Supporting the Political Role of Civil Society Organisations for Inclusive Development, Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek

Call for research proposals on assumptions underlying *Dialogue & Dissent*

The Hague, 13 June 2017
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Dutch policy framework for civil society development: Dialogue and Dissent'[1]

Focus on Civil Society Organisations

Civil society is the space between government, the market (businesses) and private life (family and friends), where citizens can organise themselves to pursue goals unrelated to personal or financial gain, which concern a wider group of people and are not necessarily taken care of by government. Civil societies are usually formed by countless different types of (networks of) civil society organisations (CSOs), from small to large, from professional to amateur, from formal to informal, and from democratic membership organisations to closed organisations without members[2].

CSOs and development

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has a long tradition of supporting CSOs operating in low- and lower-middle-income countries (LLMICs) for their developmental roles. The policy in this area is based on the principle that a diverse and pluralist civil society is crucial for sustainable and inclusive development. CSOs can contribute to this in various related ways:
- A social role – connecting and building trust. CSOs can contribute to building civil society. By bringing people together and fostering dialogue CSOs can help rebuild trust and promote reconciliation in countries torn apart by conflict.

---

[1] https://www.government.nl/documents/regulations/2014/05/13/policy-framework-dialogue-and-dissent
[2] "Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) include non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. A wide of array of organisations can be CSO: community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations". From: http://web.worldbank.org

- An economic role – poverty reduction and service delivery. CSOs can help combat extreme poverty by providing services. Support to poor communities may relate to agriculture, food security, health care (including sexual and reproductive health), water and/or education.
- A political role – lobbying, advocacy and checks and balances. A strong and active civil society is often seen as an important feature of democracy and a driver of good governance. CSOs enable citizens to defend their rights and interests, and monitor government and businesses. It provides marginalised groups a chance to have their voice heard when policy and legislation are drawn up, implemented and enforced.

Dialogue and Dissent as a shift in focus

Over the past years, CSOs in LLMICs have grown steadily stronger. Organisations which previously focused exclusively on providing services to the poor are increasingly making themselves heard, in their own country and internationally, to expose the problems they are addressing. The issues they raise, such as inequality, environmental problems and extreme poverty, are increasingly recognised as being interconnected and demand coherence between local and global policy agendas. This creates a growing need for a different type of cooperation between Northern and Southern CSOs, thereby redefining their complementary roles.

In light of these developments the MFA of the Netherlands has made a decision in the new civil society policy framework, *Dialogue and Dissent*, to shift the focus from poverty alleviation (economic role) to support aimed at tackling the root causes of poverty and inequality (political role), combined with a greater focus on the interconnectedness between issues in developing countries and in the Netherlands. *Dialogue and Dissent* envisages that Dutch development organisations will increasingly take on this new role, both in the Netherlands and abroad. On the one hand, they will concentrate on enhancing the lobbying and advocacy capacity of CSOs in LLMICs, helping them raise their voice to be heard by government, businesses and societal actors in their country. On the other hand, they are expected to ensure that their partners' voice is heard more clearly in the Netherlands and in various regional and international forums.

The overall goal of *Dialogue and Dissent* is to strengthen the lobby and advocacy capacities of CSOs in LLMICs, enabling them to contribute to sustainable, inclusive development for all by fighting against poverty and injustice with their national and international partners, and through their local, national and international networks. The framework was implemented in 2016 and will run up to 2020. It has five main support instruments:
- *Strategic Partnerships* - 25 CSO consortia strengthen the lobby and advocacy capacity of CSOs in LLMICs. Subsequent lobby and advocacy activities focus on various themes including women's rights, press freedom and the sustainable use of natural resources. This policy is unique as it spends € 1 billion euros exclusively on fostering the political role of CSOs, and because the MFA plays an active and strategic role as partner in helping achieve the jointly agreed objectives.
- *The Accountability Fund* (AF) – Through the AF, Dutch embassies can provide direct funding to CSOs in LLMICs. Embassies are often keenly aware of the political scope civil society organisations have in the country in question and the AF allows them to respond directly to existing needs. This approach recognises the increased importance of CSOs in these countries and their growing capacity to achieve results independently.
- *Voice* - Regular aid programmes often insufficiently reach those who are excluded because of disability, ethnic origin, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or gender. Voice aims to reach and support advocacy organisations of these most marginalised and discriminated groups to enable them to effectively defend their interests.
- *Leading from the South* - Three Southern Regional Women's Funds (Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean) and one worldwide Indigenous Women's fund have been selected to finance women's organisations, movements and networks in the South to strengthen their lobby and advocacy capacity on gender equality and women's empowerment and on the SDG's and more specifically SDG 5.
- *Defending political space* - In many countries it is becoming more and more difficult for CSOs to do their work due to restrictive legislation or even threats and intimidation. It is therefore essential that donors not only provide financial but also political support, to create an enabling environment for CSOs. In this regard, the MFA monitors political space through its embassies, takes part in various international networks like the Community of Democracies, and supports the international civil rights movement CIVICUS.

Science for development policy and -practice

Oldekop et all[3] highlight a critical need for a deeper reflection on paradigms underpinning international development practices, the long-debated reform of global institutions and the significance of contemporary economic and political scenarios for the development agenda.
They raise issues that require scrutiny of the theoretical assumptions of current development paradigms, and their underlying systems of beliefs and values. Asking such fundamental questions could lead to innovative problem framings and solutions. Addressing these will be critical for the success of any credible, long-term strategies aiming to promote sustainable and socially just development.

The scientific community with its knowledge, curiosity, creativity, scientific methods and independence, is well equipped to scrutinize paradigms. Scientists thus are key partners in identifying the causes of poverty and inequalities, and in developing innovative approaches and solutions that can be replicated, shared or scaled up. Science can make a difference by providing policies and politics with evidence, viable options and recommendations for tackling challenges in development policies in a more systemic and integrated manner.

However, generating new knowledge alone is not sufficient to bring about change in policies and practices. Knowledge must be made available and accessible to their possible end-users. Therefore, in 2012 the MFA has installed (among other platforms) the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE on inclusive development policies in Africa. This platform operates as a knowledge broker between researchers, government, non-governmental organisations and private organisations.

Call for proposals

In 2016, the MFA and the WOTRO *Science for Global Development* division of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) joined forces to formulate the current call for research proposals. This call is aimed at scrutinizing the Theory of Change (see annex 1) – and especially its underlying assumptions (see Section 2.1: Research foci) – of the MFA's policy framework *Dialogue and Dissent*. Research proposals responding to this call therefore must be demonstrably linked to projects/programmes implemented in LLMICs by CSOs supported by the framework 'Dialogue and Dissent' of the MFA.

Research projects should consist of two parts:
1. a literature review, supporting
2. an empirical project

Next to these parts, research teams have to actively participate in knowledge brokering activities (see Section 2.3).

The call is open for consortia consisting of a main applicant from a Dutch university (holding a PhD), and co-applicant from a research organisation[4] based in one of the LLMICs[5] where the empirical part must be executed. Optionally, a third research organisation (based in any country) can be added as partner to the consortium.

For effective knowledge brokering, the main applicant and the co-applicant must participate in knowledge sharing activities organised by the Knowledge platform INCLUDE for this programme.

1.2 Available budget

This call is initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands and administered by NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development.
A total call budget of 3 million euros is available. The maximum budget for a single research project consisting of a review study (max. 3 months) and empirical research (max 15 months) is 0.5 million

---

[3] Oldekop, Johan A.; Fontana, Lorenza B.; Grugel, Jean; Roughton, Nicole; Adu-Ampong, et all (2016). 100 key research questions for the post-2015 development agenda. Development Policy Review, 34(1) pp. 55-82.

[4] For this Call, research organisations include any organisation:
   – of which one of its main tasks is to carry out independent research;
   – that has no profit motive other than that for the purpose of further research;
   – whose researchers enjoy freedom of publication in the international (academic) literature.
   For example, universities and higher education institutions, think-tanks, planning offices, centers for international scientific education that meet these criteria are included. However, in order to prevent any conflict of interest, organisations supported by D&D are excluded.
[5] http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC%20List%20of%20ODA%20Recipients%202014%20final.pdf. LLMIC include only 'Least Developed Countries', 'Other Low Income Countries' and 'Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories'."

euros for a maximum project duration of 18 months.

Validity of the call for proposals

This call for proposals is valid until the closing date August 8th 2017, 14.00 noon CET.

In case adjustments to the call are deemed necessary, NWO-WOTRO reserves the right to publish these on the website of the research programme: www.nwo.nl/assumptions

2 Aim

The call aims to fund research projects that strengthen the evidence-base of the policy framework *Dialogue and Dissent*. It calls on scientists to submit research proposals that scrutinise specific articulated assumptions of the Theory of Change (ToC) underlying the policy framework (see annex 1) using primarily qualitative scientific methodologies.

In this call, evaluation research of the projects/programmes of the *Dialogue and Dissent* framework of the MFA is excluded. The call is specifically meant for research which addresses the underlying assumptions of this framework.

Each research project should contribute to two objectives:
- Generating new, evidence-based knowledge on the assumptions of the ToC underlying the *Dialogue and Dissent* framework;
  and
- Making this knowledge accessible, available and applicable to policymakers and CSOs in the Netherlands and in LLMICs.

2.1 Research foci

Research scope

To be of relevance for this call, research proposals must
1. relate to the theoretical propositions in the ToC document (Annex 1), and
2. the empirical research part must be demonstrably linked to projects/programmes implemented in LLMICs by CSOs supported by the framework *Dialogue and Dissent* of the MFA.
3. not be evaluation research.

At the same time, this does not mean that research proposals should use the same theoretical lenses as used in the ToC, nor that all the fieldwork should be limited to programmes/projects financed by the MFA. In order to get different perspectives, different theoretical lenses **may** be used as long as the proposal shows the added value of those lenses compared to the ones used in the ToC. For the empirical part it is **obligatory** to **also** include actors, projects and/or cases which have no connection to the programmes/projects financed within the 'Dialogue and Dissent' framework of the MFA. By taking such a broader view, the MFA aims at getting a more comprehensive view, for instance on the influence of donor funding (from different donors) on the political role of (different) CSOs.

Research focus

The general research focus of this call are the assumptions underlying the Theory of Change (ToC) of the policy framework *Dialogue and Dissent*. The Theory of Change flowchart is depicted below (Figure 1). Annex 1 contains the full ToC document which elaborates the assumptions and positions them in two competing development paradigms.

Specific research foci

Within the context of the general research focus, research projects should focus on assumptions underlying one of the three specific themes depicted below. Annex 2 provides a more elaborate description of these three themes, covering the core assumptions of the *Dialogue and Dissent* Theory of Change, and providing research and policy questions. Research proposals must relate to the analysis and research questions in this document, and contribute to answering the formulated policy questions. While the research questions in annex 2 provide the overall direction and should therefore be the starting point for each research proposal, applicants are invited to refine and tailor them to specific subjects and/or cases.

1. Political roles of CSOs in LLMICs

Assumptions:
– CSOs play a crucial role in changing power relations
– CSOs perform 4 types of political roles to change power relations:
  ○ Educational (internal & external)
  ○ Communicative (linking state & society)
  ○ Representational (voice & resistance)
  ○ Cooperative (subsidiarity & coordination)
– Different roles require different organisational forms (i.e. formal / informal), capacities and different forms of legitimacy
– When pressured, informed and/or persuaded by CSOs, states and companies change their policies and practices, and societal groups change their norms, values and practices to be more sustainable, equitable and inclusive
– Precondition: CSOs need to be locally rooted, strong, legitimate and autonomous to perform political roles

2. The aid chain

Assumptions:
– External aid by the Ministry and (mainly Northern) CSOs can strengthen CSOs in LLMICs in their political roles through capacity building and assistance in advocacy processes
– CSOs are actors in their own right and not merely instrumental channels for aid delivery
– Promoting civil society's political roles needs a long-term, context-specific approach, which incorporates mutual learning, trust and local ownership
– Precondition: The design of the aid chain does not interfere with the aspects mentioned in the previous point

3. Civic space under pressure

Assumptions:
– Assumption/precondition: CSOs need civic space to perform political roles
– External aid by the Ministry and (mainly Northern) CSOs can strengthen CSOs in LLMICs in their political roles by offering protection in hostile environments and lobbying for improved political space

While projects must focus on one of the three themes mentioned, each project should explicitly reflect on the relevance of their project (findings) for the two other themes. This reflection is needed as the three themes are interrelated.

To encourage discourse on the interrelatedness of the three themes, all applicants of awarded projects will periodically meet to discuss progress and findings at workshops organised by the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE.

Figure 1: Theory of Change Dialogue & Dissent
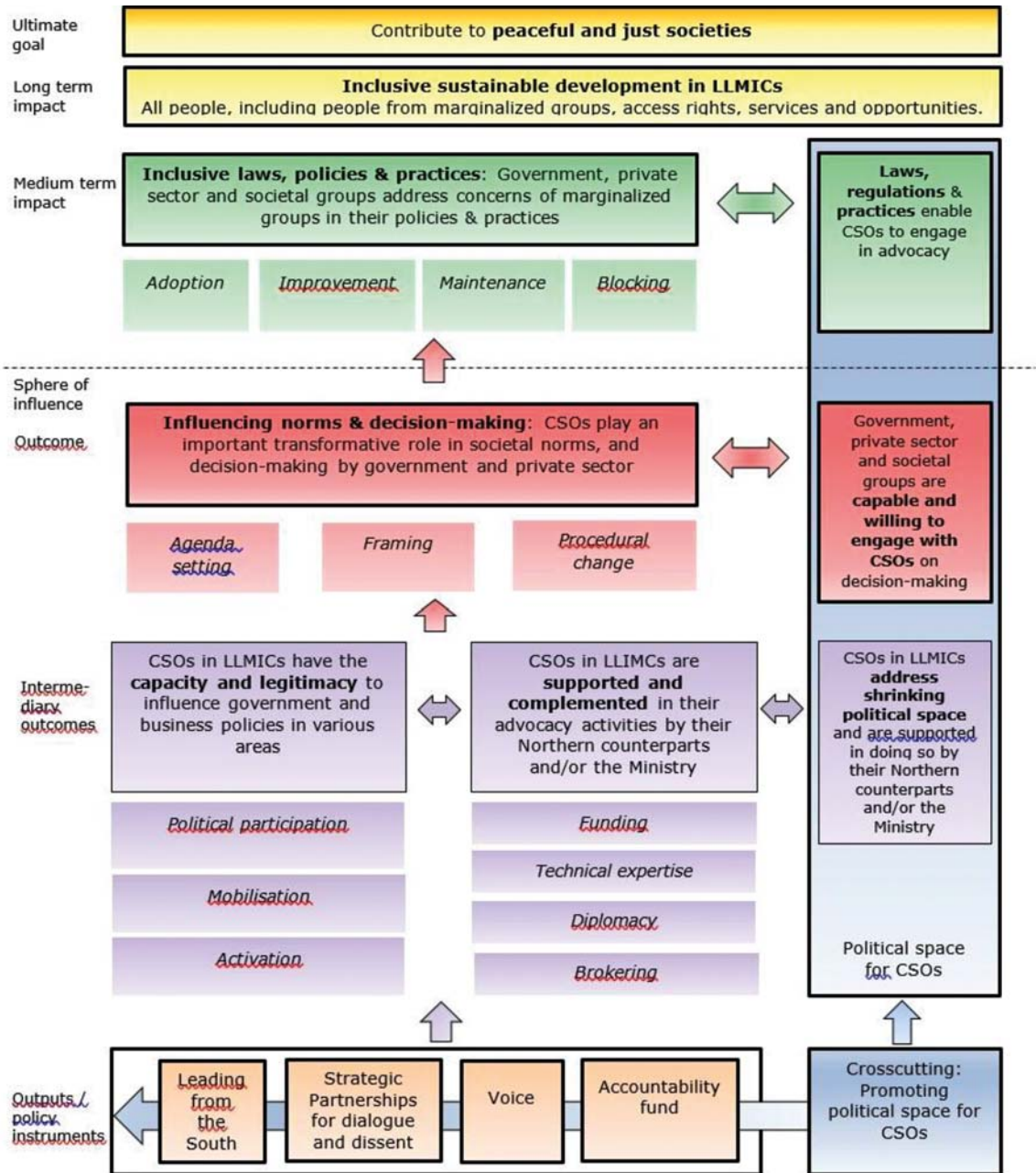
2.2 Project conditions

Literature review and empirical research

Each project proposal should consist of two parts: a literature review and empirical research. In addition to these parts, research teams have to actively participate in knowledge brokering activities (see Section 2.3).

Part one: literature review

Literature review is defined here as a study that provides an overview of existing, peer-reviewed published scientific research insights and/or methodologies, complemented with grey literature where relevant and feasible. The review should identify, select, synthesise and appraise all high- quality research evidence relevant for the research project (part two). In doing so, it should use multiple theoretical perspectives, connecting the insights of multiple scientific traditions. The literature review should not duplicate the extensive literature review in the ToC (Annex 1), but should build on and/or relate to it.

Part 2: empirical research

As the research projects concentrate on understanding complex processes and phenomena related to the assumptions behind the *Dialogue and Dissent* ToC, researchers **must** use **qualitative** research methods. A mixed methods approach **may be** used, where quantitative methods complement the main qualitative part, if researchers can show the added value of such an approach. Using these methodologies, evidence based results concerning the (validity of) the assumptions underlying the *Dialogue and Dissent* framework should be delivered.

As explained above, the empirical part of the research proposal, must be **demonstrably** linked to projects/programmes implemented in LLMICs by CSOs supported by the framework *Dialogue and Dissent* of the MFA. At the same time the project must not be limited to projects/programmes supported by *Dialogue and Dissent*.

2.3 Timing and expected output

Projects should provide two types of output.

First, projects should provide input and lessons for the design of the next civil society policy framework of the MFA. As this design process will already start in 2019, research results should be available by then. This has consequences for the timing of output: the whole project (literature review and empirical research) has to be finalised in max. 18 months after the starting date.
– The literature review process must be completed within 3 months. A report of the review part of the project (output) must be sent within 4 months after the starting date to NWO-WOTRO who will assess the review for quality and share the review and assessment with the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE.
– For the empirical part, including the writing of the final report a maximum of 15 months are available.

> Thus, delivering the results in time is a prerequisite and no (budget-neutral) extension of projects is possible.

Second, knowledge generated by the researches should be accessible, available and applicable for the MFA as input for a learning agenda with its partners in the *Dialogue and Dissent* framework. As this is an ongoing process, frequent interaction between researchers and the MFA on both intermediate results and final reports is a prerequisite. The Knowledge Platform INCLUDE will facilitate knowledge brokering activities. Main and co-applicant of awarded projects are obliged to actively participate in and contribute to knowledge brokering activities, e.g. workshop participation and timely delivery of interim- results.

Knowledge brokering

In order to facilitate outcome and impact, the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE will regularly organize workshops and other knowledge brokering activities that bring together researchers of different projects with relevant practitioners[6], including CSOs and the MFA. By involving them along the research, they act as sounding board to reflect on the approach of the empirical part and/or in discussing the (early) findings. This increases the likelihood that research results will be used and thereby improves their impact. Projects should budget the participation of main and co-applicant(s) to these workshops. Active participation in all knowledge brokering activities is required. Research updates will be published on a website.
The four workshops are:
– A kick-off meeting (one day) organized immediately after the actual start of the projects where the main applicants of all projects meet with a small group of stakeholders to fine tune their project plans in view of the call's goals and objectives;
– A workshop (one day) five months after the start of the projects. The goal of this workshop is to discuss the results of the literature review (part one of the project) and to discuss the impact of the review on the empirical part. During this workshop the main and co-applicant will discuss their findings with a broader group of stakeholders (practitioners and researchers);
– A progress workshop (one day) approximately one year after the start of the project to discuss

---

6 Practitioners include any type of organisation other than research or higher education organisations that represent a group of people actively engaged in policy design for and/or implementation of those policies (programming), including public organisations (governmental departments of line ministries, local or international governments, extension services, et cetera), as well as private organisations (including for-profit enterprises (such as SME's and MNE's) and related support organisations and private non-profit organisations such as NGOs, cooperatives, social movements, unions and civil society organisations).

intermediate results of the projects with main and co-applicants of all projects and a broader group of stakeholders;
– A final workshop (one day) of main applicants of all projects with a small group of stakeholders at the end of the projects, in which final results on both project and programme level will be discussed, to synthesize results from all projects in order to formulate an aggregated and concise and coherent advice for more evidence-informed CSO policy frameworks to all stakeholders, and especially to the MFA of The Netherlands that will feed a new policy framework *Dialogue and Dissent*.

Next to these knowledge brokering activities, consortia are expected to organise a project kick-off workshop to fine tune the approach of the project (directly after the programme kick-off workshop) and to organize a final self-assessment workshop with stakeholders on site resulting in a final research report. Costs for policy briefs, lay-men publications, books, and other (visual/audio) approaches or tools to enhance knowledge sharing and use should also be budgeted.

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Applications can be submitted by consortia consisting of at least:
– A Dutch university;
  and
– A research organisation located in (one of) the LLMIC(s) in Africa, Asia or Latin America where the project/programme that is subject of the empirical research is implemented;
  and (optional)
– A research organisation based in any country.

Organisations that are supported by *Dialogue and Dissent* cannot be part of the consortium. All organisations participating in a consortium must be registered as a legal persona and deliver proof thereof.

The main applicant should hold a senior[7] position at the Dutch university. He or she will act as project coordinator and point of contact with NWO-WOTRO and will submit the research proposal. The main applicant's organisation will take responsibility for the project secretariat, the day-to-day management and all financial affairs of the research project.

Together, the consortium members will 1) formulate relevant research questions and approaches; 2) formulate and submit the proposal; 3) conduct the project activities; 4) coordinate knowledge sharing and support the application, dissemination and communication of the project results to a broader group of (local) possible knowledge users who are not a member of the consortium; and 5) take responsibility for reporting adequately and timely in accordance with the terms and conditions.

Each individual person can be applicant in only one proposal submitted. Universities and research organisations may submit multiple proposals.

3.2 What can be applied for

For each research project of a duration of 18 months, a maximum budget of 0.5 million euros will be available. Applicants can budget only for costs that directly attribute to the project (see below).

Reimbursable costs

The following cost can be reimbursed by a grant:
I. Personnel costs of project staff[8];
  Subsidy can be requested for the time that staff members work on the project. To determine the reimbursable salary costs, a distinction is made between personnel from Dutch universities and personnel from all other organisations.
  – Personnel costs of project staff (max. 395,000 euros):
    ○ The maximum tariffs for the researchers employed by research organisations in the Netherlands are based upon the NWO-VSNU contractand are subject to change;

---

[7] VSNU 2010: senior positions include tenured staff such as Post-docs, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Full Professor, and senior lecturer (UHD). All must have a PhD degree.
[8] Project staff refers to individuals who actually conduct the project activities. Overhead costs (including but not limited to academic supervision of post-docs) are excluded from reimbursement.

- Senior researchers employed by research organisations based in LLMICs or elsewhere can be provided with a net monthly living allowance. The living allowance is expected to cover all personal costs, including housing, organisational overhead, medical costs, insurances, travel to and from work, et cetera. The regulations of the main applicant's institute should be guiding for determining the amount of the living allowances.
  However, costs for 1 fte junior researcher may not exceed 4,500 euros a month, costs for 1 fte senior researcher may not exceed 6,500 euros a month;
  - Personnel costs of project staff not employed by other organisations (for example when staff of CSOs are included):
    - Salaries for project staff not employed by research organisations must be guided by the contracting organisations' norms and legal regulations of the country concerned, but is limited to the maximum gross full-time monthly rate of 4,500 euros (all costs included);
II. Research costs (indicated 50,000 euros):
  - International travel and accommodation costs for exchange of project staff between participating consortium members (max. six months per project, per senior researcher);
  - Salaries for technical and administrative support staff who are engaged for less than 0.4 fte during the running time of the project. Salaries must be guided by the organisations' norms and legal regulations of the country concerned but is limited to the maximum gross full-time monthly rate of 3,200 euros (all costs included);
  - (Use of) durables (buildings excluded), consumables, use of existing data/information, interview costs, et cetera;
  - Please note that procurement costs are excluded from reimbursement.
III. Knowledge sharing & utilisation costs (indicated 55,000 euros):
  - Costs for participation (travel and accommodation costs) in four knowledge brokering workshops (in the Netherlands) organised by the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE. At all workshops, the main applicant and/or co-applicant are expected to participate.
  - Costs for organising a project kick-off workshop within the consortium to fine tune the approach of the project (directly after the programme kick-off workshop);
  - Costs for organising a final self-assessment workshop with stakeholders on site resulting in a final research report;
  - Costs for policy briefs, lay-men publications, books, and other (visual/audio) approaches or tools to enhance knowledge sharing and use.

All costs should be made during the project duration.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

The closing date for the submission of full proposals is August 8th 2017, 14.00 CET

The assessment round will take approximately five months. For an overview of the procedure timelines, please see Section 4.1.

3.4 Preparing and submitting an application

Preparation

Applications, including annexes, should be written in English.

Application forms can be downloaded from the electronic application system ISAACor from NWO's website (www.nwo/assumptions). Before completing the application form, please read the information and guidelines provided in Section 7 of this call.

An application can only be submitted to NWO-WOTRO via the online application system ISAAC. This must be done by the main applicant. Applications that are not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

The main applicant should submit his/her application via his/her own ISAAC account.
Please note: In case a main applicant does not have an ISAAC account he/she is advised to create an account at least *five working days* before submitting the application, to ensure that any registration problems can be resolved in time. Especially if the applicant's organisation is not listed in ISAAC it is vital to take five working days into account to ensure correct registration (a request for registration of the applicant's organisation in the ISAAC system should be sent to relatiebeheer@nwo.nl).

Submitting an application

Please arrange the annexes (for a list of annexes see Section 6) in PDF before starting your submis-

sion. The budget template must be submitted in Excel. When the application form has been completed, save the form (including annexes) as a pdf and upload it in ISAAC. When you submit your application to ISAAC you will also need to enter additional details online.

It is advised to start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see Section 5.2.

3.5 Specific grant conditions

Accountability

With regard to accountability of the projects, the General Provisions of the NWO Grant Rules 2017apply. When the results from the project are published or presented, it should mention the financial support (stating the project number) and received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands with cooperation of NWO-WOTRO and the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE.

Open Access

All scientific publications resulting from research that is funded by grants derived from this call for proposals are to be immediately (at the time of publication) freely accessible worldwide (Open Access). There are several ways for researchers to publish Open Access. A detailed explanation regarding Open Access can be found on www.nwo.nl/openscience-en.

Data management

Responsible data management is part of good research. NWO commits itself to research data that emerge from publicly financed research to become freely and sustainably available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers. Furthermore NWO aims to raise awareness among researchers about the importance of responsible data management. Proposals should therefore satisfy the data management protocol of NWO. This protocol consists of two steps:

1. Data management section

The data management section is part of the research proposal. Researchers should answer four questions about data management within their intended research project. Therefore, before the research starts the researcher will be asked to think about how the data collected must be ordered and categorised so that it can be made freely available. Measures will often need to be taken during the production and analysis of the data to make their later storage and dissemination possible. Researchers can state which research data they consider to be relevant for storage and reuse.

2. Data management plan

After a proposal has been awarded funding the researcher should expand the data management *section* into a data management *plan*. The data management plan is a concrete elaboration of the data management section. In the plan the researcher describes whether use will be made of existing data or a new data collection and how the data collection will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within a maximum of 3 months after the proposal has been awarded funding. The approval of the data management plan is one of the conditions that must be met before the project can start and before funding is disbursed. The plan can be adjusted during the research. All changes are subject to approval by NWO.

Further information about the data management protocol of NWO can be found at http://www.nwo.nl/en/policies/open+science/data+management.

4 Procedure

4.1 Assessment procedure

The NWO Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interestapplies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process.

Eligibility

The first step in the assessment procedure is to determine the admissibility of the application. All

project proposals received via ISAAC are screened by the NWO-WOTRO secretariat for compliance with formal eligibility. Eligibility concerns compliance with the conditions set in this call. Formal criteria include (but may not be limited to):
– Timely received application via NWO's electronic application system ISAAC;
– Application has been submitted by the main applicant who holds a senior position within a collaborating Dutch university;
– Specific conditions (as outlined in Section 3.5) have been applied;
– Completed and signed application form;
– Composition of consortium complies with the requirements;
– Format, length of text, language (English) is as required;
– Budget conditions are met;
– Completed annexes.

Completed annexes:
– Proof of legal registration for each non-Dutch consortium member organization;
– Letters of commitment outlining the availability and commitment of consortium members, signed by heads of the participating department;
– Budget (in Excel format, using the template provided)
– Letter of support or financial guarantee concerning co-financing (if applicable).
– Letter of support concerning use of data (if applicable).

No additional annexes are allowed.

Applicants will receive written confirmation of receipt within two weeks after the deadline of this call, stating whether or not the application has been accepted into the selection procedure.

Selection procedure

If eligible, proposals will be reviewed on the basis of the selection criteria mentioned in Section 4.2. At least two independent, international expert advisors from the International Advisory Committee will pre-assess the proposals for all criteria. Because of the tight time schedule, applicants will not be offered an opportunity to respond to the comments of the experts.

Advice

During an assessment meeting, the International Advisory Committee (IAC) will discuss all proposals and pre-assessment reports and will rank the proposals on the basis of the selection criteria (see section 4.2). Based on the ranking, the IAC will present an advice on funding to the Programme Committee (PC). The IAC may also provide an advice to the PC with regard to the feasibility of the planning and the value for money of the project proposal.

The data management section (see also 3.5) in the application is not evaluated and hence not included in the decision about whether or not to award funding. However, the IAC can issue an advice with respect to the data management section.

Decision

The PC will verify that the procedure has been conducted properly before taking a decision on granting. In principle, only proposals that are evaluated as 'good' will be taken into account for funding by the PC. The PC nevertheless has the right to reconsider the advice of the IAC. The PC will decide on funding of proposals, based on the advice of the IAC and depending the available call budget.
– a maximum of two research proposals per theme (Section 2.1) will be awarded.
– This process should result in a geographically balanced portfolio in which 50 per cent of the awarded projects focus on an African country or include a substantial African component. For the remaining 50 per cent, proposals may also focus on countries in Asia and/or Latin America. Furthermore, proposals may include (comparative) research across multiple countries within or between Africa, Asia and/or Latin America.
As explained above, empirical research in each country included in the research must be demonstrably linked to projects/programmes implemented by CSOs supported by the framework *Dialogue and Dissent* of the MFA. Therefore, the PC will decide on funding of only two proposals per theme that are proposed for funding by the IAC but will take into account the relevance, comprehensiveness and geographical distribution of the portfolio as a whole.

The PC may decide to fund a project on the condition that the budget will be adjusted in order to increase the feasibility of the planning, the relevance and/or the 'value for money' of the project.

All main applicants will be informed in writing about the outcome of the selection procedure. NWO gives all full proposals a qualification[9]. The applicant is informed of this qualification when the decision about whether or not to award funding is announced. For further information about the qualifications see www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding+process+explained/nwo+qualification+system.

A research project that is awarded a grant must start within two months after the granting date.

Indicative timeline

Proposals will be assessed, ranked and selected for funding according to the following time scheme:

August 8th, 2017	Deadline submission of proposals Eligibility check
August-September	Evaluation and formulation of advice on funding by the International Advisory Committee
October	Decision on funding by the Programme Committee
Mid October	Notification of applicants
December, 2017	Ultimate start of projects

Appeals procedure

If an applicant objects to a decision taken by the PC, (s)he can lodge a complaint with the General Board of NWO through the NWO Appeals Committee. Any written appeal against a decision taken by the PC must be lodged within six weeks after the day on which the notice of this decision was sent.

4.2 Assessment criteria

Main assessment criteria

All eligible applications will be evaluated according to two main criteria: scientific quality and relevance for development policy and programming in the context of the policy framework *Dialogue and Dissent*. Applications will be ranked based upon an equal weighing of the two criteria. In order to be eligible for funding, the project proposal should score at least as 'good' (see NWO qualification system) for each of the two criteria.
- Scientific quality:
  - Validity of the conceptual framework (coherence of the objectives, research questions and scientific methodology);
  - Originality;
  - Demonstrable quality of (relevant) expertise of the main- and co-applicants, research staff;
  - Complementarity of expertise in the consortium.
- Policy relevance:
  - The extent to which the project proposal addresses the assumptions of the ToC of the *Dialogue and Dissent* framework, and relate to the analyses and questions in annex 2;
  - Proven ability to translate research findings into policy messages/advices that can be useful for the MFA for improving the D&D policy framework; both for generating input for the MFA and its learning trajectory with CSOs involved in the D&D policy framework, and for generating input for the design of its subsequent Civil Society policy framework
  - Feasibility of the work plan.

4.3 Project monitoring & evaluation

Within 4 months after the starting date, projects must submit a report on the results of the literature review, including a popular summary (max. two pages). The IAC will assess the report and the report and comments will be discussed during the workshop organised by the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE.

The final report must be based on a self-assessment which includes a workshop for consortium members and their main stakeholders, organised by the consortium. The final report must also include a financial report and a policy advice on how the policy framework could benefit from the project results. The final reports will be assessed by the IAC and be discussed at the final workshop/ seminar organised by the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE.

---

[9] For further information about the qualifications, see https://www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding+process+explained/nwo+qualification+system.

The project ends with the issuing of the grant settlement decision. This decision is taken after approval of the final document(s) by NWO-WOTRO[10].

4.4 Governance

The Programme Committee (PC) is the decision making body of the call and is responsible for:
• Approving of the call;
• Appointing members of the International Advisory Committee (IAC);
• Allocating funding to projects, based on the advice of the IAC;
• Approval of the project review and final evaluation reports, based on the advice of the IAC.
• Formulating strategic plans and activities for the future of the collaboration.

The individual members of the Programme Committee are responsible for timely informing and aligning with the bodies they are representing.

The PC, operating under a mandate from the NWO-WOTRO governing body, consists of a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (1), a representative of an international academic organisation known for its expertise in civil society and development policy (1), a representative of an international CSO (1), a representative of the Knowledge Platform INCLUDE (1) and a technical chair forwarded by NWO-WOTRO. The chair of the IAC will operate as an observer in the PC.

The International Advisory Committee (IAC) is responsible for
• Assessment and ranking of project proposals;
• Advising the Programme Committee on funding of project proposals;
• Assessing the quality of the project review and final evaluation reports;
• Advising the PC on the approval of the project final evaluation reports.
The PC may ask the IAC to advise the PC on other matters as well.

The IAC is composed of (international) researchers and -academic- CSO experts on the research foci of the call. An academic expert representative of the MFA of the Netherlands will be an observing member to the IAC. The IAC is installed by the Programme Committee.

The composition of the PC and IAC will be published on the NWO-WOTRO website: www.nwo.nl/assumptions

NWO-WOTRO is responsible for the day-to-day management of the call, including organising the assessment procedures, for all (financial and other) administration with regard to awarded projects. NWO-WOTRO provides the secretariat of the PC and IAC.

5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development
E-mail: assumptions@nwo.nl

Day-to-day coordination:
Dr. Lydia Langerwerf
assumptions@nwo.nl
+31 70 3440900

General information, forms and administration:
Ms. Esselien Chan
assumptions@nwo.nl
+31 70 3440763

Postal address:
P.O. Box 93120
2509 AC The Hague
The Netherlands

Visiting address:

---

[10] Please note that the conditions in Article 24 under paragraph 4.4 of the NWO 'General Provisions on Granting' apply to this grant settlement decision.

Laan van Nieuw Oost Indië 300
2593 CE The Hague
The Netherlands

5.2 Technical questions about ISAAC

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual first before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours CET on +31 (0)20 346 71 79. However, you can also submit your question by e-mail to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.

5.3 Further information

For more information on NWO-WOTRO, visit www.nwo.nl/wotro.

6 Annexes

For more information regarding this call, please consult the following annexes
1. Theory of Change Dialogue and Dissent
2. Specific research foci and research questions
3. Contact information CSOs supported by the MFA in the context of 'Dialogue and Dissent'
4. Budget Template

7 Instructions

7.1. General instructions and submission of the proposal

Applications should be submitted electronically by the main applicant using the ISAAC system. If you are not registered in ISAAC as a user it is recommended that you try to submit timely, we recommend at least five working days before the deadline.

Some additional remarks on the use of ISAAC:
– The electronic application consists of two parts: a fact sheet and the application form itself;
– The fact sheet relates to the basic details of the applicant. Note that the fact sheet can only contain plain ASCII characters and that no formulas or layout formats can be used. These may be used in the application form;
– The application form must be attached to the fact sheet. Note that a PDF format is required for the attachment. In order to be able to process the details of the application properly, the file should not be protected in any way (no passwords, etc.);
– For Technical questions about ISAAC, see Section 5.2;
– The receipt of your application will be confirmed by e-mail;

7.2. Registration

Research Focus

Within the context of the general research focus, research projects should focus on one of the themes mentioned in section 2.a. and explicitly reflect on the relevance of their project for the two other themes. Please consult Annex 2 for a more detailed description of the research foci and examples of possible research questions.

Main field(s) of research

Please fill in the code and field of research that correspond to the subject of your research. The NWO listing of research fields should be used: www.nwo.nl/researchfields.

Composition of the consortium and project staff

Provide the details of the applicants and their employing consortium member organisations, i.e. those organisations and individuals that together carry the responsibility for the project. The consortium should consist of at least two members as outlined in Section 3.1 of the Call. Please bear in mind that the main applicant should hold a senior position at a Dutch university and that at least one of the co-applicant should be from a research organisation located in one of the LLMIC(s) where the project that is subject of the empirical research is implemented.

7.3. Research Proposal

Summary and key words of research proposal

Provide a summary of your project proposal, written for the interested layman. The summary should describe briefly, in no more than 200 words, the main research objectives of your project, its research focus, and its relation to the underlying assumptions of the Theory of Change of the MFA's policy framework 'Dialogue and Dissent'. Please supply a maximum of 5 keywords.

Detailed description of the project proposal

Provide a detailed description of the proposed research in no more than 2000 words.
Please consult and take into consideration the assessment criteria against which the scientific quality and relevance of the proposal will be assessed (section 4.2.)

The narrative outline of the project should include the following aspects:
Research objectives.
Provide a brief analysis of the main research objectives, including the projects relation to the research foci mentioned in section 2.1. Elaborate on the assumptions of the Theory of Change of 'Dialogue and Dissent' the research aims to scrutinise.

Research questions and methodology.
Describe and justify the research questions and methodology. Describe how these questions and methodology have been developed from the research objectives of your project and explain their relevance. Please note that your research must not be evaluation research and must use qualitative research methods.

A description of the literature review.
Relate your research to existing insights from diverse scientific traditions. Identify some of the key publications and demonstrate the new and innovative contribution your project will make. The literature review may address both peer-reviewed scientific publications and grey literature.

A description of the empirical project
Describe the empirical project and its relation to the framework 'Dialogue and Dissent' of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Demonstrate clearly its link to projects/programmes implemented in LLMICs by CSOs supported by the MFA in the context of 'Dialogue and Dissent'. Please explain also how your project extends beyond this framework. Note that it is obligatory to include actors, projects and/or cases which have no relation to this framework.

Knowledge Utilization and Sharing

Describe in no more than 750 words the expected outcome and impact of the project, related to the framework 'Dialogue and Dissent' of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Explain the type of evidence-based knowledge the project will provide on the assumption of the Theory of Change of the Dialogue and Dissent framework. Elaborate on its relevance for policymakers and CSOs in the Netherlands and LLMICs. Share your plans for making this knowledge accessible, available and applicable for the MFA and other parties, including the obligatory project kick-off and final- assessment workshop.

Timeline

A timeline of the project and its expected outcome in terms of knowledge utilization and sharing. Please take into account that the project may not last longer than 18 months, with 3 months devoted to the literature review and 15 months to the empirical project. It is possible that certain knowledge outcomes will be reached after the end of the project.

Roles & contribution of the consortium partners

In no more than two pages A4, describe the role and contribution of the consortium partners. This part should consist of three sections:
1. A description of the specific relevance of each of the applicants and their employer (the consortium member organisation) in terms of experience, skills, know-how and expertise.
2. A list of a maximum of five key publications per consortium member. You may refer to scientific manuscripts, abstracts and reviews but also to publications that address non- scientific stakeholders such as policy or company briefs or reports, websites, et cetera. Please provide the following details in full: authors, year and title. Also make sure reviewers can track the publication (for

example by providing the name of the journal or series in which the publication appeared, web-links, contact details, et cetera).

3. Brief CVs of the consortium members. It is recommended to tailor the CVs such as to clearly bring out the expertise and experience of relevance for the current project.

Literature references

Using 1 page A4 only, list relevant literature and include full bibliographical details, e.g. authors, title article, title book/journal, eds., year, page nrs.

7.4. Budget

Please use the budget template to specify the costs of your project. You must include the budget in the grant form and submit it separately in Excel-format. Section 3.2 provides an overview of reimbursable costs. If the total costs exceed the reimbursable costs, please provide an overview of the co-funding, including financial guarantee or a letter of support. Please note that all costs must be made during the project duration. There exists no possibility of extension.

7.5. Signatures

The application must be signed by all members of the consortium. Faxed, electronic or scanned signatures will be accepted.

7.6. Annexes

Please prepare the following annexes in PDF and submit to ISAAC:
– Proof of legal registration for each non-Dutch consortium member organization.
– Letters of commitment outlining the availability and commitment of consortium members, signed by heads of the participating department
– Budget (in **Excel**)
– Letters of support or financial guarantee concerning co-financing (if applicable)
– Letters of support concerning use of data (if applicable)

Vastgesteld door de NWO-WOTRO Stuurgroep op 28 mei 2017.