

Letter of 27 June 2025 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the President of the House of Representatives on the policy framework for cooperation with civil society organisations in the period 2026-2030

The current policy framework 'Strengthening Civil Society' will expire at the end of 2025. The outlines of a new framework for cooperation with civil society organisations in the field of development aid for 2026-2030 were set out in the letter to the House of Representatives of 11 November 2024 (Parliamentary Papers 36600, no. 13). As stated in the letter of 11 November, this letter gives further details on the new policy framework.

Below I will also inform the House on follow-up to motions and undertakings relevant to the new policy framework. In her letter of 21 January 2025 prior to the debate with the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Trade and Development Aid, the former Minister for Foreign Trade and Development informed the House of the current state of play with regard to some of these motions (Parliamentary Papers 36600, no. 55).

The new policy framework will be given the title 'Focus' since the government has drafted it with a view to ensuring more focus. Due to the cutbacks to development aid, the new framework will focus more sharply on service provision, and will be limited to a select number of themes, mainly involving partnerships with local civil society organisations.

This letter begins with a brief description of the policy principles and core elements underpinning the 'Focus' policy framework. The eight thematic instruments contained in the framework will then be described. This will be followed by further elaboration of the accountability system. The letter concludes with a timetable for the follow-up steps. I will return to the subject of 'own contribution to project costs' (the 50% threshold criterion and the customised approach) as soon as possible.

Policy principles underpinning the 'Focus' framework (2026-2030)

The aim of the policy framework is to strengthen the capacity of chiefly local civil society organisations so that they can provide the necessary services and conduct the dialogue needed to fulfil the objectives of the eight instruments. To this end, the government has adopted a number of principles.

The new framework is more efficient, places more emphasis on service provision and less on dialogue, and has local ownership at its core. Each instrument takes gender equality on board.¹ This contributes to effective development aid. After all, programmes yield better results if they actively engage with women and girls and take account of their situation.²

Efficiency

¹ The activities within the instruments must score 1 (gender equality as the main objective) or 2 (contributes to gender equality) according to the OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker.

² OECD-DAC (2022) Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls: DAC Guidance for Development Partners.

The current partnerships are sometimes characterised by bureaucratic programme management, high indirect costs and delays in implementation.³ The funding models under this framework will therefore be simplified so that resources can be used more efficiently. Fewer layers of management will lead to lower administrative costs, enabling partner organisations to focus more on achieving the instruments' objectives.

Balance between service provision and dialogue

The policy framework 'Strengthening Civil Society' focused on advocacy and lobbying. In the Power of Voices partnerships, service provision was banned altogether. Various mid-term reviews of the current strategic partnerships show that this approach is sometimes too one-sided, and that some scope for service provision is needed.⁴ With a view to this and to achieving concrete, measurable results, the new framework will focus more on activities in the field of service provision that directly improve people's and communities' lives. Specifically, in the new policy framework at least 30% of the programme budget must be spent on activities in the field of service provision. Examples include information sessions on HIV or care for traumatised victims of sexual or gender-based violence.

The mid-term reviews and the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) evaluation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) 2012-2022 show moreover that a combination of advocacy and service provision provides an effective strategy to achieve development goals. For this reason there will still be scope to enter into – where necessary critical – dialogue with influential partners at various levels. It is, for example, essential to influence customs in order to prevent harmful practices like female genital mutilation.

On a previous occasion, the former Minister for Foreign Trade and Development informed the House that the government would no longer fund international lobbying, with UN agencies for instance, under the policy framework. In response to the motion introduced by MP Sarah Dobbe *et al*, which was recently adopted, international lobbying to protect and promote human rights and in particular women's rights will now be permitted under this policy framework.⁵ This applies to all instruments, with the exception of the instrument to encourage Dutch private initiatives. Funding of lobbying in the Netherlands will continue to be excluded.

Local ownership

This new framework is informed by the government's wish to encourage and enhance local ownership within development aid.⁶ According to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), this means that local actors have agency in designing and implementing development initiatives, with international

³ Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) evaluation of the Dutch contribution to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) 2012-2022 (p. 4).

⁴ Mid-term reviews of partnerships under the 'Strengthening Civil Society' policy framework in Uganda, the Palestinian Territories and Lebanon.

⁵ Parliamentary Paper 36 180, no. 145.

⁶ This is in line with the recommendations of the most recent OECD peer review of Dutch development aid (2023), the meta-evaluation of the mid-term reviews of the strategic partnerships under the 'Strengthening Civil Society' policy framework (2024) and the IOB SRHR evaluation 2012-2022.

donors and external partners playing a supporting role in solving the social problems confronting local communities.⁷

Within the instruments, we will work as directly as possible with civil society organisations in low- and middle-income countries established and operating in the regional, sub-national or national areas they target. This will promote efficiency, because the money will benefit the target group faster. Local organisations are familiar with local cultures, needs and legislation, and can ensure that activities yield results that are aligned with them. This is more effective than determining from abroad what is relevant for a country or community.⁸ Respect for universal human rights will continue to have priority.

Strengthening capacity

By improving local civil society organisations' skills and knowledge we contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of development initiatives. Capacity strengthening is therefore an important element in the framework. Examples include training, coaching and other action to strengthen capacity in various areas: from programme and financial management to effective protection for vulnerable groups. Here, we will build on existing local capacity. This is essential to promote local ownership.⁹

To illustrate, between 2016 and 2024, the Voice Fund, financed by the Netherlands, supported as many as 745 projects run by small local organisations, by for instance strengthening their technical and organisational capacity. This often led to more efficient, more effective project design and also enabled organisations to continue their work more effectively after the grant period ended.¹⁰

Role of Dutch civil society organisations

We are changing the way we work with Dutch civil society organisations operating in the field of development aid. These organisations will increasingly play a supportive role vis-à-vis local organisations – for example, by offering to strengthen their financial capacity, by facilitating knowledge sharing with and between local partners, or by providing access to important technological innovations or scientific insights.¹¹ In the past few years, the government, with its Dutch partner organisations, has invested considerably in the capacity of our local partners, who are well able to take the lead themselves.

The government acknowledges the value of the strategic knowledge, expertise and experience built up over many years by Dutch civil society organisations. They will therefore continue to have sufficient scope within the new policy framework to play an effective role. Depending on the capacity needed to achieve our goals – implementation capacity and substantive expertise, for example – and whether this is sufficiently available at local level, Dutch civil society organisations may be eligible for funding. In relation to some instruments, security considerations also

⁷ OECD-DAC (2024) Pathways Towards Effective Locally Led Development Co-operation: Learning by Example.

⁸ As I also indicated in my letter of 20 February 2025 to the House of Representatives on international development (Parliamentary Paper 36 180, no. 133).

⁹ OECD-DAC (2024) Valuing and Sharing Local Knowledge and Capacity: Practical approaches for enabling locally led development co-operation.

¹⁰ Scio Network (2023) Voice Final Evaluation Report.

¹¹ Partos (2022) Dream Paper: Shift the Power.

play a role, due to the sensitivity of the theme, as is the case with human rights and fundamental freedoms. In these cases, it may be useful if a Dutch organisation, acting as intermediary, can provide local organisations with extra security. Dutch and possibly international organisations can also be contracted by intermediaries or fund managers and local organisations to share their knowledge with them. The instrument for encouraging private initiatives focuses exclusively on Dutch organisations.

Second, we will encourage local organisations to make use of Dutch knowledge and expertise, wherever relevant. Take, for example, the renowned 'Dutch Approach' to combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic, or Dutch organisations' ability to connect local organisations and Dutch businesses with a view to encouraging clean and fair trade. Where relevant, we will ask local organisations to engage with Dutch organisations in developing and implementing activities. Where capacity allows, our embassies can facilitate these knowledge exchanges, for example through a dialogue session or learning event. This is the government's response to the motions introduced by MPs Ria de Korte *et al*, Roelien Kamminga and Don Ceder.¹²

Also in response to the motion introduced by MP Ria de Korte *et al*, the evaluation of the new policy framework will take on board the changing role of Dutch civil society organisations within development aid, in so far as this applies to the policy framework.¹³

The instruments in detail

The new 'Focus' policy framework will include eight thematic policy instruments. Given the considerable retrenchment in relation to development aid, the government has had to make some very clear choices. Although the budget has been reduced, the government will continue to make a substantial contribution to civil society, but will do so more effectively. The total budget is EUR 490 million¹⁴ for the 2026-2030 period.

Focus framework

Instrument	Budget (5 years)
Combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic	EUR 100 million
Preventing harmful practices	EUR 40 million
Promoting clean and fair trade	EUR 80 million
Encouraging women's entrepreneurship	EUR 55 million
Combating violence against women and supporting defenders of women's rights	EUR 105 million
Women, peace and security	EUR 35 million
Protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms	EUR 60 million
Encouraging Dutch private initiatives	EUR 15 million
Total	EUR 490 million

¹² Parliamentary Papers 36600-XVII, no. 66; 36600-XVII, no. 26 and 36600-XVII, no. 41 respectively.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ 0.3% of the budget will be earmarked for a baseline study and external evaluation, to be conducted at central level.

The budgets match *pro rata* earlier commitments to the various themes. With these budget allocations, we will also continue to be a significant donor in the fields of human rights and gender, despite the cutbacks.

Consortiums with many different layers of management will no longer be set up for any of these instruments. Cooperation will be simpler and partnerships will comprise no more than two layers. In many cases, these will consist of intermediaries or fund managers (first layer) capable of reaching smaller local organisations (second layer). These intermediaries may be established outside a low- or middle-income country, but must show how they will enhance local ownership of the policy themes in the framework.

Three grant policy frameworks will be published for a total of five instruments. The first will be for the instrument for clean and fair trade. The second, for protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, will comprise two segments: (1) freedom of religion and belief and (2) equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people. The third grant policy framework will be for the three instruments relating to women's rights, and will comprise three segments: (1) women's entrepreneurship, (2) combating violence against women, and (3) women, peace and security. For the instruments relating to HIV/AIDS and preventing harmful practices, resources will be delegated to an embassy for a programme in the region. For the instrument for encouraging Dutch private development initiatives, funding will be given directly to a civil society organisation established in the Netherlands.

Below you will find a brief description of the envisaged objectives of each of the eight instruments and their practical implementation. The activities referred to are examples. It is up to local and other civil society organisations to give the instrument a tangible shape.

Instrument 1: Combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic (budget: EUR 100 million)

This instrument contributes to improved prevention and access to HIV/AIDS treatment for women, girls and vulnerable groups (the key populations). With this instrument, the government is responding in part to the motions introduced by MP Sarah Dobbe *et al* and MP Roelien Kamminga.¹⁵

This instrument will focus on improved provision of services, including information, assistance and training of medical staff, and on lowering barriers to care – such as stigma or practical obstacles – for high-risk groups. For this reason, there will also be scope for advocacy, with a view to ensuring that national, sub-national, regional or international HIV/AIDS policy responds more adequately to the needs of the target group. The government will thus commit to the proven Dutch Approach to HIV, which focuses on cooperation between academia, healthcare organisations and high-risk groups.

The instrument will focus on southern Africa, where there is a relatively high prevalence of HIV, in particular among women, girls and vulnerable groups. Funding will be delegated to a Dutch embassy in this region. Civil society organisations with a broad knowledge of this theme and experience in the southern African context will work with smaller local organisations. Southern partners will be asked to work with Dutch civil society organisations with technical

¹⁵ Parliamentary Papers 36 180, no. 107 and 36 180, no. 111 respectively.

expertise in the field of HIV/AIDS. This is in line with the motion introduced by MP Ria de Korte.¹⁶

Instrument 2: Combating harmful practices (budget: EUR 40 million)

This instrument contributes to better prevention of harmful practices including female genital mutilation and child marriage by changing customs and behaviour, and to better after-care regarding the consequences of such practices. With this instrument, the government is responding in part to the motion introduced by MP Roelien Kamminga.¹⁷

Possible activities include training for medical staff in providing safe, child-friendly care, including physical care and trauma processing, and in informing the community about the consequences of harmful practices. Endeavours could also be made to provide safe spaces for victims and vulnerable groups. This instrument also aims to tackle deeply-rooted customs that are often the reason for these practices, for example by working with traditional and religious leaders or with schools and social workers.

The funds committed to this instrument will be delegated to a Dutch embassy in eastern Africa, which will finance one or more local civil society organisations with experience of and expertise in preventing harmful practices in the region. The organisation(s) will work with a number of smaller local organisations in order to effectively connect with the target group.

Instrument 3: Promoting clean and fair trade (budget: EUR 80 million)

The objective of this instrument is to improve labour rights and working conditions and to prevent deforestation and pollution in production countries, in tandem with the Dutch business sector and its suppliers.

With the help of this instrument, civil society organisations can launch multi-stakeholder initiatives and support social dialogue¹⁸ in order for instance to contribute to improving working conditions and to the greening of production. This will not only strengthen local earning capacity but also enhance security of supply to the Netherlands of products that meet international and European RBC standards.

With this instrument, and with their in-depth knowledge of European markets, civil society organisations can also connect local organisations to Dutch businesses and their suppliers. The geographical focus will be on countries in Africa and Asia, to be selected at a later date.

Instrument 4: Encouraging women's entrepreneurship (budget: EUR 55 million)

The objective of this instrument is to strengthen the economic position of women entrepreneurs, the majority of whom are active in the informal sector, and to help break down the social and cultural barriers they run into.

To achieve this, we will take action to improve women entrepreneurs' commercial and business skills, such as negotiating techniques and networking. There will also

¹⁶ Parliamentary Paper 36 600-XVII, no. 66.

¹⁷ Parliamentary Paper 36 180, no. 111.

¹⁸ Social dialogue takes place between employees, employers and – in tripartite dialogue – government authorities.

be scope for dialogue with government authorities, financial institutions and male entrepreneurs in order to break down the social and cultural barriers encountered by women entrepreneurs and where relevant to improve legislation.

This instrument will target countries in Africa. The organisation or organisations selected will need to have appropriate knowledge and experience of this theme in the region, and be able to connect women entrepreneurs in the informal sector with private parties and development banks.

Instrument 5: Combating violence against women and supporting defenders of women's rights (budget: EUR 105 million)

The objective of this instrument is to combat violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, to provide treatment for the victims of this violence, and to support defenders of women's rights in precarious circumstances. This is the government's response to the motion introduced by MP Sarah Dobbe *et al.*¹⁹

The instrument will chiefly focus on improving access to medical and psychosocial care services, on legal assistance for victims and on preventing violence against women and girls. There will be scope for local and international advocacy to improve relevant legislation and its enforcement, including prosecution of perpetrators. This instrument will also focus on enhancing the online and offline safety of women's rights defenders and activists.

We will work in this instrument with intermediaries with expertise in both elements of this theme. They will subsequently support local organisations in West Africa (in the Sahel in particular), the Horn of Africa and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Instrument 6: Women, peace and security (budget: EUR 35 million)

This instrument aims to strengthen the position of women in peace and security processes and to protect and re-integrate the victims of conflict-related sexual violence. This is the government's response to the motion introduced by MP Derk Boswijk.²⁰

Examples of activities include training in conflict mediation or setting up and strengthening networks of women peacebuilders. Awareness-raising campaigns, also targeting men, can help change social norms relating to participation of women in peace processes. The capacity of local civil society organisations will be strengthened to enable them to provide the victims of conflict-related sexual violence with diverse forms of support. There will also be scope for local and international advocacy, for example relating to the drafting and implementation of National Action Plans to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325.²¹

Within this instrument, we will work with a number of intermediaries that have substantive expertise in this theme and a broad network in the following regions: West Africa (the Sahel in particular), the Horn of Africa, the MENA region and

¹⁹ Parliamentary Paper 32 735, no. 388.

²⁰ Amended motion introduced by MP Derk Boswijk *et al.*, Parliamentary Paper 36 600-XVII, no. 27.

²¹ For example, since 2008, the Netherlands has drafted National Action Plans to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325.

possibly other relevant regions as well. These intermediaries will subsequently support local women's organisations in implementing activities.

Instrument 7: Protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms (EUR 60 million)

The objective of this instrument is to promote freedom of religion and belief, to protect religious minorities and to promote and protect equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people. Given the instrument's attention to preventing the persecution of Christians, this partly constitutes the government's response to the motion introduced by MP Chris Stoffer *et al.*²² With a view to equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people, this instrument is also partly in response to the motion introduced by MP Roelien Kamminga.²³

Action will be taken to improve access to services such as legal assistance, mental healthcare and safe spaces, or to provide training in effective enforcement of legislation to counter discrimination. There will also be scope for local and international advocacy to improve this kind of legislation, for example in order to prevent persecution of religious minorities, including Christians. Action will also be taken to promote dialogue on freedom of religion and belief and equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people, for example through interdenominational dialogue sessions.

The instrument will be implemented in a number of countries in Africa, the MENA region and Asia. With regard to promoting freedom of religion and belief and protecting religious minorities, we will also work with local religious civil society organisations, fulfilling the commitment to MP Don Ceder.²⁴

Instrument 8: Encouraging Dutch private initiatives (budget: EUR 15 million)

The objective of this instrument is to strengthen the financial and organisational capacity of Dutch private development initiatives²⁵ so that they can make a larger, better quality contribution to development goals. The government also seeks to facilitate even greater affinity and engagement among Dutch people with development aid.

Through this instrument we will provide support for a diverse array of Dutch private development initiatives. There will be scope for supporting initiatives by civil society organisations on improving food security, education and health, for example, or on people with disabilities. Religious organisations²⁶ and diaspora organisations²⁷ will be eligible for this instrument as well. This instrument has no

²² Parliamentary Paper 36 600, no. 22.

²³ Parliamentary Paper 36 180, no. 111.

²⁴ Undertaking by the former Minister for Foreign Trade and Development to examine how, in elaborating policy on civil society, to improve support to religious civil society organisations in the Netherlands and in countries where aid is provided (TZ202504-025).

²⁵ Self-organised groups of people providing direct and structural support in one or more developing countries by means of voluntary, small-scale activities without receiving direct funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Definition from: Kinsbergen, S. & Schulp, L. (2010) *De anatomie van het P.I.: Resultaten van vijf jaar onderzoek naar Particuliere Initiatieven op het terrein van ontwikkelingssamenwerking*. (The anatomy of Private Initiatives: results of a five-year study of private initiatives in the field of development cooperation), Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen.

²⁶ TZ202504-025.

²⁷ In accordance with the commitment made to MP Mpanzu Bamenga, during the debate of 25 March 2025 with the Permanent Committee for Foreign Trade and Development about the situation in Sudan and the DRC, to engage more effectively with the diaspora in supporting private initiatives.

thematic focus. Private development initiatives will gain access to funding and technical support to professionalise their work. This may include not only training in the field of project management, fundraising, intercultural communication or cooperation with local partners, but also a financial contribution to help them complete their project.

A civil society organisation established in the Netherlands will receive a grant under this instrument to implement support activities of this kind. The instrument has no specific geographical focus.

Accountability system

Results measurement and accountability are essential for public support. By measuring results we can see whether the objectives of the thematic instruments are being achieved and acquire valuable input for timely adjustment to or – where necessary – improvement of development initiatives. This enhances the effectiveness of policy. In addition, transparent accountability promotes trust in development organisations, because it shows that they work carefully and efficiently.

Simplification and efficiency are the principles underpinning the new monitoring, evaluation and accountability methods in the 'Focus' policy framework. We will, for example, reduce the administrative burden on partner organisations, enabling them to focus on achieving their goals.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation requirements within the current policy framework 'Strengthening Civil Society' demand considerable time, knowledge and resources of both our partner organisations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is an obstacle to local ownership, because it is often too much to ask of small local organisations.²⁸ Our aim is therefore to simplify the monitoring and evaluation requirements in the new policy framework. These will be based on the recommendations of the IOB SRHR evaluation and on the proposal for a new accountability system which I shared with the House on 23 May 2025, and which will be included in the 2026 draft budget.²⁹

The current policy framework 'Strengthening Civil Society' is characterised by indicators that are difficult to measure effectively and consistently, such as the number of national laws amended or more effectively enforced due to partner organisations' work. In contrast, in the new policy framework we will opt for a limited number of indicators for monitoring, focusing on results achieved directly. This will make monitoring simpler than in the current framework, because these results can be attributed directly to our programmes. Examples of indicators include the number of victims of sexual violence gaining access to legal, medical or psychosocial assistance or the number of community leaders who have received information on harmful practices.³⁰ Measuring these results will cost our partner organisations less time and resources.

²⁸ Mid-term reviews of partnerships under the 'Strengthening Civil Society' policy framework; IOB SRHR evaluation 2012-2022.

²⁹ Parliamentary Paper 31865, no. 282.

³⁰ These are examples. The actual indicators are still under development and will be chosen in consultation with the local partner organisations.

Partner organisations will also have more scope to design their own monitoring and evaluation plans, since they will no longer be obliged to carry out a baseline study and external evaluation themselves. The government will contract an external party to do this. This is my response to the motion introduced by MP Ria de Korte.³¹

We will continue to engage in conversation with civil society organisations on the degree to which these amendments to the monitoring and evaluation requirements genuinely reduce the administrative burden for partner organisations.

Financial accountability

Financial accountability for development initiatives funded by the government is mandatory, and essential to ensure transparency and gain the trust of both the House of Representatives and society as a whole, because it shows whether public funds are being spent efficiently and lawfully.

As I shared with the House of Representatives in my recent letter on follow-up to the motions introduced by MP Chris Stoffer and MP Dennis Ram (no. 62),³² organisations awarded grants by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the new policy framework will explicitly be requested to publish their annual financial reports and accounts. This is my response regarding the motion introduced by MP Dennis Ram (no. 61) and regarding my undertaking to him on this matter.³³ This is additional to Dutch civil society organisations' obligation to submit their financial reports to the Chamber of Commerce to allow public inspection.³⁴ Civil society organisations also report on their funding flows through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

With regard to the publication of financial information by civil society organisations, account will be taken of the security of these organisations and their employees, in particular if publication of financial or other information puts partners at risk. For security reasons some organisations are for example not established or registered in the country where they operate.³⁵ MPs can submit a request to inspect, on a confidential basis, sensitive financial information which, for security reasons, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has chosen not to publish.³⁶

Risk management

³¹ Motion introduced by MP Ria de Korte (Parliamentary Paper 36600-XVII, no. 66).

³² *Idem*.

³³ Motion introduced by MP Dennis Ram (Parliamentary Paper 36600-XVII, no. 61) requesting the government to explicitly include publication of annual financial reports and annual accounts in the grant conditions and contracts with NGOs; commitment by the former Minister for Foreign Trade and Development to explore how, in elaborating the new policy framework, the financial information of NGOs receiving grants can be made more accessible and more transparent (TZ202502-082).

³⁴ These are public benefit organisations. As of the 2025 financial year, the Chamber of Commerce will require all legal persons – including the Dutch civil society organisations receiving grants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – to file their annual accounts with the commercial register by means of Standard Business Reporting.

³⁵ In accordance with the undertaking given to member of the Senate Farah Karimi during the 2025 budget debate of 11 March 2025.

³⁶ Article 68 of the Constitution: Ministers' and State Secretaries' obligation to provide the House of Representatives and Senate with information; members' right to call for an emergency debate.

Decisions on funding civil society organisations will always be taken with the utmost care. Risk management will be applied and developed with a view to improving the likelihood of successful project implementation and reducing the risk of irregularities and abnormalities, for example as a result of fraud or corruption. An extensive risk analysis will be performed for all – potential – new activities. This analysis will chart the risks of fraud and corruption in the particular context, programme and organisation, and will formulate mitigating measures to minimise the risks and their possible impact should they materialise. In addition, an Organisational Risk and Integrity Assessment (ORIA) is mandatory for all organisations receiving funding of at least EUR 1.5 million. An organisation's administrative and financial capacity is decisive for successful risk management. Current practice is to support the capacity of civil society organisations in situations where their capacity falls short. We will decide with our partners how risk management can be organised without increasing the administrative burden, and what support will be needed. As is the case in the new policy framework, funding will often be channelled through an intermediary that can provide capacity support, thus further limiting risks.

Given the emphasis on local ownership in this framework, the government will devote specific attention to the financial, political and contextual risks confronting intermediaries and local organisations that receive direct funding from the Dutch government. We will engage in an ongoing conversation with organisations on this issue.

Assessment under section 3.1 of the Government Accounts Act

In accordance with the working method 'policy choices explained', this policy framework has been assessed for compliance with section 3.1 of the Government Accounts Act. The assessment, containing explanatory notes on the objectives, instruments, financial implications and expected efficiency and effectiveness of this policy framework, has been enclosed as an annexe to this letter.

Timetable and follow-up

The selected intermediaries and fund managers will work with smaller local organisations to develop the activities to be implemented within the eight instruments. The aim is for these activities to be launched in the first half of 2026.

The motion introduced by MP Mpanzu Bamenga (no. 63) requests the government to publish the new framework for civil society organisations before the summer of this year, and to provide these organisations with assurances about funding by October at the latest. I have responded by publishing this letter giving further details of the 'Focus' policy framework before the summer. However, it will take more time to prepare the actual calls for proposals, and to develop the grant policy frameworks. For reasons of good governance, it is therefore not feasible to provide all organisations with assurances about funding by October. The aim is to share the calls for proposals with civil society organisations in the second half of 2025.

Conclusion

Civil society organisations play an essential role in social and economic development. They ensure that development aid not only reaches the countries and communities where we operate, but also makes a difference to them. The government expects that this new, detailed policy framework will work more efficiently and with more focus to further enable local civil society organisations to align development aid with their own needs, vision of the future and financial security. We will move ahead with confidence, strength and focus.