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DAO Governance Health Check

A Behavioral Self-Assessment for DAO Founders and Participants

Based on the BE DAO Framework (Carswell, 2024) and the Theory of Blockchain Psychology

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About This Assessment

The health of a DAO is not measured by its treasury size, its token price, or the number of proposals passed. It is measured by the quality of its decision-making, the resilience of its community, and the alignment of its incentive structures with human behavioral reality.

This Health Check is a self-assessment tool derived directly from the BE DAO Framework (Carswell, C.J., 2024) and the Theory of Blockchain Psychology. It operationalizes the three pillars of the BE DAO — Decision Hygiene, Behavioral Economics, and Global Ethics — into 20 scored diagnostic questions across five governance dimensions.

The assessment is designed for DAO founders, governance leads, community managers, and serious participants who want to understand where their governance is behaviorally strong and where it is structurally vulnerable. It is not a pass/fail test. It is a diagnostic tool for continuous improvement.

HOW TO SCORE

For each question, read all five descriptors (scored 1–5) and select the score that most honestly reflects your DAO's current state. Score conservatively — if you are between two levels, take the lower score. The value of this assessment is its honesty.

Each dimension has a maximum of 20 points (4 questions × 5 points). The total health score is out of 100. Record dimension scores on the Scoring Summary page at the end.

Important: *Score your DAO as it actually operates today — not as it was designed to operate, not as you wish it operated, and not as it performed at its best moment. Behavioral health is a function of consistent behavior, not ideal behavior.*

THE FIVE DIMENSIONS

D1: Decision Hygiene	Are structured noise-reduction practices built into your governance process? (Based on Kahneman, Sibony & Sunstein — as applied in the BE DAO Framework)
D2: Cognitive Alignment	Is your governance designed to reduce cognitive load and enable genuine broad participation?
D3: Community & Social Health	Is your community behaviorally healthy — with protected dissent, distributed power, and resilience to groupthink?
D4: Incentive Architecture	Do your token and reward structures align participant behavior with long-term community health?
D5: Transparency & Ethics	Does your DAO build genuine trust through radical transparency and culturally sensitive, ethical governance?

Dimension 1: **Decision Hygiene**

Noise reduction in governance — based on Kahneman, Sibony & Sunstein as applied in the BE DAO Framework

Q1 Does your DAO require a mandatory cooling-off period between proposal submission and the opening of voting?

- 1 No cooling-off period — voting begins immediately or within hours of submission.
- 2 Informal norm only — some proposals wait, others do not, based on community mood.
- 3 Recommended but not formally encoded — good-faith compliance is inconsistent.
- 4 Formally required for standard proposals — encoded in governance documentation.
- 5 Formally required and tiered by impact — higher-stakes proposals require longer cooling-off periods, enforced by governance contract.

SCORE
/5

Notes:

Q2 Are governance proposals required to include both the supporting case AND the strongest counterargument?

- 1 No requirement — proposals are one-sided by default and counterarguments are suppressed as FUD.
- 2 Counterarguments are occasionally included by individual proposers but not required.
- 3 Guidelines suggest inclusion but compliance is inconsistent and unenforced.
- 4 Required in the proposal template — proposals missing the counterargument section are returned.
- 5 Required, moderated, and quality-assessed — proposals with weak or strawman counterarguments are formally returned for revision.

SCORE
/5

Notes:

Q3 Does your DAO use a Six Thinking Hats or equivalent structured perspective-taking approach for major governance decisions?

- 1 No structured approach — discussion is dominated by whoever speaks most forcefully or holds the most tokens.
- 2 Informal awareness of different perspectives but no formal process to surface them.
- 3 Some structured debate formats used inconsistently for selected major proposals.

4

Formal structured debate required for proposals above a defined impact threshold.

5

Mandatory multi-perspective analysis — built into governance architecture and enforced for all significant decisions.

SCORE

/5

Notes:

Q4

Does your DAO conduct pre-mortem analysis — formally imagining failure before major votes are cast?

1

Never considered — the DAO operates on optimism with no formal failure-scenario analysis.

2

Occasionally informal — some community members may raise failure scenarios but it is not standard.

3

Encouraged but not standard — pre-mortem thinking happens in some channels and not others.

4

Standard practice for major decisions — a formal failure-scenario document is required.

5

Formally required and documented for all significant proposals — failure scenarios are published alongside the proposal for community review.

SCORE

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Notes:

Dimension 2 **Cognitive Alignment**

Reducing cognitive load to enable genuine broad participation

Q1 Are governance proposals written in plain language that all community members — not just technical experts — can understand?

- 1** Proposals are highly technical — the majority of members cannot evaluate them without expert interpretation.
- 2** Technical language dominates — only technically sophisticated members can meaningfully participate.
- 3** Mixed quality — some proposals are accessible, others are not, with no enforced standard.
- 4** Plain language standard exists and is enforced — technical appendices are used for detail.
- 5** Plain language is mandatory — proposals are returned if they fail a community-accessible readability standard.

SCORE

/5

Notes:

Q2 Does your DAO use a standardized proposal template that ensures all relevant information is consistently presented?

- 1** No template exists — proposal format varies dramatically, creating uneven cognitive load and inconsistent information.
- 2** Informal guidelines exist but compliance is entirely voluntary and inconsistently applied.
- 3** A template exists but is not enforced — deviation is common and unchallenged.
- 4** Mandatory template, consistently used — all standard fields including objective, risk, and impact are required.
- 5** Mandatory template including TL;DR summary, impact assessment, dissent section, and reversibility classification — enforced with formal review.

SCORE

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Notes:

Q3 How many distinct steps does a community member need to take to cast a standard governance vote?

- 1** Six or more steps — the voting process is so complex that only highly motivated members complete it.
- 2** Four to five steps — significant friction that regularly deters participation.
- 3** Three steps — moderate friction; most willing participants can complete the process.

4

Two steps — low friction; the process is accessible to most members with minimal effort.

5

One step — frictionless participation, with gasless voting or equivalent accessibility for all token holders.

SCORE

/5

Notes:

Q4

Are participation costs — gas fees, time, and cognitive effort — low enough for broad genuine participation across all token holders?

1

High financial cost effectively excludes the majority of token holders from meaningful participation.

2

Costs are prohibitive for smaller holders — governance is financially accessible only to whales.

3

Costs are moderate — some barrier remains that discourages casual or small-holder participation.

4

Low costs with subsidies or gasless voting available for standard governance votes.

5

Participation is fully accessible and cost-free to all token holders — the DAO actively removes participation barriers.

SCORE

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Notes:

Dimension 3: **Community & Social Health**

Behavioral resilience, distributed power, and protection from groupthink

Q1 Does your DAO have a formal, protected channel where dissenting opinions can be expressed without fear of social retaliation or FUD labeling?

- 1** No such channel exists — dissent is routinely labeled FUD and socially punished.
- 2** Informal tolerance of dissent but no formal protection — retaliation is occasional and unchallenged.
- 3** Dissent is accepted but not actively encouraged — the social environment is neutral to mixed.
- 4** A dedicated dissent channel exists and is moderated to protect participants from retaliation.
- 5** Dissent is actively incentivized through token rewards or social recognition, and formally protected from retaliation at the governance level.

SCORE
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Notes:

Q2 Is governance participation distributed across a broad range of holders, or effectively controlled by a small number of whale wallets?

- 1** Governance is effectively controlled by 1-3 wallets — decentralization is structural fiction.
- 2** Heavy concentration — the top five wallets consistently determine outcomes regardless of broader participation.
- 3** Moderate concentration — the top twenty wallets dominate most votes, limiting effective decentralization.
- 4** Distributed participation — no single wallet controls outcomes and broader participation is meaningful.
- 5** Broad, distributed participation with active anti-concentration mechanisms such as quadratic voting, reputation weighting, or delegation systems.

SCORE
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Notes:

Q3 Does your DAO actively monitor community health indicators — engagement trends, sentiment, burnout signals, and participation rates?

- 1** Community health is not monitored at all — problems are only recognized after they become visible crises.
- 2** Informal observation only — leadership may notice signs of decline but there is no formal process.
- 3** Periodic informal check-ins exist but are infrequent and produce no documented output.
- 4** Regular structured monitoring with community health reports published to the community at defined intervals.

5

Continuous monitoring with formal leading indicators, public health dashboards, and established intervention protocols triggered when indicators decline.

SCORE

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Notes:

Q4

Are there mechanisms specifically designed to prevent groupthink — such as anonymous voting, devil's advocate roles, or structured debate requirements?

1

No mechanisms — groupthink is endemic and social dynamics consistently override independent judgment.

2

Some informal awareness of groupthink risk but no formal mechanisms to address it.

3

One anti-groupthink mechanism exists — it operates inconsistently or only for selected proposals.

4

Multiple complementary anti-groupthink mechanisms are embedded in the governance process.

5

A comprehensive anti-groupthink architecture is in place — including structural protections, monitoring, and regular community assessment of epistemic health.

SCORE

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Notes:

Dimension 4: Incentive Architecture

Behavioral economics of engagement — mission capital over mercenary capital

Q1 Do your token reward structures genuinely incentivize long-term engagement and value creation, rather than short-term extraction?

- 1 Reward structures clearly favor short-term extraction — participants who extract early benefit most.
- 2 Mixed signals — some short-term incentives actively compete with long-term alignment.
- 3 Moderate long-term alignment with significant exceptions that create misaligned incentive opportunities.
- 4 Strong long-term incentive alignment — extraction is meaningfully less attractive than long-term participation.
- 5 Comprehensively designed for long-term engagement — mission capital is systematically more rewarded than mercenary capital throughout the token lifecycle.

SCORE
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Notes:

Q2 Are governance participation rewards tied to the quality and thoughtfulness of contributions, not merely to the frequency of voting?

- 1 No governance participation rewards exist at all — there is no incentive to engage beyond token-holding.
- 2 Rewards are based on voting frequency only — any vote counts equally regardless of deliberateness.
- 3 Some quality consideration exists but volume of participation dominates the reward calculation.
- 4 Quality-weighted rewards with meaningful differentiation between thoughtful and perfunctory participation.
- 5 Sophisticated quality assessment with community-verified contribution scoring that genuinely rewards deliberate, well-reasoned governance engagement.

SCORE
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Notes:

Q3 Does the founding team's vesting schedule align their financial incentives with the DAO's long-term community health?

- 1 No vesting — founding team tokens are fully liquid, creating principal-agent misalignment from day one.
- 2 Short vesting period of under one year — insufficient to align incentives with long-term community outcomes.
- 3 Moderate vesting of one to two years — some alignment but inadequate for a multi-year governance horizon.

4

Long vesting of three to four years with a cliff period — meaningful alignment with community timeline.

5

Long vesting with cliff, community-visible on-chain enforcement, milestone-aligned release triggers, and no acceleration clauses that benefit the team at community expense.

SCORE
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Notes:

Q4

Does your DAO have a formal sunset and review process for ongoing initiatives — preventing sunk cost thinking from perpetuating failing projects?

1

No review process — funded initiatives continue until they are quietly abandoned, regardless of performance.

2

Informal occasional review exists but rarely results in termination — sunk cost thinking dominates.

3

Annual review process exists but criteria for discontinuation are vague and infrequently applied.

4

Formal sunset provisions with clear, pre-defined performance criteria and a structured discontinuation process.

5

Automatic sunset mechanisms with renewal requirements, behavioral performance assessment, and community-transparent reporting built into every funding cycle.

SCORE
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Notes:

Dimension 5: **Transparency & Global Ethics**

Building genuine trust through radical transparency and ethical governance design

Q1 Are all governance decisions — including reasoning, vote distribution, and dissenting positions — permanently and publicly recorded?

- 1 Decisions are recorded but reasoning and individual vote distribution are opaque or inaccessible.
- 2 Partial transparency — outcomes are published but the decision process, deliberation, and dissent are not.
- 3 Most information is technically available but not easily accessible or consistently formatted.
- 4 Full transparency with organized, searchable public archives of all proposals, votes, reasoning, and outcomes.
- 5 Full on-chain transparency with plain language summaries, dissenting positions documented, and proactive community notification for all decisions.

SCORE

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Notes:

Q2 Does your DAO communicate honestly and consistently during negative events — governance failures, treasury losses, security incidents — not only during positive ones?

- 1 Communication goes dark or becomes defensive during crises — transparency disappears when it matters most.
- 2 Delayed, minimal communication during negative events — disclosure is reactive rather than proactive.
- 3 Communication occurs during crises but is often incomplete, managed, or timed to minimize impact on token price.
- 4 Consistent communication maintained across positive and negative conditions — with timeliness and honesty.
- 5 Proactive, detailed, honest communication during all significant events including failures — with formal post-incident reviews published to the full community.

SCORE

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Notes:

Q3 Are security audits, financial reports, and risk assessments regularly published and genuinely accessible to all community members?

- 1 Reports are not published or are extremely difficult for ordinary community members to locate.
- 2 Occasionally published in formats that are technically available but not practically accessible.
- 3 Published but not in plain language or with the context needed for community members to interpret them.

4

Regular systematic publication in accessible formats with organized archives.

5

Regular publication with plain language summaries, proactive community notification, Q&A sessions, and independent verification of key findings.

SCORE

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Notes:

Q4

Does your DAO have a formal mechanism for community members to raise governance concerns without fear of social retaliation?

1

No such mechanism exists — raising concerns is a social risk that most members choose to avoid.

2

Informal channels exist but offer no formal protection — retaliation is possible and has occurred.

3

Concerns can be raised but the response is inconsistent and there is no formal accountability for governance failures.

4

Formal concern-raising process with defined response protocols and documented accountability.

5

Anonymous reporting capability, formal response protocols with defined timelines, explicit protection from retaliation, and community-transparent reporting on the outcome of all formal concerns raised.

SCORE

/5






Notes:

Scoring Summary

Record your scores from each dimension below. Transfer the total to see your verdict.

Dimension	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total /20
1 — Decision Hygiene	_____	_____	_____	_____	/20
2 — Cognitive Alignment	_____	_____	_____	_____	/20
3 — Community & Social Health	_____	_____	_____	_____	/20
4 — Incentive Architecture	_____	_____	_____	_____	/20
5 — Transparency & Ethics	_____	_____	_____	_____	/20
TOTAL HEALTH SCORE	<i>(Sum all five dimensions)</i>				/100

GOVERNANCE HEALTH VERDICT

Score	Governance Health Verdict	Recommended Action
85-100	 Behaviorally Resilient	Share this result publicly. Use it as a benchmark. Schedule a re-assessment in 12 months to track changes.
70-84	 Fundamentally Sound	Identify your two lowest-scoring dimensions. Request a BlocPsych Governance Audit for targeted intervention.
55-69	 At Risk	Structural vulnerabilities present. Prioritize your lowest dimension for immediate redesign. Consider a Decision Hygiene Workshop.
40-54	 High Risk	Multiple governance systems require redesign. Begin with Cognitive Alignment and Community Health. Engage BlocPsych consulting.
Below 40	 Critical — Intervene Now	Your DAO is operating on behavioral debt. A full BE DAO implementation review is urgently recommended before your next major governance decision.

Interpreting Your Results

Priority recommendations for each dimension

IF YOUR D1 (DECISION HYGIENE) SCORE IS BELOW 12

Your governance decisions are being made under System 1 conditions — without the noise-reduction structures that protect against cognitive bias, social pressure, and poor collective judgment. Priority intervention: implement mandatory cooling-off periods and a standardized proposal template requiring counterarguments. Reference: the BE DAO White Paper, Decision Hygiene Workshop (BlocPsych, LLC).

IF YOUR D2 (COGNITIVE ALIGNMENT) SCORE IS BELOW 12

Your governance is inaccessible to the majority of your token holders — cognitive load is acting as a participation barrier that produces de facto centralization. Priority intervention: adopt a plain language proposal standard and reduce voting friction to a maximum of two steps. The complexity gap between governance design and governance reality is a behavioral emergency.

IF YOUR D3 (COMMUNITY & SOCIAL HEALTH) SCORE IS BELOW 12

Your community is operating with suppressed dissent and concentrated power — the conditions that produce Behavioral Liquidation Cascades during market stress. Priority intervention: establish a protected dissent channel and implement one anti-groupthink mechanism immediately. Consider quadratic or reputation-weighted voting to address whale concentration.

IF YOUR D4 (INCENTIVE ARCHITECTURE) SCORE IS BELOW 12

Your token reward structures are attracting or retaining Mercenary Capital rather than Mission Capital — participants whose engagement is conditional on continued extraction. Priority intervention: conduct a behavioral tokenomics audit to identify the specific incentive misalignments and begin a redesign aligned with long-term community health. BlocPsych offers the Behavioral Tokenomics Audit service for this purpose.

IF YOUR D5 (TRANSPARENCY & ETHICS) SCORE IS BELOW 12

Your DAO is operating on borrowed trust — a deficit that compounds with every opaque decision and every crisis where communication fails. Priority intervention: publish a transparency commitment with a defined schedule for security audits, financial reports, and post-decision summaries. Establish a formal concern-raising process within 30 days.

The BE DAO framework is not a theoretical exercise. It is a practical, deployable system for organizations that are serious about building decentralized communities that actually work. — C.J. Carswell, BE DAO White Paper (2024)

To request a BlocPsych Governance Audit or BE DAO consultation:

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