Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Fair Focus on Trade

Questions & Answers

First batch

30 June 2026

INDEX

Introduction/context

Dear Applicant,

This document contains answers to the questions submitted regarding the Fair Focus on Trade (FFT) Grant Programme.

We have addressed questions received via our email address, fft@rvo.nl, as well as questions raised through the Q&A chat during the online information session held on 11 June.

Many questions were submitted on similar topics. Where possible, we have grouped these questions together and provided consolidated answers. The questions and answers have also been anonymized.

As announced on our website, the deadline for submitting questions has been extended until 3 July 2026, as the application forms had not yet been made available on the RVO website.

Given the substantial number of questions received to date, as well as the additional questions anticipated following the publication of the application forms, we have decided not to address all questions in a single publication. Instead, responses will be provided and published in a series of updates. This document contains the first set of responses, with further questions and answers to be published in subsequent updates.

An important note is that the purpose of this document is to provide clarification on the provisions of the Fair Focus on Trade Grant Programme as published in the Dutch Government Gazette (Staatscourant)[1], including guidance on how these provisions may be interpreted and where relevant information can be found. In preparing our responses, we have relied on the Dutch Fair Focus on Trade Policy Framework as published in the Dutch Government Gazette. The Dutch publication is the authoritative version. Consequently, no rights may be derived from this document.

Furthermore, we have not responded to questions that would require us to assess whether a specific applicant, project idea, or application meets one or more eligibility, threshold, or assessment criteria. The answers provided in this document should not be regarded as a preliminary assessment or pre-screening of an application. It is the responsibility of each applicant to determine, on the basis of the provisions set out in the Fair Focus on Trade Policy Framework published in the Government Gazette and the clarifications provided in this document, whether their application complies with the applicable requirements and criteria.

[1] Staatscourant 2026, 17614 | Overheid.nl > Officiële bekendmakingen

1. General questions

1.1

As the tender submission window runs from 30 June to 11 August, could you clarify whether all proposals will be assessed equally after the closing date, or whether submissions will be evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis, meaning that early submission may provide an advantage?

Applications will be assessed on an equal basis against the criteria set out in the Policy Framework. The first-come, first-served principle does not apply to this Grant Programme.

Submitting an application prior to the deadline may provide us with the opportunity to conduct an initial completeness check. Please note that only complete applications can be taken forward for assessment. Following the application deadline, applicants will no longer be able to supplement or amend their application. Should an application be incomplete or contain insufficient information to assess one or more of the applicable criteria, it may be rejected.

Please be aware that we cannot guarantee that applications submitted before the deadline will be subject to a completeness check prior to the closing date. This will depend on the volume of applications received and our capacity to process them within the available timeframe.

1.2

The templates are not yet published, can we still ask questions about the templates now that the deadline for questions has passed?

Yes, you may ask questions until 3 July.

1.3

Where can we access the recording of the FFT webinar held on 11 June 2026, and will the presentation slides be made available?

The recording of the FFT webinar is accessible through the RVO website: Fair Focus on Trade (FFT) subsidy Grant Programme | RVO.nl. The slides will not be made available separately.

1.4

The call speaks about a 60 months Grant Programme duration and mentions that the period ends on 31/12/2030 (meaning only 4 years instead of 5 if the start date is 1/1/2027). What is the Grant Programme duration?

The activities have a total duration of 60 months and must commence within two months after the grant award. The first implementation phase within this period consists of a so-called inception phase of six months. The start date of the activities will therefore also determine the end date of the grant period.

1.5

Is it correct that a Dutch applicant can also have a Dutch implementing partner (in addition to the implementing partners from the target country)?

The applicant can work with partners in the Netherlands by providing them financial support which is used for the provision of services and the facilitation of dialogue activities that contribute to the objectives and thematic priorities of this Grant Programme. Please note that the main share of eligible staff costs (calculated on the basis of hours worked) must be incurred in the target country. The Netherlands is not a target country.

Civil society organisations (CSO) that are not legally established in the Netherlands/target countries but in another European country cannot be selected as an (in-country) partner.

1.6

Is it possible to share a more detailed breakdown of the way points will be allocated in the assessment (ex-points per sub-bullet given in the document)?

A detailed breakdown of the points per sub-criteria can be found in the Project Proposal Template.

1.7

How can we determine in advance if we are indeed a specialised organisation?

In Annex 4 of the Policy Framework (Government Gazette) and in Annex 5 to the application form Annex 5 Financial independence the conditions for a specialised organisation are described. You are advised to carefully read them and assess if your organization meets the criteria.

RVO will assess after submission whether your organisation qualifies as a specialised organisation. Applicants are therefore encouraged to review the applicable requirements carefully and ensure that they can substantiate their eligibility. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that their organisation meets these conditions.

1.8

Could we include the track record of country offices of our federation, as experience of the lead applicant? This country office will be based in the focus country of the proposal, and so also implement (part of) the Grant Programme.

No. In this Grant Programme, only one organisation can submit an application; applications from consortia are not eligible. As a result, only the applicant's own experience will be taken into account when assessing the track record. The experience or track record of (in-country) partners, will not be considered in the assessment. Please note that partner selection will take place during the inception phase.

1.9

Several questions were asked related to countries that can be included in the proposal.

The MFA does not allow deviations from the published country lists. The list is aligned with the Foreign trade and development aid policy.

1.10

In other Focus Framework calls, for example Focus on Freedom, "international or regional CSOs" were allowed to receive funding and implement activities as part of the projects funded as in-country partners. Would that also be allowed under this framework? In particular we would like to know if our country office that is a branch office of our headquarters in Switzerland, and therefore technically a Swiss organisation, would be allowed to be considered an in-country partner?

Fair Focus on Trade is a different instrument than Focus on Freedom and different criteria apply. The same policy principles apply but the criterion applicable to other Focus instruments are not always applicable to Fair Focus on Trade. You are therefore advised to carefully check the Policy Framework of Fair Focus on Trade. Only CSOs that are legally established in the Netherlands or in the target countries can apply. CSOs legally established in countries other than the Netherlands and target countries cannot apply. Swiss CSOs are not eligible to apply. And CSOs in another European country cannot be selected as an (in-country) partner.

1.11

Could you share when the ministry will be expecting to transfer funds for this Grant Programme for the granted applicants?

According to section 6 of the of the FFT Policy Framework, a decision on whether to award a grant will be made by 1 December 2026.

1.12

Consortiums cannot apply, but is there a role for other 'expert' organizations to provide capacity strengthening and be funded by the project?

Indeed, it is not possible to apply for this Grant Programme as a consortium. There is only one applicant and this must be a civil society organization (CSO). This CSO must work with partners who carry out activities relevant to achieving the objective of the Grant Programme. These partners may include expert organizations and other relevant stakeholders**.**

1.13

If the applicant is part of an international confederation, to what extent can the track record of other confederation members or country offices be used, especially where the Dutch applicant had a substantive role in funding, oversight, QA, technical support or contract management?

In this Grant Programme there is only one applicant and only the track record of this applicant will be taken into consideration. For a more detailed explanation of the track record requirements, please refer to Article 7.2.1 of the Government Gazette. An unofficial translation of the policy framework is available on our website under Publications.

1.14

Our organisation is part of a confederation. Our Country Offices have separate legal registrations, but they are part of a joined structure and we implement through them. For this tender, would our organization in the Netherlands and the relevant Country Office be viewed as one organisational entity, or as two separate organisations?

The requirements for the applicant organisation are set out in the Dutch Government Gazette (Staatscourant). As we do not have access to all relevant information and supporting documentation concerning your organisation, we are unable to determine which provisions apply to your specific legal form or circumstances.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to assess whether the organisation meets the applicable requirements. Compliance with these requirements will be assessed by RVO as part of the formal evaluation process after the application has been submitted.

1.15

The headquarters of our organization are based in the United States and we also have a Regional Hub Office that is legally registered in Nigeria and manages several programs across Africa, particularly in our four core program countries: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan. Would our organisation be eligible to apply for this opportunity through its legal registration in Nigeria?

This Grant Programme is intended for CSOs that are legally established either in the Netherlands or in the target country in which they will carry out the activities. Meaning that if your organization is indeed legally established in Nigeria, you would be eligible to submit an application for this Grant Programme. However as we do not have access to all relevant information and supporting documentation concerning your organization, we are unable to determine at this point if your organization is legally established (statutorily registered) in Nigeria and indeed qualifies for this Grant Programme. Compliance with these requirements will be assessed by RVO as part of the formal evaluation process after the application has been submitted. Please note that the maximum number of countries per application is 3 and that all countries must be in the same region**.**

1.16

You mentioned in the online information session that the primary value chain cannot deviate from the priority list. Does that mean that the secondary value chain can deviate from the country list?

The primary value chain must indeed be on the list, secondary – or additional value chains can deviate from the list. However, please note that all activities must remain within the scope of the selected priority sector. This means that any secondary or additional value chains must also fall within the selected priority sector and may not relate to sectors that are not included in the list of eligible priority sectors.

1.17

Is it possible to submit one proposal for two different countries having one head quarter in Europe?

You can only apply for this Grant Programme if your CSO is legally established in the Netherlands or in the target country where the activities will be carried out. CSO's legally established in another European country cannot apply for this Grant Programme.

You can apply for 1, 2 or 3 countries. All countries must be on the country list that can be found in Appendix 1 of the Government Gazette. If your project takes place in two or three target countries, all countries must be located within the same geographical region. This means that the target countries are neighboring each other or belong to the same region, based on the United Nations Geoscheme.

1.18

My understanding is that consortia cannot apply (i.e. there is only one applicant) but the applicant must work in partnership with CSOs in the target countries and companies - is that correct?

Indeed, it is not possible to apply for this Grant Programme as a consortium. There is only one applicant and this must be a civil society organization (CSO). During the implementation phase the applicant must work with (in-country) partners who carry out activities relevant to achieving the objective of the Grant Programme. The definition of (in-country) partners, the division of roles and responsibilities and the requirements regarding selection of the (in-country) partners are specified in the Policy Framework**.**

1.19

Can consultancy companies, technical organistions or federations apply for this call? And federations?

Only CSOs are eligible to apply.

1.20

Regarding the connection to the Dutch market: does this refer to companies registered in the Netherlands, or to companies that are active in the Dutch market?

The project must focus on a primary value chain for which the primary market for its products is the Netherlands or Europe. The value chains that meet this requirements are already listed in Appendix 1.

1.21

For the Fair Focus on Trade call, in the document provided here, some countries do not have key value chains listed (for example, for DRC and Vietnam, no key value chain is specified under the CRM focus sector). Are applicants able to select a key value chain for these countries at their own discretion?

For countries that have not designated a specific Critical Raw Material (CRM) value chain, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), India, and Vietnam, applicants may select one or more CRM value chains from the list of Critical Raw Materials included in Appendix 1. For countries that have designated specific Critical Raw Materials, such as South Africa and Mozambique, applicants must select one of the designated CRM value chains as the primary value chain of the proposal. In such cases, the primary value chain may not be chosen freely from the broader list in Appendix 1.

1.21

Where applicants are looking to include 2 countries, does the primary value chain for the one country then determine the value chain for the other (for example, if Indonesia and Vietnam are being included in a proposal for Southeast Asia and where the focus sector is CRM, lithium and nickel have been specified for Indonesia so would this mean that these minerals also need to be relevant for Vietnam, where no key value chain has been specified)?

Where a proposal covers multiple value chains, the primary value chain is the value chain to which the majority of the proposed activities relate. The selection of the value chain(s) should follow logically from an analysis of the local context and previous activities within the relevant sector(s) and value chain(s). Any secondary or additional value chains must be directly linked to the primary value chain. And must fit within the priority sector that is listed in Appendix 1 to the Policy Framework. Applicants should be able to clearly demonstrate these linkages and justify the selection of the secondary and additional value chains in their proposal.

2. Track Record Related Questions

2.1

What type of track record is required in relation to the secondary value chain? And how should the applicant demonstrate its track record? How are the primary, secondary and additional value chains assessed during the scoring of the proposal?

When assessing the track record, see section 7.2.1, only the track record of the applicant in the primary value chain will be assessed. Secondary and any other additional value chains will not be assessed in the track record section.

Primary, secondary and any additional value chains will be assessed at section 7.2.2, Intervention Logic including budget. Further information on the criteria can be found in the Policy Framework. More information on how the applicant should demonstrate its experience and more details on the qualitative assessment criteria can be found in section 6 and 7 of the Government Gazette and in the Project Proposal Template that can be found on the RVO website.

2.2.

Section 6.1 Application Requirements states the requirement for “An overview of demonstrable expertise in the type of activities to which the activities to be performed relate, in the target countries chosen by the applicant and the primary value chain.”
Question: can an applicant successfully meet this requirement by demonstrating experience in the proposed type of activities in the proposed primary value chain, but in a different but similar geographical context to the target country for these proposed activities (e.g. a proposal that aims to scale successful activities in one country to another country in the same region)?

No. Experience gained in other countries or in other value chains are not considered eligible track record under this specific assessment criterion.

2.3

How strict should we interpret the track record requirement? To what extent must an organisation have a track record in a specific supply chain (for example, poultry in Benin, or avocados or table grapes in Lebanon)? Can an organisation that has been active in a country for many years and has extensive experience in the relevant sector transfer that expertise to a supply chain that is new to the organisation, such as the cashew supply chain? Or would that not be considered sufficient?

For the track record criterion (both threshold and qualitative criteria), the applicant's experience in the primary value chain will be assessed. An organisation interested in applying must be able to demonstrate a track record in the primary value chain in the country covered by the project proposal. This means that if an organisation does not have a track record in the primary value chain and instead intends to transfer expertise from another value chain, the criteria will not be met.

2.4

Can network organisations use combined Grant Programmes or initiatives as track record for the proposal?

No. Only the applicant’s own experience will be taken into account in the assessment of the track record.

2.5

Given that partner selection will take place during the inception phase, is it nevertheless important to demonstrate a track record of collaboration with specific partners? If so, how should such experience be presented in the proposal?

In section 7.2 of the government Gazette all the criteria around collaborating with (in-country) partners are specified. In the project proposal template you will be provided with instructions on how to demonstrate your track record and your approach around selection and assessment of (in-country) partners for financial support - for service provision and dialogue implemented by partners -, and for capacity strengthening of in-country partners.

2.6

It is not very common for CSOs to receive a grant of 10 million euros, this makes the track record very challenging for CSOs. Do we have a chance of receiving this grant?

RVO recognizes that EUR 10 million is a significant amount of funding and that this may be challenging for CSOs to demonstrate a track record through their previous grants. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has deliberately chosen for a more focused approach: fewer implementing partners will receive larger grants. RVO has been tasked to carefully assess which organisations are best positioned to deliver the intended results. A demonstrated track record is included as criteria to assess an organisation’s experience, capacity, and ability to manage Grant Programmes of a similar scale and complexity.

2.7

‘What is meant by "activities of comparable scale"? Does this refer to the budget, the type of activities, or both? If budget is considered, is this assessed per individual track record project or across the applicant's overall track record portfolio?

Under Section 4.2.c, applicants must demonstrate that they have sufficient organisational capacity to implement the proposed activities, as evidenced by previous implementation of activities of comparable scale. This forms part of the threshold criteria. At this stage, RVO verifies among other things, whether the applicant has included three relevant projects in the track record e.g. whether these projects were implemented in the relevant target countries, primary value chains and sectors and if the projects are of a broadly comparable size and scale to the proposed project. This is a threshold check only; RVO does not carry out an in-depth assessment of the content or quality of the listed projects at this stage.

Only when all the threshold criteria are met, RVO proceeds to the substantive assessment, during which the track record is assessed in greater detail in accordance with Section 7.2.1. The final score for the track record assessment is based on the average score of these three projects.

3. MEL related questions

No questions received yet.

4. Finance related questions

4.1

The Policy Framework provides for the possibility of providing financial support to local partners. To what extent may funding be provided to organisations based in the Netherlands or elsewhere in Europe, for example to develop tools or deliver services that form part of the proposed Grant Programme?

Under the FFT Policy Framework, partners are defined as in-country partners or CSOs legally established in the Netherlands that, with the support of a grant recipient, carry out activities relevant to achieving the objective of the grant Grant Programme. Please refer to section 3 and 4 of the FFT Policy Framework.

There are only four eligible activities in this Grant Programme, financing activities is one of them. The project must constitute a holistic combination of all four activity types . The applicant (grant recipient) can only provide financial support to partners in the Netherlands and in the target countries. CSOs from other countries cannot receive financial support directly from the applicant.

4.2

If a local organisation submits an application, may it allocate part of its budget to Dutch organisations, for example to facilitate connections with the Dutch market?

Capacity strengthening activities, such as connecting local CSOs with Dutch enterprises and their suppliers, can only be carried out by the applicant. If the applicant is a local organisation than only the local organisation can carry out this capacity strengthening activity. If the applicant decides to financially support to a Dutch partner, the activities are limited to service provision and dialogue activities that are relevant to the objectives and thematic priorities of this Grant Programme.

4.3

Is there a minimum proportion of Grant Programme activities that must be carried out in the local context? For example, is there a requirement that at least 30% of service delivery or dialogue activities be implemented in the production countries?

According to section 5.2 (Non-)eligible costs) of the FFT Policy Framework, at least 30% of the costs for financing activities, must be allocated to service provision provided by in-country partners.

According to section 4.4.2 (Service provision) of the FFT Policy Framework, service provision encompasses activities that directly aim to improve the welfare or living conditions of individuals or communities in the target countries.

According to section 5.1 (Principles) The main share of eligible staff time and hours charged to the project must be spent in the target country.

4.4

The Dutch Government Gazette provides several examples of eligible activities under Section 4.4.3 (Dialogue). Could you clarify whether contributing to a Dutch network of CSOs, recognised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a relevant stakeholder and facilitating dialogue between CSOs, the Dutch government, EU institutions, the OECD and businesses with the aim of promoting policy change, improving the implementation of legislation and regulations, and

strengthening sectoral collaboration within value chains, would qualify as an eligible activity under Section 4.4.3 (Dialogue)?

At this stage, RVO will not assess whether a specific activity or project idea would qualify under the criteria. This will be done after submission. In addition, since we do not have all the information about your organisations project plan, the value chain, the role of the applicant in this multi-stakeholder initiative and how the activity contributes to the Grant Programme objectives, RVO cannot make such an assessment. Answers provided in this Q&A document should not be regarded as a preliminary assessment or pre-screening of an application. Applicants are responsible for determining, based on the provisions set out in the Dutch Government Gazette and the clarifications provided in this document, whether their proposed activities comply with the applicable requirements and criteria.

4.5

Can you clarify whether Netherlands-based civil society organizations are eligible to receive financial support as partners of a grant recipient, or is such financial support limited to in-country partners in target countries?

In-country partners as well as CSOs legally established in the Netherlands, can receive financial support from the applicant (grant recipient), provided that they carry out activities relevant to achieving the objective of the grant Grant Programme. The activities that can be carried out under 'financing activities' are limited to service provision and dialogue. Please refer to section 3 and 4 of the FFT Policy Framework.

4.6

In the Government Gazette it was written that the following was ineligible "Activities of organisations that already receive an institutional grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the duration of which extends into the grant period for which a grant is requested under this grant Grant Programme". Question: The exclusion of organisations already receiving an institutional grant is not mentioned on the RVO website. Can you clarify whether or not this exclusion still applies or not?

CSOs that already receive an institutional grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affair must demonstrate that the activities in their application are not already funded. Activities already funded are ineligible.

4.7

What is the maximum indirect cost rate that your organization will allow under this program?

Indirect costs are subject to a maximum of 15% of the sum of direct and indirect costs. This applies to both the applicant and the partners. Please refer to section 3.2 of Annex 2.2 Model Budget Guidelines Fair Focus on Trade FFT-Annex-2.2-guide-to-the-Model-Budget.pdf.

4.8

The framework requires that the majority of subsidised staff hours are spent in the target country. Could you clarify how this requirement is calculated and applied in practice? What is 'het zwaartepunt'? It would help to further detail that in each of the 4 eligible activities.

For details about the calculation of staff costs, please refer to section 3.1 of Annex 2.2 Model Budget Guidelines Fair Focus on Trade FFT-Annex-2.2-guide-to-the-Model-Budget.pdf. In section 5.1 indicates that the majority of the subsidised staff hours (i.e. personnel time for which costs are claimed) must be spent in the target country. RVO assess this based on the model budget , budget justification (PxQ) and project proposal. In the proposal the applicant is requested to provide a detailed description of the proposed activities, specifying for each target country which primary value chain will be the main focus and what share of the total grant amount requested is allocated to that value chain.

4.9

If we apply 2 proposals would we be eligible 10-22 million Euro for each proposal?

The requested subsidy per application must not be less than € 10 million and not more than € 22 million. If an organisation submits 2 applications, each one will be assessed individually.

4.10

What is the ceiling for project management costs?

Project management costs, consisting of activity coordination and the financial management of support provided to partners, may not exceed 20% of eligible costs. This 20% ceiling is calculated based on the total direct and indirect costs incurred by partners. For details about the calculation of project management costs, please refer to section 3.1 of Annex 2.2 Model Budget Guidelines Fair Focus on Trade FFT-Annex-2.2-guide-to-the-Model-Budget.pdf.

4.11

Can an application build on or strategically align with existing Ministry of Foreign Affairs-supported initiatives, such as SPVO or Sectoral IMVO Agreements?

- **Is it permissible for a proposal to build on or strategically align with existing initiatives if the proposed activities have a distinct and complementary scope, involve additional partners, and do not finance activities already covered under those initiatives?**
- **Can an applicant be considered ineligible or excluded from this call solely because it receives funding through covenant membership (e.g. Sectoral IMVO Agreements), even if the activities proposed under this application are clearly distinct and are not already funded?**

In section 7.2.2.a the project proposal is assessed on several sub-criteria including the degree to which: the project is complementary to other initiatives and promotes a multistakeholder approach. The project proposal may score points if the applicant can demonstrate this.

Receiving funding through another Ministry of Foreign Affairs-supported initiative, such as SPVO or SESAM, does not in itself make an applicant ineligible for this call. However, activities that are already funded through another Grant Programme, are not eligible for funding under this Policy Framework. This includes activities that are already funded, for example through SPVO or SESAM are not eligible. See section 4.3.3 for more information.

4.12

You mention medium-term vision. Can you say something about sustainable projects beyond the 5 years. Is it valuable to you if a project demonstrates intention to become financially sustainable so they can run beyond the 5 years?

In section 7.2.3.a RVO will assess the applicant's vision on localisation: the degree to which the applicant presents a clear vision and approach for fostering local ownership, with a transparent division of roles between the applicant and in-country partners in Grant Programme decision-making, and showing that cooperation is based on shared responsibility, shared risks and equal decision-making arrangements. A maximum of 3 points can be scored.

4.13

How should the different percentage limits in the FFT Policy Framework be interpreted? Specifically, what is the difference between the 4.5% administrative costs, the 20% project management costs, and the indirect cost recovery (ICR)? Is there any flexibility in applying the ICR for implementing partners in the Netherlands?

The 4.5% refers to the maximum allowance for administrative costs (see section 11 of the FFT Policy Framework). The 20% refers to the maximum project management costs for the applicant (see Section 5.2). The indirect cost recovery (ICR) is capped at a maximum of 15% of the total direct and indirect costs. These maximum percentages apply as set out in the FFT Policy Framework. No additional flexibility applies to the ICR for partners in the Netherlands.

5. Treshold criteria related question

5.1

Specialist Organisation Requirement: Could you please clarify what evidence or documentation is required to demonstrate that an applicant qualifies as a Specialist Organisation? Specifically, is formal accreditation, certification, or registration required, or can eligibility be demonstrated through the organisation's track record, expertise, services provided, and organisational mandate? We note that further instructions are expected in Annex 5 of the application form and would appreciate any additional guidance available at this stage.

All the information can be found in Appendix 4 of the publication in the Policy Framework. Further instructions are given in appendix 5 to the application form Annex 5 Financial independence.

5.2

Eligibility of Southern Legal Entities Affiliated with International Organisations: The guidelines define a Small Southern Organisation as an organisation that is legally registered in an OECD-DAC low- or middle-income country and has an annual staff budget not exceeding EUR 500,000. Could you clarify whether a legally registered entity in an eligible country may qualify as a Small Southern Organisation if it is affiliated with, or references, an international parent organisation in its legal documentation (e.g. articles of association or incorporation documents)? In particular, does such an affiliation automatically exclude the organisation from eligibility, or is eligibility assessed primarily on the basis of the local entity's legal registration, governance structure, and financial criteria?

Under this grant programme, the applicant must be a CSO that is legally established either in the Netherlands or in one of the eligible programme countries.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine and demonstrate whether the organisation qualifies as a CSO and meets the applicable requirements, or whether it qualifies as Small Souther Organisation under the provisions of the scheme. More information can be found in Appendix 4 of Dutch Government Gazette and in Annex 5 to the application form Annex 5 Financial independence. Should you decide to submit an application, RVO will assess the application against these criteria. As we do not have access to the relevant supporting documentation at this stage, it is not possible for us to establish in advance whether a particular organisation meets the applicable requirements.

5.3

One of the treshold criteria for the organisation include: CSO has demonstrable expertise in implementing programmes of similar scope for which the subsidy is being applied. Is this treshold criterion based on the sector of appendix 1 of the Policy Framework?

These threshold criteria for organizations are based on article 4.2. (background) of the publication in the Policy Framework. The eligible target countries are listed in Appendix 1 of the Policy Framework.

5.4

Can Ethiopia be included in the proposal?

Yes, Appendix 1 of the Policy Framework has listed Ethiopia as a target country.

5.5

How can we assess if we meet the threshold criteria?

The threshold criteria are described in sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 5.2 (Eligible Costs) of the Grant Policy Framework. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine whether their application meets the threshold criteria before submitting it. Following submission, RVO will assess whether the application complies with these criteria. Only applications that meet all threshold criteria will proceed to the substantive assessment under section 7.

5.6

Treshold criteria for the organisation include 'living wage'. Does this mean that the organisation pays at eats the living wage to its employees?

No. The Grant Policy Framework does not require applicants to already pay a living wage to all employees at the time of application. As described in section 4.2, applicants must explicitly and holistically include in their application the ambition to work towards paying a living wage to locally employed staff, in accordance with Parliamentary Motion 36180-159 and Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Grant recipients will be required to report annually on the progress made towards achieving this ambition. In determining an appropriate living wage level, applicants may make use of the living wage benchmarks recommended under the IDH Living Wage Roadmap.

5.7

The call for proposals only allows multi-country proposals if all the countries included are in the same geographical area and if the primary value chain of the proposal is listed for all the countries. We would like to do a proposal for South East Asia focused on deforestation conversion free value chains, but Indonesia and Vietnam don't share palm oil (Indonesia) and coffee (Vietnam) which are the two most significant deforestation causing value chains of their lists. Would we be allowed to do a proposal focused on those two value chains in those countries?

Section 4.3.2 of the Grant Policy Framework states that, within the selected focus sector(s), a project must focus on a value chain. Activities relating to more than one value chain may be eligible, provided the applicant can convincingly demonstrate that the value chains are clearly linked. In such cases, the applicant must identify the primary value chain (to which the majority of activities relate). Meaning that your organisation should determine which one of the value chains is your primary value chain who which the majority of the activities relate and which secondary/additional value chains you have selected. Please note that you should apply the People, Planet, Profit principle. And Appendix 1 to the Policy Framework sets out the eligible countries, sectors and value chains under the Fair Focus on Trade programme.
Based on the information provided, we are not able to assess whether this specific project idea would meet the criteria. RVO does not provide preliminary assessments of project ideas. Such an assessment would require the full application.

6. Practical application questions

6.1

Where can we find the value chain strategies of the embassies in the focus countries?

You can find the key value chains for each target country in the document 'FFT Target Countries 2026', available under Publications on our website. The Multi Annual Country Strategies of the Dutch Embassies are not publicly available.

6.2

Does a nonprofit lead applicant for this opportunity, necessarily have to have a registration in the Netherlands?

You can only apply for this grant Grant Programme if your CSO is legally established in the Netherlands or in the target country where the activities will be carried out. Please note that consortia are not allowed to apply.

6.3

Can a German Foundation country office in Ethiopia can apply using on eHerkenning?

No, this is not possible. Only Dutch organisations can apply for this Grant Programme using eHerkenning. Representatives of organisations without eHerkenning can create an RVO account via the login page. Select the option: I don't have any of these login methods *(in Dutch: Ik heb geen van deze inlogmethodes)*. Please note that you can only apply for this Grant Programme if your CSO is legally established in the Netherlands or in the target country where the activities will be carried out. German CSOs are not eligible to apply.

6.4

If we encounter a technical issue while creating the account—particularly during Step 3 (account verification)—should we contact fft@rvo.nl for assistance, or is there another email address we should use?

If you encounter technical issues with your application, you can contact us via https://english.rvo.nl/topics/contact.

6.5

Section 6.2 of the Dutch Government Gazette (Staatscourant) (p. 12) states: "Recovery period. If an application is submitted incomplete, the Minister may (pursuant to Article 4:5 of the Dutch General Administrative Law Act (Algemene wet bestuursrecht)) request additional information. In that case, the date and time of receipt of the application will be deemed to be the date and time on which the requested information is received. After the application deadline, it is no longer possible to submit additional information." If we submit our application one and a half to two weeks before the deadline, will RVO verify whether the application is complete and notify us of any missing or incomplete documents before the submission deadline?

RVO aims to review submitted applications for completeness as soon as possible after you have submitted them. However, whether RVO is able to identify missing information or documents and request additional information before the application deadline depends on a range of factors, including the number of applications received and the timing of submission. Applicants are therefore strongly advised not to rely on a completeness check by RVO prior to the deadline and to ensure that their application is complete upon submission. Please note that if RVO does not request additional information in relation to an application submitted well before the deadline, no rights may be derived from this. The responsibility for submitting a complete application remains with the applicant at all times.

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