Strengthening Civil Society Policy Framework: Questions and Answers (Round 2) - February 2020

The Ministry has received a second batch of questions, based on the publication of the application portal for the grant instruments Strengthening Civil Society. The questions are answered below. As announced, the Ministry only answered questions which were technical and related to submitting applications via the online website. Questions regarding the content of the grant instrument were already answered in the first round (see link: https://www.government.nl/documents/policy-notes/2019/11/28/policy-framework-strengthening-civil-society). Please note that there will not be a third round of questions.

If you face any technical problems (for example: creating an account, logging in) please contact support@worth.systems.

General

1. For being able to login for the application portal, a person needs to register itself first. During my registration, I got the message "This user does not belong to an organization" (see attached picture), while I do belong to an organization (organization xx). I however could not change this setting: Would this not affect our organization's application, which I will fill in (based on my account) for my organization?

No, this will not affect your application, this text is a standard text under account settings.

2. The explanation on https://vmm.bzforms.mfaservices.nl/explanation/vmm-pov mentions that the ToC must be submitted in Word format, while https://vmm.bzforms.mfaservices.nl/vmm-pov/5783013497/Uploads/POV/Upload mentions that the ToC must be submitted in pdf format, and only allows pdfs to be uploaded. (A) We kindly request that this discrepancy is solved by modifying the text on https://vmm.bzforms.mfaservices.nl/explanation/vmm-pov so that the ToC may indeed be uploaded as pdf. Reason is that the ToC will include an image and that the docx format doesn't provide certainty about the correct representation on all computers of documents containing images and other lay-out elements. (B) We also kindly request to arrange that the Track record and the Vision can be uploaded in pdf format, as this format provides certainty that MFA will receive the documents with the lay-out used by the applicants, which is not the case with the docx format (that may cause bullet lists and numbered lists to disappear or be modified on other computers, as well as other elements of the lay-out that are relevant for the comprehension of the text). / We would prefer to upload a PDF file instead of a doc. If it possible to do this? And if not, please explain the rational for requesting a doc.

It is possible to upload the Theory of Change, the Consortium's vision and the Track Record both as a Word-file or PDF-file.

3. - The maximum size for attachments (references for D4 e.g.) is 20MB. The reports we would like to refer to are often data-heavy as they are sometimes large and include pictures. Is it permissible to: Create a zip file that contains these references or Provide hyperlinks to a section of our website where the documents can be found. Or Amend the documents by removing the photographs or Present only the relevant sections of the reports
   - When attachments need to be uploaded at the different threshold criteria sessions, it is being mentioned "max file size: 20MB". Does this maximum stand for each separate file or the total of all files together per each threshold criterion?
   - Is it possible to upload a file with references to links to websites instead of uploading all the documents for all the alliance members? If this is not possible, it is necessary to ensure enough space to upload enough documents for all the members and give explanation.

- On a number of places documents from all the consortium members need to be uploaded (e.g. D1b Statutes, D3, D5, D7b) . It seems it is only possible to upload only 1 document per criterion. Could you please confirm that you want us to merge all documents from all consortium members into 1 file, max 20 MB and in PDF format, and upload that in the online application?

The maximum file size applies to each separate file. ZIP-files or hyperlinks are not permitted. Please amend the documents so that they do not exceed the maximum file size of 20MB. Multiple documents can be uploaded with every threshold criterion.

4. - Regarding the threshold criteria: no word limit is described in the policy framework when it comes to answering the various questions. Does this mean that the text boxes that are available for answering the questions about the threshold criteria allow an unlimited number of words?
   - It would be very helpful if you could indicate the maximum number of words or characters in the form for the threshold criteria (at least for the criteria where additional explanation/reference is required). Now the text is automatically interrupted - which also gives an indication - but it obviously works better if the maximum length of the text is known in advance.
   - The application form includes a box / field in which you can refer to passages or page numbers from annual reports and the like. In that box there is only room for a very limited number of characters, with which one of our members cannot get along. The question would then be: can you increase the available space in this particular box?
   - Available space for reference and explanation in Treshold check criteria no. D.3. D.3 allows the use of 1000 characters to provide references to the uploaded documents. This amount of space is (in our case) not enough to provide for each of the elements of the D.3 criterium the required references to sections of the uploaded documents; to mention which sentences within these sections are meant; and to explain why these sentences match the element in question of the criterium. Room for explanation is needed when the linguistic usage in the framework differs from the linguistic usage in the uploaded statutes and annual reports: different terms, jargon, abstraction levels, theoretical approaches to world problems etc. may be applied that describe what in the subsidy framework is indicated as "structural poverty reduction and inclusive development", "low-income etc. countries" and "cooperation with CSOs". Furthermore, these three elements may be present in the uploaded documents not within one and the same section, which requires reference to several sections. And reference alone uses a substantial amount of characters when sections in annual reports are not numbered (as a result of which the relevant section headings must be cited in the reference). We kindly request to provide the opportunity to upload one additional document per alliance that can be used for the references and explanations of all alliance members together, and to cancel the maximum number of characters (in line with the practice in the ORIA form), or to put the maximum at 30.000 characters, especially also for the bigger alliances.

The maximum amount of characters has been extended to 7000 per text box.

5. Supplementary information: On the online application form – first page it is mentioned "In the context of the application procedure, particular attention is drawn to Article 7, third paragraph, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Decree. If an application is submitted incompletely, the Minister may request a supplement. The date on which the application is supplemented will be treated as the date on which the application is received. If an application is not submitted in the last four weeks before the deadline of 12.00 CET on 12 March 2020, the applicant runs the risk that the Minister will not exercise her authority to request a supplement as such supplementation is no longer possible without exceeding the deadline. In that case, it will no longer be possible to supplement the application, and the application will be assessed as it was submitted in first instance." Could you please indicate what would be the last date that we can make use of this service?

Four weeks before 12 March 2020 12.00 CET is 13 February 2020 12.00 CET. Please note that it is only possible to submit a proposal online, once all required fields and documentation have been inserted.

Please also note that the Minister <u>may</u> request a supplement; this is not a 'service' provided by the Ministry nor an obligation for the Minister.

6. In General Information: we are asked to list per consortium the name(s) of the director(s): Could you please clarify: you want all the directors of an organization that make up the Management Team or Board, or do you only want the name of the director that will be directly responsible for the implementation of the Power of Voices Grant (if awarded)?

Please provide in this specific section only the name of the Director responsible for the implementation of the Power of Voices Grant

<u>Threshold Criterion D3, 4 & 5</u>

7. D.3: if answering the question does not make use of annual reports but only of statutes do the annual reports still have to be uploaded?

Please only upload those documents which you use to demonstrate that you meet the threshold criteria.

8. Threshold criteria 3 & 4: The available space for text for the fields "Refer to passage and/or page numbers" of threshold criteria 3 and "refer to page number/ paragraph of all annual reports or statutes" for threshold criterion 4 is too tight for being able to properly refer to the pages of all annual reports. Could you please increase these spaces, as limited space should not have a negative impact on passing these threshold criteria.

The word count limit has been extended to a maximum of 7000 characters.

9. We are expected to provide various documents for the threshold criteria. For example, for D.5, the 2016-2017-2018 annual reports are requested from the lead party and all co-applicants. For a consortium of, for example, 7 organizations, this means 21 documents. However, it seems that we can only deliver 1 PDF of 20 MB. Annual reports are generally large due to the layout, use of photos and the like. It seems unrealistic to merge 21 annual reports into a document of less than 20 MB. Or does the online system offer the possibility to upload multiple documents (so 21 individual documents)? Or can we make a document with hyperlinks to annual reports?

It is possible to submit multiple documents. The 20mb limit applies to individual documents.
Hyperlinks are not allowed.

10. D3: Given the fact that we have an alliance with a large number of members and we want to have an optimal reference to the answers required, is it possible to upload an attachment instead of typing in the answers? In case it is not possible to upload attachment, then there needs to be more space to give adequate answers for all the alliance members.

The maximum amount of words/characters has been extended, so there is enough space to refer to the attachments within the forms.

11. Can we also insert tables or print screens / pictures of tables into the text boxes? For the explanation of criterion D.5, for example, it is easier to make a table containing the breakdown per partner and the reference to pages in the annual reports.

No, this is not possible.

12. The policy framework states that for the ToC 2 documents are requested: A) 1 word document with the narrative (max 4000 words) and B) 1 visual in pdf. However, in the online system there is only room for 1 PDF document for the ToC. Is this an error? Can we assume that an additional upload option will be created to also upload the word document? Or does this mean that we then have to submit 1 pdf with visual and narrative together? If the latter is the case, please adjust the Q&A response accordingly.

It is possible to upload a maximum of 2 documents under the Theory of Change.

13. - The answer to the questions 6-11 of the document "Q&A maatschappelijk middenveld" of 19 December 2019 states that "either organizational annual reports or annual reports submitted to donors" could be sent. The online application portal says: “upload three annual reports of 2016, 2017 and 2018 of lead party” Question Would it please be possible to send more than three (3) annual reports submitted to donors, as we are having several donor reports for different countries per year (to show that we meet this requirement for at least 3 countries per year).
    - The online application portal mentions that the lead party needs to have at least the preceding three years’ experience in capacity strengthening of CSOs in the areas of lobbying and advocacy, in at least three of the in the application proposed countries, as of 1 January 2019. Should this be 3 years for exactly the same countries?
    - Can the consortium submit more than three annual reports of the lead party for this criterion, or is three the maximum?
    - Our financial year is from 1 April to 31 March and our audited report period is also from 1 April-31 March. This means if we submit annual reports. audited statement for three years starting from 1 April 2016- 31 March 2017, we miss out on reporting on the first three months of the year 2016. Should we then submit annual reports/audited statement for 1 April 2015- 31March 16 too as that would include information of the months Jan-March?
    - For another application for this framework, we would like to know whether an organization (lead party) whose annual narrative reports run from July 1 to June 30, could please send 4 annual reports in order to be able to demonstrate 3 years of experience as on January 1, 2019 (being the following annual reports: 2018/2019; 2017/2018; 2016/2017 and 2015/2016)?
    - Question about QA 6-11: “As published in the policy framework Strengthening Civil Society, statutes and/or annual reports are requested. Annual reports need to be official documents, either organizational annual reports or annual reports submitted to donors (for instance, project specific annual reports). Other documents are not allowed. If an organization has another financial year than the calendar year, it is allowed to provide information that also covers partly 2019, provided that the organization is able to demonstrate that it has worked for the three preceding years before 2019 on the in D.3 and D.4 mentioned issues. D.4 applies only to the lead party.” Can we assume that the time indication in this text only relates to criterion D.4 (working on capacity building in the field of L&A)? In the original framework, under D.3 nothing is written about the period in which an organization must have worked on structural poverty reduction and inclusive development - only that this must be proven by statutes or annual reports.

Organizations can upload a maximum of two annual reports per calendar year (so a total of 6 annual reports can be uploaded under criterion 4 by the lead applicant). For a definition of annual report please see Q6-11 QA Strengthening Civil Society, first round. In case the organization has reporting years with a different start and end date than a calendar year (for example from July till June next year) the lead applicant can upload a total of 8 annual reports to cover the period 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Threshold criterion D.4 only applies to the lead applicant. The lead applicant needs to demonstrate that it has three years’ experience (thus in 2016, 2017 and 2018) in at least three of the in the application proposed countries. The requirement applies to the full period of three years for every country which is chosen.

14. - Regarding threshold criterion 5, the following is expected to be filled into the online application portal (total annual income 2016/2017/2018 of which not from MFA). *Question :* how could this be filled in for organizations whose financial and narrative annual reports run from 1 July until 30 June? Criterion 5: Threshold criterion 5 states that this financial data must be filled in for the period from 1 January 2016 - 31 December 2018. There are however not enough fields for organizations whose financial annual report run from 1 July until 30 June, as they are dealing with the following

financial periods: 2018/2019; 2017/2018; 2016/2017 and 2015/2016. This means we need 4x (instead of 3x) the fields: total annual income and of which not from MFA. Question how can we still enter our financial data for the period from 1 January 2016 - 31 December 2018?

Should total annual income figures correspond to calendar or fiscal years? For example for 2016 can we use annual income figures from audit reports from fiscal year April 2016 – March 2017.

In case an organization has reporting years with a different start and end date then a calendar year (for example form July till June next year), please recalculate (or estimate) annual income for 2016, 2017 and 2018 and upload 4 documents as proof. The number of fields will not be modified in the online form.

Threshold criterion 6

15. POW Threshold Criteria 6 - We suggest the there is a mistake in the online form text here, with repeated text in the first instance. It reads "Payments made at set times of year, such as holiday pay, 13th month's salary, employer's share of pension contribution, etc EUR", when it should read " Total of periodically paid salary, profit shares and bonus payments EUR".

This has been corrected.

16. POW Threshold Criteria 6 - If Board members receive no remuneration, should they still each be listed with zero remuneration noted? Or only list Management staff who receive remuneration?

Board members with no remuneration should still be listed.

17. Concerning threshold criterion D.6. The policy framework states that we must provide the information "from each of the members of management (including CEO) and board of one's own organization and all other alliance partners." However, the online system only seems to have room for data from 1 person per organization. Does that mean we only have to provide the CEO information? If this is the case, please adjust the Q&A response accordingly.

Under threshold criterium D.6. it is possible to add an entry for every board member from every consortium partner. This option can be found under additional information.

18. If an alliance partner (INGO) is established in the UK, for the max remuneration check, should we consider UK to be an EU member state, or "any other country", with the Brexit taking place on 31 January?

Given the date of the entry into force of the policy framework and the expected transition period, the UK will be considered as an EU member state for the specific purpose of this policy framework. The policy framework will be amended to this to avoid possible misunderstanding.

19. Under question D6, it is indicated for organizations that fall within the scope of the Top Income Standardization Act that a reference to the online reporting of the WNT data to the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is sufficient. Our organization falls under the scope of the WNT, but does not fall under the obligation to report online to the said ministry. The website topinkomens.nl (https://www.topinkomens.nl/melden) states: "WNT institutions account for their WNT data in their annual accounts. Accountants check the WNT accountability and are obliged to report any violations. Up to and including 2016, WNT institutions were also required to report the WNT data in their annual accounts digitally via the digital reporting tool of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations or the sectoral reporting tools of the CIBG, the Education Executive Agency or the Housing Corporation Authority. With effect from 2017, this obligation no longer applies to all institutions. Only WNT institutions that fall under the responsibility of a minister with their own digital reporting tool must still report WNT data digitally. This applies to WNT institutions under the responsibility of:

• the Minister of Education, Culture and Science: they report via the xbrl application of the Education Executive Agency;

• the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations insofar as it concerns housing associations: they report to the Housing Associations Authority via dVi of Corpodata."

When we click under question D6 that our organization falls under the 'scope of the WNT', then the option to enter the salary data will lapse and only a reference to the internet page on which the WNT data will be made public will be possible.

Our organization publishes the WNT data in the financial statements, is a reference to the financial statements sufficient here? If not, there should be a possibility to report the top incomes in the application form, also for organizations that fall under the WNT.

As corrected in the online portal, for Dutch organizations that fall within the scope of the WNT, the following applies (this will be corrected in the policy frameworks as well):

For Dutch organizations that fall within the scope of the Top Incomes (Standardisation) Act (WNT) a reference to the WNT-data that has been made public annually at 1 July at the latest, will suffice, unless this data is no longer valid as at 1 January 2019 due to a change in remuneration. The WNT-data should be made public on the internet for a period of at least seven years. This data should be generally accessible and easy to find.

So these organizations should be able to refer to a webpage where their WNT-data has been made public. For organizations that are WNT registered, but do not have a URL for it, they may also refer to a publication of the annual statement and page number.

Threshold criterion 7A+B (ORIA)

20. - (SRHR) We looked on the internet for more information on the social report and were only able to find one example of this, this one, by a Dutch shipping company; however it doesn't contain anything on social behaviour. It does contain information on reporting on recruitment of new staff members and the satisfaction, health and motivation of current staff. Is this what the Ministry is looking for when referring to a social report? If not, could you please clarify the type and content of the social report that is required for the required social report?

21. ORIA assessment form annex 2a- can you please clarify what a social behavior report is? I have looked on the internet and cannot find any reference to this? Is it in relation to anti-social behavior at work? Or ethical behavior in the workplace?

A social report is an annual human resources report which has to show the details and implementation of the HR-policy of your organization. This is not a checklist, but rather an overview of policy, results, practices, etc.

This document can be provided to demonstrate compliance with parts of question 3.1.6. of the ORIA assessment form. However, this compliance can also be illustrated with other documents such as a regular annual report.

22. - The Organisational risk and Integrity Assessment (ORIA) Annex 2b. Who should do the assessment part C? And how should give the approval for part D? Should this be an external party or the organisation itself?

- Concerning the term "fully completed ORIA" - Threshold Criteria 7.A (D.7.a a fully completed ORIA annex 2a) What is meant by a "fully completed" ORIA? It is still unclear to us from the first round of Q&A (from the contradictory answers given by the Ministry on this point to questions 76.b & question 81 and 82), whether the lead party that is submitting a full ORIA (annex 2a) must fill out only parts A & B, or also parts C & D? Please can you confirm that it is the Ministry who completes parts C & D. And that the lead organization only has to fill out parts A & B. And that the lead party is not expected to hire consultants to do the evaluation/assessment in part C?

The final assessment under part C and the final approval under part D will be done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because the ORIA form is part of the threshold criteria.

23. ORIA assessment form annex 2a- should this be completed on the form itself? There isn't much space to answer some of the questions / POW Threshold Criteria 7A / ORIA - The online application form asks the Lead Party to submit a fully completed ORIA (annexe 2a), and upload it at Threshold Criteria 7A in the online application form. The ORIA is frequently referred to as a form, but we are not able to locate or access a form that can be filled in

We only have the ORIA annexe 2a pdf document provided at: https://www.government.nl/topics/development-cooperation/documents/policy-notes/2019/11/28/policy-framework-strengthening-civil-society

A: Is there a form, or a template, or a required format for the ORIA? Or do we develop that ourselves?

B: In the previous question round Q74 confirmed there is no word limit for the ORIA form - but can you provide greater guidance on the length or complexity of answers required? A For example 3.3.1 requests a description of our monitoring, performance assessment, evaluation and quality management systems etc, which could be provided at any length from 300 to 3000 words. Could you provide examples or other guidance that reflect your expectations?

Can you provide greater guidance on the length or complexity of answers required?

In Adobe Acrobat Reader you can export the pdf file of the assessment to a Microsoft Word-document, which you can then fill in manually. If this does not technically work for you, please send an email to SDG5-TFVG@minbuza.nl, powerofvoices@minbuza.nl, SDG5-WPS@minbuza.nl or SDG5-SRHR@minbuza.nl, so the Ministry can send you the Word-version.

There is no word limit for this assessment form. The length and complexity of the answers is up to the organisation itself.

24. Annex 2-a: Are the 'in-control' statements mentioned in 3.4.6 (for annual report) and 3.4.7 (for audited statement) same?

Yes, they are the same document.

25. For Criteria 7a we are asked to upload the documents for the lead party – e.g. the Valid PARTOS ISO-9001 certification. But below the upload button there is a question "*Refer to activity number of elaborate*". Can you please clarify what you want us to refer to or elaborate on here?

This is meant to say: "Refer to activity number or elaborate". If you wish, you can provide additional elaboration of any nature here.

26. Same for Criteria 7b: we are asked to upload the OIRA integrity forms + obligatory information (part B) for all consortium members. Then after this there is a space where it says "elaborate". What do you want us to elaborate on?

If you wish, you can provide additional elaboration of any nature here.

27. There appears to be two different answers to questions about the Oria integrity and the ISO 9001 2018 certificate. Can you clarify which answer is correct and if it is necessary for parties which already have the Partos ISO 9001:2015 version 2018 certificate to also fill in a ORIA declaration on integrity? Or is the Partos certificate enough?

We are referring to the following answers:

- Question 71. Regarding D.7.a: Could you please confirm that we understand it correctly that for (Dutch) organizations that are in the possession of a PARTOS ISO-9001, they do not have to submit neither a Positively approved ORIA, nor Positively approved COCA + annex 2c, nor a fully completed ORIA (annex 2a)? Answer: When Dutch organizations have a PARTOS ISO-9001:2015 version 2018 the certificate should be submitted. In case they have a PARTOS ISO-9001:2015 version 2015 the Integrity update form should be submitted additional to this certificate.

- Question 78. Do all the consortium partners need to submit an Integrity Form, in case there is no previously approved ORIA available for the lead organization? Answer: Yes, all consortium partners need to submit an Integrity Form.
- Question 83. In threshold criterion D.7.b. about integrity policy it states that this policy has to be demonstrated with a ORIA declaration or a filled out form. Integrity is however also part of the Partos ISO 9001 certification. Is this certification also enough to meet the D.7.b. requirement? If not, why not? Answer: No, please follow the criteria in the policy framework Strengthening Civil Society.

If an organization has a Partos ISO 9001-2018 version, you don't have to submit a separate integrity form. However, if an organization only has the Partos ISO 9001-2015 version, a separate integrity form will have to be provided.

28. Is the conclusion correct that the ORIA 2b form does not need to be assessed externally? This conclusion is based on the following answers:
   -Answer 79**.** Who would be the potential external evaluators for the ORIA assessment: accounting firms, auditors, the Dutch Ministry? For these instruments: the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
   - Answer 82. The ORIA document also indicates that "If the organization itself will be invited to fill in this form, only parts A and B can be provided. If an external assessor will be hired, parts A, B and C can be provided." Can you clarify: What 'will be invited' entails and how to determine that a lead organization falls in this category? When does an organization need to involve an external assessor to complete the ORIA form? Every organization that does not have a valid ORIA or COCA with update form has to fill out this form. This is according to the guidelines that are given in the policy framework Strengthening Civil Society. It is up to the lead party to consider the need of involving an external assessor.

The final assessment and approval of this form will be done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, it is allowed to include the report of an external assessor.

29. Threshold criterium 7-B It is clear that the ORIA integrity Update Form itself can only be submitted in English. Is our interpretation correct that the annexes to the ORIA Integrity Update Form can also be submitted in French or Spanish?

Statutes and/or annual reports must be submitted in Dutch, English, French or Spanish. If statutes and/or annual reports are not available in above mentioned languages, the lead party must take care of a certified translation.

Documents other than statutes and/or annual reports will have to be provided in English or Dutch, if necessary as a certified translation.

30. Threshold criterion 7B: Could you confirm that the consortium partners only have to fill out sections A and B of annex 2B, and not section C (the latter will be done by the Ministry)?

Correct

31. If an organization is putting in two applications as lead in separate grant instruments will they have to send in separate ORIA forms? and can or should the forms have different/relevant track records and references? i.e. Track records- do the track records have to be separate for each of the grant instruments and Reference: Will the reference have to be separate as per the grant instrument

The organization will have to submit a separate ORIA form per application. The content of these separate ORIA forms may be the same; this is up to the organization itself.

Power of Women > Question about 80%

32. For Power of Women, 80% of the lead or consortium partner's management must be women. Does this include the Board or only the senior management team of the organisation? Senior management teams consisting of directors for programmes and other departments may not be included in annual reports. How do we demonstrate this if not written in the annual report?

This applies to the executive management of the organization: a team of individuals at the highest level of management of the organization who have the day-to-day tasks of managing that organization. This should be mentioned in the annual report. If the annual report doesn't mention this, one additional official document can be uploaded per organization per year to prove compliance with the requirement that 80% of management should have consisted of women.

33. Does the 80% have to be proven for each year or is it cumulative over the three years?

It has to be proven for each year.