REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
Resource Development Expert – Global Fundraising Strategy
Organization: Groundswell International
Timeline: January 2027 – April 2027
Proposal Submission Deadline: November 27, 2026

Executive Summary & Background

Groundswell International is a global network of NGOs spanning 11 countries across West Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. Our mission is to build healthy food and farming systems from the ground up.

To inform our next phase of growth and sharpen our resource development approach, the Groundswell International coordinating body is seeking a highly qualified **Resource Development Consultant.**

The ideal consultant will possess the following:

- Experience conducting organizational fundraising capacity assessments, fundraising landscape studies, and grant and proposal review.
- A deep and demonstrated understanding of opportunities for funding at the nexus of the agroecology, agriculture and food systems, climate change, women's empowerment, youth empowerment, and biodiversity. Additional understanding of funding landscapes related to Indigenous identities, biodiversity, mental health and wellbeing, and/or just economies is also appreciated.
- Demonstrated experience developing right-sized resource development systems for tracking opportunities, CRM use, and prioritizing opportunities for small NGOs.

Key Tasks

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

1) Internal Organizational capacity assessment/fundraising readiness audit.
    a) Conduct approximately 15-20 interviews (internal and with funders and prospective funders),
    b) Review data and existing institutional resources, including:

- 3 years of financial data, analyzing donor retention rates, average gift trends, and the true cost to raise a dollar, and
- Existing resources and RD infrastructure practices, including donor database/CRM, website donation experience, and recurring giving programs.

c) Conduct 4 in-depth proposal reviews to assess alignment with solicitations and/or donor priorities. Identify both strengths and areas for further improvement based on the 4 reviewed proposals.

2) Fundraising Landscape assessment:
   a) Identify 10 to 15 specific mission-aligned and viable foundations, high net worth individuals, or corporate grant makers, that fund organizations and efforts in agroecology, food systems, agricultural development, climate change, and women's and youth empowerment, as well as other adjacent topics for which Groundswell's work might be relevant. Provide key messages and strategic priorities for these donors to inform Groundswell International's future outreach.
   b) Analyze 3 to 4 peer organizations to understand and identify replicable practices that have resulted in their funding success.
   c) Identify reasonable and right-sized 2- and 5- year growth scenarios based on funding landscape.
3) Analyze donor analytics within communications: how communications channels (Instagram, LinkedIn, et cetera) target certain donors.
4) Strategic Recommendations and next steps:
   a) Provide a SWOT Analysis that synthesizes data from both the internal and fundraising landscape assessment and outlines Groundswell International's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
   b) Develop *right-sized* recommendations for future infrastructure- and capacity-building; identify most critical next steps for Groundswell International in building its resource development infrastructure and staffing.
   c) Based on ROI, prioritize funding types and next steps (e.g., grants vs. relationship-building vs. pursuing individual donors) based on the lowest barrier to entry and cost and highest potential return for a small team.
   d) Suggest a set of *right-sized* growth targets based on the landscape and Groundswell's capacity.

Scope of Work & Deliverables

The selected expert will work closely with Groundswell International leadership to finalize the deliverables and tasks above:

- Draft report, combining findings from both the internal capacity assessment and landscape assessment.
- Final report, incorporating one round of feedback and edits.
- Presentation on final recommendations and next steps, to be given to Groundswell Staff and Board.

Proposed Timeline and Level of Effort (LOE):

Groundswell International staff will finalize a timeline with the selected consultant prior to finalizing the contract. We envision anticipated length of engagement lasting for approximately 4 months, from mid-January 2027 until mid-April 2027.

Consultants should include their anticipated LOE in their proposals. For transparency, Groundswell International envisions this engagement at approximately 30-40 days LOE, but is open to alternative proposals based on the consultant's analysis of the deliverables and timeline.

An illustrative timeline to consider during proposals includes:

- **January:**
  - Secure access to the CRM/donor database, website analytics, and recurring gift backend.
  - Aggregate 2 years of financial data to calculate donor retention rates, average gift trends, and cost-to-raise-a-dollar metrics.
  - Collect the 4 past proposals slated for in-depth review.
- **February:**
  - Schedule and conduct 15–20 interviews spanning internal staff, current funders, and prospective funders.
  - Perform structural reviews of the 4 proposals against their original solicitations to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
  - Analyze interview transcripts for common themes.
  - Finalize the Internal Readiness Audit report and present initial baseline findings to Groundswell International leadership.
- **March:**
  - Identify 10 to 15 specific mission-aligned and viable foundations, HNIs, or corporate grantmakers, or localized government streams that fund the NGO's exact sector and geographic region. Provide key messages and strategic priorities for these donors to inform Groundswell International's future outreach.
  - Analyze 3 to 4 peer organizations to understand and identify replicable practices that have resulted in their funding success.
  - Identify reasonable 2- and 5- year growth scenarios based on funding landscape.
- **April:**
  - Synthesize findings from both the Internal Capacity Assessment/Readiness Audit and the Fundraising Landscape Assessment.
  - Develop SWOT, recommendations, and ROI.
  - Compile a comprehensive presentation that presents all findings Strategic recommendations and next steps to Groundswell staff and Board of Directors.

4. Proposal Requirements

To apply, please include the following components in your proposal:

1. **Capability Statement:** A brief overview of your business or independent consulting practice.
2. **CV highlighting relevant experience:** Proof of past success developing fundraising strategies for NGOs, with a focus on NGOs receiving non-governmental funding. Experience with philanthropic and private funding landscape preferred. Please submit a CV outlining this experience.
3. **2 examples of similar past work:** including specific fundraising landscape assessments and Internal Organizational capacity assessment/fundraising readiness audits. These may be redacted as needed, based on proprietary the nature of this work, but we would appreciate a set of examples that give us a sense of the work that you can do. Please prioritize examples with smaller NGOs, as well as those for organizations working on aligned or similar issues.
4. **2 references** who can speak to your previous work.
5. **Proposed approach for this assignment:** A brief narrative detailing the values you would bring to this work and how you might approach these tasks.
6. **Cost Proposal:** A comprehensive line-item budget broken down by milestones or hourly fees, including any applicable administrative costs.
7. **Project Timeline:** A detailed schedule charting major tasks from the kickoff meeting through final delivery.

4. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed and rated by an internal steering committee using a balanced matrix scoring model:

Criteria	Description	Weight
Technical Expertise	Depth of experience in resource development and fundraising strategy development.	35%
Past Performance	Strength of references, past case studies, and proven track record with similar non-profits.	35%
Cost & Value	Total cost efficiency and cost clarity relative to the deliverables.	30%

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5. Submission Instructions

Please submit your final proposal in a single PDF file to **admin@groundswellinternational.org** no later than 5PM EST **November 30, 2026**.
Late or incomplete submissions will not be reviewed.
Any clarifying questions regarding this RFP should be submitted in writing to the same email address by **November 15, 2026.**