

Order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of 28 September 2023, no. Min-BuZa.2023.19913-19, laying down administrative rules and a ceiling for grants awarded under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006 Grant Regulations 2006 (*Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*)

The Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation;

Having regard to articles 6 and 7 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree;

Having regard to articles 3.1, 3.2(b), 3.2(c), 3.2(d), 3.4, 3.5, 3.6(d) and 3.6(e) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006;

Orders:

Article 1

The administrative rules appended as an annexe to this Order apply to grants awarded under articles 3.1, 3.2(b), 3.2(c), 3.2(d), 3.4, 3.5, 3.6(d) and 3.6(e) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006 with a view to financing activities to strengthen the humanitarian sector for the period from the date on which this Order enters into force up to and including 31 December 2027.

Article 2

1. A grant ceiling of €60 million applies during the period referred to in Article 1, with the funds being divided over the following policy objectives:

- a) €8 million for applications aimed at 'humanitarian access';
- b) €52 million for applications aimed at 'anticipatory humanitarian action in response to crises caused or exacerbated by people' and/or 'local leadership through risk- and capacity sharing'.

2. If any funds remain for one of the two policy objectives referred to in the first paragraph, they will become available for applications aimed at the other policy objective(s), if and insofar as such applications meet the criteria laid down in the annexe to this Order.

3. Multi-year grants may be awarded subject to the condition referred to in section 4:34 of the General Administrative Law Act that sufficient funds are made available for them in the applicable budget.

Article 3

Applications for a grant within the scope of *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027* may be submitted from the entry into force of this Order until 11:59 CET on December 1, 2023, using the application form as stipulated by the Minister and accompanied by the documents stipulated in that form.¹

Article 4

The funds earmarked under Article 2, paragraph 1, will be allocated in accordance with an assessment based on the criteria set out in the annexe to this Order, on the understanding that, of the applications that meet the criteria, those that meet them best will be given priority for a grant, with due regard for an even distribution as referred to in article 8, paragraph 3 (d) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Decree.

Article 5

The Order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of October 15, 2021, Min-BuZa.2021.10296-30, laying down administrative rules and a ceiling for grants awarded under

¹ <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-foreign-affairs/documents/decrees/2023/10/09/subsidy-framework-strengthening-the-humanitarian-sector-2024-2027>

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006 Grant Regulations 2006 (*Humanitarian Aid 2022-2026*)², is amended as follows:

A

Article 2.1(c) is eliminated.

B

The annexe is amended as follows:

1. Paragraph 2.1 is amended as follows:
 - a. In the second sentence "three funding channels" is replaced by "two funding channels".
 - b. Replacing the semicolon at the end of the text under 2.1(b), the text of 2.1(c) is eliminated.
2. Paragraph 3.2 is amended as follows:
 - a. In the first sentence "three funding channels" is replaced by "two funding channels".
 - b. Paragraph 3.2.3 is eliminated.
3. Paragraph 3.3 is amended as follows:
 - a. In the title of paragraph 3.3 footnote 11 is eliminated.
 - b. In the first sentence "three funding channels" is replaced by "two funding channels".

Article 6

This Order enters into force on the day after the publication date of the Government Gazette in which it appears and lapses with effect from January 1, 2028, with the proviso that it continues to apply to grants awarded prior to that date.

This Order and its accompanying annexe, excluding the appendices, will be published in the Government Gazette. Appendices to the annexe will be published on the Internet.³

Director General of International Cooperation

for

the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

P. Grotenhuis

² Government Gazette 2021 no. 44259.

³ <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-foreign-affairs/documents/decrees/2023/10/09/subsidy-framework-strengthening-the-humanitarian-sector-2024-2027>

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Grant policy framework: Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector

1. Introduction

This grant policy framework is an annex to the Order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of 28 September 2023, no. MINBUZA-2023.19913-19, laying down administrative rules and a ceiling for grants awarded under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006. The grant policy framework contains administrative rules for the award of grants under the grant policy framework *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*.

2. Terminology

Humanitarian imperative	The humanitarian imperative is the right to receive lifesaving humanitarian assistance and the obligation to take action to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict.
Humanitarian principles	The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence are fundamental to humanitarian action.
Humanitarian access	Humanitarian access refers to the space and/or opportunity for neutral humanitarian actors to reach people in need during a conflict, crisis or (natural) disaster to provide humanitarian assistance and to the space and/or opportunity for affected communities to receive aid.
Humanitarian delivery chain	This terminology refers to the entire chain of actors, involved in a humanitarian intervention, who have as a common objective the delivery of humanitarian assistance (primary donor, intermediary organization/donor, implementing organization).
Anticipatory humanitarian action	Anticipatory humanitarian action means taking humanitarian action at an early stage in expectation of foreseeable events that will create or exacerbate humanitarian needs, in order to prevent or mitigate those needs.
Crises caused or exacerbated by people	Within the context of this grant policy framework, this terminology refers to crises that are caused or exacerbated, at a relatively short term and directly, by human action or lack thereof, as opposed to natural disasters or crises as a result of among other climate change (even if in these last forms of crises human action can be seen as a cause of those crises over a longer period of time and indirectly).
Non-gouvernemental organisation (NGO)	An NGO is a not-for-profit organisation, which possesses legal personality under civil law and serves a public interest, neither established by a public authority nor connected to a public authority either de facto or under its constitution, or which after its establishment by a public authority has become fully autonomous (also known as a civil society organisation).
Risk sharing	Risk sharing is a form of risk management, in which actors throughout the humanitarian delivery chain jointly identify, analyze and weigh risks, develop preventive measures and agree on responsibilities and action needed in case a risk materializes. Risk sharing entails a reasonable sharing of the burden of preventative measures and a reasonable sharing of responsibility for risks that do materialize.
Capacity sharing	Capacity sharing refers to a way of working in which humanitarian actors jointly identify and prioritize capacity required, capacity gaps and priorities for both capacity deployment and capacity building, throughout the delivery chain.
Conflictsensitivity	Within the context of this grant policy framework, this term refers to a humanitarian response which is developed in such a way as to consciously avoid or minimize negative impacts and unintentional contributions to conflict.

3. Policy context

Instability and violence, as a consequence of geopolitical conflict, natural disasters, climate change and outbreaks of infectious disease, are leading to emergency situations affecting a growing number of people. The resources available worldwide to provide assistance in these emergencies have not grown quickly enough to supply adequate and where needed sustained help to all the people in need. As this is a continuing trend, **the humanitarian aid system needs to adapt. This grant policy framework aims to contribute to the transformations needed for this,** as elaborated in chapter 4. Furthermore, with this grant policy framework, the third channel originally foreseen under the grant policy framework *Humanitarian Aid 2022-2026*⁴, is given substance to; the Order which lays down the current administrative rules therefore also arranges the elimination of the third channel in the grant policy framework *Humanitarian Aid 2022-2026*.

To begin with a brief description is provided below of the broader policy context of this grant policy framework *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*.

3.1 International policy framework

At the international level the provision of humanitarian assistance rests on a solid foundation, on which the Netherlands bases its work as well. The following humanitarian principles and principles of international law are determinant:

- the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality;
- international law, especially international humanitarian law, human rights and international law on refugees;
- the Sphere standards;⁵
- the *Agenda for Humanity* agreed at the *World Humanitarian Summit*⁶ in Istanbul in 2016 and the agreements constituting the *Grand Bargain*;⁷
- obligations arising from UN resolutions on humanitarian assistance.⁸

3.2 Netherlands policy framework

The Dutch policy on humanitarian aid and diplomacy is an integral part of broader Dutch foreign policy and development policy. The principles of this policy are formulated in the Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation policy document '*Do What We Do Best*'.⁹ The Dutch humanitarian policy has been elaborated in the policy letter '*People First: The Netherlands' Course Towards Humanitarian Aid and Diplomacy*'.¹⁰ Each year a letter to the House of Representatives on humanitarian aid and diplomacy sets out the specific aims for that year.¹¹ The policy response¹² to the evaluation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of Dutch humanitarian aid and diplomacy in the years 2015-2021, '*Trust, Risk and Learn*', also sets out a number of principles and priorities of Dutch policy.

The implementation of the Dutch humanitarian policy follows two interlinked tracks:

1. Humanitarian assistance in situations of war, conflict and natural disasters: the great majority of this assistance is provided through multiannual, flexible financing of the work of trusted partners such as UN organisations, the International Red Cross Red Crescent-movement and the *Dutch Relief Alliance*, a partnership of Dutch aid organisations.

⁴ Government Gazette 2021 no. 44259.

⁵ www.spherestandards.org.

⁶ www.agendaforhumanity.org

⁷ www.interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain

⁸ Such as: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, 1 July 2022: <https://undocs.org/E/RES/2022/10>

⁹ Policy document '*Do What We Do Best*'.

¹⁰ <https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documenten/parliamentary-documents/2019/03/29/letter-on-the-netherlands-course-towards-humanitarian-aid-and-diplomacy/letter-people-first.pdf>.

¹¹ Humanitarian aid and diplomacy 2023, Parliamentary Paper 2023Z03119, 21 February 2023.

¹² Parliamentary Paper 2023Z03057 of 21/2/23.

2. Political, diplomatic and thematic initiatives that promote:
- provision of humanitarian aid in accordance with the humanitarian principles;
 - compliance of international humanitarian law during conflicts;
 - provision of humanitarian assistance in an effective and efficient way that aligns optimally with the needs of the affected population.

The Netherlands works in partnership with organisations that subscribe to these aims. In this way the Netherlands contributes to a humanitarian system that adapts to changing conditions and increasing challenges and needs.

4. Problem statement and policy objectives

This grant policy framework focuses on the second track of paragraph 3.2, and more specifically on initiatives and efforts that facilitate effective, efficient and people-centred humanitarian assistance, and/or contribute to the transformation of the way in which international humanitarian assistance functions.

To achieve this, this grant policy framework focuses on the following three humanitarian challenges:

- *Obstacles to humanitarian access (see paragraph 4.1);*
- *Growing humanitarian needs due to insufficient analysis and use of data for anticipatory humanitarian action in response to crises caused or exacerbated by people (see paragraph 4.2);*
- *Insufficient scope for strong local leadership, due to lack of equal dialogue and collaboration throughout the humanitarian delivery chain, particularly with regard to sharing capacity and risks (see paragraph 4.3).*

4.1 Obstacles to humanitarian access

International humanitarian law, enshrined in the Geneva Conventions among other instruments, forms the international legal foundation of the work of humanitarian organisations. It safeguards their scope to offer independent, impartial aid to everyone who needs it. International humanitarian law also protects civilians from the worst excesses of armed conflict.

However, international humanitarian law is increasingly being violated by states and other parties. Just as the multilateral system as a whole is under pressure, so is the international system for humanitarian assistance and protection. Some players are trying to instrumentalise humanitarian aid for political, military, strategic or ideological purposes. The scope for humanitarian organisations to do their work in full compliance with humanitarian principles is diminishing. More and more often, impartial humanitarian access is being actively hindered. The safety of aid workers themselves and of the people in need whom they are trying to reach is under pressure. While growing numbers of people are becoming dependent on humanitarian assistance, the scope to provide this help efficiently and effectively is shrinking. For these reasons, the Netherlands endeavours to enhance respect for international humanitarian law and to protect and expand humanitarian space.

To operate and respond as adequately and effectively as possible in situations of limited humanitarian access, local context-specific information is crucial. State parties and multilateral organisations cannot obtain and analyse this kind of information on their own. International NGOs and networks as well as local organisations are also of great importance in ensuring the existence of a solid analytical and factual basis for the humanitarian diplomacy needed to enhance access for and the safety of aid workers.

The Netherlands is also working to strengthen the international legal system, particularly those aspects of the system aimed at reducing the impact of conflict on people and on safeguarding humanitarian space. For development of effective international agreements and mechanisms to combat the shrinkage of humanitarian space, evidence and information drawn from practice are of

great importance; if this body of information is lacking, no new case law or instruments such as resolutions can be established, and Dutch diplomatic efforts on this point will be less effective.

In keeping with the above, the first policy objective of this grant policy framework is:

Policy Objective 1: More effective application of humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law, enabling more humanitarian responders to do their work safely and access populations in need

Under this policy objective, this grant framework aims at facilitating initiatives that make it possible to gather, process and apply local, context-specific information on humanitarian access, the safety of humanitarian responders and/or compliance with (other aspects of) international humanitarian law. These initiatives must pursue these objectives in more than one specific crisis, and also translate and operationalise the information, insights and working methods collected for use in regional or global negotiations or developments extending across several different crises, including beyond the timeframe of the grant period.

4.2 Growing humanitarian needs resulting from insufficient analysis and use of data to take anticipatory humanitarian action in response to crises caused or exacerbated by people

Anticipatory humanitarian action means taking humanitarian action at an early stage in expectation of foreseeable events that will create or exacerbate humanitarian needs, in order to prevent or mitigate that distress. This is relevant not only to natural disasters but also to crises caused or exacerbated by people at a shorter notice. Anticipatory humanitarian action is often initiated on the basis of forecasting tools, when triggers are reached and previously determined threshold levels for the timely allocation of funds are exceeded. This allows organisations to work proactively and effectively to stop life-threatening situations from developing into large-scale disasters, enabling communities to prepare better and protect themselves from crises. When people are less affected by crises, they are more resilient to future shocks. Anticipatory humanitarian action also helps protect and promote sustainable development results.

Anticipatory humanitarian action is increasingly included in humanitarian organisations' mandate and conception of their tasks. As the Anticipatory Action Task Force (AATF)¹³ has noted, however, a system-wide shift is needed, spurred on by players throughout the whole humanitarian delivery chain, to increase the impact of efforts in this field¹⁴.

Opportunities are now also being considered to take anticipatory humanitarian action in cases of crises, particularly complex crises, *caused or exacerbated by people*. Data-driven models exist to predict crises caused or exacerbated by people as well. However, these models as such are not an adequate basis for anticipatory humanitarian action. Their capacity to predict specific developments, and especially to predict the humanitarian impact of such developments, is not sufficiently evolved for adequately informed, justified and conflict-sensitive anticipatory humanitarian action. After assessing the technical feasibility of conflict prediction for anticipatory humanitarian action,¹⁵ the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data made several recommendations for further work in this area. In particular, it focused on the need for:

- flexible models with scope for context-specificity;
- predicting shifts in conflicts;
- predicting the humanitarian impact of conflicts;
- the development of methods that use local data and human inputs to elaborate and improve model performance in specific contexts;

13 Consisting of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), IFRC, OCHA, Start Network and World Food Programme (WFP). See Terms of Reference https://www.anticipation-hub.org/Documents/Other/Anticipatory_Action_Task_Force_ToR_JAN_2021.pdf
14 <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/exchange/networks-and-forums/anticipatory-action-task-force-aatf>

15 'Assessing the Technical Feasibility of Conflict Prediction for Anticipatory Action', OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data, October 2022.

- developing and refining models in a reproducible and transparent way that enables the comparison of model performance in varying circumstances;
- basing initiatives on research under way in the academic field;
- ensuring that applied research is relevant for humanitarian decision-making.¹⁶

In keeping with the above, the second policy objective of this grant policy framework is:

Policy Objective 2: Increasingly, in response to crises caused by people as well, anticipatory humanitarian action is undertaken, reducing the upward pressure on humanitarian needs

Under this policy objective, this grant policy framework aims at facilitating initiatives that enable knowledge and principles for anticipatory humanitarian action to be used more effectively in, and in the run-up to, crises caused or exacerbated by people. These initiatives ensure that data and models and/or working methods used to forecast human dynamics that cause or exacerbate crises are applicable for conflict-sensitive anticipatory humanitarian action, taking note of the findings and recommendations of the Anticipatory Action Task Force and the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data. Moreover, the aim is that these models or working methods remain applicable beyond the duration of the initiatives receiving a grant.

4.3 *Insufficient scope for strong local leadership, due to lack of an equal dialogue and collaboration throughout the humanitarian delivery chain, particularly with regard to sharing capacity and risks*

People and communities affected by crises or living in situations of risk are rightholders who must be put at the centre of decision-making processes on humanitarian action that concerns them.¹⁷ A joint international objective is to make principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary.¹⁸ The aim is to remove barriers that prevent partnering with local responders,¹⁹ and to include people affected by humanitarian crises in all aspects of the humanitarian response.²⁰

In June 2021 the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a literature review, *'Interrogating the Evidence on Humanitarian Localisation'*, which concluded:

'There is concern that the construction of the localisation discourse continues to place international actors at the centre; that localisation debates continue to be driven by international actors; and that little attention has been given to the role of local actors in transforming norms and practices.'²¹

In the literature reviewed, the main obstacles to tangible progress towards localisation objectives are found in perceptions and assumptions about such matters as risks and local actors' capacity and capability to act in accordance with humanitarian principles.

'In turn, perceptions of and approaches to risk management impact partnership models. The literature predominantly focuses on the risks to international actors when partnering with local actors, rather than vice versa, raising issues of power imbalances. Similarly, capacity-strengthening approaches further entrench such power dynamics: despite moves towards more sustained and participatory approaches, capacity-strengthening requirements are still largely identified by international organisations and predominantly

¹⁶ See note 15.

¹⁷ A-71-353 *'SG Report on the Outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit'*, 23 August 2016, para. 36.

¹⁸ *'The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need'*, May 2016, p. 5, commitment 2.

¹⁹ *Idem.*, p. 5, commitment 2.2.

²⁰ *Idem.*, p. 10, commitment 6.

²¹ *'Interrogating the Evidence Base on Humanitarian Localisation: A Literature Study'*, June 2021.

focus on local actors' organisational capacity and their capacity to fulfil donor requirements.'

This grant policy framework is aimed at addressing a few of these obstacles and stimulating ways of working that facilitate more local leadership.

Sharing risks

The context in which humanitarian aid is provided is often complex, and humanitarian assistance is not possible without taking risks.²² Humanitarian organisations often have robust systems in place to assess and mitigate potential risks and, should a risk nevertheless occur, to respond effectively. This is also something that donors like the Netherlands expect. Lack of a more equal dialogue and a joint approach *throughout the whole humanitarian delivery chain* can lead to risks being transferred to intermediary and then local organisations.²³ This can in turn overburden partners' capacity for implementation, undermine the achievement of results and reduce the scope for local leadership of humanitarian action. The burden of the risks of humanitarian action must be shared in a responsible manner by all parties across the humanitarian chain, who should work jointly to ensure this, for example using the *Risk Sharing Framework*²⁴ that was presented during the Annual Meeting of the Grand Bargain in June 2023.

Sharing capacity

Similarly, capacity requirements, capacity gaps and priorities for both capacity deployment and capacity building must be discussed and addressed by all actors throughout the humanitarian delivery chain in an open manner and on an equal footing. All the partners in the implementation chain have their specific characteristics, mandates and expertise. To achieve good results, those characteristics and expertise need to be optimally combined as they are used and strengthened. It is also important that priorities not be unilaterally decided or imposed by one partner in the chain on other partners or groups of partners. A more equal dialogue and cooperation in this field will facilitate more local leadership as well.

In keeping with the above, the third policy objective of this grant policy framework is:

Policy Objective 3: A more equal dialogue among all partners throughout the humanitarian delivery chain about cooperation and the sharing of capacity and risks, facilitating increased local leadership

This grant framework aims at facilitating local leadership by enabling development, application and promotion of working methods that are based on an open, equal dialogue and collaboration between partners throughout the humanitarian delivery chain (back donors, intermediaries and national and/or local implementation partners), focusing particularly on sharing risks and capacity. Moreover, the aim is that these models or working methods remain applicable beyond the duration of the initiatives receiving a grant.

5. Eligible activities

To be eligible for a grant under *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*, applications must address *either* policy objective 1 (paragraph 4.1) *or* policy objective 2 and/or 3 (paragraph 4.2 and 4.3). An application which aims at both policy objective 2 and 3 is only eligible if it is based on one comprehensive intervention logic (for intervention logic, refer to chapter 10, part v.).

5.1 Type of interventions

²² <https://www.interaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Risk-Global-Study.pdf>

²³ Ed Hughes, '*Risk Sharing in Practice: Success Stories, Enablers and Barriers to Risk Sharing in the Humanitarian Sector*', commissioned by the ICRC and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2022.

²⁴ *Risk Sharing Framework* | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org)

In order to achieve the three policy objectives described above, interventions may be used that combine or alternate focus on local, national, regional and global level, such as:

- lobby and advocacy;
- research, data collection, or development of ways of working, including piloting, in specific crises;
- collection and comparison of results of pilots in different crises;
- translation of results into recommendations or tools for global, regional and/or local humanitarian actors;
- dissemination thereof within the humanitarian sector.

5.2 Non-eligible activities

As this policy grant framework is aimed at the transformation and improvement of the humanitarian system, activities which are *primarily* focused on provision of *direct* humanitarian aid are not eligible for grants under this framework, neither are activities which are aimed at *only one country or crisis*.

Direct provision of humanitarian aid can form part of initiatives under policy objectives 4.2 or 4.3, provided that this direct provision of aid is being used to test and disseminate new ways of working, and meeting these policy objectives.

If provision of direct humanitarian aid is indeed part of the proposed intervention logic, it is only eligible if provided in countries included in the most recent *List of Recipients of Official Development Assistance* as established by the *Development Assistance Committee* (DAC) of the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development*.

Activities which already receive grant funding from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are not eligible for grant funding from the grant policy framework *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*. Activities for which an organization has received a contribution indirectly, through a grant or contribution provided to another organization at the expense of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget, are also not eligible for a grant under this grant policy framework.

6. Who is eligible for a grant

To be eligible for a grant under the grant policy framework *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*, the following conditions apply:

- The applicant is a non-governmental organisation (NGO).
- The applicant has a substantial focus on one or more of the specific policy objectives of this grant policy framework (see chapter 4); this should be evident from its prevailing vision document or multiannual strategy.
- The applicant has at least three years of knowledge and experience with types of interventions that address at least one of the challenges described in chapter 4.
- The applicant implements programs, or has done so, and/or has active networks in countries currently and/or regularly affected by humanitarian crises; and the applicant also has connections to international humanitarian networks and organizations that play a role in regional and/or global processes and negotiations on humanitarian action.
- An organisation is only eligible for one grant under this grant policy framework. If an organization submits more applications, only the application first received will be taken into consideration. Any applications received subsequently, will be rejected.

Not eligible for grant funding under the grant policy framework *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027* are:

- Local and other governments, intergovernmental organisations and organisations in which a public authority is the sole shareholder (or the majority shareholder).
- Applicants who submit an application as lead applicant on behalf of a consortium.

7. Duration of activities

The activities will be implemented within a period of no less than 42 and no more than 48 months; this period starts not earlier than 1 January 2024 and ends 31 December 2027.

7.1 Inception phase

After the grant is awarded, the grantees will run through an inception phase of (no more than) four months. Purpose of this inception phase is to further elaborate the general and broad plans that were submitted with the application.

More specifically, the grantees will use the inception phase to:

1. operationalize and synchronize the envisaged qualitative and quantitative results (with indicators and targets) at outcome level and to further develop the envisaged Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy, integrated in an optimal way in the overall MEL-strategy of the grantee's organisation, and also consistent with the learning agenda and results framework of DSH-HH.
2. conduct a study to define baseline values for the envisaged qualitative and quantitative indicators.
3. determine the format and focus of the policy dialogue with the ministry in order to achieve an efficient and adequate cooperation where needed for the efforts to strengthen or transform the humanitarian sector.
4. elaborate the budget as submitted with the application into a detailed budget for the first twelve months of the grant period. For the remaining period of the grant an annual plan together with an annual detailed budget will be submitted.

Thus, upon completion of the inception phase the following documents will be submitted to the ministry at the minimum:

- An operationalized activity- and MEL-plan (ad.1)
- A study with baseline values for the envisaged qualitative and quantitative indicators (ad.2)
- A detailed budget for the remaining period of the first twelve months (ad.4).

8. Available funds and their allocation

A total of **€60 million** is available for grants under the grant policy framework *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027* for the entire four-year period. For efficiency reasons a methodology has been selected for the awarding of approximately seven grants under this framework, provided that sufficient qualifying applications are submitted.

This amount will be divided between the three policy objectives as follows and with the following minimum and maximum limits per grant (application):

1. **€8 million** for policy objective 1: **humanitarian access**;
For this policy objective, per application for the total grant period, a minimum is set of **€3 million** and a maximum of **€5 million**.
2. **€52 million** for policy objectives 2: **anticipatory humanitarian action in response to crises caused by people** and 3: **local leadership through risk- and capacity sharing** together.

For each of these policy objectives, per application for the total grant period, a minimum is set of **€8 million** and a maximum of **€20 million**. If an application aims at both objective

2 and 3, a minimum is set of **€10 million** and a maximum of **€24 million** for the full grant period for the *combined* application.

The allocation of the funds available for *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027* will take place by means of a call for proposals. After the closing of the application period, all the applications received by the deadline will be considered, and ranked by quality. Each application will be assessed on the basis of the information received before the closing of the application period.

The applications that have satisfied the threshold criteria (see paragraph 12.2), will for each of the two grant ceilings be ranked on the basis of an assessment using the quality criteria given in paragraph 12.3 of this grant policy framework. The applications that best meet the criteria will be given priority in the award of grants, whereas at least one grant will be awarded per policy objective (provided that qualifying applications are submitted). The Minister will award grants in accordance with this ranking until the available budget is exhausted.

If too few qualifying applications are submitted for one of the two grant ceilings to be reached, the remaining funds will become available for qualifying applications under the other grant ceiling.

If under one of the two grant ceilings funds remain that are lower than the minimum limits set above per grant, these funds will not be used for a grant. These funds as well will be made available for qualifying applications under the other grant ceiling. In case this situation arises for both grant ceilings, the remaining funds from both ceilings will be combined; these funds will be used to award a grant to the application, which best meets the quality criteria, among the applications that have not yet been awarded a grant, regardless of the policy objective(s) aimed at and only if the application is of sufficient quality to be eligible for a grant.

The grant will be made available through periodical prepayments. For the final year of the grant period, a maximum of 90% of the budget requested for that year will be transferred as prepayment.

9. Eligible costs

Only costs that are necessary for carrying out the activities for which grant funding is sought, and which cannot reasonably be covered from the applicant's own resources or in some other way, are eligible for a grant.²⁵ Activities started prior to 1 January 2024 are not eligible for funding, nor are the corresponding costs. The eligible costs are listed and explained in the model budget that must be used for the budget that should be submitted with the application (appendix 5 to this grant policy framework).

10. Grant application requirements

Grant applications must be submitted using the form stipulated by the Minister (see appendix 1 to these administrative rules). The application form must be **completed in full** and must be accompanied with the documents listed on the form.

The application form accompanying the grant application requires the following mandatory annexes:

- i. Recent **registration certificate from the Business Register**, no older than January 1, 2023;
- ii. The most recent **vision document or multi-year strategic plan** published no later than April 1, 2023.

²⁵ Article 14, paragraph 1 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree.

- iii. **Financial statements**, or a summary of the applicant's financial situation for the past three years (2020, 2021, 2022).
- iv. A **track record** of maximum 2 pages (see appendix 5, part A) describing the applicant's previous experience with the type of interventions that tackle challenges addressed by this grant policy framework (see chapter 4) and that through a combined set of interventions at both local/national/crisis level as well as regional or global level help to strengthen or transform the humanitarian sector. As part of the track record, applicants must provide a *showcase* highlighting this experience. If an application aims at more than one policy objective, the showcase should illustrate experience addressing the challenges connected to the selected policy objectives (see chapter 4).
- v. A **program proposal** of maximum 15 pages (see appendix 5, part B), consisting of the following components:
 - o General (i.e. non-country-specific) problem analysis in relation to at least one of the policy objectives mentioned in chapter 4 (*either* policy objective 1, *or* policy objective 2 and/or policy objective 3).
 - o An intervention logic for the full grant period, consisting of:
 - A. Proposed combination of types of interventions (see chapter 5), with substantiation of the way in which these address the challenges identified;
 - B. the intended qualitative and/or quantitative outputs and outcomes to be achieved during the grant period, with corresponding success criteria and/or indicators;
 - o An overarching risk analysis (overview of contextual and programmatic risks) with associated mitigating measures;
 - o An action plan that clarifies in broad outlines how during the grant period the intervention logic will be translated into operational plans, including:
 - A. an explanation of the way in which during the grant period decisions will be made, such as on (additional) country-specific interventions;
 - B. an explanation of the way in which information gathered and lessons learned will be used effectively to make adjustments to interventions if needed.
- vi. A **budget** for the first 12 months, including a financial estimate for the remainder of the period covered by the application, drawn up in accordance with the mandatory format included in appendix 5, part C. The budget provides insight into income, including contributions from third parties, and expenses related to the planned activities.
- vii. An **Organisational Risk and Integrity Assessment (ORIA)** (appendix 2.3), or an ORIA update form (appendix 2.1), or an ORIA light form (appendix 2.2). In the ORIA assessment guidelines (appendix 2) explanation is provided as to which organization must submit which information.

11. Application procedure

Grant applications may be submitted from the date on which this Order enters into force until 11.59 am CET on 1 December 2023. Applications submitted after this date and time will be rejected. The time at which the application is received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be considered the time of submission (see below). The applicant bears sole responsibility for ensuring that the application is complete and submitted on time.

With regard to the application procedure, particular attention is drawn to article 7, paragraph 3, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree. If an application does not comply with the formal requirements set out in this grant policy framework, the Minister may request a supplement. In this case, the date and time of receipt of the application will be considered to be the date and time on which the supplemented application is received. The shorter the time remaining between submission of the application and the deadline, the greater the risk that, if the application is incomplete, the Minister will not use their discretionary powers to request a supplement; this in

connection with the time required to check all applications are complete. In this case, no supplement will be requested and the application will be assessed as it stands. This may lead to a lower ranking or even rejection of the application.

Applications should be complete and without reservations, signed by an officially authorised signatory (state name and position) on behalf of the applicant. It is not possible to submit a provisional application.

When drawing up the grant application, it is not sufficient to refer for the sake of brevity to other parts of the application or annexes, unless the application form explicitly states that this is wholly or partly acceptable. Incomplete applications – including applications lacking annexes – may be rejected.

Applications should be submitted in English. A translation should be added to annexes written in a language other than English. Applicants should not include additional information (such as USB sticks or links to background information about an organisation) with their application, as these will not be taken into account when assessing the application.

Applications should preferably be submitted by email in PDF format. Applications per e-mail are submitted by sending these to the following e-mail address: dsh-hh-subsidies@minbuza.nl with '*Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*' in the subject line.

The time when the e-mail is received on the servers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be considered the time of submission. Please note that the total size of attachments accepted by the Ministry's email server is 14MB. If the size of all attachments together is more than 14MB, these should be divided over separate e-mails. In this case, the time at which the last e-mail is received will be considered the time the application is submitted. If an application is split into several files which are sent in multiple e-mails, the e-mails must be numbered, with both the e-mail number and the total number of e-mails clearly indicated in the subject line.²⁶

Any technical or other issues relating to submission are at the applicant's own cost and risk.

Submitting applications by post is not recommended.²⁷ Applicants who nonetheless choose to submit applications by post or courier or in person should contact the Ministry at: dsh-hh-subsidies@minbuza.nl with '*Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*' in the subject line.

Questions concerning this document or any other matters will only be accepted if they are sent by e-mail to dsh-hh-subsidies@minbuza.nl, no later than 24 November 2023. Answers to questions - anonymised and, if necessary, aggregated - will be published biweekly (as much as possible) on <https://www.government.nl/documents/questions-and-answers/qa-strengthening-the-humanitarian-sector-programme>.

²⁶ E.g. 'email 1 of 5', 'email 2 of 5', etc.

²⁷ If the applicant nevertheless prefers this option, they should send their application by registered post to: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attn. Secretariaat DSH, referring to *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027*, Postbus 20061, 2500 EB Den Haag, The Netherlands. If an application is sent by standard post instead of registered post, the sender bears the full risk of it being received late or not at all. Applications sent by post (apart from those using a 'postage paid' envelope) and postmarked on a date before the application deadline are considered to have been submitted on time, provided they are received no later than one week after the deadline for applications has passed. Applications sent by post using a 'postage paid' envelope are considered to have been submitted on time if they are delivered to the Ministry before 11:59 am CET on 1 December 2023. An item is not considered received until it has been recorded by the Ministry's mail department. Incoming mail is not recorded in the evenings or at weekends.

12. Assessment procedure

12.1 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 under this grant policy framework. Applications will be assessed in accordance with the above legislation and pursuant to the criteria set out in this grant policy framework.

The applicant and all activities for which grant funding is sought must first satisfy all the threshold criteria listed in section 12.2. **Applications that fail to satisfy one or more of the threshold criteria will be rejected and will not be assessed any further.**

Applications that have passed the threshold test are subsequently subjected to a quality assessment based on the *quality assessment criteria* (see section 12.3). To qualify for a grant, an application must in any case be of sufficient quality (meaning that the application should have a score of at least 65% of the maximum number of points to be attained). The final selection of applications that are awarded a grant takes place according to the allocation mechanism laid down in chapter 8.

12.2 Threshold criteria

All applications received by the deadline will first be assessed on the basis of the threshold criteria below. Applications must satisfy all threshold criteria in order to be eligible for a grant.

Threshold criteria concerning the applicant:

- D1. The applicant is a non-governmental organization (NGO)²⁸.
- D2. The applicant submits the application as an independent applicant, not on behalf of a consortium.
- D3.
 - a) The applicant implements programs, or has done so, and/or has active networks in countries currently and/or regularly affected by humanitarian crises;
 - b) The applicant has connections to international humanitarian networks and organizations that play a role in regional and/or global processes and negotiations on humanitarian action.
- D4. Apparent from its vision document or its multi-annual strategy, the applicant has a substantial focus on one or more of the specific policy objectives of this grant policy framework: (i) More effective application of humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law, enabling more humanitarian responders to do their work safely and access populations in need; (ii) Increasingly, in response to crises caused by people as well, anticipatory humanitarian action is undertaken, reducing the upward pressure on humanitarian needs; (iii) A more equal dialogue among all partners throughout the humanitarian delivery chain about cooperation and the sharing of capacity and risks, facilitating increased local leadership of humanitarian action.
- D5. The applicant has at least three years of knowledge and experience with interventions that address at least one of the challenges described in chapter 4: (i) obstacles to humanitarian access; (ii) growing humanitarian needs due to insufficient analysis and use of data for anticipatory humanitarian action in response to crises caused or exacerbated by people; and/or (iii) insufficient scope for strong local leadership, due to lack of equal dialogue and collaboration throughout the humanitarian delivery chain, particularly with regard to sharing capacity and risks.
- D6. In the 2020-2022 period, on average at least 25 % of the total annual income of the applicant has come from sources other than direct or indirect grants and/or contributions from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including missions).

²⁸ See definition in chapter 2.

D7.

- a) The gross remuneration of individual management and board members of an applicant legally established in the Netherlands or in another EU member state must not exceed €205,000 (gross) per calendar year, as from the start of the period for which the grant is being requested.²⁹

For applicants legally established in an EU member state that does not use the euro, this amount is converted into local currency using the Ministry corporate rates (appendix 3 to these administrative rules) as of 1 January 2023.

- b) The gross remuneration of individual management and board members of an applicant legally established in the United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland, Japan, US or Canada must not exceed, per calendar year, as from the start of the period for which the grant is being requested:³⁰

- United Kingdom GBP 177,136;
- Norway NOK 2,427,977;
- Switzerland CHF 313,392;
- Japan YEN 28,500,537;
- US/Canada USD 243,013.

- c) The gross remuneration³¹ of individual management and board members of an applicant legally established in other countries must not exceed, per calendar year, the amount specified for the country in question in appendix 4 to these administrative rules, as from the start of the period for which the grant is being requested

D8. The applicant has not previously submitted an application for a grant under the present *Strengthening the Humanitarian Sector 2024-2027* grant framework.

D9. The applicant is capable of proper financial management and its expertise can ensure effective and efficient implementation of the activities for which grant funding is sought.

D10. The applicant has adopted an integrity policy and has introduced procedures to apply that policy. The integrity policy should include pre-employment screening and the necessary procedures to apply the policy. This integrity policy and these procedures should serve to prevent as far as possible any sexual misconduct, racism and other serious forms of inappropriate behaviour towards employees and other individuals during the implementation of the proposed activities by the applicant and other parties they involve in the activities, and in the event of such incidents ensure that they are investigated and appropriate measures are taken to put an end as promptly as possible to the misconduct or inappropriate behaviour and mitigate the consequences. These procedures must be structured in a way that guarantees prompt reporting of any such incidents to the Minister.

Threshold criteria on the activities for which a grant is sought:

D11. The application is aimed at
either policy objective 1 ('humanitarian access'),

²⁹ For further technical details on this criterion (such as employment and the constituent components of the amount, see D.7 in the application form. The remuneration ceilings for organisations established in these countries have been adjusted based on purchasing power data published by EUROSTAT (comparative price levels 2022), See: [Statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat).

³⁰ For further technical details on this criterion (such as employment and the constituent components of the amount, see D.7 in the application form. The remuneration ceilings for organisations established in these countries have been adjusted based on purchasing power data published by EUROSTAT (comparative price levels 2022), See: [Statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat).

³¹ For further technical details on this criterion (such as employment and the constituent components of the amount, see D.7 in the application form.

or policy objective 2 ('anticipatory humanitarian action in response to crises caused or exacerbated by people') and/or policy objective 3 ('local leadership through risk- and capacity sharing')

D12. The application contains one comprehensive intervention logic, regardless of the number of policy objectives it aims to address.

D13. The application contains a combined set of interventions aimed at both local/national as well as regional/global level (see for interventions paragraph 5.1).

D14. The application is not aimed at the direct provision of humanitarian aid, with the exception of direct humanitarian aid that forms part of initiatives under policy objectives 2 or 3, if used to test and disseminate new ways of working with regard to these policy objectives, and if provided in countries that are mentioned in the most recent *List of Recipients of Official Development Assistance* as established by the *Development Assistance Committee (DAC)* of the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance*.

D15. The application is not aimed at one country or crisis only.

D16. The application seeks funding amounting to:

- a) for grant applications aimed at policy objective 1: a minimum of €3 mln and a maximum of €5 mln;
- b) for grant applications aimed at policy objective 2 or 3: a minimum of €8 mln and a maximum of €20 mln;
- c) for grant applications aimed at policy objective 2 and 3: a minimum of €10 mln and a maximum of €24 mln.

D17. The activities for which grant funding is sought concern a period of no less than 42 and no more than 48 months.

D18. The activities start no earlier than 1 January 2024 and end no later than 31 December 2027.

D19. The following activities are not eligible for a grant:

- a) proselytism;
- b) commercial activities;
- c) activities which already receive grant funding or a contribution directly or indirectly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

12.3 Quality criteria

Applications that satisfy the threshold criteria will be assessed on the basis of the following quality criteria. There are quality criteria for the track record and quality criteria for the program proposal, including criteria for the overall consistency and impact of the proposed interventions. For each set of criteria, the percentage of the total possible score that can be attained for those criteria has been indicated.

A. Track Record (25% of total points)

The quality of the track record is assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The extent to which the applicant has effective experience with interventions that are relevant for achieving the objectives aimed at by this grant policy framework (see chapter 4);

2. The extent to which the applicant has effective experience contributing to strengthening or changing the humanitarian sector, not only with regards to one or a few crises, but also in humanitarian action at a global level.

Program proposal (75% of total points)

The quality of the program proposal (including intervention logic) will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

3. The extent to which the global (not country-specific) problem analysis is consistent with the policy objective(s) of the grant policy framework (chapter 4) aimed at by the applicant.
4. The extent to which the choice of the policy objective(s) being pursued follows logically from the applicant’s Track Record and Strategic Plan or vision/mission document.
5. The extent to which the intervention logic contributes to achieving the selected policy objective(s) of the grant policy framework (chapter 4), as shown by:
 - alignment with the problem analysis;
 - intended outcomes and outputs (with success criteria or indicators);
 - intended interaction and complementarity between efforts at local/national and at regional/global level.
6. The extent to which the knowledge and/or ways of working to be developed through the proposed interventions will remain applicable and/or will continue to have an effect, after completion of the proposed program.
7. The extent to which the risks to the proposed interventions have been identified and are addressed with adequate mitigation measures.
8. The extent to which the decision-making mechanisms with regards to activities that cannot yet be fully identified at the moment of submission of the application, ensure a high level of achievement of the policy objectives for which the application is submitted.
9. The extent to which the system for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) is sufficient for monitoring progress and making adjustments to resources, activities, outputs, outcomes and underlying assumptions.

13. Timetable

Submission of grant application	From date on which Order on this grant policy framework enters into force	Until 11:59 am CET on 1 December 2023
Decision on timely submitted applications	No later than 1 March 2024	

14. Reporting and other grant obligations

The grant decision will set out obligations tied to the grant. These obligations will include among others an obligation to notify the ministry of facts and circumstances that may have a significant impact on the grant, such as the applicant’s temporary or complete/partial inability to implement the activities for which a grant is awarded, and obligations to submit accountability reports, including interim and final narrative and financial reports.

Unless the grant period is extended, any funds remaining at the end of the duration of the grant decision will flow back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An obligation to this effect will also be included in the grant award decision.

15. Administrative burden

The administrative burden of the implementation of this grant policy framework will amount to €1.8 million for the entire grant period. The administrative burden consists of work associated with the obligations to provide information as part of the application process and, if a grant is awarded, the work involved in meeting the reporting obligations under the grant. €1.8 million amounts to 3% of the total grant budget. This calculation is based on an estimate that no more than 25 organisations will be interested in the grant policy framework and will submit an application for which a grant can be awarded.

In drafting the grant policy framework, critical attention has been paid, first, to ensuring that the criteria for grant applicants and the intended results are clearly formulated, and second, to providing clarity about how the grants awarded will be funded and accounted for. This should enable applicants to assess the likelihood that submitting an application will lead to the award of a grant. In this way the Ministry aims to keep the administrative burden for applicants to a minimum.

16. Appendices:

1. Application form
2. *ORIA-assessment guidelines*, including:
 - 2.1 ORIA Update form
 - 2.2 ORIA Light form
 - 2.3 Full ORIA form
3. *Corporate rates 2023*
4. *Maximum Remuneration 2023*
5. Templates
 - 5.1 Track Record
 - 5.2 Program Proposal
 - 5.3 Budget