THE FOUNDING ROUND: WHAT IT BUYS, AND WHAT IT CANNOT

A short note for funders considering the founding of The Threshold Initiative.

The Threshold Initiative · Concept note for funders · Draft v1 · November 2026 · In development, not yet incorporated · Budget figures are estimates

A founding funder pays for an institution to exist, not for any judgment it later reaches.

That institution grades and preserves evidence that others bring. It does not litigate, campaign or gather evidence for any case, so that those who bring cases can rely on what it holds.

WHY IT IS NEEDED

Harm keeps happening partly because proving it is slow, costly and repeated. Each case rebuilds its evidence from the start, and evidence that cannot be shown to be untouched is easy to dismiss. We have catalogued 77 consequential harms since 1900 from published sources, and the pattern repeats. Plastic comes first: 22 million tonnes leaked into the environment in 2019 (OECD, 2022).

WHO USES WHAT WE BUILD

- **Those who gather evidence** (citizens, researchers, NGOs): a safe copy held away from their own premises, an independent grade, and their rights kept.
- **Those who bring cases** (litigators, regulators): evidence they can choose from, with its history and grade visible, so they do not start from zero. A sealed option for live cases is in design.
- **Everyone else:** a public record that corrects itself in the open, within 72 hours, and that no funder can change.

WHAT THE FOUNDING ROUND BUYS

- Years 1 and 2, estimated at CHF 1,705,000. It builds the institution only.
- The Swiss entity, formed with CHF 50,000 of endowment that becomes its permanent reserve; an independent Oversight Board seated by an outside panel; the Canons; legal cover.
- The evidence platform, live in Year 1 on two independently governed sites in Geneva and near Reykjavik, and a small grading pilot to size the grading round. Year 2 adds search tools, recruitment, the website and administration.

WHAT IT DOES NOT BUY

Grading and verification at scale, the Althing Round, the Story and the Spotters network are separate operating rounds. None is costed yet. Each will be costed with the people who will lead it before it is raised. Founding money and operating money are kept apart on purpose.

WHAT A FOUNDING FUNDER CANNOT BUY

- Any influence over findings, grades or methodology, at any level of gift.
- A key, a seat or a role in governance. No government or multilateral body funds the core.
- A particular result. A founding funder may release Year 2 on the Year 1 report, which is tied to what was built and never to what the evidence finds.

WHERE WE STAND

The Initiative is in development and not yet incorporated. A fiscal sponsor holds funds first, and a Swiss foundation follows in Year 1. We have begun conversations with litigators and NGOs. They told us confidentiality and trust come first, and we changed the design. No organisation has yet agreed to use or endorse the Knowledge Base, and we do not suggest otherwise. Founding funders are named in public, and the round is open to several.

WHAT NOW

Twenty minutes to hear what you would need to see before founding an institution like this. The one-page overview and the Programme Architecture set out the rest.

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