

Questions and Answers

Choices and Opportunities Fund

Updated: 15 July 2010

New Q&As will be added if needed. Further questions can be sent by email to: DSO-GA@minbuza.nl till 16 July 2010.

- Q According to paragraph VII.6 of the Choices and Opportunities Framework, grants made from the Fund will not exceed 25% of the total annual income of the applicant organisation. Does the 25% criterion relate to the amount of the total grant application or the grant applied for per year?
- A The total amount of the grant application will be considered for the 25% total annual income criterion. For example: if an international NGO applies for a grant of € 1 million per year for four consecutive years (1 January 2011 through 31 December 2014), thus totalling an amount of € 4 million, the total annual income of the organisation, including the € 4 million grant, should be € 16 or more.
- Q Are rules for administrative cost allowance applicable?
- A No. Administrative costs should be reasonable and well motivated.
- Q Could a faith based organisation qualify for a grant?
- A Yes. An application can be submitted by a faith based organisation if the organisation meets the requirements for an international NGO as mentioned in the Choices and Opportunities Framework (paragraph IV.A and B and VI). As stated in paragraph VII.3 the grant application must not be for activities whose aim or partial aim is to proselytise.
- Q Public authorities at all levels do not qualify for a grant. How does the Ministry decide whether an organisation is regarded as public authority?
- A Applications for the Choices and Opportunities Fund can only be submitted by international NGOs that are active in, or working for the benefit of, developing countries. Whether an organisation will be regarded as public authority, depends on the level of independence of the organisation from the public authorities and the country specific situation. The documents submitted (paragraph XI) will be assessed on what the goals are of the organisation, whether the organisation was established by the government or by private initiative, and the composition of the board.

Q What must be indicated in the liquidity forecast that should be included with the application (paragraph XI)?

A The annual liquidity forecast as mentioned in paragraph XI of the Choices and Opportunities Framework is meant to indicate how the amount of the grant applied for will be needed during the grant period. For example: if an organisation applies for a grant of € 8 million over the four years period (1 January 2011 through 31 December 2014) the programming could be such that every year € 2 million will be needed. Or, it may differ per year, for instance € 1 million for the first year, € 2 million for the second and third year and € 3 million for the last year. Furthermore, paragraph XI.8 of the Choices and Opportunities Framework also asks for an indication of what other donors will contribute to the proposed activities. The liquidity forecast applies to the activities for which grant funding is sought (referred to in paragraph XI.6).

Choices and Opportunities Fund
Updated: 12 July 2010

New Q&As will be added if needed. Further questions can be sent by email to: DSO-GA@minbuza.nl till 16 July 2010.

- Q Change of Grant order for an international NGO applying for a grant on behalf of a consortium primarily working in the field of harm reduction for injecting drug users (IDUs).
- A A change to the 2 June 2010 Grant has been decided on 12 July 2010 and will be published soonest. After the 2 June 2010 Grant order and the annex were published, it became clear that international NGOs mainly working in the field of harm reduction for IDUs cannot comply with the financial requirements set in § VII of the Choices and Opportunities Framework. According to § VII.6 grants made from the Fund may not exceed 25% of the total annual income of the applicant organisation, while the minimum grant application needs to be € 1 million per year (§ VII.5). As to the other priority themes, it is known that there are international NGOs that can meet these requirements. Since international NGOs primarily working in the field of harm reduction cannot comply with these criteria, it has been decided that if an international NGO applies on behalf of a consortium on the theme of harm reduction, the total annual income of all participating organisations will be considered for the 25% annual income criterion.
- Q If an organisation already receives a grant funded from the budget of Ministry of Foreign Affairs for activities taking place between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2014, can such an organisation in any way profit from the Choices and Opportunities Fund?
- A Such an organisation is not eligible to apply for a grant from the Choices and Opportunities Fund (§ IV.B.4). However, since the Choices and Opportunities Fund Framework does not contain restrictions with regard to the choice of partners of an international NGO, such an organisation could be a partner of an international NGO applying for a grant or a member of a consortium for which an international NGO is the applicant.
- Q Does an application need to include all the sub themes listed under a priority theme?
- A No. The sub themes listed under the priority themes (§ IV.C.) are the type of activities that the Minister has in mind.

- Q Does Ministry of Foreign Affairs provide a list of approved pharmaceuticals for procurement under the Choices and Opportunities Fund?
- A No. In order to qualify for a grant, an application will need to comply with the criteria mentioned in § VI and further, including the quality criteria as mentioned in § IX of the Choices and Opportunities Framework. These include criteria for innovation, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Q For which countries should activities be proposed?
- A According to § IV.A and VII.2 of the Choices and Opportunities Framework the proposed activities should benefit ODA recipient countries. Reference is made to the OECD-DAC list of official development assistance (ODA) recipient countries.
- Q Can an application cover a region as a whole or would the Ministry prefer an application targeting two countries which could be replicated in others?
- A An application can cover a region or several countries. Criteria § VII.2. states that the proposal must relate to more than one country. Further information on this item can be found in Q&A, item III, Themes, of the 24 June 2010 list of Q&As.

Questions and Answers
Date: 24 June 2010

I General

Q Is an application form available?

A No. Applicants are encouraged to use their own formats.

Q Can additional information be obtained by telephone?

A No. Questions must be submitted by email (DSO-GA@minbuza.nl). With a view to maximize transparency, the questions will be posted on the website along with the answers.

Q Could the applicant organisation's strategic plan (consistent with a priority theme) provide the framework for these activities/streams of work, or does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs want each applicant organisation to identify and propose specific projects for which the Ministry's funding would be used?

A The choice of approach is left to the applicant's organisation. The grant can be used to support the organisation's strategy. However, the main focus of the application should be on one of the priority themes with the activities and effects expected as mentioned in § XI.6-10. Annual reports should give insight in how the grant has been utilized.

II Qualification criteria

Q A current grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which officially expires on 31 December 2010 is likely to be allowed a no-cost extension into 2011. What are the consequences for an application to the Choices and Opportunities Fund?

A A no-cost extension of a current grant expiring end 2010 does not stand in the way of an application to the Choices and Opportunities Fund.

Q International NGOs based outside the EU that already receive funding through Dutch missions on the basis of a private-law contribution agreement may apply for this grant (see IV.B.4. - footnote 5). What does this mean? Could you give an example?

A A funding agreement with a Dutch mission outside the EU does not stand in the way of an application to the Choices and Opportunities Fund.
For example: an international NGO (based outside the EU) receiving a contribution from the Netherlands' mission in Delhi, can seek funding through the Choices and Opportunities Fund for its activities on a multi-country or international scale.

Q If an International NGO applies for a grant from the Choices and Opportunities Fund, does this mean the organisation will not be able to apply for any other future funding by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands during the grant period (2011 through 2014)?

A An organisation that already receives a grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for activities taking place between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2014 cannot apply for a grant from the Choices and Opportunities Fund (§ IV.B.4. of the grant decision). Whether or not the organisation can apply for other grants that may become available during this period, depends on the conditions set in any future Fund.

Q Are NGOs allowed to form consortia in order to meet the criteria of the Choices and Opportunities Fund?

A Only international NGOs or consortia of NGOs qualify. Organisations are encouraged to collaborate, although this is not mandatory. In the case of consortia, the organisation applying on behalf of the consortium will need to be an International NGO as described in the grant decision. The lead organisation will be responsible for onward granting to (local) partners. The Choices and Opportunities Fund Framework does not contain restrictions with regard to the choice of partners in a consortium and hence does not exclude Dutch NGOs as partner.

In principle it is possible for an international NGO to participate in a consortium and at the same time apply as an individual organisation.

Q Can a Dutch NGO working through regional offices apply for a grant from the Choices and Opportunities Fund?

A § VI.1. of the annexe to the grant decision implies that NGOs, established under Dutch law or registered in the Netherlands cannot apply.

III Themes

Q Should applications consider one or multiple themes?

A Applicants will address one priority theme in their proposal. Approaches that seek integration of elements of other priority themes are welcomed.

Organisations are allowed to submit proposals on different themes. The intention is, however, to fund one organisation per theme (§ V, third section).

- Q Does the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs have a ranking for the countries in de OECD-DAC list of official development assistance (ODA) recipient countries?
- A Ranking of recipient countries according to income category is not a criterion in the Choices and Opportunities Fund Framework. In case of applications of equal quality, the Ministry may, however take the country choice of the applicant into consideration. As indicated in the policy memorandum on HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in foreign policy: Choices and Opportunities, the Netherlands' policy concentrates on countries/regions where needs are highest.