

PLEASE NOTE

Questions and requests for more information about the Human Rights Fund 20172020 or the application can only be submitted via email to:

MRF2017-2020@minbuza.nl.

If necessary, questions will be aggregated and anonymised and published every Monday, with their answers, on www.government.nl/topics/grant-programmes/contents/human-rights-fund

The answers will be published as an addition to the Q&As already published, by means of updating this document. Before submitting a question, please check first if your question has not already been answered in the Q&A section, the grant policy framework or the application form.

Questions must be received **before 17:00 on Wednesday** in order to be answered on the site at 17:00 on the following Monday.

Q&As

THE HUMAN RIGHTS FUND

Q: Is there a difference between this call, the MRF2017-2020, and possibilities of funding through local embassies? Does the funding for this specific MRF 20172020 call also include funding that is made available through local embassies? Can applications for the MRF 20172020 be submitted through local embassies?

A: The funding available through local embassies is not related to this call (MRF2017-2020) and applications for this call cannot be submitted through local embassies.

Q: Can an organization submit a project under the MRF2017-2020 call and also submit another project to an embassy? Do these projects have to have different themes and focus countries?

A: If an organization wants to submit one proposal under the MRF2017-2020 call and another one through one of the embassies, they can. However, this cannot be the same project or the same activities. This does not necessarily mean that the two projects could never focus on the same theme or on the same country.

Q: Is it possible to know which Dutch embassies has funding available from the Human Rights Fund for projects focusing only on one specific country?

A: No such list is available. However the overview in the 2015 "Human Rights Report" (<https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2016/12/01/human-rights-report-2015>) can provide an indication. Please contact the embassy in question or contact dmm@minbuza.nl.

Q: Are we eligible to receive funding from MRF2017, if we are already receiving funds from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kosovo / Brasil?

A: That depends on whether this funding concerns the same project or the same activities. If the new proposal includes the same activities you will not be eligible. Please keep in mind that you would also have to meet the criterion of D.5, regarding your financial independence.

Q: As this is the MRF 2017-2020: is there another funding round planned 2018-2020? Would the same or similar applications be accepted in that round?

A: The possibility to publish calls for proposals depends on, among others, Government priorities and available funding within the MRF. At this time we cannot provide information on any future calls.

WHO

Q: Is this fund intended only for Dutch organisations?

A: No.

Q: Can a Kosovo/Bangladesh Civil Society Organisation apply for a grant?

A: There is no reason why any Civil Society Organisation could not apply for a grant under the MRF 2017-2020, provided of course that all the criteria regarding the organization as set out in the Grant Policy Framework are met.

Q: If an organization functions -in practice- as an independent organizations but is operating under the fiscal sponsorship of a larger non-profit that is not solely devoted to human rights, would they be eligible?

A: The applicant/lead party itself must meet the threshold criteria concerning the applicant, D.1 – D.7. So amongst others it needs to have legal personality and must work to improve human rights. If this is not the case the organisation is not applicable as applicant/lead party. Organisations with a *broader* objective (that do focus on human rights, but not solely) may demonstrate that they satisfy this criterion on the basis of their most recent annual report and/or internal policy documents. Therefore, if applying with the larger nonprofit organisation as the lead-applicant, this larger non-profit organisation will have to meet the criteria.

Q: Can the Ministry look at the personal track record of the organization's principal officers instead of the organization's history per se, to show it has at least two years' experience with the theme in question and one year's experience in the countries proposed.

A: No, the criterion is directed at the organisation as such, not at its founders or employees. If it cannot be substantiated that the organization can meet this requirement itself, joining a consortium to obtain the required experience would be advisable.

Q: Can an organization be the lead at one project proposal and partner at other project proposal(s)?

A: Yes, it can.

Q: Can an organization be the lead at two project proposals?

A: Yes, it can.

Q: Are international organisations eligible for funding?

A: Yes, they are, assuming that they will meet the criteria regarding the organization, such as criterion D.1 and D.2. This means, amongst others, that they cannot be affiliated with a government in any way. NB: intergovernmental organisations are not eligible for a grant.

Q: While the application states that a legal personality is needed at the time of the application, our organization is still in the process of registering as a coalition. However, individual organizations within the coalition are registered - would this be enough to fulfil the legal personality requirement?

A: The lead party and the co-applicants have to meet the requirements of D.1. A consortium as a whole has to meet the requirements of D.3. If the coalition intends to be lead party or co-applicant it will have to have legal personality itself.

Q: Our organization consists of many different members. A joint application with all these members would be too complicated. Can we submit an application as the overarching organisation?

A: If the overarching organisation itself meets the necessary requirements of D.1 and implements the project completely by itself, you can submit an application as such. The applicant will then be assessed as a single applicant, not as a lead applicant submitting the application on behalf of a consortium. This is relevant for threshold criterion D.5, for example. The members in that case aren't part of a consortium because they are not contributing as such. A consortium is a partnership between two or more civil society organisations that carry out a joint project to which each party contributes. In certain cases the members could be considered local implementing organisations, because they are merely forming a partnership to implement the project of certain of its components. In that case the criterion of D.4 should be met.

If the members are in fact a consortium with the overarching organisation being the lead applicant, the requirements of D.3 will have to be met and an agreement will have to be drafted and signed for the course of the project.

Please note that the applicant has to make clear whether or not the application is submitted on behalf of a consortium, in order to apply criteria such as criterion D.6. It is the applicant's responsibility to then meet the criteria that are applicable.

Q: We are an umbrella organization. We would like to apply as the sole applicant but once the grant is awarded, we would implement the project via our membership by signing memoranda of understanding. Activities would be implemented by staff members hired by us as consultants but deployed in the local centres and operating from there. Is such an operational structure allowed?

A: Please note that your project has to be in fact a project and not core funding of regular activities. If it is indeed a project the following applies.

If the overarching organisation itself meets the necessary requirements of D.1 and D.2 and implements the project completely by itself, you can submit an application as such. The applicant will then be assessed as a single applicant, not as a lead applicant submitting the application on behalf of a consortium. This is relevant for threshold criterion D.5, for example. The members in that case aren't part of a consortium because they are not contributing as such. A consortium is a partnership between two or more civil society organisations that carry out a joint project to which each party contributes. In certain cases the members could be considered local implementing organisations, because they are merely forming a partnership to implement the project of certain of its components. In that case the criterion of D.4 should be met.

If the members are in fact a consortium with the overarching organisation being the lead applicant, the requirements of D.3 will have to be met and an agreement will have to be drafted and signed for the course of the project.

Please note that the applicant has to make clear whether or not the application is submitted on behalf of a consortium, in order to apply criteria such as criterion D.6. It is the applicant's responsibility to then meet the criteria that are applicable.

Q: Is it possible for a newly founded ngo, comprised of two people, to co-apply for a grant as part of a consortium?

A: For a newly founded NGO it is in principle possible to join a consortium when applying for a grant. Of course all the criteria have to be met. For example criterion D.1 requires all applicants to have legal personality and criterion I.1 requires that the lead party and the coapplicants together (as organisations) demonstrate their experience. Please be referred to the grant policy framework and the application form for details.

Q: Can an organization that operates as an independent NGO, but doesn't have a separate legal entity, apply for the Human Rights Fund?

We operate as an independent NGO, and are based within a University. The University is an exempt charity but our organization itself is not registered as a separate legal entity.

A: No. The lead applicant must meet the requirements of (among others) criterion D.1 and should therefore have legal personality. Universities generally have legal personality. In the case of an organization that legally is a department within the University and has no legal personality itself, it could be possible if the University would be lead applicant. In that case please be sure to fill out all the information with the University as the lead applicant, as all criteria concerning the lead applicant will be applied on the University.

Q: Our organization promotes rule of law, defend human rights and fighting against discrimination and impunity. Can I still send my project proposals?

A: Yes, MRF 2017-2020 grants are intended for projects run by independent, not-for-profit civil society organisations with legal personality that work in a result-oriented way to protect and promote human rights.

Please read all information as presented in the Human Rights Fund Grant Policy Framework 2017-2020, the application form for human rights fund grants 2017-2020 and the latest version of the Q&As on the grant policy framework MRF 2017-2020 before writing your application. Current information concerning proposals already received on the different themes can also be found on this website.

Here the link to our English website:

www.government.nl/topics/grant-programmes/contents/human-rights-fund

And here the link to our Dutch website:

www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/subsidies-voor-ontwikkelingssamenwerking-en-europa/inhoud/subsidies-maatschappelijke-organisaties/mensenrechtenfonds.

Q: Can a Dutch university be the leading organization in the project proposal?

A: The Grant Policy Framework states at D.1. that "The applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead party and all co-applicants must be (a) not-for-profit civil society organisation(s) with legal personality."

Universities in the Netherlands have legal personality. Please note that the application should be in name of the University, NOT by a specific department, as a University department as such normally does not have legal personality.

Also the University should fall within the scope of the definition of a civil society organisation as mentioned in D.1, which can only be assessed after receiving the complete application with the relevant appendices.

Q: Can an organization that makes at the moment a restart apply for the Human Rights Fund?

A: This might be possible, but can only be assessed after receiving the complete project proposal.

Please note that of course all the criteria have to be met. For example criterion D.1 requires all applicants to have legal personality and criterion I.1 requires that the lead party and the coapplicants together (as organisations) demonstrate their experience. Please be referred to the grant policy framework and the application form for details.

COLLABORATION

Q: Are foreign organisations required to have a Dutch partner organisation?

A: No.

Q: May proposals be submitted that are drawn up by a consortium?

A: Yes.

Q: May a Dutch organisation form a consortium with an international organisation?

A: Yes.

Q: May a knowledge institution be part of a consortium?

A: Yes.

Q: Can a consortium include Dutch NGOs?

A: Yes

Q: Can local departments of UN organisations be part of a consortium?

A: No, also co-applicants have to meet threshold criterion D.1. UN-organisations and their local departments do not do so.

Q: Is it possible to use funds to pay local organisations that will be involved in implementing the programmes being developed? Must these organisations be mentioned in the application?

A: Yes, this is allowed, and yes, these organisations must be mentioned in the application.

Q: Do the cases for the track record have to be written for the consortium as a whole, or may they concern individual consortium members?

A: A case for the track record may be supplied either by the applicant/lead party or jointly by the lead party and co-applicants. Its aim is in any case to show that the consortium as a whole has the necessary experience.

Q: May organisations that are part of an international confederation include results in the track record that have been achieved within and by other parts of the confederation, or must the track record be based exclusively on the organisation's own activities?

A: Yes, organisations that are part of an international confederation may base their track record on results that have been achieved within and by other parts of the confederation, provided that the organisation itself has demonstrably contributed to those results.

Q: Do applicants need to provide documents, together with the application, stating that the applicant will collaborate with other NGOs even if they are not forming any consortium for this fund?

A: If several NGOs are working together this is either a consortium with a lead party or an applicant with local implementing organisations. The respective applicable criteria will have to be met in order to qualify for a grant.

Q: In the application form it is stated: "You must enclose the applicant's constitution as proof [of legal personality]." For an International NGO is it necessary to supply a constitution for each of the country offices relevant to our application or uniquely the constitution of the US entity?

A: The lead party and all co-applicants must meet the criterion of D.1. If all the country offices are to be considered separate co-applicants because they are separate legal entities then it has to be substantiated with their constitutions that they individually meet the criterion. If there is only one legal entity, which happens to have a head office and country offices, there will be one applicant, whose constitution should be submitted and no constitutions of its daughter companies need to be provided.

Q: Are we required to submit only our HQ annual accounts, or also the annual accounts of the relevant country offices?

A: In case of a consortium, the lead party and all co-applicants must meet the criterion of D.5 together and thus supply, according to the checklist in the application form (under "V"), annual accounts as appendix E. If all the country offices are to be considered separate coapplicants because they are separate legal entities, it has to be substantiated with their two most recent sets of annual accounts and that of the lead applicant that they together meet the criterion. If there is only one legal entity, which happens to have a head office and country offices, there will be one applicant, whose two most recent sets of annual accounts should be submitted and no annual accounts of its daughter companies need to be provided.

Q: Should two independently registered organisations, however in practice operating together and under the same name, apply as one applicant or as a consortium?

A: If these are two legal entities these will be considered to be a consortium. One of them has to act as lead applicant.

Q: Is it possible to cooperate with one local implementing partner that is not yet registered?

A: It is not entirely clear whether this question regards a consortium partner or a local implementing organisation. In case of a consortium each partner is required to have legal personality. In case of a local implementing organisation it is required that it is stated whether they have legal personality, to show its capacity to implement the project and to give a reasoned opinion on its reliability and stability.

Q: Can we keep some of our partners and countries anonymous in the application for confidential purposes?

A: When working with local partners you are requested to provide the information as stated in criterion D.4. The same applies to countries with regard to criterion D.11. However, your application will be dealt with confidentially. If your application has been granted you can request this information not be made public.

HOW

Q: May a proposal be submitted in a language other than Dutch or English?

A: No.

Q. All appendix and attachments documents are in another language than Dutch of English. Is it obligatory to translate it or do we have a possibility to submit these documents in those languages?

A: As set out in paragraph 5.6 of the Grant Policy Framework all appendices have to be translated in either English or Dutch. Please note that this does not have to be a certified translation.

Q: How should a proposal be submitted?

A: Applications may be submitted by email after publication of the grant policy framework. Please note that the Ministry's email system will reject emails with attachments larger than 14MB. If the file you are sending is larger than 14MB, you may divide it into smaller files and send them in separate emails. In this case, however, please note that your application is complete only once all the emails have been received; the moment of receipt of the last email counts as the moment of receipt of the application. Please number your emails, clearly indicating the email number and the total number of emails making up the application in the 'Subject' line (for example: 'email 1 of 5', 'email 2 of 5', etc. up to 'email 5 of 5').

Q: Are the application form and the logframe really mandatory?

A: Yes, you must use the published application form and logframe in order for your application to be processed. The fixed format ensures the uniformity of applications and of their assessment, thus guaranteeing a level playing field for all applicants.

Q: Is there a budget template that we should use (appendix H) and if so, where can we find it?

A: No, there is not an obliged budget template.

Q: What is the final deadline for submitting proposals?

A: The deadline is 23:59 CET on 31 August 2018. Nevertheless, as proposals are assessed in the order in which they are received, the funds available for the MRF – divided over the specific themes – may already be exhausted before this deadline. Once funds are exhausted, applications will no longer be processed.

Q: What appendices must be sent with the application?

A: The documents that must be included with the application as appendices are listed at the very end of the application form.

Q: May an organisation submit more than one proposal?

A: Yes, but they must be genuinely different proposals.

Q: If an application cannot be processed or is rejected, may I resubmit it?

A: Yes, you may. The date on which your amended proposal is received will be taken as the date of receipt of your application. Submitting a second application on a different project is also possible.

Q: Do the threshold criteria have to be filled out again if the organisation has been selected for another grant award before, for example as a strategic partner or for a different project?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it possible to submit more than one proposal within the same thematic issue (in different countries)?

A: Yes, this is possible within the same thematic issue, as long as they are truly two projects and have a different focus.

Q: In the Q&A document, under the "How" chapter, it is specified that an organization/applicant can submit more than one proposal, even within the same thematic issue (e.g. torture as most flagrant violation), on condition that the proposals/applications are clearly two different projects, with different focus and countries of intervention. Is that correct? Would you advise us to submit two applications on two different projects, or just one?

A: The three different Q&A's above regarding this question are correct. It is up to the applicant to decide whether or not it is worth while to try and submit two applications. The Ministry cannot give any advice on that matter. Please be referred to the application overview on the website to find out about applications that are still being processed.

Q: Is it possible to submit a proposal aimed at a country where also other activities are being implemented in the context of the strategic partnerships with the MFA. If yes, can these activities be implemented with the same partner organisation or should it involve different partner organisations?

A: Yes, it is possible to submit a proposal focusing on a country where already other activities are being implemented (whether or not in the context of the strategic partnership with the MFA). However, the proposed project(s) should be genuinely different from the already existing project in that country and these activities should clearly be taken into account. Of course also the requirements of criterion D.12 have to be met, concerning financing by the MFA.

If these requirements are met it is allowed to work together with the same local implementing organisation.

Q: Does the applicant have to list all local partners even though it is not objectively possible to know in advance (for a long term project) who all these local partners will be?

A: If the local organisations for later years cannot be known in advance, details cannot be provided. In that case applicant can provide information on why it is not yet known. Of course, when asked how the local implementing organisations will be involved and will have influence etc., applicant can still provide the information on how this will be the case when the local partners are selected.

Q: Can the Ministry of Foreign Affairs say anything about how many grant applications have already been submitted?

A: This anonymized information will be published every week (at the same time as the Q&A's) on the website of the Human Rights Fund. However, no rights can be derived from this text.

Q: Is it necessary that all required documents that are part of a certain appendix be merged into one document?

A: No, this is not necessary as long as the different documents of the same appendix are logically numbered.

Q: Will the Ministry of Foreign Affairs publish an announcement once the budget for a particular lot has been depleted or diminished?

A: Information about the (provisional) exhaustion of funds will be published once available. Until then a weekly anonymized overview of the submitted applications will be published. However, no rights can be derived from this text.

Q: Can an application be submitted via other means than provided for in the grant policy framework (notably email and regular mail)? For example via WeTransfer?

A: No, applications are to be submitted via email or, if need be, via regular mail, as stated in the policy grant framework.

Q: Is the application form also available in English?

A: Yes, everything is available in English. Please be referred to the government's English website: www.government.nl/topics/grant-programmes/contents/human-rights-fund

Q: What is the word count / character limit / page limit for the application form?

A: There is no word count, character limit or page limit for the application form.

Q: Is there a template for the liquidity forecast (appendix J) referenced in section I.9?

A: No, there is no template for the liquidity forecast.

Q: How can an organisation avoid drawing up and submitting an application but being rejected because funding has already been exhausted?

A: You will have an indication of the grants that have been applied for through the weekly updated overview on the site . Of course it will take several weeks before it is known whether or not the previously submitted applications have been granted. If funding for a theme is provisionally exhausted (para 2.4 of the framework) this will be published too. No rights can be derived from these overviews.

You can make an estimated guess whether or not it is worthwhile to submit an application, but guarantees cannot be given. As would of course be the case if applications would not be processed in the order that they are received but through a tender procedure.

Q: What is the average percentage of applications being accepted (in past application rounds)?

A: The MRF 2017-2020 is quite different from previous calls for proposals, since applications will be assessed in the order of receipt, following a "first come, first serve"-principle. The applications overview provided weekly on the website is meant to give you an indication of the grants that have been applied for. Of course it will take several weeks before it is known whether or not the previously submitted applications have been granted. If funding for a theme is provisionally exhausted (para 2.4 of the framework) this will be published too. No rights can be derived from these overviews.

You can make an estimated guess whether or not it is worthwhile to submit an application, but guarantees cannot be given. As would of course be the case if applications would not be processed in the order that they are received but through a tender procedure.

Q: Does the Ministry want to see impacts on the individual, state, international, or multiple levels?

A: It is required that activities, outputs and outcomes are described in your application and logframe (for which the prescribed logframe format, appendix II to the grant policy framework, should be used), impact level is not required. For definitions thereof please be referred to www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf. The level on which the outcomes are to be realized depends on the nature of the project, but will most often be on state, international and/or multiple levels.

Q: The application form (appendix I) is a mix of explanatory and guiding information and several tables. Could you clarify which parts have to be filled in by the applicants? Only the tables (e.g. part II. General information on the applicant and the project) or all parts, even those that are not in the form of a table?

A: All dropdown menus, all tables, all open text areas – in short every part of the form that allows you to fill something out - are to be filled out by the applicant.

Q: We expect to submit our application around the end of May. Do you think it is fine or the risk is too high given the fact that applications are processed in the order in which they are received?

A: Please be referred to the application overview. This is all the information we can provide. We cannot advise you on the risk of waiting, however, since applications are processed in the order they are received you may want to consider being as quick as possible.

Q: Could we send you a letter of inquiry briefly explaining our project in order to verify if it complies with your expectations, ensuring your interest when we apply the full proposal, if it's the case.

A: No, only a full and complete application will be processed and assessed.

WHAT

Q: What are the minimum and maximum project duration?

A: Projects must have a duration of between two and four years. Projects must start between 23 January 2017 and 30 November 2018 and end no later than 31 December 2021.

Q: If my proposal serves objectives under multiple themes, may I submit it for consideration under more than one theme?

A: You may not submit a proposal for consideration under more than one theme. You should choose one theme, taking account of the requirement laid down in sections 3.2 and D.8.

Q: In D.8 it states that at least 80% of the funds is intended for outputs and outcomes relating to the overall objective of the chosen theme. How is this to be calculated?

A: In appendix II to the grant policy framework you will find the format for a logframe. This excel document contains four sheets to be filled out by the applicant. The first sheet should give an overview of the resources that are allocated to activities which activities, in turn, are aimed at outputs and then at outcomes. The outcomes and the underlying outputs that contribute directly to the overall objective can be identified and elaborated on in the third and the fourth sheet.

Combining those sheets will enable you to estimate the percentage of resources that are directly aimed at the overall objective. First check which resources contribute to outputs and outcomes that are aimed at the overall objective. Then calculate the sum of those resources as the percentage of the total budget. This should be at least 80%.

Q: Is it a hard requirement to keep to the specific objectives that have been listed in chapter 4, as long as 80% of the budget is allocated to implementing activities which contribute to achieving the overall objective?

A: No. This is not a requirement. As long as 80% of the budget is allocated to implement activities which contribute to achieving the overall objective, the requirement is met.

Q: Is it possible to formulate different specific objectives that nonetheless fit under the overall objective?

A: Yes, this is possible.

Q: Should the entire proposal and budget be directly related to a specific objective under a theme?

A: No, 80% of the budget must be allocated for outcomes that are aimed at the *general* objective of the selected theme.

Q: Can the track record include projects that are currently still under implementation, or should these only be finalised projects?

A: To establish the applicant's experience it is necessary that you can indicate to what extent outputs and outcomes have been realized or have not been realized and what lessons have been learned from that. To that end a project will need to be finalized or at least furthered to a stage in which the applicant can provide that information.

Q: We understand that the required 1-year experience within the selected countries does not necessarily have to be linked to the thematic field we are applying for. Is this correct?

A: Yes, this is correct.

Q: Do local implementing organisations have to be located within one of the proposed countries of operation, or can they be based in another country/region?

A: Local implementing partners can be based in countries other than the proposed countries of operation. However, criterion D.4 must be met.

Q: Are local implementing organisations required to have legal personality?

A: Yes, legal personality is required (see criterion D.4).

Q: Is it allowed to provide some track record from the applicants member organisations even though it is not a form of consortium (in the context of a new organisation)?

A: No, this is not allowed.

Q: A maximum of 12.5% of the total budget can be budgeted for other outcomes than those aimed at the overall objective of the selected theme (100% minus 80% minus 7,5% overhead). Can the Ministry please elaborate further on what kind of costs and activities can be budgeted here?

A: Activities that can be budgeted here do not have to be aimed at the overall objective but still have to be aimed at human rights related objectives. They can therefore relate to other human rights issues than the selected theme.

Q: Are future activities eligible when they are a in fact following up to activities that are currently being implemented?

A: Yes, new activities financed through MRF2017-2020 can be follow up activities that are currently being implemented. Through the MFA activities will not be eligible for funding twice nor will they be eligible if they have already been started. New activities can be similar to or a follow-up to activities that have been funded or started in earlier projects, but they have to be genuinely new activities in order to be eligible for funding through the MRF20172020.

Q: Are secondment and/or expert deployment to other organisations eligible as capacity building activities?

A: That depends on the nature of their activities and the nature of the project. The activities should be fully aimed at capacity building of the organization the person is deployed to.

Q: Does the Ministry have any preference with regards to the duration of the projects, or is this not relevant as long as it is within the already set frame?

A: No, this is not relevant. The project duration is maximum of 4 years/48 months, a minimum of 2 years/24 months, and should fall between a start date no earlier than 23 January 2017, no later than 30 November 2018 and an end date of 31 December 2021 at the latest, as stipulated in D.9 and D.10.

Q: As part of the project, we would like to provide financial assistance to third parties for a specific activity (the provision of medical services). The aim is to reach out to grass-roots organizations. We have substantial experience with this type of activity as we already have a permanent sub-granting scheme. About 20% of the project budget would be sub-granted. The sub-grants would be allocated according to a transparent process on the basis of the criteria defined in the grant framework for the eligibility of local implementing partners. Is such an activity allowed?

A: Yes, this is allowed, but please be informed that this should not lead to exceeding the maximum percentage of overhead costs.

Q: We would like to know if it is possible for us to apply with a long-term project about peer violence in primary and secondary schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina? We believe that this project is a fundamental human rights project, however we would like to know if the Fund is willing to consider it as such, especially in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina?

A: Please be referred to the grant policy framework. In chapter 4 it is stated that in order to be eligible for an MRF 2017-2020 grant, applications must focus on one of the themes selected for this fund. Although it is not possible nor advisable to say something about the eligibility of a project without the actual application, it appears in general that peer violence in schools does not concern any of those themes.

Additionally, to be eligible for funding under the MRF 2017-2020 it is required that the project aims to realise outcomes in at least two countries. Therefore a project aimed at Bosnia-Herzegovina alone would not be eligible.

For information about the possibilities for funding for one-country projects you can contact the local Dutch representation.

Q: Criterion I.6 is about the PME system: is it referring to a specific system made by your Ministry or is it any PME system? For instance, as an applicant, could we propose and use our own PME system? If not, where could we get more information about the relevant PME system?

A: There is no specific PME system prescribed or designed by the Ministry. You can use your own PME system, the quality of which will be assessed according to I.6.

Q: We would like to ask funding for different activities, which all fall under the same human rights theme.

Can the Ministry fund such a variety of activities or does the Ministry need one project with a limited type of activities?

A: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not apply a minimum or maximum number of activities to be performed as long as the activities contribute (for at least 80%) to the overall objective of the theme chosen. NB the activities should form a coherent project.

COCA

Q: One of the threshold criteria for grant applications of €1 million or more is that the organisation must have PARTOS-9001 or PARTOS-9001:2015 certification or a positive Checklist for Organisational Capacity Assessment (COCA). If an organisation is fully ISO certified but not PARTOS ISO certified, is the regular ISO certification sufficient? What about certification from the Central Office for Fundraising Organisations (CBF)?

A: No, ISO 9001 certification and/or CBF certification are not sufficient. If the organisation cannot demonstrate that it has a valid, positive COCA or PARTOS ISO-9001 or PARTOS ISO9001:2015 certification, a COCA should be filled out and submitted after the organisation has been notified that it has met the threshold and substantive criteria.

Q: Does an organisation have to demonstrate that it has a valid, positive COCA, PARTOS ISO-9001 or PARTOS ISO-9001:2015 certification even if it is already a selected partner (e.g. for Dialogue and Dissent)? Does an organisation also have to demonstrate this if the Ministry has awarded it a grant before (from the Human Rights Fund)?

A: Yes, even a previously selected partner or grant recipient must demonstrate on request that it has a valid COCA or certification.

Q: Can the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provide information about whether or not an organization has previously submitted a COCA and if this COCA was assessed positively?

A: No, it is the responsibility of the applicant to show its organizational capacity.

Q: If we apply for a budget under 1 million euros, do we need to have COCA or/and PARTOS -9001 Certification?

A: Please be referred to the application form, under "Organisational capacity", more specifically to the requirements listed under b. If you have a valid COCA or a PARTOS 9001 certification you are considered to have the required organisational capacity. If you don't have any of the two and you're applying for a grant under EUR 1.000.000, please provide the documents as set out under b.iv. Please note that the check on your organisational capacity

will only take place if and after the threshold check and the substantive check have been positively assessed.

Q: What is "Partos 9001".

A: It is a certification that can be obtained by NGOs. With that certification it is assumed that an organization meets the Organisational Capacity as required by the MFA. Please be referred to

- www.partos.nl/fileadmin/files/Documents/Partos_9001-2015_EN.pdf.
- www.partos.nl/en/about-us/

or contact the organisation at info@partos.nl

Q: In the application form, in the 'Organisational capacity' section, on page 5 the bullet point 'b.iv' says: "The applicant/lead party should submit the available documents specified under 'VI". Where does "VI" refer to?

A: In this sentence VI refers to appendix VI "Coca List of documents".

Q: Are all the required documents necessary to obtain a positive COCA?

A: To be eligible for a grant, the applicant has to pass the Checklist for Organisational Capacity or provide a Partos-9001 certification. The organisational capacity will only be assessed when the application has passed the threshold check and scored sufficiently on the substantive criteria. In order to pass the assessment on these first two tests, all required documentation as mentioned in the application form under V: "Checklist and numbering of appendices to your application" is needed.

Only after the threshold and substantive check are passed will the applicant be invited to demonstrate its organizational capacity. The documentation and information needed for that check is listed under "Organisational Capacity" in the application form and differs depending on the applicant's situation.

Q: Regarding the Organizational Charter and Structure and the Governance Structure (both documents requested for the COCA): which is exactly the difference between these two?

A: Please be referred to Appendix V, where under par. 3.1 this is explained: Organisational Charter and Structure refers to the Organisation Chart of the organization, of which a copy is to be submitted. For the Governance Structure, the questions 3.1.2 up to 3.1.6 need to be answered.

Q: Which kind of documents can be attached and submitted with the COCA form in order to show or prove the Details on work force (quantity and quality)? More specifically, which kind or type of measurement is expected in terms of proving the quality of the Organization's work force?

A: These documents should refer to staff working for the organization and their qualifications in relation to the grant proposal submitted.

Q: An organization can hand in the coca-form at a later stage. Is this also the case with the following documents: (f) Procurement policy, (g) Code of conduct or code of ethics, (h.) Anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy.

A: The Organisational Capacity of an applicant will only be assessed after the threshold and substantive checks have both been passed. If that is the case the applicant will be notified thereof. In that case you will have to provide the information required to assess the Organisational Capacity. This information depends on your situation, for example whether or not you have a valid COCA or PARTOS certification. Please carefully read the instructions in the application form, under "Organisational Capacity".

The documents mentioned in the question are part of the procedure under b (applications for grants under EUR 1.000.000), more specifically b.iii or b.iv. In case b.iii or b.iv are applicable to your situation you will be asked to provide those documents to assess your organizational capacity. Again, this will only be the case if and after your application will have passed both the threshold and the substantive checks.

Q: Having passed the threshold criteria check for another MFA-fund, namely the ARC-fund, can we assume that we have "previously drawn up a COCA which was assessed positively by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs"?

A: The threshold check with ARC entailed an assessment of an applicant's organisational capacity. Therefore, if you have been received confirmation that you passed the threshold check you normally should have a valid COCA, in which case you can refer to the activity number and fund when requested to provide the information. *However*, keep in mind that a valid positively assessed COCA means that it should not be older than 4 years. So it is possible that an applicant in its application for the ARC Fund referred to a COCA that was still valid then but isn't anymore. It remains the responsibility of the applicant to show its organizational capacity. Again, this information will only be asked for if and after the application has passed the threshold and substantive checks.

Q: Are you able to provide an editable version of the COCA form? (e.g. Word format) Or should we formulate our responses in a new document?

A: Yes, we can provide you with a word-version. However, we will do so only if and after your application has passed the threshold and substantive check. Only then will an assessment of your organisation's organizational capacity become relevant.

THEMES

Q: Are activities contributing to the overall objective only eligible if they are also aimed at (one of) the specific objective(s)?

A: No. As stated in chapter 4 of the Grant Policy Framework the project should aim to contribute to the overall objective to be eligible for funding. The specific objectives are always to be understood to fall under the overall objective. It will be favourable to your score under I.2 if these specific objectives will be served with your project.

Q: Do the specific objectives represent priority issues for the Ministry? Will the score of the assessment be influenced by inclusion of the specific objectives of the Ministry in a proposal? And if so, would it be possible to explain how it influences the score?

A: Yes, they are priority issues and yes, they will influence the score. As stated in chapter 4 of the Grant Policy Framework "the extent to which a proposed project also contributes to the specific objectives is assessed under criterion I.2". The score will of course be positively influenced if the project clearly aims to contribute to the specific objectives. This cannot be explained in more detail.

Q: Can a project proposal for the theme Gender and Sexual Minorities or children rights be submitted?

A: No, the disbursement of grants for activities is restricted to the following themes: -
Human rights defenders
- Equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people
- Most flagrant violations (capital punishment and torture)

- Freedom of expression
- Internet freedom
- Freedom of religion and belief
- Business and human rights
- Impunity of international crimes

You should choose one these themes taking account of the requirement laid down in sections 3.2 and D.8.

Human Rights Defenders

Q: In the grant policy framework it states that the specific objective for this theme is "to improve the safety of human rights defenders by enabling temporary regional reception." Do you mean "temporary regional relocation"?

A: Yes, there has been an oversight in the translation. It should say "temporary regional relocation".

Q: Do our activities contribute to the specific objective if the temporary relocation is not regional?

A: No, the specific objective concerns regional relocation.

Q: Does the Ministry see rehabilitation as part of the process for achieving prevention?

A: Depending on the approach used concerning 'rehabilitation', it could be seen as part of the process for achieving prevention. Solely medical rehabilitation will not be considered as such.

Q: The theme Human Rights Defenders has already a lot of applications. Is it still useful to draw up an application on this theme?

A: The overview provide is meant to give you an indication of the grants that have been applied for. Of course it will take several weeks before it is known whether or not the previously submitted applications have been granted. If funding for a theme is provisionally exhausted (para 2.4 of the framework) this will be published too. No rights can be derived from these overviews.

You can make an estimated guess whether or not it is worthwhile to submit an application, but guarantees cannot be given. As would of course be the case if applications would not be processed in the order that they are received but through a tender procedure.

Q: Are activities supporting the specific objective of improving "the safety of human rights defenders by enabling temporary regional reception" the only type of activities eligible to support the overall objective of "protecting and supporting human rights defenders around the world"?

A: No. To be eligible the project must contribute to the overall objective. The extent to which the project additionally (but within the scope of the overall objective) contributes to the specific objective(s) is assessed under I.2 and can positively influence the score.

Q: If we focus on Human Right Defenders in Turkey, as part of the specific objective: to improve the safety of human rights defenders by enabling temporary regional relocation. Can Europe (the Netherlands) be seen as the region?

A: No, creating temporary shelter for human rights defenders in the Netherlands does not qualify as regional relocation. Regional relocation refers to relocation in neighboring countries, or countries close to (and preferably easily accessible from) the country of current residence of the human rights defender.

Q: When we focus on finding shelter for Human Rights Defenders in the region, but can't shelter all applicants, can shelter in Europe (the Netherlands) be provided as alternative in the application?

A: As long as the project proposal is in line with the policy of the Netherlands on human rights (and not incompatible with the MFA policy on foreign relations and development cooperation), this might be an option. This can only be assessed after receiving the complete project proposal.

Most flagrant violations

Q: How is the term 'torture' defined under this call?

A: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs applies the definition of 'torture' as defined in the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT): *"The term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions."*

Freedom of expression

Q: Regarding the specific objective "to promote the sustainable financial independence of media in Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries": should a project focus on policy work or do development and promotion of specific tools to aid media economic independence also fall within the scope of this specific objective?

A: Both policy work and the development and promotion of specific tools to aid media economic independence could fall within the scope of this specific objective.

Impunity of international crimes

Q: Is the Ministry looking for projects that directly address criminal accountability, or also projects that lay the groundwork for when, eventually, it will be possible to address accountability?

A: Projects that lay the ground work for criminal accountability for International Crimes may also be considered, but whether or not they are eligible for a grant will eventually be dependent on the results of the assessment of the specific applications. The project has to contribute to the overall objective and preferable also aim at the specific objectives, as set out in Chapter 4 of the Grant Policy Framework.

Business and Human Rights

Q: Is it too late to apply for us to stand a realistic chance of consideration for a sum in the region of 500,000 Euros [under the theme Business and Human Rights]?

A: The applications overview provided weekly on the website is meant to give you an indication of the grants that have been applied for. Of course it will take several weeks before it is known whether or not the previously submitted applications have been granted. If funding

for a theme is provisionally exhausted (para 2.4 of the framework) this will be published too. No rights can be derived from these overviews. You can make an estimated guess whether or not it is worthwhile to submit an application, but guarantees cannot be given. As would of course be the case if applications would not be processed in the order that they are received but through a tender procedure.

WHERE

Q: Activities must take place in at least two countries. Do the activities have to be the same in all countries, or may they be different?

A: While activities need not be the same in all countries, there needs to be sufficient cohesion between them so that it is clear that they are part of a single project. In addition, a minimum percentage of the total project budget must be used to achieve the intended outcomes in each of the selected countries. (NB The question here is not how much money is actually spent in a given country, as in the distinction between ODA and non-ODA, but how much is spent on achieving the intended outcomes in a given country.)

Q: In which countries may projects be implemented? Is there an overview or list of these countries?

A: There is no longer a list of countries that can be referred to. Of course, projects must be implemented in countries where interventions in defence of human rights are necessary.

Q: Does it make a difference whether projects are implemented in ODA-eligible or non-ODA eligible countries?

A: The application form includes a question on whether the activities will chiefly take place in ODA-eligible or non-ODA-eligible countries. However, your answer makes no difference to the possible award of funds. The information is related to administrative requirements for the Ministry and to the IATI requirements.

Q: D.11 gives a formula on the percentage of the budget to be spent on outcomes in each selected country. How should this percentage of the budget be calculated?

A: In appendix II to the grant policy framework you will find the format for a logframe. This excel document contains four sheets to be filled out by the applicant. The first sheet should give an overview of the resources that are allocated to activities which activities, in turn, are aimed at outcomes. It should be indicated in which country the outcome will be achieved. First check which resources contribute to outcomes in each country. Then calculate the sum of those resources as the percentage of the total budget. (This percentage should be at least the total budget, divided by twice the number of countries in the application. The application form gives an example of that last formula.)

Q: How does the possibility for 'worldwide' projects combine with the 'at least two countries' criterion?

A: When a project has a worldwide focus the 'at least two countries' criterion is met. Of course it has to be accounted for that the project indeed aims to achieve outcomes with a worldwide span.

Q: Is there an allowable percentage of a project to be planned as 'worldwide', in addition to some focus countries?

A: As long as it is accounted for that the project indeed aims to achieve outcomes with a worldwide span, it can. The percentage for the focus countries still has to meet the minimum requirement.

Q: Is the Human Rights Fund 2017-2020 open for applications that focus on Central America/Georgia and Armenia/ EU member states / Tanzania / Macedonia / Uganda / Pakistan?

A: Yes, as long as criterion D.11 and I.3 are met. The two-countries-criterion of D.11 will be met when a project aims to realise outcomes in at least two different countries. These countries can all be members of the EU (in which case the calculation in D.11 would be a bit more elaborate). Please note that implementing activities in those countries is not the same as aiming to realise outcomes in those countries, as the latter is the measure for the MRF2017-2020.

Q: Is the Human Rights Fund 2017-2020 open for applications that focus on the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for example on Curacao and Aruba?

A: No. The MRF 2017-2020 is an instrument of the Dutch *foreign* policy on human rights. Therefore outcomes aimed to be realised within the Kingdom of the Netherlands are excluded from funding.

Q: If the project has a worldwide focus, does the applicant have to list all the possible countries when any criterion requires an explanation of some kind about the countries?

A: No, when the project is worldwide the criteria that regard the countries can be filled out with the worldwide focus in mind. Not all the possible countries have to be listed separately. Of course the applicant does have to meet all the criteria that (wholly or partly) regard the selected countries. For example, when requested to elaborate on the relevance and the combination of the selected countries, applicant will have to explain the logic behind the project having a worldwide focus and how there will still be an interplay within the project between different countries/regions.

Q: Can you confirm which countries can be deemed 'priority' countries for each theme?

A: As stated in the Grant Policy Framework (paragraph 2.6) there are no priority countries. Of course the criterion under I.3 has to be met.

Q: Is it an advantage to have a worldwide project or to include specific countries that the Dutch MFA focuses on?

A: No, it is not. Projects can be aimed to realise outcomes anywhere where the requirements of criterion I.3 are met.

Q: Regarding 1.3, does the call require that we demonstrate the pre-existence (i.e. prior to the implementation of the project) of geographical/regional, social or political ties or links between the selected countries where the project would take place?

A: Yes. The countries selected (in which the outcomes will be realised) should form a logical combination.

Q: Is it possible to combine Sudan, Egypt and Pakistan in one application?

A: Yes, one project can aim to realise outcomes in three countries, as long as the criteria of D.11 and I.3 are met.

Q: Is the fund also eligible for minority groups in diaspora?

A: This depends on the application. Minority groups in diaspora are certainly not excluded per se, but the application will have to meet all the criteria, such as realising outcomes in at least two countries and focusing on the themes that are eligible for the Human Rights Fund.

Q: If the project outcomes focus on a specific context but activities are implemented in another country, which country will be considered as the country of intervention?

A: Please be referred to the explanatory notes to D.11 in the application form. The criterion aims at the country in which the outcomes will be realised, not necessarily where the activities themselves are carried out or where the money is spent. Funding allocated to outcomes that are to be realised in a given country can be considered when making the calculation for that country, regardless of where the money will in fact be spent. (This differs from the distinction between ODA and non-ODA, which concerns how much funding is spent in a given country.)

Q: Should we select contexts in which the human rights situation is very similar or can we identify different contexts (from a geographical, historical and political point of view) as long as the situation legitimizes an intervention responding to one of the selected themes?

A: The selected countries have to form a logical combination regarding the context of your project, as will be assessed under criterion I.3. The aim is to assure that it is in fact one project in (at least) two countries and that they are not randomly selected countries. So normally the human rights situation and/or the context in which your operating should be similar in the selected countries. The connection does not need to be geographical per se, but can also be cultural, political, historical, etc. and it has to be quite clear. This connection will in turn most likely influence the interplay between the countries within the project.

Q: We would like to present a project with a worldwide impact. The activities would be implemented in 15 countries (3 per region – Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, MENA, Asia and non-EU Europe) selected at the beginning of the project in countries where we have a local presence through our membership. The countries (and members) would be selected according to the needs deriving from the human rights situation, the identified opportunities during the course of the project and the potential impact of the activities in that context. For these reasons, we cannot specify in the application form the countries where the activities will be implemented. Is this allowed and will our application still be eligible?

A: When the project is worldwide the criteria that regard the countries can be filled out with the worldwide focus in mind. Not all the possible countries have to be listed separately. Of course the applicant does have to meet all the criteria that (wholly or partly) regard the selected countries. For example, when requested to elaborate on the relevance and the combination of the selected countries, applicant will have to explain the logic behind the project having a worldwide focus and how there will still be an interplay within the project between different countries/regions.

Please be aware of the fact that in a case like this you will still be expected to be able to give the required information for all the regions you will be aiming at, since the project could take place in each of those regions. Also, the way countries will be selected at the beginning of the project will have to be part of your response in I.3, for example the criteria on which the

human rights situation is assessed, how the selected countries will be linked up and the interplay between the countries within the project.

Q: Is there any guidance you can provide on how much detail we should include about each country that is part of our application, specifically with regards to I.3?

A: Please provide for enough detail to allow the Ministry to assess the criterion, with due focus on the questions set out in the application form. The Ministry will of course check this information, but if it is not included in the application it will in any case be considered insufficient. There is no page limit, so please do not feel restricted.

Q: Most of the planned activities would take place in country A, but none in country B or country C per se. The project, however, would directly impact the two latter countries. Is this eligible?

A: This would probably meet the requirement of D.11, but this can only be assessed based on the details of the application as a whole. This criterion is assessed based on where the outcomes are to be realised, not where the activities are in fact carried out. Even though generally this is the same country, it does not have to be.

Q: The application requires a minimum of two countries where the activities are planned. Our project activities are taking place in several countries. However, since our focus is collecting evidence on war crimes committed in one of those countries, the outcome of our activities is more related to that country than other countries. Would outcomes of the activities planned in multiple countries require outcomes for each country? And if so, does the outcomes of all countries have to be equal?

A: In the application form (D.11) it is clearly stated that the project budget must result in outcomes (not activities) relating to promoting and improving the human rights situation in at least two different countries. In each country, the share of the total budget to be spend on the intended outcomes is at least: the total budget, divided by twice the number of countries in the application ($100\% / (\text{number of countries} \times 2)$).

This means that for a minimum of two countries outcomes should be achieved. The outcomes don't need to be equal in either country, but the share of the total budget spend on the intended outcomes should (for each country where outcomes are planned) reach a minimum percentage as calculated in D.11.

If the outcomes in this question/proposal only relate to one country, this would not be allowed.

Q: The application form mentioned that in each country, the share of the total budget to be spent on the intended outcomes is at least: the total budget, divided by twice the number of countries in the application. Is there any flexibility in these percentages and can our organization spend a bit below the required percentage in some of the countries?

A: No, that is not possible. If the proposal does not meet the minimum requirements, it will be rejected.

PROCESSING

Q: Why has the MFA decided to apply the principle of 'first come first serve' to this call under the MRF?

A: The principle of 'first come first serve' allows for much shorter waiting periods for applicants after they have submitted their proposal. Within 13 weeks after the application has been

submitted an applicant will know whether or not their request for a grant is approved. In addition less capacity is needed from both the ministry as well as civil society in relation to the awarded grants than would be the case with a regular call for proposals. Less proposals will have to be submitted and considered before the funding will be allocated. Of course this means that applicants need to be quicker and some proposals will be rejected, merely for being too late. However, we intend to maintain a high standard with a high threshold. Therefore the quickest applications might not necessarily be approved if speediness stood in the way of quality. With this principle we are aiming for a strong balance between efficiency and quality.

Q: How soon will a decision be reached on my application?

A: You can expect a decision on your application within 13 weeks.

Q: In what order are applications processed?

A: Funds are allocated in the order that applications are received, on the understanding that the total available funds have already been divided over the MRF 2017-2020 themes and that the order of receipt is determined separately for each theme.

Q: May the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ask additional questions even if the application form is complete?

A: Supplementary information will be requested if a proposal cannot be assessed without it. In this case, the date on which the supplementary information is received will be taken as the date of receipt of the application. You should therefore ensure that your application is complete and that you have fulfilled all the requirements as best you can when submitting it. This is entirely the applicant's responsibility.

Q: How are the available funds divided over the different themes?

A: The allocation of funds to each of the themes is set out in paragraph 2.2 of the grant policy framework and in the Order.

Q: Will proposals be considered that focus on themes other than those set out?

A: No. Applications containing proposals focused on other themes will neither be processed nor forwarded to any other unit or ministry.

Q: If an earlier application applied for most of the available funding under a certain theme, will the available funding be divided between that application and a later application?

A: No, this is not the case. As stated in par. 2.5 of the Grant Policy Framework following the approval of one or more applications for a particular theme, funds amounting to less than €500,000 (the minimum amount that can be applied for) may be left over. As the minimum grant amount is €500,000 and projects cannot be partially financed, no additional projects can be approved for that theme.

Q: Will the Ministry inform us on the results of the assessment of the proposal in different stages of the process? For example, will we be informed when we have passed the assessment of the threshold criteria?

A: Applicants will be notified if the application

- is considered incomplete;
- fails the threshold check;
- fails or passes the substantive check;
- fails or passes the check on organizational capacity.

Q: When turning down an application will the Ministry share its assessment with the applicants so it is clear which specific parts or elements should be improved?

A: Yes. When turning down an application the decision will provide information on the (main) reason(s) for doing so. Improvement of the application on those points is necessary in order to enlarge the chances for a new application to be improved.

REPORTING, PLANNING, MONITORING, EVALUATION

Q: Must organisations use an IATI dataset for their reports?

A: Yes. An IATI dataset must in any case be used if the funds are to be spent chiefly in ODA-eligible countries. IATI-compliant reporting is also requested if the funds are to be spent chiefly in non-ODA-eligible countries, but if this is a problem other arrangements are possible with the Ministry's prior approval.

Q: What is IATI?

A: For information on the IATI standard please consult its [website](#) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' [Publication Guidelines](#).

Q: What form of monitoring and evaluation is expected?

A: The requirements in the area of monitoring and evaluation are set out in criterion I.6.

Q: In section 3.8 of the Grant Policy Framework it is stated: "To be eligible for a grant, an organisation's reporting must be IATI-compliant." Could you please clarify what is meant by IATI-compliant? Does an organisation only need to be registered with the IATI or must it also publish a set of documents?

A: Reporting in IATI is mandatory. Please be referred to [the Ministry's publication "How to use the IATI standard"](#), mentioned in 3.8. of the Grant Policy Framework (www.government.nl/documents/publications/2015/12/01/open-data-and-developmentcooperation).

Q: Where can I find the reporting requirements for grants <1.000.000 and grants >1.000.000?

A: The specific reporting requirements will be laid down in the grant decision. For as far as the IATI standard is concerned in general, requirements for IATA-compliant reporting are laid down in [the Ministry's publication "How to use the IATI standard"](#), referred to in 3.8 of the Grant Policy Framework (www.government.nl/documents/publications/2015/12/01/open-data-and-developmentcooperation)

FINANCIAL

Q: What is the relationship between the Human Rights Fund 2017-2020 grant policy framework and other financing modalities offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? Are organisations that are already receiving grant funding on the basis of a different grant round or core funding also eligible for funding from the Human Rights Fund 2017-2020, either directly (as a lead party) or indirectly (as a coapplicant)?

A: Organisations that are receiving funding on the basis of another grant framework may also be eligible for funding from the Human Rights Fund 2017-2020, provided that the application concerns different activities. An organisation that is receiving core funding may not be an applicant or the lead party of a consortium, but it may be a co-applicant. However, the organisation must meet requirements for financial independence, and in assessing its independence, other income received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is taken into account.

Q: What are the rules for overhead costs?

A: Appendix IV to the grant policy framework specifies the costs that must be counted as overhead costs. These costs must not exceed 7.5% of the total budget. **The 7.5% allowance for overhead can be taken over the entire project budget, or if you prefer, separately over each year. But it applies over the total project budget, not only over the part requested from the HR fund.**

The costs indicated for reporting on the project are considered part of the overhead costs if overhead is part of the requested grant. If funding of overhead costs is not requested by the applicant the costs indicated for reporting on the project may still be listed separately in the budget to be covered by the grant.

Q: What is the difference between direct and indirect funding?

A: Direct funding is based on a contract between the requesting organisation and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (embassy, MFA department, etc.). Indirect funding refers to funds received or channelled through an organisation that has a contract with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Q: Can the ministry give an example calculation for threshold criterion D.5?

A:

Example 1

The requesting organisation's annual report shows that in the most recent fiscal year, the organisation received €1,250,000 of its total revenue from the MFA:

- one €250,000 grant via the embassy in Cotonou (Benin);
- one €900,000 grant via the Multilateral Organisations and Human Rights Department (DMM);
- €100,000 in funding for certain activities through a network organisation that has a contract with the MFA.

The organisation's total revenue in the most recent fiscal year was €1,560,000.

Of this, the MFA therefore provided 80% (1,250,000 / 1,560,000). In this case, the requesting organisation will not be eligible for funding through the Human Rights Fund 2017-2020. This is because the percentage of its revenue that it receives from sources other than the MFA is 20%, whereas the minimum required is 25%.

If the organisation receives 20% of its revenue from other sources in year one and 30% in year two, the average of the two years can be used. However, the average must be at least 25%. This calculation is made by dividing the amount of revenue from other sources by the total revenue given in the two most recent annual reports.

Example 2

The requesting organisation forms a consortium with another NGO, which receives a small amount of funding from the MFA (€50,000) and has €150,000 in revenue from other sources. In that case, the consortium will have a total revenue of €1,760,000 (1,560,000 + 50,000 +

150,000), of which €1,300,000 comes from the MFA and €460,000 from other sources. Other resources therefore represent 26.14% (460,000/1,760,000) of the total revenue. Given that the minimum percentage required is 25%, the consortium will be eligible for funding (if approved) through the Human Rights Fund 2017-2020.

If the organisation receives 20% of its revenue from other sources in year one and 30% in year two, the average of the two years can be used. However, the average must be at least 25%. This calculation is made by dividing the amount of revenue from other sources by the total revenue given in the two most recent annual reports.

Q: With reference to threshold criterion D.5 on the application form, can the MFA provide an instance where an organisation would be asked to provide proof of its capacity to manage Human Rights Fund funding?

A: If the requested funding (on an annual basis) is more than twice the organisation's average own income, the organisation must show it can manage Human Rights Fund funding. An organisation requests a €2,000,000 grant to run for four years. The average amount per year is €500,000. According to its two most recent annual reports, the organisation didn't receive any funding from the MFA. However, the organisation did receive €200,000 on average from other sources. In this case, the organisation is eligible to apply for Human Rights Fund funding, but will also have to show its capacity to manage that funding because the funding is 2.5 times higher than the average funding it managed over the past two years.

Q: Could the Ministry of Foreign Affairs please specify the definition of direct and indirect costs of the applicant as meant under I.9 of the application form? What costs could be included under indirect costs that are other than overhead as defined by Appendix IV?

A: Direct costs are cost that can be related directly to specific outputs. For example salary costs from staff directly working for an activity, or ICT costs for setting up a website if this website is indeed an output of the project.

Indirect costs are made by the organisation to support activities but are not clearly assignable to specific outputs. For example auditors cost, office expenses, managerial cost, organisation website maintenance.

Indirect cost can be seen as overhead. In short you can either present 7,5% of the total budget as overhead or, for cost as specified in Annex IV, specify all indirect costs.

Q: If it is necessary that staff of the applicant works alongside local partners in order to achieve outputs and outcomes, is it acceptable to count this as direct costs?

A: Yes.

Q: With regards to the additional funding, is it possible to use funding originating from other MFA-funded projects as additional funding to this Human Rights Fund?

A: No, this is not allowed.

Q: In Appendix VI, titled: "List of documents to assess the organizational capacity for grant applications under EUR 1,000,000", part A asks for an 'independent auditor's report'. On the last page of the application form (part V – Checklist and numbering appendices to your application) D.5 states "Two most recent sets of annual accounts, approved by an auditor. In these cases, must the annual accounts as drafted by an external auditor be verified by a third party?"

A: In both cases (application form section V – checklist under D5 and Annex VI a.) it is required to submit annual accounts approved by a certified auditor. This does not necessarily have to be a third party.

Q: How should the last column in the table in Appendix IV be read?

A: Unfortunately, this appendix contains outdated information. The allowed percentage for overhead costs is 7,5% as stated in the grant policy framework.

Q: On page 1 of Appendix IV it is mentioned as included in the overhead costs: "Checks on regularity and efficiency of expenditure, the accuracy of financial reports and any engagement of competent accountants (at the ministry's request and if laid down in the contract, this item may be included as project costs)." Do we understand correctly that this does not refer to external accountants, but to bookkeepers, and that audit costs are part of direct costs?

A: Yes, bookkeeping staff is part of the overhead costs and audit costs concerning the specific activity/project are part of direct costs.

Q: Can an applicant send its cost categorization ahead of the application and ask the MFA to approve of that beforehand?

A: No, the general guidelines should help with categorizing the costs. The cost categorization is part of the assessment of the application.

Q: The documentation regarding the Human Rights Fund says the project can start January 23, 2017. Does that mean funding, if approved, can be applied to expenditures already made before the funding is released?

A: Before the date of submission of the grant application, no expenses can be funded from this grant. Any project expenses made between the application and the decision being made will only be funded in case of a positive decision. In case of a negative decision, these costs will not be reimbursed. This follows from art. 9 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Grants Decree, as referred to in par. 5.9 of the grant policy framework.

Q: Could the Ministry of Foreign Affairs please list exactly what is included in the remuneration calculation under the eligibility criterion (D.6). Should we count non-taxable health/dental, pension, and other benefits?

A: The mentioned maximum remunerations include:

- * all periodically paid salary, bonus shares and participations,
- * taxable expense allowances (fixed or variable),
- * vacation allowances, end-of-year allowances (13th month salary), pension contributions paid by the employer.

Of course whether or not an expense allowance is taxable depends on your own legal system. You can refer to the three categories from the criterion (salary components, taxable expense allowances and other payments at set times of the year) to sustain your calculations.

Q: If a member of the alliance does not calculate 7,5% administrative costs over their part of the requested funding, can the lead applicant calculate 7,5% over that part? The total overhead won't be more than 7,5%. This is needed to comply with both the MRF2017-2020 rules on overhead and those of other contributors who use different rules concerning the overhead costs.

A: In the case of an alliance, maximum 7,5% administrative cost (overhead) over the total project budget will be accepted. The distribution over the different partners is irrelevant.

Q: Regarding criterion D.6: our organisation is independently managed and funded and we control our own budgets and staffing. However, we are housed in a much larger civil society organisation that is the legal entity under whose authority all of our project's legally binding contracts and agreements are signed. The CEO of this civil society, and our representative legal entity, earns a salary that is higher than the remuneration limit stipulated by D.6. Our proposal would be submitted by this civil society on behalf of us.

Would our proposal be in compliance with the threshold criteria?

A: No. For criterion D.6 (remuneration limit) the Ministry takes into account the organisation/legal entity which submits the application and which, in case the application is awarded a grant, will be the grant recipient.

Q: Is there any additional budgetary guidance available to applicants? For example, we would like to know whether there are any particular set thresholds which we should apply under main budget headings, such as Human Resources, Travel, etc.

A: No. The proportion between the budget items on the one side and activities and outputs/outcomes on the other should be balanced, necessary and effective. Exceptions should be explained clearly.

Q: Can an applicant compensate the shortfall to comply with the 25%-requirement (D.5) in the first year with a surplus in the second year?

A: Yes. It is allowed to use the average percentage of both years.

Criterion D.5 states: over the last two years for which auditor-approved annual accounts are available, at least 25% of the applicant organisation's total annual income must have come from sources other than derived directly or indirectly from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributions. Grants awarded under MRF 2017-2020 will not on an average annual basis exceed 75% of the applicant organisation's average annual income (based on the last two auditor-approved annual accounts).

Q: How is 'own income' defined in section D.5?

A: "Own income" within the context of D.5 is defined as all income from other sources than derived directly or indirectly from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Q: Section D.12 states that "activities of organisations already receiving core funding from the MFA budget during the grant period" are ineligible. Does this include activities of local implementing partners ?

A: Yes.

Q: Can an application be submitted for 100% of the project budget?

A: An application can be submitted for 100% of the project budget, as long as the requested subsidy is more than €500.000 and does not exceed €2.000 .000 and of course the other financial criteria should be met.

Q: If additional financial contributions are required but not yet confirmed in writing, can an application still be submitted?

A: Yes. If contributions are not yet secured an application can still be submitted. In that case it is required that the applicant describes sufficiently how the project's continuity will be guaranteed if these contributions are not secured. This will be assessed with criterion I.8.

Q: Would two annual reports signed and approved by a bookkeeper satisfy the requirement established at paragraph D.5 of the application form?

A: No, a certified auditor should approve the annual accounts.

Q: Criterion D.1 states that the lead party of a consortium must be a not-for-profit organisation and there are also financial threshold criteria. Is it possible for a notfor-profit organisation that does not meet the financial threshold criteria to be financially underwritten by a for-profit consortium member that does meet the criteria?

A: No. The threshold criteria are applicable to the legal entities of both the lead applicant and all individual co-applicants.

Q: Section D.5 requires that auditor approved financial statements are required. If the lead entity is exempt from audit according to national legislation - in this case the UK by virtue of size - is it acceptable to provide the unaudited accounts as submitted to the UK Companies House? If not, are there any further options such as a letter from the organisation's accountancy firm confirming they have been prepared according to UK law?

A: Audited financial statements are required under D5, as they can be better relied upon compared to unaudited statements. However, in case audited financial statements are not available for the reason as described in the question, unaudited financial statements could be provided, but with the risk that during the assessment of the grant application, questions on the content of the unaudited financial statements might arise which could lead to delay in the assessment process and/or even to rejection of the grant application.

Q: While the application form states that applying organizations are required to have two year audit reports, we as a coalition have not yet been audited by an external party. However, we have collectively managed over 10 million dollars in funding from key partners like the USG, EU, and French Government. Would recommendations from these donors that verify our financial independence be suffice to replace the audit requirement?

A: It is not entirely clear whether the coalition you mean is one within the meaning of criterion D.3. However, in that case audit reports from the lead applicant and all the coapplicants are required.

Q: D.5 of the application form states: "If the requested grant amount (per year) is more than twice the applicant's average own income, you must satisfactorily establish that the applicant is capable to manage the grant from the Human Rights fund". In case of consortium does "applicant's average own income" mean the average income of all partners of the consortium or the average income of the leading party only?"

A: This means the average income of all partners of the consortium for the total requested grant.

Q: How many details are needed for the budget of year 3 and 4? It is difficult to predict the level of inflation because the countries are fluctuating in vulnerability and are volatile at times. Would it be acceptable if we budget in an increase of 10% for all projects as to cover the inflation?

A: This could be acceptable as long as this increase for inflation is well explained and documented per country.

Q: Do we need to specify in the budget the separate expenses for each country office? And for each region? Or could we all combine the similar line items in one figure within the budget? The country offices are submitting separate budgets which will be combined in one overview for the lead applicant to monitor on. Should we add that overview as an appendix?

A: Yes, these separate expenses for each country office and region should be specified.

Q: Until now, we organised our budget overview as a template where the budgeted costs are divided in out-of-pocket project costs and the use of hours (valued against an external rate). This external rate is built up to cover costs made for objectives, costs to obtain income and costs for management & administration of the organization. Can an organization use this template of budget overview with out-of-pocket project costs and the use of externally rated hours?

A: Yes, this is possible, on three conditions: the 7.5% overhead costs should not additionally be calculated over these external rates, the structures of the external rates should be included and from this it should follow that the overhead, included in the rates, should not exceed 7.5%.

Q: With regards to the liquidity forecast, is that for all consortium partners and what period should it cover?

A: The liquidity forecast should cover the period of the project duration. It concerns the project budget expenditure and therefore all income and expenditure related to the activities involved by all consortium partners should be taken into account.

Q: What are the corporate rates for (appendix III)? How and when should they be used as part of the application?

A: These corporate rates are to be used only if you need to convert amounts in any other currency to Euro's. For example in criterion D.5 if your annual accounts are drawn up in USD you will need to use the corporate USD rate to convert the amount to Euro's. Using another conversion rate is not allowed.

Q: Although it is possible for a newly established organisation to join a consortium, this seems at odds with the requirement that a co-applicant needs to submit annual accounts (and possibly even annual reports and internal policy documents). As a newly established organisation it is not possible to submit such annual accounts (or any of those other documents). Is this a problem?

A: All organisations of the consortium need to submit annual accounts. However, for a newly established organization that joins a consortium and that ended its first financial book year before or at 31/12/2016 it might not be possible yet to deliver an auditor approved year account or annual report. This is not a problem. In all other cases for any book year ended at 31/12/2015 or before, all described requirements will have to be met.

Q: In the guidelines it is stated that at least 80% of the total project budget must be intended for the implementation of activities aimed at the overall objective, and the remaining part must also be intended for human rights activities but these do not need to focus exclusively on the overall objective.

Does this mean that you cannot fund any of the running (operating) costs of the organization applying, including the salaries of the employees working on the project?

A: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can fund those running costs that are required explicitly for the project.

For example: the salary cost of a program manager can be included in the budget as direct project costs for the specific percentage of time the program manager is working on this project. Other running (operating) costs of the organization must be covered by the 7.5% overhead percentage (administrative costs).