**Investment Recommendation – Shomrim**

**Summary and recommendation:**

The Center for Media and Democracy in Israel, Shomrim (the Guardians) is a non-profit, independent news organization established to strengthen Israeli democracy through investigative journalism. Shomrim is inspired by the Pro-Publica organization, which is a nonprofit newsroom organization aiming to produce investigative journalism in the public interest. Shomrim was established in reaction to unprecedented challenges in the Israeli media landscape, after years of hostility from the political and commercial environments, which have undermined accountability journalism. The goal of the organization is to promote healthy democracy in Israel.

Shomrim produces in-depth journalistic investigations on various social and political issues to influence public opinion and decision-makers and lead to desired policy changes.

We have been in contact with Shomrim for several months. We believe that the organization has great potential to influence public opinion and decision-makers to promote SFPI's areas of interest across the board – including welfare, inclusivity, and public policy.

The organization is in its infancy, and it is not yet possible to assess its effectiveness and impact on public opinion and policymakers.

We recommend giving the organization a grant of $100,000 for one year to explore the potential of this relationship to help advance SFPI's goals and interests.

**Background:**

The Center for Media and Democracy in Israel, Shomrim (the Guardians) is a non-profit, independent news organization established to strengthen Israeli democracy through investigative journalism. Shomrim is based on the idea of the Pro-Publica organization - an American non-profit newsroom organization that aims to produce investigative journalism in the public interest. Shomrim seeks to increase the flow of trustworthy, fact-based, and data-driven information to the public; incubate investigative reporting projects with potential for social impact; highlight new voices and tell relevant stories; and publish our work in partnership with a variety of print, broadcast, and digital outlets to achieve maximum exposure and impact.

Shomrim's model of operation is to identify public interest stories, conduct independent investigations and publish them in media outlets, thus contributing to other news organizations and their readers.

**Organization and Project Strategy:**

Shomrim was established in reaction to unprecedented challenges in the Israeli media landscape, after years of hostility from the political and commercial environments, which have undermined accountability journalism. The repercussions of the hard-hitting financial crisis have led news carriers and media organizations to take cost-saving measures, impacting media performance, e.g., output, breadth, and depth of coverage, and scope of investigative reporting. The crisis-related constraints have caused an overall drop in the quality of news delivery to citizens.

Shomrim believes that a healthy democracy requires a vibrant public square in which strong, independent media inform the public and hold power accountable. Their vision for success is to maintain their editorial independence in order to serve the public good; to conduct deep investigations that build trust with audiences, incorporating both traditional investigative journalism as well as data journalism that tells a complex story through engaging infographics (the use of data has become an integral part of investigative journalism around the globe); to fight misinformation and fake news with data journalism; to promote diversity of readership; and to expand reader engagement and publishing platforms across the entire political spectrum, from the far right to the far left.

Shomrim seeks to impact public opinion and policymaking and increase their readers' awareness of the social and political issues affecting their lives through in-depth investigation.

During the grant period, Shomrim will:

1. Continue to build its reputation, capture the attention of decision-makers, and affect government action.
2. Continue to produce in-depth journalistic investigations on social and political issues. As far as possible, Shomrin will also produce investigations in areas that the foundation tries to promote.
3. Focus on promoting strategic relationships with television stations and networks to expand distribution channels and reach wider audiences. They will also labor to increase their publications within the media outlets of their already established partnerships.