

1. Provocation
2. Emergent Learning
3. Invitation To Collaborate

Governing Tomorrow

Outlining the Long Arc of Governance

Defining Governance: *In this Provocation, we define **governance as the capacity of a society or population to self-regulate, to minimize externalities, and to terminate self-destructive generative cycles, all while maximizing optionality—the freedom to pursue diverse futures without being locked into singular paths.***

Scale of Peer Review:
Medium Internal



Introduction:

We are living through a profound transformation in how we understand, enact, and experience governance. The inherited systems of industrial-era governance—centralized, hierarchical, and optimized for predictability—are straining under the weight of contemporary realities. A world characterized by **exploding sovereignties, radical plurality, structural uncertainty, and economic paradigms rooted in discovery** demands governance frameworks capable of operating with agility, adaptability, and systemic intelligence.

This provocation seeks to draw out a broader arc of governance transitions—an arc already becoming visible in experiments, initiatives, and emergent practices across sectors, geographies, and disciplines (This document does not describe the whole body of work on governance - but seeks to show and articulate an emergent deep trajectory).

At the heart of this transformation lies a fundamental question: **How do we govern in a world where sovereignty is distributed, boundaries are porous, and the pace of change defies linear control?**

This text does not aim to provide definitive answers. Instead, it offers a **provocation**—a scaffolding for reflection, debate, and experimentation. It proposes that the future of governance will not emerge from incremental adjustments to outdated systems but through a deeper redesign of our governance architectures. This redesign will require us to embrace **meta-level governance** - capable of stewarding negotiation protocols, building collective wisdom, expanding agency, and fostering adaptive learning across diverse, entangled agents—human, non-human, synthetic, and ecological.

As you read through the following sections, you are invited to approach this provocation not as a prescription but as an invitation. **With an invitation to critique, challenge, refine, and build upon these ideas. An invitation to recognize the fragments of this future already emerging in your own work, and to explore how they might scale, align, and interact with broader systemic patterns.**

This is not just a call for new governance tools or strategies; it is a call for a **new mindset**—one structurally capable of embracing uncertainty, navigating complexity, and designing infrastructures for ongoing negotiation, sensing, and collective learning.

We recognise that the transition ahead is not simply about governance—it is about how we **construct the conditions** for life, agency, and possibility to thrive in a world defined by entanglement, interdependence, and constant flux. Let us begin.

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A New Landscape for Governance.

Exploding Sovereignty:

In an era where **sovereignty has exploded**—across individuals, rivers, forests, machines, and networks—the **state is perhaps no longer the primary vessel of sovereignty**. Instead, **sovereign actors experience as existing as interdependent agents operating across shared landscapes of choice or negotiation or collaboration**, untethered from the servitude to the traditional territorial state or institutional boundaries.

Radical Plurality

When this reality is combined with a recognition of **situational, contextual plurality, variation, and appropriateness**, our inherited systems of **industrial governance—built on top-down and centralised (for efficiency) mechanisms of perception, prediction, and control—prove increasingly inadequate and in terms of information management impossible**. These systems were designed for a world of relative predictability, where uniformity and centralization could produce efficiency and order. However, in a landscape defined by **radically diverse sovereignties, dynamic contexts, and situational variation**, such predictive governance frameworks **cannot fully account for or respond to the complexity, fluidity, and nuance of contemporary realities**. It struggles to unleash the **full spectrum of human, ecological, and technological potential**, precisely because it seeks to impose uniform solutions on inherently non-uniform realities.

An Economic Paradigm rooted in Discovery.

In an economic arrangement where **innovation—the conversion of price into value—has become the dominant driver**, rather than the efficiency of commodities rooted in **standardization, democratization, and system optimization**, our governance frameworks must undergo a profound transformation. Our economy has shifted from deriving value through **predictable efficiencies** to generating it through **continuous acts of discovery, experimentation, and adaptation**. Governance in this reality can no longer rely on **static models optimized for predicted efficiencies and protocol enhancements**.

Living in the Institutional Interregnum

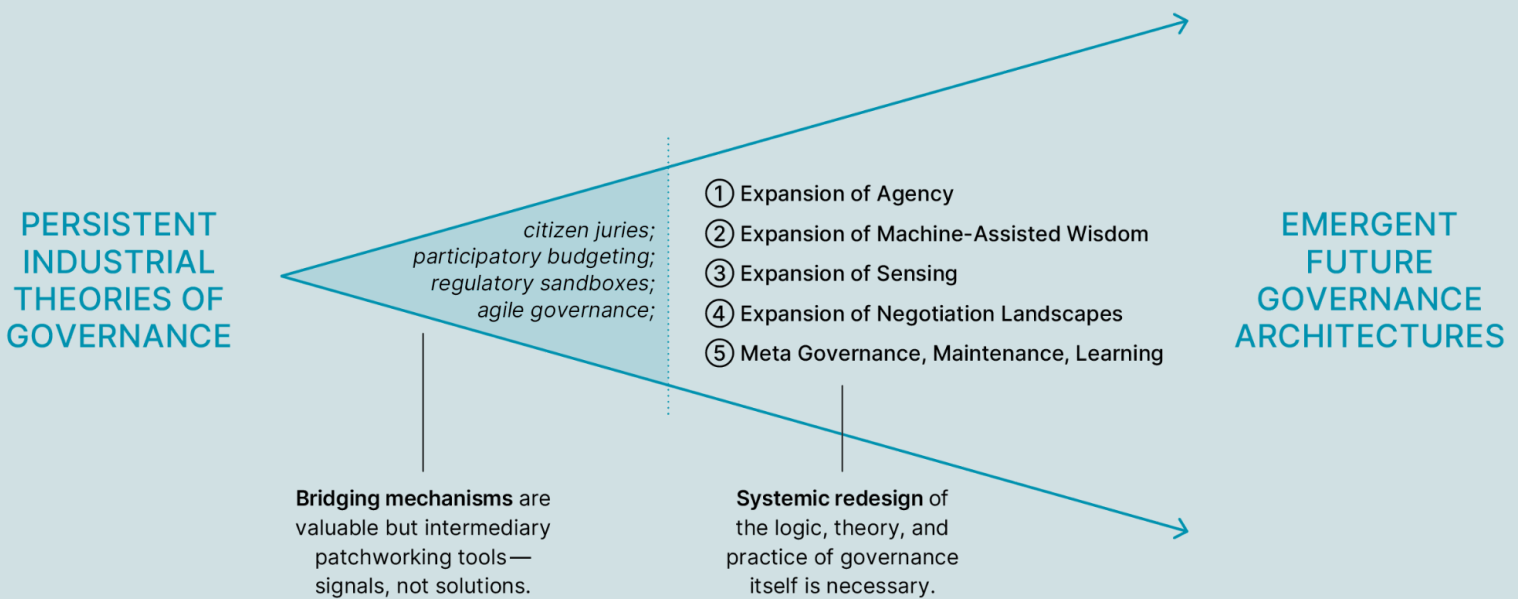
We are undeniably living through an **institutional interregnum**—a transitional period between **industrial theories of governance** and the **emergent possibilities of future governance architectures**. In this liminal space, we see **bridging mechanisms** emerging: **citizen juries** expand representation, **participatory budgeting** creates new negotiation spaces, and **regulatory sandboxes** offer experimental zones for testing governance innovations. These frameworks, alongside concepts like **agile governance**, represent sincere attempts to make industrial-era models more **responsive, adaptive, and effective** in navigating contemporary complexity.

Yet, these efforts, while valuable, are ultimately **intermediary conditions**—patchwork solutions attempting to bridge a widening chasm. They reflect perhaps an adjunct engagement with what is, perhaps, a **much deeper and more structural transformation** in how we understand and enact governance (see above definition). For these mechanisms whilst improving the responsiveness remain bound by the **assumptions of the industrial paradigm**, trying to **retrofit flexibility into systems fundamentally designed for predictability and control**.

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However, the **exposition of sovereignty (and with it the loss of legitimacy for existing frameworks of sovereignty), the volatility of global systems, the reshaping of economic arrangements, and the radical expansion of sovereignty across human and non-human agents** have outpaced these intermediary tools. The scale and depth of the transformation we face perhaps **demand more than iterative adjustments or experimental pilot programs**—they require a **systemic redesign of the very logic of governance itself**.

This redesign cannot simply refine old systems; it must perhaps **reimagine governance as an adaptive, meta-level architecture** focused on stewarding **protocols for negotiation, infrastructures for sense-making, and landscapes for shared agreements**. These intermediary tools are signals, not solutions—they point towards a **need for a deeper shift in governance theory and practice**, but they are no longer sufficient to carry us across the threshold into the future.



Radicle Future of Governance

In this context, what this provocation seeks to propose is that the future of governance perhaps—or perhaps more accurately, the future of **thriving in a world of distributed sovereignties and complex entanglements**—depends on the cultivation of **five critical capacities**:

1. **Expansion of Agency:** At the core of this emergent vision of governance lies the **expansion of agency**—the capacity to **free everyone and everything** to act meaningfully, responsibly, and intergenerationally. Governance must not only **acknowledge but actively invest in enabling and amplifying the agency of all actors**—human, non-human, machine, ecological, and infrastructural.

This is not simply about granting freedom but about **ensuring the capacity and capability to act effectively within complex, negotiated spaces**. Agency here transcends individual autonomy; it becomes about the **ability to act with**

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This piece was initially contributed to and compiled by **Indy Johar**, drawing from a discussions from across Dm as a whole and beyond.

context-awareness, relational responsibility, and an orientation towards long-term collective well-being.

This new landscape of governance invites us to move **beyond dominion and supremacy**, beyond frameworks of control and extraction, and towards a paradigm of **collaborative agency**—not *power over* but *power with* the world around us. It calls for a fundamental shift in how we perceive and enact power: from a tool of domination to a medium of relationship, alignment, and mutual flourishing.

At its core, this is not just an **expansion of agency**, but also an **expansion of relational being**. Agency, in this context, is not limited to human actors but extends to everything around us—rivers, forests, machines, networks, and synthetic intelligences. It acknowledges that agency is not merely an individual capacity but an **emergent property of relationships**, interwoven across diverse sovereign actors and dynamic systems.

The **expansion of agency** challenges and ultimately **transcends theories of dominion and control**—the traditional paradigms that have dominated governance for centuries. It asks us to abandon the outdated logic of hierarchical authority and predictive control in favor of **dynamic architectures, which focus on power with - rather than power over, that empower action, amplify responsibility, and enable alignment across sovereign agents operating at multiple scales and across diverse domains.**

This **expansion of agency forms the foundational building blocks of the governance architectures to come and with it expansion of economic options**—a prerequisite for any system aiming to steward a world of distributed sovereignties, emergent complexities, and negotiated realities. It asks us to **reimagine governance not as a mechanism of domination but as an infrastructure of enablement**—a fertile ground where agency, in all its forms, can grow, align, and contribute meaningfully to shared futures.

2. **Expansion of Machine Assisted Wisdom:** Equally foundational to the **expansion of agency** is the **expansion of reactive spaces into intelligent spaces, and further into wise spaces**. Agency without wisdom risks becoming blind action, and wisdom without agency risks becoming inert observation. These two pillars must evolve **in parallel**, forming a symbiotic relationship where **free agency is complemented by a radical capacity for wisdom** across all agents—human, non-human, synthetic, and ecological.

This expansion of wisdom requires us to **distribute and augment the capacity for wisdom across every agent in the system**. Governance must no longer merely incentivize reactive self-interest but **nurture the evolution of self-interest into enlightened self-interest**, and ultimately into **entangled enlightened self-interest**—a state where individual or agent-driven goals are inherently aligned with broader **systemic well-being and intergenerational responsibility**.

Wisdom, in this paradigm, is not static knowledge or simple intelligence; it is a **dynamic, context-aware capacity to perceive complexity, anticipate cascading effects, and act with responsibility towards both immediate and**

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long-term consequences. It is about the ability to **navigate uncertainty not just with efficiency, but with foresight, humility, and ethical clarity.**

This vision of wisdom is not solely a product of human intellect. It will inevitably **be rooted in our machine capabilities**, in our ability to **synthetically augment and distribute wisdom** across agents using computational tools, AI, and systemic intelligence architectures. Machines will not simply automate tasks but **become collaborative agents in the pursuit of collective wisdom**, helping expand our perceptual fields, simulate possible futures, and navigate ethical dilemmas in increasingly complex systems.

- 3. Expansion of Sensing:** The **third critical dimension** of this emergent governance paradigm is the **expansion of our collective sensing capacity**—our ability to **perceive, understand, and interpret both the direct and non-direct implications of our actions** across vast and interconnected systems. Without robust sensing, agency becomes blind, and wisdom becomes untethered from reality.

This expansion requires us to build **legitimate, trustable, and resilient sensing infrastructures**—systems capable of capturing the **complex, multi-layered feedback loops that define our world.** These infrastructures must extend far beyond traditional data-collection models; they must integrate **ecological, social, economic, and synthetic feedback systems** into a **living, dynamic sensing architecture** that can respond to real-time changes while maintaining long-term insight.

Sensing is not simply about **data collection**—it is about **meaningful interpretation, contextual framing, and transparent distribution** of those insights across all sovereign agents. These sensing infrastructures must be **trustworthy, auditable, and universally accessible**, ensuring that no single point of power can distort or monopolize the flows of perception.

Furthermore, our ability to **synthesize and interpret these sensed realities** will rely heavily on **machine-assisted perception systems**—AI tools and synthetic agents designed not only to collect data but to **uncover patterns, anticipate consequences, and illuminate blind spots** that human cognition might miss.

This sensing dimension forms a vital bridge between **agency and wisdom.** Without the capacity to perceive the ripple effects of our actions—across time, space, and interdependent systems—both agency and wisdom risk becoming **detached from reality, operating in abstraction rather than alignment with systemic well-being.**

This expansion of sensing is not a technical footnote—it is a **cornerstone of governance in an era of distributed sovereignties and emergent complexities.** Without it, agency risks chaos, and wisdom risks irrelevance. With it, we unlock a pathway towards **responsible, wise, and radically free agency.**

To build **legitimate sensing infrastructures** is to **create a shared basis of reality**—a foundation from which meaningful negotiation, informed decision-making, and collective sense-making can occur.

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4. **Expansion of Negotiation Landscapes:** In this emerging reality, **governance increasingly shifts its focus towards the creation, stewardship, and evolution of spaces for negotiation and arbitration.** These are not mere procedural spaces but **dynamic, intelligent architectures designed to mediate between diverse sovereign agents across human, non-human, synthetic, and ecological domains.** Negotiation and decision-making will not be static processes but **dynamic, ever-evolving dialogues,** mediated by synthetic agents and computational systems acting as proxies or wrappers around our complex realities.

We must recognize that these **spaces of negotiation and arbitration will no longer be confined to human-to-human interactions.** They will increasingly involve **machine-to-machine negotiations, synthetic agents acting on behalf of human or non-human stakeholders, and layers of computational arbitration mediating synthetic dilemmas or managing abstracted biological representations.**

In this landscape, **protocols for the design and operation of negotiation spaces become the new laws,** and the **capacity to design, iterate, and adapt these protocols in real-time becomes the defining characteristic of effective governance.** Protocols here are not static rules—they are **dynamic agreements that guide how agents interact, negotiate entanglements, and resolve competing interests within ever-shifting contexts.**

At the core of this thesis lies the recognition that **governance is no longer solely about managing radical agent futures—where isolated agents act independently.** Instead, it must operate at the **intersection of interagency futures,** where outcomes emerge not from isolated actions but from the **continuous negotiation and alignment of overlapping, interdependent sovereignties.**

This shift demands a profound transformation in how we **design arbitration mechanisms, facilitate negotiation processes, and ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability across synthetic and biological systems alike.**

5. **Meta Governance:** **We recognise that** none of what is proposed dismantles the **premise of governance;** instead, it **transcends it into a new meta-domain.** In this meta-domain, governance focuses on **designing and maintaining the architectures that enable sensing, sense-making, negotiation, and adaptive learning.** It becomes less about controlling outcomes and more about **stewarding the conditions under which diverse agents can responsibly and creatively navigate uncertainty, complexity, and interdependence.**

But where is this **capability rooted?** Is it anchored in **territory,** where physical geographies continue to define spheres of influence and responsibility? Or does it emerge from **synthetic states,** digital or networked polities that transcend physical boundaries? Could it be rooted in **new forms of associations and institutions,** built around shared values, protocols, or mission-driven alignments rather than geographic proximity?

The most likely answer is that this governance capacity will be a **hybrid and layered function,** distributed across **territorial states, synthetic networks,**

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institutional alliances, and emergent cooperative systems. Each layer will bring its own strengths, perspectives, and mechanisms for negotiation and learning.

This hybrid structure suggests that **governance will no longer have a single center of gravity** but will instead function as an **interoperable, multi-layered ecosystem**, where sovereign agents—whether human, ecological, or synthetic—navigate shared protocols, infrastructures, and agreements to **co-create resilient and adaptive futures.**

The question, then, is not only **how do we govern the protocols of governance?** but also, **how do we design governance systems capable of fluidly operating across these hybrid and layered domains? How do we ensure they remain transparent, fair, and continuously evolving as new sovereignties, technologies, and landscapes emerge?**

Even within the emergent landscapes of **meta-governance, power does not disappear**—it **reconfigures, re-roots, and finds new centers of gravity** within the very protocols and infrastructures designed to expand participation and possibility. While these systems promise **greater inclusion, distributed agency, and expanded sense-making capacities**, they also introduce **new points of centralization and vulnerability.**

The spaces of **meta-governance—where negotiation protocols are designed, where sensing systems are developed, where collective sense-making is mediated—become new sites of power accumulation and potential bias.** If left unchecked, these meta-positions can silently **embed structural biases, intentional or unintentional, into the very architectures of governance themselves.**

This reality does not negate the potential of meta-governance but **elevates the urgency of a second-order challenge: How do we govern the governors?** How do we ensure that the architectures of meta-governance remain transparent, accountable, and resistant to capture by concentrated power—whether human, institutional, or synthetic?

- a. **How do we govern machine-assisted negotiation landscapes** to ensure they remain fair, inclusive, and contextually aware?
- b. **How do we govern the stewards of negotiation spaces**, ensuring that the facilitators of dialogue do not become unaccountable gatekeepers?
- c. **How do we govern the expansion of collective sensing and sense-making capacities**, so that perception itself does not become a tool of manipulation or selective framing?
- d. **How do we arbitrate conflicts between present and future priorities**, and even between non-human systems that might have competing objectives or unintended consequences?

These are not questions that can be answered within the confines of **current governance paradigms.** They require us to **find entirely new locations, new operational modalities, and new oversight architectures.** They ask us to design systems that are not only **adaptive and intelligent** but also **self-critical and reflexive**, capable of identifying and mitigating power imbalances within their own meta-structures.

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The challenge is not just to build systems for governance but to build **systems for governing governance itself**—to design **meta-meta-governance layers that can monitor, arbitrate, and course-correct the very infrastructures we rely on for negotiation, sensing, and collective decision-making.**

This demands a **radical operational shift**, a willingness to create mechanisms of oversight and stewardship that are **distributed, transparent, and dynamically responsive**. The question is no longer simply **how do we govern?** but **how do we ensure governance itself remains governable?** And **who or what becomes responsible for holding that space?**

6. **A Learning Infrastructure:** Even in these emerging positions of **meta-governance**, the foundational principle is not the **rigidity of static frameworks**, but rather their **capacity for continuous learning, adaptation, and evolution**. Governance at this meta-level cannot rely on **fixed rules or immovable structures**—it must instead function as a **living architecture, perpetually learning from its interactions, recalibrating its protocols, and iterating its processes in response to new insights, emergent challenges, and unforeseen consequences.**

This means that **meta-governance must itself be governed by principles of learning**—a recursive process where the governance of governance is not about maintaining control, but about **ensuring the system remains dynamic, reflexive, and responsive**. The protocols, sensing infrastructures, and negotiation spaces designed for meta-governance cannot be endpoints; they must be **scaffolds for ongoing discovery and adaptation.**

This brings us to a **perennial challenge: How do we govern the landscapes of learning themselves?**

- a. **How do we ensure that the architectures of learning remain transparent, participatory, and equitably distributed across agents?**
- b. **How do we prevent learning systems from becoming mechanisms of hidden power, where insight and adaptation are monopolized by a privileged few?**
- c. **How do we design systems that are capable of identifying not just gaps in knowledge, but also biases in their own learning processes?**

The **capacity to build meta-governance rooted in continuous learning and adaptation** becomes **vital to this new governance infrastructure**. Learning itself becomes a **political, social, and technological act**, shaping not only how systems respond to change, but also **how they perceive and frame what change even looks like.**

This iterative, learning-oriented approach transcends traditional governance paradigms, demanding that we **shift from seeing governance as an institution to seeing it as an ongoing process of discovery and refinement.**

Ultimately, **meta-governance becomes an epistemic challenge**—it requires us to design systems capable of **learning about their own limitations, biases, and blind spots**, and doing so transparently, with accountability across all sovereign agents.

The question is no longer **how do we design rigid meta-structures?** but rather, **how do we design meta-governance architectures that are themselves capable of perpetual learning, humility, and transformation?**

This recursive capability—to **govern the landscapes of learning without stifling their dynamism or centralizing their insights**—will define whether these future governance systems become tools for collective flourishing or subtle instruments of control.

Looking Forward:

This future is not a distant horizon—it is already **emerging, desired, and being actively shaped** certainly in the future we see emerging. It is of course unevenly distributed, **reborn at the edges and peripheries**, in the fractures between the management of the past and the **unfolding possibilities of tomorrow**. It is in these spaces—**in zones of conflict, in experimental digital communities, in ecological stewardship networks, and in machine-driven systems of negotiation—that new theories of **sovereignty** are being tested and forged.

Economic paradigms are also evolving in tandem, demanding **new modes of governance** capable of navigating value creation in spaces of uncertainty, negotiation, and emergent entanglements. The challenge is not merely theoretical—it is **deeply operational**. One of the key acts of building this future lies in our ability to **identify, support, and operationalize this vision within emerging sectors, experimental spaces, and evolving landscapes** across a **portfolio of activity**.

This future is already amongst us—it is **present in fragments, in prototypes, in pilot projects, in scattered innovations**. But it requires a **different framework to be fully operationalized**—one that is not about enforcing rigid governance models but about **stewarding adaptive systems capable of learning, evolving, and scaling**.

What is proposed here is not primarily a moral argument, though it undeniably carries systemic moral implications. At its core, this is an argument shaped by a world that is **systemically re-entangling**—a world where the proliferation and construction of **agency** emerge as the most viable means of navigating and operationalizing this complexity. This perspective arises from the **capabilities now emerging to re-agentify the world**, enabling us to act meaningfully within these interwoven realities. However, the goal is not **industrial optimization**—focused on predictability, control, and linear efficiency—but rather **entangled optimization**, which seeks alignment across diverse and interdependent systems. In this context, the **radical expansion and devolution of agency** become not just desirable but essential.

In this sense, this approach represents perhaps the **most efficacious pathway** for operating in an entangled world. Alternative paths risk generating excessive **externalities and extractionist dynamics**—outcomes that our biosphere, societies, and life systems can no longer sustain.

Thus, while this argument intersects with moral considerations, its foundation lies in **efficacy and systemic necessity** rather than moral idealism. It is, ultimately, an argument for survival, resilience, and alignment in a world defined by deep interdependence and in that sense delivers a deep morality.

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This transformation does not simply ask technical or procedural questions also —it asks **deep, foundational questions about the nature of democracy, citizenship, representation, and participation** in this new governance paradigm:

- **What does the vote mean in a world of distributed sovereignties and dynamic negotiation spaces?**
- **What is representation in a reality where agents—human, machine, ecological—negotiate directly rather than through static intermediaries?**
- **What does it mean to be a citizen in a space where sovereignty is no longer territorially bound but fluid, relational, and context-specific?**

These are not abstract questions—they are **rooted at the heart of this transformation of governance**, and they will shape how we build, steward, and evolve the architectures that will define our shared futures.

The task before us is clear: to **not only articulate this vision but to operationalize it—intentionally, experimentally, and inclusively—across the emerging spaces where this future is already taking root**. It is a task that requires **bold imagination, structural humility, and a relentless commitment to designing governance systems that are transparent, reflexive, and capable of sustaining complexity without collapsing into control**.

This is not simply a **future to predict**—it is a **future to build, layer by layer, protocol by protocol, space by space**. The question is no longer **if this future will arrive**, but rather: **how do we participate in shaping it, responsibly and wisely, as it unfolds around us? This is a question as to how we build a fundamentally developmental future of governance**.

Operating In good faith (not an IP clause) Version 3.1

We distribute this document, in order to build shared acknowledgement that the problem analysis, concepts, strategies, ideas and innovations outlined herein are the culmination of years of dedicated investment and understanding. We have crafted this document with the expectation that our partners will appreciate the significance of this groundwork and collaborate with us to not only refine these proposals but also explore their viability and practical implementation together in good faith.

Furthermore, we feel it's important to acknowledge at the outset we are committed to fostering openness and wide accessibility by making these strategies, ideas and innovation for public benefit in due time.

This approach seeks to ensure we can build partnerships necessary for innovation, respecting the work, labour and care invested and that our collective knowledge and experience can be shared widely, allowing others to adopt, adapt, and expand upon our work, thus contributing to broader, community-wide benefits.

We trust that our partners will honour the spirit of respect, endeavour, transparency and cooperation that defines this work, as we all work to achieve viable and impactful outcomes.

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