



Grant Manual

Voice in Lao PDR

December 2020

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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 rightsholders 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 Dissent², and Power of Voices³ frameworks 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 is executed by a consortium of Oxfam Novib and Hivos which coordinate the programme at national level in the ten Voice focus countries⁴: Oxfam in Laos is responsible for Voice in Laos.

Overall, Voice targets five rightsholder groups. Depending on a country's contextual analysis, calls for proposals will focus on specific groups through an intersectional lens. Voice in Laos **primarily** focuses on:



The youth and the elderly;



Women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence;

and a **secondary** and **intersectional** focus with:



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



People living with disabilities;



Ethnic minorities.

The Voice rightsholder 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 an eight-year programme, for which a total of €86 million is available for programme-, grants-, management- and linking and learning costs. This includes a total of €60.2 million available for grants for ten countries, the Voice 2016-2023 Fund.

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 <https://voice.global/assets/2019/12/Voice-policy-frame-Extension-English-November-2019.pdf>

⁴ The Voice focus countries are: Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Indonesia, Philippines, Laos and Cambodia.



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

This grants manual is meant to help (potential) grantees to 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. If you have any feedback on how Voice can improve its grant-making, you are very welcome to do so via laos@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, coalitions, and networks although the applicant needs to be legally registered or recognised and have a bank account in the applicant's name. The grant types are as follows:



Empowerment grants: Targeting (informal) groups or organisations to raise awareness, to work on leadership skills, build confidence and skills and work against discrimination of the most marginalised groups. Smaller grants with a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 36 months, which are accessible for informal groups⁵ through for example a partnership with formal organisations. Empowerment grants can be up to €25,000.



Influencing grants: Targeting organisations and networks to strengthen their influencing, lobby and advocacy capacities to amplify the voices of rightsholder groups. Influencing grants that are country specific can be up to €200,000 for a duration of between 18 and 36 months.



Innovate and Learn grants: Innovate and Learn grants focus on organisations that want to learn from innovation and/or to test and scale new approaches with a focus on human-centred innovations that are context-specific and relevant to **empowering, amplifying and/or influencing the voice of rightsholders** to participate fully in society. Innovate and Learn grants can be up to €250,000 for a minimum duration of 12 and a maximum duration of 36 months.



Sudden Opportunity grants: Creating flexibility to undertake joint action to address specific rapid opportunities to influence policy or practice in dealing with a reduction of civic space. The opportunity impacts one or more of the Voice rightsholders in one or more of the impact themes. Grants responding to a sudden opportunity are available from €5,000 to €200,000 for a duration between 6 and 12 months.

In 2020, only **Influencing** grants will be available in Laos.

For each grant type, there are different approaches related to making proposals, assessing applications and reporting against grants. Empowerment grants are flexible and contain fewer requirements. Influencing, and Innovate and Learn grants have more requirements to mitigate risk and increase accountability. We strongly urge you to review the Frequently Asked Questions available via: <https://www.voice.global/f-a-q/>.

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 rightsholder groups and grant type.

⁵ Groups which emerge naturally due to the response and common interests of the members of an organisation who can easily identify with the goals or independent activities of the group.



<i>Step 6</i>	Agreements	<p>Voice provides selected applicants with feedback to further improve and refine their proposed project and budget. Site visits may be undertaken to ensure that applicants have minimum governance and accounting protocols and/or to review existing programming.</p> <p>The pre-contracting stage does not mean a grant has been awarded to the applicant. Voice reserves the right to reject an applicant if they do not pass an organisational assessment and/or no mutually agreeable proposal and budget can be arrived at.</p> <p>When proposals are finalised, Voice enters into a Grant Agreement with successful organisations. The Grant Arrangement applies for the period of time required to complete the project. The time plan and approved budget is an integrated part of the Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement outlines the requirements under the grant and other terms and conditions.</p>
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When should your organisation submit an Application?

Calls for proposal will be published annually at a minimum via www.voice.global/laos, twitter.com/voicetweetz and www.facebook.com/voice.global.online. Applications for Empowerment grants, Sudden Opportunity and Innovate and Learn grants will be accepted on a rolling basis (i.e. applicants can send their applications anytime). However, the review and feedback process will only be done during a specific timeframe (see schedule below). This means that proposals submitted before the deadline of the first review cycle will be reviewed during that cycle, anything after those dates will be reviewed in the next cycle. For Influencing grants, applications will be accepted in accordance with the deadlines.

Here is the schedule of applications submission in 2020:

Type of grant	Open Call for Proposals date	Submit By / Deadline	Response Date	Contract Signing	Project starts
INFLUENCING GRANTS	18 th October 2020	4 th December 2020 5 PM (Lao time)	February 2021	February – March 2021	-
Celebrating Inclusion	15 th December 2020	29 th Jan 2021 5 P.M (Lao time)	February 2021	March 2021	1 st April 2021



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 within the same budget heading, but only to a maximum of 10% and you will always inform the Voice team about such changes. If you required changes over 10% you will have to obtain approval of the Voice team beforehand.

- o Supporting documents, that prove that you made the expenditures, 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 and/or Coordination Team.
- *Audit Report:* An audit report is only required for all grants over 100,000 EUR. It is to be prepared and submitted after Voice approves the last financial report.

Forms

The application form, budget template as well as assessment template varies with each Call for Proposal and are available via <https://voice.global/calls-for-proposals-overview/>.

7. Fraud and Corruption

Fraud is described as “dishonestly obtaining a benefit by deception or other means”. Voice has “zero-tolerance” to all forms of fraudulent or corrupt activity. This means that Voice, supported through Oxfam Novib and Hivos policy does 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 like to report an incident or have proof, or a justifiable suspicion of unethical, inappropriate and/or corrupt practices within the Voice Country Team or any of its grantees, you may report them through the following confidential channels:

- **Email:** confidential@voice.global
- **Phone (Whatsapp and Signal):** +31 (0) 6-13-322-2688

All reports received will be investigated and, if substantiated, acted upon within a reasonable timeframe. If your concern involves a Voice grantee we will liaise with the Voice country team and/or senior management of either the Hivos or Oxfam office, following due process of the relevant organisation. If your concern relates to the functioning of the Voice country team and/or senior management of the relevant office itself, the Voice Global Programme Manager will coordinate the investigation, again following the relevant policies and processes of either Hivos or Oxfam. The Global Programme Manager will also be responsible for any concerns related to multi-country grantees. If the concern is directly related to the unethical and/or corrupt behaviours of the Global Programme Manager it will go to the Voice Steering Committee.

The whistle-blower can report the event with his/her identity open or anonymously. In all cases, Voice will protect your identity as a whistle-blower. We implement a zero-exposure policy to safeguard you as the source of information that helps us to expose and address wrongdoing. The whistle-blower should therefore exercise due care to ensure accuracy of the information.



For more information, you can review the [Voice Whistle-blower Policy and Procedures](#).

