

Request for Proposals

Consultant(s) for Evaluation for Wellspring Philanthropic Fund and SAGE Fund

Human Rights and Accountability of Economic Actors

The International Human Rights Program at Wellspring Philanthropic Fund and the SAGE Fund seek consultant(s) to assess how work for accountability of economic actors to human rights, primarily as funded by Wellspring but also including other actors and strategies, has advanced toward its objectives, and to make a case for funding of human rights and accountability work going forward.

1. Description and Background

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (“Wellspring”) is a global philanthropic institution committed to the effective advancement of social justice and human rights. We strive to cultivate accountable social systems and structures that uphold human dignity, strengthen agency, and advance equity for all people.

[SAGE \(Strengthening Accountability in the Global Economy\) Fund](#) is a grant-maker and catalyst that seeks to strengthen human rights accountability of powerful economic actors, and address critical gaps in protection created by the global economy by: Spurring innovation in the tools and approaches used to hold economic actors accountable for human rights violations; Building knowledge, skills and capacity (with a focus on the Global South) to analyze key challenges, fashion strategies in response and mobilize new coalitions and constituencies; and Creating greater leverage (within donor and NGO communities) by building consensus and an agenda for the field, and identifying priorities and opportunities for impact.

Wellspring’s International Human Rights Program (the “Program”) supports grantees working to prevent human rights violations and protect civilians during conflicts and crises; to end impunity for rights violations involving governments, corporations, and other economic actors; to advance disability rights; and to ensure that human rights organizations and activists can do their work safely and effectively. The Program has supported work to hold economic actors, including corporations and public financial institutions, accountable to human rights for over a decade, in a theme of work titled Human Rights in the Global Economy (“Global Economy theme”). The primary focus has been on the difficulty of holding transnational economic actors to account for their human rights impacts given the lack of an enforceable global human rights framework that applies to them, and on closing this accountability gap.

The primary strategies supported have been (i) policy and legislative advocacy (both national and international), and (ii) strategic litigation, primarily at the national level both in countries where abuses occur, and in countries where multinationals are headquartered; (iii) casework and advocacy identifying and pressuring buyers, investors, other financial institutions, and others with economic leverage over actors responsible for abuse; and (iv) field-building including network development and coalition-building; peer exchange, learning and support structures; innovation and development of new tools and strategies; and a robust information ecosystem for the field.

We plan to collaborate between SAGE and Wellspring to initiate the consultancy, with Wellspring playing a lead role at the outset. As Wellspring is in the process of winding down its grantmaking, we will be fully transitioning the management of this consultancy to the SAGE Fund in late 2025.

2. Evaluation Objective and Purpose

The Program seeks to assess how the work on the human rights accountability of economic actors has advanced, and the impacts of the field, both on the ground in specific cases and with specific policy advances, and in changing systems more broadly.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the impacts of the field working for accountability of economic actors, and to guide future funding. We intend to use the findings:

- (a) to demonstrate the value and impact of the field of human rights and accountability of economic actors, primarily for other funders; and
- (b) as evidence for funders, including those who do not primarily use a human rights lens, on how strategies centering accountability of economic actors can advance their strategic objectives.

An ancillary purpose is to generate learning and knowledge that the broader ecosystem of actors can use to more effectively advance accountability and human rights.

3. Evaluation Questions

Below are draft evaluation questions that Wellspring and the SAGE Fund would like to discuss and refine with the consultant/team once the consultancy is procured:

The primary questions we seek to answer through this consultancy are:

- 1) **How has the field over the last 10 years advanced toward its objectives of securing accountability of economic actors to human rights norms?**
What has it collectively achieved, particularly at the systemic level?

The evaluation should consider the strategies that Wellspring has supported, including the following:

- Policy and legislative advocacy (national and international)
- Strategic litigation, primarily at the national level both in countries where abuses occur, and in countries where multinationals are headquartered
- Casework and advocacy using pressure on buyers, investors and other financial institutions with leverage over companies responsible for human rights abuses
- Field-building including network development and coalition-building; peer exchange, learning and support structures; innovation and development of new tools and strategies; and a robust information ecosystem

If other strategies have been particularly effective, they should also be considered.

However, the primary intent is not to evaluate these strategies per se, but rather, first, to capture the changes enabled by the field, and then, if possible, to assess what strategies enabled them.

- 2) Based on this evidence, **what effective strategies going forward should be funded**, either to close the global gap in accountability to human rights of economic actors, or to use the field's approaches to address other issues such as climate change?

When answering the above questions, the approach should evaluate, for specific cases, **the systemic impacts of the cases**, such as their influence in policy advocacy, how they shaped public opinion, or their

deterrent effect toward other similar companies—not just the gains (and any costs or harms) for people directly implicated in the cases, e.g., plaintiffs or a class in strategic litigation. Similarly, **if a policy was secured or law was passed** in one country or concerning one business sector, the evaluation should consider its **direct impacts**, and **impacts it had in other countries, or on other sectors**.

The secondary questions we hope to address include:

- 3) What **indicators emerge from this evaluation that funders and other field actors could use in future** to assess the impact of funding for human rights and accountability? This could include indicators that cannot be reconstructed retrospectively for this evaluation but that the evaluation team recommends to measure going forward.
- 4) Do indicators that emerged include **quantitative evidence and data** available to measure the field's impacts? E.g., counting how many people were affected, both directly and indirectly, by the shifts and advances that the work secured; quantifying how they were affected. What indicators can be used to measure those gains? If these data are not available, what would be required to develop and gather them?

4. Methodological Considerations

In order to facilitate the use of findings by other funders, we anticipate consultations with funders to be part of the inception process, with their input helping us refine the evaluation questions and design.

The primary focus of the evaluation will be work funded by the Global Economy theme, but the evaluation should also consider evidence of the impact of other funders, and/or strategies and actors for human rights accountability of economic actors not funded by Wellspring. We expect that the evaluation team will conduct a systematic review of the Program's and grantees' documents, documentation by organizations not funded by Wellspring, and other third-party information. While we expect that the evaluators will conduct interviews with Wellspring grantees, other organizations, subject matter experts, and other stakeholders, the evaluation report should go beyond a synthesis of interviews or a general assessment of changes in the field, and reach concrete conclusions about the impact of the field.

The evaluation should state explicitly the criteria for assessing the strategies that are likely to be most effective moving forward (Evaluation Question 2 above).

For the secondary questions, the relevant indicators should capture systemic changes and impacts on people's rights and lives, i.e., they should go beyond counting policies and regulations passed, or lawsuits filed or won.

The findings and conclusions of the evaluation should be informed by data that has been triangulated and cross-verified from multiple sources. The broader evaluation methodology is up to the discretion of the applicants.

5. Deliverables

The following is a tentative list of deliverables for this evaluation:

- 1) A midterm draft with initial findings and an indication of work remaining, by 1 September 2025.

- 2) A long-form internal evaluation report, presenting the methodology including quantitative and qualitative indicators developed; the data and information gathered corresponding to these indicators; and an in-depth analysis and assessment of the overall progress made. This report should include a full bibliography and list of people and organizations interviewed, as well as an executive summary of up to 10 pages.

The evaluation report should also include any indicators or framework that the evaluation team would recommend using in future – whether or not it was feasible to apply that framework and assess progress on those indicators in this case.

- 3) A full draft of the long-form report by 15 February 2026, for comment and revision.
- 4) Input into communications around the report findings to be carried out by SAGE Fund

Once a consultant(s) is/are selected, we will work with them to schedule regular check-ins and agree upon a reasonable set of midterm deliverables (e.g., list of interviewees, literature, and other information sources, potential case studies, etc.) in addition to the final deliverables outlined here.

6. Budget and Timeline

We expect the full evaluation under this project to be completed within approximately 12 months of entering into a contract, including an initial inception phase spanning 4-6 weeks which will be focused on finalizing the methodology.

The estimated budget range for this consultancy is USD 100,000-150,000. If your proposed budget is beyond this range, please include the rationale for the proposed budget. We are open to working with consultants to right-size the scope and budget for an evaluation approach that is best suited to fulfilling the evaluation objective.

The following is the anticipated timeline for the evaluation, subject to some changes:

Stage	Date
Proposals submitted	15 February 2025
Interviews with shortlisted teams	20-28 February 2025
Evaluation team identified and informed	7 March 2025
Inception phase commences	15 March 2025
Main evaluation phase commences	25 April 2025
Midterm draft submitted	1 September 2025
Draft final report submitted	15 February 2026
Evaluation completed	15 March 2026
Input into communications of project findings	April-June 2026

7. Desired Qualifications

The team should include one or more experts with deep, primary experience in evaluation, ideally for foundations or other philanthropic actors. This evaluation experience should ideally include:

- Experience measuring strategic and systemic impacts of strategic litigation beyond the actors in individual cases, and strategic and systemic impacts of legislative and policy advocacy;
- Expertise in gathering and presenting data, including quantitative data, about social change and human rights, including experience with these issues in Global Majority regions; and
- Experience developing indicators for social change and human rights;

The team should also include one or more experts in the area of human rights and transnational economic actors, including human rights impacts in Global Majority regions.

In case of entities/firms, we are open to working with both mission-driven for-profit as well as non-profit organizations.

8. Next Steps

Interested consultants should submit their applications to evaluation@wpfund.org by **15 February 2025**. Please put “Human Rights and Accountability of Economic Actors Evaluation” in the email subject. The application should include:

- CV and bios detailing relevant experience of applicants, specifically:
 - Expertise in gathering, evaluating, and presenting data about social change and human rights, including in Global Majority regions; and
 - Subject matter expertise.
- A technical and financial proposal based on the information provided in this document, including any questions you have about the scope or approaches for this RFP.

Please note that any information you provide in the proposal is your intellectual property. It will be used only for the purpose of understanding your expertise and approaches and how it may align with our needs. We will not use any ideas or samples you submit without explicit permission or compensation.

Thank you for your interest and patience, and feel free to reach out to us at evaluation@wpfund.org if you have any questions in the meantime.

9. Wellspring’s Institutional Culture of Respect, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund believes we are strengthened by the diversity of consultants we work with. We welcome proposals from evaluators of all cultures, backgrounds, and experience levels.

In particular, we strongly encourage individuals or teams located in Global Majority regions, and/or individuals or teams who are from under-represented backgrounds in the field of evaluation, to apply.

We also encourage proposals from evaluators or evaluation firms who will include emerging evaluators or evaluators in training, including those from under-represented backgrounds in the field of evaluation. Please include relevant information in your proposal so that we can factor it into our review process.