



Funder Safeguarding Collaborative

Safer grant-making. Higher impact.

FAQs

RFP: Development of evidence-based safeguarding practice standards for funders

In July 2024, the Funder Safeguarding Collaborative (FSC) published a [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) for suppliers to develop safeguarding practice standards for philanthropic funders. This document provides additional information in response to the questions and requests for clarifications submitted by interested parties.

1. About FSC

1.1 Could you share an overview of the FSC network and your 80+ members?

Details of all FSC members can be found on our [webpage](#).

1.2 How involved have your members been in developing this research specification?

The RFP was developed by the FSC team but responds to feedback from members who would like greater clarity about what constitutes good safeguarding practice from a funder perspective. Members would like clear guidance on 'good practice' to assist them in developing their safeguarding approach and avoid the need to reinvent the wheel. Equally, for those who have established safeguarding measures, members would like guidance on 'good practice' in order that they can benchmark their practice against sector-recognised standards.

1.3 How does this project compliment other aspects of FSC's work?

Through our four-year [strategic plan](#), FSC aims to strengthen funder approaches to safeguarding through three mutually reinforcing strategies:

- **Evidence:** We generate knowledge about safeguarding in grant-making organisations to improve the evidence base in this area.
- **Influence:** We raise awareness of the role of funders in safeguarding by sharing knowledge and creating spaces for dialogue, reflection, and learning.
- **Implement:** We turn awareness into action by providing technical support to help funders implement practices that build a culture of safeguarding, in their own organisations and for the organisations they fund.

Once developed, the safeguarding practice standards will be integrated into all aspects of FSC's work to ensure a lasting impact. Building on the research, FSC will use the findings to generate new evidence-based guidance and resources to support the work of grant-making organisations (**Evidence**). Underpinned by robust research, FSC will be able to confidently advocate for the adoption of these standards among the wider philanthropic community (**Influence**). Finally, we will integrate the standards into our training and technical support, helping funders turn principles into practice (**Implement**).

1.4 How would you envisage the FSC team being involved in the two phases of the project?

This is a critical piece of work for FSC. We will be actively engaged and provide support throughout the process. This will include:

- Regular engagement with the supplier to discuss and refine the project design at each phase and then monitor and support progress.
- Help to identify and facilitate access to relevant standards and funder requirements on safeguarding.
- Provide access to anonymised data and learning gathered from FSC's work to date, including the [exploratory study into funder approaches to safeguarding](#) conducted in 2021 and learning from our initiatives to strengthen safeguarding in Africa and Asia.
- Promote engagement among the FSC network and connect the supplier with FSC members who are interested in participating.
- Help to identify other key stakeholders who are critical to this work and facilitating connections with key individuals and agencies from within our wider network.

We are also keen to engage our Steering Committee and the organisations funding this work as they will act as champions for the standards once developed. We welcome discussions with the selected supplier about how this might best be achieved.

2. Definitions & Terminology

2.1 How does FSC's define 'funders'? Does this include intermediaries and international NGOs who regularly disburse funds?

FSC defines funders as agencies involved in philanthropic giving, where grant making is a core component of their charitable mission. This includes family foundations, corporate foundations, donor advised funds and intermediaries who receive funding from others and grant onwards to non-profit organisations, movements, or individuals.

Many organisations may disperse funds. However, if grant making is not a core part of their charitable mission, then FSC would not categorise them as a 'funder'. For this reason, most international NGOs would not qualify as a funder under the FSC definition.

In addition, institutional or government donors are distinct from philanthropic funders. For the purpose of this work, the safeguarding standards and requirements of institutional donors should be considered as part of the literature review and some engagement with institutional donors may be appropriate. However, the supplier should be clear that the focus of the standards is to influence and shape the practice of philanthropic funders, not institutional or government donors.

2.2 How is FSC defining 'safeguarding' for this piece of work?

FSC defines safeguarding as the policies, practices and organizational cultures which:

- Promote a culture of dignity, respect and safety.
- Proactively prevent harm, abuse or exploitation by staff, volunteers and operations.
- Ensure timely action to address any actual or suspected harm, abuse or exploitation.

In order to build safe organisations, we recognise that other policies, procedures and practices should be in place. Examples might include health and safety, diversity equity and inclusion, safety and security, staff well-being etc. However, this piece of work focuses

specifically on how funders can help ensure the organisations they fund are equipped to prevent and respond to all forms of harm, abuse and exploitation that may arise as a result of their staff, volunteers and operations.

It is important to note that there are many different definitions of safeguarding within regulations, standards and funder requirements. A key component of this work is for the supplier to map out the different definitions and then identify ways for funders to align their approach to improve clarity and consistency within the sector.

2.3 Does this project focus on safeguarding in relation to specific groups (e.g. children, elderly, people with disabilities etc.) or specific sectors (i.e. humanitarian, health, education, LGBTQ+, environment etc.)?

The focus of this work is on how funders approach safeguarding and the expectations they place on their grantee partners. Funders provide grants to organisations operating in a broad range of contexts and supporting a broad range of organisations. The aim is to identify which funder approaches are effective in promoting stronger safeguarding practices within organisations working across a broad range of different sectors and with different populations.

2.4 What does FSC mean by the term 'practice standards'? Are there similar 'standards' which FSC has in mind?

FSC uses the term 'practice standards' to refer to a set of guidelines or practices that are designed to ensure quality and promote positive outcomes. Although we have used the term 'standards', we want to avoid imposing a rigid checklist of requirements that fail to take into account the different contexts, structures and funding arrangements that exist.

Accordingly, there is flexibility in terms of the final output. Indeed, the exact structure and content of the 'standards' should be based on learning from the research and co-creation process. However, it is important that the standards are:

- *Evidence based* – drawing on research and relevant knowledge and experience.
- *Easy to understand* – for diverse organisations working in diverse contexts.
- *Practical* – include tangible steps that funders can take to improve outcomes.
- *Realistic* – avoid imposing unnecessary burden on funders or grantees.
- *Measurable* – can be used to assess and benchmark funder practice.

Interesting examples to consider in the field of philanthropy are the [Trust Based Philanthropy Project](#) which establishes 6 core principles for funders to align around, with some concrete steps to put these into action. Also, [Funding for Real Change](#) outlines clear practices for funders to align around to combat the starvation cycle of nonprofit organisations, offering flexible and multi-year funding.

3 Phase 1

3.1 The RFP mentions the UK, but are practice standards from outside of the UK also relevant? Would this include standards and literature in languages other than English?

The RFP explicitly mentions requirements in the UK as these are among the most robust and well-established standards on safeguarding globally. In addition, a significant proportion

of FSC members are based in the UK and must demonstrate compliance with UK laws and regulations.

However, FSC is a global network, and the aim of this work is to develop practice standards that can be applied by funders who are located in or funding across diverse geographies. We therefore expect the supplier to consider a broad range of standards, guidance and research on what constitutes effective safeguarding across different contexts. By identifying commonalities, the aim is to achieve consensus that allows UK based funders to meet their regulatory requirements whilst avoiding UK-centric definitions and approaches to safeguarding being applied as the norm in other contexts.

3.2 Can you also confirm whether you would be expecting a mix of responses from grantee recipients as well as funders?

The sample of respondents should reflect the specific focus of the research questions identified in the RFP. The first question focuses on funder approaches to safeguarding and we would expect data to be primarily gathered from funders. However, the second question explores how funder requirements influence practice within recipient organisations. Consequently, it is imperative that data is obtained from organisations who have been subject to funder requirements to understand how these influenced their approach and whether this was effective in helping them prevent and respond to harm, abuse and exploitation. To answer the final question, it is likely data will be obtained from both funders and grant recipients as implementing safeguarding measures has resource implications for both groups.

3.3 Are you envisaging the research including only funders who are FSC-members, and their grantees?

FSC members are likely to be an important constituency for this work as our members already recognise the importance of safeguarding and most have already integrated safeguarding into their requirements and grant making practices. This means that our members, and their grantees, can provide valuable insights into current approaches to safeguarding and their impact on grantee practice.

However, we recognise that our membership only represents a small proportion of funders globally. The supplier should therefore consider how to obtain data from funders who have implemented safeguarding measures but may not currently be part of the FSC network. Similarly, data should be obtained from a broad range of organizations who have been subject to funder safeguarding requirements, irrespective of whether they are currently in receipt of funds from FSC members.

3.4 What would be the pool of research respondents – broadly, would it include non-profits, or specific organization that focus on humanitarian, or human rights work?

As noted above, the aim of this work is to identify which funder approaches are effective in promoting stronger safeguarding practices within organisations working across a broad range of different sectors and with different populations. We would therefore expect the sample to reflect a broad range of organisations working in a variety of contexts, on a broad range of different issues. This is likely to include a variety of non-profit organizations but may also include non-constituted groups, movements and individuals who receive grant funding and are subject to funder safeguarding requirements.

3.5 Do you expect data collection (interviews, focus groups, surveys etc.) to cover multiple geographic regions? Are you expecting data collection to be conducted in English or do you anticipate that interpreters would be needed?

FSC is a global network, and the aim of this work is to develop practice standards that can be applied by funders who are located in or funding across diverse geographies. We would, therefore, expect literature and data to be gathered from multiple geographic regions and translation or interpretation may be required.

It is important to note, however, that understanding safeguarding in different contexts extends far beyond mere translation. Consequently, we are particularly interested in receiving proposals from suppliers who have experience working in different regions and can bring an understanding of different legal, social and cultural contexts to this work.

3.6 Research question 2 aims to identify which funder practices are the most effective in promoting and supporting safer organisations. Does the FSC already have a definition of "effective" or is this something that the consultants can define?

Broadly, the term "effective" refers to safeguarding requirements that have a positive impact on an organisation's ability to prevent and respond to harm, abuse and exploitation. However, we welcome discussion with the supplier to ensure a more precise definition.

4 Phase 2

4.1 How does FSC define "co-creation"?

FSC defines "co-creation" as a collaborative process that actively engages those with experience of funder approaches to safeguarding in the development and design of the standards. Actively seeking diverse perspectives helps ensure we achieve a more holistic understanding of what is needed (and what should be avoided). Achieving consensus among a broad range of stakeholders will also add credibility and increase buy-in once the standards have been developed.

4.2 Does FSC have minimum requirements for the number of individuals and organizations involved in the co-creation of standards and their geographic diversity?

FSC does not have set requirements for the number of individuals or organizations involved in the co-creation process. We would expect involvement from a broad range of organizations and individuals, reflecting the geographical diversity and thematic interests of philanthropic funders. We would be interested in proposals that think creatively about how we can ensure that diverse perspectives are represented while ensuring that the process is manageable, and deliverables can be achieved within the agreed timescales.

4.3 Are there any key agencies whose engagement is deemed critical? How many FSC members are you expecting to be deeply involved?

We expect findings from Phase 1 to inform decisions around who might be critical to involve in the co-creation process. Within this, we would expect the cohort to include some FSC members but are keen to engage others who may not be members of FSC but have critical

insights and experiences that add value to the process. This will include organisations and individuals who are not funders. FSC will work closely with the supplier to identify key funders, agencies and individuals to participate in Phase 2 and we are happy to facilitate connections via our networks.

4.4 What does FSC mean by a "roadmap" for adoption of the standards?

Once produced, FSC will take responsibility for disseminating the standards and encouraging funders to adopt these in their work. However, the supplier will have valuable insights on how to achieve this due to their in-depth engagement with funders throughout the research and co-creation process. We would therefore like the supplier to develop a set of recommendations on how FSC can best promote and encourage the adoption of the standards, both among FSC members and wider philanthropy.

4.5 What does FSC mean by a framework for assessing and monitoring the impact of the implementation of standards? Who will be using this framework?

The ultimate objective of this piece of work is to improve and strengthen safeguarding practice, not simply to develop a set of standards. It is essential, therefore, that we have a way to measure changes in funder practice and the impact this is having on the organisations they fund.

Alongside the standards, we would like the supplier to develop a set of simple indicators that can be used to assess changes in funder practice. This will be used by FSC to assess the practice of funders within our network and show changes over time. However, we are keen for the standards to have an impact on wider philanthropy and would like to develop a simple self-assessment framework that allows any funder to assess their own progress towards the agreed good practice set out in the standards.

Understanding the impact on safeguarding within grantee organisations is more complex, but critical to understanding impact. We would, therefore, like the supplier to develop a simple set of indicators that can be incorporated into funder monitoring or grantee perception surveys, to help funders better understand how their practice is influencing the organisations they fund.

4.6 Does FSC envisage the supplier undertaking additional work to communicate and disseminate the standards and guidance that emerges from this project?

In order to generate and maintain interest in the development of practice standards, FSC will work with the supplier to produce regular communication materials (blogs, articles etc) to share with FSC members and wider philanthropic sector. This will include sharing the research findings at the end of Phase 1 and additional, shorter communications at key points during Phase 2.

FSC may wish to engage the supplier in other activities to disseminate the standards and research findings (e.g. writing an article for publication, presentations at conferences). Any additional work would be outside the scope of the current RFP and would be subject to negotiation of a new contract.

5. Selection Process

5.1 Who can submit a proposal in response to the RFP?

We have not imposed any specific criteria on the types of individuals or organizations that can submit proposals. We welcome proposals from independent consultants, non-profits, for-profit organisations, academic institutions and others. We welcome applications from collaborations between individuals and/or organisations that bring together expertise from the fields of research, philanthropy and safeguarding.

Suppliers must be able to demonstrate that they meet the requirements set out in section 3.1 of the RFP. We do not have any specific geographical requirements in relation to where individuals or organisations are based. However, given the global reach of this work, it is desirable for suppliers to have established networks and experience in different geographies.

5.2 Are attachments capturing experience/CVs permitted outside of the 8-page proposal limit?

The proposal should not exceed 8 pages. The supplier should summarise their experience rather than providing detailed attachments.

5.3 Can you share more information around the length of the assignment, including any key deadlines?

The consultancy is from January 2025 to August 2026. The RFP includes approximate timelines for each of the two phases (Phase 1: Jan – Sept 2025; Phase 2: Oct 2025 – August 2026). We have not added in additional milestones as we want to leave some flexibility. We will agree more detailed timelines and milestones with the selected supplier as part of the contract negotiation and development of the final service specification.

6. Budget

6.1 Is there an indicative budget for the development of safeguarding practice standards?

We have not included any guidance around the budget as we will be guided by the supplier as to what is a reasonable budget based on the specific activities included in the proposal. We have provided an indication of how many consultant days will be required to complete each phase (Phase 1: 100 days; Phase 2: 120 days) as a guide to the scope and cost of this work.

6.2 Is there any guidance on the daily rate you are anticipating as part of the budget?

We have not included any guidance around daily rates as we recognise that this will vary depending on a number of factors (e.g. location, experience, organisational policies etc).

6.3 Are you open to compensating organisations / individuals who participate in the co-creation and if so, should that be included in our proposed budget?

FSC is committed to recognising the expertise that individuals and organisations bring to this work and to compensating individuals and organisations for their time. We are happy for honorariums to be included within the budget.

6.4 Is the project execution mostly online, or will in-person travel be necessary?

Given the global reach of this project, we anticipate most of the engagement taking place online. However, if the supplier believes that in-person engagement is necessary to ensure the quality and success of this work, we are happy for in-person travel to be included in the budget. However, there must be a clear rationale and it must represent good value for money.

6.5 What will be the arrangements for payment schedules during the phases?

This will be agreed with the selected supplier as part of the contract negotiation. In general, FSC would expect to make a payment at the start of each phase and then pay the remainder once any deliverables have been submitted and approved.