



Grant Manual Voice in Lao PDR






May 2018



1. A letter from.....

*"We pledge," says the UN, in its manifesto on the Sustainable Development Goals, "that no one will be left behind [in the collective journey to end poverty and inequality]." In addition, the most marginalised will be prioritised: "We will endeavour," the UN pledges, "to reach the furthest behind first."*¹

It is in this context that the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ("the Ministry") designed a special fund, called Voice, with the objective to support the most marginalised and discriminated groups in their efforts to exert influence in accessing productive and social services and political participation. Voice forms an integral pillar of the Ministry's overall Dialogue and Dissent policy framework² which aims to strengthen the capacity for lobby and advocacy of civil society organisations in low- and lower-middle-income countries to allow for participation in mainstream development processes. Voice is executed by a consortium of Oxfam Novib and Hivos which coordinate the programme at national level in the ten Voice focus countries³: Oxfam in Laos is responsible for Voice in Laos. Overall Voice targets five groups, although it depends on the country's contextual analysis which groups will be served in each Voice focus country:

-  People living with disabilities;
-  Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people;
-  Women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence;
-  Age-discriminated vulnerable groups, notably the young and elderly;
-  Indigenous groups and ethnic minorities.

Following Laos' contextual analysis, Voice focuses on the intersections and linkages between these groups.

These groups are often the hardest to reach. Therefore innovative approaches to strengthening capacity of lobby and advocacy as well as empowerment are essential. A linking and learning process encourages sharing of lessons learned, and provides a forum for mutual learning and empowerment of the most marginalised and discriminated groups. Voice is initially a five-year programme, for which a total of €50 million is available for programme-, grants-, management- and linking and learning costs. This includes a total of €35 million available for grants for ten countries, the Voice 2016-2020 Fund.

Most –if not all- the information is available via www.voice.global/laos including all Calls for Proposals and relevant information regarding the grantees.

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

² <https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documents/parliamentary-documents/2015/07/01/voice-the-accountability-fund-and-the-participation-of-civil-society-organisations-in-theme-based-calls-for-proposals/letter-to-parliament-on-voice.pdf>

³ The Voice focus countries are: Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Indonesia, Philippines, Laos and Cambodia.



This grants manual is meant for (potential) grantees to help them decide on whether and how to make a grant and what the reporting requirements are. As with all documents in Voice it is a 'living' document; hence if you have any feedback on how Voice can improve its grant-making, you are very welcome to do so via laos@voice.global.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey!

The Voice family

2. What types of grants will be awarded?

The Voice grant facility is designed to support informal groups as well as formal organisations and networks, although the applicant needs to be legally registered or recognised and have a bank account in the applicant's name. The Grant types are as follows:



Empowerment grant: Targeting (informal) groups or organisations to raise awareness, develop transformative leadership, build confidence and skills and work against stigmatisation of marginalised and discriminated groups. Smaller grants with a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 24 months, which are accessible for informal groups through for example a partnership with formal organisations. Empowerment grants are available from €5,000 to €25,000.



Influencing grant: Targeting organisations and networks to strengthen their influencing, lobby and advocacy capacities and amplify the voices of marginalised and discriminated groups. Influencing grants that are country specific are available from €25,000 to €200,000 with time period 18 months and maximum 30 months.



Innovate and learn grant: For groups or organisations that want to learn from innovation and/or test and scale new approaches to address the marginalization, discrimination, and exclusion experienced by Voice target groups. Innovation and learning grants are available from €5,000 to €200,000 with time period of minimum 12 months and maximum 24 months.



Sudden opportunity grant: Creating flexibility on urgent circumstances to undertake collective action to address specific unanticipated opportunities to influence policy or deal with a threatened reduction of civil space which discriminate, marginalise, exclude, and criminalise one or more of the Voice target groups in one or more of the impact themes. Grants responding to a sudden opportunity are available from €5,000 to €200,000 with time period minimum 6 months and maximum 12 months.

For each grant modality, there are different approaches related to making applications, assessing grants and reporting against grants. Empowerment grants and smaller grants designed to address sudden opportunities will be more flexible and contain fewer requirements. Influencing and Innovate and Learn grants will contain more requirements to mitigate risk and increase accountability. We also strongly urge you to review the Frequently Asked Questions available via: <https://www.voice.global/f-a-q/>



Voice stands out from other grant-making programmes by developing a grant application and reporting process that is accessible, user-friendly and innovative adapted to the target groups and grant type.

3. How to make an application

Steps	Task	Activities
<i>Step 1</i>	Preparation for calls for proposals.	Based on country contextual analysis, the Global Voice Advisory Board –through the Annual Plan- will provide guidelines for themes and subjects that the Call for Proposals could focus upon. This process will be repeated on an annual basis for each subsequent call for proposals. We also use an analytical tool using PowerBi to analyse the applications received in Smartsheets.
<i>Step 2</i>	Calls for proposals	Advertising the Call for Proposals as approved (at least 6-weeks for applicants to respond). Outreach and communication activities will be designed to reach the groups and are announced on social media.
<i>Step 3</i>	Support	The application process should be viewed as a capacity building exercise and applicants should receive useful feedback after the application is assessed. Oxfam Country Office Laos organise information session on the proposal using creative settings.
<i>Step 4</i>	Screening	Voice is designed as a competitive application-based grant-making programme. Therefore, for an organisation to receive funding, it must submit an application, which is reviewed using an open and transparent assessment method. For Laos, empowerment grant applications can be submitted in Lao or English and in addition to submission of a written proposal, through audio and/or video. All other proposals need to be submitted in English

Voice screens proposal applications against the eligibility and criteria requirements (six weeks for screening with extension depending on number of applications received).

Apart from screening on the basis of eligibility, preliminary assessment of applicant capacity is made. Site visits may be undertaken as part of the screening process to ensure that applicants have minimum governance and accounting protocols and/or to review existing programming.



<i>Step 5</i>	Selection	Once the screening is complete recommendations for grant awards plus recommendations capacity development will be submitted to the Country Office of Oxfam for final approval. Each short-listed application will be rated and ranked using the selection criteria provided below
<i>Step 6</i>	Agreements	Once the project is finalised, Voice will enter into a Grant Agreement with successful organisations. The Grant Arrangement will apply for the period of time required to complete the project. The time plan and approved budget will be an integrated part of the Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement will outline the requirements under the grant and other terms and conditions.

When should your organisation submit an Application?

Calls for proposal will be published annually at a minimum via www.voice.global/laos and www.facebook.com/voice.global.online. Applications for Empowerment grants, Sudden Opportunity and Innovate and Learn grants will be accepted on a rolling basis (i.e. applicants can send their applications anytime). However, the review and feedback process will only be done during a specific timeframe (see schedule below). This means that proposals submitted before the deadline of the first review cycle will be reviewed during that cycle, anything after determined dates, for example, will be reviewed in the next cycle. For Influencing grants, applications will be accepted in accordance with the deadlines.

For Sudden Opportunity grants you can write an Email any time to Laos@voice.global to explain the Sudden Opportunity in one or two paragraphs on why the opportunity is so sudden and unique.

Here is the schedule of applications submission:

Type of grant	Submit By / Deadline	Response Date	Contract Signing
Empowerment grants (rolling basis)	<i>Review Cycle 1:</i> July 08, 2018 <i>5PM (Local Time)</i>	<i>Review Cycle 1:</i> August 17, 2018	<i>Review Cycle 1:</i> September 28, 2018
	<i>Review Cycle 2:</i> November 02, 2018 <i>5PM (Local Time)</i>	<i>Review Cycle 2:</i> December 14, 2018	<i>Review Cycle 2:</i> January 31, 2019
Influencing	<i>Review Cycle 1:</i> July 08, 2018 <i>5PM (Local Time)</i>	<i>Review Cycle 1:</i> August 17, 2018	<i>Review Cycle 1:</i> September 2018
Innovate and Learn (rolling basis)	<i>Call for proposal starting date:</i> July 16, 2018		



	<p><i>Review Cycle 1:</i> September 16, 2018 5PM (Local Time)</p> <p><i>Review Cycle 2:</i> February 16, 2019 5PM (Local Time)</p>	<p><i>Review Cycle 1:</i> October 31, 2018</p> <p><i>Review Cycle 2:</i> April 01, 2019</p>	<p><i>Review Cycle 1:</i> December 2018</p> <p><i>Review Cycle 2:</i> May 24, 2019</p>
Sudden Opportunity	Opens All Times	Pitch your idea by sending the concept note to Laos@voice.global to be invited to submit a full proposal	

This means that Oxfam in Laos has at least 6 (Six) weeks to review all proposals against eligibility and project criteria. After six weeks the rejected applicants will receive a response. Those proposal that are taken to the final stage ("*organisational assessment*") will have up to 10 weeks more for proposal and budget revisions, organisational assessments, donor checking and contracting. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application, but only those that have undergone a project check will receive detailed feedback.

Regarding outreach, the country team will conduct targeted outreach corresponding with the above cycle.

Who can make applications?

Applications can only be submitted by organisations which possess legal registration, or which are officially recognised by for example a commune chief. They need to have and/or open a bank account in the applicant's name. Organisations can independently submit a grant application or form part of a consortium in a joint application. A consortium is a cooperative of two or more civil society organisations, which implements a joint, integrated project in which all parties contribute to the total. They draw up a cooperative agreement for this purpose. In this case, a consortium representative (known as the 'lead party') submits the grant application on behalf of the consortium as a whole. Only the lead party needs to be legally registered, not all of the consortium members. If the application is granted, the lead party is responsible for implementing the consortium's project. Applicants may form a partnership with other not-for-profit organisations or social enterprises to implement the project or certain of its components, however, such partnerships must be identified within the grant application. Applications may also include activities to strengthen the capacity of the organisation, please refer to the relevant sections below.

Informal groups are not officially registered as an organisation but may have status or by-laws to help organise themselves or may be recognised at the local level. To receive a Voice grant, an informal group will need to select a "Host Organization" to manage the grant on their behalf. On the application, both the informal group and the host organisation should be listed as the applicant.

Where should we send our application?

Applications for grants from Voice must be submitted using the model application formats as stipulated in the Call for Proposals. Applications should be complete and without reservations and submitted via the appropriate page and Smartsheet link on www.voice.global/laos. Please only submit the project proposal and the budget as attachments. And kindly notice that the maximum file size of documents that can be received is 10 MB.



7. Fraud and Corruption

Fraud is described as “dishonestly obtaining a benefit by deception or other means”. Voice has a “zero-tolerance” to any form of fraudulent or corrupt activity. This means that Voice, supported through Oxfam Novib and Hivos policy will not condone any form of fraudulent or corrupt behaviour in its operations such as payment of bribes, facilitation payments or “hidden” commissions for any reason. Organisations receiving Voice funding support shall have mechanisms in place to manage fraud including prevention, detection, investigations and reporting.

If you suspect irregularity, please report to the Country Director of Oxfam Laos and the Voice Programme Manager globally who will immediately report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. Voice and the Ministry reserve the right to conduct investigations into cases of suspected fraud. All suspected cases of irregularity will be handled and investigated in a confidential, prompt and professional manner.

The Country Director of Oxfam in Laos will resolve the issue within two-weeks of receiving the grievance. If the grievance is not resolved in time or to the satisfaction of complainant, the Programme Manager at global level will initiate an investigation of the grievance. In instances where the Programme Manager does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, it may be elevated to the Voice Steering Committee who has the authority as per the Dutch Staatscourant decision dated December 2, 2016 to make final decisions with respect to a grievance or complaint.

We also refer you to the Whistleblower policy available via www.voice.global.

