



Order of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of 3 June 2015, no. TFGV 122-15, laying down administrative rules and a ceiling for grants awarded under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006 (*Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women 2016-2020* )

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 article 5.1 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006;

Orders:

#### Article 1

The administrative rules appended as an appendix to this Order apply to grants awarded under article 5.1 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grant Regulations 2006 within the framework of Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women 2016-2020 with a view to financing activities in the field of equal rights and opportunities for women.

#### Article 2

An overall ceiling of €93,000,000 applies to FLOW 2016-2020 grants awarded from the date on which this Order enters into force up to and including 31 December 2020.

#### Article 3

Applications for FLOW 2016-2020 grants may be submitted from the date on which this Order enters into force until 31 August 2015, using the application form stipulated by the Minister and accompanied by the documents stipulated in the form.<sup>1</sup>

#### Article 4

The funds 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 the need for an even distribution as referred to in article 8, paragraph 3 (d) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree.

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<sup>1</sup> The model application form and appendices can also be found at <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/subsidies-voor-ontwikkelingssamenwerking-en-europa/subsidies-maatschappelijke-organisaties>

## Article 5

This Order enters into force on the day after the date of the Government Gazette in which it appears and lapses with effect from 1 January 2021, 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. The appendices to the annexe will be published on the internet<sup>2</sup>.

R.M. Buijs

Deputy Director-General for International Cooperation

For the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.government.nl/government/documents-and-publications/decrees/2015/06/12/funding-leadership-and-opportunities-for-women-flow-2016-2020.html>

## **Leadership and Opportunities for Women 2016-2020 (FLOW 2016-2020) policy framework**

### **Chapter 1. Introduction and background**

Reducing inequality – not only economic inequality, but also inequality based on social status, politics, religion, ethnicity, sex or sexual orientation – is a key priority of the Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation policy agenda. This policy framework follows on from the letter to parliament of November 2011 about International Gender Policy<sup>3</sup>, and the more recent letters to parliament “What the World deserves”<sup>4</sup> and the human rights policy 'Justice and Respect for All' of 2013.<sup>5</sup>

Worldwide, some progress has been made in recent decades in attaining women’s rights and equal treatment. Many countries have abolished discriminatory laws and criminalised violence against women. They have made investments in health and education, and in some countries the economic participation of women has increased. In general, however, the pace of change is slow. In some countries and sectors, progress is at a standstill or has even been reversed. Despite major regional and contextual differences, experts agree that there is no country where progress towards gender equality is either assured or irreversible.<sup>6</sup>

Some vulnerable groups have still scarcely benefited at all from improved opportunities. This includes women and girls living in extreme poverty and women facing multiple forms of discrimination (lesbian, bisexual and transgender women; disabled women and women who are medically incapable of work; women with HIV; and migrants).

Inequality in public life often arises from unequal power in people’s personal relationships. Researchers have concluded that in one-third of marriages between men and women, wives have no say in key decisions such as major purchases, the couple’s place of residence or how they lead their lives.<sup>7</sup>

In recent years, many low- and middle-income countries have experienced substantial economic growth. However, this has not automatically led to more gender equality or to an improvement in the position of women. The links between gender equality and economic growth are complex and asymmetric. Economic growth does not in itself appear to be enough to improve the position of women, even if in some cases it does generate paid work. Without additional investments in safety, knowledge, health and equal rights, women’s contribution to economic growth remains

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2011/11/15/kamerbrief-internationaal-genderbeleid.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.government.nl/government/documents-and-publications/letters/2013/04/05/global-dividends-a-new-agenda-for-aid-trade-and-investment.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.government.nl/government/documents-and-publications/notes/2013/06/14/justice-and-respect-for-all.html>

<sup>6</sup> Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: Report of the Secretary-General, ECOSOC E/CN.6/2015/3.

<sup>7</sup> UN-Women: calculations based on data from demographic and health surveys. From: *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly Report of the Secretary-General E/CN.6/2015/3*

sub-optimal. Conversely, there is undeniable evidence that investments in women's and girls' empowerment, especially in their knowledge and employment opportunities, actually boost economic growth.<sup>8910</sup>

FLOW 2016-2020 is the second successor to the MDG3 Fund, which was launched in 2009 to make up for lost ground in achieving MDG3 (equal rights and opportunities for women). Thanks to the MDG3 and FLOW funds<sup>11</sup> civil society organisations for women's rights have been able to reach broad networks of grassroots organisations, develop capacity for lobbying and advocacy, and grow as organisations. This policy framework contains the guiding principles for the renewal of the Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW 2016-2020) programme. It builds on the results achieved by the earlier funds and ties in with the ongoing international debate on women's rights, particularly with the UN review on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on its 20th anniversary (Beijing+20), and with the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its dedicated goal on gender equality (Sustainable Development Goal 5).

This policy framework is set up as follows. Chapter 2 outlines the policy principles, scope and priority areas of FLOW 2016-2020. Chapter 3 defines a number of key terms. Chapter 4 describes which organisations are eligible for FLOW 2016-2020 funding. Chapter 5 outlines the proposal assessment process, while Chapter 6 details monitoring and evaluation of funded activities. Chapter 7 provides an overview of the criteria being used to select proposals for funding.

## **Chapter 2. Policy principles**

### The theory of change underpinning international gender policy

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is pursuing a three-track policy on women's rights and gender equality. This consists of (i) diplomatic efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights, (ii) integration of equal rights and opportunities for women into general foreign policy and (iii) targeted financing for gender equality and women's rights in low- and lower-middle-income countries.

The diagram of international gender policy theory below shows how measures to strengthen civil society organisations working for women's rights and gender equality (left-hand column) and the institutional transformation needed to achieve equality and rights (right-hand column) reinforce one another.

The basic premise is that a sustainable improvement in women's rights and opportunities and a fair share for them in power requires a structural transformation in the standards, values and rules

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<sup>8</sup> The Gender Dividend: Making the business case for investing in women. Deloitte, 2011 <http://www.slideshare.net/liubab/the-gender-dividend-making-the-business-case-for-investing-in-women>.

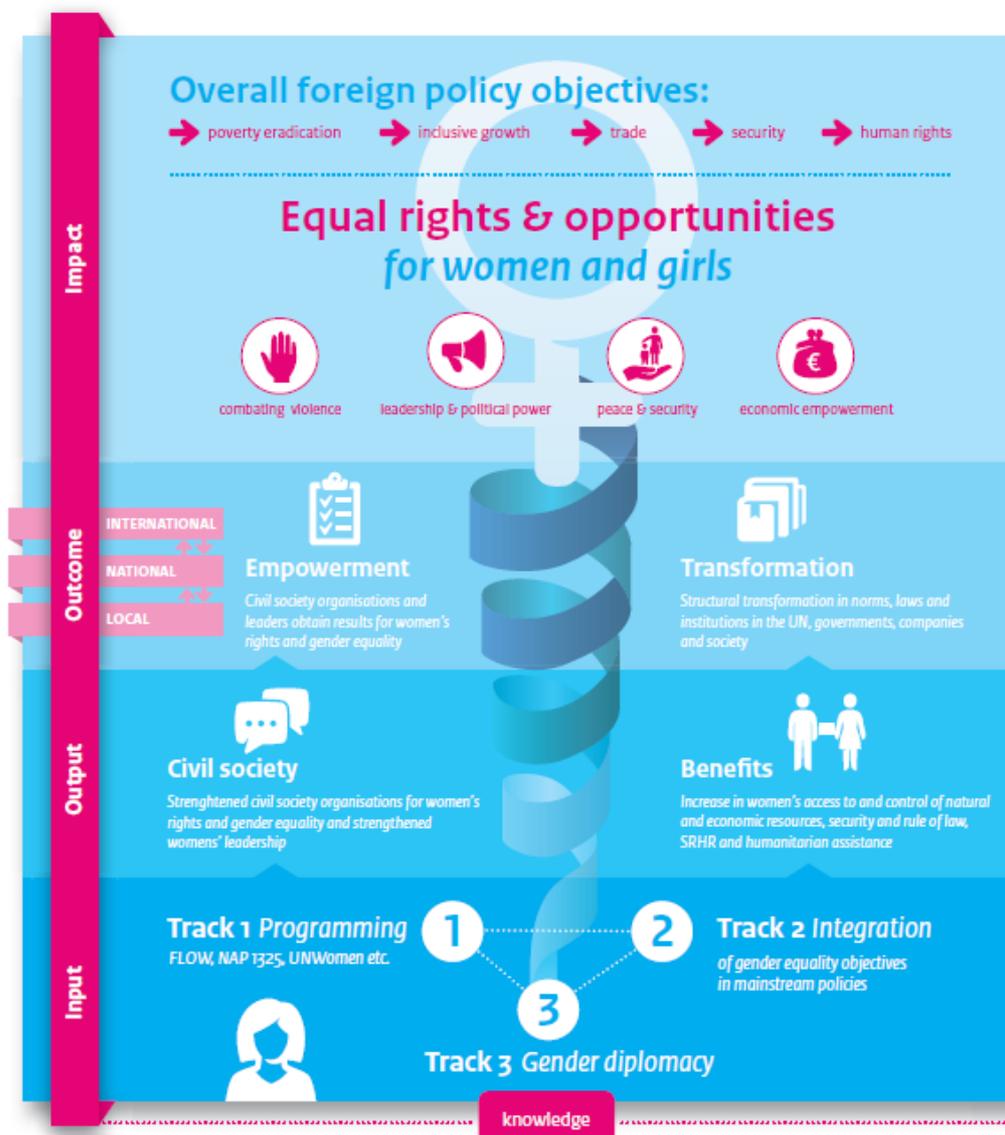
<sup>9</sup> World Bank Development Report 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Kabeer and Natali (2013): 3, 34-36, 38.

<sup>11</sup> Vaststelling beleidsregels subsidiëring op grond van de Subsidiëregeling Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken 2006 (MDG3-fonds: Investeren in gelijkheid) Staatscourant 29 februari 2008, nr. 43 en Besluit van de Staatssecretaris van Buitenlandse Zaken van 10 mei 2011, nr. DJZ/BR-0457/11, tot de vaststelling van beleidsregels en een subsidieplafond voor subsidiëring op grond van de Subsidiëregeling Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken 2006, Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW), Stcrt. 2011, nr. 8466.

of conduct for men and women. This must be achieved partly through a break with existing - relationships. The interplay between greater agency/empowerment<sup>12</sup> for women and better environmental factors (standards, laws and institutions) will generate an upward spiral. Organisations working for women’s rights and gender equality are vital for kick-starting this structural transformation. Simultaneous pressure from organisations (bottom-up) and from international standards and supervisory mechanisms (from above) is also needed to anchor women’s rights in national institutions.<sup>13</sup>

## Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in The Netherlands’ foreign policy



<sup>12</sup> World Bank Group (2014), ‘Voice and Agency: Empowering Women for Shared Prosperity’.

<sup>13</sup> Htun and Weldon (2012), ‘The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in a Global Perspective, 1975-2005’.

The Netherlands seeks to strengthen this interaction through targeted programmes and funds, including FLOW 2016-2020. These make up the first 'track' in the theory of change outlined above. Local civil society organisations will be given the opportunity to develop and implement joint strategies through cooperation or coalitions with institutional partners<sup>14</sup>, to help create an 'enabling environment' for gender equality.

#### Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action

In 2015 the 20th anniversary is being celebrated of international equal opportunities policy under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This is also the year in which the Post-2015 Development Agenda is due to be adopted by the international community. Gender equality occupies an important place in these frameworks.<sup>15</sup> It is also a specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG5). This is therefore a suitable moment to draw up an interim balance sheet and launch a revamped fund which can help to reinforce the positive trends and bridge existing gaps. The purpose of FLOW 2016-2020 is to contribute to the implementation of SDG5 on gender equality and to the implementation of the strategic goals of the Beijing Platform for Action. Taken together, these goals shape international cooperation on gender issues.

#### **2.1 Objectives and scope of FLOW 2016-2020**

FLOW 2016-2020 supports interventions by civil society organisations (and their partners) which promote an enabling environment for equal opportunities, rights and safety for women and girls in all low- and lower-middle-income countries, and/or China, Malaysia, Thailand, Jordan, Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Iran, and Tunisia, through a specific, strategic, contextual and results-based approach.<sup>16</sup> Through these programmes, FLOW 2016-2020 supports activities run by local civil society organisations either independently or jointly with (institutional) partners.

The fund gives medium-term financial support to gender equality and women's rights programmes implemented in low- and lower-middle income countries by Dutch and international civil society organisations. By improving opportunities for women and girls and creating a climate in which women's rights are better protected, the fund contributes at local and national level to sustainable inclusive development and to the fight against poverty and the lack of rights.

In their lobbying activities, civil society organisations increasingly seek strategic partnerships with a range of stakeholders (such as other civil society organisations, trade unions, the private sector, knowledge institutions, service providers,<sup>17</sup> grassroots movements, political bodies and local government) who can make an institutional contribution to improving the position of women and girls. FLOW 2016-2020, which enables the creation of alliances at local level and cooperation with local institutional partners, aims to support this trend. This form of cooperation requires

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<sup>14</sup> Service providers, medical institutions, local governments, education institutions, political organisations, unions, government organisations.

<sup>15</sup> UN Women Policy Division, 2013, 'A Transformative Stand-Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components', <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/~media/AC04A69BF6AE48C1A23DECAEED24A452.ashx>. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/~media/AC04A69BF6AE48C1A23DECAEED24A452.ashx>

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix 2 for the list of eligible countries.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. medical professionals, child care, job agencies, financial services.

contextual analysis and complementary roles on the part of civil society organisations worldwide, as well as a different way of working with governments, knowledge institutions, private enterprises, civil society organisations and individuals at national level. The aim of a strategic partnership of this kind is to create the right conditions (enabling environment) for the permanent transformation of institutions, laws and standards in order to bring about gender equality and women's rights.

## **2.2 Thematic scope**

The substantive focus of the programmes to be financed must be in keeping with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' gender policy as set out in its 2011 letter to parliament International Gender Policy, and the more recent ones "What the World Deserves" and 'Justice and Respect for All' of 14 June 2013 (see also Chapter 1, 'Introduction and background'). Based on this policy, FLOW 2016-2020 targets three interconnected thematic priorities:

- I. combating violence against women;
- II. participation by women in politics and public administration;
- III. women's economic participation and self-reliance.

The fund does not focus specifically on the development policy priority 'Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights', which is covered by other funds. Resources for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 are provided in the framework of the applicable National Action Plan. However, given the common ground with the thematic priorities of the FLOW 2016-2020 fund and the fact that FLOW 2016-2020 is also intended for projects in fragile states, some overlap between projects is possible, especially with thematic priority I (combating violence against women). Dutch financing instruments and financed projects should ideally strengthen each other. NB: activities that already receive funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget are not eligible for a FLOW 2016-2020 grant.

### 2.2.1. Thematic priority 1: combating violence against women

International women's organisations have played an important role in placing the comprehensive approach to ending violence against women on the development cooperation agenda.<sup>18</sup> They have also called for better legislation and for the criminalisation of all forms of abuse of women, including domestic violence and abuse within marriage. The results of this advocacy vary from country to country: in some, they have been highly successful, leading to comprehensive reception and care mechanisms, a suitable legal framework and guidelines to help the police and social services organise more effective shelter for women and prosecution of their abusers. Many countries however still completely lack such mechanisms, or else there are major gaps in their implementation. Moreover, in recent years women in many countries have been confronted by political changes or conservative laws which withdraw the rights they have acquired or make them difficult to exercise. In some cases political and economic tensions, growing social inequality and unemployment are leading to an increase in violence against women.

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<sup>18</sup> "WorldbankGroup (2014) Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity",

The links between violence against women and the other two thematic priorities in FLOW 2016-2020 are clear. Violence against women can be seen as the result of interaction between related social and contextual factors (such as gender norms, economic conditions and legislation) and personal factors (such as power issues, behavioural norms, financial problems or alcoholism) which lead to sex and/or gender-related violence. In conflict or post-conflict situations, these factors can be aggravated through consequences of war such as greater polarisation of gender roles or ethnic divisions.

The following strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform priority 'Violence against Women' provide guidance for this FLOW 2016-2020 thematic priority:

- (1) Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.*
- (2) Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.*
- (3) Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.*

#### 2.2.2. Thematic priority 2: participation by women in politics and public administration;

Participation by women in national parliaments globally is gradually rising, from 12% in 1995 to 23% today. However, there are major disparities between regions, and in general the voices of poor women and women from marginalised groups are still inadequately reflected in political decision-making. Where political participation of women has substantially grown, this has often been due to special targeted measures taken by governments, such as the setting of statutory quotas or explicit provisions to ensure women's access to politics and public administration.<sup>19</sup> Good results have also been achieved through initiatives by political parties to include female candidates on their lists (sometimes through the adoption of voluntary targets). The contribution made by political parties is crucial, as is that of key figures who dedicate themselves to improving the gender ratio in the private sector. MPs and political parties can make a real difference in creating better conditions for political participation by women.

Women are however still severely underrepresented in the highest political positions (party leaders, heads of state and ministers). In 2014, they occupied only 17% of all ministerial posts. Most female ministers are given social portfolios, with very few given responsibility for the economy or trade.

There has also been a modest increase in the number of women in administrative and managerial roles. In some sectors, women account for a growing proportion of trade union membership but are severely underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles. The proportion of women in senior positions in the public and private sectors also lags far behind that of men. This disparity

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<sup>19</sup> Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, op. cit.

is greatest in many Middle Eastern and North African countries, where the gender gap in senior management and decision-making roles is over 80%.

The degree of involvement of women's and other civil society organisations in political and administrative processes varies. In most low- and lower-middle income countries, it is limited.<sup>20</sup> Some even have restrictive laws and a growing democratic deficit which is frequently due to pressure from governments to limit the watchdog role of civil society organisations and individual citizens.<sup>21</sup> In addition to growing intimidation of civil society organisations by governments, many countries provide little or no transparency about their decision-making processes and rarely if ever consult with civil society organisations.<sup>22</sup>

Using FLOW 2016-2020, the Netherlands wants to strengthen civil society organisations in low- and lower-middle income countries and thus achieve results in this thematic priority area. The two strategic objectives in the priority area 'Women in Power and Decision-Making' of the Beijing Platform for Action provide guidance for programmes and the measurement of results:

- (1) *Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.*
- (2) *Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.*

### 2.2.3. Thematic priority 3: women's economic participation and self-reliance

Economic participation is a multidimensional process.<sup>23</sup> The key dimensions are labour participation, employment, income and quality of work. The last is the most difficult to measure, but a permanent fulltime job appears to be a strong indicator of subjective wellbeing, high incomes, fringe benefits and opportunities for personal development. A regular income and job security for women clearly contributes to a better balance of power between spouses, higher investments in health and education for children, and a reduction in domestic violence.

However, more women than men worldwide still experience economic exclusion. Trends suggest that global labour participation by women (aged 15-64) has come to a standstill over the past two decades and is even experiencing a slight decline, from 57% to 55%.<sup>24</sup> Men are nearly twice as likely to secure a permanent fulltime job as women. Women often work fewer hours and in jobs with less security and opportunities for development. They are overrepresented in the informal sector, where they work in unsafe and unhealthy conditions which fail to meet international standards. An ILO analysis carried out in 83 countries found that on average, women in paid

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<sup>20</sup> USAID (2013), *The 2012 CSO Sustainability Index*, [www.v-dem.net](http://www.v-dem.net).

<sup>21</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Closing Space: Democracy and Human Rights Support Under Fire* (2014).

<sup>22</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2012: Democracy at a Standstill' (2013).

<sup>23</sup> Gender at work: a companion to the World Development Reports on Jobs  
[http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Event/Gender/GenderAtWork\\_web2.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Event/Gender/GenderAtWork_web2.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Marlar, J. and E. Mendes (2013), 'Globally, Men Twice as Likely as Women to Have a Good Job,' <http://www.gallup.com/poll/164666/globally-men-twice-likely-women-good-job.aspx>; Clifton, J., and J. Marlar (2011), 'Worldwide, Good Jobs Linked to Higher Wellbeing,' <http://www.gallup.com/poll/146639/worldwide-good-jobs-linked-higher-wellbeing.aspx>.

employment earned between 10 and 30% less than men.<sup>25</sup> Similar gender gaps are visible among business people and farmers. Limited access to tools and loans causes female farmers to have lower yields and be less active in commercial agriculture than men. Female entrepreneurs tend to run smaller businesses (with no staff) in less profitable sectors. The lion's share of care tasks and domestic chores worldwide is still done by women and girls.<sup>26</sup> Discrimination, intimidation and lack of safety at work affect more women than men.

Using FLOW 2016-2020, the Netherlands wants to support civil society organisations that work with relevant partners to strengthen women's economic participation. The six strategic objectives in the priority area 'Women and the Economy' of the Beijing Platform for Action provide guidance for programmes and the measurement of results:

- *Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.*
- *Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.*
- *Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.*
- *Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.*
- *Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.*
- *Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.*

### **Chapter 3. Key terms**

This framework uses a number of key terms which are explained briefly below to facilitate a better understanding of this document.

*Gender equality*: equal access for women and men to social goods, opportunities, tools and remuneration. Gender equality does not mean there are no differences between women and men, merely that they should enjoy the same opportunities and rights.<sup>27</sup>

*Empowerment*: is central to the concept of gender equality and was introduced as a term by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. According to Kabeer,<sup>28</sup> empowerment is a process by which people with little freedom of choice acquire this freedom. Power is described in terms of people's capacity to make strategic personal choices and the degree to which these choices impact on their lives. It is important to recognise that other criteria such as caste, ethnicity, affluence, family and

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<sup>25</sup> ILO (2008), Global Wage Report 2008-09: Minimum Wages and Collective Bargaining, Towards Policy Coherence, Geneva: ILO.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Blackden et al. (2006): 17; Esplen and Brody (2007): 2, 12; FAO (2009): 14, 24; Gallina (2010): 24; Agarwal (2011): 7-8; FAO (2011): 5, 7, 13, 27; ActionAid (2012): 2, 5, 7; Kabeer and Natali (2013): 40.

<sup>27</sup> OECD (1999), 'DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation', Development Cooperation Guidelines Series: 13.

<sup>28</sup> Kabeer, N. (2005), 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal', Gender and Development 13 (1):13-24; Kabeer, N. (1999), 'Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment', Development and Change vol. 30 (1999): 435-464, Institute of Social Studies, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

age can have a major influence on individuals' power, depending on the context. The success of empowerment strategies is therefore highly dependent on context.<sup>29</sup> Although empowerment undeniably has an individual dimension, social movements are also clearly a factor. Structural inequality can seldom be overcome by a single individual, and women's organisations and social movements have an important role to play in creating the conditions needed for change.

*Gender mainstreaming*: was introduced as an international term by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action as a binding principle for gender equality (Rodenberg (2004)). In this policy framework, gender mainstreaming means identifying the gender dimension and systematically integrating equal treatment and gender sensitivity into all relevant policy areas.

*Legitimacy civil society organisations*: civil society organisations derive their legitimacy from their support base and the universal values enshrined in UN conventions, treaties and codes of conduct governing human rights, development cooperation and economic cooperation. They base their work on facts, expertise and analyses, and are accountable to society, their supporters, the government and their financiers.

*Capacity development*: must be aimed at strengthening the expertise, management and financial management of partner organisations, as well as at developing the core capabilities and skills needed to remain relevant in a changing context and achieve results. In this policy framework, capacity development is based on the 5C model, which defines five core competences.<sup>30</sup> These are:

- Commit to a specific goal and act accordingly: *capability to act and commit*
- Obtain results: *capability to deliver*
- Forge relationships with external stakeholders: *capability to relate to external stakeholders*
- Adapt where necessary: *capability to adapt and self-renew*
- Act coherently: *capability to achieve coherence*

*Institutional development*: capacity-building relies on individuals, organisations and the broader context of systems development. The combination of these factors leads to institutional development.

*Enabling environment for gender equality*: creating the right social conditions for gender equality and the exercise of women's rights. This is conditional on several social transitions, for instance in the area of improving practical conditions for women, overcoming the power imbalance between men and women in public and family life, and tackling discriminatory laws, policies and practices. *Enabling environment* has social, cultural and legal dimensions. Through their activities, civil society organisations help create better conditions for women and girls. FLOW 2016-2020 is concerned with improving conditions for women's political and economic participation and creating a climate in which violence against women will decline and no longer be socially condoned.

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<sup>29</sup> 'One of the major difficulties in measuring empowerment is that the behaviours and attributes that signify empowerment in one context often have different meanings elsewhere.' (Malhotra, 2005)

<sup>30</sup> Baser, H. and Morgan, P. (2008), 'Capacity, Change and Performance: Study Report', Maastricht: ECDPM.

*Theory of change:* a strategic programme to promote favourable conditions for rights and opportunities for women is based on a strategy of change or a 'theory of change'.<sup>31</sup> A theory of change defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. The underlying analysis, assumptions, preconditions and intended results – outputs, outcomes and impact – are all being logically incorporated and presented in a representation of the change process. It makes it possible to define the interventions required in each step of the process. This in turn makes clear what roles the various stakeholders will be playing. The change process is based on assumptions.

It is not easy to measure the success and results of an evolving enabling environment for women's rights and gender equality. In order nevertheless to monitor and evaluate it as accurately as possible, it is essential for the theory of change to show that the efforts being proposed will lead to a change in policy, structures, processes and ultimately the lives of women and girls.

The theory of change must convincingly explain the objectives of the programme and the quantifiable interim steps needed to achieve them.

*Context analysis:* Gender inequality is the result of complex social, economic and political factors. These factors are in turn interwoven with global problems such as conflicts, food crises and climate change. They also have a strong contextual and local dimension. A good contextual analysis is therefore vital for evaluating policy options and strategies:

- It must explain why gender equality is not being achieved and what the main problems and underlying causes are. It must also indicate where the main opportunities for women and girls lie, what national instruments are available, and which sectors are making the most progress towards gender equality.
- It must clarify the link between local initiatives and national policy and the potential for multilateral action. For instance, local activities aimed at ending violence against women strengthen national instruments for implementing CEDAW and are reflected in national CEDAW reports.
- It must identify the actors who are working at national or provincial level to improve the position of women (as drivers of change). This list must also show where there are still major gaps and where strategic partners are to be found.
- The chosen strategy is underpinned by the contextual analysis and assumptions. The theory of change indicates what outcome the chosen strategy leads to and how this contributes to an improved enabling climate for gender equality and women's rights (impact).

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.theoryofchange.org/>.

## Chapter 4. Who are eligible for a grant?

FLOW 2016-2020 grants are intended for Dutch and international civil society organisations with promising proposals and a proven track record in the areas of gender equality and women's rights.

Organisations may apply independently or as part of a consortium represented by a lead party who submits the application, including details of Track Record, one (or more) Theory (Theories) of Change, and an elaboration of these in a program proposal for the first year. A budget proposal is also requested. If it is granted, the lead party also bears primary responsibility for the programme's implementation. Dutch and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) are eligible for a grant under this policy framework, either as lead party/parties and/or as co-applicant(s).

A civil society organisation is only eligible for one FLOW 2016-2020 grant, either as lead party or as co-applicant.

## Chapter 5. Assessment procedure

### 5.1 Criteria

To be eligible for a FLOW 2016-2020 grant, applicants must satisfy the threshold criteria and quality criteria.

1. **Threshold criteria** are criteria which all applications must meet. Applications that fail to meet all of the threshold criteria will be rejected and will not be processed further.
2. Criteria relating to **the quality of the track record in the areas of gender equality and women's rights.**
3. Criteria relating to **the quality of the programme proposal for the first year and the theory of change.**

These criteria are set out in detail in chapter 7.

### 5.2 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 and the grants ultimately awarded. Applications will be assessed in accordance with the above legislation and pursuant to the requirements set out in these administrative rules.

The administrative rules laid down in the Standard Framework for Development Cooperation also apply.<sup>32</sup> If the FLOW 2016-2020 administrative rules deviate from the Standard Framework for Development Cooperation, the former will prevail.

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<sup>32</sup> Order of the Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation no. DJZ/BR/0874-10 of 1 December 2010 adopting administrative rules containing general provisions for grants awarded for development cooperation activities (Standard

The assessment of grant applications and the award and allocation of the available funds will take place by means of a call for proposals: the quality of all applications that meet the requirements set out in these administrative rules will be assessed according to the same criteria. The applications that best meet the criteria will be given priority in the award of grants. The Minister will award grants in accordance with this ranking.

The Minister will decide on grant applications no later than 1 December 2015.

### **5.3 Assessment stages**

The assessment will take place in two stages, leading to a selection of eligible programmes.

The first stage consists of a check against the threshold criteria. The second stage consists of a check of the content of the track record and of the detailed programme proposal, including the contextual analysis and the theory of change presented by the applicant as the logical underpinning of the envisaged goal of the programme for the first year. The theory of change sets out a detailed vision for attaining the defined goals and the accompanying short- and medium-term interventions. An assessment will also be made of the proposed relationship with local grassroots organisations and of the proposed collaboration with other local and national actors.

### **5.4 Grant applications**

Applications for a FLOW 2016-2020 grant can be submitted from the date on which these administrative rules come into force until 31 August 2015, using the model application form stipulated by the Minister (see appendix 1.)<sup>33</sup>

Applications must consist of:

- A. A theory of change that, at a minimum, describes:
  1. context, actor and gender analyses;
  2. short and medium-term objectives with an accompanying vision;
  3. the chosen strategy;
  4. in the case of a consortium, an explanation of the roles and added value of the different co-applicants;
  5. measurable process and impact indicators for the purpose of monitoring and corrective action;
  6. a risk analysis;
  7. an indication of the countries and/or regions where the applicant/co-applicants have added value;
  8. an explicit statement of the premises underlying the above points.

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Framework for Development Cooperation), Government Gazette 2010, no. 19701.

<sup>33</sup> The application form is being published at: <http://www.government.nl/government/documents-and-publications/decrees/2015/06/12/funding-leadership-and-opportunities-for-women-flow-2016-2020.html>

- B. A programme proposal that gives a detailed description of the strategic interventions chosen to achieve the envisaged goal (input, output and outcome) in each country, adapted to the country-specific context, for the first year of the program. If applicable, an explanation could be given of the roles of any local strategic partners in the programme.
  
- C. A track record demonstrating the experience and success of the applicant/lead party and any co-applicants in promoting women's rights and gender equality. It must be presented in the form of three to five cases, demonstrating the organisations':
  1. expertise and effectiveness
  2. flexibility and learning capacity
  3. transparency, accountability and public support
  4. knowledge of, and added value for, the country context(s)
  5. inclusive approach
  6. sustainability
  7. added value (applicant/lead party and any co-applicants).
  
- D. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, including a description of the estimated technical assistance required to develop and strengthen an M&E framework for local organisations.
  
- E. A budget for the entire duration of the programme, including a budget for the estimated technical assistance to develop and strengthen an M&E framework for local organisations. The budget will also need to have an allocation for travel costs in order, for the applicants, to be able to participate in the annual policy meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **5.5 Available resources**

The total amount set aside for the fund is €93 million. This amount is likely to be increased with additional contributions of other donors. Grants will be available for activities carried out between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2020. The minimum grant award is €5 million and the maximum €15 million for the entire project duration of five years. Similar to the MDG3 and FLOW1 funds, the financial mechanism of the new FLOW 2016-2020 fund is organised in such a way whereby the lead applicants and (possible) co-applicants are able to sub-grant funds to local or grassroots organisations in the selected countries, on the basis of pre-approved annual plans.

### **5.6 Allocation of resources**

To be eligible for a FLOW 2016-2020 grant, applications must, first, satisfy all of the threshold criteria. Applications will also need to adequately satisfy the criteria relating to the quality of the track record and the quality of the theory of change and the program proposal for the first year.

The assessment of grant applications and the award and allocation of the available funds will take place by means of a call for proposals: the content of all applications will be assessed according to the criteria set out in these administrative rules. The applications that best meet the criteria will be

given priority in the award of grants, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 3 (d) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree.

If insufficient resources are available for all satisfactory applications to receive the full grant requested, funds will be allocated to them according to their ranking on the basis of the criteria specified in these administrative rules. In the final allocation of resources, grants will be awarded to the highest ranking applications until the available resources are exhausted.

The funds will be allocated with due regard for an even distribution over the FLOW 2016-2020 priorities, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 3 (d) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree.

In the allocation of resources, the quality of applications will be the decisive factor. Should the quality of applications relating to one or more thematic priorities be assessed as inadequate according to the criteria specified in these administrative rules, the funds will be distributed among satisfactory applications relating to the other themes and from other organisations.

#### **5.7 Procedure prior to decision-making**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will appoint a committee of independent experts from within and beyond the Ministry to assess the applications. Committee members may not themselves submit or help draft applications.

Decisions on applications submitted before the deadline will be made no later than 1 December 2015.

### **Chapter 6. Monitoring and evaluation**

Accountability for the spending of grants will be ensured through the provision of open data in accordance with the IATI standards in force from 2016. Applicants will be expected to follow IATI developments and adapt their accountability procedures accordingly. In addition, audit reports must be submitted annually for the purposes of financial accountability. Progress will be regularly monitored on the basis of the approved theory of change and the programme submitted.

For each program a progress report as well as an annual plan is being submitted for approval. In the budget for FLOW 2016-2020 applicants are allowed to allocate an amount dedicated to technical assistance for monitoring and evaluation. This assistance is meant to build monitoring and evaluation capacity of end-users of grants, e.g. grassroots and/or local organisations (sub-sub-recipients). Estimations of allocations/percentages for monitoring and evaluation capacity building are being incorporated in the proposal. The results of monitoring and evaluation are being communicated in the progress report.

In order to be able to review results of monitoring and evaluation and to link these with implementation aspects, as well as to ensure pertinent interaction with the specific policy making units in the Ministry, an annual meeting will take place with all relevant grantees. This annual meeting also provides organisations the opportunity to exchange experience, expertise and lessons learned.

## **Chapter 7. Criteria for assessing applications**

### **7.1 Threshold criteria**

**D.1: The applicant/lead party and co-applicant(s) is (are) a Dutch or international non-governmental not-for-profit organisation which possesses legal personality.**

**A Dutch organisation is an organisation established and registered in The Netherlands, according to Dutch law.**

**An international organisation is an organisation established and registered outside of The Netherlands, in accordance with the law of that respective country, and operates across borders.**

**D.2: The applicant/lead party and co-applicant(s) strive(s) to achieve lasting reductions in social inequality in at least two countries of the lower- and lower-middle income countries<sup>34</sup>, and/or China, Malaysia, Thailand, Jordan, Algeria, Iran, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia, by working with relevant organisations and institutions with the aim of promoting equal rights and opportunities for women and girls in developing countries.**

D.3: The applicant must demonstrate that, as of 1 January 2016, at least 40% of its annual income will derive from sources other than Ministry of Foreign Affairs grants. FLOW 2016-2020 grants will not exceed 60% of the total annual income of the applicant organisation. If the applicant is the lead party of a consortium, this criterion applies to the whole consortium. Consequently, if one organisation derives less than 40% of its annual income from sources other than Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributions, this may be offset by another party in the consortium.

D.4: a. **The maximum remuneration of individual management and board members of the applicant/lead party and possible co-applicants within the EU does not exceed €163,000 per calendar year based on a 36-hour working week.** This amount includes not only the total of periodically paid salary, profit sharing and bonuses, but also taxable fixed and variable expense allowances as well as other payments made at set times of year, such as holiday pay, 13th month's salary, the employer's share of pension contributions, etc.

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<sup>34</sup> See also Appendix 2 for the list of eligible countries

b. Noting the purchasing power data published by EUROSTAT (GDP PPS)<sup>35</sup>, maximum remuneration, based on a 36-hour working week and in accordance with domestic income levels, is different in for example the following countries:

Norway:	EUR 292.000	=	NOK	2.600.000
Switzerland:	EUR 262.000	=	CHF	273.000
USA/Canada:	EUR 246.000	=	USD	275.000
Japan:	EUR 165.000	=	JPY	22.610.000

c. From the start of the grant period, the maximum remuneration of the managers and board members of an applicant/lead party and possible co-applicants established outside the EU and Norway, Switzerland, USA/Canada and/or Japan, are in reasonable proportion to the seniority of their position and to the organisation's geographical location, size and complexity.

D.5: The applicant is capable of proper financial management. The applicant can ensure effective and efficient implementation of the activities due to its expertise regarding the activities for which a grant is being applied for.

D.6: The minimum grant application is €5 million and the maximum €15 million for the five-year duration of the activities.

D.7: The programme does not involve initiatives aimed wholly or partly at proselytization.

D.8: The programme concerns activities of substance in at least two countries, of which at least one low-income country and at least one country in the lower-middle income countries' category or the countries China, Malaysia, Thailand, Jordan, Algeria, Iran, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia.<sup>36</sup>

D.9: The programme does not relate to commercial services, investment or other commercial activities.

D.10: The programme relates to activities that qualify for funding from the ODA budget in line with OECD/DAC criteria.

D.11: The activities for which grant funding is sought are not implemented in countries other than low-income countries, lower-middle income countries, and China, Malaysia, Thailand, Jordan, Algeria, Iran, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia.

D.12: The programme focuses on at least one of the following three categories of activities, or takes the form of an integrated programme encompassing two or more categories:

1. Activities focused on reducing violence against women;

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<sup>35</sup> \* <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114&plugin=1>

<sup>36</sup> See also Annex 2 of the Policy Framework: list of eligible countries.

2. Activities focused on the participation of women in politics and public administration;
3. Activities focused on economic participation and self-reliance.

## **7.2 Criteria relating to the quality of the theory of change**

The quality of the theory of change is assessed on the basis of the following detailed criteria, which relate to the minimum components that every theory of change should include.

P.1: The extent to which the theory of change contains adequate contextual, actor and gender analyses of the theme of the planned intervention (see section 2.2).

P.2: The extent to which the theory of change contains a vision on and gives an explanation of how strategic short- and medium-term goals are logically derived from the contextual, actor and gender analyses.

P.3: The extent to which the theory of change convincingly justifies the choice of intervention strategies in the programme, as logical consequences of the analysis and goals.

P.4: In the case of applications made by a consortium, the extent to which the theory of change gives an adequate account of the roles of its members and its added value. Applicants should also discuss the forms of cooperation and coordination between the lead party and the co-applicants.

P.5: The extent to which the theory of change provides an adequate system with indicators for monitoring outputs, outcomes and impact.

P.6: The extent to which the theory of change contains an adequate risk analysis that describes the steps taken to limit risks as far as possible.

P.7: The extent to which the theory of change gives a convincing account of the countries and/or regions where the applicant and any co-applicants have added value and where they see feasible opportunities to achieve results.

P.8: The extent to which the theory of change makes explicit the premises and choices underlying the chosen approach.

P.9: The extent to which the theory of change relates with priority areas of FLOW 2016-2020 and indicates strategic targets in these priority areas.

## **7.3 Criteria relating to the quality of the proposed programme**

The quality of the proposed programme is assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

P.10: The extent to which the programme is relevant to policy. This is assessed on the basis of the following factors:

P.10.a. Relevance to the objective of this grant policy framework: the extent to which the activities contribute to equal rights and create opportunities for women and girls in low- and lower-middle income countries, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Algeria, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia, particularly on the themes of safety (combating violence against women), economic participation and participation in politics and public administration.

P.10.b. The extent to which activities are in keeping with Dutch international gender policy, as described in the November 2011 letter to parliament, 'International Gender Policy', and in the 2013 letter to parliament on human rights, 'Justice and Respect for All', and with the international consensus expressed in the Beijing Platform for Action and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (gender equality).

P.10.c. Complementarity and coherence: the extent to which the activities are aligned with the development policy of the Netherlands and other donors in the countries in which the activities are to be carried out, as well as their alignment with other activities of the applicant organisations and with other Dutch grant policy frameworks.

P.11: The extent to which the programme proposal, especially the defined problem and objective, reflects the findings of a valid contextual analysis.

P.12: The degree to which the programme contributes to institutional capacity building of the partners in the countries where it is implemented and the extent to which partners or the target group can effectively influence the programme.

P.13: The extent to which satisfactory risk management is in place, consisting of a satisfactory risk analysis and a satisfactory system for monitoring and corrective action, and the funding necessary to implement the programme, in addition to the requested grant, is guaranteed.

P.14: The extent to which activities are sustainable, i.e. whether they will produce a lasting effect for the ultimate target group and contribute to the institutional sustainability of partners and the applicant's/lead party's own organisation.

P.15: In case of multiple applicants, the extent to which collaboration with co-applicants has additional value and the way the lead party/lead parties or main applicant bring(s) experience working together in this specific alliance, which is illustrated and reflected in a signed collaboration agreement, in which all agreements are noted down with regards (i) the extent to which all parties contribute to the activities of the alliance, (ii) detailing and explaining decision-making processes in the alliance, (iii) the way costs and risks are being shared amongst the participants and (iv) the way in which liabilities of the use of the grant are being guaranteed.

P.16: The extent to which the proposal provides a detailed description of the envisaged outcomes, outputs, proposed activities and resources, and shows that there is a clear link between the envisaged outputs and the resources needed to achieve these, and the extent to which envisaged outcomes, outputs and resources are Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic and Time-related.

P.17: The extent to and way in which the programme is innovative, either in a thematic sense or due to improvements in the intervention strategy used or efficiency gains in programme implementation.

#### **7.4 Criteria relating to the quality of the track record**

The quality of your track record will be assessed on the basis of the following detailed criteria, which relate to the minimum factors that every track record should provide insight into:

T.1: The extent to which the organisation/consortium has developed expertise in the areas of gender equality and women's rights, particularly with regard to the FLOW 2016-2020 themes.

T.2: The effectiveness of gender equality and women's rights activities implemented by the organisation/consortium, including its use of relevant national and international networks to enhance the intervention's effectiveness, the challenges this entailed and the organisation's/consortium's response to these challenges.

T.3: The extent to which the organisation/consortium uses innovative intervention strategies and ways of raising efficiency as it carries out its programmes.

T.4: The transparency of the way the organisation/consortium works, and the way it provides accountability to its target group, partner organisations, local stakeholders, donors and the wider public (including members and supporters).

T.5: The extent to which the work of the organisation/consortium is inclusive in terms of participation of local partners, gender mainstreaming, and increasing opportunities and access to basic services for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

T.6: The extent to which the organisation or consortium has structurally embedded its results.

T.7: The organisation's/consortium's added value for gender equality relative to other actors, such as government authorities, other NGOs, multilateral organisations and the business community.

T.8: The extent to which the organisation/consortium has the capacity to absorb, and adapt in response to, the lessons learned through planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME).

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1. Model application form

Appendix 2. List of lower- and lower-middle income countries

Appendix 3. Checklist on Organizational Capacity Assessment (COCA)

Appendix 4. Limited COCA