



Grant Manual

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(Philippines)



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1. A letter from.....

"We pledge," says the UN, in its manifesto on the Sustainable Development Goals, *"that no one will be left behind [in the collective journey to end poverty and inequality]."* In addition, the most marginalised will be prioritised: *"We will endeavour,"* the UN pledges, *"to reach the furthest behind first."*¹

It is in this context that the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ("the Ministry") designed a special fund, called Voice, with the objective to support the most marginalised and discriminated groups in their efforts to exert influence in accessing productive and social services and political participation. Voice forms an integral pillar of the Ministry's overall Dialogue and Dissent policy framework² which aims to strengthen the capacity for lobby and advocacy of civil society organisations in low- and lower-middle-income countries to allow for participation in mainstream development processes. Voice targets five groups, although it depends on the country's contextual analysis which groups will be served in each Voice focus country³:



People living with disabilities;



Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people;



Women facing exploitation, abuse and violence;



Age-discriminated vulnerable groups, notably the young and elderly;



Indigenous groups and ethnic minorities.

These groups are often the hardest to reach. Therefore innovative approaches to strengthening capacity of lobby and advocacy as well as empowerment are essential. A linking and learning process encourages sharing of lessons learned, and provides a forum for mutual learning and empowerment of the most marginalised and discriminated groups. Voice is initially a five-year programme, for which a total of €50 million is available for programme-, grants-, management- and linking and learning costs. This includes a total of €35 million available for grants, the Voice 2016-2020 Fund.

Most –if not all- the information is available via www.voice.global including all Calls for Proposals and relevant information regarding the grantees.

This grants manual is meant for (potential) grantees to help them decide on whether and how to make a grant and what the reporting requirements are. As with all documents in Voice it is a 'living' document; hence if you

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

² <https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documents/parliamentary-documents/2015/07/01/voice-the-accountability-fund-and-the-participation-of-civil-society-organisations-in-theme-based-calls-for-proposals/letter-to-parliament-on-voice.pdf>

³ The Voice focus countries are: Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Indonesia, Philippines, Laos and Cambodia.

have any feedback on how Voice can improve its grant-making, you are very welcome to do so via hello@voice.global

Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey!

The Voice family

2. What types of grants will be awarded?

The Voice grant facility is designed to support informal groups as well as formal organisations and networks, although the applicant needs to be legally registered or accredited and have a bank account in the applicant's name. The Grant types are as follows:



Empowerment grant: Targeting (informal) groups or organisations to raise awareness, develop transformative leadership, build confidence and skills and work against stigmatisation of marginalised and discriminated groups. Smaller grants with average one-year timeframe, accessible for informal groups through for example a partnering with formal organisations. Empowerment grants are available from €5,000 to €25,000 (approx. ₱265,000 to ₱1,300,000).



Influencing grant: Targeting organisations and networks to strengthen their influencing, lobby and advocacy capacities and amplify voice of marginalised and discriminated groups. Influencing grants that are country specific are available from €25,000 to €200,000 (approx. ₱1,300,000 to ₱10,600,000).



Innovate and learn grant: For groups and organisations to test and scale new approaches. Innovation and learning grants are available from €5,000 to €200,000 (approx. ₱265,000 to ₱10,600,000).



Sudden opportunity grant: Creating flexibility to undertake collective action to address specific unanticipated opportunities to influence policy or deal with a threatened reduction of civil space which impacts one or more of the Voice target groups in one or more of the impact themes. Grants responding to a sudden opportunity are available from €5,000 to €200,000 (approx. ₱265,000 to ₱10,600,000).

For each modality of grant, there are different approaches related to making applications, assessing grants and reporting against grants. Empowerment grants and smaller grants designed to address sudden opportunities will be more flexible and contain fewer requirements. Influencing and Innovation grants will contain more requirements to mitigate risk and increase accountability.

Voice stands out from other grant-making programmes by developing a grant application and reporting process that is accessible, user-friendly and innovative adapted to the target groups and grant type.



3. How to make an application

Steps	Task	Activities
<i>Step 1</i>	Preparation for calls for proposals.	Based on country contextual analysis, the Voice Advisory Board – through the Annual Plan- will provide guidelines for themes and subjects that the Call for Proposals could focus upon. This process will be repeated on an annual basis for each subsequent call for proposals.
<i>Step 2</i>	Calls for proposals	Advertising the Call for Proposals as approved (at least 6-weeks for applicants to respond). Outreach and communication activities will be designed to reach the target groups.
<i>Step 3</i>	Support	The application process should be viewed as a capacity building exercise and applicants should receive useful feedback after the application is assessed. Oxfam Country and Hivos Regional Offices will organise information session on the proposal using creative settings.
<i>Step 4</i>	Screening	<p>Voice is designed as a competitive application-based grant-making programme. Therefore, for an organisation to receive funding, it must submit an application, which will be reviewed using an open and transparent assessment method.</p> <p>Voice will screen proposal applications against the eligibility and criteria requirements (one month for screening with extension depending on number of applications received).</p> <p>Apart from screening on the basis of eligibility, preliminary assessment of applicant capacity will be made. Sight-visits may be undertaken as part of the screening process to ensure that applicants have minimum governance and accounting protocols and/or to review existing programming.</p>
<i>Step 5</i>	Selection	Once the screening is complete recommendations for grant awards and capacity development will be submitted to the Regional Office of Hivos for approval. Each short-listed application will be rated and ranked using the selection criteria provided below.
<i>Step 6</i>	Agreements	Once the project is finalised, Voice will enter into a Grant Agreement with successful organisations. The Grant Arrangement will apply for the period of time required to complete the project. The time plan and approved budget will be an integral part of the Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement will outline the requirements under the grant and other terms and conditions.

When should your organisation submit an Application?

Calls for proposal will be published annually at a minimum via www.voice.global and www.facebook.com/voice.global.online. Applications for Empowerment grants and Sudden Opportunity grants will be accepted on a rolling basis (i.e. applicants can send their applications anytime through the website). This also applies to Innovate and Learn grants, however, the review and feedback process will only be done on a specific timeframe (see below). For Influencing grants, applications must be submitted in accordance to deadlines published within the corresponding call for the proposal.

Here below are the schedules for the initial two years (2017-2018):

Type of Grant	Release Date	Date of Review / Deadline	Response Date
Empowerment Grant	February 13, 2017	Rolling basis, contact philippines@voice.global	6 weeks after receipt of submission
Influencing Grant	February 13, 2017 (August 15, 2017)	April 1, 2017 (October 1, 2017)	May 15, 2017 (November 15, 2017)
Innovation Grant	February 13, 2017	May 15, 2017 October 1, 2017 March 15, 2018	July 1, 2017 November 15, 2017 May 1, 2018
Sudden Opportunity Grant	February 13, 2017	Rolling basis, contact philippines@voice.global	6 weeks after receipt of submission

Who can make applications?

Applications can only be submitted by organisations which possess legal registration and a bank account in the applicant's name. For smaller organisations, accreditation by the barangay/municipal council or university along with a bank account in the organisation's name will suffice. Organisations can independently submit a grant application or form part of a consortium in a joint application⁴. In this case, a consortium representative (known as the 'lead party') submits the grant application on behalf of the consortium as a whole. Only the lead party needs to be legally registered, not all of the consortium members. If the application is granted, the lead party is responsible for implementing the consortium's project. Applicants may form a partnership with other non-profit organisations or private companies to implement the project or certain of its components, however, such partnerships must be identified within the grant application. Applications may also include activities to strengthen the capacity of the organisation, please refer to the relevant sections below.

⁴ A consortium is a cooperative of two or more civil society organisations, which implements a joint, integrated project in which all parties contribute to the total. They draw up a cooperative agreement for this purpose.



Where should we send our application?

Applications for grants from Voice must be submitted using the model application formats as stipulated and made available by Voice.⁵ Applications should be complete and without reservations and submitted through www.voice.global. Please only submit the project proposal and the budget as attachments

Voice will send a confirmation by email of receipt of your proposal. The confirmation email will include an application reference number which you should keep. All correspondence in relation to your application will be made with this reference number. Reference numbers will correspond to the country, the type of grant and the date of the Call for Proposals in the following format: <country><type of grant><date(month, year)><application number>.

What if you have questions about the process?

Questions about applying for a Voice grant may be submitted by email or during consultative sessions. The questions will be anonymised and published with answers on the website where appropriate. Questions can be submitted by email to: philippines@voice.global. Answers will be updated on the website on a regular basis. Consultative meetings will be held as needed, with details of the time and venue posted on the website www.voice.global.

When will funding decisions be made?

Please refer to the schedule indicated in the table above. All funding decisions will be made within six weeks after receipt of application or after the deadline indicated in schedule.

What makes a successful application?

The Voice Philippines Country Team has developed specific focus areas based upon the country contextual analysis and the Community of Stakeholders event. These need to be considered when developing an application. Beyond this guidance, the following general factors are provided as a guide to inform potential applicants of whether or not their application is focused on issues that are encouraged and therefore likely to be considered:

- Activities support and compliment the Voice impact themes and target groups.
- Communication and engagement approaches contribute to awareness, influencing understanding, cooperation and collaboration.
- Demonstration of links and/or coordination with relevant organisations, communities and government.
- Promotion and participation of women at all levels in activity implementation.
- Demonstration that benefits created by the project will be properly or widely disbursed.
- Activities that demonstrate long-term benefits for constituents and/or marginalised and discriminated people.

⁵ The model application format can be downloaded from [http://www.voice.global/...](http://www.voice.global/)



- Demonstration of skill and experience in the community/civil society/sector and geographic area.
- Demonstration of project management understanding and approach to grant use.
- Promotion of inclusive and accountable transparent processes.
- Co-contributions proposed by organisation and/or Voice target groups i.e. labour, office, materials and funds.

Unsuccessful Factors:

- Application does not meet criteria.
- Application not in Voice format or key questions left unanswered.
- Activities with an unreasonable high proportion of administrative support costs and asset acquisition.
- Funding for freight
- In general, purchase of motor vehicles, land or buildings.
- Lack of competitive costing detail, and charges for application preparation – other than for Seed Funding.
- Funding of commercial services, investment or other commercial activities.
- Over emphasis on staff training.

Linking and Learning

The Linking and Learning component provides an exciting opportunity to link to other stakeholders and to learn together. Voice promotes and supports linking and learning throughout. Also within the grants. All grantees are encouraged to include linking and learning activities in their proposal and ways of working. Therefore, Voice invites you:

- To plan for involvement of the target group(s) and main stakeholders in all project phases and relevant decision making
- To develop a change agenda for the project in particular and if relevant, for your organisation in general
- To develop your own learning agenda or learning questions
- To join one of the Communities of Practice that will work on different learning questions
- Propose innovative approaches or solutions that can be tested and if successful, be scaled up
- To document all the learning and changes happening within your project
- To engage in gathering stories of change as part of the monitoring and evaluation of the project
- To engage actively with other grantees and the Voice team to overcome challenges and to learn from successes but even more, from 'failures' and challenges



4. How will your application be assessed?

Voice uses a 3-step assessment process. These are:

1. **Threshold criteria:** minimum standards that all applications must meet. If an application does not meet all of the threshold criteria, it will be rejected.
2. **Project check:** criteria relating to the quality of the project proposal.
3. **Organizational check:** criteria relating to the quality of the applicant organisation or the lead party of the consortium.

For the small grants (empowerment grants up to €25,000) a lighter / adapted version of these types of criteria will apply.

Step 1: Threshold Criteria

The threshold criteria are minimum standards that all applications for Voice grants must meet. The criteria are as follows:

- a. Applications can only be submitted by organisations which possess legal registration/accreditation and a bank account in the applicant's name.
- b. The project will need to address one or more of the impact themes:
 - improving access to (productive) resources (finance, land and water) and employment
 - improving access to social services, health and education in particular
 - fostering space for political participation:
- c. The project will benefit of one or more of the following target groups
 - People living with disabilities
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, intersex (LGBTI) people
 - Women facing exploitation, abuse, violence
 - Age discriminated vulnerable groups notably the young and elderly
 - Indigenous groups and ethnic minorities
- d. As a sudden opportunity or threat cannot be influenced by one organisation or entity exclusively, an application to address a sudden opportunity must include collective actions.



- e. The applicant or the lead party (if the application is made by a consortium) is a legally registered/accredited not-for-profit civil society or community-based organisation with an operational bank account in the applicant's name.
- f. The applicant (or a consortium member if the application is made by a consortium) must be based in the Philippines.
- g. The applicant or the lead party substantially works with the most marginalised and discriminated groups in society (particularly those of the Voice target groups) to build their capacity to lobby or advocate for their interests or to have their voices heard. For organisations with broader objectives it is also possible to demonstrate this on the grounds of the organisation's track record.
- h. The applicant (and all co-applicants, if the application is made in consortium) is an organisation which has core values similar to the objectives of Voice, being the equal treatment and equal rights of every human beings, particularly regardless of gender identity, race, colour of skin, nationality or ethnicity, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, social class and age.
- i. The applicant, lead applicant and/or co-applicant is not a (Consortium or Alliance) Partner of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Strategic Partnership within the policy framework of "Dialogue and Dissent".
- j. With exception of Empowerment Grants, the applicant must demonstrate that, as of 1 January 2017, grants awarded from Voice derive no more than 40% of the total annual income of the applicant organisation. The applicant can demonstrate this is plausible on the basis of income over the 2015-2016 period and/or awards and grants it has secured for future years. If the applicant is the lead party, this criterion applies to the whole consortium. Consequently, if one organisation derives more than 40% of its annual income from awards granted from Voice, this may be offset by another party in the consortium.
- k. A grant application must be for funding of one of the following grant modalities and must apply for an amount and duration corresponding accordingly:

Grant Modality	Minimum Amount	Maximum Amount	Maximum Length
Empowerment	€5,000	€25,000	24 months
Influence	€25,000	€200,000	36 months
Innovate & learn	€5,000	€200,000	24 months
Sudden Opportunity	€5,000	€200,000	12 months

In Philippine peso estimates:

Grant Modality	Minimum Amount	Maximum Amount	Maximum Length
Empowerment	₱265,000	₱1,300,000	24 months



Influencing grants

In addition to the general criteria, Influencing grants will be assessed with the following criteria:

1. *Target Group Representation*: the degree to which the project and organisation involves, represents and effectively amplifies voice and builds the influence of the target group(s).
2. *Advocacy and Lobby*: the degree to which the project will support target beneficiaries to influence stakeholders to implement new procedures and policies and create new and unexpected connections and partnerships.

Innovate and Learn grants

In addition to the general criteria, Innovate and Learn grants will be assessed with the following criteria:

1. *Target Group Representation*: the degree to which the project and organisation involves and represents the Voice target groups.
2. *Innovation and scalability*: The degree to which an idea is new, given the context, and lead to the empowerment and amplification of one or more Voice target group(s). Includes an analysis of the applicants' capacity to implement, scale up and sustain.

Sudden Opportunity grants

1. *Target Group Representation*: the degree to which the project and organisation involves and represents the Voice target groups.
2. *Meeting Opportunities*: the degree to which the project analyses and responds to a new opportunity to raise awareness, develop transformative leadership, build confidence and skills of one or more Voice target groups and/or amplify voice and build the influence of the target group(s)

Step 3: Organisational Check

For organisations to be awarded a grant within Voice, the organisational assessment needs to be satisfactory in terms of quality. The organisational check must be completed satisfactorily and its entirety. Deficiencies found through the organisational check will be communicated with the applicant to develop a capacity development plan that may be funded by the Voice grant. Organisations which are determined to be high risk as a result of the organisational check are ineligible for funding.

The organisational assessment will be a review of the following: Governance and Integrity, Financial Management and Procurement, Human Resources and Program and Project Management. The scope of organisational assessment is dependent upon the type of grant applied.



The assessment process is a moment to promote inclusion of linking and learning elements in the grant proposals. When needed, the Voice country team can organise a (brainstorm) session with several grantees to come up with areas of common interest and possible activities to bring people together around a common aim or theme. It is also an opportunity to promote the inclusion of creative actions in the proposals.

In addition to organisational assessment criteria of applicants, Empowerment grants will be assessed with the following criteria:

- ## Influencing Grants and Sudden Opportunity Grants

In addition to organisational assessment criteria of applicants of empowerment grants, applicants of influencing or sudden opportunity grants will be assessed with the following criteria:

1. *Governance and Integrity*
 - The applicant has a coherent and realistic strategic plan. (review of the quality of formulation of objectives, intended results and indicators; explanation of strategic choices)
 - The applicant is accountable to and communicates effectively with its primary constituents/beneficiaries. The applicant (management) encourages and supports internal learning and reflection processes.
2. *Procurement and Finance Management*
 - The quality of financial and administrative management is adequate to ensure financial accountability. (Budget, funding plan, financial management, financial report)



An *organisational capacity assessment* will be concluded with grantees, and plans to improve a grantees capacity can be incorporated within the final Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement will apply for the period of time required to complete the activities. A time plan and financial projection will be an integrated part of the Agreement. Capacity Development Agreements may be implemented and managed by the Voice Consortium at request of the grantee.

General Technical Assistance and Capacity Development in respect of project management, administration, and accounting, among others, will always form an integrated part of any agreement involving support from Voice.

How will the Grant be Monitored & Evaluated by Voice?

Voice management and staff will monitor the integrity and performance of all grants approved. Voice will conduct site visits, financial audits and compliance inspections on a periodic basis.

For all projects, recipients will be required to safe keep financial records and receipts for inspection as needed. All grantees will be subject to periodic and regular review and unannounced spot-checks by Voice. Annual audits will be required of all grants valued at more than €100,000. The costs of the audit need to be included in the budget proposal. Apart from this, a number of other grants will be subject to audit, the selection of which will be based upon recommendations of the in-country Voice team.

How will your organisation communicate with Voice?

The Voice country and coordination team wants you to succeed. If your organisation has any questions or concerns about the Grant Agreement or how to report, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to answer your questions and help you with fulfilling the requirements under the Grant Agreement. Your first contact will be outlined in the Grant Agreement. You are also welcome to contact us to talk about improving your organisations ability (operational, management and technical); the Voice team may have some suggestions on this.

If your organisation is not able to meet the requirements under the Grant, then you must contact Voice. The Voice team will try its best to work with you to come up with solutions to help your organisation move forward and learn from setbacks. In some cases, especially as a result of events that are not in your control, you can request a modification of the Grant. A Grant Modification Request is under development. As soon as you think that circumstances may require a change to your Grant, please speak to your Voice focal point to receive guidance before submitting the request.

How will your organisation report to Voice?

Your organisation will be asked to report to Voice about the implementation of your grant. The format of the report and the frequency of reporting will depend on type of grant and grant period and will be included in the grant agreement.

For empowerment grants with a life span of less than a year we will usually ask one narrative report only. To ensure learning from the process is not lost, grantees should reflect on the learning journey of the programme. Based on the organisation's change agenda and learning questions, grantees will be invited to participate in local learning events or national and global communities of practice. Grantees will be



contributing with their project experiences to a process of learning about transformational change based on practical experiences. We also suggest, a project based reflection. We recommend to conduct an evaluation with the organisation, key target group and stakeholders on the challenges faced and strategies developed to overcome these; on the engagement process of all stakeholders. It can be useful to write up your thoughts on the process as well as the outcomes and any thoughts you have regarding the socialisation of the knowledge/learning products and how they could be used more widely in Voice. The Voice Country Team will be able to support and provide guidance.

For grants with a life span of 12 months and above, light-touch reports should be submitted to the Voice Country Team on a 6-month or yearly basis. They should include the following elements:

- Highlights on the most significant changes and lessons learned
- Progress on outcomes and outputs
- Key lessons learnt (successes and challenges) to be used as input to the learning process or
- Key findings/learning from monitoring, learning or impact measurement methodology implemented (outcome harvesting, stories of change).

Financial reporting will also depend on the size and the life span of the grant and will therefore be included in the grant agreement. Financial reports need to be delivered in the template provided.

Your organisation will maintain a separate ledger for the Voice grant that includes all project expenses. Based on this ledger you will calculate the project expenses per budget line, register this in the appropriate column in the template and calculate in a separate column how much money is left for that budget line and percentage. You may shift funds from one budget line to another, but only to a maximum of 10% and you will always inform the Voice national team about such changes. If you required changes over 10% you will have to obtain approval of the Voice team beforehand.

Supporting documents, that prove that you made the expenditures, will need to be kept on file for a period of 10 years after the project ended for a possible audit. More details on which supporting documents you need to keep on file will be given to you by the Voice Country Team.

Forms

The appropriate forms such as application form, budget template as well as assessment template will vary with each Call for Proposal. The right forms will be made available with each Call for Proposal via www.voice.global



7. Fraud and Corruption

Fraud is described as “dishonestly obtaining a benefit by deception or other means”. The Voice has a “zero-tolerance” to any forms of fraudulent or corrupt activity. This means that Voice, supported through Oxfam Novib and Hivos policy will not condone any form of fraudulent or corrupt behaviour in its operations such as payment of bribes, facilitation payments or “hidden” commissions for any reason. Organisations receiving Voice funding support shall have mechanisms in place to manage fraud including prevention, detection, investigations and reporting.

If you suspect irregularity, please report to the responsible Country or Regional Director and/or the Voice Programme Manager globally who will immediately report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. Voice and the Ministry reserve the right to conduct investigations into cases of suspected fraud. All suspected cases of irregularity will be handled and investigated in a confidential, prompt and professional manner.

The Country Director/Regional Director will resolve the issue within two-weeks of receiving the grievance. If the grievance is not resolved in time or to the satisfaction of complainant, the Programme Manager will initiate an investigation of the grievance. In instances where the Programme Manager does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, it may be elevated to the Voice Steering Committee who has the authority as per the Dutch Staatscourant decision dated December 2, 2016 to make final decisions with respect to a grievance or complaint.

