



Terms of Reference | Final Review

Security & Rule of Law in Fragile and Conflict-affected Settings

1. Introduction and background

In 2019, the last projects funded in the Security & Rule of Law (SRoL) research programme (15 Million euros) will come to a close. Therefore, NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development (NWO-WOTRO) is commissioning an external programme-level final review. This review should assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the activities implemented in the programme in view of the programme aims and objectives.

Background

The SRoL research programme started in 2013, and is managed by NWO-WOTRO. The programme is part of the Knowledge for Development Policy of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA, 2011). The Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law (KPSRL)¹ has formulated the research agenda for the SRoL research programme.

Based on the needs identified by the KPSRL in the research agenda, NWO-WOTRO developed two funding modalities within the SRoL programme:

- The **Applied Research Fund (ARF)**². This fund aims to bridge the gap between policies for Security & Rule of Law and the implementation thereof in LMICs;
- The **Strategic Research Fund (SRF)**³. This fund aims to enhance the academic basis and underlying assumptions of policy theories and intervention logic of development actors in the area of Security & Rule of Law.

Within these two funds, eight calls for proposals have been developed (six calls for applied research, two calls for strategic research) each focusing on a research theme as identified by the KPSRL⁴. The eight calls jointly resulted in the funding of 58 research projects, with a duration of six months up to three years.

Each of the funded projects aimed to contribute to two objectives⁵:

- the generation of new evidence-based knowledge and insights on selected SRoL themes of the KPSRL research agenda which can help stakeholders to improve on SRoL policies, programming and interventions on these themes in specifically targeted Fragile and Conflict-affected Settings (FCAS);
- the facilitation of uptake of knowledge generated so that it can be implemented by relevant stakeholders working on SRoL policies/programmes/interventions on selected SRoL themes in selected FCAS.

1 The KPSRL was established by the MFA in 2012 to support the implementation on Dutch policy on Security & Rule of law in developing countries by identifying, defining and answering relevant research questions and by promoting the exchange of knowledge (Programme Document Applied Research Fund & Strategic Research Fund of the Security & Rule of Law Knowledge Agenda, p2). In 2016 the MFA launched a tender for a new KPSRL. In 2017 a new KPSRL started its activities.

2 The ARF fund focuses on applied research projects, which are designed to solve practical problems, involve systematic inquiry into the practical application of science, and generally employ empirical methodologies.

3 The SRF fund focuses on strategic research projects, which are designed to develop and to help decide on a strategy to reach specified policy goals.

4 Themes ARF: Embedding justice in power and politics (2014, [ARF1](#)); Open Call for Evidence-based policy advice and tools (2015, [ARF2](#)); Open Call for Evidence-informed ideas (2015, [ARF3](#)); Influence of transnational challenges (2015, [ARF4](#)); Addressing mixed migration flows (2016, [ARF5](#)); Political dilemma of legitimate stability (2017, [ARF6](#)). Themes SRF: Employment for Stability (2014, [SRF1](#)); Comprehensive approaches to human security (2015, [SRF3](#)).

5 In the calls these were translated into more specific objectives, matching the theme and aim of the call. Please see the calls (links in footnote 4) for more information.



Furthermore, the funds have encouraged project capacity building of both Southern and Northern partners on both conducting research and research uptake⁶.

NWO-WOTRO, in its capacity as an independent intermediary organisation for research granting, is responsible for the development, implementation and administration of the SRoL programme and funds, including the appraisal and selection as well as the monitoring and evaluation of projects.⁷ NWO-WOTRO also conducts programme management, including cooperation and liaising with the KPSRL and the MFA to:

- formulate the calls for proposals, and;
- enhance the potential for research uptake of project and programme-level findings by policy makers and practitioners targeted by the calls.⁸

Further to these formal roles, NWO-WOTRO applied its expertise regarding e.g. research impact enhancement and knowledge brokering strategies in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs), including FCAS.

2. Objectives of the Final Review

The objectives of the review, for the dual purpose of learning and accountability, are threefold:

- Assessing, through documentation of results of the research funds, whether funded research contributed meaningfully to the improvement of security and rule of law policies, interventions and programmes in LMICs;
- Assessing the adequacy of the programmatic approach of NWO-WOTRO for achieving the results;
- Assessing efficiency of the available (human and other) resources for achieving objectives of the programme.

The following evaluative dimensions apply to the review⁹:

- **Relevance:** The extent to which the activities and results of the programme are consistent with the overall programme and fund aims and with the attainment of its objectives;
- **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the programme and fund aims and objectives are actually realised, and what major factors have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the aims and objectives;
- **Efficiency:** The extent to which the programme resources (i.e. financial resources, capacities, time, etcetera) have been well used to reach the programme and fund objectives. 'Well' meaning that a maximum of output of a certain quality is obtained for a given amount of resources available.

⁶ For the SRF call on comprehensive approaches to human security (SRF3) capacity building was a third objective, and therefore mandatory.

⁷ Programme Document, p5.

⁸ No specific activities and/or agreements hereto have been made at the start of the programme. The formal programme contract between NWO and the MFA (to which the KPSRL is not party) states the following (translated): Parties [NWO – BZ/KPSRL] find it important that NWO and the Knowledge Platforms regularly and in a good manner liaise on the programme and the projects, including on knowledge exchange (Article 3 of the "Raamconvenant m.b.t. onderzoeksvoorstellen van kennisplatforms").

⁹ The definitions are based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, and have been tailored to match the programme characteristics.



Thereeto, the review should addressing the following evaluative questions:

Ad 1) Relevance of programme results

Has the SRoL programme contributed meaningfully to the improvement of security and rule of law policies, interventions and programmes in LMICs in the field of the themes addressed in the respective calls for proposals, whereby:

- the meaningful contributions were based on knowledge generated through strategic research (SRF) or applied research (ARF);
- the improvement of policies, interventions and programmes are a result of co-creation and research uptake activities undertaken in the context of the SRoL programme (by the projects and/or through programme-level activities).

Have there been any unexpected and/or unintended results in terms of policy changes?

Ad 2) Effectiveness of programme design and implementation

To what extent did the different aspects of programme design and corresponding programme implementation (including activities) contribute to reaching the aims and objectives of the programme?

- a) Did the **collaboration of WOTRO with the KPSRL, and for ARF6 with the KSPRL and the MFA**, contribute to the development of clear and coherent calls for proposals?
- b) Did the **ARF and SRF fund make distinctive contributions** (in terms of types of knowledge/insights, type of policy advice, research uptake approaches) to the meaningful improvement of security and rule of law policies, interventions and programmes? Why (not)?
- c) Was the **selection of research projects** conducted in an impartial and independent manner?
- d) To what extent did the **call requirements** – including north-south and transdisciplinary project teams, development and execution of the project in co-creation, stakeholder involvement, and the use of impact pathway to plan and track outcomes and impact – contribute to a) the generation of new evidence-based knowledge and insights that can enhance the effectiveness of policies, interventions and/or programming in addressing the research themes identified, and b) the facilitation of research uptake to enhance the potential for use of these findings by stakeholders to improve their policies, interventions and/or programming. Which (combination of) aspects contributed most? Which the least? What can we learn from this for future programming?
- e) To what extent did **project monitoring and evaluation** contribute to 1) keeping the project on track in regard to research and research uptake, and 2) project learning and the improvement of research, relevance and research uptake (generation of project outcomes)?
- f) To what extent did the **mid-term programme monitoring**, which was designed by NWO-WOTRO in collaboration with the MFA, contribute to improvements in programme design and management?
- g) To what extent did **the liaising of WOTRO with the KPSRL** contribute to research uptake in and beyond the projects, including reaching the *outer circle* stakeholders (those stakeholders not directly involved in the funded projects). What contributed most? What could have been done better?

Ad 3) Efficiency of programme implementation

Were the programme resources (i.e. financial, capacity, time) well used, looking at the activities carried out by NWO-WOTRO and the programme results which were generated? I.e. were the activities carried out cost-efficient? Were the objectives achieved on time?



3. Methodology

The reviewer(s) is/are expected to develop a methodological framework for the review, which should at least include both primary and secondary data, and include following five phases:

Phase 1. Inception phase

Design of a detailed evaluation protocol, including interpretation of these Terms of Reference and a detailed description of the approach, scope and methodology for the assignment. The protocol should include a description and analysis of the role and responsibilities of NWO-WOTRO with regard to the SRoL programme in the context of the MFA policy on the knowledge platforms. The quality of the inception report has to be approved by the SRoL Programme Committee before starting the next phase.

Activities to develop a detailed evaluation protocol could include inter alia; desk review and analysis of programme documents, primary interviews with direct programme stakeholders (WOTRO secretariat, members of WOTRO-PC and IAC, KPSRL, MFA), development and planning of data collection approaches and activities (this could include case studies, outcome mapping, etcetera).

Phase 2: Evaluation phase 1

Conducting the first part of the evaluation activities, covering the ARF1-ARF5 and the SRF1 projects, and ARF6 and SRF3 results to the extent possible (excluded: last joint uptake activities executed with the KPSRL, and review results of the SRF3 projects).

Activities undertaken to collect data could include inter alia: desk review/analysis of relevant project documents; questionnaire; interviews; focus group discussions, et cetera. Field visits could be part of the review activities.

Phase 3: Reporting phase 1

Writing up an evaluation report based on the results of evaluation phase 1. The report will present review results, lessons-learned, best practices and recommendations on future programming. The report includes results on ARF1-5 and SRF1, and ARF6 and SRF3 results to the extent possible.

Presentation of report phase 1 to the SRoL Programme Committee, and collecting of PC input to improve the quality of the report (if applicable).

Phase 4: Evaluation phase 2

Conducting the second part of the evaluation activities; data collection on the last research uptake activities on the ARF6 and SRF3 calls as well as on the SRF3 project results (including project final evaluation results).

Phase 5: Final reporting

Writing up a final evaluation report, in NWO format, based on the results of evaluation phase 1, whereby results and findings are fine-tuned based on the results generated in evaluation phase 2 (on ARF6 and SRF3 uptake activities, and on SRF3 project results). Incorporation PC comments on the quality of the report for phase 1. The report will present review results, lessons-learned, best practices and recommendations on future programming.

The SRoL Programme Committee will take a decision on the approval of the final review report. The final approved report will be communicated *inter alia* to relevant governing boards, funding agencies and oversight agencies.



4. Planning and key-deliverables

<i>Review phase</i>		<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Review days¹⁰</i>
Inception phase	June 2019	Evaluation protocol Protocol to be approved by the SRoL PC	15 days
Evaluation phase 1	Sept-Nov	Evaluation activities phase 1	25 days
Reporting phase 1	December	Evaluation report phase 1 Presentation results phase 1 to SRoL PC	10 days
Evaluation phase 2	Jan-Feb 2020	Evaluation activities phase 2	8 days
Final reporting	March	Final evaluation report Final report to be approved by the SRoL PC	5 days

5. Required experience

The review will be conducted by one or two independent¹¹ external experts (preferably one Dutch expert and one expert from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East or North Africa). Required skills and experience include the following:

- Preferably a PhD degree in a relevant field of expertise;
- Familiarity with research in the field of Security and Rule of Law in LMICs;
- At least ten years of experience in monitoring and evaluation of research and innovation;
- Proven experience in scientific research, co-creation and the linking of research to development policy and practice;
- Professional experience in Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East or North Africa;
- Proven excellent writing and analytical skills;
- Fluency in Dutch and English is a necessity, knowledge of French is an asset;
- Ability to meet tight deadlines.

Should the reviewers engage in case study field visits, it is advised that one member of the review team will carry out the activity accompanied by a local evaluator (who will only be involved in the case study/studies in a particular country, and who is to be selected by the evaluators during the review). This evaluator should be well known with the local context and theme, and preferably has three years of experience in monitoring and evaluation.

The review is subject to the [NWO Code of Conduct on conflicts of interest](#) regarding scientific integrity and independence to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

¹⁰ This is indicative. Reviewer can tailor this to the own review approach and work plan.

¹¹ Excluded from the review are any individuals who are/were during the running time of the programme employed by an organisation involved in the programme (either on project or on programme level).



6. Support from NWO-WOTRO

The NWO-WOTRO secretariat of the SRoL programme will:

- Provide the external experts with all the necessary administrative and logistic support to ensure that the external experts can undertake the study with reasonable efficiency;
- Collect background documentation and provide a list of relevant stakeholders;
- Organise briefing meetings between the reviewer(s) and representatives of the SRoL Programme Committee;
- In case requested by reviewer: make available documentation on outcome mapping methods.

7. Remuneration

The maximum granted budget is 79,500 euros, including VAT. The reviewer(s) will be recruited and paid in accordance with NWO conditions and procedures. A percentage of the total cost will be paid against the completion of specific, measurable deliverables identified as 'Key Deliverables'.

8. Application procedure

Eligible applications for the review assignment comprise:

- cover letter in which you briefly motivate your interest in the assignment and which provides a summary of your (joint) competencies for the review (max 1 page);
- concise work plan, including an explanation of proposed approach and methodology (max 1 page);
- budget proposal indicating the number of days proposed as well as the fee;
- CV (max 2 pages per person), highlighting relevant past experience and including reference to relevant publications.

Applicants are required to submit an application to srol@nwo.nl **by 20 May 2019, 2 pm CEST**. Joint applications are encouraged. Selection takes place by (a delegation of) the Programme Committee (PC); the PC may delegate the NWO-WOTRO secretariat to execute the selection procedure on their behalf. A maximum of three potential candidates will be invited for an interview (possibly through Skype) in the week of 27 May 2019. A decision on the assignment will be taken immediately after this interview round.

Selection of the applications will be based upon the following criteria:

- qualifications and team composition;
- relevance of the proposed approach and methodology;
- feasibility of the evaluation (given proposed time frame and budget);
- cost-efficiency of the application.

9. Contact

For additional information on the programme, including summaries of the awarded projects, please consult the [NWO-website](#).

Applications or queries for further information can be sent to the SRoL secretariat, Maria Verschoor (srol@nwo.nl; +31 70 34 40 646).