EWC Validator Community Fund Grant Program Guidelines

1. Introduction

1.1 Objective

The goal of the Energy Web Chain (EWC) Validator Community Fund is to empower more teams or individuals to construct important tools and infrastructure that will accelerate real-world adoption of the Energy Web Chain and related open-source software in support of the global energy transition. In order to achieve the latter, a grant program has been established to award grants to organizations that enrich the EWF ecosystem.

These guidelines detail how the EWC Validator Community Fund Grant Program works (Grant Program). Anyone including individuals, independent teams, governments, organizations, businesses, institutions, and academics will be able to participate.

The Grant Program will be managed by the EWC Validator Community Fund Committee.

1.2 Scope

The following list indicates some of the areas/topics that can be covered by proposals. This is a non-exhaustive list, the EWC validators welcome any and all suggestions in support of EWF's non-profit mission. For the first open calls, existing EWC validators will be asked for any specific areas and topics they would like to include in this list.

- Education, research, and capacity building
- Developer Tools
  - Smart contract monitoring and alerting tools
- Advanced APIs
  - Analytic platforms (e.g. Dune, Messari, Chainalysis, etc.)
- Climate Change and sustainability
- Infrastructure
  - Decentralized RPC network
  - Data markets
  - Oracles
  - Wallets
  - bridges
  - Indexing protocols (e.g. TheGraph)
  - Other tools that allow generating new users to interact with EW related projects and therefore push the EW goals.

Proposals in other areas or topics must emphasize how they plan to contribute to accelerating real-world adoption of the Energy Web Chain and related open-source software in support of the global energy transition. Not doing so will lead to disqualification.

2. Process Overview

2.1 Application

The Grant Program will be accepting applications on the dates defined in the open calls. Applications shall be submitted via an online form provided by the Community Fund Committee and accessible via the website. Once submitted, applicants will receive a reception notification via email.

Applications need to include a clear explanation of how they will contribute to accelerating real-world adoption of the Energy Web Chain and related open-source software in support of the global energy transition. The application shall include a precise explanation of how they will achieve their objectives, including tasks, milestones, and delivery times. Applications must also include general information from the applicant, such as organization name, contact name, tax ID, address, email address, phone number, etc.

The Grant Program's process should be streamlined and smooth, rather than bureaucratic and burdening. Nevertheless, applicants should take the process seriously and comply with any requirement from the Community Fund Committee.

2.2 Application Review

Upon submission, applications will be first reviewed by the Community Fund Committee to see whether they have met the formal requirements. Those that do not meet the requirements will be disqualified. An application shall be considered disqualified if the Community Fund Committee does not notify the applicant after a month of submitting the application.

The remaining applications will be evaluated on a qualitative basis. Those that meet the formal requirements will receive an email with an invitation to an interview. Applicants should expect follow-up questions and/or additional requirements from the Community Fund Committee. Failure to submit and/or respond to the requirements and/or questions will lead to the applicant's disqualification.

The Community Fund Committee will process and review the application, from the application's reception to the decision. The Grant Program will formally start off when published and will

accept applications on a rolling basis or in specific open calls which will define submission conditions and deadlines.

2.3 Decision

Once the filtered applications -those that meet both formal and qualitative requirements-, the Community Fund Committee or EWC validators will make a final decision (depending on the type of application). If the decision is positive, the applicant will be notified to start the contracting process. In the spirit of transparency, the decisions adopted will be accessible to anyone via the website.

Partial decisions will not disqualify applications but will require additional information and/or questions from the applicant in order to be considered positive. Failure to deliver the additional requirements will lead to disqualification.

2.4 Voting

Final decision will be adopted once the Community Fund Committee and/or EWC validators (when applicable) have voted on the corresponding applications. Applications that have met the formal requirements will be discussed and voted on by the Community Fund Committee meetings or by leveraging the existing voting platform of the EWC Governing Process to ensure transparency and that voting sessions are tracked.

Voting thresholds will apply as follows:

- **T1 projects** will be voted on by the Community Fund Committee. Decisions to approve the application must be unanimous, meaning all Community Fund Committee members must vote affirmatively. If one or more of the members vote negatively, the application will be disqualified.

- **T2 projects** must earn written endorsement from one or more EWC validators in order to be eligible for a vote by the Community Fund Committee. Decisions to approve the application must be unanimous. If one or more members of the Community Fund Committee vote negatively, the application will be disqualified.

- **T3 projects** will be decided via a two-step voting process. First, the project must obtain a written endorsement from one or more validators of the EWC in order to be considered for initial approval from the Community Fund Committee. Initial decisions to approve the application must be unanimous. If one or more members of the Community Fund Committee vote negatively, the application will be disqualified.

Approved proposals will then be presented to all the validators of the EWC. EWC validators will have a timely opportunity to raise comments and provide feedback before submitting their vote. If sufficient issues are raised by the EWC validators the Community Fund Committee will be able to review the initial approval.

Once a voting period is open, EWC validators will have due time to submit their vote following the 10-day period established in EWC's Governance rules. A simple majority (>50%) vote from EWC validators will suffice to approve the proposal. The validator who is endorsing a project shall not count in the vote. Decisions will only be valid if the minimum voting representation requirement of a simple majority (>50%) is achieved during the voting event, if this requirement is not met a new voting event may take place.

Abstentions (i.e., EWC validators who do not cast their vote) will follow the majority. So, if the total vote count approves, the abstentions will count as approvals. But, if the total vote count rejects, the abstentions will count as rejections.

3. Evaluation

3.1 Evaluation criteria

The following table illustrates the evaluation system that will be used to evaluate applications.

Item	Description	Percentage %
Benefits to the EWChain's mission	● Applicants need to detail how they are accelerating real-world adoption of the Energy Web Chain and/or related open-source Energy Web software. ● Applicants should mention how their project supports the global energy transition. ● If applicable, applicants should mention how their proposed solution will use existing open-source tools (e.g. Switchboard).	30
Project's soundness	● Applicants must detail their timeline, milestones, deliverables, and acceptance criteria. Individual tasks and work packages throughout the timeline should be described. ● Project plan implementation needs to be realistic. To evaluate and measure progress, applicants should set feasible key performance indicators aligned with the timelines and milestones. ● Applicants should indicate the technology readiness	30

	level (TRL) of their project. ● Applicants should describe the resources needed to implement the project. ● The ability of the applicant to maintain the project beyond this program should be emphasized (e.g., maintenance costs, year-on-year breakdown as to required ongoing maintenance). If no maintenance costs, a clear risk register of obsoleteness to the project must be defined. ● Applicants may provide their existing user base or an expected user base (including the rationale behind their expectation).	
Sustainability	● Applicants should indicate how their project addresses climate change and/or sustainability. ● Applicants can indicate the estimated reduced or avoided GHG emissions.	15
Reliability	● Applicants should provide the profile of the main staff members working on this project. ● Applicants should provide examples of past projects. ● Applicants may collect endorsement letters from members of the EWC community or other relevant organizations supporting their project. ● Applicants may provide audits and reports that give insight into their reliability.	15
Completeness	● Applicants should be exhaustive by answering and providing all the information that is required. ● Applications need to be complete, readable, and structured. ● Applications should be original and make sure the content is free of third-party rights.	10

Total: 100%

Projects will be evaluated by the Community Fund Committee following the next scale:
- "Poor" = 0-50%
- "Fair" = 50-80%
- "Good" = 80-100%

3.2 General requirements

Applicants should not limit themselves to a narrow range of ideas/topics for their applications. However, the following items should be considered by the applicants before submitting their applications:

- **Open Source**: While not all projects require code, they should be constructed in the spirit of sharing your knowledge with others.
  - License-free, Copyright-free, IP-free, etc.
  - Non Open Source applications can be considered exceptionally but must include strong value to the EWF ecosystem.
- **Public Good:** There needs to be a direct link between your concept and the benefit it creates. Project proposals should outline how they benefit the EWF community.
- **Execution Ability:** Applicants shall demonstrate how your team has the abilities and potential to make your objectives a reality.
- **Accountability:** Applicants shall think carefully about the funds they are requiring and give a detailed plan for how the funds will help them achieve their objectives.
- **Oriented towards benefitting the Energy Web community:** Applications should relate to EWF's mission, technology, and community.
- **No conflict of interest:** Applicants must avoid conflicts of interest between their own interests and the EWC community. Any potential conflict of interest must be disclosed.
- **Complete, concise, and timely:** Applications should be clear in communicating their project in a complete, precise, and concise manner. Applicants should also consider the deadlines defined in these guidelines.

3.3 Disqualification

Applications should take the Grant Program seriously. Applications that do not foster the EWF's mission or that are not presented in a structured and clear manner shall be disqualified. The following list illustrates topics that would be automatically disqualified:

- **Fraud:** project proposals with no underlying utility, that promise high returns and value in exchange for resources (like ICO and NFT scams) will be disqualified.
- **Venture financing substitutes:** Grants are not a complete substitute for a round of funding. They are intended to support specific projects that benefit the EWF ecosystem as a whole.
- **Free money:** The EWC community is a strong believer in the possibilities of open-source, decentralized blockchain technology. Please don't take advantage of this.

4. Grants

4.1 Project Tiers

The funds allocated to successful applicants will be specified in each open call. The EWC Validator Community Fund will be used to pay out these grants in FIAT according to the agreed milestones. A neutral and secure payment process involving the EWC Committees and EWC

Validators will be established. The EUR/EWT exchange rate used for the payments will be that at the time of payment, using the average quotation at 00:00 of the day.

The Grant Program establishes a tiered system that will include:

- **T1 - Grants up to EUR 0-25,000:** Projects under this tier shall last no longer than 4 months and will need to provide documentation of the outcomes of the project. Applicants will also commit to providing a presentation to the EWC community.
- **T2 - Grants up to EUR 25,000-100,000:** Projects under this tier shall last no longer than 6 months and will need to provide documentation of the outcomes of the project. Applicants will also commit to providing a presentation to the EWC community and will have to provide a report comprising a substantive section and a financial section.
- **T3 - Grants up to EUR >100,000:** Projects under this tier shall last no longer than 1 year and will need to provide documentation of the outcomes of the project. Applicants will also commit to providing a presentation to the EWC community and will have to provide a report comprising a substantive section and a financial section. Lastly, projects within this tier will need to be endorsed by an active EWC validator.

4.2 Grant Considerations

After receiving the award notice, successful applicants shall receive an upfront payment of 10%, the remaining funds will be awarded to the applicant once milestones have been achieved. Applicants should also provide proof of expenditure to verify the funds have been allocated to the project.

In the event that the workload contemplated by applicants in the project plan is not properly budgeted into their resource estimation, applicants will be required to deliver regardless of their miscalculation. Failure to deliver will compromise the delivery of the grant. Only in the case of justified reasons, may the Community Fund Committee at its discretion grant additional resources to complete the project.

In the case of T2 and T3 projects, an upfront payment of more than 10% can be considered. Applicants will need to justify their request in their application. The Community Fund Committee will have the discretion to increase the upfront payment or not.

Grants awarded over the year will be limited. Up to three T1 grants, two T2 grants, and one T3 grant will be awarded within a year. This limit may be subject to changes adopted by the Community Fund Committee.

5. Project Execution

5.1 Reporting

Successful applicants shall remain transparent throughout the project execution phase. Successful applicants shall start the project as soon as they have received the award notice.

Reporting will be mandatory for T2 and T3 and optional for T1 projects. Only a final report will be required comprising the following:

- **Qualitative section:** This section will need to include at least the following:
  - Progress against milestones and timelines
  - Key barriers and challenges
  - Deliverables and outcome
  - Conclusions
- **Financial section:** A detailed account of expenditure against the allocated funds with the corresponding proofs, bills, etc.

Additionally, Applicants will have the opportunity to showcase their project in a virtual presentation to the EWC Community sharing the experience and outcomes from the project. This will be an excellent opportunity to promote the applicant's work.

If faced with significant barriers and constraints that inhibit the project execution, applicants should promptly notify the Community Fund Committee.

5.2 Documentation

In addition to the reporting requirement, successful applicants should foster the spirit of sharing the knowledge with others and will be required to at least document the following:

- Basic project information, such as project name, description, participants, tasks and timelines
- Project progress against milestones and timelines
- Findings
- Repositories
- Reports

Applicants should share and make this information available to anyone who is interested via public and accessible sites (e.g., GitHub, GitBook, Confluence, blogs, dedicated websites, etc.).

6. Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines or the Grant Program, do not hesitate to reach out to at cfgrants [AT] energyweb [DOT] org

Annex

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

1. **What type of organizations can apply for a grant?**

The program is open for anyone with innovative project proposals aligned with Energy Web's mission, from individuals to established organizations.

2. **Can I apply for a grant if my application doesn't align with Energy Web's mission?**

Unfortunately applications that don't align with Energy Web's mission will not be accepted. We're sure impactful projects won't have problems finding funding opportunities and programs in other domains, good luck!

3. **Are there any rules or materials I should consider before submitting my application?**

If you're thinking of submitting an application and haven't looked at the program's guidelines, you should take time to thoroughly review the guidelines. Better safe than sorry!

4. **What language should I use for my application?**

Please note that applications must be written in english. Unfortunately, English is the only language accepted and applications submitted in other languages will be disqualified.

Documentation or information attached to your application can be translated using machine translation. Do let us know if documents are translated from their original language.

5. **How can I submit my application?**

Applications should be submitted using the online form made available in Energy Web's website. Note that applications received via email or other means will not be accepted.

6. **How much funds can I request for my project in my application?**

If you're planning on conducting a small scale projects or a large scale one, don't worry, the program has different grant tiers with specific funding ranges to support different types of projects. Please refer to the project guidelines for more information on the grant tiers.

7. Are there any project plan templates that I should use for my proposal?

We are aware organizations use different methods and tools when it comes to project planning and we certainly don't want to disrupt the way you work best. So, feel free to use any template as long as you make sure to meet all the requirements and include a clear description of your work, milestones, timeline and budget allocation.

8. How long does the application process take?

Applicants should expect to receive a final decision in no more than 3 months upon the application's submission. A team will be in close contact throughout the process and if there are any eventualities throughout the process applicants will be informed.

9. What are the stages and steps in the grant application process?

Upon submission, applications will pass a two-step review process. First, a formal review to make sure all formal requirements are met and no information is missing. Second, there will be a qualitative review in which the content of the proposed project will be reviewed. The qualitative review might include interviews and follow-up conversation. Once the qualitative review is over a decision will be made and applicants will be informed of such a decision.

10. My application was rejected, can I apply again?

If your application has not been accepted you will be informed, we will also outline the reasons on why such a decision was taken. The program will remain open for you and you will be able to apply again. However, do make sure you take the previous decision into consideration before submitting another application.

11. I need additional funds to complete my project, can I ask for more funds?

Applicants should make sure they account for all the costs of the activities included under the scope of their project. Failure to deliver your milestones and commitments will compromise the reception of additional grant tranches. Only under exceptional and justified circumstances will additional resources be made available to complete a project.

12. I've already received a grant, can I apply again?

Applicants who have participated in the program before are welcome to submit additional applications. Please let us know in your new application.

However, not that double funding will not be accepted, work that has already taken place or that has been covered by other grants will be rejected. Additionally, applicants should note that grants should be used to support innovative projects, not to finance their ongoing operations.

13. What happens if I encounter obstacles that inhibit my ability to deliver the project?

If there are substantial challenges preventing you from carrying on with your project you should inform the EWC team as soon as possible. The EWC team will make sure to work along with applicants to ensure your projects are successfully delivered.

14. How do successful applicants report progress of their projects under an ongoing grant?

Applicants are encouraged to be transparent and communicate openly about their project's progress. A final report detailing qualitative and financial information are required for T2 and T3 projects. However, the CFC will check in from time to time to ask about your project and see if you need any support.

15. What is the EWC Community Fund Committee (CFC)?

The CFC is the body responsible for managing and administering grants under the Grant Program. The Committee was designated by EWC validators following a community decision voted in accordance with the community governance processes. The team is composed of individuals from different EWC validator organizations.

16. What is the difference between the Grant Program and the Proposal process established in the Energy Web Chain Governance documentation?

The processes established within the Energy Web Chain Governance documentation apply exclusively to EWC's active validators, whereas the Grant Program is extended to the wider Energy Web community. Additionally, the Energy Web Chain Governance documentation extends beyond funding the Community Fund and includes topics such as validator eligibility criteria, or the proposal voting mechanism or the validator code of conduct. Active validators can submit funding proposals using the existing Governance proposal process.