

Strengthening Civil Society Programme

Using the law to tackle corporate harm

Call for expressions of interest to research how civil society organisations in the UK can use the law to hold corporations to account for harms arising as a result of their activities.

Introduction

The Strengthening Civil Society (SCS) programme supports the effective use of the law and human rights-based approaches by civil society organisations (CSOs) in the UK. In March 2026, we committed to another five years of grantmaking in this area, but shifted to focus on holding corporates to account for the harms arising as a result of their activities.

Our primary focus is on social change activities that tackle discrimination and disadvantage. By social change we mean:

- changes in policy, regulation and law;
- changes in behaviour, attitudes and norms; and
- new ways of designing and delivering services or support for individuals.

Definitions of the law and human rights-based approaches vary, but we use these terms in a broad and practical way. A framework for different uses of the law by CSOs is available [here](#). This relates to holding public bodies to account for the harms arising out of their failures to fulfil their statutory duties. This research brief aims to produce a similar framework with a focus on holding corporations to account.

The research

From mid-June 2026, the SCS programme will begin funding work led by civil society which uses legal tools to hold corporations to account for their role in creating, perpetuating or exacerbating discrimination or disadvantage and to achieve wider social change.

Alongside this, we are committed to contributing to the growing body of research and knowledge in this space. To get us started, we are looking for a consultant to research and write a report outlining the ways UK civil society organisations can use legal tools to hold corporations to account for their role in creating, perpetuating or exacerbating discrimination or disadvantage and to achieve wider social change.

Our objectives for this research are to:

- gain an in-depth understanding of how the law has been used to tackle corporate harm in the UK;

- collate key information about the different legal tools available to CSOs in this area;
- understand the opportunities for civil society to use legal tools; and
- understand the limitations of using the law in this area.

We will work with the successful researcher to refine these objectives before the research commences. The researcher will also need to include potential follow-up research questions. The researcher will need to produce a short report (no more than 20 pages), write a short blog outlining their key findings, and present their findings to our Board in March 2027.

The final report should enable the reader to gain an understanding of when, how and where the law or human rights based approaches can be effective tools to hold corporations to account for creating or perpetuating discrimination or disadvantage.

We will publish the report on our website in the hope that it will be useful for people who are working in this area or wish to do so. The report will need to be accessible to a broad range of civil society actors, as well as lawyers and policy professionals, so the researcher/s should be able to confidently write for these groups.

This is an excellent opportunity for an experienced researcher to explore a niche and relatively new area of work. We are looking for someone with experience of using the law to hold corporations to account whether that is through legal practice, campaigning or academia. The ideal researcher will have some understanding and knowledge of UK civil society, however this is not compulsory (a willingness to learn is!).

Eligibility to tender

We welcome tenders from any qualified individual/s or organisations, including CSOs and consultancies. In addition to the professional experience required, we require the researcher/s to have a strong understanding of legal action and corporate accountability work in the UK more broadly.

Costs

The Foundation will award a contract for a maximum value of £20,000 for this research. This amount is inclusive of all time, expenses, taxes, and any other associated costs.

Timeline

Below is our preferred timeline for this research. However, we do have some flexibility, so if you are interested in the research but would need a bit more flexibility in the timeline, please get in touch to discuss options.

Call for tenders	Wednesday 24 June 2026
Deadline for tenders	3pm on Wednesday 19 August 2026
Applicants notified	By Friday 11 September 2026
Research begins	w/c Monday 28 September 2026
Draft research report submitted	Monday 11 January 2027
Feedback from the Foundation	Monday 25 January 2027
Final research report submitted	Monday 8 February 2027
Presentation to our Board	Tuesday 9 March 2027

Process for tendering

To consider your tender, we must receive the following information by 3pm on Wednesday 19 August 2026.

1. Proposal

The proposal must be no more than 1,500 words and should cover your:

- interest in this research and motivation for undertaking it;
- comments on our proposed objectives for the research;
- skills and experience. Outline your experience as a researcher and how it is relevant to this tender. We are particularly keen to hear about any research you have done in relation to the use of the law by civil society and/or on corporate accountability;
- engagement in the use of the law and/or corporate accountability work, and how you developed your understanding of this work;
- proposed approach to the research. This should include any specific methodologies or approaches you plan to use throughout, including in analysing your findings; and
- questions for the Foundation. This is an opportunity for you to tell us what additional information you may need from us to enable you to conduct this research.

2. Budget

An indicative budget clearly outlining your allocation of time, expenses, taxes, or additional fees. Allocation of time means breaking down the time you will give to different elements of the research – desk-based research, any interviews you plan on conducting, write-up of the report, write-up of a blog, etc.

3. References

Please include the names and contact details of two referees who can provide a reference on your organisation's work and approach. We will request references via email as part of the due diligence process before any contract is drawn-up. Please ensure your referees know that we will be in touch.

4. CVs

The CVs of all the researchers who will be involved in this work.

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The documents at 1-4 above should be sent as separate files in one email to baring.foundation@ing.com by 3pm on Wednesday 19 August 2026, with the subject line "SCS corporate accountability and the law research - name of applicant".

We may invite you to a short online meeting to learn more about you, your experiences, and your research proposal.

Contact

If you have any questions about this tender, please contact Jannat Hossain at the Baring Foundation via email at Jannat.Hossain@ing.com.