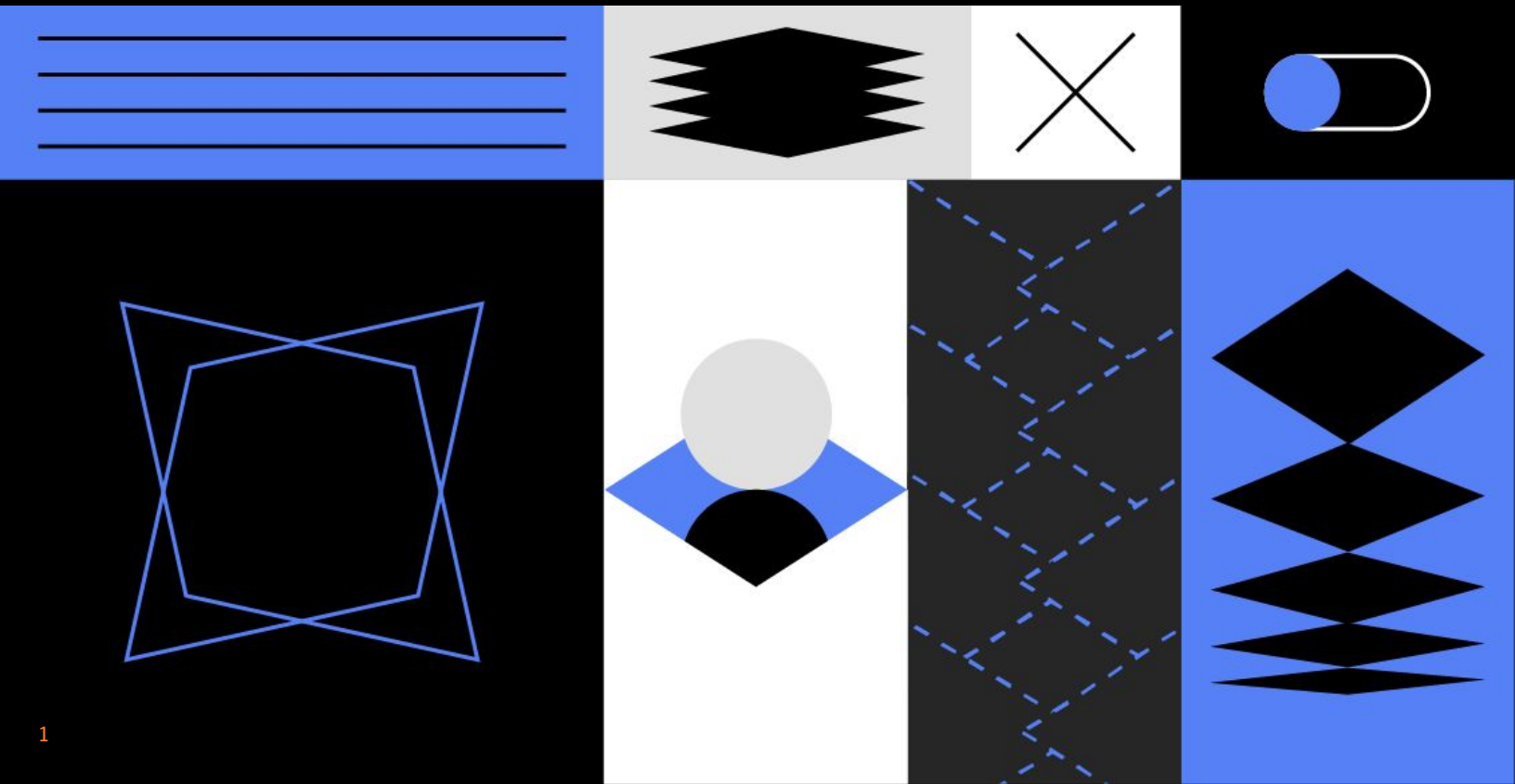


PRIMER

Token generation events



From mint to momentum: navigating a successful TGE

To launch a token, protocols must navigate a growing web of operational decisions and integrations: custody, compliance, liquidity, taxes, exchange readiness, and cross-chain composability, all with lead times that impact launch dates.

Most early missteps don't happen because teams make bad decisions, but because they didn't know which decisions exist in the first place. This guide lays out key considerations and milestones from idea to launch.

Timeline overview

1 Year - 6 Months Before Public Launch

- ☐ Lock in legal & corporate structure
- ☐ Build your token vision
- ☐ Establish banking partners
- ☐ Identify custody partner

6 Months - 3 Months Before Public Launch

- ☐ Engage security auditors
- ☐ Review grants and tax strategy
- ☐ Define market maker plan
- ☐ Partner with infrastructure providers
- ☐ Formalize exchange listing strategy
- ☐ Mint tokens with a qualified custodian (private TGE)*
- ☐ Get a formal token valuation
- ☐ Launch public testnet and developer engagement programs
- ☐ Finalize public-facing documentation

2 Months - 1 Month Before Public Launch

- ☐ Prepare your launch communication strategy
- ☐ Finalize process for investor and team token distributions
- ☐ Develop post-launch liquidity and treasury management plan

1 Year - 6 Months Before Public Launch: Get the Right Structure

This initial phase is about building the corporate and economic foundation for your protocol even before the token exists.

1. Lock in your legal and corporate structure

There are typically three entities that shape a protocol's structure: the **Foundation**, **Development Company**, and a **token issuing entity**. The Development Company is typically formed first to build the protocol, raise funding, and develop the initial technology, while the Foundation is typically established later to support decentralization, governance, and ecosystem growth. For global projects, this can become more complex, often involving multiple international entities to manage token issuance and ecosystem stewardship separately.

Takeaway: Engage legal counsel early to formalize your corporate structure and prevent future complications.

2. Build your token vision

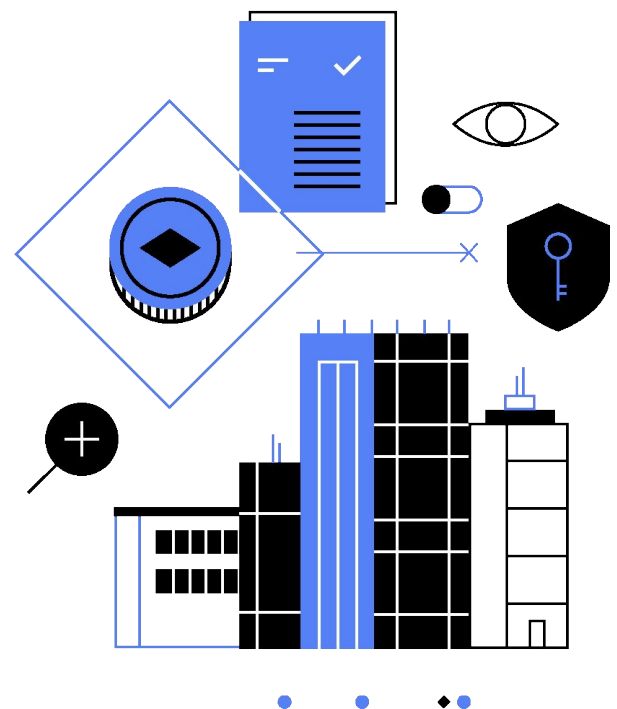
Tokens are an essential part of how the protocol works, how value accrues, and how communities form.

Key factors to consider to guide token design include:

- What role will the token play in your product and community?
- How will it influence user behavior or growth?
- What are the incentive mechanisms? How do they align with what you're looking to build?
- Total supply and tokenomics

In addition, to factors to consider when planning your tokenomics are:

- **Security audits:** Audit firms often have months-long backlogs, so engage them early.
- **Early-stage fundraising deals:** Early fundraising deals can inadvertently establish a high "fair market value" for your token, creating tax burdens for your teams. Get input from legal and tax experts.



1 Year - 6 Months Before Launch

3. Establish banking partners

As you raise funds, your treasury will consist of both fiat and crypto. Managing and deploying this operational capital will have its own complexity, and require a thoughtful setup to reduce operational overhead and risk. Consider:

- How will you handle both fiat and crypto?
- What treasury management strategies can you employ to maximize your runway?
- What setup do you need to manage a global payroll?
- How do you handle inflows and outflows?

You should think about your treasury management solution before you raise funding, so you'll have your capital secured and flowing through a trusted system right from the start.

Takeaway: Establish a robust treasury management plan before you raise funds. Ideally, find a partner that offers you both fiat and crypto services to offload complexity and reduce risk.

4. Identify custody partner

How you custody your treasury and newly minted tokens impacts everything from security to investor confidence. While multi-sig wallets are common, they can be operationally complex and introduce security risks if not managed perfectly.

Engaging a qualified custodian is often a regulatory requirement for institutional investors and provides key benefits for the protocol team:

- **Security:** A unified security model removes manual, error-prone processes often involved with a multi-sig
- **Asset support:** Qualified custodians can build support for your token, support distribution and TVL, and build additional ways to participate in your network such as staking and governance
- **Efficiency:** Streamlines complex operations like investor distributions and staking
- **Compliance:** Meets the rigorous requirements of institutional-grade partners

Takeaway: Decide on your custody strategy early. It's a foundational piece that simplifies downstream operations and builds trust with investors.

6 Months - 3+ Months Before Public Launch: Infrastructure Readiness

At this phase, infrastructure partnerships and liquidity planning are critical to build trust with developers and markets.

5. Review grants & tax strategy

Before your token has a public market value (pre-TGE), you have a window to grant tokens to your team in a tax-efficient manner. You'll be faced with decisions around when to issue Restricted Token Awards, Restricted Token Units, or other types of token-based compensation, and how to leverage key tax elections like the 83(b). Common but avoidable errors can turn token appreciation into a tax liability for your core team. Getting this right aligns long-term incentives, prevents team members from facing large tax burdens upon vesting, and demonstrates project maturity.

Takeaway: Work with legal and tax experts to structure team token grants, leveraging options like 83(b) elections to prevent major tax burdens for your team. Look for partners who can offer your team specialized retirement accounts for their digital assets.

6. Define market maker plan

Market making is a common but nuanced path. Misalignment on terms can lead to long-term risks, and integrations can be time-consuming. The wrong partner can introduce volatility or community distrust.

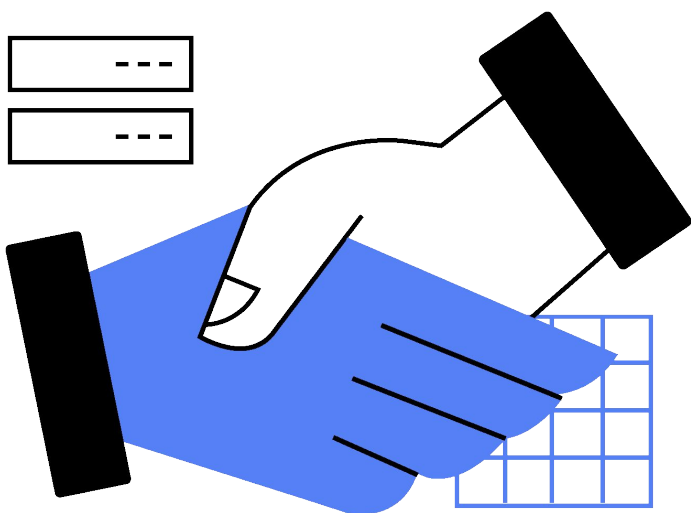
Key considerations include:

- **Structure and cost:** Token loans, incentive structures, and performance terms
- **Operational complexity:** Time required for technical integrations
- **Reputation and compliance:** Vetting a partner's track record and regulatory standing

Takeaway: If you're engaging a market maker for the first time, it often pays to speak with an institutional partner who can help you navigate.



6 Months - 3+ Months Before Public Launch: Infrastructure Readiness



7. Partner with infrastructure providers

To prevent developer frustration from latency or downtime, you must build a diverse network of reliable RPC and node providers, ensuring both geographic distribution and critical redundancy. As you get closer to launch, work closely with partners to ensure all necessary technical support and documentation are ready for launch day.

Takeaway: Partner with infrastructure providers to boost infrastructure resiliency and build trust with developers. Choose partners who can offer reliable timelines for building support for your asset.

8. Formalize exchange listing strategy

Getting listed on a centralized exchange is not just a technical milestone, but a public signal that influences perception, reach, and traction. Different exchanges have their own listing criteria. Some will require a known market maker, some will charge fees or request payment in your native token. While the integration timelines will depend on the protocol, consider starting the process at least three months in advance to be ready for launch.

Takeaway: Engage target exchanges at least three months before your public launch, allowing ample time for their due diligence process.



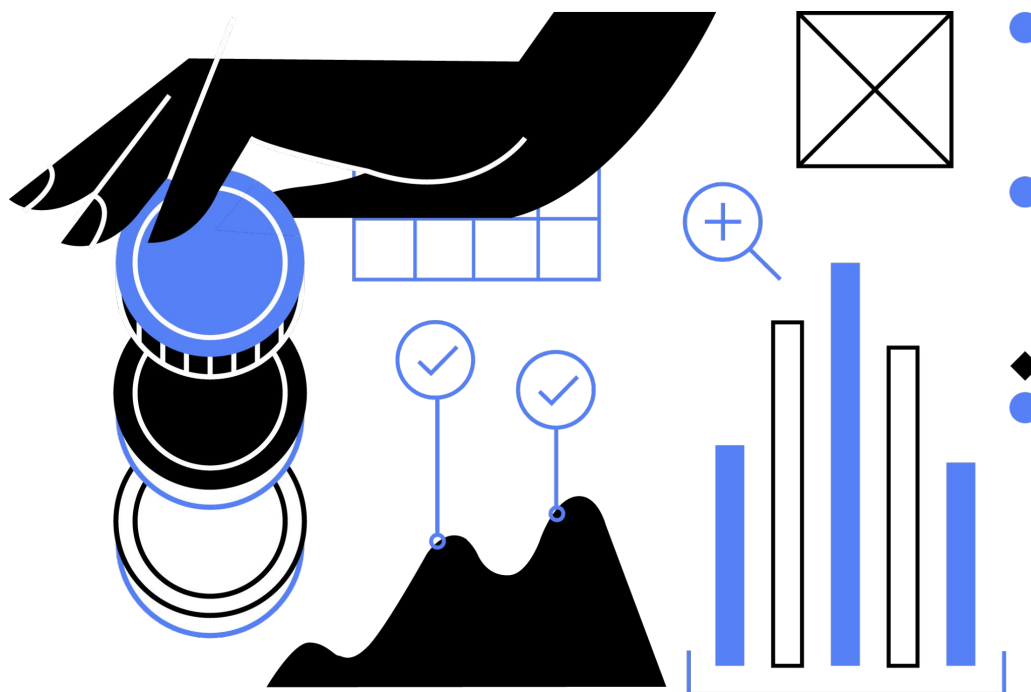
6 Months - 3+ Months Before Public Launch: Infrastructure Readiness

9. Mint tokens with a qualified custodian

Minting and a token generation event are not necessarily the same milestone. Minting is the process during which the tokens come into existence. The Token Generation Event is when they are revealed and distributed to different stakeholders based on agreed-upon schedules. Many protocols do a private mint first, then a public Token Generation Event in which the tokens are accessible to the broader public. The time frame between the two events varies based on a protocol's unique circumstances and goals. For some protocols, the private mint takes place 3-6 months before the public TGE.

Minting directly and instantly with a qualified custodian is the single most important step to mitigate risk—and may even be a requirement by your investor. A unified security model provides automated guardrails for safe transactions, and removes a significant operational burden from your team. This contrasts sharply with self-custody multi-sig solutions, which demand complex, manual management of hardware and signing operations. These processes may not only be error-prone, but also divert critical resources during a launch.

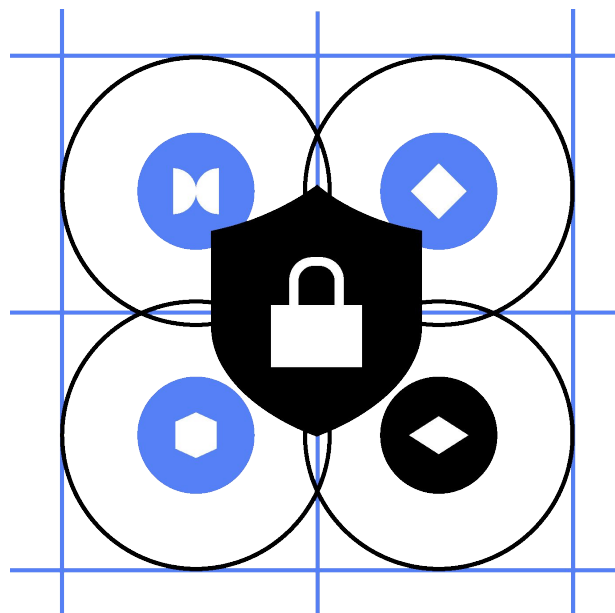
Takeaway: Consider minting your tokens with a qualified custodian over a multi-sig solution to reduce complexity and boost security.



10. Get a formal token valuation

To issue grants to your team (e.g., Restricted Token Awards for U.S. employees), you need an independent, third-party valuation to establish the token's Fair Market Value for tax purposes. This valuation must be done after the mint but as close to the mint date as possible with a "cool-off" period (typically 90+ days) before any public launch to reflect a true illiquid/pre-market Fair Market Value (FMV).

Takeaway: Engage a reputable firm for an independent token valuation immediately after minting to set the Fair Market Value for team grants.



10. Build in public: testnet, developer engagement, and documentation

Launching a testnet before your public release does two critical things: it helps you stress-test your infrastructure and catch serious bugs, and it gives developers a way to explore, build, and bring users into your ecosystem. Paired with incentives, hackathons, grants, and ambassador programs, testnets can seed an early, engaged community and create valuable feedback loops.

None of this works without clear public documentation. For most developers, your docs are the first touchpoint. Use them to clearly explain your mission, token design, incentives, and how to get started. Good docs give your community a roadmap for meaningful participation.

Takeaway: Build community before mainnet. Testnets, dev programs, and docs are your early engine for traction.

2 Months -1 Month Before Public Launch: Prepare for Public Go-To-Market

With your token live and held in custody, the final sprint involves preparing for exchange listings, coordinating communications, and finalizing distribution logistics.

11. Prepare your launch communication strategy

You only get to announce your launch once: make it count. Shape a marketing and communications strategy with clear messaging, partner coordination, and mix of channels to reach different target audiences. Your launch should include:

- Detailed day-of comms checklist to ensure flawless comms execution on launch day
- Targeted communications to key stakeholders (e.g. investors, large token holders) about custody, staking access, and timelines for support
- Developing materials with clear and consistent messaging (blog, social, and PR)
- Syncing with partners to amplify distribution
- Preparing collateral outlining your network, roadmap, and any integrations or special services
- Channels and staffing plan for community management (e.g. Telegram, Discord)

Takeaway: A successful launch requires a clear articulation of your vision and coordinated communications plan.

12. Finalize process for investor and team token distributions

A token generation event (TGE) requires operational readiness to distribute tokens securely, on schedule, with minimal friction. You will have contractual obligations to early investors, requiring a process for them to exercise their rights to tokens, and a secure method for delivery. Teams should finalize the following at least a month before launch:

- When and how will investors and employees access their tokens?
- What mechanisms will you use to distribute tokens and enforce lockups to ensure security and avoid mishaps?
- Are you prepared to meet reporting, tax, and compliance obligations?

Takeaway: Set up your token distribution and compliance infrastructure at least a month before launch, and start onboarding investors to your infrastructure partners.

Public Go-to-Market and Beyond

13. The big day: your public launch

Mainnet launch is a huge milestone. What helps make it seamless is all the work you've done before this point.

- Execute on your communications plan and partner outreach strategy
- Prepare for questions that may come inbound from partners, the media, and your community
- Execute on your airdrop and token distribution strategy based on your plan

Takeaway: Plan to be actively engaged with your community questions and stakeholders leading up to, and in the days following your public launch. Plan for global coverage.

Post-launch: sustained momentum

The launch is just the starting line. Maintaining growth requires deliberate work, including continued product development, community expansion, clear communication policies, execution on any decentralization and technical milestones, and an evolving liquidity and treasury management plan.

The right infrastructure partners make a difference. Those who can unlock institutional capital, streamline onboarding, or deliver incentives programmatically can accelerate traction.

