The Grunt-Lead Methodology

Supplemental Document for the Earned Governance Incubator — Prepared for Golda | July 2026

OVERVIEW & INTENT

This document outlines how **IntegralMASS** navigated the initial lifecycle of building a minimum viable product (MVP) with a team of unknown collaborators—without prematurely slicing equity. It follows **Mike Moyer's Slicing Pie** principle: *don't slice the pie before it's baked.*

The approach used incremental independent contractor agreements ($1,000–$3,000 each, ~$13,500 total) with clear line-item deliverables tied to each payment, executed over a **13-week lifecycle** aligned perfectly with the Grunt Fund spreadsheet calculator's 3-month window.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- **Incremental contracts** — Small, scoped agreements with clear deliverables reduce risk for all parties.
- **Flexibility within structure** — Deliverables are documented, but the team agreed to adapt as market feedback shaped the product.
- **Trust through responsiveness** — Core grunts integrated feedback in a timely manner, which built relational trust organically.
- **Code & data access** — Contracts emphasized the grunt leader's ability to pull code at any point, plus secure data transfers (SCP) with deployment documentation.
- **Cash first, equity later** — Upfront cash rationalized everyone's participation without equity stress. Now that cash has run out, we enter the equity conversation *informed*.

> *"Getting equity in a project is also a risk—an energy risk, a time risk, an open loop. This methodology gives every grunt the chance to understand that risk before committing."*

WHAT THIS ENABLES

By running the paid-contract phase first, we now have:

- A precise 3-month snapshot of who provided the most value
- An informed basis for retrospective labor valuation
- Each grunt can evaluate the risk/reward of equity participation
- No absentee-owner baggage—everyone can part ways with value rendered
- A working MVP with market feedback already integrated

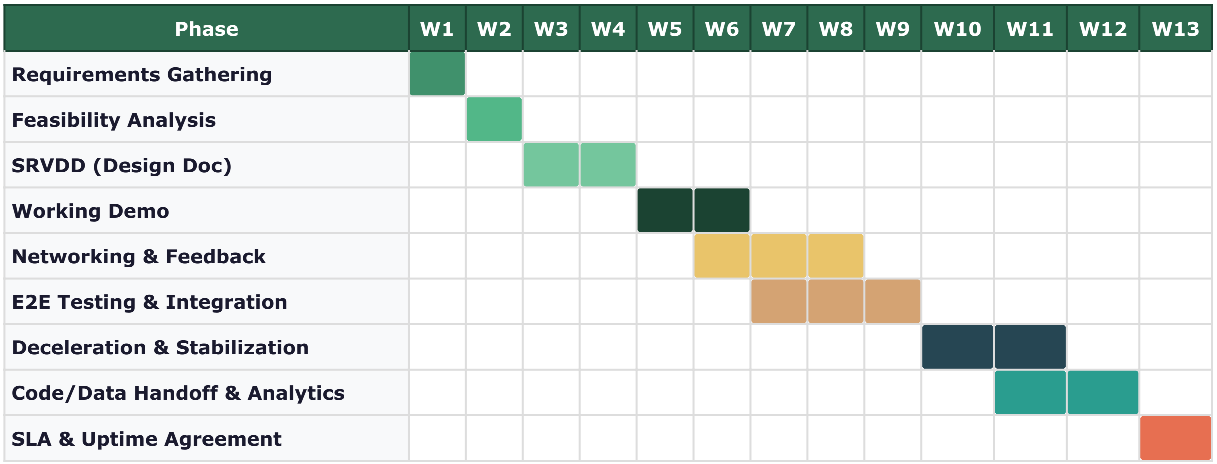
NEXT STEPS: SLICING THE PIE

1. **3-Month Retrospective** — Value each grunt's labor with appropriate hourly resource rates
2. **Create a Harvest Account** — Begin formal time tracking under the Grunt Fund model
3. **Share Calendars** — Provide validation layer for how time is spent
4. **Generate a Pitch Deck** — Formalize the product/market/geography fit
5. **Market Validation** — Continue validating demand and scalability
6. **Operating Agreement** — Develop through the incubator process
7. **Rebranding** — Plan for a new identity if product direction diverges from the original trade name/sole-owner LLC

LEGAL NOTE

The current entity is a **trade name under a sole-owner LLC**, providing legal protection for the tool's public-data crawling operations. A rebranding and new entity formation should be anticipated as part of the incubator's output if the team commits to a shared direction.

13-WEEK LIFECYCLE — GANTT CHART



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