambassador

Program and deliver immediate results for the Polkadot Network, we propose an interim funding phase. This phase will bridge the gap, enabling us to refine and test processes before committing them to code.

During this interim period—projected to last four months—the Ambassador Fellowship will operate with processes that closely mimic the dynamics planned for the future pallet. Temporarily, an Advisory Board will stand in for Token Holders, managing decisions on funding allocation, expense validation, and slot efficiency oversight. This Advisory Board will play a crucial role in ensuring transparent and effective operations until the finalised mechanism is in place.

Furthermore, the interim phase will encourage community involvement. During the referendum voting period, any community member will have the opportunity to propose their own initiative for funding consideration. The submission process is outlined below.

- **Interim Sub-Treasury**

**Request: 10,000 USD per month for four months;
Total: 40,000 USD**

The Ambassador Fellowship programme has an on-chain treasury which will be used to provide tooling for the Fellowship and cover any incidental costs. The top-up amount and frequency will be agile, depending on the need. The required funds and top-ups will be requested via OpenGov, based on the process set by the Ambassador Fellowship. The use of the funds once in the treasury will be decided through the internal Fellowship voting system. Examples of what the Ambassador sub-treasury would be used for:

- Tooling such as G-Suite, Element, Discord, premium membership for apps and social media channels.
- Branding and marketing
- Specialist merchandise for Ambassadors
- Operational emergencies

When the Ambassador Fellowship is fully operational, the treasury attached to the pallet will be topped up by the main Polkadot treasury and spent as described above. We will be mimicking that funding by requesting a similar amount for this period. This will allow us to test the waters as to how much will be required by the Ambassador Fellowship on an ongoing basis. For the purposes of the interim treasury, spending in the establishment period will be decided upon by the Advisory Board.

- **Interim Optimistic Fund with Phragmèn Voting**

**Request: 15 Optimistic Blocks (OpBlocks) per month, 60 OpBlocks in four months;
Total: 600,000 USD.**

As with the sub-treasury, the funds will be used to mimic the Optimistic Fund with Phragmèn Voting, which will be being built during this time. We will begin with a small number of Opblocks to demonstrate to the community how the system will work and gauge how many OpBlocks we should start with when the Fund opens.

This funding mechanism is designed to support a diverse range of initiatives, including:

Solo Operating Ambassadors; Full-Time

A full-time Solo Operating Ambassador may request funding equivalent to a full-time position (40 hours per week) by applying for one or multiple OpBlocks. This role requires the Ambassador's exclusive dedication to the Polkadot Network and the Ambassador Fellowship, with no other commitments or external funding inside the ecosystem. Any funded commitments outside of the ecosystem must be declared upon application for OpBlocks.

Solo Operating Ambassadors; Part-Time

A part-time Solo Operating Ambassador may seek funding proportional to a part-time role (20 hours per week), either through a single or shared OpBlock arrangement with another part-time Ambassador. This Ambassador may hold additional commitments and receive funding from other sources inside (up to a further 20 hours per week) or outside of the ecosystem, provided they fulfil their obligations to token holders and deliver measurable results for the program.

Groups of Ambassadors

In this model, a group of Ambassadors collaborates to undertake a specific initiative. They may request one or more OpBlocks, depending on the project scope. While no individual commitment is required from each member, the group as a whole is expected to deliver meaningful results and make a positive impact.

DAOs / Communities

Domestic or thematic communities (such as DAOs) may apply for funding, requesting one or more OpBlocks as needed. The primary expectation from these groups is the achievement of clear results that align with the program's objectives.

OpBlocks Allocation

This proposal aims to initiate the first of the 15 available slots by funding the Advisory Board itself. This initial slot will allocate USDT 10,000.00 per month to the members of the Advisory Board. The primary role of the Advisory Board will be to select the recipients for the remaining 14 slots.

1) Applications

Individual Ambassadors, groups, or communities interested in applying for one or more of the 15 slots will be invited to complete the application form, available on the [Phoenix-Project](#) GitHub repository. Applicants will have 21 days from the publication date of this referendum to submit their applications.

2) Selection Process

After the 21-day application period, the Advisory Committee will have a 14-day window to review and select the slot recipients. The final selections are expected to be announced by the conclusion of the referendum voting period. Given the temporary nature of this process, the Advisory Board is not required to provide justifications for their choices, allowing flexibility for these busy committee members to make efficient decisions.

3) Expense Reporting and Accountability

In preparation for the future implementation of the Phragmén system, selected members will be required to document and justify their expenses. The Advisory Board will oversee this accountability process and hold the authority to maintain, remove, or replace a slot recipient if necessary.

- **OpBlock 1: Advisory Board**

- Role: to provide advice and guidance to the Operational Committee (OpCom) on decisions that (1) are critical to the establishment of the programme and cannot go through OpenGov due to the nature of the decision or time restrictions and (2) would be voted on using the Phragmén system when it has been established.
- Monthly time commitment: Each advisor is expected to contribute 10 working hours in month one and two hours per month for month two, three and four. There will need to be some flexibility depending on the needs of the programme when it is first established.
- Compensation: 1,000.00 USD per month for each Advisor.
- Selection Process: we have asked ten members of the Polkadot ecosystem that provide a cross-section of expertise and represent different corners of the community. All of those that we have approached have a long history within the ecosystem and are well-known and highly respected for their contributions. These are amongst the most trusted members of the ecosystem and will form a solid backbone for the programme along with the Operating Committee Director and Leads.

- **Advisory Board Composition**

- Basti Köcher
- Chrissy Hill
- Christoph Kampitsch
- Felix-Swarm
- Joe Petrowski
- John Linden
- Kai C. Chng
- Mister Cole
- Otar Shakarishvili
- Radha Dasari
- Rob Wood
- Seraya Takahashi
- Shawn Tabrizi

- **OpBlock 2-5: Interim Programme Director & Interim Programme Leads**

- Role: the establishment of the Polkadot Ambassador Fellowship in December 2024 and leadership during the incubation phase, Q1 2025.
- Key responsibilities:
 - Complete initial seeding of Ambassadors from Ranks I-IV.
 - Onboard 5 Ambassador at Rank 0 during Q1 2025.
 - Select specialist verticals to operate during the incubation period.
 - Establish a framework to assess the program's effectiveness and ensure continuous improvement.

- Specify how real-time collaboration tools will be utilised to maintain constant dialogue between Ambassadors and Ambassadors and the Polkadot community, especially across time zones.
 - Select, set-up and manage the tools best suited for the Fellowship
 - Create a culture of collaboration within the programme. Introduce regular Town Halls for Ambassadors to provide feedback on program initiatives, content, and challenges. This ensures a continuous improvement loop that adapts to evolving community needs.
 - Establish the specialist verticals that focus internally on the Fellowship:
 - Ambassador Development and Recognition
 - Programme Impact and Success
 - Recruitment and retention
 - Monthly time commitment: the equivalent of two full-time Programme Directors. These roles are highly skilled, will be intense and require additional hours for the duration of this period.
- **OpBlock 6-15: Specialist Verticals (SVs)**
 - These will be subject to the submission process outlined above and OpBlocks may be split in two (USDT 5,000.00 for each recipient) as a testing ground for what will best serve the ecosystem when the Phragmén Funding System is active.
 - **Specialist Vertical Application Process:**
The application process will be shared by Friday 15 November. It will be a simple Google sheet submission. The selected SVs will then be logged on GitHub for when they become active in January 2025.
 - Applications will be accepted for a 14 day period from Monday 18 - Sunday 30 November 2024.
 - Applications will be reviewed by the Advisory Board and Operational Committee from Monday 1 - Sunday 15 December 2024.
 - Selected SVs will be notified followed by the community on the dedicated channel on the Polkadot Discord by EOD on Tuesday 17 December.
 - Selected SVs will begin active work on Monday 6 January for the duration of Q1 2025.

Milestones and Expectations

We have defined key milestones and expectations to evaluate the success of the Polkadot Ambassador Fellowship's initial phases: (1) the Establishment Phase, December 2024, and (2) the Incubation Phase, January – March, Q1 2025. These metrics provide a structured framework for assessing both operational effectiveness and the program's influence on the broader Polkadot ecosystem.

This OKR and KPI framework ensures that the Fellowship's mission is aligned with quantifiable, actionable goals, while also allowing for strategic adjustments based on community input and program

outcomes. Each KPI, along with specified tracking intervals, supports ongoing alignment with the Fellowship's objectives and facilitates timely adjustments as needed.

1. Successfully Launch and Establish the Ambassador Fellowship Program
2. Support Initiatives to Drive Engagement and Create Community Impact
3. Develop and Sustain a High-Retention, High-Engagement Ambassador Network
4. Ensure Transparent, Accountable and Effective Use of Funding
5. Build Long-Term Infrastructure and Strategy for Continuous Improvement

A detailed overview is available [here](#). These points have been shared with the Polkadot community and will remain open for discussion throughout the voting period and the establishment and incubation phases. As we explore what will lead to the best outcomes, it's important to allow expectations to evolve, so change should be anticipated.

Seeding

In December 2024, an initial cohort of 50+ Ambassadors, spanning Ranks I through IV, will be formally inducted as part of the Ambassador Fellowship's establishment phase. This selection process will adhere strictly to the ranking methodology specified in the Ambassador Fellowship Manifesto. Final decisions regarding seeding will be made by the OpCom in conjunction with the Advisory Board, with advisory support from members of the Technical Fellowship. If there are more than 50 members of the community who wish to be seeded as part of the initial establishment and incubation period, the Advisory Board will use their discretion to decide how many individuals to include, with a maximum cap of 100. This cap is in place to not overstretch the framework whilst it is in the build phase.

Following this initial seeding, Fellowship membership will open to all applicants beginning in January. A key objective for the OpCom during this incubation period will be the onboarding of 5 Advocate Ambassadors (Rank 0), thereby broadening the Fellowship's reach and establishing a strong foundation for its future impact. We are keeping this number tight due to feedback from multiple individuals suggesting we keep the incubation phase tight and do not risk a speedy expansion overriding the build out of a robust programme. This number grows the seeded cohort by a sensible and solid 10% , whilst also serving as a testing ground for the onboarding and engagement protocols designed by the OpComm during this period.

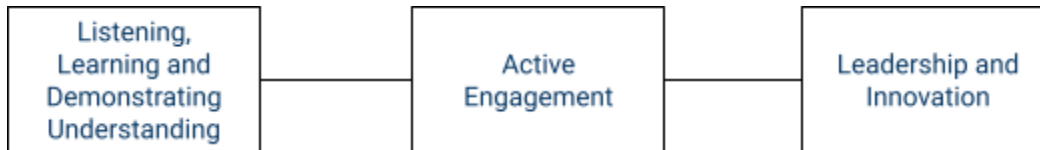
Ranking Methodology

The active ranks (I-VI) are divided into three tiers, each aligned with expected behaviours and deliverables. These behaviours and resulting actions are broad-spectrum, based on the natural evolution of the learning and development process.

[A—Learners] 1–2

[B—Engagers] 3–4

[C—Drivers] 5–6



Tier A: Learners

Listening, Learning and Demonstrating Understanding

- Associate Ambassador (Rank I)
Listening and Learning about the Polkadot Network and the Community
- Lead Ambassador (Rank II)
Initial engagement with the Polkadot Community

Tier B: Engagers

Active Engagement

- Senior Ambassador (Rank III)
Actively Engaging with the Polkadot Community and Growing External Networks
- Principal Ambassador (Rank IV)
Helping External Partners Navigate the Polkadot Ecosystem, Cross-Chain Collaboration, Fellowship Programme Management

Tier C: Drivers

Leadership and Innovation

- Global Ambassador (Rank V)
External Partnership Lead, Fellowship Programme Process Design
- Global Head Ambassador (Rank VI)
Globally Recognised Voice of Authority, Strategically Aligning the Ambassador Fellowship with Polkadot senior leaders.

Six key areas of appraisal for seeding:

No.	Key Area of Appraisal	Expected At	Example Action
1	Online Engagement	Ranks I–VI	Community Forums and Chat Channels, Social Media, Podcasts, Live Spaces
2	Offline Engagement	Ranks II–VI	Event Attendance, Meetups, Hosting, Speaking
3	Governance	Ranks II–VI	OpenGov voting, Proposal Submission, Advocacy and Onboarding [retail and whales], Delegations
4	Community Growth and Sustainability	Ranks III–VI	Onboarding Retail Customers, DevRel, Ambassador Fellowship Growth and Retention, Educational Tool and Material Development

5	External Partnerships	Ranks IV–VI	Enterprise adoption, Cross-Chain partnerships, Investors, Government lobbying, Institutional user onboarding
6	Executive Responsibilities and Mentorship	Ranks V–VI	Ambassador Fellowship Development, Polkadot Strategy, Governance Engagement

Key Documents

- [Project Phoenix: Polkadot Ambassador Fellowship Manifesto DRAFT 5.0](#)
- [Project Phoenix: Ambassador Fellowship at a Glance](#)
- [Project Phoenix: Key Updates](#)
- [Project Phoenix](#)