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**Call for Concept Papers**  
**Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – Kenya**  
**2026 Water Programming**

***Indicative grant amount (per award/programme):***

*10 million Euros*

***Duration:***

*5 years*

***Broad Programmatic areas:***

- *IWRM- ASAL Stabilisation and Basin Resilience*
- *WaSH- Services performance in Growth Corridors and Secondary Towns*

**A. Introduction**

The 2026-2029 Multi Annual Country Strategy (MACS) for Kenya defines the strategic cooperation between the Netherlands and Kenya. This builds on a long-standing partnership between the two countries, that spans over six decades of economic and development cooperation, and which is anchored on shared interests.

Water continues to be a priority theme and a recognized top sector in the MACS and is seen to contribute to both economic and social impacts that strengthen the Netherlands earning capacity as well as that of Kenya. Underpinning the 2026-2029 MACS is the current Netherlands foreign policy which outlines three main policy themes as: Water, Food Security and Health. The prioritized thematic areas strategically contribute to three key Dutch interests which are Trade and Economy, Security and Stability, and Migration and Refugee Response. Foundational to the priority themes and interests, is the strategic enabling focus areas in the MACS, these are; Good Governance, Human Rights, Rule of Law and Civic Space. In addition, climate and gender are two mandatory cross-cutting themes in programming and policy development.

This call aims to strategically contribute to development opportunities in the Kenyan context, and to position the Netherlands as a Sustainable solutions partner for Kenya in the water sector. The call seeks to strengthen local leadership, ownership, and earning capacity, while strategically leveraging the competitive advantages of Dutch actors; including knowledge institutions, NGOs, and the private sector; in knowledge, technology, innovation, expertise, and infrastructure.

The ambition for this round of programming is anchored on a two-pronged approach that distinguishes between (1) opportunities for programming in the ASAL counties, where interventions build on the socio-economic development potential while also having a strong focus on stability strengthening, and linkages to the refugee responses where applicable, and (2) programming opportunities in the traditionally known growth corridor areas of the country, with a stronger link to private sector engagement. Engrained across the two-pronged approach is that interventions are



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demand driven and have a private sector development lens, with a demonstrable link to Dutch actors and Dutch earning capacity.

This call, therefore invites concept papers from qualified consortia, to implement interventions under the water programme framework. The aim is to initiate a catalytic water programme to address persistent structural constraints in Kenya's water sector.

The water programming is taking place at a time when Kenya has well-developed policy and institutional frameworks, including the; Water Act (2016) that also facilitates active participation of private sector, National Water Policy (2021), Sanitation policy, and established investment plans (NAWASIP, NISIP), as well as the recently signed Kenya water compact.

## **B. Program Scope**

The programmes aim to strengthen; water and sanitation services performance, water security, and reduce water-related conflict; through increased, efficiency, reliability and stimulating inclusive social-economic growth across water and sanitation systems in ASAL basins and growth corridors. Hence programmatic attention is given to;

- Strengthening water governance and resource management;
- Enhancing water and sanitation systems' service delivery and performance;
- Preparing utilities to credit worthiness and investment readiness;

Three strategic programmatic intervention areas were identified in the scoping phase. These strategic programmatic areas as described in the scoping report balance Kenyan and Dutch policy objectives and interests. The identified areas of programming are where the Netherlands has a clear added value in the broad and complex landscape of ongoing initiatives by various development partners.

This call contributes to developing a water programme in Kenya funded by the Netherlands government. A scoping phase commissioned by the Embassy, in January-April 2026, has informed the development of this call. A summary of the scoping report has been uploaded<sup>1</sup>.

The focus of this call is on **two** of the identified programmatic areas in the scoping report. The third programme area will be developed in a separate process which is not part of this call. This call recognizes the third programmatic area as critical for the sector, and to the other two programmatic areas. The link to the third programme area could be reflected in the submitted concept paper – however not as a core intervention area, but in how the main interventions proposed for programme areas 1 and 2 also contribute to sector commercial viability, project preparation, investment readiness and financing<sup>2</sup>.

Interested parties are therefore invited to submit a concept paper that covers one of the program areas (Programme area 1 or 2), or concept paper that outlines an integrated program approach of the two programmatic areas<sup>3</sup>. Both focused and integrated proposals are welcome and will be assessed on the strength and coherence of their own theory of change.

The outlined domains in the programme areas below are indicative and not exhaustive. Applicants

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<sup>1</sup> Please note the scoping report recognizes that the three Programme Areas are structurally interdependent: PA1 and PA2 generate the bankable systems and stable catchments that PA3 requires as its transaction pipeline, while WS3 unlocks the finance that WS1 and WS2 need for scaling.

<sup>2</sup> Third component will be programmed separately, outside of this call for concept papers.

<sup>3</sup> More details on the two programmatic areas can be found in the scoping report.



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are welcome to propose other intervention domains if justified by the system diagnosis and clearly linked to programme objective.

### **Programme area 1: ASAL Stabilization and Basin Resilience**

Objective:

To stabilize selected Basin water systems by; strengthening governance, restoring hydrological function, and enhancing enabling conditions for socio-economic activity across upstream and downstream users.

Scope of Work:

Applicants are invited to design and deliver interventions tailored to address the dynamics in one or more of the identified domains of a selected basin system. The domains are not exhaustive as noted above.

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Example<sup>4</sup> of intervention entry points</i>
<i>Water Governance</i>	Strengthening WRUAs; allocation enforcement; conflict management
<i>Water Accounting</i>	Efficient allocation, Metering, telemetry, abstraction monitoring
<i>Catchment Restoration and hydrological buffering</i>	Recharge, retention, rangeland and riparian restoration (3R approaches), distributed storage
<i>Livelihood and Enterprise catalyst</i>	Support to water-dependent economic activities via relevant water intervention

Key Requirement:

Applicants must adopt a diagnostic-first approach where interventions demonstrate a credible pathway through system stabilisation to sustained socio-economic activity and resilience in selected water basins.

### **Programme 2: Growth Corridors and Secondary Towns**

Objective:

To improve service performance of water systems and/or sanitation systems, as well as financial viability of utilities and water service systems in secondary towns and growth areas.

Scope of Work:

Applicants are invited to design and deliver interventions tailored to address the dynamics in one or more of the identified domains. The domains are not exhaustive as noted above:

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Example of intervention entry points</i>
<i>Service performance strengthening</i>	NRW reduction, energy efficiency, solarization, DMA establishment, pressure management
<i>Commercial Systems</i>	Billing and collection reform, customer database cleaning, revenue systems
<i>Sanitation Systems</i>	Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) design, circular economy models, enterprise development

<sup>4</sup> Examples are only entry points and only relevant if they address a diagnosed structural constraint



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<i>Private sector development</i>	Private sector engagement & development, inclusive business models, <i>technological solutions, innovations and digital Systems</i>
<i>Finance linkages</i>	Engage financial institutions, financial management & governance

Key Requirement:

Applicants must adopt a diagnostic-first approach, whereby it is demand driven from the selected system.

- **Geographic scope**

Proposed geographic area(s) should be specified in the concept paper. Bonus points will be awarded to interventions that will be active in ASAL counties. We welcome activities in all areas of Kenya, but activities in certain ASAL counties will receive three or two bonus points during scoring. Interventions that include counties from both categories will be awarded 3 bonus points.

**Counties that will be awarded 3 bonus points.**

Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, Isiolo, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, Lamu, West Pokot.

**Counties that will be awarded 2 bonus points**

Laikipia, Narok, Kajiado, Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, Embu, Makueni, Kitui, Taita Taveta, Kilifi, Kwale, Nyeri, Baringo.

- **Crosscutting thematic scope**

All proposals should demonstrate how their interventions contribute to:

- **Inclusion (GESI):** Meaningful participation and benefit for women, youth, underserved groups, including refugee communities where applicable.
- **Climate Resilience:** Clear pathways for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

- **Implementing approach**

The proposed initiatives should be locally led. The submitted concept papers are required to demonstrate how they are implementing principles of locally-led development cooperation (see Annex III). The consortium should further demonstrate that the concept paper has been co-created with a mandated government institution/agency at county level and/or at national level.

Applicants should show which mandated or relevant system actors are essential for the intervention to work, what role they will and can play and how their commitment will be secured without necessarily making them direct recipients of grant funding.

When working with stakeholders and mandated institutions, the concept paper should indicate to what level these actors were involved in drafting the document and indicate in what way they will be engaged in the writing, conceptualization and budgeting of the full proposal.

Consortia are encouraged to include different areas of expertise in their skill-mix and involve organizations from different backgrounds and diverse areas of society.



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### **C. Criteria**

All submitted concept papers will be assessed and scored against established set of requirements.

#### *Threshold Criteria*

- Submission of concept paper should be by a consortium (see annex II) .
- The lead consortium member (lead applicant member) should be clearly stated.
- Consortium size should be minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 organizations.
- At least one of the consortium members should be a local organisation
- Maximum budget for a proposed programme should not exceed 10 mln euro (or equivalent in KES).
- Programme timeline should be 5 years.
- Annual grant disbursement should not be more than twice the consortium lead average annual turnover over the last 3 years.
- Consortium lead should have a strong track-record on water-related programme implementation in Kenya for at least 3 years.
- Indirect costs including overheads should be less than 15% of the total project budget.
- Companies or for-profit organizations that are consortium members are only eligible when applying non-commercial rates.

These criteria outline the minimum requirements that must be met for a concept paper to be eligible for full evaluation.

#### *Evaluation Criteria*

Refer to table in section D for the evaluation criteria and accompanying descriptions.

The evaluation criteria will help evaluate the concept paper based on how clearly it outlines; what is the binding constraint; why can the existing system not solve it on its own; which actor behaviour, mandate, incentive, financing mechanism or accountability arrangement will change; and what will continue after the programme.

### **D. Concept Paper Template**

The structure of concept paper should adopt the required sections as indicated in the table below. The concept paper should explicitly specify the selected programmatic area or if an integrated approach of the programmatic area is the focus.

The paper should not be more than 7000 words in total. Text in footnotes and standard text boxes within the main document do count toward the word limit. Comprehensive organizational or staff CVs, institutional registration documents, and letters of support are permitted as separate annexes and will not count toward the 7,000-word ceiling. Separate annexes are permitted but their full review by the selection committee is not guaranteed.

Concept papers that meet the threshold criteria above will then be assessed based on 9 topics, as described in the table below. The table further elaborates on the evaluation criteria.



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	<b>Required Sections</b>	<b>Scoring Weight</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>
1	Strategic Alignment	5%	Explain how the proposed programme is aligned to Dutch and Kenyan policy priorities and strategic focus, both in the water sector and indirectly. Present an understanding of similar relevant interventions being undertaken in the sector by partners; outline how your proposed initiative leverages, links and/or synergies.	To what extent is this activity aligned with EKN priorities and Government of Kenya sector relevant priorities. How is it aligned with 1 or multiple programme areas as identified in the scoping report. How is it aligned with major similar relevant interventions in the sector.
2	Budget	10%	Check guidelines on budget specification in Annex 1.	To what extent is the budget fit for purpose, are overheads acceptable, is it good value for money? Is it feasible and realistic? Is it accurate, justified, competitive and compliant? Is co-funding or own contribution included if possible?
3	Consortium roles and responsibilities	10%	Define the decision-making architecture and demonstrate overlapping and complementarity in roles, expertise, and responsibilities of consortium partners.	To what extent is the consortium balanced, with clear roles and responsibilities, with complementary expertise and a strong track record. Does the consortium include a local partner with physical presence in one of the areas of implementation? To what extent is the governance, division of roles and decision making clear? Are reporting lines and financial flows mapped?
4	Technical Approach	25%	Clarify the link between selected programme areas and the persistent structural constraints. The link should clearly outline pathways to address these identified structural constraints. This should include a theory of change that details the main approach which should follow from a strong analysis. Include a broad description of activities. Mention any innovations and how the intervention	Is there a logical link between activities, outputs, and the long-term impact. To what extent is it based on evidence? Does this realistically fit within the context? Is this more innovative, or more about scalability? What's the systemic impact and the projects' ability to address persistent structural constraints? How valid is the evidence of co-creation with local institutions and system actors?



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			contributes to systemic change. Outline scaling approaches.	
5	Market Orientation – (acknowledging differing contexts presented by the two programme areas, thus the implication on market orientation and commercial viability.)	(10%	Explain the extent to which the proposed intervention is market-led and assess commercial viability of (aspects of) your intervention. Include an outline on how private sector is engaged.	Does the concept paper demonstrate strong understanding of the sector’s commercial strengthening and medium term to longterm investment viability? How convincing and realistic is the strategy for Private Sector Engagement/development? Do all market actors have a financial incentive to continue the relevant activities after funding ends? What is the clarity of the market orientation pathway, for either service provision and/ or basin systems including in ASAL contexts?  What is the potential to leverage Dutch expertise and partnerships, and contribute to Dutch earning capacity? Are there tangible business and project opportunities?
6	Institutional Capacity & Experience	15%	Detail the track record of all consortium members. Explain expertise and experience in the programmatic areas. If main positions (project manager or technical lead) are known, share those. CV’s should be annexed.	What is the track record in sector related activities and in scope of counties / counties of focus identified? Are possible CV’s showing a good match with the required expertise?
7	Inclusion & Climate integration	10%	State how the intervention plans to integrate GESI, and how it addresses resilience to climate change.	What is the expected impact on GESI and climate resilience? What is the strategy to ensure this? For example: analysis, expertise in the team, dedicated budget lines, mentioned in the ToC and possibly log frame?
8	Assumption and Risk Management	10%	Explicitly identify the main assumptions and risks central to whether the proposed intervention will work and be sustained. Outline how these will be managed. Be realistic and frank about residual risks.	To what extent are contextual, programmatic and corruption risks identified, monitored and managed? Are the residual risks acceptable?
9	Pathways to Sustainability	5%	Outline sustainability strategies to be applied beyond project duration and the exit strategy.	Is the project designed to be absorbed into existing Kenyan government structures or existing market systems? Is there a clear timeline for the phasing out of donor support?



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				Did the relevant system actors or stakeholders have a say in the project design, ensuring they actually want it to continue after the project ends?
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### E. Submission Timelines

The submission should be made latest by **13<sup>th</sup> July 2026** to [nai-os@minbuza.nl](mailto:nai-os@minbuza.nl). Questions and clarifications about this call should be submitted in writing, not later than, **24<sup>th</sup> June 2026**, to the same email address. One document detailing all answers to questions submitted will be posted on the website by the **1<sup>st</sup> July 2026**. It is strongly recommended to review the FAQ annexed to this document.

Concept papers within a 5-point margin of the highest-ranked concept paper will be considered technically comparable. For these proposals, the embassy reserves the discretionary right to make a final selection based on portfolio balancing, including geographical distribution and thematic diversity.

The selected concept paper(s) will be invited to submit a full proposal.



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## **ANNEX I: Budget Specifications**

Budget should outline all major expenditure categories, including, but not limited to:

- A) Direct Costs:
  - i) Personnel costs,
  - ii) Travel / transport costs,
  - iii) Costs for programme activities, broken down by objective.
- B) Indirect costs.

Additionally, the budget should clearly specify the amount allocated to each implementing partner. Any co-funding or own contributions should also be mentioned here.



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## Annex II: Further Clarifications and Guidance for Applicants

### 1. Eligibility, Governance & Consortium Structure

**Q: Can an individual organization participate in more than one consortium submission? Also, can an organization lead more than one consortium?**

An organization can participate in only one consortium, with the exception of Government of Kenya organizations. An organization can only be consortium lead in only one consortium. A consortium is to submit maximum 1 concept paper.

**Q: What are the specific requirements for the "Consortium Lead" regarding legal registration and operational presence in Kenya? Do local subsidiaries, country offices of global organizations, or entities under Host Country Agreements (HCAs) qualify?**

A local subsidiary office, a registered country office of a global international NGO (even if it does not operate fully independently from global headquarters), or an international research organization operating under a formal Host Country Agreement (HCA) or diplomatic treaty status with the Government of Kenya (such as CGIAR centers or UN-organizations) satisfies this local registration requirement.

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**Q: Are intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), United Nations agencies, or Kenyan government bodies eligible to serve as formal consortium members or leads?**

Yes. UN offices registered in Kenya, IGOs, mandated government research institutions, and Kenyan national or county government institutions (such as national Ministries or State Departments or state agencies) are fully eligible to join a consortium as regular members or serve as the Consortium Lead, provided they find appropriate consortium partners and meet all other threshold criteria. All Consortia will be subjected to an Organisational Risk and Integrity Assessment (ORIA). A satisfactory outcome of that assessment is a prerequisite for further contracting.

**Q: Are commercial, for-profit organizations permitted to act as the lead applicant?**

Yes. Commercial for-profit companies registered in Kenya are eligible to serve as a consortium lead or member, provided they fulfill all standard threshold criteria, including the strict requirement to apply and operate at verified non-commercial rates.



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**Q: What is the required consortium size, and are formal binding agreements necessary at this stage?**

The required consortium size is a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 formal partner organizations. Formal, legally binding consortium agreements are not mandatory at the concept paper stage (though a conceptual outline of roles and responsibilities is welcome). A draft consortium agreement detailing roles, governance, and budget management will be required to be submitted in the first 3 weeks of the full proposal phase.

## 2. Financial Framework, Budgets & Remuneration Rates

**Q: Does the €10 million envelope refer to a single project or the entire portfolio? How many grants will be awarded?**

The total available funding envelope is a maximum of €10 million per individual project proposal, representing a 100% grant/subsidy framework. The Embassy intends to select and award funding to either 1 or 2 proposals in total from this call.

**Q: Are proposals with budgets below the €10 million ceiling acceptable, or must budgets fully utilize the allocation?**

There is no minimum budget requirement per proposal. Smaller interventions are eligible too. Applications will be evaluated based on impact for money and context-appropriate scoping rather than budget size.

**Q: How will grant disbursements be operationally managed within the consortium structure?**

Grant funding will be disbursed exclusively and in full to the designated Consortium Lead. The consortium lead will act as the sole contractual partner with the Embassy and carries ultimate accountability for the onward transfer, financial management, reporting obligations and compliance of funds to the other consortium members.

**Q: How does the financial threshold criterion regarding the 3-year average annual turnover apply to intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and UN agencies?**

For international, multilateral, and intergovernmental organizations, the requirement stating that the annual grant disbursement must not exceed twice the lead applicant's average annual turnover will be calculated against the organization's global consolidated annual budget, operating revenue, or total financial expenditure over the past 3 financial years, as detailed in their certified audited financial statements, rather than the localized budget of the country office.

**Q: How should the maximum 15% overhead/indirect cost cap be interpreted? What qualifies as a direct cost versus an indirect cost?**

Overhead/Indirect Costs (Max 15%): Refers to general institutional and administrative expenses that support the organization's broad operations but cannot be uniquely or directly linked to a specific project activity. This includes global headquarters administration, corporate human



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resources, central accounting/finance management, global ICT infrastructure, and non-project-specific office rent or utility expenses. Flat-rate administrative fees exceeding 15% will not be accepted.

Direct Costs: Expenses that are completely attributable to the project's delivery, clearly itemized, and justified by the scope of work (e.g., dedicated field personnel, project-specific office operations, activity travel, mid-term and final evaluations, and project-specific audits). For UN agencies, their official Programme Support Cost (PSC) rate satisfies the overhead definition, while country-office technical support must be itemized under direct costs.

**Q: What does applying at "non-commercial rates" mean for private sector partners, and how must this be evidenced? Does it apply to subcontractors?**

The requirement to apply non-commercial rates applies strictly to formal, core consortium members that are for-profit organizations; it does not automatically extend to third-party subcontractors or commercial service providers under a standard procurement process. Non-commercial rates require the complete removal of all commercial profit margins. To evidence this, applicants must detail their regular commercial rates versus the baseline internal cost structure (eligible for subsidy). The Embassy reserves the right to commission external audits if the internal cost structure is unclear. For larger Dutch companies, the RVO Integrale kostensystematiek (IKS) guidelines can serve as an illustrative baseline.

<https://www.rvo.nl/onderwerpen/subsidiespelregels/ez/iks>

**Q: Does the Dutch Standards for Remuneration Act (WNT / Wet Normering Topinkomens) apply to this call? What is the cap?**

This call follows the compliance standards detailed in the Dutch Standards for Remuneration Act (WNT), including the specific section governing international development cooperation. The applicable annual executive salary/remuneration ceiling is currently set at a maximum of €241,000 annually. Individual staff salaries charged directly to the grant budget will be evaluated against value-for-money frameworks and market competitiveness.

**Q: Are capital expenditures, infrastructure investments, or asset acquisitions, eligible costs?**

Yes. Procurement of assets, infrastructure investments, or financial mechanisms are eligible under the budget. There is no predetermined maximum percentage restriction for infrastructure; however, proposals must demonstrate a clear structural balance between infrastructure spending and soft/operational direct activities to achieve the programmatic development outcomes. Asset acquisitions must strictly adhere to the lead applicant's established procurement guidelines.

**Q: Are Value Added Tax (VAT) and fieldwork travel costs eligible under the budget?**

Yes. VAT is considered an eligible expense. Reasonable direct travel, subsistence, and field monitoring expenses are permissible, with a strong donor preference for budget lines structured around real, itemized expenditure rather than blanket flat-rate travel allowances.



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### 3. Geographic Scope, Value Chains & Programmatic Strategy

**Q: Must a concept paper address all three programmatic areas outlined in the call study, or can it focus on a single sector or area?**

Applicants are permitted to focus their concept note on a single programmatic focus area or present an integrated approach combining the two programmatic areas. The Embassy has no preference and will score focused single-program proposals and integrated multi-sector proposals on an equal basis, assessing the internal logical soundness and theory of change of the approach. There are no minimum activity or budget thresholds required per chosen programmatic area.

**Q: How will the geographic bonus scoring system (3-point and 2-point counties) be applied to proposals active across multiple ASAL and non-ASAL regions?**

The maximum additional bonus score that can be awarded to any single proposal under the geographic criteria is capped at 3 points in total. If a project operates across a mixture of non-ASAL and ASAL counties from different point categories, the total bonus will remain flat at 3 points.

**Q: Is there a minimum or recommended number of counties a proposal must cover?**

No. There is no minimum or recommended number of counties. Consortia should define their geographic scope based on what fits their technical strategy and implementation capabilities.

### 4. Government Co-Creation & Dutch Added Value

**Q: What formal evidence is required to demonstrate "co-creation" with county or national government authorities at the concept paper stage? Are signed MoUs or letters of commitment required?**

The Embassy will accept any verifiable form of evidence that validates genuine co-creation and dialogue. Acceptable proof includes co-signed meeting minutes, letters of intent, documented consultative processes, co-signatories on the concept paper submission, or letters of support from national/county public entities.

**Q: Is a formal partnership with a Dutch organization required? What are the expectations regarding "contribution to Dutch earning capacity" or the "Dutch Diamond" approach?**

Direct consortium membership by a Dutch organization is welcome but is not a threshold requirement. The expected contribution to Dutch earning capacity is not prescriptive; it can be demonstrated through future or current technical collaboration, joint research arrangements, commercial market linkages with Dutch agribusiness firms, or innovation exchanges, and will be evaluated during the formal assessment. There is no explicit requirement to structure the consortium according to the formal "Dutch Diamond" model.



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## 5. Submission Logistics, Format & Process Rules

**Q: Is there a specific template provided for the concept paper or budget submission?**

For the concept paper outline, applicants are highly required to structure their document headings in line with the template guideline provided In section D of the call (ref; column labelled 'required sections'). For the budget, refer to the broad expenditure lines referenced in Annex 1 of the call.

**Q: What is the exact deadline for submission, and are extensions possible?**

The submission deadline is 13 July 2026, before midnight. Extensions to the submission deadline will not be granted.

**Q: What is the strict word count limit, and what elements are excluded from it?**

The concept paper has a maximum limit of 7,000 words. Text in footnotes and standard text boxes within the main document do count toward the word limit. Comprehensive organizational or staff CVs, institutional registration documents, and letters of support are permitted as separate annexes - if annexed they will not count toward the 7,000-word ceiling. Separate annexes are permitted but their full review by the selection committee is not guaranteed.

**Q: Can the budget be prepared in local currency (KES), and what level of activity breakdown is required?**

Budgets can be prepared in either Euros (€) or Kenyan Shillings (KES) based on applicant preference. At this concept note phase, costs should be structured around major, aggregated expenditure categories (refer to budget annex in the call) ; there is no operational requirement to break down budgets into specific activity lines or individual operational items.

**Q: What is the broad operational timeline for shortlisting, full proposal invitation, and the project start date?**

The contract phase is planned to be fully executed and signed by November 2026, with the successful project expected to start by latest 01 Jan, 2027, for a fixed contract duration of 5 years. Shortlisting will be done by end of July 2026 and selected concept paper(s) invited soon after to develop full proposal. A 2 or 3 month window will be provided for the full proposal development phase.



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### **Annex III: Defining Locally-Led Action (LLA)**

LLA encompasses all locally led activities within the humanitarian, climate, development, and peace and security sectors. The Netherlands applies the OECD-DAC working definition on locally-led development:

- Locally led development is an ongoing development process where diverse local actors exercise agency across development policy and programme dimensions (framing, design, delivery, learning, accountability) in given local operating contexts.
- Local actors are individuals and entities based and operating within the recipient country or in other developing countries, subject to local laws, whose actions are centered on local issues.
- LLA does not necessarily imply direct funding. When direct funding applies, this also includes financing through maximum one intermediary

LLA is not only about facilitating easier (in)direct access to funding for local actors. It is also about increasing the influence of local actors in policy- and decision-making and, most importantly, strengthening the dignity of local actors. As such DGIS departments and embassies support the full spectrum of activities under Locally Led Action and not only financial activities.