REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
Strategic Framework Consultant
Organization: Groundswell International
Timeline: January 2027 – October 2027
Proposal Submission Deadline: December 1

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. We promote sustainable local food systems, and our work is anchored in agroecology—as a science, a practice, and a social movement.

Groundswell International is seeking comprehensive, competitive proposals from qualified consultants or consulting firms to facilitate the co-creation of our next **Strategic Framework for 2028 - 2032**. A summary of our previous framework can be found here: Strategic Framework (2023-2027).

Our current guiding questions for this process include:

1. What goals from our previous framework do we want to retain, adjust, expand, or release? What do we prioritize, and what do we leave behind?
2. Where have we grown in the past four years, and where do we want to grow for the next four?
3. How do we intend to measure impacts?
4. How do we account for a complex, changing environment?

Requirements

We are a network organization, where partners and a coordinating body work together; co-creation of knowledge, peer-to-peer learning, and participatory approaches are at the heart of our methodology. Our strategic planning process must mirror these principles. We would like to work with a consultant who not only can distill strategy for the next 5-year plan, but who also specializes in highly participatory and decentralized strategy processes across network organizations.

The ideal consultant will possess the following:

- Demonstrated experience developing strategies and strategic frameworks at an organizational level.
- Fluency in current trends related to agroecology, sustainable local food systems, women and youth, climate resilience, access to markets, and territorial scaling.
- Expertise in network-level and systems-related strategic planning. Experience formatting strategies for decentralized networks rather than top-down structures.
- Deep experience with participatory methodologies. Proven expertise leading bottom-up, co-creative strategic planning for international networks and NGOs operating across multiple countries.
- Cross-Cultural and Multilingual Capability: Proficient execution of multi-lingual processes. The individual or team must be capable of working across English, French, and Spanish to include our West African and Latin American partners.

Key Tasks

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Co-create process for information gathering: work with Strategic Planning Committee and Executive Director to develop an information gathering plan *(December 2026- January 2027)*
2. Conduct Information Gathering/Data collection *(January - April 2027)*
    - Desk review of approximately 20 documents
    - Interviews and focus groups with approximately 25 people, including:
        - Partners
        - Funders
        - Staff
        - Key Informants and sector and industry experts
3. Lead Mid-point 1-day workshop to present and refine emerging findings *(May 2027)*. Workshop can be virtual or in-person depending on consultant's location and proposed budget, although virtual may be more feasible.
4. Write draft strategy to be shared with Groundswell staff for review *(June- July 2027)*
5. Update draft strategy to be shared with Groundswell partners prior to September workshops *(August 2027)*
6. Conduct one participatory workshop with all Groundswell Partners in Senegal*(September 2027)*
    - Ground truthing and strategy input workshop with Groundswell International partners, to be held in Senegal
7. Make final edits to written strategy, based on workshop feedback *(October 2027)*
8. Present final strategy *(November 2027)*
    - Presentation of process, data collection, and final strategy recommendations

Expected Deliverables

The selected expert will work closely with Groundswell International leadership to finalize the following deliverables, based on the tasks above. Illustrative dates are provided, but are subject to change based on consultant proposals:

Deliverable	Illustrative Due Date
1. Information Gathering Plan	January 15, 2027
2. Check-point meetings every 2-3 weeks throughout data collection	Throughout January - April
3. Plan and materials for 1 day mid-point workshop	May 1, 2027
4. Draft Strategy 1	July 15, 2027
5. Plan and materials for workshop with all Groundswell network partners in Senegal	Submit materials by August 15, 2027 for September 2027 workshop
6. Draft Strategy 2	October 15, 2027
7. Final Strategy	November 10, 2027
8. Strategy slide deck	Submit deck by November 10, 2027 for November 20 presentation

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 11 months, stretching from January 2027 until November 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. Please note that travel to the Groundswell network partner workshop will be approximately 4 days of travel, to be included in LOE estimates.

Proposal Requirements

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

1. **Proposal document:** An overview of your business or independent consulting practice, the values you would bring to this work, an explanation of the skills and strengths that you would bring to this work, a plan for how you would develop a consultative process for data gathering, and how you might approach the workshops and strategy documents.
2. **CV highlighting relevant experience:** Proof of past success developing strategic frameworks for NGOs and network organizations. Please include facilitation experience as it relates to the workshops.

3. **2 examples of similar past work:** 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. **Cost Proposal:** A comprehensive line-item budget broken down by milestones or hourly fees, including any applicable administrative costs.
6. **Project Timeline:** A detailed schedule charting major tasks from the kickoff meeting through final delivery.

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 strategy development and facilitation for organizations with missions similar to Groundswell International's.	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%

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.**