

Call for Expressions of Interest:

External evaluation of advocacy work at Canadian Foodgrains Bank

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank invites expressions of interest to carry out a Utilization-Focused Evaluation of our advocacy work. The evaluation should consider advocacy work over the past 10 years, and make recommendations for the future. Advocacy work includes all activities of the public policy department, in addition to activities of the resource and public engagement department that encourage and mobilize members of the public to take advocacy actions.

Given the 10-year time frame and depth of work to be evaluated we will be contracting the evaluation in two stages: A design stage, culminating in an inception report and presentation to Foodgrains Bank; and an implementation and reporting stage. We expect a rapid but deep engagement with the evaluation consultant to ensure a robust evaluation.

Background

As part of our mission to end global hunger, the Foodgrains Bank engages with decision makers in government to improve and enact relevant policies. We focus on a limited number of issues and strive for a high level of technical competency to ensure credibility. The efforts of staff are augmented by the active involvement of the Foodgrains Bank member organizations and constituency.

Advocacy work began in 1996, with one part-time staff person, and has gradually increased to the current staff complement of six. Funding for this work comes from Global Affairs Canada (as part of our Long-Term Income Support grant, Foodgrains Bank member organizations, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The main policy issues we work on (all relevant to ending global hunger) include:

1. Optimizing Canada's food assistance
2. Role of food security and food systems in Canada's international assistance
3. Impact of climate change on food security
4. Canada's overall aid budget
5. Policy dialogue on food security with developing country governments.

From time to time, we conduct research (which may lead to advocacy) on other issues.

The only significant evaluation of our advocacy work was carried out in 2005, as part of an organization-wide strategic planning process. The evaluation was also intended to inform the board as they considered a proposal to expand public policy work. The evaluation affirmed the high quality and effectiveness of this work and recommended (among other things) that the work be scaled up.

In our advocacy work, Foodgrains Bank often takes a leadership role (among other civil society organizations) on issues relating to global food security. Foodgrains Bank sometimes joins advocacy work led by others (ie a follower role), including work on Direction and Control, and overcoming barriers to sending aid to Afghanistan.

The current strategic plan (Until All Are Fed, 2022-2026) affirms the importance of policy dialogue with governments as a means to end hunger, and emphasizes collaboration across departments to build the capacity and reputation of Foodgrains Bank’s network.

List of Users for this evaluation

User	Uses
Foodgrains Bank – Public policy	To improve our advocacy work, by demonstrating what is effective about our current methods and identifying areas for improvement.
Foodgrains Bank – Resource & public engagement	To improve public engagement which contributes to advocacy work. To provide evidence which can be shared with our constituency on the relevance and effectiveness of advocacy work in contributing to our mission
Foodgrains Bank – International Program	To improve our advocacy work, by identifying effective areas and methods for inter-departmental collaboration
Foodgrains Bank board	To demonstrate the ways in which advocacy work contributes to the organization’s mission and strategic plan
Member organizations	To identify areas of effective collaboration and areas for improvement
Global Affairs Canada – International Humanitarian branch	To demonstrate the value of supporting policy dialogue in the Long-Term Income Support grant
Global Affairs Canada – Global Issues and Development branch	To demonstrate the value of Foodgrains Bank’s policy dialogue (alone and through coalitions)
Coalitions	To demonstrate the value of working through civil society coalitions, and to identify areas for improvement
Foundations/ Funders	To demonstrate the effectiveness of our advocacy work in influencing public policies

Questions for evaluation (These may be revised based on the inception report)

The evaluator will evaluate current work and make recommendations (strategic and operational) on the following questions.

1. To what extent is our advocacy work effective in influencing Canada’s public policies that relate to hunger?
2. To what extent is our advocacy work effective in influencing public policies that relate to hunger in developing countries?
3. To what extent are the policy issues that we work on, and the positions we take on these issues relevant to global hunger and the priorities of the people who experience hunger?
4. To what extent do our policy issues and positions align with our strategic plan, Until All Are Fed?
5. To what extent are the following methods effective in contributing to overall advocacy goals:
 - Direct advocacy – dialogue with political and non-political sides of government
 - Public engagement for advocacy - mobilizing Canadians to take advocacy actions
 - Communications tools

- Working through coalitions – value of working through coalitions for policy dialogue, including relative value of being a leader or a follower on issues.
 - Working with member organizations and their constituents
 - Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning
 - Inter-departmental collaboration with Resource & Public Engagement department and with International Program department
6. What is the Foodgrains Bank’s reputation for advocacy work and to what extent does that reputation contribute to success in advocacy work, considering:
- Internal reputation - board, staff in other departments, member organizations, constituents
 - External reputation - Canadian government, other civil society organizations, Canadian agricultural organizations, academics, UN agencies

Deliverables

For design stage: a report and presentation to key staff, outlining a recommended methodology and timeline for the full evaluation.

For full evaluation: a report and presentation(s) to key staff, including operational and strategic recommendations, and shorter briefs for various audiences.

Budget for initial stage: up to \$5000

Budget for full evaluation: to be determined

For this Expression of Interest, please submit a letter including:

- Proposed evaluation methodology and methods for evaluating complex policy advocacy initiatives
- timeline for initial stage and full evaluation (ideally to be completed by 31 March 2024)
- estimate of budget for full evaluation
- summary of relevant education and experience
- examples of similar work

For inquiries, contact Paul Hagerman phagerman@foodgrainsbank.ca

Expressions of interest should be submitted to Paul Hagerman phagerman@foodgrainsbank.ca by 15 November 2023.