

Human Rights Fund Grant Policy Framework 2019-2021

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Financial resources, allocation and timetable	3
3. Selection criteria and procedure	5
4. Themes	7
5. Formal application requirements and further procedure	10
6. Threshold criteria	13
7. Substantive criteria	16

Human Rights Fund Grant Policy Framework 2019-2021

1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance for the Dutch human rights policy

Human rights are the cornerstone of human dignity, freedom and development, and form the basis for open and free societies all over the world. There can be no democracy or rule of law if these rights are not promoted and protected. The Netherlands has a rich tradition of defending human rights, both at home and abroad. Doing so is a moral and legal obligation. Moreover, respect for human rights leads to a more stable and prosperous world, which also benefits the Netherlands. Several policy priorities and their objectives have been drafted for Dutch human rights policy. These priorities have been included in the 2017 Human Rights Report providing an update of Dutch human rights policy.¹

The Human Rights Fund was established to provide grants to organisations that work to promote human rights worldwide. It is used to finance activities that support the priorities set out in the aforementioned 2017 Human Rights Report.

The Human Rights Fund Grant Policy Framework 2019-2021 (MRF 2019-2021) is part of the overarching Human Rights Fund. MRF 2019-2021 grants are intended for activities relating to the following themes:

- Freedom of expression
- Internet freedom
- Freedom of religion and belief
- Human rights defenders
- Equal rights for LGBTI persons
- Promotion of the international legal order / The fight against impunity

It must be noted that these themes, which form the focus for the MRF 2019-2021, do not correspond exactly to the priorities set out in the 2017 Human Rights Report. The theme of equal rights for women and girls has been incorporated into the specific objectives of the other themes. Moreover, in order to be eligible for an MRF 2019-2021 grant, projects must address one or more of the objectives formulated for the selected theme.

1.2 Reading guide

Chapter 2 provides information on the financial resources available and the timetable. Chapter 3 provides general information on the selection criteria and the selection process. Chapter 4 looks at the programme's overall and specific objectives for each of the themes which are to be pursued with the grant funding, and chapter 5 explains the formal application requirements and the further procedure. Finally, the last two chapters set out the applicable threshold criteria (chapter 6) and substantive criteria (chapter 7).

¹ Letter to parliament on the 2017 Human Rights Report (Parliamentary Paper 32 735, no. 198).

2. Financial resources, allocation and timetable

2.1 Available resources

A total of €23 million is available under the MRF 2019-2021. The minimum grant amount for MRF 2019-2021 is €1 million and the maximum €3 million. Projects must have a duration of between two and four years. Projects must start between 1 April 2019 and 1 October 2020, and end no later than 1 October 2024.

2.2 Allocation of available resources

Funds are allocated in the order that applications are received, on the understanding that the total available funds have already been divided among the MRF 2019-2021 themes and that the order of receipt is thus determined separately for each theme. To be eligible for an MRF 2019-2021 grant, applications must be related to one of the themes below. For more information on these themes, see chapter 4.

The total funding available is divided among the themes as follows:

Theme	Available funding
Freedom of expression	€4m
Internet freedom	€2m
Freedom of religion and belief	€6m
Human rights defenders	€2.5m
Equal rights for LGBTI persons	€6m
Promotion of the international legal order / The fight against impunity	€2.5m
Total	€23m

This division of funding reflects a particular focus on freedom of religion and belief, the position of journalists and equal rights for LGBTI persons.

Under the theme of freedom of religion and belief, the aim will be to award at least one grant, provided an eligible application along these lines is received, for activities with the specific objective of promoting freedom of religion and belief, especially for vulnerable groups such as women and girls and LGBTI persons from around the world.

Under the theme of freedom of expression, the aim will be to award at least one grant, provided an eligible application along these lines is received, for activities with the specific objective of promoting the safety of journalists, especially female journalists.

Under the theme of human rights defenders, the aim will be to award at least one grant, provided an eligible application along these lines is received, for activities with the specific objective of supporting human rights defenders from around the world by offering them

temporary relocation to the Netherlands in combination with a customised training programme.

Under the theme of internet freedom, the aim will be to award at least one grant, provided an eligible application along these lines is received, for activities with the specific objective of enhancing the digital security of human rights defenders from around the world by offering financial support in emergencies and offering organisations guidance in recovering from a digital emergency.

Until at least one project proposal for each of these four specific objectives has been approved for a grant, proposals along these lines will be given priority in the allocation of the available resources. If no complete project proposal for each of these four specific objectives is submitted in the first four weeks of the MRF 2019-2021 funding round, the available resources will be allocated to other project proposals.

2.3 Simultaneous receipt of applications

If awarding grants to applications received simultaneously would result in the grant ceiling for any given theme being exceeded, those applications will be ranked according to the degree to which they meet the criteria set out in this grant policy framework. The application that meets these criteria best will be given priority in the award of grants. If two or more applications meet the criteria in equal measure, they will be ranked by drawing lots.

2.4 Exhaustion of funds

For each theme, applications will be assessed in the order in which they are received. Once funds appear to have been exhausted by applications that have successfully met the threshold and substantive criteria, the processing of applications received from that point on will be suspended. Only if an earlier application that satisfied the threshold and substantive criteria fails the organisational check (see section 3.7) will the processing of applications be resumed, by theme, in the order in which they were received.

2.5 Residual funds

Following the approval of one or more applications for a particular theme, funds amounting to less than €1 million (the minimum amount that can be applied for) may be left over. As the minimum grant amount is €1 million, no additional projects can be approved for that theme.

2.6 ODA and non-ODA

This grant framework applies to activities that promote respect for human rights, including both activities that fall under ODA expenditure in accordance with the OECD-DAC criteria²

² <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistance/definitionandcoverage.htm>.

and activities that cannot be categorised as such. It must be noted that there is no country list for the MRF 2019-2021. Projects may be carried out worldwide, and must in any case involve activities in at least two different countries anywhere in the world. However, the choice of countries must satisfy certain substantive requirements (see criterion I.3).

2.7 Deadline for submissions

Grant applications may be submitted from 9:00 CET on the first working day after the date on which MRF 2019-2021 is published, until 23:59 CET on 1 July 2020. A decision will be made on a grant application within 13 weeks of its receipt.

It should be noted that, as applications are assessed based on the order of receipt, the resources available for the various themes may be exhausted before 1 July 2020. If this occurs for a particular theme, an announcement will be published on the website³ and applications for that theme will be rejected without being substantively assessed.

3. Selection criteria and procedure

3.1 Who are MRF 2019-2021 grants for?

MRF 2019-2021 grants are intended for projects run by independent, not-for-profit civil society organisations with legal personality that work in a result-oriented way to protect and promote human rights. In this framework, a 'civil society organisation' (CSO) is a not-for-profit organisation, neither established by a government body nor linked to a government body either de facto or under its constitution, which is a legal person under civil law.

Organisations can submit a grant application independently or form part of a consortium in a joint application. A consortium is a partnership between two or more civil society organisations, as defined above, that are carrying out a joint project to which each partner contributes and that have concluded a cooperation agreement for this purpose. The lead party submits the grant application on behalf of the consortium. If the application is approved, the lead party is responsible for implementation of the consortium's project and for compliance with the obligations associated with the grant.

Applicants may form a partnership with other not-for-profit organisations or businesses to implement the whole project or some of its parts. Such partnerships are not consortia in the sense as described above, but partnerships with local organisations, for instance, which implement certain parts of the project at local level.

3.2 Minimum thematic requirements

To be eligible for an MRF 2019-2021 grant, at least 80% of the funds needed to implement the project must be intended for activities aimed at outputs and outcomes relating to one

³ <https://www.government.nl/topics/human-rights/human-rights-fund>

or more of the specific objectives for the theme in question, as defined in chapter 4 of this grant policy framework.

The remaining part of the funds, minus the overhead costs, must also go towards activities aimed at achieving the overall objective for the chosen theme, but need not focus exclusively on any of the specific objectives for that theme.

The aforementioned percentage is calculated using the logframe and refers to the sum of funds needed for the activities, outputs and outcomes⁴ with regard to the specific objective(s) in view.

A definition of overhead costs can be found in the 'definition of administrative costs allowance' in appendix I.

3.3 Formal requirements

To be eligible for an MRF 2019-2021 grant, applications must meet the formal requirements given in chapter 5.

3.4 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 MRF 2019-2021 applications and the ultimate award of the grant. Applications will be assessed in accordance with the abovementioned legislation and pursuant to the criteria set out in this grant policy framework.

There are two sets of criteria: the threshold criteria, assessed in the first stage, and the substantive criteria, assessed in the second stage. Only applications that satisfy the threshold criteria go on to the second stage of assessment, which considers the track record of the applicant/lead party and any co-applicants and the quality of the project proposal.

3.5 Threshold criteria

To be eligible for an MRF 2019-2021 grant, the applicant/lead party and all co-applicants as well as the project for which grant funding is requested, must in any case satisfy all the threshold criteria (D.1 to D.12, chapter 6). Applications that fail to meet one or more threshold criteria will be rejected and will not be processed further. The threshold criteria relate to the applying organisations (applicant/lead party and co-applicants) and to the project itself.

3.6 Substantive criteria

⁴ For definitions of 'outputs' and 'outcomes', see: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>

Applications that meet the threshold criteria are then assessed against the substantive criteria (I.1 to I.9, chapter 7).

In order to qualify for an MRF 2019-2021 grant, applications must be of *good quality*. This is expressed in a score. Applications must score at least 80% of the possible total number of points and must in addition achieve a minimum score on various individual criteria (these 'hard criteria' are specified in chapter 7 of these administrative rules). This should ensure that the applications selected are not only of sufficient quality, but also distinct themselves in a positive manner regarding the promotion and protection of human rights.

3.7 Organisational capacity

To be eligible for an MRF 2019-2021 grant, the applicant/lead party must be capable of adequate financial management and, based on relevant expertise, of ensuring effective and efficient implementation of the activities for which grant funding is being sought.⁵

The applicant must also demonstrate that it has, and in the case of a consortium that all co-applicants have, adopted an integrity policy and that it has/they have introduced procedures to apply that policy. This integrity policy and these procedures should prevent as much as possible any sexual misconduct and other serious forms of inappropriate behaviour towards employees and other individuals during the implementation of the proposed activities by the lead party, its co-applicants and other parties they involve in the activities, and in the event of such incidents, to investigate and take appropriate measures 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.

Applicants' organisational capacity and integrity policy are only checked in the case of applications that have passed the threshold check and have a sufficiently high score on the substantive criteria to be eligible for a grant. These applicants will thereafter be invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to demonstrate that they have sufficient organisational capacity and an adequate integrity policy. If this is shown to be the case, their application will be eligible for a grant. If not, then the application will be rejected. Applications will also be rejected if any additional information requested for the purposes of the organisational capacity and integrity check is not provided or not provided in time.

3.8 Timeframe for decision

A decision will be made on a grant application within 13 weeks of its receipt.

4. Themes

⁵ See article 4 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree.

For additional information about the Dutch human rights policy, please consult the 2017 Human Rights Report and other sources that provide updates of domestic and international human rights policy and its results.⁶

As mentioned earlier, a number of themes have been selected for the MRF 2019-2021. The overall objective for each of the themes is described below. To be eligible for an MRF 2019-2021 grant, applications must focus on one of these themes (as stated in chapter 2), and the overall objective and specific objectives for that theme.

At least 80% of the funds needed to implement the project must be intended for activities aimed at outputs and outcomes relating to one or more of the specific objectives for the theme in question. The overall and specific objectives must always be understood within the context of the Human Rights Report.

The extent to which a proposed project contributes to the overall objective of the chosen theme is assessed under criterion 1.2. It should be noted that, for each theme, the specific objectives fall under the overall objective.

- Freedom of expression
- Internet freedom
- Freedom of religion and belief
- Human rights defenders
- Equal rights for LGBTI persons
- Promotion of the international legal order / The fight against impunity

Freedom of expression
Proposals for grants under this theme must pursue the overall objective of promoting freedom of expression, including freedom of the press.
The specific objectives are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote the access to information in the countries, and/or • to promote the safety of journalists, especially female journalists, and/or • to prevent the impunity of violence against journalists, and/or • to promote the sustainable financial independence of media in countries that are ODA-eligible under the OECD-DAC criteria.

Internet freedom
For Dutch policy on this theme please consult, alongside the 2017 Human Rights Report, the International Cyber Strategy 'Building Digital Bridges'. ⁷

⁶ Letter to parliament on the 2017 Human Rights Report (Parliamentary Paper 32 735, no. 198.).

⁷ <https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documents/parliamentary-documents/2017/02/12/international-cyber-strategy/International+Cyber+Strategy.pdf>

Proposals for grants under this theme must pursue the **overall objective** of promoting respect for human rights online and/or improving the online freedom and safety of human rights defenders around the world.

The **specific objectives** are:

- to enhance the digital security of human rights defenders by offering financial support in emergencies and offering organisations guidance in recovering from a digital emergency, and/or
- to promote expertise in the area of internet freedom and the availability of that expertise for human rights defenders, and/or
- to promote research into the impact of legislation on internet freedom, and to encourage the dissemination and/or application of the results, and/or
- to promote the development of policy and legislation that is favourable for internet freedom, and/or
- to encourage private sector involvement in promoting internet freedom.

Freedom of religion and belief

Proposals for grants under this theme must pursue the **overall objective** of promoting every individual's freedom to express their identity, as informed by religious or other beliefs.

The **specific objectives** are:

- to combat discrimination, violence and persecution on the basis of religion or belief, and/or
- to promote freedom of religion and belief, especially for vulnerable groups such as women and girls and LGBTI persons.

Human rights defenders

Proposals for grants under this theme must pursue the **overall objective** of protecting and supporting human rights defenders around the world, so that they can continue to work on the promotion of civil and political and socioeconomic human rights as effectively as possible.

The **specific objectives** are:

- to support human rights defenders from around the world by offering them temporary relocation to the Netherlands in combination with a customised training programme, and/or
- to enhance the capacity of human rights defenders to operate in a restrictive environment and to deal with restrictions of the social space (online and offline) that are in violation of international human rights standards, and/or
- to expand public support for human rights defenders locally, including by rebutting news reports that serve to promote policy that is in violation of international human rights standards, and/or

- to promote the safety of female human rights defenders and to support them in order to reduce gender-specific risks, and/or
- to promote the safety and support of human rights defenders, especially environmental and land rights activists.

Equal rights for LGBTI persons

Proposals for grants under this theme must pursue the **overall objective** of promoting equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons worldwide.

The **specific objectives** are:

- to combat discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and/or
- to abolish the criminalisation of homosexuality, and/or
- to promote social acceptance of LGBTI persons, and/or
- to encourage private sector involvement in respecting and promoting equal rights for LGBTI persons.

Promotion of the international legal order / The fight against impunity

Proposals for grants under this theme must pursue the **overall objective** of fighting impunity of international crimes, notably genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, with a particular focus for the interests of victims and witnesses.

The **specific objectives** are:

- to enhance international or hybrid tribunals and evidence-gathering mechanisms that focus on international crimes, and/or
- to promote public support for international or hybrid tribunals and evidence-gathering mechanisms that focus on international crimes, and/or
- to enhance the position of victims and witnesses of international crimes in international and/or hybrid tribunals, and/or
- to promote the collection and documentation of evidence in relation to international crimes.

5. Formal application requirements and further procedure

- 1.1 Grant applications may be submitted from the time this grant framework takes effect (9:00 CET on the first working day after the day on which MRF 2019-2021 is published) until 23:59 CET on 1 July 2020. Applications submitted after this deadline will be rejected, even if the available funds have not yet been exhausted. The applicant bears sole responsibility for ensuring that the application is complete and submitted on time. Given that applications will be processed in the order in which they are received and that a grant ceiling exists, MRF 2019-2021 funds may

already be exhausted before the deadline noted above has been reached. If this occurs, subsequent applications will be rejected for that reason.

- 1.2 Applications must be submitted using an application form provided for this purpose by the ministers, where all the criteria have been mentioned again, including explanations. The application form can be found on <https://www.government.nl/topics/human-rights/human-rights-fund>. Subsequently, the application needs to be accompanied by the appendices specified in the application form.
- 1.3 Applications that do not meet the formal requirements set out in this chapter will not be processed. However, applicants will be given the opportunity to remedy this in accordance with section 4:5 of the General Administrative Law Act. Failure to do so within the given time period, means the application will not be processed.

Particular attention is given to article 7, paragraph 3 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree in this regard. If an applicant uses the opportunity provided for in section 4:5 of the General Administrative Law Act, the date on which the supplementary information is received will be taken as the date of receipt of the application.

- 1.4 When drafting the application, it is not sufficient to refer for the sake of brevity to other parts of the application, websites or annexes, unless the application form clearly states that this is wholly or partly acceptable. If parts of the application form are incomplete or mandatory annexes are not submitted, the applicant risks a lower score or even rejection of the application.
- 1.5 It is expressly preferenced that applications are submitted via e-mail and in .pdf format. Applications via e-mail are submitted by sending these to the e-mail address: MRF2019-2021@minbuza.nl

The time at which the e-mail is received on the servers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including all mandatory annexes, will be considered the time the application is submitted. Be aware that files larger than 14MB cannot be received. Therefore, e-mails larger than 14MB must be divided into smaller e-mails. The time at which the whole application is received, including the last e-mail, will be considered the time the application is submitted. The e-mails must also be numbered in the subject-line, where it must be made clear out of how many e-mails the application consists.

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

- 1.6 Submitting applications by post is not recommended. However, if the applicant prefers this option, a printed copy of the digital application can be submitted by registered post to the following address:

DMM Secretariat
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 attn. Human Rights Fund 2019-2021
 Postbus 20061
 2500 EB The Hague

If an application is sent by standard post instead of registered post, the sender bears the risk of it being received late or not at all by the Ministry.

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 23:59 CET on 1 July 2020. 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.

1.7 Applications must be submitted complete and without reservations, signed by an officially authorised signatory (state name and position) on behalf of the applicant.

1.8 It is not possible to submit a provisional application.

1.9 Applications must be submitted in Dutch or English. A Dutch or English translation should be added to annexes written in another language than Dutch or English.

Applicants should not include informative or illustrative books, CD-ROMs, USB sticks or DVDs about their organisation with their application, as those will not be assessed.

1.10 Applications received after the available funds appear to have been exhausted on the basis of the results of assessed applications submitted earlier, will not be processed, unless funds once again become available as a result of earlier applicants not passing the organisational capacity and integrity check.

1.11 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 incomplete application is submitted, the Minister may request a supplement. In this case, the date and time of receipt of the application will be the date and time on which the supplemented application was received. Incomplete or insufficiently reasoned applications may be rejected based on the threshold or substantive criteria.

1.12 Particular attention is drawn to article 9 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree. Applications concerning activities that have already been started at the time

that the grant application is submitted, will be rejected. Projects must start no earlier than 1 April 2019.

- 1.13 Questions concerning this document or any other matters will only be accepted if they are sent to MRF2019-2021@minbuza.nl. If necessary, questions will be aggregated and anonymised and published once a week, with answers, on the Q&A section of the Human Rights Fund website.⁸

6. Threshold criteria

The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party and all co-applicants, as well as the project for which a grant application is being submitted must meet all the threshold criteria below. If an application fails to meet one or more threshold criteria, it will be rejected and will not be processed further. Please note that applications must be made using the application form and that referring for the sake of brevity to other parts of the application, websites or annexes is not sufficient. The application form explains in greater detail how applicants should demonstrate their compliance with a criterion.

6.1 Threshold criteria concerning the organisation

D.1 Civil society organisation

The applicant is or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party and co-applicants each are a civil society organisation. A 'civil society organisation' (CSO) is a not-for-profit organisation which has legal personality under civil law and is neither established by a government body nor linked to a government body either de facto or under its constitution.

D.2 Objective

The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party and all co-applicants must work to improve human rights as defined in the overall and specific objectives under chapter 4.

D.3 Consortium

Applications by consortia must include a consortium agreement, signed by all the consortium partners (lead party and co-applicants) involved, laying down in any case:

- how each of the consortium partners will contribute to the consortium's activities;
- how decisions are made within the consortium;
- how costs and risks are shared among the consortium partners;
- how the fulfilment of obligations towards the Minister in respect of the grant will be ensured by the lead party, including responsibility for the joint aggregated reports;
- how the lead party and co-applicants will keep each other informed about, in particular, their financial health;

⁸ <https://www.government.nl/topics/human-rights/human-rights-fund>

- how the partnership can be adapted;
- the role of the lead party and each of the co-applicants in monitoring and evaluating progress in the activities for which a grant has been received.

D.4 Local implementing organisation

In the case of cooperation with one or more local implementing organisations that are not part of the consortium within the meaning of criterion D.3, the application must in any case:

- state the implementing organisation's name and contact details and information proving the organisation has legal personality;
- provide an explanation, with reasons, of the organisation's capacity to implement the project, in any case demonstrating that the organisation has experience with the theme or region in question, or both;
- provide the applicant's reasoned opinion on this organisation's reliability and stability.

D.5 Financial independence

Over the last two years for which annual accounts with an unqualified audit report are available, at least 25% of the applicant organisation's total annual income must have come from sources other than derived directly or indirectly from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the budget for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. Grants awarded under MRF 2019-2021 will not on an average annual basis exceed 75% of the applicant's average total annual income (based on the two most recent sets of annual accounts with an unqualified audit report). For applications by a consortium, this criterion applies to the consortium as a whole. Consequently, if one consortium partner derives less than 25% of its annual income from sources other than Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributions, this may be compensated by another consortium partner.

D.6 Remuneration

A. The maximum remuneration of individual management and board members of the applicant established in the Netherlands, or in case of a consortium, lead party and any co-applicants, does not exceed €181,000 (gross) per calendar year for a 36-hour working week, as from the start of the period for which the grant is being requested. This amount includes:

1. the total of periodically paid salary, shares of profits and bonus payments;
2. taxable fixed and variable expense allowances;
3. payments made at set times of year, such as holiday pay, 13th month's salary, the employer's share of pension contributions, etc.

B. This criterion also applies to applicants/lead parties and co-applicants established in other EU member states that use the euro. For applicants/lead parties and co-applicants

established in EU member states that do not use the euro and for applicants from non-EU countries, this amount is converted into local currency using the Ministry corporate rates (see appendix II) as at 1 January 2019.

C. With reference to the data on purchasing power published by EUROSTAT (comparative price levels for 2017), the following income ceilings based on a 36-hour working week apply to the senior management of organisations established in the following countries:

- Norway NOK 2,343,565;
- Switzerland CHF 295,399;
- Japan YEN 23,203,761;
- US/Canada USD 217,310.

D. From the start of the requested grant period, the maximum remuneration of individual managers and board members of an applicant/lead party and any co-applicants established in other countries must be in reasonable proportion to the seniority of their position, the geographical location and to the organisation's size and complexity.

D.7 Courts and tribunals

International courts and tribunals are not eligible for financing under this fund.

6.2 Threshold criteria concerning the project

D.8 Thematic focus

At least 80% of the funds needed to implement the project must be intended for activities aimed at outputs and outcomes relating to one or more of the specific objectives under one of the following themes, as defined in chapter 4 of this grant policy framework:

- Freedom of expression
- Internet freedom
- Freedom of religion and belief
- Human rights defenders
- Equal rights for LGBTI persons
- Promotion of the international legal order / The fight against impunity

D.9 Scope and duration

The minimum grant amount is €1 million and the maximum €3 million. Projects must have a duration of at least two years but no more than four years.

D.10 Grant period

The activities must start no earlier than 1 April 2019 and no later than 1 October 2020, and end no later than 1 October 2024. Activities that have already been started at the time that the application is submitted are not eligible for a grant.

D.11 Countries where activities will be implemented

The project budget must result in outcomes relating to promoting and improving the human rights situation worldwide or in at least two different countries. The percentage of the total budget to be spent in each country on the intended outcomes is at least: $100\% / (\text{number of countries in the application} \times 2)$.

D.12 Activities not eligible for funding

The activities for which grant funding is sought must not concern:

- initiatives aimed wholly or partly at proselytisation;
- the funding of commercial services, investments or commercial activities;
- activities which already receive grant funding or a contribution directly or indirectly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget;
- activities of organisations already receiving core funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of which the grant period extends into the MRF 2019-2021 grant period.

7. Substantive criteria

Only applications assessed as good are eligible for a grant. This is determined on the basis of the substantive criteria. Applications must score at least 80% of the maximum possible score. Criteria I.2, I.3 and I.8 are 'hard criteria', on which applications must earn a certain minimum score or be rejected.

7.1 Track record

I.1 The applicant/lead party or the consortium as a whole has demonstrated that it is capable of achieving planned outputs and outcomes and has at least two years' experience with the theme in question and one year's experience in the countries proposed.

7.2 Policy-related criteria concerning the project

The application must describe the intended changes to be achieved through the project with regard to promoting, protecting and improving human rights, as defined in the overall and specific objectives in chapter 4. Applications' policy relevance will be assessed on the basis of the criteria below.

I.2 Logical coherence and thematic relevance

a. The project is based on a thorough context and actor analysis, from which an adequate problem definition, the proposed (innovative) intervention strategy and outcomes have been derived. It is clear how the project will contribute to the overall and specific objectives

for the MRF 2019-2021 theme in question, worldwide or in each of the countries. The project must be feasible, and it must be clear to what extent results of evaluations, pilots, studies, etc. have been incorporated into the project design.

b. The project is SMART⁹ wherever possible, and provides a detailed description of resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, assumptions and indicators, in a way that ensures these components form a logical and coherent whole. Applicants should use the logframe format published as appendix III on the website,¹⁰ making clear how each point corresponds to the budget.

I.3 Relevance of the countries and regions selected

The countries selected for implementation of the proposed project are a logical combination. Moreover, the human rights situation and the quality of the rule of law in these countries justify the project activities, and the project has added value there. For applications with a worldwide focus, this criterion applies to the method that will be used at the start of the project to select countries or regions.

I.4 Local implementing organisations

In the case of cooperation with one or more local implementing organisations (as referred to in criterion D.4), these organisations:

- must have exerted effective influence over the development and content of the project;
- must have effective influence over the way the activities are monitored and managed.

I.5 Sustainability

The project is sustainable: it will produce a long lasting effect for the ultimate target group and/or help build the institutional capacity of the local implementing organisation(s), and/or strengthen the rule of law, and/or increase public support for the protection of human rights.

7.3 Technical criteria concerning the project and the organisation

I.6 PME system

The Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (PME) system is sufficient for monitoring progress and corrective action in terms of resources, activities, outputs, outcomes and the underlying assumptions.

I.7 Risk management

⁹ SMART stands for: Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic and Time-related.

¹⁰ <https://www.government.nl/topics/human-rights/human-rights-fund>

During the project, (1) an adequate analysis has been made of the internal and external risks – including digital risks and risks with regard to information management – and results for the implementing organisation and the activities, and (2) steps have been taken to mitigate those risks as much as possible.

I.8 Additional funding

The resources which, complementary to the requested grant, are necessary for the implementation of the project, must be guaranteed.

I.9 Budget and proportionality

The project makes a clear and realistic connection between the resources necessary for the activities to be implemented and the outputs and outcomes to be achieved. The budget also demonstrably corresponds to the logframe.