



**VOICE(s) CONNECTED & AMPLIFIED!  
LINKING & LEARNING FACILITATION  
FOR  
LAOS**

Contents

1 Introduction..... 2

1.1 Background to Voice ..... 2

1.2 Linking and Learning objectives ..... 2

1.3 Reason behind this Call for Proposals ..... 3

2 Description of key deliverables and Voice principles and instruments..... 4

2.1 Expected deliverables ..... 4

2.2 Key principles and instruments ..... 7

3 Implementation arrangements ..... 8

3.1 Coordination ..... 8

3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation ..... 8

3.3 Reporting and publications ..... 9

3.4 Applicant capacity and track-record..... 9

4 Financial arrangements ..... 10

4.1 Available budget..... 10

4.2 Due diligence, audit and compliance ..... 10

5 Application procedure ..... 11

6 Standardising terms ..... 11



## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to Voice

Voice<sup>1</sup> is an innovative grant facility that supports the most marginalised and discriminated rightsholders in Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda Tanzania, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines. Voice is an initiative by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is executed by a consortium between Oxfam Novib and Hivos.

Voice aims to amplify and connect thus far unheard voices in efforts to leave no one behind to exert influence in accessing productive and social services and political participation. Voice works with the following rightsholder groups;

1. People with disabilities;
2. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people;
3. Women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence;
4. Vulnerable elderly and youth
5. 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 rightsholder groups. Voice is initially a five-year programme (2016-2020), with now an extension contract for three years (2021-2024), for which a total of €36 million is available for programme-, grants-, management- and linking and learning costs.

### 1.2 Linking and Learning objectives

In Voice, *Linking and Learning* refers to the processes, platforms, and activities that boost collaboration, connectedness, and knowledge-sharing among grantees and stakeholders toward innovation and application of new knowledge. It allows for deeper learning and scaling up of successful projects. The ultimate goal is to catalyse transformative change in the lives of rightsholder groups. Integrated within linking and learning is capacity strengthening. Voice focuses on enabling people to build individual or collective self-esteem and the capacity to define their own change agenda.

The specific objectives of Voice for linking and learning are as follows:

- Develop a mutual learning process fostering intersectional approaches where exchange of knowledge, experiences and lessons learned take place among grantees, contributing to inclusive change among the Voice rightsholder groups.
- Ensure local ownership of the learning agenda through a natural and intrinsic process wherein the needs, existing knowledge, expectations and questions of Voice rightsholder groups are put at the centre.
- Enable a space for review, reflection, and re- strategizing throughout the grantees' journey, emphasising on the learning process and ways forward.

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<sup>1</sup> An initiative from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Voice is a partnership between Oxfam Novib and Hivos. For more information please visit [www.voice.global](http://www.voice.global)



- Design the linking and learning process in a way that can be sustained beyond the official duration of Voice.
- The linking and learning process complements with the system for monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

### 1.3 Reason behind this Call for Proposals

As part of the Voice grant facility there are four types of grants available, each with their own application and reporting processes. They range from multi-year Influencing grants, Innovate and Learn grants, Sudden Opportunity as well as Empowerment grants. The latter are aimed at supporting (informal) groups or organisations to raise awareness, develop transformative leadership, build confidence and skills and work against stigmatisation of marginalised and discriminated groups.

Within the Voice programme grantees and rightsholder group members aim to 'leave no one behind' and embark on a journey together with those concerned. This requires meeting up, talking, sharing, and understanding each other's work and views. In safe and inclusive spaces where people can speak up and leave with new ideas and where rightsholder groups participate on their own behalf.

Voice Laos is therefore looking to engage an institution, an organisation or (social) enterprise that will;

1. Facilitate safe, inclusive spaces for grantees and Voice rightsholders to share experiences and learn together on their projects, to explore empowerment and influencing approaches and to enhance the grantees' capacity to be inclusive. To do so the organisation/institution/social enterprise will facilitate participation of all Voice grantees through learning sessions, capacity-strengthening opportunities, communities of practice, as well as participation in off- and online platforms or face2face meetings.
2. Amplify the voices of rightsholder groups, including Voice grantees, and support putting their ideas and identities in the public space. To do so, the organisation/institution/social enterprise should promote use of different media formats to raise voices and share concerns to the wider audience, in close collaboration with the Voice communications hub. The organisation should pay attention to innovative offline options for areas that have little or no internet access, such that communities in remote rural areas, indigenous people, and other disenfranchised groups alienated from the information society are able to learn as well as generate new knowledge.

In brief, the key roles of the identified Linking and Learning facilitation support will:

- Put the grantees' (interest and knowledge) in the centre of the linking and learning activities, taking on a facilitating role;
- Support the Voice country team to gather data on the effectiveness of the grant making, and on the learning agendas of the individual grantees, including financial and logistic organisation of events and exchanges;
- Bring together all Voice grantees (and other stakeholders) in sharing and learning sessions like the annual linking and learning event, communities of practice, communities of stakeholders, through online/face-to-face meetings, and platforms;



## VOICE IN LAOS LINKING AND LEARNING FACILITATION

- Create space for public debate, dialogue and action informed by collated information from Voice grantees;
- Develop initiatives to address the gaps, and enhance participation and visualisation of the people left behind in national development processes as part of efforts towards realising the Leave No One Behind agenda;
- Explore with and support Voice grantees in the creation of communication messages and putting their ideas and identities safely in the public space through different media formats and innovative offline options for communities with little to no internet access.

The key responsibility is to make central the voices of individuals too often relegated to the margins, support untold stories to be told, and empowering the public with new perspectives.

## 2 Description of key deliverables and Voice principles and instruments

### 2.1 Expected deliverables

The linking and Learning organisation selected to facilitate the Voice(s) connected & amplified Call for Proposals, will work in straight collaboration and coordination with the Voice team in Laos with the leadership of the Voice Linking, Learning and Amplifier Officer. Some key tasks and deliverables expected from this contract are:

Key Deliverables	Description	Targets
Support grantee linking and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grantees are asked to integrate linking and learning into their activities. This includes documenting change processes, gathering evidence, and reflecting on experiences.</li> <li>• Grantees need to formulate learning questions as a process to keep track of their journey during the grant period.</li> <li>• Identification of joint follow-up activities to the Linking and Learning events at grantee level. It concerns in particular activities of collaboration, application of new knowledge and exchanges between several Voice partners.</li> <li>• When selecting grantees and/or members of rights holder groups, the global coordination team and the national team should amplify their work in the global learning events. Selected partners will need support to participate in the global learning events (e.g. data analysis, preparation of presentation and travel needs if necessary, etc.).</li> <li>• Lessons learned from all global events should be shared with grantees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grantees have developed their linking and learning strategies.</li> <li>• Grantees are assisted in creating learning questions within their projects and consulted in developing learning questions for every linking and learning activity</li> <li>• Identification of follow-up activities at grantee level; after approval, provide support for implementation.</li> <li>• Selected grantees are supported in their preparation and participation in the Voice Global Annual Learning Event, Knowledge Exchanges or other relevant events.</li> <li>• A re-echoing activity is done after the event. This may take the form of a meeting or a (multi)media material dissemination.</li> </ul>



VOICE IN LAOS LINKING AND LEARNING FACILITATION

Organise and develop linking and learning activities and platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking and learning activities may be organised at a local, regional, or national scope.</li> <li>• Grantees need creative platforms to meet, share experiences, learn with, and understand each other, as well as to connect with relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• These platforms build towards creation or improvement of existing <b>Communities of Practice (CoPs)</b> and <b>Communities of Stakeholders (CoS)</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– CoPs are spaces for grantees and target groups to reflect, articulate, and share challenges on specific thematic areas.</li> <li>– CoP members support each other in the practical application of knowledge and lessons learned through methods and grants.</li> <li>– The CoS is a co-created space enabling rightsholder groups and their organisations and networks to meet with other local actors and have direct involvement in the national Voice programming and learning.</li> <li>– Members of the CoS will be temporary and determined based on being recognised as influential by the target groups and/or wider civil society.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of Reference (TOR) for the CoP and CoS are finalised in consultation with grantees and target groups</li> <li>• At least one (1) national L&amp;L event is organised</li> <li>• At least three (3) local or regional meetings are organised (2 for CoPs and 1 for CoS)</li> <li>• Online learning strategy is re-developed and participation in current online platforms is boosted</li> </ul>
Develop a Capacity-Strengthening Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While onboarding organisations as Voice grantee, an organisational assessment is conducted by the Voice team. Some of the gaps identified will be addressed through the grant, such as financial and project management, and not through the linking and learning.</li> <li>• Therefore, within the scope of this terms of reference, capacity strengthening refers to a process that aims to support grantees to enhance core capabilities and skills. These include areas like lobby and advocacy, storytelling, communication, collaboration, as well as organisational development (e.g. leadership, accountability) of grantees, needed to remain relevant in a changing context and achieve results.</li> <li>• Grantee capacity strengthening can be streamlined in the CoP and CoS processes, as well as peer to peer learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common areas of capacity gap (technical/operational) among grantees are identified. In case needed, a tool will be developed together with the Voice country team, to assess grantee capacity gaps.</li> <li>• Possible modes/mechanisms of capacity strengthening that can be streamlined within the L&amp;L processes are identified and maximised.</li> <li>• Grantees are assisted in producing at least 1 resource within duration of the project</li> </ul>



VOICE IN LAOS LINKING AND LEARNING FACILITATION

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grantees are also encouraged to develop shareable resources in a variety of creative formats (e.g. blog posts, articles, videos, podcasts, drawings, infographics).</li> <li>• Some grantees need support in shifting processes and identifying media formats that are appropriate to their long-term goals and capabilities.</li> </ul>	
Promote innovation and produce publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting innovation can also be streamlined in the CoP and CoS processes. This includes exploring and testing participatory, creative, and transformative approaches and methodologies to maximise participation and inclusion.</li> <li>• Lessons learned will also be generated through the various CoS and CoP platforms, and published (internal/external) using a variety of media and audiences.</li> <li>• Presentation of information and data must be done in a creative and engaging way using a variety of artistic forms.</li> <li>• Successful approaches needs to be gathered and included in the global collection intended to be a knowledge library from all 10 Voice countries.</li> <li>• Global Coordination Team and the Country Team need in selecting grantees and/or target group members to amplify their work in the global learning events.</li> <li>• Selected grantees will need support to participate in the global learning events (e.g. data analysis, preparation of presentation and travel requirements when necessary, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 2 innovative approaches tested and documented.</li> <li>• At least 1 publication within the duration of the contract. This can take many forms such as research papers, opinion pieces, explainers, and documentary videos</li> </ul>
Participation in the Voice Community of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community of practice is existing within the Linking &amp; Learning community of Voice at the global level. This is implemented and sustained mainly by the Linking &amp; Learning Coordinator, Linking, Learning and Amplifier Officers, and Linking &amp; Learning Facilitators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend all monthly Linking and Learning e-Meet.</li> <li>• Submit quarterly Linking and Learning data on the inventory form.</li> <li>• Attend the annual Linking and Learning meeting.</li> <li>• Contribute actively by sharing Linking and Learning tools and approaches, among others.</li> </ul>





Based on the information above, applicants are expected to develop proposals on how they envision the linking and learning process. The project plan should include :

- The frequency of meetings/learning events ;
- Effective methods/approaches to the learning environment;
- The different learning agendas.

We invite everyone to be as innovative and creative as possible considering the local context.

## 2.2 Key principles and instruments

*'Diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance' -Verna Meyers*

As rights-based organisations, both Oxfam Novib and Hivos already have strong value statements. Voice is further guided by the key principles listed below in its planning and implementation. All applicants are expected to be familiar with, adhere to, and follow these same principles throughout the contract period.

### Rightsholders

Voice recognises the role society plays in marginalisation and discrimination and supports ownership of the influencing agenda by the people concerned. Voice considers terms such as beneficiaries and target groups do not honour the individuals and organisations as rightsholders that can make legitimate claims. Similarly, States and other actors are duty-bearers that are responsible and can be held accountable for their acts or omissions. Putting the rightsholder groups at the centre of Voice therefore requires a changing narrative.

### Nothing About Us Without Us

Abbreviated to NOW-Us!, this saying stems from the People with Disabilities (PwD) movement. It emphasises that no policy and/or practice should be decided without the full participation of the rightsholders. For Voice, NOW-Us! is also embodied in the modus operandi or way of working, ensuring we walk the talk. It also emphasises that the rightsholders own their own narrative at all times.

### Leave No One Behind

Every person – regardless of ethnicity, geography, disability, gender (identity and expression), sexual orientation, race, age or other status – should live their lives freely and fully. We recognise that people have diverse identities and as a result may face overlapping forms of exclusion, and are often left behind. Within Voice, we consciously promote taking an intersectional approach.

### The right voices at the table rather than on the menu

As a key to vital inclusive societies and sustainable development, we recognise the critical role of civil society as a platform for rightsholders to raise their voice. For Voice, this means inclusion, openness and embracing diversity lie at the heart of all we do and stand for. It means putting 'inclusive' values into action; it is about everyone rather than about a particular group.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.indexforinclusion.org/themeaningofinclusion.php>





Knowledge generation and exchange should include the people concerned in all aspects and produce accessible information using various media.

### **Innovativeness**

Innovative approaches are sought in all key components of Voice. Being innovative means not only creating new ways of working but also creating space for improvement in every step of the implementation of Voice, which can entail different steps in different contexts. This implies flexibility, to allow for the implementation of new ideas.

Voice is furthermore innovative, because of its explicit focus on the inclusion of informal civil society organisations, as not all rightsholder groups are formally organised. Also, the space for 'failures' is innovative: to encourage experimental and innovative projects, taking risks is allowed and failures are framed as lessons to learn from. The linking and learning process provides an environment for different groups to share and learn from successes and failures of others.

### **Safety and Security**

In all processes and activities of Voice, safety and security of all grantees shall be ensured. This includes physical, emotional, and digital safety and security. Depending on the current local context, risks shall always be assessed and proper mitigation strategies shall be developed. Information/data from grantees shall be protected, following Voice and local data privacy policies.

## **3 Implementation arrangements**

### **3.1 Coordination**

The applicant will work in direct coordination with the Voice Linking, Learning and Amplifier Officer based in the Oxfam in Laos Office, who will also monitor implementation and be responsible for quality management. Following this Call for Proposals, the Voice Country team as well as the Voice Coordination Team represented by the Linking and Learning Coordinator, will approve the final project plan and budget. All daily coordination and communication will be the responsibility of the selected Linking and Learning organisation, the Voice Linking, Learning and Amplifier Officer and the Voice Programme Officer in Laos.

### **3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Linking and Learning component is one of the two result areas of Voice and therefore completely integrated in the Voice results framework. Monitoring and evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of this project will need to be aligned with the overall Voice monitoring and evaluation practice and contribute with quantitative and qualitative data gathering through stories of change, outcome harvesting (only for the influencing grants), participatory videos or theatre, event reporting and like.

The approved project plan will be evaluated annually to reflect on the outcomes and strategies so far. We recognise that not all applicants may fully understand the linking and learning process within Voice. These annual reflections are opportunities for a check-in to review the progress so far



and could result in adjustments to the project plan, including activity milestones, emergent needs, and other circumstances that may arise. Continuation of the grant depends on a mutually agreed plan between the Linking and Learning facilitator, the Voice Laos team, and the Voice Global Coordination Team.

### 3.3 Reporting and publications

The chosen applicant reports directly to the Voice Laos Programme Officer and the Linking, Learning and Amplifier Officer. Although the Linking and Learning (L&L) organisation plays a coordinating role in the L&L activities of all grantees, grantees do not report to the L&L organisation.

A reporting schedule will be agreed upon, to provide timely inputs into Voice reporting schemes. Furthermore, the organisation will commit to record all facilitated processes and make these reports available to all involved and share them on Box, the Voice online sharing facility. Publications following exchanges, learning events and the journey of a community of practice, will be planned accordingly. Lay-out and branding will be done locally, taking into account the Voice branding guidelines. Official Hivos and Oxfam sign off needs to be respected. Personal and organisational safety and security are guiding.

### 3.4 Applicant capacity and track-record

The applicant needs to have proven experience in facilitating dynamic learning processes and successful exchanges with high level of accessibility; preferably considered a frontrunner in its field. The applicant uses and develops participatory, creative, and transformative approaches and methodologies to maximise participation and inclusion.

The applicant has strong experience in reporting and developing thought-provoking publications where information and data are presented in creative and engaging ways. They must be adept in using a variety of artistic forms and ICT in order to support grantees and rightsholder groups to reach a variety of audiences. They must be able to provide proof of earlier products.

Strong experience in social and organisational development and facilitation of capacity strengthening initiatives. The organisation must be able to work with various types of organisations, from national to grassroots level, from individual Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with defined structures to networks/coalitions with more loose arrangements. An understanding of the nuances in capacity is necessary, especially when looking at the contexts of work where the organisations are situated in (e.g. national/local, urban/rural).

If the organisation collaborates with other partners on some aspects or tasks, they will provide sufficient information on these partnerships. The applicant organisation needs to have a strong track record of activities in Laos and is able to submit the last two audited financial statements and annual reports.

The applicant organisation must have a positive image in the country, is known for being reliable and credible with a positive influence on the public especially the rightsholder groups and



stakeholders concerned. The organisation fosters attitudes of respect, understanding, and empathy towards individuals and rightsholder groups marginalised and discriminated by the state and/or society. They must not have encountered any problems with the local and/ national authorities in the past or any political conflict of interest.

The applicant organisation is a risk taker and self-starter with a proven capacity of thinking out of the box to address issues in different, innovative ways.

If worked with Oxfam and/or Hivos before, the applicant organisation must have a clean financial record.

## 4 Financial arrangements

### 4.1 Available budget

The maximum budget is Euro 250,000 for a period between 24 to 33 months. This is funding drawn from the Innovate & Learn grant window. Euro 50,000 is reserved for joint linking and learning follow up activities at grantee level. It's use will be approved by the Voice team on a case by case basis.

All costs associated with organising events including but not limited to costs for participation should be covered from the grant.

- Periodic/annual meetings/ with grantees, rightsholders/stakeholders/community of practice
- Learning events/ capitalisations/evaluations/timely event celebrations (such as international women's days, handicap day, youth day, etc.)
- Internal travelling (visiting grantees, experience /knowledge sharing, linking group to group, etc.)
- Publication/ printing/digital communication/translation/media's coverage/
- Other Monitoring & Evaluation and communication activities (data collection, story gathering, context analysis, etc.)

### 4.2 Due diligence, audit and compliance

All applicants will be required to submit the following documents:

- Letter of Registration/MOU with government agencies to operate in Laos.
- Last 2 financial annual statements.
- Last 2 annual reports.

The Grantee is responsible for ensuring that an independent and complete financial audit is undertaken at the end of the project with detailed project annual accounts. The financial audit may be Voice project specific or an audit of the organisation as a whole, provided that an organisational financial audit report provides annual income and expenditures per donor.



## 5 Application procedure

All interested organisations are asked to complete the application narrative and finance forms with the required supporting documents and submit it via the Smartsheet link available online before or on **19<sup>th</sup> February 2019** at the latest.

The application process has the following schedule:

- Call for Proposals: 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021
- Review of Proposals: February 2021
- Announcement: March 2021

The committee's decision will be final, transparent, and accountable. Feedback will be provided to non-successful applicants. We also reserve the right to publish the successful application towards our commitment to transparency.

## 6 Standardising terms

Voice elaborated a list of Standardising terms in use in the programme.

