

Request for Proposals: Consultancy: Regional Coordinator – Corporate Accountability Ecosystem Building Program in Southeast Asia

MARCH 2023

Summary

The Freedom Fund is launching a new Corporate Accountability Ecosystem Building Program in Southeast Asia (the 'Ecosystem Program'). The program aims to strengthen the role of frontline civil society organisations (CSOs) in the region to engage in corporate accountability strategies. We are seeking to appoint a **Regional Coordinator** to implement this ground-breaking program, working closely with frontline CSOs/activists in Southeast Asia and global partners.

The Regional Coordinator's responsibilities will include coordinating and network-building among organisations in Southeast Asia and partners, assisting program participants to develop and carry out action plans, supporting technical training, and managing program's activities – including grant management as required. The Regional Coordinator will work closely with the Freedom Fund's Corporate Accountability team to carry out these duties and is expected to provide regular updates to the team describing progress and results.

The role will be a two-year contract for an individual consultant or organisation, commencing in May 2023 (with an opportunity to renew, depending on performance and funding availability).

Eligibility

Individuals and social impact organisations (profit/non-profit) are invited to submit proposals. Applicants must have a presence in Southeast Asia and/or have significant experience implementing programs in the region. Applicants must have demonstrable subject matter expertise and a track record in successful implementation of capacity building programs in the Global South.

Expected time commitment

The position is expected to be an equivalent of a full-time role for an individual consultant or constitutes 15 – 20 working days per month for an organisation, depending on the team's experience. Budgets will be reviewed, on a competitive basis, with respect to the strength of the proposal in meeting the program's objectives.

Proposal deadline

Proposals should be submitted via email to Marta Bylica (mbylica@freedomfund.org) before **11 April 2023, 5pm UK Time**. Proposals should be no longer than 5 pages plus annexes.

Background to the Freedom Fund

The Freedom Fund is a global fund with the goal of ending modern slavery. We identify and invest in the most effective frontline efforts to eradicate forced labour and human trafficking in the countries and sectors where they are most prevalent. Partnering with visionary investors, governments, anti-slavery organisations and those at risk of exploitation, we tackle the systems and power structures that allow modern slavery practices to thrive.

The Freedom Fund's Corporate Accountability initiative invests in cutting-edge accountability programs designed to shift corporate behaviour as a driver of forced labour and human trafficking across all sectors of the global economy. Our goal is to incentivise systems change by increasing the pressure on businesses to address, remedy, and prevent modern slavery in their supply chains.

Project Overview

Securing accountability¹ for corporations involved in, or benefitting from, forced labour in their supply chains is a critical component of a systems change approach to ending modern slavery. The introduction of new enforceable standards of responsible business conduct, and the increasing number of legal cases being filed against multinational corporations implicated in forced labour practices, provides new opportunities to advance accountability and secure remedy for workers in global supply chains. The Freedom Fund has a long-term goal of supporting efforts to develop a global 'ecosystem' where frontline CSOs, lawyers, rights holders, and advocates can collaborate to identify and build strong legal cases to hold companies accountable for forced labour and human trafficking.

In 2021, the Freedom Fund [commissioned a scoping study](#) to understand the role of Global South CSOs and lawyers in corporate accountability legal actions for forced labour. The study provided a landscape assessment of the accountability 'ecosystem' within three countries in Southeast Asia: Thailand, Malaysia, and The Philippines. It concluded that there are currently no clear pathways for local groups in these countries to pursue transnational corporate accountability legal approaches. Both local and global organisations lack the connections and resources required to identify, develop, and sustain such actions, and as a result there is little consideration given to the possibility of pursuing these avenues to justice.

Building on this initial study, we subsequently developed a strategy outline for the new regional Ecosystem Program based on consultations with nearly 70 civil society stakeholders across Southeast Asia and globally. The strategy confirms existing barriers and challenges, ranging from institutional challenges to capacity gaps and lack of resources for the safety, protection, and support of claimants throughout the legal process. Stakeholders strongly recommended a need to establish regional networks focused on corporate accountability – with clearly defined objectives of local leadership and ownership. Additionally, financial and technical support should prioritise the engagement of local groups, working in close collaboration with expert organisations in corporate accountability, to co-create and equip groups with the necessary foundational knowledge and resources to engage in the program.

The Freedom Fund intends to establish the new program to help strengthen the accountability ecosystem for forced labour – with the following key components:

- 1) **Funding & Case Pipeline Development** – provide financial support for accountability initiatives, which involve initial investigations, on-the-ground interviews, desk-based research, broader advocacy and communication activities, as well as supply chain investigations to connect human rights violations with companies at the local and international level
- 2) **Technical Training Programs** – partner with local groups to build knowledge/skills to help identify potential legal pathways to pursue corporate accountability as well as developing a legal strategy
- 3) **Networks** – connect local groups among themselves, and with international and regional experts, to foster collaboration on regional and transnational corporate accountability strategies that are driven by local needs and perspectives of rights holders.

We plan to pilot the program in Southeast Asia, supporting a small cohort of frontline CSOs with experience working on labour rights issues linked to global supply chains. Our target countries are Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan, Indonesia, Cambodia, and The Philippines. The program will be carried out in three stages:

¹ 'Corporate accountability' refers to legal ways to impose penalties on companies involved in trafficking or forced labour, or to require them to remedy harm caused to affected people. This may include civil, criminal, or administrative legal mechanisms, such as civil or criminal lawsuits, sanctions, 'import bans', OECD mechanisms, or industry grievance mechanisms.

Stage 1: Foundation (Years 1-2)

This stage is designed to equip CSO partners with the necessary foundational knowledge to participate in the program and understand international corporate accountability mechanisms and frameworks. Activities in this stage will include regional training programs, design thinking workshops, as well as corporate accountability-focused exchanges and working groups. We also envision establishing a corporate accountability seed fund to support program participants in developing and translating their ideas into practice.

Stage 2: Trial (Years 2-3)

This stage will focus on supporting CSO partners, through collaboration with global partners, to investigate cases, gather evidence, develop, test, and implement corporate accountability strategies, and continuing to provide them with the necessary technical skills and organisational resources to do so.

Stage 3: Implementation (Years 3+)

In the final stage, CSO partners who have been supported through stages 1 and 2 should be in a position to pursue and lead corporate accountability strategies through their own initiative and share their learnings and experiences with others.

Position Overview

We are seeking a highly motivated individual or organisation to manage and coordinate the Ecosystem Program. The Regional Coordinator will play an integral role in the project's activities across Southeast Asia, which involve coordinating and network-building among CSO partners, as well as providing financial and technical support to participating organisations.

This is a unique opportunity for an experienced human rights professional based in Asia with experience in the field of corporate accountability or modern slavery, and who has strong network-building, strategic coordination, project management, and capacity-building skills.

This role will be fully remote and can be based anywhere in Southeast Asia – with a preference for candidates based in Thailand, Indonesia, or Malaysia. Candidates must have the right to work in their base location.

Duties & Responsibilities

- Coordinate, oversee, and monitor the implementation of the Ecosystem Program, managing a portfolio of program partners across up to six countries in Southeast Asia
- Build and support a regional corporate accountability network of civil society actors, lawyers, and other relevant stakeholders
- Facilitate exchanges and dialogues between Ecosystem Program partners in Southeast Asia and international stakeholders to support program activities
- Design and implement an effective funding mechanism, based on The Freedom Fund's grant-making processes, to provide financial support to selected partners
- Provide technical support and guidance (in partnership with relevant experts, as required) to Ecosystem Program partners to support the delivery of corporate accountability initiatives
- Convene and lead regional exchanges, workshops, and training sessions with CSO partners
- Support the periodic monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of the Ecosystem Program
- When required, participate in meetings and events relating to modern slavery in supply chains and business and human rights
- Provide regular updates to the Freedom Fund's team on action plan implementation and share learnings among the network's participants

Consultant Requirements/Qualifications

Essential:

- Background in business and human rights, law, international development or a related discipline
- Subject-matter expertise in the field of corporate accountability for human rights violations in global supply chains
- At least 5 - 7 years of professional experience in managing or coordinating donor-funded programs
- Strong project and people management skills
- Strong network and coalition-building experience – especially with frontline CSO groups
- Strong knowledge and experience of the human rights context in Southeast Asia – especially as it relates to modern slavery
- Strong communication skills
- Ability to work remotely and independently with minimal supervision
- Professional working competency in written and spoken English
- Willingness to travel within Southeast Asia and internationally

Desirable:

- Legal background
- Spoken and written fluency in at least one regional Southeast Asian language
- Strong links with CSOs working on issues of labour rights and/or modern slavery in Southeast Asia
- Experience in grant-making processes

Proposal format and timeline

Interested parties should prepare a proposal of no more than 5 pages (excluding annexes). Proposals should contain the following sections:

- 1 Profile of organisation or individual applicant, including how the organisation/applicant meets the eligibility requirements
- 2 Approach to delivering on the scope of the RFP
- 3 Team structure, if applicable, defining the role and time commitment of key project team members.
- 4 Proposed budget in USD.
- 5 CVs of consultant(s) (to be included in the annex)

The proposal must be written in English and submitted electronically in Microsoft Office or PDF format.

9 March 2023

Release of RFP.

By 11 April 2023 5PM UK time

Final proposals due.

Please submit all documents to Marta Bylica (mbylica@freedomfund.org) with 'Application: Ecosystem Program – Regional Coordinator' as the email subject line.

By 17 April 2023

Shortlisted candidates notified for interviews.

By 1 May 2023

Contract signed with selected consultant or organisation.

For any questions about the about the consultancy, eligibility criteria, or the submission process, please email Marta Bylica (mbylica@freedomfund.org).