WageMap BACKGROUND

Round 2 Public Consultation

WAGE MAP

Our Launch Partners (selection)

Table of Contents

The following document provides an overview of the WageMap consortium and the draft Living Wage Reference Standard.

1. **About WageMap**
   - Priorities, Problem it addresses, Founding Partners, Funders
2. **How does WageMap work?**
   - Principles, Strategy, Alignment with existing efforts
3. **What is the Living Wage Reference Standard?**
   - Definition, Purpose, Contents, Timeline
4. **How will the Standard be applied?**
   - Approach to evaluating methodologies, outputs
5. **How will WageMap operate in the long-term?**
   - Governance, Users
6. **What is the consultation process?**
   - Public consultation process, Decision-making process

© WageMap | All rights reserved

1. About WageMap

WageMap's mission is to support the achievement of living wages for workers globally, **drive alignment across living wage methodologies** and frameworks.

Core Priorities

1. Establish a Living Wage Reference Standard

- Develop a universally accepted Living Wage Reference Standard method to calculate a living wage
- Guide data providers, offer a foundation for creating incentives, and promote transparency in employer actions

2. Create an aggregated map of living wage estimates

- Assess existing national and global living wage benchmarking methodologies against the living wage reference standard
- Determine a single living wage estimate value that is most aligned with the Living Wage reference standard in a specific geography

Secondary Priorities

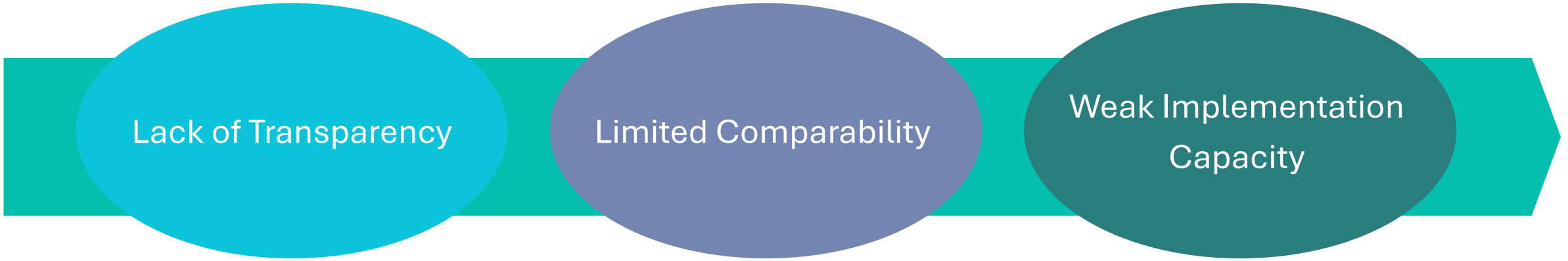
Build Living Wage Knowledge Hub

Expand the Global Movement

© WageMap | All rights reserved

The Living Wage Data Problem

While progress on living wages has been made – WageMap seeks to tackle the following core issues…



- There is a lack of transparency **in the differences between the methodologies.**
- This makes it challenging for actors to identify how estimates compare to one another.

- The **lack of a standardized and universally accepted method** to calculate a living wage.
- This **leads to market distortion** and disparities in compensation and working conditions.

- These factors have weakened implementation efforts as **actors across value chains use different living wage data, driving greater confusion.**

WAGE MAP

Founding member organizations

WageMap's six founding organizations are **leading living wage data and service providers** who came together in 2023 to try to address the data inconsistencies and confusion that are a major blockage in the living wage movement.

BSR	BSR is a sustainability and human rights organization that builds impactful multi-stakeholder collaborations and supports companies to establish living wage programs.	LIVING WAGE FOR US, Inc.	Creates public benchmarks across the U.S. and certifies U.S. employers that pay their workers and contractors a living wage based on real costs of living.
Loughborough University Centre for Research in Social Policy	The research organization behind the UK Living Wage Foundation's cost-of-living number that also supports research teams globally to determine the true cost of living in decency.	NEW FORESIGHT SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES	Strategy consultancy firm with expertise across the full living income and living wage journey working to firm driving transitions towards sustainable economies in over 35 sectors and 45 countries.
LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION	UK accreditation scheme for over 14,000 recognized Living Wage Employers, including over half of the FTSE 100.	WageIndicator	Global not-for profit organization. Co-creator of the WageIndicator Living Wage methodology. Publishes data and information to inform workers, trade unions, employers and policy makers to improve wage negations - in every country in the world, in national languages.

WAGE MAP

Funders

Launch Partners	Members	Sponsors
• Launch partners provide a fixed, three-year financial commitment to enable the WageMap proposition to be put into practice. • Current paying Launch Partners are **Hershey, Mondelez**, and an **undisclosed partner**.	• Members provide a fixed, three-year financial commitment to enable the WageMap proposition to be put into practice. • WageMap's current paying Member is **Target Corporation**.	• Sponsors provide a financial commitment determined on an individual basis to contribute to the WageMap activities. • WageMap's current sponsors are **ISS World, Bettys and Taylors of Harrogate**, and an undisclosed partner (made public soon).

WAGE MAP

2. How does WageMap work?

Our Principles

Transparency: Share information, actions, decisions, and decision-making processes in a clear and accessible manner to all stakeholders involved.

Human Rights: Uphold the fundamental, universal, inalienable and indivisible rights that every person is entitled to.

Evidence-Based Decision Making: Prioritize evidence-based insights in all decisions, minimizing political influences. Involve both external and internal experts to ensure a well-rounded perspective on each issue.

Multiple Perspectives: Consider multiple perspectives on any given topic or question to inform decisions. Ensure that the ultimate goal remains the guiding principle throughout the decision-making process.

Adherence to Academic Standards: Apply rigorous academic norms, such as the principle of hearing both sides (audi alteram partem), forming and revising hypotheses, and maintaining scholarly integrity.

WAGE MAP

The problem

1/3 of workers globally earn less than a living wage, equating to 1 billion people. These workers earn less than they need to afford a decent standard of living.

To support efforts to close the living wage gap, **numerous living wage benchmarking approaches & methodologies have emerged.**

As a result:

- **No universal standard** to calculate a living wage and **minimal trust and collaboration on LW approaches.**
- Use of different methods has led to **market distortions and compensation disparities**
- The hyperfocus on methodologies has resulted in **insufficient resources directed towards actions to reduce the living wage gap**

Strategic response

A global consortium of living wage data & service providers driving alignment across LW methodologies and frameworks.

Core priorities	Activities
1. Develop a Living Wage Reference Standard	• Draft Standard • Refine the standard and develop assessment of compliance to standard • Review, update and increase global adoption
2. Set globally comparable, locally specific estimates	• Understand existing methodologies and principles and drive consensus • Establish 'best available' data map and promote adoption
Other priorities	
3. Strengthen living wage implementation support **4. Expand the global movement**	• Build network of equipped service providers • Community building

Inputs

- Multi-stakeholder visions
- Academic expertise
- Financial resources
- Time

Outcomes

Short

- **Greater consistency** in living wage benchmarking
- **Increased awareness and understanding** of living wage concept and measurement
- **Increased understanding of differences and similarities** in LW estimate approaches
- **Increased transparency and access** to living wage estimates across geographies

Greater alignment, trust & collaboration amongst stakeholders working on living wages

Medium

- **Increased stakeholder adoption** of living wage benchmarking (in policy and practice)
- **Strengthened advocacy** efforts on living wages
- **More consistent** living wages **implementation support**

Estimates are **more commonly used in wage negotiations**

Standard is universally accepted, widely used & considered best practice

Long

Workers and unions

- More informed negotiations
- Increased wages

Government + civil society

- Consistent and fairer labor practices
- Progress towards UN SDGs (1,8,10)

Supply chain actors

- More ethical business practices
- More ethical investments

IMPACT

All workers receive a Living Wage.

Assumptions

- Need for harmonization
- Willingness to share amongst all

Alignment with existing living wage efforts

There are many organizations that have established living wage methodologies and approaches to implementation.

The purpose of WageMap is to drive alignment across these platforms while also building on best practices.

WageMap remains open to additional members joining the consortium, actively consults other living wage organizations on the strategic vision, and references recommended practices generated by these organizations into the Living Wage Reference Standard. This should not be misinterpreted as implying these organizations have endorsed the WageMap effort. Rather, it is an acknowledgment of their independent work and a credit that we referenced this work in the standard creation from publicly available documentation.

Several contributors beyond the WageMap consortium include:

International Labour Organization

GLOBAL LIVING WAGE COALITION

idh transforming markets

ANKER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

FAIRWAGE NETWORK

Asia Floor Wage

International Trade Centre

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The Living Income Community of Practice

United Nations Global Compact

value balancing alliance

KIT INSTITUTE

…in addition to local trade unions and community led initiatives

WAGE MAP

Building on ILO principles for a Living Wage

The Living Wage Reference Standard is designed to be in alignment with the ILO principles. As the ILO expands its guidance on living wage WageMap will continue to evolve the standard.

Definition

In line with the ILO Constitution and the Philadelphia Declaration, and consistent with the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), **the ILO denotes that the concept of the living wage is:**

"the wage level that is necessary to afford a decent standard of living for workers and their families, taking into account the country circumstances and calculated for the work performed during the normal hours of work; calculated in accordance with the ILO's principles of estimating the living wage, as outlined below; and to be achieved through the wage-setting process in line with ILO principles on wage setting."

ILO Principles for living wage benchmarking

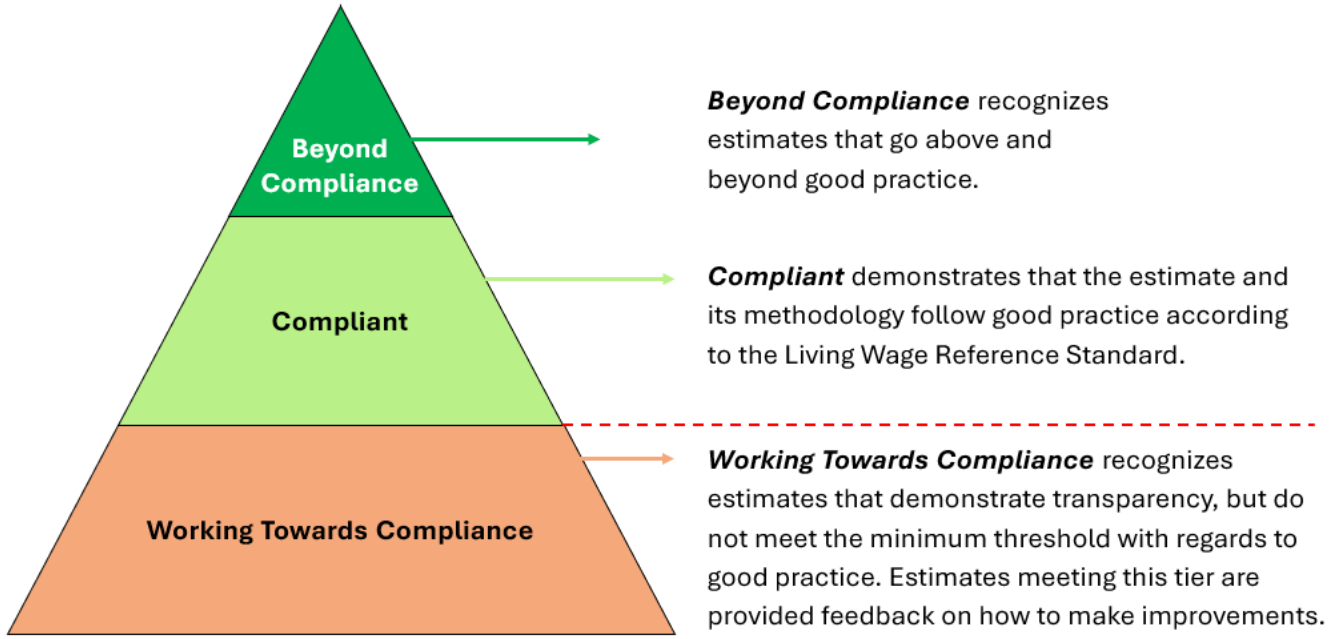
- Estimation of the **needs of workers and their families** through **evidence-based methodologies;**
- **Consultation with representative employers' and workers' organizations** on living wage estimates and **involvement of social partners** throughout their development, with a view to ensuring **national and/or local ownership;**
- **Transparency,** including details with regard to data sources and methods of processing, that are open to scrutiny, are comprehensive and replicable;
- Robustness of the data in terms of **representativeness and transparent data collection** methods;
- **Timely** public availability of the estimates, data and methodologies;
- Specification on whether estimates are gross or net, namely **whether items such as social security contributions are included or not;**
- **Regular adjustments** to consider changes in the cost of living and the patterns of consumption;
- quality control, including sound technical review, validation, as well as periodic review for continuous improvements;
- **Promotion of gender equality** and non-discrimination;
- Consideration of the **regional or local context** and socio-economic and cultural realities.

3. What is the Living Wage Reference Standard?

What is the Living Wage Reference Standard?

Definition

The Living Wage Reference Standard is a document which can be used to assess living wage estimates according to three categories containing quality criteria: Beyond Compliant, Compliant and Working Towards Compliance*.



Beyond Compliance recognizes estimates that go above and beyond good practice.

Compliant demonstrates that the estimate and its methodology follow good practice according to the Living Wage Reference Standard.

Working Towards Compliance recognizes estimates that demonstrate transparency, but do not meet the minimum threshold with regards to good practice. Estimates meeting this tier are provided feedback on how to make improvements.

Purpose

Create a universally accepted 'Standard' that:

- ✓ Provides greater consistency, clarity and alignment on approaches to living wage estimation
- ✓ Guides methodology owners about good practices, and
- ✓ Increases credibility and transparency of employer initiatives on living wages.

WAGE MAP

*Details on how Living Wage Reference Standard will be scored using these three categories is in development.

Contents of the Standard – **Part 1 [Overarching Frameworks]**

Section	Overview
Data collection and Transparency	• Data Collection and Sharing • Academic Rigor – Survey-based Data and Focus Groups • Transparency • Conflict of Interest • Representative Data
Geographic scope and Timing of estimates	• Geographic Scope • Quality Control • Local Input of Ownership • Migrant Labor • Timing for Updates of Data
Family size, Number of workers per family and Working hours	• Family Household Size – General • Family Size – Number of Adults and Children • Number of Workers Per Family • Working Hours
Accounting for public Benefits	• Applicability of Public Benefits • Accessibility of Public Benefits • Accounting for Public Benefits

WAGE MAP

Contents of the Standard – **Part 2 [Items on Cost of Living]**

Section	Overview
Nutritious Food	• Nutrition • Variability of Diet • Price Collection
Housing	• Housing Size • Rent vs. Home Ownership • Utilities, Furnishings, Insurance, Maintenance and Repairs, Taxes, and Mandatory Services Charges
Healthcare	• Data Collection and Transparency – General
Care	• Ensuring Timely Childcare Payment • Elder Care / Retirement
Transportation	• Assessing Transportation
Other Categories (COICOP)	• Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics • Clothing and Footwear • Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance • Information and Communication • Recreation, Sport and Culture • Education Services
Savings for Special or Emergency Events	• Amount Included
Mandatory Deductions from Pay	• Depth and Specificity

WAGE MAP

How have we developed the Standard?

We are here

Compare Methodology Documents & Descriptions

Compare Data from Specific Benchmarks in Overlapping Geographies

Present consensus and areas of difference for stakeholder feedback to inform Standard design

Step 1

- **Assess** methodology documents and records
- **Identify major differences** in approach

Step 2

- **Identify where methodological differences are producing equivalencies** in results, allowing for flexibility in approaches

Step 3

- **Assess estimates from different methodologies in the same geographic area** to determine which elements of the calculations are showing the greatest level of consistency or variability in results

Step 4

- **Examine the differences against the framework of ILO, IDH, and LICoP guidance** on living wage estimations to inform best path forward

Step 5

- **Discuss identified differences and similarities in technical committee meetings** establishing where consensus exists

Step 6

- Present choices where consensus does not yet exist within WageMap for stakeholder feedback to inform the standard choices

Methodologies and estimates reviewed in comparative analysis – Using publicly available or shared data and details			
Alberta Living Wage Network	Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives	Living Wage Ireland	NewForesight
Anker Methodology	ILO Methodology	Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand	Ontario Living Wage Network
Anker Reference Values	Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-economiques	Loughborough University	Seoul Metropolitan Council
Area Metropolitana de Barcelona	Living Wage for Families BC	MIT Living Wage Calculator	UK Living Wage Foundation
Asia Floor Wage	Living Wage For Us	National University of Singapore	WageIndicator Foundation

4. How will the Standard be applied?

WAGE MAP

How are methodologies evaluated?

WageMap has developed a draft methodology to evaluate living wage estimates and their methodologies. To evaluate these methodologies, WageMap will work with separate organizations and individual contributors (see Evaluators).

1. Assess methodology against questions in Standard

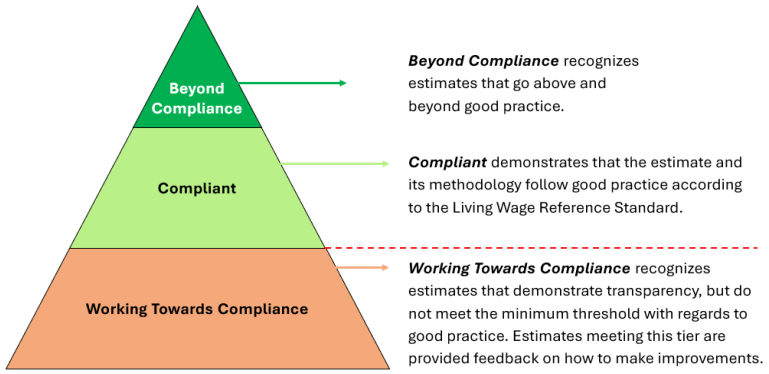
- To ensure evaluations are as clear and consistent as possible, we've adopted a **binary approach** – each criterion is scored as ***Met*** or ***Not Met***.
- This binary approach eliminates ambiguity and allows users to quickly understand weather a requirement has been fulfilled.

2. Conduct overall assessment against quality criteria

- The framework is organized into structured categories – **Working towards compliant, Compliant, Beyond Compliance** – with each tied to a specific set of yes/no questions.
- We've developed scoring templates to illustrate how this approach works in real assessments.

Example

2.1 Data Collection and Transparency – 2.1.1: Data Collection and Sharing - General	
Working towards requirements	
Is data IDH-aligned? Does the estimate rely on data sources accepted by IDH (i.e., field-level research, representative online surveys, national statistics, and/or modeling—but not modeling alone or self-selected online surveys)?	Met Not met N/A
Is data ILO-aligned? Does the methodology reflect the ILO principle of estimating the needs of workers and their families through evidence-based approaches?	Met Not met N/A
Compliant Requirements	
Is data collection variability documented across estimates? Are differences in methods (e.g., skipped fieldwork, varying sample sizes) clearly documented across different locations or studies?	Met Not met N/A



WAGE MAP

Potential Evaluation Journey for Living Wage Estimates

Month 1-2

1 Preparation – Opt In

- Data provider opts in to have their methodology and data evaluated.
- Data provider conducts self-assessment and submits with data.

2 Preparation – Opt Out

- For methodologies and data that WageMap has prioritized to include, but the data provider has not formally opted in, a package of data and an initial assessment will be submitted for evaluation.

Month 3-4

3 Evaluation

- Evaluators will be trained to use the standard to review the self-assessments and datasets as well as evaluate any methodologies that are provided without a self-assessment.
- Evaluators will provide scoring as well as feedback to the data providers on what they can do to improve their scores initially and over the long term to improve their scores.

Month 5-10

4 Reassess

- Data providers will be provided their scores and feedback. There will be a call to review the results and to hear about any issues, questions.
- Data providers will have ~4 months to make any initial changes and resubmit their methodology and estimates. They are not required to make changes but will be noted as "Working towards Compliance."

5 Approval

- Evaluators submit their final recommendation to WageMap.

Month 11-12

6 Publish

- WageMap will compile data and scores to publish on website.

WAGE MAP

A Phased Implementation Approach for Evaluating Estimates*

1

Year 1 (Pilot 2026)

- Pilot approach with **1 organization and/or several individuals to evaluate methodologies**

2

Medium term

- **2-4 organizations/multiple individuals** from different regions and sectors to evaluate methodologies and provide scoring.

3

Long-term

- **4+ organizations/multiple individuals** from different regions and sectors to evaluate methodologies and provide scoring.

WAGE MAP

*WageMap is currently meeting with organizations and individuals who are interested in this role. Please share recommendations on which organizations would be best suited to play this role in the short or medium term.

Results of Assessments: WageMap Aggregated Data Map

The core output is a publicly available aggregated data map* of globally comparable, locally specific, living wage estimates. Estimates will be assessed at the regional estimate level, with each sub-national estimate evaluated independently. The example below shows how three different estimates could be visualized based on 1) how the data provider chooses to 'opt-in' to have their estimates disclosed and 2) how estimate's methodology aligns with the standard.

Estimate Country: Dominican Republic
Estimate Coverage: Santo Domingo

Scoring Framework

Working towards Compliance	Compliant	Beyond Compliance

	Full Opt-in	Partial Opt-in	No Active Opt-in
Living Wage Reference Standard Categories and Scoring This standard is used as a point of comparison. The most aligned living wage estimation is provided along with the associated data below	**Living Wage Methodology 1** **Estimate:** 15.35 DOP/hour **Estimate Year:** *2024* **Evaluation:** **Link:** *Website*	**Living Wage Methodology 2** **Estimate:** *See public site (link)* **Estimate Year:** *2024* **Evaluation:** **Link:** *Website*	**Living Wage Methodology 3** **Estimate:** See website **Estimate Year:** *2024* **Evaluation:** **Link:** *Website*
The scoring below is illustrative only, showing two of six subcategories within the first category. The final version would include scoring across all categories.			
Data Collection and Transparency			
Data Collection and Sharing			
Academic Rigor – Survey-based Data			
Academic Rigor – Focus Groups			
Transparency			
Conflict of Interest			
Representative Data			
Geographic Scope and Timing			
Geographic Scope			

Indicative

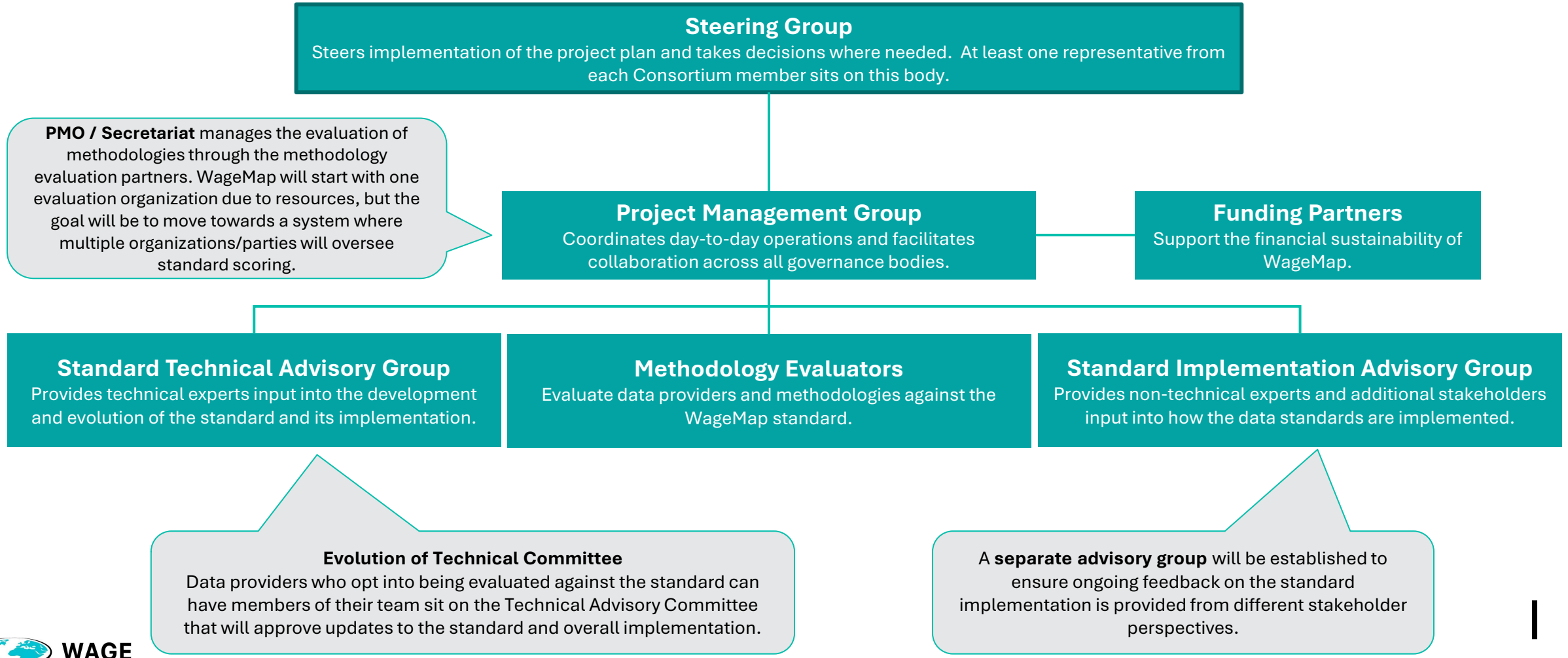
*WageMap continues to explore different ways to visualize their data map and welcomes feedback on the proposed concept.

6. How will WageMap operate in the long-term?

WAGE MAP

WageMap Proposed Governance (~2027 Onwards)

WageMap is preparing to evolve its governance and its stakeholder engagement approach after the first round of pilot data is launched. The following model is subject to change based on feedback.



WAGE MAP

A range of key stakeholder groups will interact with the Standard

WageMap is preparing to evolve its governance and its stakeholder engagement approach after the first round of pilot data is launched. The following model is subject to change based on feedback.

DATA PROVIDERS:

Organizations that generate or maintain living wage estimate data

DATA USERS:

Employers or other entities that use Living Wage data to inform their living wage efforts

METHODOLOGY EVALUATORS:

Individual organizations or collaborators trained to evaluate living wage estimates

KEY PARTNERS:

Non-profit organizations, unions, international organizations, governments

WAGE MAP

Methodology evaluators

Individual organizations or collaborators trained to evaluate living wage estimates

Use case

Methodology evaluators will review self-assessments and estimate methodologies against the Living Wage Reference Standard and provide scoring*.

Methodology evaluators will:

- be **separate organizations** from data providers themselves.
- **provide objectivity** in the evaluation of different methodologies.
- **operate independently** in evaluating and scoring methodologies and will report to the Project Management Office.

Engagement approach

WageMap is currently meeting with potential methodology evaluators and will be using the insights from the 2nd public consultation period to inform the overall engagement approach with potential partners.

WAGE MAP

*WageMap is still the process of developing its scoring mechanism for the Living Wage Reference Standard.

Data Providers

Voluntary network of data providers who opt in to collaborate with WageMap

Use case

To fulfill its mission of advancing alignment and transparency across living wage estimate methodologies, WageMap aims to build a collaborative community of Data Providers – working together to strengthen the Living Wage Reference Standard and enhance its value for those contributing to and using the data.

Engagement approach

Data Providers can choose to share their living wage estimates (or just have a link to their website) and participate directly in WageMap's evaluation and engagement activities. Providers that choose to have their estimates evaluated will:

- **Receive recognition** as official contributors
- Nominate **representatives to participate in WageMap's Technical Advisory Board**
- Provide **feedback on methodology** alignment and scoring processes
- **Stay informed of developments**, revisions, and expectations around data validation and standard alignment.

WAGE MAP

Data users

Employers or other entities that use Living Wage data to inform their living wage efforts

Use case

WageMap was created to make it easier for Data Users to implement living wages. WageMap aims to offer solutions for employers, unions, civil society and even governments. WageMap will continue to strive to support data users through providing:

- **Transparent, easy-to-use, reliable** living wage data
- **Clarity and standardization** on how to evaluate and implement living wages

Engagement approach

As WageMap explores how to establish a sustainable model to maintain the ongoing evaluations of estimates and its platform, it will continue to engage Data Users so it can create offerings that meet their needs.

WageMap appreciates all employers who participated and provided feedback in the 1st Public Consultation in Oct/Nov 2024.

WAGE MAP

Key partners

Non-profit organizations, unions, international organizations, governments

Use case

- WageMap is built upon multiple attempts by different parties to find a solution to the living wage data problem. WageMap works with many of these stakeholders and engages with others to strengthen the approach and overall movement. WageMap stakeholders include:
  - Workers and Unions
  - Employers and Employer Organizations
  - Businesses and Investors
  - Governments
  - Platforms and Multi-stakeholder Initiatives

Engagement approach

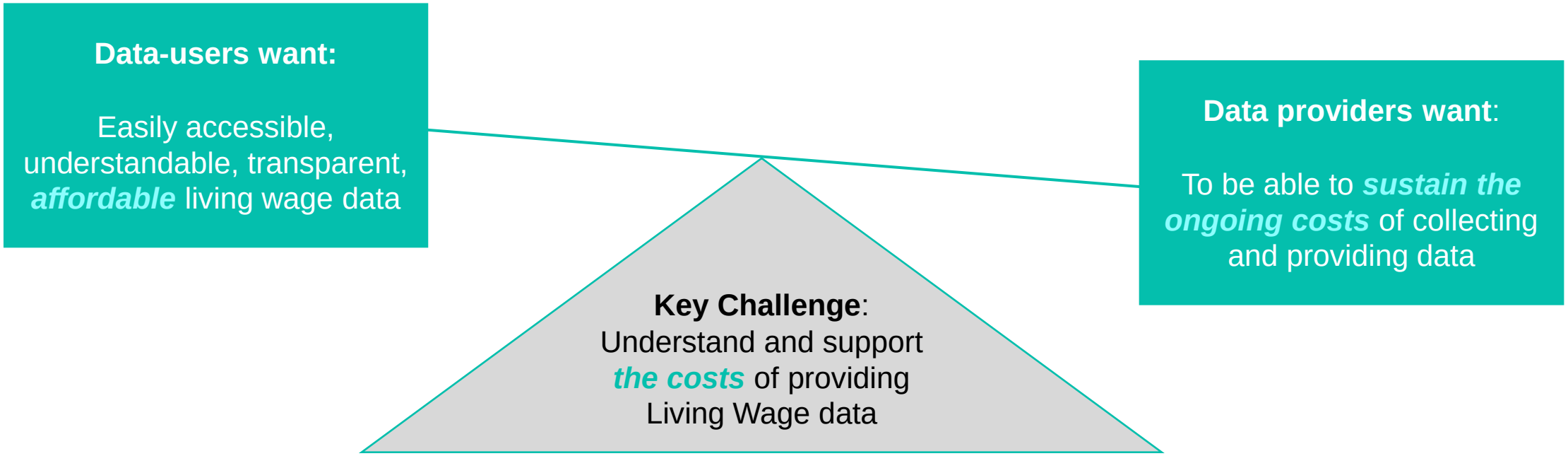
WageMap is grateful to have received feedback and insights from numerous contributors as part of:

- Regular check-ins with key organizations
- Specialized focus groups during public consultation sessions
- Collaboration on evaluation and implementation

WAGE MAP

Long-term model must address costs of collecting data

WageMap recognizes that to be able to provide easily understandable living wage data, living wage Data Providers must be able to sustain their work. **WageMap aims to work iteratively on its 'publicly available aggregated data map' to drive progress while working collaboratively within the living wage movement to address this challenge**.



WAGE MAP

6. What is the consultation process?

WAGE MAP

Public Consultation Process

WageMap is dedicated to getting stakeholder input from across different regions, stakeholder groups and channels. It is hosting **two rounds of public consultation as well as a round of targeted feedback** to garner final insights before **launching in November 2025 at the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights.**

1 Round 1 Public Stakeholder Consultation Nov – Dec 2024

Engagement results:
- 6 webinars
- 122 organizations
- 36 countries
- 150 individuals
- 53 survey responses

Stakeholder groups consulted
- Methodology owners
- Certification bodies
- Civil society, NGOs, INGOs
- Local living wage networks
- Research institutes
- Unions/Labour movement
- Governments
- Industry groups
- Corporates
- Funders

2 Round 2 Public Stakeholder Engagement Consultation July – August 2025

Consultation Focus
- Feedback on the draft Living Wage Reference Standard
- Feedback on draft WageMap Background document
- Share progress and feedback from Round 1
- Online focus group series for underrepresented groups (e.g. unions and local movements)
- Online asynchronous consultation with survey and guidance
- 1-2-1 interviews for key stakeholders

3 Targeted Final Feedback Sept – Oct 2025

Planned engagements
- Online focus groups with key stakeholder groups
- Follow up on specific issues that need greater expertise and further discussion
- Address scoring and implementation guidance

WAGE MAP

© WageMap | All rights reserved

Decision making structure

You can find the WageMap Standard Development and Revision Procedure in this link.

This document specifies the procedure to be followed by WageMap for the development of any new WageMap standards, such as the Living Wage Reference Standard, and when substantive changes to existing WageMap standards are required to be made.

Contact us

To follow up or for broader questions, please address communication to the Project Management Office:

Joost Backer
joost.backer@newforesight.com

If you're familiar with any collaborating organizations and wish to discuss this project, please reach out to their designated lead contact for communication:

BSR
Emma Giloth
egiloth@bsr.org

Loughborough University
Centre for Research in Social Policy
Abigail Davis
A.A.I.Davis@lboro.ac.uk
Matt Padley
M.J.Padley@lboro.ac.uk

LIVING WAGE FOR US, Inc.
Michelle Murray
michelle@livingwageforus.org

NEW FORESIGHT
Daniel Viviers-Rasmussen
Daniel.Viviers-Rasmussen@newforesight.com

WageIndicator
Fiona Dragstra
fionadragstra@wageindicator.org

Living Wage Foundation
Shaheen Hashmat
Shaheen.Hashmat@livingwage.org.uk

WAGE MAP