

Request for proposals

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE INDONESIA SEAFOOD HOTSPOT PROGRAM

Location	Indonesia
Start date	25 February 2026
Application deadline	9 February 2026

About the Freedom Fund

The Freedom Fund is a collaborative fund that invests in frontline organisations and movements to drive a measurable reduction of modern slavery in high-prevalence countries and industries.

We fund, support and convene community and survivor-led organisations working to end modern slavery and human trafficking.

The Freedom Fund:

- identifies and funds local organisations in countries with a high prevalence of modern slavery, and funds many survivor-led organisations.
- convene organisations to exchange best practices and build a collaborative ecosystem
- lead efforts to establish the robust evidence base that underpins global anti-trafficking work
- fill a critical gap by bringing donors together and mobilising resources that would otherwise be out of reach for community and survivor-led partners.

Summary

The Freedom Fund invites qualified individuals, research organisations or consortia to submit proposals to conduct an external evaluation of its Indonesia seafood hotspot program. The evaluation will be guided by the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability) across both Phase 1 (2022-2024) and Phase 2 (2024-2026) and in relation to the program's four outcomes.

Conducted within the framework of the Freedom Fund's Indonesia seafood hotspot program and its wider Asia-Pacific collaboration with Humanity United, the evaluation will generate evidence on what strategies are working well, where gaps or challenges remain, and how the program's Theory of Change and implementation approach could be strengthened for the next phase. Findings will be used to inform program learning, strategic decision-making and a participatory, worker-led review of the hotspot strategy. **The anticipated budget for this work**

is approximately USD 50,000, with contracting expected in February 2026, research activities beginning shortly after that and final deliverables due by July 2026.

Eligibility

Individuals and organisations with relevant evaluation experience are invited to submit proposals for this study. The lead applicant must be a legally registered entity according to the laws of the country in which it operates. The Freedom Fund strongly prefers applicants based in Indonesia with demonstrated experience conducting mixed methods program evaluations, and a strong contextual knowledge of the seafood industry, labour rights, migration and/or forced labour in Indonesia.

Budget

A fee of approximately USD 50,000 has been made available for this evaluation. Budgets will be reviewed with respect to the strength of the proposal in meeting the evaluation objectives in a cost-effective manner - we do not simply prioritise the lowest budget.

Proposal deadline

Proposals should be submitted via email to Brittany Quay with “Proposal for external evaluation of the Indonesia seafood hotspot program” as the email subject line at bquy@freedomfund.org no later than **9 February 2026, 10am UK time**. Proposals should be submitted in English and in Word or PDF format. Proposals should be no more than 5 pages, plus CVs and annexes.

Introduction to the Freedom Fund and its work in Indonesia

The Freedom Fund is a global fund with the sole aim of helping end modern slavery. We are a catalyst in the global effort to end modern slavery, working in the countries and sectors where it is highly prevalent. We invest in and partner with organisations and communities on the frontlines of ending slavery and exploitation. By partnering with survivors and those at risk of slavery as well as visionary investors, governments and anti-slavery organisations, we bring together the knowledge, capital and will needed to dismantle the systems that allow slavery to exist and thrive. Through our investments and support, we aim to shift power, so that frontline organisations and communities can shape and drive the change required to bring modern slavery to an end.

Indonesia is the world’s second-largest seafood producer and a major labour-sending country for migrant fishers employed on commercial fishing fleets globally. Millions of workers, particularly women, are employed in seafood processing factories, while large numbers of men work on fishing vessels. Human trafficking and forced labour have been widely reported across the seafood sector. Common abuses include deceptive recruitment practices, debt bondage, wage withholding, excessive working hours, hazardous working conditions, retention of identity documents and physical or verbal abuse.

Since 2015, the Freedom Fund has partnered with Humanity United on a regional Asia-Pacific program, combining grassroots worker-led approaches with engagement across supply chains, policy and governance systems addressing forced labour in seafood sector. In 2022, the Freedom Fund launched a hotspot program in Indonesia, which aims to reduce vulnerability to forced labour in fishing and seafood processing communities by strengthening worker organisation, supporting access to legal and social services and advancing advocacy with government and private sector actors.

Scope of the evaluation

The scope of this evaluation is to examine the extent to which the Freedom Fund's Indonesia seafood hotspot program has contributed to improving employment experiences for Indonesian seafood workers and reducing vulnerability to forced labour in overseas fishing, domestic fishing and seafood processing sectors. The evaluation will assess progress made towards the program's four outcomes and its underlying Theory of Change, with a focus on learning, accountability and forward-looking strategic improvement.

The evaluation should be guided by the **OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability)** and apply these consistently across all four outcomes. Particular attention should be paid to identifying what strategies are working well, where gaps or challenges remain, what are the barriers to reaching workers and how worker-led and participatory approaches have been supported in practice.

The findings will inform decision-making for the next phase of the hotspot (2027–2029), including potential adaptations to strategy in response to Indonesia's evolving political, economic and labour migration context. The evaluation will take a high-level assessment of both Phase 1 (January 2022–March 2024) and Phase 2 (April 2024–December 2026) of the hotspot program. Eight partners engaged across both phases will be included in the scope of the evaluation. The evaluation will examine the hotspot's contribution to the following overall goal and four outcomes:

Overall goal: Migration and employment experiences for Indonesian seafood workers are significantly improved through organised worker action, advocacy and provision of legal and social services.

Outcome 1: Seafood workers have better access to sustainable and effective civil society and worker organisations, providing a pathway for collective action and assistance.

Outcome 2: More seafood workers are empowered to organize, claim rights and demand decent working conditions.

Outcome 3: Government and private sector are more responsive to the rights of migrant workers, particularly in relation to improving the implementation of laws/policies/systems related to safe migration and freedom of association.

Outcome 4: More seafood workers that are at high-risk of or affected by forced labour are able to access legal and social services, enabling them to seek redress.

Main evaluation questions

As part of the contracting process, the evaluation questions will be refined with the advice of the selected team. Some indicative questions are included below to support the proposal evaluation design.

1. To what extent is the Indonesia seafood hotspot program relevant to the lived realities, priorities and risk profiles of workers in seafood sector?

[This question assesses relevance, examining how well program strategies align with workers' experiences of recruitment, migration, employment conditions, gendered risks and exposure to forced labour across the seafood value chain.]

2. To what extent has the program strengthened worker organising and collective action among workers, and what has been the program's contribution to any changes in workers' power, voice and agency?

[This explores effectiveness and impact by assessing how worker-led and survivor-centred approaches have supported worker organising, leadership and collective responses to exploitation and claiming rights.]

3. How effectively have workers at high risk of or affected by forced labour accessed and utilised legal and social services supported by the hotspot partners, and which service pathways have been most responsive to their needs?

[This assesses effectiveness and impact in relation to service access, quality, inclusivity and outcomes such as protection, redress and reduced vulnerability.]

4. How has the program influenced government and private sector policies, practices or systems related to migrant worker rights, safe migration and freedom of association at local, national and international levels?

[This examines impact focusing on advocacy outcomes, policy implementation, institutional responsiveness and the hotspot's contribution within a broader ecosystem of actors.]

5. What have been the key enablers, barriers and contextual factors affecting the implementation of the program and how have these been addressed over the course of the program?

[This question assesses effectiveness and efficiency, identifying internal and external factors influencing delivery, adaptation, inclusion and coordination across the program.]

6. To what extent are the program's outcomes likely to be sustained beyond the current phase, particularly in relation to worker organising, advocacy gains and access to services?

[This assesses sustainability, examining institutional strength, local ownership, policy durability and the likelihood that positive changes will continue without ongoing hotspot support.]

7. Based on the evaluation findings, what key lessons and practical recommendations can inform the next phase of the Indonesia seafood hotspot (2027–2029) and broader Freedom Fund programming?

[This synthesises learning across all OECD/DAC criteria to support strategic adaptation, prioritisation and future impact.]

Research approach and methodology

The Freedom Fund invites proposals that outline a rigorous, ethical and context-appropriate evaluation approach, combining primarily qualitative and some quantitative data collection methods, where appropriate. The main participants for this evaluation will be the hotspot program participants, Freedom Fund’s partner organisations, Freedom Fund and Humanity United staff, government actors, private sector and civil society stakeholders. If there are any other elements considered to be crucial to a successful evaluation, please include them in the proposal.

Methodological approach: The Freedom Fund primarily seeks qualitative findings from the evaluation, with a small component of quantitative insights. The quantitative component will also involve analysing the consolidated internal impact data that Freedom Fund’s partners have gathered since the program inception. The Freedom Fund will provide these datasets; the applicant is expected to review and analyse them, but extensive data entry or cleaning is not anticipated. Kindly include data collection methods, sampling strategies, sample size and sources of information. Please specify whether the research will be conducted in-person, remotely or through a combination of both, and provide the rationale for your chosen approach.

Stakeholder participation: Please outline how you will engage stakeholders at different stages of the evaluation process. Describe how a sample of respondents will be obtained; consideration should be given to how these individuals can be accessed and engaged with in a manner which encourages honest responses. The review is not expected to exhaustively cover all locations in which the program operates, but rather, selection of an appropriate set of respondents. The proposal should include at minimum one validation workshop or exercise (online or in person) with stakeholders identified by the Freedom Fund.

Community engagement: Please highlight creative data collection methods that preferably go beyond traditional interviews and focus groups. Approaches that are inclusive and engaging for participants without research knowledge or experience would be viewed favourably. In addition, please consider how you will share the review results back with the community in relevant and accessible ways.

Operational and ethical considerations: Highlight any logistical, ethical and/or safeguarding issues with the proposed methodology, such as encouraging candid responses through in-person and/or remote interviews, handling of potentially sensitive information, confidentiality of respondents, sensitivity and respect to stakeholders, Do No Harm etc. Include details on whether your proposed study would require approval from an Indonesian ethical board, and if so, which board you would engage and how this process would affect the project timeline.

Please indicate how you will monitor responses provided and mitigate response bias that may influence the evaluation process. Note that we expect the team (or its subcontractors) to include fluent Bahasa speakers to administer data collection.

The research will be contracted by the Freedom Fund US and supervised by our Research & Evaluation Manager based in London. The FF anticipates working closely with the evaluation team through all stages of the program.

Budget

The FF has budgeted approximately USD 50,000 for this study. Budgets will be reviewed with respect to the strength of the proposal in meeting the project objectives in a cost-effective manner, we do not simply prioritise the lowest budget.

As part of the proposal, please prepare a brief budget with the following breakdown:

- Personnel costs
- Fees to local research partners or subcontractors, compensation for research participants, if applicable
- Other direct costs – e.g. travel, software licenses, devices for data collection, fees for ethical review
- Overheads
- Value Added Tax or Goods and Services Tax, if applicable

High-level timeline and deliverables

Main deliverables	Proposed timeline
• Kick-off meeting with the FF team.	Feb 2026
• Desk review of Indonesia program documents and discussions with the FF team.	Mar 2026
• Detailed research protocol, including methodology, sampling plan, research tools, work plan and ethical procedures.	
• Primary data collection completed.	May 2026
• Data cleaning and analysis.	May 2026
• Presentation of preliminary findings for internal review and discussion.	June 2026
• Draft report shared for review and discussion, along with cleaned raw dataset.	
• Finalise report, along with an Executive Summary (translated into Bahasa), based on a structure pre-agreed with the Freedom Fund.	July 2026

Note: Ramadan and Idul Fitri fall in February-March in 2026. While work can continue, Mudik could significantly constraint travel and permits; therefore, the research protocol and travel bookings should be finalised by April 2026 to avoid delays for the May data collection.

In addition to the main deliverables listed above, the research team is also expected to discuss with the Freedom Fund any proposed design changes and share regular updates on the progress of field activities.

Proposal format

Interested parties should prepare a proposal of no more than 5 pages, plus CVs and annexes. Proposals should contain the following sections:

1. Short biography of principal investigator(s) and key team members, outlining relevant subject matter expertise and experience leading similar evaluation projects, particularly in Indonesia. CV of the principal investigator should be included in the annex. Past report(s) from similar projects could be included as links or in a separate annex.
2. Research approach, addressing the topics listed in the 'Research approach and methodology' section of this RFP. Proposals should clearly outline a data quality plan (including enumerator training, ethical considerations, field supervision and data verification procedures) and a data analysis plan.
3. Team structure, defining the role and time commitment of key project team members.
4. Proposed budget in USD, containing the details listed in the 'Budget' section of this RFP.

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

Proposal criteria & scoring

In reviewing proposals, the Freedom Fund will use the following criteria:

Technical criteria	Weighting
a. Technical capacity of the team (including local partner and subcontractors if relevant), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Proposed method is consistent with the outlined approach and is feasible for generating meaningful insights to answer the evaluation questions.- Experience of conducting program evaluations with vulnerable communities, with demonstrable understanding of relevant qualitative and quantitative research techniques.	50%
b. Contextual knowledge of the team, including on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Strong knowledge of labour rights, migration and/or forced labour in Indonesia. Previous work on these issues will be advantageous.- Ability to gain access into and work collaboratively with communities affected by exploitative labour conditions to carry out the evaluation.- Knowledge of economic, socio-cultural and political environment in Indonesia.	20%
c. Team structure, including:	20%

- Adequate staffing levels to deliver quality program outputs within the desired timeframe.
- Contribution of Indonesian and/or Indonesia-based researchers, ideally in key roles such as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator where they are recognised as lead authors of the evaluation. Shortlisted candidates will most likely meet this criterion.
- Gender diversity among the team members.
- Team members with fluency in English and Bahasa is essential. Proficiency in other local languages would be advantageous.

Financial criteria

d. Costs are proportionate to the scale of work being proposed, and consideration of all potential expenses.	10%
Total	100%

Commissioning timeline

23 Jan 2026	Release of this Request for Proposal.
9 Feb 2026	Proposals due.
10am UK time	Please submit all documents to Brittany Quay at bquy@freedomfund.org with "Proposal for external evaluation of the Indonesia seafood hotspot program" as the email subject line.
16 Feb 2026	All shortlisted research teams will be notified, and interviews will be scheduled.
20 Feb 2026	Clarifications/discussions with shortlisted teams.
25 Feb 2026	Contract signed with selected research team.

Payment and jurisdiction

Applicants should observe that the Freedom Fund is a United States 501(c)(3) public charity. The awarded contract will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, United States of America, without regard to principles relating to conflicts of law. All payments to the consultant under the awarded contract shall be agreed upon therein, in compensation for the services provided, and directly related to the approved costs of the required services when/if applicable. Contracts will always be drafted in United States Dollars. The awarded contract will be a service agreement between the consultant and the Freedom Fund.

Confidentiality

This Request for Proposal and associated documents are the property of Freedom Fund and confidential. Apart from using FF documents to respond to the request, you shall not disclose any details, to any other person or organisation, and shall treat this RFP and your response with complete confidentiality.