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Grant Policy Framework for Matra “government to government” 2020-2024

1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance to Dutch policy on security and stability

The Matra programme (*Maatschappelijke Transformatie*; ‘social transformation’) is part of the government’s overarching policy on security and stability. The government’s aim is to promote security and stability in the Netherlands and worldwide through effective bilateral and multilateral cooperation and by fostering the transition towards democracy in priority regions. The Matra programme, together with the Shiraka programme, is part of the Dutch Fund for Regional Partnerships (NFRP) which focuses on the countries surrounding the European Union. The Matra programme is aimed at countries with a prospect of joining the EU (pre-accession countries) and countries in the Eastern Partnership.¹

Key concepts of the NFRP are democratisation, developing the rule of law, good governance, social engagement and a healthy relationship between governments and their citizens. The Matra programme focuses primarily on capacity building and institutional strengthening with regard to the judiciary, public institutions, civil society organisations and political parties. The Matra programme has been running continuously since 1993, making it one of the longest-running programmes with these focus areas.

The government attaches particular importance to the programme, since it is all about reinforcing and promoting shared European values – values that connect European countries, bridging their cultural diversity. A strong and pluralist democracy under the rule of law, stable democratic processes and good governance – all of which are dealt with in this grant policy framework – are part of these values and of the agenda for the regions bordering on the European Union.

This Grant Policy Framework for Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 (hereafter ‘Matra “government to government” 2020-2024’) builds on the previously published Grant Policy Framework for Matra 2017-2020 and is aimed at supporting public authorities in Matra target countries. Both frameworks are based on the Matra policy framework letter of 8 January 2016 (Parliamentary Paper 2015-2016, 34 300 V, no. 51). This instrument will be used to transfer knowledge and skills relating to pluralism, the rule of law and democratic and good governance from Dutch public authorities to their counterparts in the Matra regions.

¹ Pre-accession countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.
Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine.

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1.2 Objective of the Grant Policy Framework for Matra “government to government” 2020-2024

Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 is primarily about strengthening the capacity of public and semi-public institutions in pre-accession countries and the four countries in the Eastern Partnership that have signed either an association agreement (AA) or a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the European Union (hereafter ‘AA and CEPA countries’).² Projects in the pre-accession countries must demonstrably contribute to the development of the rule of law and good governance, in line with EU accession criteria. Projects in the AA and CEPA countries must demonstrably contribute to achieving provisions on the rule of law and good governance, laid down in the association or partnership agreements.

Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 also focuses on strengthening bilateral ties. Applications must therefore involve non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and not-for-profit educational/research institutions and draw on the expertise of Dutch public or semi-public institutions.

In concrete terms, the objective comprises:

A .Capacity development

The capacity of one or more public or semi-public institutions in one or more of the target countries to comply with the agreements made with the EU³ will be strengthened by drawing on the capacity of one or more relevant public or semi-public institutions in the Netherlands.

And

B. Strengthening bilateral relations between the Netherlands and the Matra countries

Cooperation between Dutch public and semi-public institutions and their counterparts in the target countries will strengthen ties between the countries.

1.3 Reading guide

Chapter 2 provides information on the procedure, the financial resources available, the selection process and the timeframe. Chapter 3 explains what types of project are eligible for a grant. Chapter 4 sets out the formal requirements for applications and the subsequent procedure. Finally, the last three chapters set out the applicable threshold criteria, track record criteria and substantive criteria on which applications will be assessed.

² This grant framework does not therefore apply to the Matra countries Azerbaijan and Belarus.

³ For the pre-accession countries: the agreements made on developing the rule of law and good governance, in line with the EU accession process. For the AA and CEPA countries: the provisions on developing the rule of law and good governance, set out in their association or partnership agreements with the EU.

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2. Procedure, financial resources, resource allocation and timeframe

2.1 Assessment in two phases

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 award of Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grants. The administrative rules laid down in this grant policy framework also apply to the assessment of grant applications and the allocation of the available resources.

To be eligible for a Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grant, applications must meet the formal requirements set out in chapter 4.

Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grant applications will be assessed in two phases:

1. Threshold check part A, track record check, quality check of concept note. See chapter 5 for full details on part A of the threshold check, chapter 6 for details on the track record check and chapter 7 for details on the substantive check of the concept note.
2.
 - a) Threshold check part B and quality check of full proposal. See chapter 5 for full details on part B of the threshold check and chapter 7 for details on the substantive check of the full proposal.
 - b) Assessment of organisational capacity and integrity policy.

2.1.1 Assessment in phase 1

In the first phase the applications submitted are assessed against the criteria in part A of the threshold check, the track record criteria and the criteria relating to the quality of the concept note (drawn up using the template in appendix 2), outlining the project’s objectives and administrative characteristics (budget, duration, etc.) and which partners are involved.

i. Threshold criteria part A

To be eligible for a Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grant, the applicant/lead party and all co-applicants as well as the project for which grant funding is sought must in any case satisfy all the threshold criteria (see chapter 5). Applications that fail to meet one or more threshold criteria will be rejected and will not be processed further.

The threshold criteria will be assessed in two phases. In order to keep the burden of the concept note phase as manageable as possible, part A of the threshold check will assess only those matters which are deemed essential at that phase of the assessment. Part B of the threshold check will not be carried out until the second phase for applicants who, following the substantive check of their concept note, are invited to submit a full proposal.

ii. Track record

All applications that pass part A of the threshold check will be assessed against the track record criteria (see chapter 6). To be eligible for a Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grant, the applicant/lead party and all co-applicants must in any case satisfy all

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these criteria. Applications that fail to do so will be rejected and will not be processed further.

iii. Quality of the concept note

If an application passes part A of the threshold check and the track record check, the quality of the concept note will be assessed against the substantive criteria (see chapter 7). A concept note must be of good quality (see section 2.3) for the applicant to be invited to submit a full proposal.

iv. Selection of applicants invited to submit a full proposal

Applications will be ranked according to their score on the qualitative assessment of the concept note. On the basis of this ranking and the available resources, applications will be selected for phase 2 (submission of a full proposal), with due regard for the need for an even distribution of the available resources over the themes and sub-themes, the two target regions (the pre-accession countries and the AA and CEPA countries) and the target countries. Applications will be selected until the requested grant amounts add up to a maximum of €15 million.

The applicants who submitted the selected applications will be invited to submit a full proposal for the second phase of assessment. This full proposal must be consistent with the concept note. Changes may not be made to the consortium, target countries or any other features already assessed in part A of the threshold check.

2.1.2 Assessment in phase 2

Phase 2.a

i. Threshold check part B

All full proposals submitted on time will first be assessed against the criteria in part B of the threshold check (see chapter 5). Applications that fail to meet one or more of these criteria will be rejected and will not be processed further.

ii. Quality of the full proposal

If all the criteria in part B of the threshold check have been met, the application will be assessed against the substantive criteria relating to the quality of the full proposal (see chapter 7). To be eligible for a grant, a full proposal must be of good quality (see section 2.3).

Applications will be ranked according to their score on the assessment of the full proposal. Applications will be selected for a grant on the basis of this ranking and the available resources, with due regard for the need for an even distribution of the available resources over the themes and sub-themes, the two target regions (the pre-accession countries and the AA and CEPA countries) and the target countries. This will result in a provisional list of grantees.

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Phase 2.b

Under article 4, paragraph 1 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree, grants are awarded solely to legal persons who are in a position to ensure adequate financial management and can guarantee effective and efficient implementation of the activities through experience and expertise in relation to activities of the kind for which grant funding is sought.

The applicant must also demonstrate that it has and, in the case of a consortium, all co-applicants have adopted an integrity policy and that it has or they have introduced procedures to apply that policy, so as to 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.

An Organisational Risk and Integrity Assessment (ORIA) is only required for applicants that have passed parts A and B of the threshold check and meet the track record criteria, and are eligible for a grant based on their scores on the substantive criteria in both phases 1 and 2.a. These applicants will be invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to demonstrate within a prescribed time limit 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. Otherwise the application will be rejected. Applications will also be rejected if any additional information requested for assessing organisational capacity and/or integrity policy is not provided or not provided on time.

This means applicants do not yet need to supply a copy of the ORIA or PARTOS ISO-9001 certification required for the assessment of organisational capacity and integrity policy either with the concept note or with the full application. This way of working ensures a level playing field for applicants who do not yet hold these documents. To allow a final decision to be reached within the timeframe set in section 2.5, applicants will only be given short notice to demonstrate that their organisational capacity and integrity policy are satisfactory: 10 working days at most. It is important that you prepare for this. Please refer to the explanatory note in appendix 8 to find out how you will be expected to demonstrate organisational capacity if your application meets the threshold and substantive criteria and what documents will be required for this purpose.

2.2 Available resources, amount per project and timeframe for carrying out activities

The grant ceiling for Matra "government to government" 2020-2024 is €9 million. The minimum grant amount per project is €500,000 and the maximum €2 million. Projects must have a duration of between two and four years. Projects must start between 1 May 2020 and 1 October 2020 and end no later than 30 October 2024.

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2.3 Selection of applications and allocation of available resources

To be eligible for a Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grant, an application must fulfil all the threshold criteria and track record criteria, and the quality of both the concept note and the full proposal must be at least ‘good’ (a score of at least 70% of the maximum number of points).

The assessment of grant applications and the award and allocation of the available resources 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. These applications will be ranked and the applications that best meet the criteria will be given priority in the award of grants. Grants will be allocated to the highest ranking applications until the available resources have been exhausted.

The available resources are therefore allocated on the basis of the quality of the applications submitted, assessed using the criteria in these administrative rules. The allocation of the available resources will as far as possible ensure a reasonable distribution of resources over activities in the two target regions. The Minister will also strive to ensure a reasonable distribution of the resources over the target countries stated in section 3.1.3 and the themes and sub-themes stated in section 3.1.1.

As a result, an application that received a good score may nevertheless be rejected because the available resources are not sufficient to award grants to all applications of good quality and/or because allocation according to the provisional ranking by quality would result in an uneven distribution of resources over the themes or sub-themes, target regions and/or target countries.

2.4 Residual funds

Following the approval of one or more applications, funds amounting to less than €500,000 may be left over. Projects will not be partially funded if this would mean allocating an amount lower than the minimum grant amount of €500,000. No further project grants can therefore be awarded.

2.5 Deadline for submissions and subsequent timeframe

Applications can be submitted from the date on which this Order enters into force (the day after its publication in the Government Gazette) until 12.00 CET on 31 October 2019. Within four weeks after the deadline selected applicants will be invited to draw up full proposals on the basis of their concept notes. These full proposals can be submitted until 12.00 CET on 21 February 2020. A decision on full proposals that have been submitted on time will be made by 30 April 2020 at the latest.

Action	Timeframe
Deadline for submitting applications incl. concept notes	12.00 CET on 31 October 2019
Assessment of concept notes, selection of applicants who will be invited to submit full proposals	1 November - 30 November 2019

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Deadline for submitting full proposals	12.00 CET on 21 February 2020
Assessment of full proposals, selection of applicants who may be eligible for a grant, organisational capacity and integrity policy check, grant award decision	24 February – 30 April 2020

2.6 Obligations tied to the grant award

If a grant is awarded the grant recipient must report on the progress of their activities. The exact requirements, which must be satisfied as a condition of the grant award, will be laid down in the grant decision.

2.7 Role of the embassies in the target countries

During both the concept note phase and the writing of the full proposal, applicants can indirectly draw on the expertise of the embassies in the target countries. Any questions they may have relating to the local context can be sent in writing to matra@minbuza.nl. These questions will be aggregated where necessary, anonymised and added once a week, with answers, to the Q&As of the NFRP Matra programme website (www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/europese-subsidies/inhoud/nederlands-fonds-voor-regionale-partnerschappen-nfrp/nfrp-matra-subsidie).

Applicants should not contact the embassies directly.

3. Activities and organisations that are eligible for a grant and requirements for partnerships

3.1 Activities eligible for a Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grant (themes and working method)

3.1.1 Qualifying themes and sub-themes

The term ‘the rule of law’ in English can be considered the equivalent of the Dutch concept ‘rechtsstaat’. Neither concept is clear-cut, however, and both include various themes that are sometimes formulated in other ways. To make it possible to cover the full range, a number of themes and sub-themes have been identified. To be eligible for a grant, applications should address at least one of these. Different qualifying themes and sub-themes have been identified for the two target regions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has particular interest in innovative projects within the thematic areas mentioned below.

Applications that focus on themes other than the ones set out here will be rejected.

The qualifying themes and sub-themes are:

Pre-accession region

1. The rule of law, administration of justice and law enforcement

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- **Professional and modern justice system**
 - a. Strengthening the organisation and management of the judiciary
 - b. Fostering efficient cooperation within the justice system
 - c. Strengthening judicial training institutions
 - d. Increasing the independence, integrity, transparency, impartiality and accessibility of the judiciary
 - e. Building capacity to combat corruption and organised crime
 - f. Incorporating and implementing international standards on criminal law with specific attention to trying war criminals in their own country, cooperation with international tribunals and transitional justice in the shape of establishing the truth, reconciliation and compensation
- **Incorporating and implementing international standards with regard to human rights**
- **Press freedom**

2. Good governance

- **Reliable, inclusive and democratic government action through increased:**
 - a) transparency
 - b) auditability
 - c) integrity
 - d) and democratisation.

AA and CEPA countries

1. The rule of law, administration of justice and law enforcement

- **Professional and modern justice system**
 - a. Strengthening the organisation and management of the judiciary
 - b. Efficient cooperation within the justice system
 - c. Strengthening judicial training institutions
 - d. Increasing the independence, integrity, transparency, impartiality and accessibility of the judiciary
 - e. Building capacity to combat corruption and organised crime
 - f. Incorporating and implementing international standards on criminal law
- **Incorporating and implementing international standards with regard to human rights**
- **Press freedom**

2. Good governance

- **Reliable, inclusive and democratic government action through increased:**
 - a) transparency
 - b) auditability
 - c) integrity
 - d) and democratisation.

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Applications that focus on themes other than the ones set out here will be rejected.

3.1.2 Qualifying working methods

In accordance with the Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 objective as set out above applications should focus on:

- 1) transferring expertise and skills to public or semi-public institutions; *and*
- 2) institutional strengthening. The project should draw on the relevant subject expertise of one or more Dutch public or semi-public institutions (see section 3.3.1.).

3.1.3 Geographic scope

To be eligible for a grant, applications must focus on building the capacity of public or semi-public institutions in one or more of the following target countries:

- **Pre-accession countries:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.
- **AA and CEPA countries:** Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Particular attention will be given to regional cooperation (within the above-mentioned country categories). If an application contains a regional cooperation component, the quality of this component will be assessed during the concept note phase. It should be noted that carrying out separate projects in various target countries does not qualify as regional cooperation.

3.2 Who are Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grants for?

The following can be eligible for a Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grant:

- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and non-profit educational/research institutions;

For the purposes of these administrative rules, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) is a not-for-profit organisation that was not established by a public authority and that possesses legal personality under civil law in the country where it has its registered office.

Only legal persons are eligible for Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grants.

For-profit organisations may not apply on their own for a Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 grant. NGOs may however include experts from commercial organisations in a project budget if the nature of the project requires their expertise and the costs of doing so are in proportion to the services provided and in keeping with the nature of the Matra programme. The costs budgeted for hiring commercial experts must be in line with the motion submitted by MP Marleen de Pater-van der Meer (Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives 2009-2010, 32 124, no. 18), which states that a maximum hourly rate of €250 excluding VAT and a maximum daily rate of €1,800 excluding VAT apply to external expertise hired in the Netherlands. The Dutch embassies in the target countries will

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be called upon to help establish whether the rates for expertise procured there are reasonable.

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 organisations that are eligible for a grant and are carrying out a joint project to which all partners contribute. To this end the partners sign a partnership agreement that must be submitted with the full proposal in phase 2. The lead party submits the grant application on behalf of the consortium. If the application is approved, the lead party is responsible for the implementation of the consortium's project and for compliance with the obligations associated with the grant.

Please note: organisations can be involved in up to three Matra "government to government" 2020-2024 grant applications, either as applicant, lead party or co-applicant. If an organisation is involved in more than three applications, any applications submitted after the first three have been received will be rejected and will not be processed further.

Applicants may form a partnership with third parties to implement part or all of the project. Such partnerships are not consortia in the sense described above, but partnerships with local organisations, for instance, which implement certain parts of the project at local level.

3.3 Requirements for partnerships

3.3.1 Partnerships with public or semi-public institutions in the Netherlands and the target countries

Matra "government to government" 2020-2024 grants are intended for projects focusing on one or more of the themes or sub-themes listed in section 3.1.1, on which Dutch public or semi-public institutions work in a result-oriented way with public or semi-public institutions in the target countries.

For the purposes of Matra "government to government" 2020-2024, 'Dutch public or semi-public institutions' is understood to mean central government ministries, High Councils of State, autonomous administrative authorities (ZBOs), public-law industrial regulatory and professional bodies, legal persons constituted under private law and natural persons invested with any public authority.

The eligible bodies in the target countries are public and semi-public institutions comparable to the Dutch institutions listed above.

In addition to cooperation with one or more public or semi-public institutions at central government level, Matra "government to government" 2020-2024 allows scope for cooperation with subnational Dutch authorities if this would help achieve the objective of the proposed project. *It should be noted that cooperation of this kind cannot replace the required cooperation with one or more of the public or semi-public institutions at central government level mentioned above.*

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Staff of the public or semi-public institutions mentioned above will not always be able to provide all the required expertise, in which case consultants from the commercial sector can be called upon (see section 3.2 on the costs incurred for hiring external experts). Use may also be made of the expertise of appropriate public or semi-public institutions in other EU member states, provided this is not in conflict with the objectives set out in section 1.2.

3.3.2 Cooperation with local civil society

Local NGOs that are active in the target countries in the areas mentioned in section 3.1.1 can play a major role in attaining the objectives listed in section 1.2 and in ensuring that the results have a lasting impact, for example when a substantial part of the civil service is replaced following elections. A strong and involved civil society sector can also contribute indirectly to advancing the rule of law, pluralism and effective government. Involving these organisations in projects where appropriate may also increase public support for reforms.

Local civil society organisations may therefore be involved in projects under this grants framework. However, this is not a requirement.

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4. Formal requirements for applications

- 4.1 Applications can be submitted from the date on which this Order enters into force (the day after its publication in the Government Gazette) until 12.00 CET on 31 October 2019. Applications submitted after the date and time stated above will be rejected. Applications must be submitted using the model application form as stipulated by the Minister and accompanied by the documents stipulated in the form. Where the Minister has made templates available, these must be used in drawing up documents (see the model application form and appendices 1 to 12 to this grant policy framework).⁴ The applicant bears sole responsibility for ensuring that the application is complete and submitted on time.
- 4.2 Full proposals may be submitted from the date on which the applicant/lead party is requested to do so until 12.00 CET on 21 February 2020. A decision on full proposals submitted on time will be made by 30 April 2020 at the latest. Full proposals submitted after the date and time stated above will be rejected. The applicant bears sole responsibility for ensuring that the full proposal is complete and submitted on time.
- 4.3 If an applicant/lead party wishes to apply for a grant for more than one project, a separate application must be submitted for each project. If multiple projects are included in a single application, the application will be returned and the applicant/lead party will have to submit new, separate applications for each project. The time at which the separate applications are received will be considered the time of receipt. Please note: the deadlines set out above also apply to resubmitted separate applications. If the time remaining until these deadlines can reasonably be assumed to be insufficient to inform the applicant that they must re-apply and/or for the applicant to do so, the combined application will be rejected.
- 4.4 Applications should preferably be submitted by email in PDF format.⁵ Budgets should preferably be submitted in Excel format. Applications by email can be sent to:

Matra@minbuza.nl

The time when the email is received on the servers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be considered the time of submission. Please note that the email server will reject files larger than 14MB. Larger files should be split up into smaller files and sent in separate emails. Where this is the case, the time at which the last email is received will be considered the time the application is submitted. If an application is split into several files which are each sent separately by email, the emails must be

⁴ The model application form and document templates that must be used when submitting an application will be published as appendices to the grant policy framework on www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/europese-subsidies/inhoud/nederlands-fonds-voor-regionale-partnerschappen-nfrp/nfrp-matra-subsidie

⁵ WeTransfer or other digital data transfer systems may not be used for this purpose.

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numbered, with both the email number and the total number of emails clearly indicated in the subject line.⁶

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

Postal applications should be sent to:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
European Affairs Department
Postbus 20061
2500 EB The Hague

If you wish to deliver your application personally or by courier, it may be handed in at the Ministry's mail desk (deliveries), Rijnstraat 8, 2515 XP, The Hague.

The time at which the application is received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be considered the time of submission.

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

Applications sent by post (apart from those using a 'postage paid' envelope) and postmarked on a date before the application deadline are considered to have been submitted on time, provided they are received no later than one week after the deadline for applications has passed.

Applications sent by post using a 'postage paid' envelope are considered to have been submitted on time if they are delivered to the Ministry before 12.00 CET on 15 October 2019 (for the concept note) or before 12.00 CET on 21 February 2020 (for the full proposal). 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.

- 4.5 Applications should be complete and without reservations, signed by an officially authorised signatory (state name and position) on behalf of the applicant.
- 4.6 It is not possible to submit a provisional application.
- 4.7 Applications must be submitted in Dutch or English. A Dutch or English translation should be added to any supporting documents 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 these will not be taken

⁶ E.g. 'email 1 of 5', 'email 2 of 5', etc. up to 'email 5 of 5'.

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into account when assessing the application.

- 4.8 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.*

If the application or the full proposal is submitted only a short time before the deadline of 31 October 2019 or 21 February 2020 respectively, the applicant runs the risk that, if it is incomplete, the minister will not use her discretionary powers to request a supplement, because it cannot be submitted before the deadline. In that case, the application or proposal would have to be assessed as it stands. Incomplete or insufficiently reasoned applications may be rejected based on the threshold or substantive criteria.

- 4.9 We would also draw applicants' attention to article 9 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Decree in particular. Applications concerning activities that have already been started at the time that the grant application is submitted will be rejected.
- 4.10 Questions concerning this document or any other matters will only be dealt with if they are sent by email to matra@minbuza.nl. Until the deadline for submitting full proposals, questions will be aggregated where necessary, anonymised and added once a week, with answers, to the Q&As of the NFRP Matra programme website (www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/europese-subsidies/inhoud/nederlands-fonds-voor-regionale-partnerschappen-nfrp/nfrp-matra-subsidie).

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5. Threshold criteria (D.1 to D.20)

Applications that fail to meet all the threshold criteria will be rejected and will not be processed further. These criteria are listed below and explained where necessary.

In order to make phase 1 as accessible as possible the threshold criteria will be assessed in two phases. Part A will be assessed in phase 1, part B will be assessed in phase 2.

Part A (criteria D.1 to D.16)

Threshold criteria concerning the applicant

Criterion D.1 – Type of organisation and place of establishment

a. Type of organisation

The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party and each co-applicant must be an NGO or not-for-profit educational/research institution or the Dutch branch of an international NGO that is registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce as an independent Dutch legal person.

- For the purposes of the application of these administrative rules, 'NGO' means a not-for-profit organisation that was not established by a public authority and that possesses legal personality under civil law in the country where it has its registered office.
- 'Dutch' means established in the Netherlands under Dutch law and having its registered office in the Netherlands.

b. Place of establishment

The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party and co-applicants have their registered office in the Netherlands.

Criterion D.2 – Consortium

In the case of a consortium, a declaration of intent (drawn up using the template in appendix 3 to this grant policy framework), signed by all the consortium partners (lead party and co-applicant(s)), must be included with the application to demonstrate their intention to jointly carry out the project for which grant funding is sought.

Criterion D.3 - Extent of organisations' financial independence

In the 2016-2018 period no more than 75% of the applicant's total annual income came from grants and/or contributions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including missions). If the applicant is the lead party of a consortium, this criterion applies to the whole consortium. Consequently, if one of the parties in the consortium derives more than 75% of its total annual income from Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributions, this may be offset by another party in the consortium.

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Criterion D.4 – Maximum remuneration

The maximum remuneration of individual management and board members of the applicant/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, profit shares and bonuses;
- 2) taxable fixed and variable expense allowances; and
- 3) payments made at set times of year, such as holiday pay, thirteenth-month bonus, the employer's share of pension contributions, etc.

Criterion D.5 - Number of applications

The organisation submitting the application, or in the case of a consortium, each consortium partner (lead party and co-applicant(s)) may be involved in no more than three Matra "government to government" 2020-2024 grant applications as an applicant, lead party or co-applicant.

Threshold criteria concerning the project

Criterion D.6 – Size of the grant

The grant amount requested must be at least €500,000 but no more than €2,000,000.

Criterion D.7 – Project duration

The project for which grant funding is sought must have a duration of at least 24 months but no more than 48 months.

Criterion D.8 – Project start and end dates

The activities must start no earlier than 1 May 2020 and no later than 1 October 2020, and end no later than 30 October 2024.

Criterion D.9 – Countries where the activities will be implemented

The project must focus on strengthening the capacity of one or more public or semi-public institutions in at least one of the following target countries:

- **Pre-accession countries:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey
- **AA and CEPA countries:** Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine.

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Criterion D.10 – Alignment with Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 objectives

The project must help achieve the overarching Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 policy objectives:

A. Capacity development

Strengthening the capacity of one or more public or semi-public institutions in one or more of the target countries to comply with the agreements made with the EU by drawing on the capacity of one or more relevant public or semi-public institutions in the Netherlands.

And

B. Strengthening bilateral relations between the Netherlands and the Matra countries

Strengthening bilateral relations between the Netherlands and the Matra countries through cooperation between Dutch public or semi-public institutions and their counterparts in the target countries.

Criterion D.11 – Contribution to the implementation of EU agreements with the target country or countries

The project must contribute to:

1. the development of the rule of law and good governance in line with the EU accession criteria, in the case of capacity development in the pre-accession countries; and/or
2. the implementation of provisions on developing the rule of law and good governance as set out in the association agreements with the EU, in the case of capacity development in the AA and CEPA countries.

Criterion D.12 – Qualifying themes

The project for which grant funding is sought must focus on at least one of the themes or sub-themes listed in section 3.1.1.

Criterion D.13 – Involvement of Dutch public or semi-public institutions and cooperation with public or semi-public institutions in target countries

The applicant must directly involve Dutch public or semi-public institutions in the implementation of the project by working in a results-oriented way with one or more public or semi-public institutions in one or more of the target countries referred to under threshold criterion D.9.

For the purposes of Matra “government to government” 2020-2024, ‘Dutch public or semi-public institutions’ is understood to mean central government ministries, High Councils of State, autonomous administrative authorities (ZBOs), public-law industrial regulatory and professional bodies, legal persons constituted under private law and natural persons invested with any public authority.

The eligible bodies in the target countries are public or semi-public institutions comparable to the Dutch institutions listed above.

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D.14 – Cooperation with public or semi-public institutions

The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party, must include with the application a declaration of intent (drawn up using the template in appendix 4 to this grant policy framework), demonstrating the intention of the applicant/consortium, the Dutch public or semi-public institution(s) and the public or semi-public institution(s) in the target country or countries to jointly carry out the project for which grant funding is sought. The declaration must be signed by the applicant or, in the case of a consortium, by the lead party on behalf of the consortium or by all the consortium partners, as well as by the Dutch public or semi-public institution(s) and the public or semi-public institution(s) in the target country or countries.

Criterion D.15 – Overhead costs and contingency

Overheads must not exceed 10% of the project budget.⁷

Contingencies must not exceed 5% of the project budget.⁸

Criterion D.16 - Activities not eligible for a grant

The project may not involve:

- 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 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget;
- activities by a local NGO which already receives a contribution from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget;
- activities of organisations already receiving core funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget during the period to which the application relates.

Part B (criteria D.17 to D.20)

Criterion D.17 – Full proposal is consistent with concept note

The full proposal is consistent with the concept note and is an elaboration on the concept note. Changes may not be made to the consortium, target countries or any other features already assessed in part A of the threshold check.

Criterion D.18 – Consortium

In the case of a consortium, the lead party must include with the full proposal a partnership agreement signed by all consortium partners (the lead party and the co-applicant(s)), in any case laying down arrangements on the following with regard to the project for which grant funding is sought:

- a. how each of the parties will contribute to the consortium's activities;
- b. how decisions are made within the consortium;

⁷ A definition of overheads can be found in appendix 12 to this grant policy framework.

⁸ A definition of contingencies can be found in appendix 12 to this grant policy framework.

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- c. how costs and risks are shared among the partners;
- d. how the fulfilment of obligations towards the Minister in respect of the grant will be ensured, including responsibility for the joint aggregated reports;
- e. how the consortium members will keep each other informed about, in particular, their financial health;
- f. how the partnership can be adapted;
- g. the role of each of the consortium members in monitoring and evaluating progress in the activities for which a grant has been received.

Criterion D.19 – Collaboration with public or semi-public institutions

The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party, must include with the full proposal an agreement specifying how the applicant or the consortium, the Dutch public or semi-public institution(s) and the public or semi-public institution(s) in the target country or countries will work together in implementing the project. The agreement must be signed by the applicant or, in the case of a consortium, by the lead party on behalf of the consortium or by all the consortium partners, as well as by the Dutch public or semi-public institution(s) and the public or semi-public institution(s) in the target country or countries.

Criterion D.20 - Additional funding

The funding necessary to implement the project, in addition to the requested grant, must be guaranteed.

6. Track record (T.1 to T.2)

T.1 Experience in target country/countries

The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party or the lead party and co-applicants combined, must have at least two years' experience, gained within the last 10 years, with activities in the country or countries where the project for which grant funding is sought will be carried out (reference date 1 January 2019).

T.2 Experiences with the theme(s) or sub-theme(s)

The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party or the lead party and co-applicants combined, must have at least two years' experience, gained within the last 10 years, with activities relating to the theme or sub-theme on which the project for which grant funding is sought will focus (reference date 1 January 2019).

7. Substantive criteria (I.1 to I.8)

Only applications assessed as 'good' (i.e. both the concept note and the full proposal must score at least 70% of the maximum number of points on the substantive criteria below) are eligible for a grant. Applications that do not attain the minimum number of points will be rejected.

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Policy-related criteria concerning the project

The policy relevance of the applications submitted will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1.1 Logical cohesion and thematic relevance

Concept note:

- 1) The extent to which the project ties in with one or more of the themes and sub-themes listed in section 3.1.1.
- 2) The extent to which the project is based on a sound contextual and stakeholder analysis.
- 3) The extent to which the problem has been adequately defined and the projected outcomes follow logically from the contextual and stakeholder analysis.
- 4) The extent to which the project is expected to contribute to the achievement of the desired outcomes.
- 5) The extent to which the project contributes to the achievement of the Matra “government to government” 2020-2024 objectives as set out in section 1.2.
- 6) The extent to which the project is feasible and it is clear how the outcomes of evaluations, pilots, studies, etc. have been incorporated into the project design.
- 7) The extent to which the project is shown to be complementary to the interventions of other donors.
- 8) The extent to which the applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party has demonstrated convincingly that the project’s approach is innovative.

Full proposal:

- 1) The extent to which the proposed intervention strategy follows logically from the contextual and stakeholder analysis.
- 2) The extent to which the proposed intervention strategy is SMART⁹ in terms of:
 - outcomes
 - outputs
 - indicators
 - activities, and
 - resourcesand these parts are logically and clearly linked.
- 3) The extent to which the chosen approach is inclusive and takes account of the various stakeholders as defined in the contextual and stakeholder analysis.

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

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1.2 Role of Dutch and local public or semi-public institutions

Concept note:

The extent to which the proposed cooperation with a Dutch public or semi-public institution and a public or semi-public institution in the target country contributes to achieving the objective.

1.3 Local implementing NGO or NGOs

Full proposal:

In the case of cooperation with one or more local implementing organisations as referred to in section 3.3.2: the extent to which this organisation or these organisations:

- a) are capable of adding value efficiently within an international project;
- b) have exerted effective influence over the development and content of the project;
- c) have effective influence over the way the activities are monitored and managed.

1.4 Quality of regional cooperation

Full proposal:

In the case of a regional cooperation component: the extent to which the regional cooperation component is well conceived and will have added value for more than one country. It should be noted that carrying out separate projects in various target countries does not qualify as regional cooperation.

Sustainability

1.5 Sustainability

Concept note:

The extent to which the concept note convincingly addresses the project's sustainability.

Full proposal:

The extent to which the project is sustainable: the extent to which it produces a lasting effect for the ultimate target group and/or contributes to sustainable institutional strengthening and capacity building at one or more public or semi-public institutions, with careful consideration having been given to how the results achieved can be safeguarded after the project's completion.

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Technical criteria concerning the project and applicant

1.6 PME system

Full proposal:

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

1.7 Risk management

Full proposal:

The adequacy of the analysis of the internal and external risks to the organisation and activities, relating to the implementation of the project (1), including steps to mitigate those risks as much as possible (2).

1.8 Budget and proportionality

Concept note:

The extent to which the general budget outline makes a clear and realistic connection between the resources needed and the envisaged outcomes.

Full proposal:

The extent to which the detailed budget makes a clear and realistic connection between the planned activities, the resources needed, and the envisaged outputs and outcomes.