

PLEASE NOTE:

This is the English translation of the Dutch publication in the Staatscourant number 64845 of November 28 2019. The translation has been reviewed thoroughly to assure compatibility with the Dutch text. In the unlikely circumstance a discrepancy with the Dutch text arises the latter text will prevail.

Order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of 20 November 2019, nr. Min-BuZa.2019.4583-13, in amendment of the order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of 8 September 2016, no. MinBuZa-2016.56930, laying down administrative rules and a grant ceiling for grants awarded under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006 (Voice Fund 2016-2024).

The Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation;

Having regard to Articles 6 and 7 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Decree; Having regard

to Article 5.1 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006; Decides:

ARTICLE I

The order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of 8 September 2016, no. MinBuZa-2016.56930, laying down administrative rules and a grant ceiling for grants awarded under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006 (Voice Fund 2016-2020)¹ is hereby amended as follows:

A

In Article 1, “Voice 2016-2020” is replaced by “Voice 2016-2024”.

B

Article 2 is amended as follows:

1. Paragraph 1 will read as follows:

1. A ceiling of € 60.2 million applies to grants as part of Voice Fund 2016-2024 awarded from the date of entry of force of this Decision to 30 September, 2024. The annual ceiling is as follows, whereby it is understood that if the ceiling in any year is not allocated, the remaining funds are available for applications submitted in the following year:

- a) 2016: € 1.0 million;
- b) 2017: € 12.7 million;
- c) 2018: € 13.425 million;
- d) 2019: € 5.375 million;
- e) 2020: € 12 million;
- f) 2021: € 10 million;
- g) 2022: € 5 million;
- h) 2023: € 0.7 million;

¹ Stcrt. 2016, no. 48323; amended by Order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of November 1, 2016, no. MinBuZa-2016.717262, in amendment of the order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of 8 September 2016, no. MinBuZa-2016.56930, laying down administrative rules and a grant ceiling for grants awarded under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006 (Amendment Voice Fund 2016–2020), Stcrt. 2016, no. 59431; and by Order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of January 26, 2018, no. MinBuZa-2018.190309, in amendment of the order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of 8 September 2016, no. MinBuZa-2016.56930, laying down administrative rules and a grant ceiling for grants awarded under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006 (Second amendment Voice Fund 2016–2020), Stcrt. 2018, no. 5703.

i) 2024: € 0.

In paragraph 2, “€ 8.75 million” is replaced by “€ 15.05 million” and “€ 26.25 million” is replaced by “€ 45.15 million”.

3. Paragraph 3 will read as follows:

3. The allocation of the resources of the ceiling, as referred to in paragraph 1, among the different grant modalities is as follows:

- a. Empowerment grants: € 11.75 million;
- b. Influencing grants: € 22.6 million;
- c. Innovate & Learn grants: € 18.85 million;
- d. Sudden opportunity grants: € 7 million.

4. In paragraph 4, “grant ceiling” is replaced by “the resources as referred to in paragraph 3(b) and (e)”.

C

Article 3 is amended as follows: 1.

1. In paragraph 1, “30 June 2020, 23.59 hrs Dutch time” is replaced by “Friday 29 December 2023, 23.59 hrs Dutch time”.

2. In paragraph 2, “Article 2, paragraph 3 (b)” is replaced by “Article 2, paragraph 3 (b) and (e)”.

D

In Article 4, “Voice 2016-2020” is replaced by “Voice 2016-2024”.

E

In Article 5, “1 January 2021” is replaced by “1 January 2025”.

F

The annex to the order is replaced by the administrative rules added as annex to this order.

ARTICLE II

This order enters into force on the day after the date of the Government Gazette in which it is published.

This order will be published in the Government Gazette.

On behalf of the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

K. van der Heijden

Director-General for International Cooperation

Annex

1. Introduction and background

The Voice programme forms part of the policy frameworks Dialogue and Dissent and Power of Voices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The overarching goal of these policy frameworks is to strengthen the capacity for lobby and advocacy of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in low- and lower-middle-income countries. This enables these organisations, in collaboration with their national and international partners and via their networks, to play their lobby and advocacy role at local, national and international level and thereby contribute to sustainable, inclusive development for all and fight against poverty and inequality. Voice is aimed specifically at CSOs and representatives of the most marginalised and discriminated groups, which are often also the hardest to reach.

Empowerment and innovative approaches to strengthening lobby and advocacy activities as well as creating more opportunities for organisations to have their voice heard are therefore essential to Voice. A “linking-and-learning” approach encourages those taking part to share ideas and experiences and provides a forum for mutual learning for the most marginalised and discriminated groups.

The programme has a term of eight years, the last three of which are an extension of the initial five years, based on a positive mid-term evaluation. A number of limited shifts have been introduced for the last three years, which are in line with the programme’s initially defined goals and method and the recommendations of the mid-term review. These shifts are based on the lessons learnt in the period from 2016 to 2019.

A total of € 86 million is available for programme management, including grants and the costs of linking and learning. As regards the grants issued under the Voice programme, € 35 million was available in the period from 2016 to 2020, and € 25.2 million will be available in the period from 2021 to 2024.

Voice started as one of the components of the Dialogue and Dissent policy framework. The other three components are the Strategic Partnerships Lobby & Advocacy, the Accountability Fund and the Leading from the South programme. The Strategic Partnerships are collaborations between 25 NGOs or alliances of NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the goal of capacity strengthening for lobby and advocacy of CSOs in low- and lower-middle-income countries. The Strategic Partnerships started on 1 January 2016. The Accountability Fund is facilitated via Dutch embassies in direct cooperation with local CSOs and has the same goal as the Strategic Partnerships, but on a smaller scale. Leading from the South strengthens local, national and regional women's rights organisations, movements and networks via four regional women's funds. These funds support the government's commitment to more direct support to and empowerment of local women's rights organisations.

In the last three years of Voice Fund 2016-2024, Voice will form part of the Strengthening Civil Society policy framework. The other three components of the Dialogue and Dissent policy framework will also be continued under that policy framework.

Voice focuses specifically on inclusivity and is in line with the inclusive development plans of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for foreign trade and development cooperation. This vision was set out by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation in a letter to the House of Representatives (28 September 2015, ref. 33625-182).

The minister has decided that Voice will be managed and facilitated by a fund manager. On the basis of a tendering procedure, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to assign the fund management of

Voice to the Oxfam Novib and Hivos consortium. The consortium has the mandate to manage Voice Fund 2016-2024 on behalf of the minister.

CSOs play a crucial part in development processes. Empowered citizens can have more influence on decision-making at different levels through lobby and advocacy. CSOs operate at the interface of state, citizens and market. Owing to their independent position and their roots in society, they link and represent the interests of a wide range of groups. Many local CSOs in low- and lower-middle-income countries have become stronger in recent years, but the pressure under which they have to do their work has also increased because of a shrinking and shifting enabling environment.

Voice supports three different types of CSOs:

1. Umbrella organisations and thematic networks: national and international partnerships, regional networks, diaspora organisations, organisations with coordinating tasks and alliances of organisations that combine their knowledge, ideas and strengths and work together to pursue a common goal.
2. Formal organisations: officially registered organisations with rules and a constitution that generally serve the local community directly or operate at regional, national or international level, whether or not in cooperation with small, local organisations.
3. Informal organisations (small-scale organisations rooted in the local community): informal and ad hoc organisations working in the immediate context, with a limited thematic or geographical dimension.

Capacity strengthening normally consists of activities strengthening the expertise and general and financial management of CSOs, as well as the development of the core competencies needed to remain relevant and achieve results in a changing context. Capacity strengthening for lobby and advocacy aims at empowerment and the development of relevant competencies. A variety of instruments and strategies can be used to put or keep issues on political and corporate agendas, with a view to tackling the causes of structural poverty and injustice and bringing about sustainable policy change. As groups pursue different goals, lobby and advocacy can be linked to different themes.

Effective lobby and advocacy is based on research, analyses, lessons learned (i.e. evidence) and collective experiences. Which instruments or combinations of instruments are deployed – advice, advocacy, lobbying or activism – depends on the country-specific context, the current phase of the developments in the policy processes, the balance of power and the parties involved.

The most marginalised and discriminated groups are those that have little or no opportunity to have their voices and interests heard or stand up for their interests. Voice aims to create and improve these opportunities. In this context, a group is defined as a number of individuals that have a common goal or interest and come together in a formal or informal setting to organise themselves (formally or informally) and stand up for their rights and interests. Where specific groups have not yet been organised, Voice approaches organisations representing their interests, making sure the members of those groups are involved in the process. Voice focuses on those groups that are neglected and ignored by society and the political system and are thus sometimes invisible and politically vulnerable, such as people with a disability, women facing exploitation, abuse or mutilation, indigenous peoples, LGBTI, farmers who do not own any land and vulnerable people who are discriminated against because of their age.

Marginalisation is linked to social, cultural, economic and political status and exclusion. It can be defined as an acute and persistent form of disadvantaging, rooted in underlying social inequalities. Marginalisation often occurs as a result of a combination of different forms of discrimination based on, for example, competencies and skills, age, ethnicity, economic status, gender, geography, physical and mental health, language, marital status, race, religion, sexual orientation and social status. Marginalised groups often unintentionally find themselves outside the framework of productivity, social activity, reproduction, political power and cultural influence. It is impossible for them to live a fulfilling social life at an individual, interpersonal and societal level. People who are marginalised have relatively little control over their life and the resources available to them; they may become stigmatised and are often confronted by a negative attitude from the people around them. Their opportunities to contribute to society are limited and they often have little self-confidence and self-esteem.

Discrimination can be defined as follows: any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on gender, race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social class, age (depending on the conventions with regard to retirement), marital status or family responsibilities, or as a result of any conditions or requirements that are not consistent with the principles of fairness and natural justice, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.²

Legitimacy should be the guiding principle in lobby and advocacy by and for the most marginalised and discriminated groups. The motto “Nothing about us, without us” is one of the key principles of the Sustainable Development Goals and is essential for the implementation of Voice. CSOs and representatives of marginalised and discriminated groups must reflect this context and must genuinely be the right parties to represent these groups. As a result of the lobbying activities, the groups whose interests are being promoted must feel a sense of ownership of the changes, and people must feel encouraged to participate and play a significant role in the development and implementation of new laws and policy. In that way, they will experience the changes in their environment for themselves and they will recognise that they have rights which they can claim. They are encouraged to challenge the traditional roles of government and society, and they become more aware of their rights and social responsibilities.

Empowerment is a process that gives people control of their own life and enables them to take their own decisions. In other words: it gives them an opportunity to make strategic choices about matters that have an impact on their life. It is important to recognise that under specific circumstances matters such as gender, caste, ethnicity, affluence, family and age can have a major influence on the degree to which individuals are in control. Which empowerment strategy is most likely to succeed is therefore highly dependent on the context.

The most marginalised and discriminated groups play an important role in identifying barriers that hamper inclusion and lobbying for their removal. People who are excluded often lack the self-esteem and self-confidence to claim their rights. Marginalised and discriminated groups become more empowered when they are convinced, they have the right to speak out in public and be heard. With support they can organise themselves, and from that position they can speak out and claim their right to inclusivity. As a result, these groups will have more influence on decisions affecting them directly. Voice focuses on both the individual and the collective process of empowerment. The individual process is about building self-esteem, a condition for the collective process. The collective process is

² United Nations. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 1.

about people's ability to exercise their right to freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly, in order to be heard and influence the decision-making process.

2. Policy principles of Voice

2.1. Aim and policy themes

In recent years, a considerable number of low- and lower- middle-income countries have experienced substantial economic growth, but this has not resulted in the same level of development for all. Often the gap between rich and poor has widened. Reducing inequality – not only in economic terms but also in social, political, religious and ethnic terms and in the areas of gender and sexual orientation – and making sure no one is left behind (“Leave no one behind” and “Prioritise those furthest behind”) are not only key objectives of the foreign trade and development cooperation policies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also form part of the UN plans for sustainable development (the Sustainable Development Goals).

Different actors play a part in reducing inequality and including people in society who have so far been marginalised. First of all, it is the task of national governments to ensure that inclusion of marginalised and discriminated groups is anchored in national policy. The development and implementation of inclusive policy (in low- and low-and-middle-income countries) requires more awareness, sustainable investments and a willingness to change from the decision-makers in those countries.

Another important actor is society itself. CSOs play a multitude of different roles in inclusive and sustainable developments, such as humanitarian assistance, service delivery, lobby and advocacy and innovation. The role of CSOs in terms of inclusivity is particularly pertinent. Some CSOs have proved to be exceptionally effective in reaching or representing poor and socially excluded people by mobilising community efforts, speaking up for human rights (including gender equality), lobbying decision-makers within national governments and helping to empower their environment. Addressing inequalities that hamper inclusive sustainable developments requires the creation of a safe and fruitful climate and environment - an enabling environment - in which civil society can function optimally and is able to reach the most marginalised groups. An enabling environment refers to the sociocultural, political, economic, financial and legal conditions that must be met in order that CSOs can do their work properly. It is essential that society recognises the importance of pluralism and the role of CSOs as advocates and watchdogs of the democratic process. This distinct role must be enshrined in a legal framework, implying that governments also recognise and respect the freedom of speech, association and assembly.

Voice's aim fits in with one of the five strategies recognised globally as an important condition for inclusive development: putting an end to discrimination and marginalisation. No one should be left behind. Inequality and marginalisation are closely intertwined. Marginalisation and barriers that prevent participation in society can result in situations where the potential of marginalised and discriminated people are not used to the full. These groups are excluded from political positions and their voices are neither heard nor respected. Exclusion and marginalisation undermine social cohesion and increase the risk of conflicts, extremism and violence, for example when certain groups are not engaged in policy-making and decisions about issues that concern them.

Inclusion of the most marginalised and discriminated groups has been part of development cooperation policy for many years, but it has not been sufficiently successful to date. Innovative measures and instruments are required, which provide ample scope for experimentation, innovation and learning from any mistakes made. Voice offers that scope by means of the linking-and-learning process, and also through the different components of the grant facility, such as the monitoring and

evaluation system, the selection procedure and the approach for capacity strengthening.

Reaching and empowering the most marginalised and discriminated groups requires innovative, progressive and unproven methods and instruments. What is innovative depends on the context; this may involve, for example, cooperating with new actors or using new technologies or scientific findings. Research institutes can also play a role in supporting and facilitating an innovative learning process.

Voice focuses on five groups, selected on the basis of research and country analysis (see the table below). The key selection criteria were:

- Groups most affected by poverty and making hardly any progress in terms of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Groups most affected by social, economic, spatial and political exclusion;
- Groups that are currently often being ignored by or are not reached through development cooperation;
- Groups and their representatives at risk of oppression or violence if they stand up for their rights.

The table below shows which groups have been selected and for what reasons.

Group	Key considerations (see note 2)
People with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The World Bank estimates that 20% of the poorest people have a physical or mental disability. • In developing countries, 90% of children with a disability do not go to school (UNESCO). • Women and children with a disability are particularly vulnerable to abuse (context analysis). • In developing countries, 80-90% of adults with a disability are unemployed (UN). • Increased focus on the rights of people with a disability in developing countries (e.g. SDGs), in accordance with the CRPD Treaty and (possibly) ratification in Voice countries; there is now a need for effective strategies.
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexual people (LGBTI).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hundreds killed and thousands injured in targeted attacks since 2011 (UNHCR). • Consensual contacts between adults are criminalised in 70 countries (context analysis). • In most African countries, organisations for LGBTI people are illegal. • Rejection by the family leads to homelessness and harmful “therapies”.
Women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-thirds of women in developing countries work informally or unpaid from their home (UNDP). • Unpaid work and few assets make women vulnerable to extreme poverty (USAID). • 35% of all women have experienced physical/sexual violence (WHO).
Vulnerable groups discriminated because of their age, notably young and older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many older and young people in developing countries (20% of the African population consists of young people). • 100 million older people live on less than \$ 1 a day, and 80% of older people in developing countries have no regular income (Helpage). • 45% of all young people (515 million people) live on less than \$ 2 a day (UN). • This group is underrepresented in political parties and CSOs (context analyses).
Indigenous groups and ethnic minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.5% of the global population and 10% of all poor people in the world belong to this group (World Bank). • Score worse than average on: child mortality (<5), adult literacy, school attendance, finishing school, gender equality, child nutrition (World Bank). • Income level often badly affected by illegal land expropriation (context analysis).

Note 2. The most important sources that have been used: World Bank, World Report on Disability, 2011 and World Development Indicators, 2015; UN Enable, 2015, UNESCO EFA Flagship Initiative; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Report on discrimination and violence against LGBT, 2015, World Health Organisation; the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women and country context analysis of the 10 countries of the Voice consortium. These groups are also most at risk of being restricted in their freedom to organise themselves and speak out, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association.³

Inequality: gender and youth

Women and young people often face additional disadvantages, for example:

- Traditional (social, cultural, religious) beliefs limit the freedom of choice and educational opportunities;
- Limited access to already scarce productive resources;
- Less representation in positions where decisions are made;
- Exposure to gender-based violence and extreme exploitation.

Women and young people are targeted by development actors, but often they have little say about the substance and quality of interventions. As a result, their huge potential to make changes is ignored; young people are often much more open to change, are less stuck in traditions and are more energetic, persistent and creative in pursuing development. Voice will focus on three specific themes:

- **Improved access to (productive) resources (finance, land and water) and employment:** A barrier to economic inclusion for women, young people and indigenous groups is that they are often exploited and vulnerable; people with a disability often find it hard to find work.
- **Improved access to social services, in particular healthcare and education⁴:** Marginalised and discriminated groups are often unable to access good services because of language barriers (in the case of ethnic minorities), distance (rural communities) or exclusion. This particularly affects young people and women, who often lack the information and tools to demand better services.
- **Scope for political participation:** Civil society is under pressure, and it is often particularly difficult for marginalised and discriminated groups to participate in public debate, for example due to lack of information or organisation. The situation is even more difficult for indigenous groups and LGBTI people.

The themes coincide with the economic, social and spatial dimensions of marginalisation; they offer grantees scope for their own focus in the specific context of their country.

Grants can also be used to break out of isolation and build self-acceptance and self-confidence. Voice focuses on ten countries in three regions: West Africa (Nigeria, Niger and Mali), East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines and Indonesia).

³ UN Human Rights Council Report 2014.

⁴ Including: budget monitoring, transparent contracts, monitoring of services by citizens, open data and lobby and advocacy.

2.2. Grant modalities

The grant scheme is designed to support informal groups as well as formal organisations and networks, but the applicant must be a legal entity. Voice distinguishes the following grant modalities:

- **Empowerment grant:** Targeting (informal) groups or organisations to raise awareness, develop leadership, build self-confidence and strengthen skills (in the period from 2021 to 2024: build self-confidence and strengthen existing skills) and tackle the stigmatisation of marginalised and discriminated groups. In the period from 2016 to 2020, smaller grants with an average timeframe of one to two years are available, for example, for informal groups partnering with formal organisations. Regional empowerment activities that enable neighbouring countries to participate in a joint learning trajectory can also qualify for these grants. Empowerment grants in this period vary from €5,000 to €25,000 at national level and from € 5,000 to € 75,000 at regional level.
In the last three years of Voice Fund 2016-2024, i.e. 2021 to 2024, grants with a timeframe of one to three years will be available in this modality. In this period, grants will vary from € 5,000 to € 25,000 at national level and from € 5,000 to € 75,000 at regional level. In the last three years of Voice Fund 2016-2024, this modality will also include the **empowerment graduation / empowerment accelerator grant:** targeting formal organisations, informal groups and individuals who received an empowerment grant between 2016 and 2020 and need further support in their empowerment process but are not yet ready for a grant from one of the other modalities. This grant aims to further strengthen the empowerment process at individual and organisational level by means of: raising awareness, developing leadership, building confidence, further strengthening existing skills and tackling the stigmatisation of marginalised and discriminated groups. Grants are of a minimum of € 5,000 and a maximum of € 50,000, with a timeframe of one to three years. A pilot project with this grant modality will start in 2020.
- **Influencing grant:** Targeting organisations and networks to help them strengthen their lobby and advocacy capacities and amplify the voices of marginalised and discriminated groups; in the period from 2021 to 2024: to help them strengthen their lobby and advocacy capacities and amplify the voices of marginalised and discriminated groups on the basis of innovative and inclusive approaches. Influencing grants in selected specific countries vary from € 25,000 to € 200,000; influencing grants with a more international focus can be up to € 500,000.
Timeframe: 12 to 36 months. In the last three years of Voice Fund 2016-2024, i.e. 2021 to 2024, grants with a timeframe of 18 to 36 months will be available in this modality. The minimum and maximum amounts of the grants will remain the same.
- **Innovate and learn grants:** Targeting groups and organisations wishing to test and try new approaches (in the period from 2021 to 2024: innovative approaches). These grants vary from € 5,000 to € 200,000, with a timeframe of 12 to 24 months. In the last three years of Voice Fund 2016-2024, i.e. 2021 to 2024, grants with a timeframe of one to three years will be available in this modality. In this period, grants vary from € 5,000 to € 250,000.
- **Sudden opportunity grants:** Creating flexibility to respond to unforeseen opportunities to influence policy or tackle a reduction in the scope of civil society in terms of one or more Voice themes and for the benefit of one or more Voice target groups. These grants vary from € 5,000 to € 200,000, with a timeframe of 6 to 12 months. No changes will occur with regard to this grant in the last three years of Voice Fund 2016-2024.

The grant modalities, eligibility and the relevant amounts and timeframes for applications

concerning the ceilings for the years from 2016 to 2020 are summarised in Appendix A, and the details for applications financed by the ceilings for the years from 2021 to 2014 are summarised in Appendix B.

Each grant modality has its own procedure for submitting and assessing applications and its own reporting obligation. Stricter conditions and reporting obligations apply to grants above € 25,000 in order to mitigate the risk and safeguard accountability, in line with the administrative rules regarding grants as outlined in the *Aanwijzingen voor subsidieverstrekking (Uniform SubsidieKader)* [Instructions for Grant Provision (Uniform Grant Framework)] and the *RUS (raamwerk voor uitvoering van subsidies)* [Framework for Grant Implementation].⁵

Voice differentiates itself from other grant programmes by its accessible application and reporting process, which is user-friendly and innovative and has been adapted to the grantees, the target groups and the specific grant modality.

2.3. Grant provision in Voice

Applications can only be submitted by organisations with a bank account in the applicant's name. In addition, the applicant must be an officially registered, recognised, non-profit CSO or a small-scale organisation with strong roots in the community (i.e. a community-based organisation). Organisations can submit a grant application independently or as part of a consortium, which is a cooperative of two or more CSOs which implement a joint, integrated project to which all parties contribute. They draw up a cooperation agreement for this purpose. The consortium's representative (the "lead party", which must be a legal entity) submits the grant application on behalf of the consortium. If the application is accepted, the lead party will be responsible for implementing the consortium's project. Applicants can also implement their project or part of their project in partnership with other non-profit organisations or private companies, but the relevant organisations or companies must be identified in the grant application.

Voice grants are intended first of all for organisations in: Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, Tanzania and Uganda. The emphasis is on national calls for proposals, but funds are also available (up to 25% of the total grant budget) for international and regional proposals.

CSOs with which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has entered into a strategic partnership under the policy framework "Dialogue and Dissent" or "Power of Voices", or which form part of an alliance - either as lead organisation or as co-applicant - with which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has entered into such a partnership, do not qualify for a Voice grant as applicant, lead party or co-applicant. Organisations that already receive a contribution from such a CSO are not excluded from funding from Voice, provided that the Voice grant application concerns activities that are different from those for which such a contribution has already been received.

3. Assessment procedure

3.1. Assessment criteria

Organisations applying for a grant under Voice must meet certain criteria in order to qualify for a grant. There are three categories of criteria:

⁵ Order of the Prime Minister, Minister of General Affairs, 15 December 2009, no. 3086451, concerning the adoption of Instructions for Grant Provision, Stcrt. 2009, no. 20306.

1. Threshold criteria: the minimum criteria all applications must meet. Applications that do not meet the threshold criteria are rejected (threshold or eligibility check).
2. Criteria relating to the quality of the project proposal (project check).
3. Criteria relating to the quality of the applicant organisation or the lead party of a consortium (organisation check).

Proposals and applicants that demonstrate insufficient quality do not qualify for a grant. The criteria are explained in more detail in Chapter 4. The requirements for smaller grants (up to € 25,000) are not quite as strict.

3.2. Assessment

The provisions of the General Administrative Law Act, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Grants) Decree and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006 are fully applicable to the assessment of applications and the grants that are ultimately awarded. Applications will be assessed with due regard to the above legislation and in accordance with the standards laid down in these administrative rules.

The assessment of grant applications for activities as referred to in Article 2, paragraph 3 (b) and the award and allocation of the available funds will take place by means of a call for proposals: the quality of all applications will be assessed according to the same criteria.

Only applications that meet the threshold criteria (see 3.1) can qualify for a grant. Whether or not a grant application is accepted depends on the quality of the project proposal in the relevant application. The fund manager will take a decision about the applications within six weeks of the deadline for submitting applications under the call for proposals.

The assessment of grant applications for activities as referred to in Article 2, paragraph 3 (a), (c) and (d), takes place on a rolling basis for the small empowerment and sudden opportunity grants, while there are strict deadlines for the other grants. The applications are assessed according to the criteria set out in these administrative rules, including the threshold criteria. Only applications that meet the criteria can be considered for a grant, provided that the available resources have not yet been exhausted as a result of previously submitted and accepted applications. The fund manager will take a decision on the application within 13 weeks of receipt of the complete application.

The assessment of applications for Voice grants takes place in stages, although stages 2 and 3 can be completed in quick succession. The first stage consists of a threshold criteria check. During the second stage, the project proposals are assessed, provided that they meet the threshold criteria. Parties that have submitted applications that have successfully passed the project check will undergo an organisational check in the third stage.

3.2.1. Step 1: threshold or eligibility criteria

The threshold criteria are the basic requirements that all applications for Voice grants must meet. Applications that do not meet the threshold criteria and are not awarded any points are rejected; the relevant applicants receive a letter of rejection and are not considered any further.

3.2.2. Step 2: project proposals

Stage 2 involves screening the quality of the project proposal, the so-called project check. If the quality of the project is judged to be insufficient, the application will not be accepted and the applicant will receive a letter of rejection.

3.2.3. Step 3: the organisation

Stage 3 consists of an organisation check, which is an assessment of the quality and efficiency (prior history and track record, planning, monitoring and evaluation and financial and administrative management) of the applicant organisation. The assessment of the organisation must be fully completed.

Organisations which are found to be high risk do not qualify for funding. These organisations and organisations that are found to be of insufficient quality receive a letter of rejection.

3.2.4. Allocation of available resources

The resources available for empowerment grants and innovate and learn grants will be allocated in chronological order on the basis of the date and time applications are received, provided there is a current call for proposals. The resources available for sudden opportunity grants will be allocated in chronological order on the basis of the date and time applications are received; applications can be submitted from the date these administrative rules enter into force. Applications of insufficient quality do not qualify for a grant.

The resources available for Influencing grants and innovate and learn grants will be allocated on the basis of annual calls for proposals. Proposals that demonstrate sufficient quality during the project check and the organisation check are selected on the basis of the quality of the project proposal.

If insufficient resources are available to accept all applications of satisfactory quality, the applications will be ranked according to the results of the project check. The size of the grant they receive will depend on the extent to which they meet the criteria, within the framework of a balanced distribution as referred to in Article 8, paragraph 3 (d) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Grants) Decree.

If the quality of the applications for a grant modality, measured on the basis of the criteria in these administrative rules, is insufficient to allow the available resources for that modality to be exhausted, the remaining resources will be allocated proportionately among the ceilings for the other modalities. Any resources left over from the available resources for a specific year will be added to the resources available for the following year.

3.3. Application procedure

Applications for Voice grants must be submitted using the standard application form made available by the Fund Manager.⁶ Information about the grant application procedure is published on www.voice.global.

4. Assessment of applications

4.1. Threshold or eligibility criteria

Applications that do not meet all the threshold criteria described below will be rejected. The criteria are listed below and explained in more detail where necessary.

- a. The grant proposal concerns one of the following *themes*:
 - . improved access to (productive) resources (finance, land and water) and employment;
 - . improved access to social services, in particular healthcare and education;

⁶ The standard application form can be downloaded from <http://www.voice.global>

- scope for participation in the political process or civic engagement.

and mentions one of the following *target groups*, in line with the programme proposal from Voice:

- people with disabilities;
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexual people (LGBTI);
- women facing exploitation, abuse or violence;
- vulnerable groups discriminated because of their age, notably young and older people;
- indigenous groups and ethnic minorities;

in one or more of the Voice *focus countries*: Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines and Indonesia.

- b. As a sudden opportunity or challenge cannot be handled by a single organisation or group, an application to that effect must concern joint activities of cooperating actors.
- c. As regards international calls for proposals: The applicant (or lead organisation if the application is made by a consortium) must be based in Africa or Asia and be active in one or more one or more of the Voice focus countries.
- d. As regards national calls for proposals: The applicant (or lead organisation if the application is made by a consortium) must be based and be active in the Voice focus country where the application or call for proposals has been issued.
- e. The applicant (or lead party if the application is made by a consortium) is an officially registered, non-profit CSO or a social enterprise⁷ whose profits, according to its articles of association, are reinvested in the community, or a small-scale organisation with strong roots in the community (i.e. a community-based organisation) and a current account in the applicant's name.
- f. The applicant or lead party cooperates intensively with the most marginalised and discriminated groups (particularly with one or more of the Voice target groups) to enhance their influencing capacity and enable them to stand up for their interests and have their voices heard. Organisations with broader objectives can also demonstrate this on the basis of their track record and their internal policy agenda.
- g. The applicant (and the lead party and co-applicants if the application is made on behalf of a consortium) is an organisation which has core values similar to the objectives of Voice, i.e. the equal treatment and equal rights of all people, regardless of gender identity, race, colour, nationality or ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social class and age in particular.
- h. The applicant, lead party or co-applicant is not a CSO with which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has entered into a strategic partnership under the policy framework "Dialogue and Dissent" or its successor "Power of Voices", and it does not form part of an alliance - either as lead organisation or as co-applicant - with which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has entered into such a partnership.
- i. With the exception of empowerment grants and innovate and learn grants, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that (as of 1 January 2018) Voice grants account for no more than of 50% of the organisation's total annual income. The applicant can demonstrate this on the basis of the income in the preceding year. If the applicant is the lead party of a consortium, this rule applies to the consortium as a whole. In other words: if one of the participants in the consortium depends for more than 50% on Voice grants, this can be compensated for by another participant.
- j. A grant application is submitted for one of the following grant modalities and for the corresponding amount and duration.

⁷ Social enterprises seek innovative solutions for social challenges. Their social mission is their key priority. Like ordinary businesses, social enterprises supply products or services. But earning money is not their main objective; money provides a way in which they can make the world a slightly better place. Source: <https://www.social-enterprise.nl/over-sociaal-ondernemen>. As in most of the Voice focus countries this form of enterprise does not (yet) exist as a separate business category or legal entity, Voice will assess this on the basis of the enterprise's articles of association, which must specify its social impact and what is done with the profits (which must be reinvested to the project or the community).

Grant modality	Minimum amount	Maximum amount	Minimum/maximum length
Empowerment	€ 5,000	€ 25,000 (one country) € 75,000 (regional) For applications financed by the annual ceilings for 2021 to 2023: € 75,000 (regional); € 50,000 (empowerment graduate)	12-24 months For applications financed by the annual ceilings for 2021 to 2023: 12-36 months
Influencing	€ 25,000	€ 200,000 (one-country project); € 500,000 (international project)	12-36 months For applications financed by the annual ceilings for 2021 to 2023: 18-36 months
Innovate and learn	€ 5,000	€ 200,000 For applications financed by the annual ceilings for 2021 to 2023: € 250,000	12-24 months For applications financed by the annual ceilings for 2021 to 2023: 12-36 months.
Sudden opportunities	€ 5,000	€ 200,000	6-12 months

- l. Notwithstanding the above, all activities for all grants must be completed before 31 March 2024. On the basis of this guideline, the grant timeframe of each grant will be laid down in the grant decisions.
- m. The activities for which a grant has been requested cannot start before 1 September 2016.
- n. The activities for which a grant has been requested do not concern the funding of commercial services, investments or other commercial activities.

4.2. Project assessment

If the quality of the project is insufficient, the grant application will not be taken into consideration. The project check involves a number of general criteria and a number of specific criteria for each grant modality:

4.2.1. General criteria

1. *Context analyses*: The extent to which the proposal - in particular the problem and the objectives - reflects the findings of the context analysis.
2. *Project success analysis*
 - a. Details of envisaged outcomes, outputs, activities and resources: the extent to which the project provides a description of envisaged outcomes, outputs, activities and resources, and it is clear how the envisaged results relate to the resources required to achieve those results.
 - b. Risks, monitoring and corrective measures: the extent to which sound risk management is in place, consisting of a thorough risk analysis and a plan for monitoring and corrective measures.
3. *Sensible deployment of resources*: the extent to which the project will efficiently deploy the resources to organise activities and achieve results.

4.2.2. Empowerment grants

In addition to the general criteria, applications for empowerment grants will be assessed on the basis of the following criterion:

1. *Target group representation*: the degree to which the project and the organisation involve and represent the beneficiaries, effectively raises awareness, develop leadership and build confidence and skills.

4.2.3. Influencing grants

In addition to the general criteria, applications for influencing grants will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. *Target group representation*: the degree to which the project and the organisation involve and represent the Voice target groups and effectively amplify their voice and increase the influence of the target group(s).
2. *Advocacy and lobby*: the degree to which the project will support Voice target groups in persuading stakeholders to implement new procedures and policy and enter into new relationships and partnerships.

4.2.4. Innovate and learn grants

In addition to the general criteria, applications for innovate and learn grants will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. *Target group representation*: the degree to which the project and the organisation involve and represent the Voice target groups.
2. *Innovation and scalability*: the degree to which an idea is new in a specific context and will contribute to one or more Voice target groups being empowered and being heard. This also includes an analysis of the applicant's capacity to implement, upscale and sustain a plan.

4.2.5. Sudden opportunity grants

1. *Target group representation*: the degree to which the project and the organisation involve and represent the Voice beneficiaries.
2. *Taking advantages of opportunities*: the degree to which the project analyses and takes advantage of new opportunities for one or more Voice target groups, with the aim to increase awareness, develop leadership and build the confidence and skills of the target group(s).

4.3. Organisation assessment

In order to qualify for a grant, the organisational quality of the applicant or lead party must be of a satisfactory standard. The assessment of the organisation must be fully completed. Any shortcomings found will be communicated to the applicant, so that a capacity development plan can be developed for a possible Voice grant. Organisations which are found to be high risk do not qualify for funding. The assessment will focus on the following subjects: governance and integrity, financial management, human resources and programme and project management.

Empowerment grants

Applicants for empowerment grants will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. *Good governance and integrity*
 - The applicant has a clear purpose and implements decisions.
 - The degree to which the leadership is respected by the target group(s).

2. Financial management

The quality of the financial and administrative management is adequate to safeguard payments and procurement.

Influencing grants (of a minimum of € 25,000 and a maximum of € 200,000 for a project in one country), and sudden opportunity grants (of a minimum of € 5,000 and a maximum of € 200,000 for a project in one country)

In addition to the criteria that apply to empowerment grant applicants, the following extra criteria apply to influencing grant applicants (in one country) and sudden opportunity grant applicants (in one country):

1. Good governance and integrity

- The applicant has a realistic and coherent strategic plan. (The assessment focuses on: the formulation of objectives, expected results and indicators and the explanation of strategic choices.)
- The applicant is accountable to and communicates effectively with the target group(s) and beneficiaries. The applicant (the management) encourages and supports internal learning and reflection processes.

2. Procurement and financial management

- The quality of the financial and administrative management is adequate to ensure financial accountability. (Presence of a budget, a funding plan, financial management and an annual financial report.)

3. Programme and project management

- The applicant has a sound monitoring and evaluation process and uses this for accountability and learning purposes. (Documents and collects data, involves stakeholders and analyses results.)

4. Human Resources

- The number, composition and expertise of staff are adequate in view of the applicant's objectives and programmes.

Innovate and learn grants (of a minimum of € 5,000 and a maximum of € 200,000 for one-country and international projects), influencing grants (of more than €200,000 and of maximum of €500,000 for an international project) and sudden opportunity grants (of a minimum of € 5,000 and a maximum of € 200,000, for international projects).

In addition to the criteria that apply to empowerment grant applicants, the following extra criteria apply to applicants for innovate and learn grants at national or international level, for influencing grants at international level and for sudden opportunity grants at international level:

1. Good governance and integrity

- The applicant, as an organisation, has a realistic and coherent strategic plan. (Context and problem analysis, Theory of Change, the formulation of objectives, expected results and indicators and the explanation of strategic choices.)
- The applicant is able to mobilise sufficient financial resources and, where necessary, also non-material support among members and supporters.
- The applicant is internally transparent and accountable. (Good relationship between staff and management; the quality of decision-making.)
- The applicant maintains good relationships with external (institutional) stakeholders and is

considered credible and sound.

- The applicant is consistent in terms of ambition, vision, strategy and operation. The management is able to deal strategically with external pressure and conflicting demands.
- The applicant has formulated objectives with regard to the position of women and equal rights.

2. Procurement and financial management

- The quality of the financial and administrative management is adequate to ensure financial accountability. (Operates on the basis of a budget, a funding plan, financial management and an annual financial report.)
- The organisation maintains annually audited accounts.

3. Programme and project management

- The applicant has a sound monitoring and evaluation process and uses this for accountability and learning purposes. (Documents and collects data, involves stakeholders and analyses results.)
- The applicant (the management) is alert in its response to trends and changes and applies current strategies and knowledge.

Appendix A. Modalities, eligibility and application windows, 2016 - 2020 Grant modalities	Eligibility	Purpose	Application procedure
Empowerment grant Grant size: € 5,000–25,000 for national level and € 5,000 to € 75,000 for regional level Duration: Min 12 months max 2 years	Formal organisations Informal groups and individuals working in partnership with a locally registered organisation.	Raising awareness, developing leadership, building confidence and skills and tackling the stigmatisation of marginalised and discriminated groups.	Rolling grants
Influencing grant Grant size: € 25,000-200,000 for One-country project / € 500,000 for international project Duration: Min 12 months max 3 years	Formal organisations and networks of informal groups and network working in partnership with a locally registered organisation. Organisations registered in other countries.	Help organisations and networks strengthen their lobby and advocacy capacities and amplify the voice of marginalised and discriminated groups.	(Semi) open call
Innovate and learn grant Grant Size: € 5,000 – € 200,000 Duration: Min 12 months max 2 years	Formal CSOs and networks Organisations registered in other countries (e.g. International NGOs or platforms) for global calls.	Test and trial new approaches.	Rolling grants at national level and (semi) open call at global level
Sudden opportunity grant Grant size: € 5,000 – € 200,000 Duration: Min 6 months max 1 year	Formal organisations and networks and informal groups.	Create flexibility to respond to unforeseen opportunities to influence policy or tackle a reduction in the scope of civil society in terms of one or more Voice themes and for the benefit of one or more Voice target groups.	Rolling grants

Appendix B. Modalities, eligibility and application windows, 2021 – 2024 Grant modalities	Eligibility	Purpose	Application procedure
Empowerment Grant Grant size: € 5,000–25,000 for national level and € 5,000 - € 75,000 for regional level Duration: Min 12 months max 36 months Empowerment graduation: € 5,000 – € 50,000 Duration: Min 12 months max 36 months	Formal organisations Informal groups and individuals working in partnership with a locally registered organisation. Empowerment graduation: Formal organisations, informal groups and individuals who have previously received an empowerment grant.	Create awareness, leadership. Strengthen empowerment at individual and organisational level by means of: raising awareness, developing leadership, building confidence, further strengthening existing skills and tackling the stigmatisation of marginalised and discriminated groups.	At least one call per year Empowerment graduation: Rolling open call for all organisations that have received an empowerment grant. A pilot project with this grant modality will start in 2020.
Influencing grant Grant size: € 25,000-200,000 for One-country project / € 500,000 for international project Duration: Min 18 months max 36 months	Formal organisations and networks of informal groups and network working in partnership with a locally registered organisation. For international projects, also organisations registered in other countries.	Help organisations and networks strengthen their lobby and advocacy capacities and amplify the voice of marginalised and discriminated groups, by means of innovative and inclusive methods.	Annual call for 2020 and 2021, then based on context and need
Innovate and learn grant Grant Size: € 5,000 – € 50,000 Duration: Min 12 months max 36 months	Formal CSOs and networks and networks and organisations registered in other countries (e.g. International NGOs or platforms) for global calls. Inclusive thinktanks, research institutions, sustainable enterprises and startups with a social mission. For international projects, also organisations registered in other countries.	Formulate, upscale, trial or share new approaches.	Annual call at national and global level for 2022-2022. Specific calls can be issued for specific themes.
Sudden opportunity grant Grant size: € 5,000 – € 200,000 Duration: Min 6 months max 1 year	Formal organisations and networks and informal groups.	Create flexibility to respond to unforeseen opportunities to influence policy or tackle a reduction in the scope of civil society in terms of one or more Voice themes and for the benefit of one or more Voice target groups.	Rolling open call

