The SAGE Fund
Request for Proposals 2022

The SAGE Fund invites two-page concept notes from organizations and movements primarily in the Global South piloting innovative efforts and building cross-movement power to hold economic actors accountable to human rights. Proposals must be received by 16 May 2022.

Overview
Around the world, human rights organizations, movements, and community-based groups are making headway to address the harms resulting from the global economy by working to hold powerful economic actors accountable – including corporations, investors, private financial actors, development finance institutions and the state – for the impacts from their investment and operations. Workers, women, and grassroots communities disproportionately bear the costs of economic insecurity, loss of livelihoods and lands, environmental degradation, human rights abuses, health and climate change impacts, while corporations and financial actors profit. While the human rights movement has made some progress in addressing these gaps and challenges, there is a need and an opportunity to cultivate new tools and strategies for holding economic actors accountable, build skills and power, and link movements to leverage strategies for greater impact.

The SAGE Fund -- Strengthening Accountability in the Global Economy -- seeks to increase human rights accountability of powerful economic actors by supporting innovative approaches and building greater cross-movement and cross-field power among affected communities, workers, movements, and allied NGOs. The Fund seeks to:

- Spur innovation in the approaches, strategies and tools used to hold all economic actors accountable for human rights violations and advance rights protection;
- Build knowledge and skills to analyze key challenges, craft strategies and mobilize new coalitions and constituencies; and
- Provide thought leadership and analysis on emerging issues and key challenges to human rights protection in the global economy.

The SAGE Fund staff takes an active role in cultivating a complementary set of projects around a shared theme drawn from the ideas and proposals that surface through its Request for Proposals (RFP). The thematic focus emerges from the ideas participating organizations share in the RFP Pool.
Project Criteria
The Fund will make up to 5-7 grants of US $70,000 - $100,000 each, for 12-18 months, to organizations or partnerships with primary leadership in the Global South that are designed to achieve at least one of the following:

- Seed promising approaches for strengthening human rights accountability in the global economy, particularly for corporations, investors, and other non-state actors, by:
  - Piloting a new tool or strategy;
  - Developing the potential of an existing tool or strategy; or
  - Applying a successful approach to a new context.

- Advance understanding of key challenges or emerging issues, and identify opportunities to strengthen the human rights framework in response, through:
  - Research and analysis on challenges or barriers to accountability of economic actors, with potential for impact through pilot projects, advocacy, campaigns, or other responses;
  - Scoping work and field convenings to develop consensus and a coordinated field agenda on key challenges and opportunities for leverage; or
  - Education and outreach initiatives to create priorities for action and build constituencies across fields.

- Strengthen cross-movement collaboration to challenge corporate power and shift power to workers and communities, with the goal of ultimately transforming the global economy into a more equitable and sustainable one by:
  - Deepening a new or existing collaboration between two or more coalitions, networks, or movements from across fields, including but not limited to the economic, labor, indigenous, gender, and climate justice movements; and
  - Identifying key priorities, developing a common agenda, and/or building toward coordinated advocacy, campaigns, or other collective actions.

SAGE does not provide funding for ongoing, existing programmatic work. We seek projects that focus on developing new tactics, testing innovative approaches, and developing promising collaborations and/or partnerships to take work in new directions.

Geographical Scope: Projects may take place anywhere in the world.

Outside the Scope of Funding: Training and capacity-building may be included as part of a larger strategy but will not be funded as the primary focus of a project.

Language: Due to SAGE staffing constraints at this time, concept notes must be submitted in English. Grantee organizations or partnerships are very welcome to work in any language but must have one partner or someone within the partnership or organization that can communicate with the Fund in English.

Organizational Criteria
Civil society organizations and movements with a mission and programs strongly aligned with human rights are invited to apply, including:

- NGOs from the Global South;
• Movements (including affected communities, women’s movements, worker movements and unions);
• Networks, coalitions, and project partnerships (preference will be given to those with strong participation and leadership from the Global South); and
• Research centers with strong links to activist practice.

Project proposals may be submitted by an individual organization or by two or more groups as project partners. International NGOs or anchor NGOs from the Global North may participate as a project partner but are not intended as a primary grantee and may not receive most of the funds. Prioritization will be given to proposals from organizations working closely with, or led by, affected communities and movements.

Eligible organizations must either:
• Be a legally registered charity in the local country and have a bank account that can receive international wire transfers; or
• Designate an NGO that is legally registered in the country and has a local bank account that can receive international wire transfers to serve as the project’s fiscal agent.

Grant Support and Criteria
Grants are in the amount of US $70,000 - $100,000 for a term of 12-18 months and are for project activities with a clear start and end date. There is the possibility of renewal funding, although it is not guaranteed, and the proposal should therefore be designed as a first stand-alone phase of work.

Recognizing that the timeline for strategies is often longer than one and a half years, please think of the project funding period as the first phase in a longer-term process and design it with feasible and concrete outcomes at the end of a 12-18 months.

Grant funds are not intended as core support, although SAGE understands the need and is flexible in covering staffing and other core costs as part of a sustainable project. Grant funds may not be used to support lobbying or political activities.

Application Process
A two-stage application process will be used to open the process to a diverse pool of groups while lessening the burden on groups applying by keeping the first submission to a brief concept note.

May 16, 2022: Two-page concept notes and completed application forms are due.

Concept Note
Brief narrative including:
• a description of the project and proposed strategy
• goal(s)
• description of activities and timeline
• outcomes
• very brief statement of need (the problem or issue the project addresses)
• what the applicant organization(s) expect to transform or change as a result of the work
Application Form
Brief online application form that requests basic information for the applicant organization(s) including name and contact details, size of annual organizational budget, number of full-time staff, list of main funders, and contact details for one funder reference; and amount of grant requested.

July – October 2022: The SAGE Fund will work in an interactive way with a small number of organizations selected to submit a full proposal. If approved, grant funds would be available for a project start in January 2023.

Next Steps

1. Complete the online application form via this link (https://forms.gle/WErpC7T3shhEkk7P7) by May 16, 2022.
   Note: The online application will open on April 20, 2022. Applicants will be unable to view and submit responses to the online application form before then.

2. Email your 2-page concept note to SAGEFundGrants@newventurefund.org by May 16, 2022. Please make the subject heading of the email:
   
   Primary Applicant Organisation’s Name_SAGEFund_2022_GE_RFP

Questions regarding the RFP and concept notes can be directed to Kris Genovese, Program Officer, and submitted via email to kris@sagefundrights.org and CCing SAGEFundGrants@newventurefund.org

The SAGE Fund
The SAGE Fund – Strengthening Accountability in the Global Economy – is a collaborative fund that cultivates breakthroughs in human rights accountability for economic actors: spurring innovation in approaches and building greater field capacity in the human rights movement. The Fund works interactively with groups to pilot new tools and strategies that require more upfront design to increase their likelihood of success. We support multi-tiered partnerships between civil society organizations and affected communities to bring an array of skills, knowledge, and leverage points.

The SAGE Fund (http://www.sagefundrights.org/) is a project of New Venture Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization based in the United States.