The Decentralized Open Source Program Office

A visual guide to the dOSPO model — sustaining open source infrastructure in Web3 ecosystems through bounded, accountable coordination.

What Is a dOSPO?

A **community-mandated coordination layer** that separates **policy authority** from **operational execution** to steward open source infrastructure within decentralized Web3 ecosystems. It does not own projects, dictate roadmaps, or centralize contributors. It provides **bounded, renewable execution capacity** for functions that decentralization alone cannot reliably perform.

INFOGRAPHIC 01

Four Structural Failures of Web3 Open Source

⚡ 01 Dependency Risk at Scale

Thousands of apps rely on a handful of libraries maintained by a few individuals — with no formal obligation, compensation, or succession planning.

🚨 02 Incident Coordination Latency

When vulnerabilities span multiple components, decentralized ecosystems face unclear authority, fragmented disclosure channels, and delayed response.

💰 03 Funding Mismatch

Grants and bounties initiate work but fail to sustain it. Maintenance needs continuity and accountability — not milestone completion.

04 The Governance Gap

When coordination is absent, governance becomes implicit and unaccountable. Influence substitutes for mandate. Crisis substitutes for planning.

The Governance Triangle

LEGITIMACY

DAO
Only

**Corp
OSPO**

dOSPO
Balanced

**Foun-
dation**

EUTRALITY

EXECUTION

● DAO-Only ● Foundation ● Corp OSPO ● dOSPO

Comparative Framework

DIMENSION	DAO-ONLY	FOUNDATION	CORP. OSPO	DOSPO ◆
Legitimacy	High	Medium	Low	High
Execution Capacity	Low–Med	Med–High	High	High (delegated)
Neutrality Risk	Whale capture	Donor/board capture	Employer capture	Bounded by charter
Incident Response	High latency	Medium latency	Low latency	Low latency
Replaceability	High	Low	Low	High
Fork Tolerance	High	Medium	Low	High
Primary Failure	Non-decisions	Institutional drift	Centralization	Bureaucracy if unchecked

dOSPO Core Functions

Single Intake Surface

One entry point for ecosystem-wide proposals and issues, reducing fragmentation and duplicated effort.

Portfolio Visibility

Maintains a view across all infrastructure and tooling, including builder profiles linking verified achievements to persistent identities.

Lifecycle Funding Coordination

Coordinates lifecycle-based funding programs approved by governance — matching instruments to project maturity.

Cross-Project Alignment

Facilitates alignment where dependencies overlap between projects, preventing conflicts and ensuring coherence.

Security Coordination

Organizes incident response workflows with defined disclosure paths, severity taxonomy, and pre-authorized roles.

Developer Community Stewardship

Provides onboarding paths, contribution frameworks, and cross-project visibility that persist beyond the dOSPO's mandate.

Three-Domain Governance Architecture

DOMAIN 1
Open Source

› Lifecycle criteria & maturity
› Funding eligibility standards
› Transparency & reporting
› Contribution guidelines
› Code governance for dApps

DOMAIN 2
Technical

› Cross-project standards
› Dependency management
› Interoperability requirements
› Technical gating for transitions
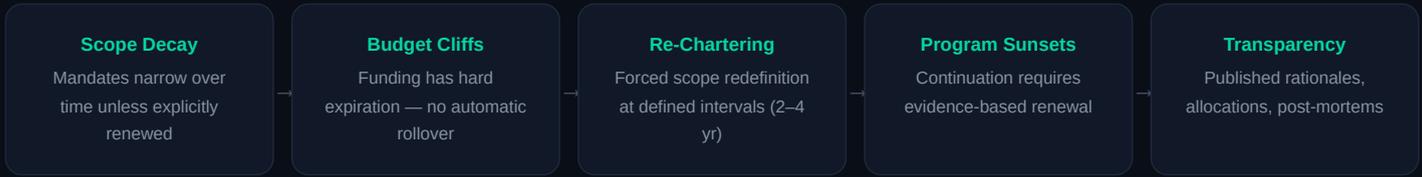› Quality & integration review

DOMAIN 3
Security

› Disclosure policy
› Severity taxonomy
› Embargo procedures
› Incident coordination authority
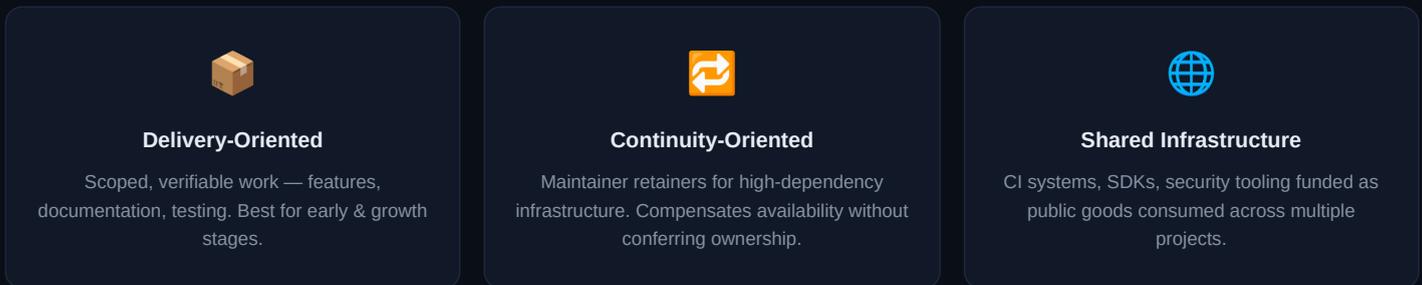› Emergency power constraints

▼   ▼   ▼

► dOSPO OPERATOR ◄

Delegated execution within bounded authority — manages intake, coordinates programs, facilitates alignment, organizes incident response, produces reporting. Does not set priorities or allocate funds outside approved programs.

Enforcement Mechanisms: Designed to Expire

Scope Decay	Budget Cliffs	Re-Chartering	Program Sunsets	Transparency
Mandates narrow over time unless explicitly renewed	Funding has hard expiration — no automatic rollover	Forced scope redefinition at defined intervals (2–4 yr)	Continuation requires evidence-based renewal	Published rationales, allocations, post-mortems

Funding & Cost Models

DAO-Only Coordination		$0–$150K/yr
Foundation-Led		$2M–$20M+/yr
Minimum Viable dOSPO		$450K–$1.2M/yr
Mature dOSPO		$1.5M–$4M/yr

Delivery-Oriented

Scoped, verifiable work — features, documentation, testing. Best for early & growth stages.

Continuity-Oriented

Maintainer retainers for high-dependency infrastructure. Compensates availability without conferring ownership.

Shared Infrastructure

CI systems, SDKs, security tooling funded as public goods consumed across multiple projects.

Patterns from Practice: Ecosystem Evidence

ETHEREUM

Protocol Guild & Continuity Funding

On-chain registry of ~200 core contributors with time-weighted allocation. Funding vests over 4 years. Demonstrates continuity funding as a commons — decentralized, transparent, capture-resistant.

`Continuity Funding`

`Commons Model`

POLKADOT

OpenGov & the Execution Gap

Dissolved elected Council for fully public referenda with track-based scoping. Increased decentralization but created the gap between deliberation capacity and execution capacity a dOSPO would fill.

`Execution Gap`

`Meritocratic Fellowship`

CARDANO

Multi-Entity Coordination at Scale

Authority distributed across IOG, Cardano Foundation, EMURGO, and Intersect. Committee-led policy with delegated execution. Closest existing alignment to the dOSPO model.

`Multi-Entity`   `Builder Profiles`

`Portfolio Visibility`

Anti-Patterns to Avoid

Foundation-in-Disguise

dOSPO begins to own infrastructure, host canonical repos, or persist without renewal — effectively becoming a foundation.

Process-as-Authority

Adherence to procedure substitutes for substantive outcomes, turning coordination into gatekeeping.

Hero Operator

Effectiveness depends on a small number of exceptional individuals rather than replaceable structures.

Security Exceptionalism

Rare incidents are used to justify permanent expansion of authority beyond the dOSPO's intended scope.