

SMART CONTRACT AUDIT REPORT

for

Monroe Protocol

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PeckShield March 4, 2024

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1 Introduction

Given the opportunity to review the design document and related smart contract source code of the Monroe protocol, we outline in the report our systematic approach to evaluate potential security issues in the smart contract implementation, expose possible semantic inconsistencies between smart contract code and design document, and provide additional suggestions or recommendations for improvement. Our results show that the given version of smart contracts can be further improved due to the presence of several issues related to either security or performance. This document outlines our audit results.

1.1 About Monroe

Monroe is a new DeFi primitive built on realising the full potential of liquid staking tokens (LSTs) across all EVM compatible chains. It achieves this by enabling the creation of stablecoins from LSTs in a fully decentralized way. The protocol makes incremental innovations on the back of giants such as Liquity, Lybra and Prisma. The envisioned outcome is that these stablecoins will be able to maintain its peg without significant price variance in different market conditions. The basic information of the audited protocol is as follows:

ltem	Description
Target	Monroe Protocol
Туре	EVM Smart Contract
Language	Solidity
Audit Method	Whitebox
Latest Audit Report	March 4, 2024

	Table 1.1:	Basic	Information	of Monroe	Protocol
--	------------	-------	-------------	-----------	----------

In the following, we show the Git repositories of reviewed files and the commit hash values used in this audit. Note that the Monroe protocol assumes a trusted price oracle with timely market price feeds for supported assets and the oracle itself is not part of this audit. • https://github.com/MonroeProtocol/contracts.git (fe5b79a)

And these are the commit IDs after all fixes for the issues found in the audit have been checked in:

https://github.com/MonroeProtocol/contracts.git (bf902c4)

1.2 About PeckShield

PeckShield Inc. [11] is a leading blockchain security company with the goal of elevating the security, privacy, and usability of current blockchain ecosystems by offering top-notch, industry-leading services and products (including the service of smart contract auditing). We are reachable at Telegram (https://t.me/peckshield), Twitter (http://twitter.com/peckshield), or Email (contact@peckshield.com).

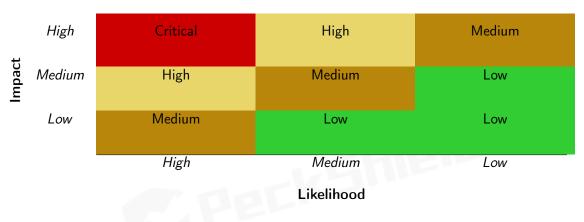


Table 1.2: Vulnerability Severity Classification

1.3 Methodology

To standardize the evaluation, we define the following terminology based on OWASP Risk Rating Methodology [10]:

- <u>Likelihood</u> represents how likely a particular vulnerability is to be uncovered and exploited in the wild;
- Impact measures the technical loss and business damage of a successful attack;
- Severity demonstrates the overall criticality of the risk.

Likelihood and impact are categorized into three ratings: *H*, *M* and *L*, i.e., *high*, *medium* and *low* respectively. Severity is determined by likelihood and impact and can be classified into four categories accordingly, i.e., *Critical*, *High*, *Medium*, *Low* shown in Table 1.2.

Category	Check Item		
	Constructor Mismatch		
	Ownership Takeover		
	Redundant Fallback Function		
	Overflows & Underflows		
	Reentrancy		
	Money-Giving Bug		
	Blackhole		
	Unauthorized Self-Destruct		
Basic Coding Bugs	Revert DoS		
	Unchecked External Call		
	Gasless Send		
	Send Instead Of Transfer		
	Costly Loop		
	(Unsafe) Use Of Untrusted Libraries		
	(Unsafe) Use Of Predictable Variables		
	Transaction Ordering Dependence		
	Deprecated Uses		
Semantic Consistency Checks	Semantic Consistency Checks		
	Business Logics Review		
	Functionality Checks		
	Authentication Management		
	Access Control & Authorization		
	Oracle Security		
Advanced DeFi Scrutiny	Digital Asset Escrow		
j	Kill-Switch Mechanism		
	Operation Trails & Event Generation		
	ERC20 Idiosyncrasies Handling		
	Frontend-Contract Integration		
	Deployment Consistency		
	Holistic Risk Management		
	Avoiding Use of Variadic Byte Array		
Additional Decommendations	Using Fixed Compiler Version		
Additional Recommendations	Making Visibility Level Explicit		
	Making Type Inference Explicit		
	Adhering To Function Declaration Strictly		
	Following Other Best Practices		

Table 1.3:	The Full	List of	Check	ltems
------------	----------	---------	-------	-------

To evaluate the risk, we go through a list of check items and each would be labeled with a severity category. For one check item, if our tool or analysis does not identify any issue, the contract is considered safe regarding the check item. For any discovered issue, we might further deploy contracts on our private testnet and run tests to confirm the findings. If necessary, we would additionally build a PoC to demonstrate the possibility of exploitation. The concrete list of check items is shown in Table 1.3.

In particular, we perform the audit according to the following procedure:

- <u>Basic Coding Bugs</u>: We first statically analyze given smart contracts with our proprietary static code analyzer for known coding bugs, and then manually verify (reject or confirm) all the issues found by our tool.
- <u>Semantic Consistency Checks</u>: We then manually check the logic of implemented smart contracts and compare with the description in the white paper.
- <u>Advanced DeFi Scrutiny</u>: We further review business logics, examine system operations, and place DeFi-related aspects under scrutiny to uncover possible pitfalls and/or bugs.
- <u>Additional Recommendations</u>: We also provide additional suggestions regarding the coding and development of smart contracts from the perspective of proven programming practices.

To better describe each issue we identified, we categorize the findings with Common Weakness Enumeration (CWE-699) [9], which is a community-developed list of software weakness types to better delineate and organize weaknesses around concepts frequently encountered in software development. Though some categories used in CWE-699 may not be relevant in smart contracts, we use the CWE categories in Table 1.4 to classify our findings.

1.4 Disclaimer

Note that this security audit is not designed to replace functional tests required before any software release, and does not give any warranties on finding all possible security issues of the given smart contract(s) or blockchain software, i.e., the evaluation result does not guarantee the nonexistence of any further findings of security issues. As one audit-based assessment cannot be considered comprehensive, we always recommend proceeding with several independent audits and a public bug bounty program to ensure the security of smart contract(s). Last but not least, this security audit should not be used as investment advice.

Category	Summary		
Configuration	Weaknesses in this category are typically introduced during		
	the configuration of the software.		
Data Processing Issues	Weaknesses in this category are typically found in functional-		
	ity that processes data.		
Numeric Errors	Weaknesses in this category are related to improper calcula-		
	tion or conversion of numbers.		
Security Features	Weaknesses in this category are concerned with topics like		
	authentication, access control, confidentiality, cryptography,		
	and privilege management. (Software security is not security software.)		
Time and State	Weaknesses in this category are related to the improper man-		
	agement of time and state in an environment that supports		
	simultaneous or near-simultaneous computation by multiple		
	systems, processes, or threads.		
Error Conditions,	Weaknesses in this category include weaknesses that occur if		
Return Values,	a function does not generate the correct return/status code,		
Status Codes	or if the application does not handle all possible return/status		
	codes that could be generated by a function.		
Resource Management	Weaknesses in this category are related to improper manage-		
	ment of system resources.		
Behavioral Issues	Weaknesses in this category are related to unexpected behav-		
	iors from code that an application uses.		
Business Logics	Weaknesses in this category identify some of the underlying		
	problems that commonly allow attackers to manipulate the		
	business logic of an application. Errors in business logic can		
	be devastating to an entire application.		
Initialization and Cleanup	Weaknesses in this category occur in behaviors that are used		
	for initialization and breakdown.		
Arguments and Parameters	Weaknesses in this category are related to improper use of		
	arguments or parameters within function calls.		
Expression Issues	Weaknesses in this category are related to incorrectly written		
	expressions within code.		
Coding Practices	Weaknesses in this category are related to coding practices		
	that are deemed unsafe and increase the chances that an ex-		
	ploitable vulnerability will be present in the application. They		
	may not directly introduce a vulnerability, but indicate the		
	product has not been carefully developed or maintained.		

2 Findings

2.1 Summary

Here is a summary of our findings after analyzing the Monroe implementation. During the first phase of our audit, we study the smart contract source code and run our in-house static code analyzer through the codebase. The purpose here is to statically identify known coding bugs, and then manually verify (reject or confirm) issues reported by our tool. We further manually review business logic, examine system operations, and place DeFi-related aspects under scrutiny to uncover possible pitfalls and/or bugs.

Severity		# of Findings
Critical	0	
High	0	
Medium	3	
Low	2	
Informational	0	
Total	5	

We have so far identified a list of potential issues: some of them involve subtle corner cases that might not be previously thought of, while others refer to unusual interactions among multiple contracts. For each uncovered issue, we have therefore developed test cases for reasoning, reproduction, and/or verification. After further analysis and internal discussion, we determined a few issues of varying severities that need to be brought up and paid more attention to, which are categorized in the above table. More information can be found in the next subsection, and the detailed discussions of each of them are in Section 3.

2.2 Key Findings

Overall, these smart contracts are well-designed and engineered, though the implementation can be improved by resolving the identified issues (shown in Table 2.1), including 3 medium-severity vulnerabilities and 2 low-severity vulnerabilities.

ID	Severity	Title	Category	Status
PVE-001	Medium	Revisited Health Factor Calculation in Ba-	Business Logic	Fixed
		seVault		
PVE-002	Medium	Timely And Accurate Income Collection in	Time and State	Fixed
		BaseVault		
PVE-003	Low	Incorrect Deposit Accounting in Emergen-	Business Logic	Fixed
		cyPool		
PVE-004	Low	Accommodation of Non-ERC20-	Coding Practices	Fixed
		Compliant Tokens		
PVE-005	Medium	Trust Issue of Admin Keys	Security Features	Mitigated

 Table 2.1:
 Key Monroe Protocol Audit Findings

Beside the identified issues, we emphasize that for any user-facing applications and services, it is always important to develop necessary risk-control mechanisms and make contingency plans, which may need to be exercised before the mainnet deployment. The risk-control mechanisms should kick in at the very moment when the contracts are being deployed on mainnet. Please refer to Section 3 for details.

3 Detailed Results

3.1 Revisited HealthRate Calculation in BaseVault

- ID: PVE-001
- Severity: Medium
- Likelihood: Medium
- Impact: Medium
- Description

- Target: BaseVault
- Category: Business Logic [7]
- CWE subcategory: CWE-837 [4]

In the Monroe protocol, there is a core BaseVault contract that underpins the implementation of various vaults by recording user collateral and debt. While examining the associated health factor calculation from user collateral and debt, we notice current approach needs to take into account the decimals of underlying collateral and debt.

To elaborate, we show below the related getHealthFactor() routine. It has a rather straightforward logic in computing a user's health factor based on the following formula, i.e., collateraValue * 100 / debtValue (line 242). However, the collateraValue calculation is computed as balanceOf(user)* latestPrice(), which needs to be revised as balanceOf(user)* latestPrice()/ 2**IERC20Upgradeable(collateralAsset()).decimals(). Similarly, the debt vaule needs to be revised as _debtBalance * ISynth (synth).getPrice()/ 2**ISynth(synth).decimals(). And the final health factor can then be computed as hf = 100 * balanceOf(user)* latestPrice()/ 2**IERC20Upgradeable(collateralAsset()).decimals().

Listing 3.1: BaseVault::getHealthFactor()

Recommendation Revisit the above routine to properly the user's health factor. Note the same issue also affects other routines, including _liquidateCollateral(), emergencyRepay(), and rigidRedemption().

Status The issue has been addressed in the following commits: 0d62223, 599c659, and bf902c4.

3.2 Timely And Accurate Income Collection in BaseVault

- ID: PVE-002
- Severity: Medium
- Likelihood: Medium

- Target: BaseVault
- Category: Time and State [8]
- CWE subcategory: CWE-682 [3]

• Impact: Medium

Description

As mentioned in Section 3.1, the Monroe protocol has a core BaseVault contract that underpins the implementation of various vaults. Each vault may have its income that needs to be properly collected for overall collateral and index adjustment. While analyzing the income collection, we notice the income needs to timely and accurately collected and distributed.

In the folowing, we examine the BaseVault contract and report an issue in emergencyRepay() that does not timely collect the income. Specifically, this emergencyRepay() routine allows to repay the debt in the emergency pool and get respective collateral in return. However, the logic needs to invoke checkIncome() before making any debt payment.

```
198
      function emergencyRepay(uint debtAmount) external {
199
        uint repaidValue = debtAmount * ISynth(synth).getPrice();
200
        uint clawedAmount = repaidValue * 108 / 100 / latestPrice();
201
        ISynth(synth).burn(msg.sender, debtAmount);
202
        decreaseDebt(emergencyPool, debtAmount);
203
        IERC20Upgradeable(collateralAsset()).safeTransfer(msg.sender, clawedAmount);
204
        decreaseCollateral(emergencyPool, clawedAmount);
205
        _totalDepositedCollateral -= clawedAmount;
206
207
        emit RepayEmergencyDebt(debtAmount, clawedAmount);
208
      }
```

Listing 3.2: BaseVault::emergencyRepay()

In addition, the derived RebaseCollateralVault contract from BaseVault has a concrete checkIncome () implementation. Our analysis shows its implementation can be improved. Specifically, the internal state epShare records the emergency pool share of new income that will be credited to emergencyPool as a new deposit into the vault. With that, there is a need to update _totalDepositedCollateral as follows: _totalDepositedCollateral += epShare (line 24). Similarly, another derived RebaseCollateralVault contract shares the same issue.

```
18
     function checkIncome() public override returns (uint income){
19
       uint actualBal = ERC20(collateralAsset()).balanceOf(address(this));
20
       if (actualBal > _totalDepositedCollateral){
21
         income = actualBal - _totalDepositedCollateral;
22
         if (balanceOf(emergencyPool) > 0){
23
           uint emergencyPoolShareTarget = controller.emergencyPoolShare();
24
            uint epShare = income * emergencyPoolShareTarget * 15 / 1000;
25
           increaseCollateral(emergencyPool, epShare);
26
            income -= epShare;
27
         }
28
         // part of the income distributed out (to treasury and savings)
29
         income -= _distributeIncome(income);
30
         /*
31
           Remaining income is given to distributors thru rebase (increase liquidityIndex)
32
            totalBalances * liquidityIndex = _totalDepositedCollateral
33
           new_totalDepositedCollateral = old_totalDepositedCollateral + income
34
35
           since balances dont change:
36
           newLiquidityIndex / new_totalDepositedCollateral = old_liquidityIndex /
                old_totalDepositedCollateral
37
         */
38
         liquidityIndex = (_totalDepositedCollateral + income) * liquidityIndex /
              _totalDepositedCollateral;
39
         // sanity check (cant require or error would brick the vault):
              _totalDepositedCollateral + income = ERC20(collateralAsset()).balanceOf(
              address(this))
          _totalDepositedCollateral = ERC20(collateralAsset()).balanceOf(address(this));
40
41
          emit CollectIncome(income);
42
       }
43
     }
```

Listing 3.3: RebaseCollateralVault::checkIncome()

Recommendation Revise the above-mentioned routines to timely and properly update new income.

Status The issue has been addressed in the following commits: 94bf1f9 and bf902c4.

3.3 Incorrect Deposit Accounting in EmergencyPool

- ID: PVE-003
- Severity: Low
- Likelihood: Low
- Impact: Low

- Target: EmergencyPool
- Category: Business Logic [7]
- CWE subcategory: CWE-837 [4]

Description

The Monroe protocol has the notion of EmergencyPool that keeps debt from emergency liquidation. This EmergencyPool contract is implemented as an ERC4626 vault with a standard API for tokenized yield-bearing vaults, offering basic functionality for depositing, withdrawing tokens, and reading balances. In the process of examining the related deposit logic, we notice the implementation makes an extension and that extension can be improved.

To elaborate, we show below the related code snippet of the _deposit() routine. The purpose here is to deposits assets of underlying tokens into the vault and grants ownership of shares to receiver. The EmergencyPool contract extends the logic by also keeping track of the depositTime of caller. In fact, the depositTime state should be about the receiver, not msg.sender (line 43).

```
40 /// @notice Forward assets to collateral vault after deposit
41 function _deposit(address caller, address receiver, uint256 assets, uint256 shares)
internal override {
42 super._deposit(caller, receiver, assets, shares);
43 depositTime[msg.sender] = block.timestamp;
44 IERC20(asset()).approve(collateralVault, assets);
45 IBaseVault(collateralVault).depositAndMint(assets, 0);
46 }
```

Listing 3.4: EmergencyPool::_deposit()

Moreover, the depositTime state is used to detect early withdrawals. An early withdrawal situation may charge 0.1% fee. However, this detection can be easily bypassed as the share can be transferred to a new fresh account to perform the actual withdrawal.

Listing 3.5: EmergencyPool::_withdraw()

Recommendation Revise the above routine by properly keeping track of the depositTime state and reliably charge the early withdrawal fee.

Status The issue has been addressed in the following commits: d03fdf4 and b020f1c.

3.4 Accommodation of Non-ERC20-Compliant Tokens

- ID: PVE-004
- Severity: Low
- Likelihood: Low
- Impact: Low
- Description

- Target: Multiple Contracts
- Category: Coding Practices [6]
- CWE subcategory: CWE-1109 [1]

Though there is a standardized ERC-20 specification, many token contracts may not strictly follow the specification or have additional functionalities beyond the specification. In this section, we examine the approve() routine and analyze possible idiosyncrasies from current widely-used token contracts.

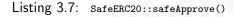
In particular, we use the popular stablecoin, i.e., USDT, as our example. We show the related code snippet below. On its entry of approve(), there is a requirement, i.e., require(!((_value != 0) && (allowed[msg.sender][_spender] != 0))). This specific requirement essentially indicates the need of reducing the allowance to 0 first (by calling approve(_spender, 0)) if it is not, and then calling a second one to set the proper allowance. This requirement is in place to mitigate the known approve()/ transferFrom() race condition (https://github.com/ethereum/EIPs/issues/20#issuecomment-263524729).

```
194
        /**
195
        * @dev Approve the passed address to spend the specified amount of tokens on behalf
            of msg.sender.
196
        * @param _spender The address which will spend the funds.
197
        * Cparam _value The amount of tokens to be spent.
198
        */
199
        function approve(address spender, uint value) public onlyPayloadSize(2 * 32) {
201
             // To change the approve amount you first have to reduce the addresses '
202
             // allowance to zero by calling 'approve(_spender, 0)' if it is not
203
             // already 0 to mitigate the race condition described here:
204
             // https://github.com/ethereum/EIPs/issues/20#issuecomment-263524729
205
             require(!(( value != 0) && (allowed[msg.sender][ spender] != 0)));
207
             allowed [msg.sender] [ _spender] = _value;
208
             Approval (msg. sender, _spender, _value);
209
```

Listing 3.6: USDT Token Contract

Because of that, a normal call to approve() is suggested to use the safe version, i.e., safeApprove(), In essence, it is a wrapper around ERC20 operations that may either throw on failure or return false without reverts. Moreover, the safe version also supports tokens that return no value (and instead revert or throw on failure). Note that non-reverting calls are assumed to be successful. Similarly, there is a safe version of transfer() as well, i.e., safeTransfer().

```
38
30
         * @dev Deprecated. This function has issues similar to the ones found in
40
         * {IERC20-approve}, and its usage is discouraged.
41
42
         * Whenever possible, use {safeIncreaseAllowance} and
43
         * {safeDecreaseAllowance} instead.
44
        */
45
        function safeApprove(
46
            IERC20 token,
47
            address spender,
48
            uint256 value
49
       ) internal {
50
            // safeApprove should only be called when setting an initial allowance,
51
            // or when resetting it to zero. To increase and decrease it, use
52
            // 'safeIncreaseAllowance' and 'safeDecreaseAllowance'
53
            require(
54
                (value == 0) (token.allowance(address(this), spender) == 0),
55
                "SafeERC20: approve from non-zero to non-zero allowance"
56
            ):
57
            _callOptionalReturn(token, abi.encodeWithSelector(token.approve.selector,
                spender, value));
58
```



In current implementation, if we examine the BaseVault::_distributeIncome() routine that is designed to distribute new income. To accommodate the specific idiosyncrasy, there is a need to use safeApprove(), instead of approve() (line 300). And it is better to be invoked twice: the first safeApprove() resets the spending allowance and the second sets up the intended allowance.

```
757
      function _distributeIncome(uint amount) internal returns (uint distributed) {
758
        uint treasuryFee
                                = controller.treasuryFee();
759
        uint userShare
                                 = 10_000 - treasuryFee;
760
        // After fees, split the income between depositors and savings
761
        uint shareSavings = userShare * ISynth(synth).getSavingsYield() / 10_000;
762
        uint treasuryAmount = amount * treasuryFee / 10_000;
763
        IERC20Upgradeable(collateralAsset()).safeTransfer(controller.treasury(),
            treasuryAmount);
764
        amount -= treasuryAmount;
765
766
        // Send its share to savings pool for Dutch auction
767
        uint savingsAmount = amount * shareSavings / 10_000;
768
        if(IERC20Upgradeable(collateralAsset()).allowance(address(this), synth) <</pre>
             savingsAmount) IERC20Upgradeable(collateralAsset()).approve(synth, savingsAmount
            ):
```

```
769 ISynth(synth).collectSavingsIncome(collateralAsset(), savingsAmount);
770
771 distributed = treasuryAmount + savingsAmount;
772 }
```

Listing 3.8: BaseVault::_distributeIncome()

Note the EmergencyPool::_deposit() routine can be similarly improved.

Recommendation Accommodate the above-mentioned idiosyncrasy about ERC20-related approve().

Status The issue has been addressed in the following commit: aldf7e3.

3.5 Trust Issue of Admin Keys

- ID: PVE-005
- Severity: Medium
- Likelihood: Medium
- Impact: Medium

- Target: Multiple Contracts
- Category: Security Features [5]
- CWE subcategory: CWE-287 [2]

Description

In the Monroe protocol, there is a privileged owner account that plays a critical role in governing and regulating the system-wide operations (e.g., parameter setting, vault adjustment, and synth creation). Our analysis shows that the privileged account needs to be scrutinized. In the following, we examine the privileged account and the related privileged accesses in current contracts.

```
72
     function setTreasury(address _treasury) public onlyOwner {
73
       require(_treasury != address(0), "Ctrl: Null Address");
74
       treasury = _treasury;
75
     }
76
77
78
     /// @notice Add a new collateral vault
79
     function addVault(address vault) public onlyOwner returns (uint) {
80
       require(vault != address(0), "Ctrl: Invalid Vault");
81
       address collateral = IBaseVault(vault).collateralAsset();
82
       address oracle = IBaseVault(vault).oracle();
83
       require(collateral != address(0) && oracle != address(0), "Ctrl: Invalid Vault");
84
       require(collateralToVault[collateral] == address(0), "Ctrl: Vault Already Exists");
85
86
       vaults.push(vault);
87
       collateralToVault[collateral] = vault;
88
       return vaults.length;
89
```

90	
91	function createSynth(bytes32 name, address oracle)
	newSynth) {
92	<pre>if (oracle != address(0)) require(AggregatorInterface(oracle).latestAnswer() > 0, "</pre>
	Ctrl: No Such Oracle");
93	<pre>string memory _name = string(abi.encodePacked("Monroe", name));</pre>
94	<pre>string memory _symbol = string(abi.encodePacked(name, "m"));</pre>
95	<pre>newSynth = Clones.clone(synth);</pre>
96	ISynth(newSynth).initialize(_name, _symbol, oracle, lz0Endpoint, savingsPoolLogic);
97	<pre>synths.push(newSynth);</pre>
98	<pre>ISynth(newSynth).transferOwnership(msg.sender);</pre>
99	}

Listing 3.9: Privileged Operations in Controller

We emphasize that the privilege assignment may be necessary and consistent with the protocol design. However, it is worrisome if the privileged account is not governed by a DAD-like structure. Note that a compromised account would allow the attacker to modify a number of sensitive system parameters, which directly undermines the assumption of the protocol design.

Recommendation Promptly transfer the privileged account to the intended DAD-like governance contract. All changed to privileged operations may need to be mediated with necessary timelocks. Eventually, activate the normal on-chain community-based governance life-cycle and ensure the intended trustless nature and high-quality distributed governance.

Status The issue has been confirmed by the team. For the time being, it is planned to mitigate with a timelock mechanism.

4 Conclusion

In this audit, we have analyzed the design and implementation of the Monroe protocol, which is a new DeFi primitive built on realising the full potential of liquid staking tokens (LSTs) across all EVM compatible chains. It achieves this by enabling the creation of stablecoins from LSTs in a fully decentralized way. The protocol makes incremental innovations on the back of giants such as Liquity , Lybra and Prisma. The envisioned outcome is that these stablecoins will be able to maintain its peg without significant price variance in different market conditions. The current code base is well structured and neatly organized. Those identified issues are promptly confirmed and addressed.

Meanwhile, we need to emphasize that smart contracts as a whole are still in an early, but exciting stage of development. To improve this report, we greatly appreciate any constructive feedbacks or suggestions, on our methodology, audit findings, or potential gaps in scope/coverage.



References

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