

Security and Rule of Law Programme Evaluation

Final Evaluation Report

Client: Dutch Research Council Science for Global Development

Rotterdam, 29 May 2020



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List of abbreviations

ARF	Applied Research Fund
DSH	Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict Affected States
IAC	International Advisory Committee
KPSRL	Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law
LMIC	Low and Middle Income Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NWO	Dutch Research Council
PC	Programme Committee
PIE	Pool of International Experts
SRF	Strategic Research Fund
SRoL	Security and Rule of Law
ToC	Theory of Change

Executive summary

Context for this evaluation

The Security and Rule of Law (SRoL) research programme was launched in 2014 with the aim of promoting research that contributes to strengthening the knowledge base of SRoL policies, interventions and programmes in fragile and conflict-afflicted settings, in order to improve their effectiveness. The SRoL Programme, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), was developed in close cooperation between the Knowledge Platform for Security and Rule of Law (KPSRL) and the Dutch Research Council's Science for Global Development division (NWO-WOTRO). Two competitive research grants were used: the Strategic Research Fund (SRF); and the Applied Research Fund (ARF).

Between 2014 – 2019, eight calls for proposals, each with a specific thematic focus, were launched under the SRoL Programme, two under the SRF and six under the ARF. These calls have generated 58 projects, which have addressed a number of key themes in fragile countries - in line with the Dutch SRoL policy - and with a broad geographical scope that ranges from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Sahel, the Middle-East, North-Africa, Europe, South-East Asia to West Asia.

With the programme ending in 2019, NWO-WOTRO commissioned Ecorys to conduct an external final evaluation to assess its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, placing a particular focus on the functioning of the key assumptions underpinning the programme design: that research produced under the ARF and SRF funds would provide different outputs and outcomes; that northern-southern cooperation, transdisciplinary teams and co-creation would contribute to stronger research results, and that monitoring and evaluation activities and tools (i.e. impact pathways) would help keep the projects on track and work towards the achievement of outcomes and impact. Furthermore, the evaluation looked into the working mechanisms and experimental design of the tripartite relationship between NWO-WOTRO, the KPSRL and the MFA, which is at the basis of the functioning of the programme.

The evaluation was conducted through the application of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including desk research, a survey, interviews and three field visits (to Tunisia, Lebanon and Kenya). Evaluation activities took place from June 2019 to April 2020.

Main findings

The evaluation confirmed that the thematic topics addressed through the SRoL Programme are contemporary and of importance to security and rule of law. Obstacles encountered to fully addressing **relevance** included the relative short duration of (some) research projects, which limited the emphasis on dissemination activities; the ability of grantees to engage decision-makers; the lack of willingness of local decision-makers in target countries to engage on politically sensitive topics; and external political factors such as change of government and overall political fragility of the countries. The evaluation also concludes that knowledge generated through the ARF and SRF fills gaps identified by the project researchers in the respective countries. Research outcomes have contributed to achieving the objectives of the different calls.

Overall, the evaluation finds that the projects conducted under the programme have been perceived as **effective** by grantees, with the impact on personal capacity development within the grantee organisations described as a clear positive contribution.

This evaluation finds that there is a **minimal difference** between the effectiveness of the ARF and SRF funds. This is partially a consequence of the lack of specific call objectives under each of the funds, as well as limited focus on the difference in strategic versus applied research relevance in the proposal selection phase. The outputs of the different projects vary only to a small extent, regardless of which fund they belong to. The actual impact generated by the programme is difficult to determine, also in light of the limited time between the end of (several) projects and the project end assessment carried out by NWO-WOTRO as well as this external programme evaluation.

Transnational collaboration between northern and southern partners was found to be a key factor contributing to the SRoL Programme effectiveness. This often created a 'two-way mentorship', which generated new (research) skills, knowledge, and networks for members of the teams. However, evaluation findings also show that northern organisations are more frequently in the lead and play larger roles compared to southern partners, leading to often unbalanced collaborations. The use of **transdisciplinary teams** was considered relevant by grantees, however not at the forefront of day-to-day collaboration. However, the involvement of **practitioner organisations** in the research, emerged as a strong element contributing to the effectiveness of the research. Such organisations were considered to bring better understanding of the local context and access to local networks which was key to unlocking knowledge.

Co-creation activities (i.e. the involvement of stakeholders/research end users throughout the project) also emerged as a strong point of the SRoL Programme. The added-value of co-creation activities was repeatedly found to be just as important by stakeholders as the actual results of a project. Several obstacles to co-creation emerged: the time and resources needed to bring together multiple partners (especially when working with short project timeframes); the willingness of local policy makers to discuss and engage in politically sensitive issues; and, in some cases administrative and legal constraints.

With regard to the role played by NWO-WOTRO in the Programme, the evaluation finds that overall, grantees were positive with regard to its **support and assistance**, in particular with monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities and the design and implementation of impact pathways. With regard to the **M&E activities** implemented, mid-term assessments by NWO-WOTRO were specifically foreseen for projects of a duration longer than 24 months, and evidence shows that grantees found these reviews beneficial. Other projects did not benefit from this additional review, mainly because of their short duration. The majority of grantees confirmed that a) they found M&E activities (highly) relevant to keep their project on track and achieving objectives) and b) that they implemented their own M&E mechanisms even when they were not required to do so by the Programme. **Impact pathways** were also foreseen by NWO-WOTRO as a way for project teams to monitor project's progress and, specifically, ensure that projects were intentionally working towards achieving impact. Findings show that the pathways were regarded as a useful mechanism to understand how a team's research would result in outputs and outcomes early on in the project. However, local partners in target countries seem to encounter more difficulties in designing and applying them. As the relevance of pathways is one of the elements proposals are judged on, the scarce familiarity with the tool can have an impact on the selection of applications from organisations located in fragile settings.

The **selection procedure** designed and implemented by NWO-WOTRO was found to be transparent and fair. However, the length and complexity of the process raises questions related to the appropriateness of the process in relation to the needs of the donor organisation for fast, applicable research. Furthermore, an analysis of the respondents to the calls shows that in the majority of the cases projects are applied for (and ultimately implemented) and lead by a northern organisation. A deeper look into the strategy for the dissemination of the calls and the selection

criteria indicates that more could be done in this sense to ensure a more balanced pool of applicants and grantees.

Finally, the evaluation finds that the initial **working arrangements** between NWO-WOTRO, the KPSRL and the MFA, while justified when the programme was launched, were not effective. This can be attributed to the **lack of formal contractual arrangements** between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL and the resulting **absence of a clear division of roles and responsibilities** between the two. This affected in particular knowledge uptake and dissemination of research results, also due to the **lack of a dedicated pool of funds** for this purpose within one of the two organisations. Other factors that hampered the effectiveness of these working arrangements include the lack of staff capacity/frequent turnover within both organisations and structural issues related to broader NWO standards for scientific rigour and codes of conduct surrounding the secrecy of proposal, which affected the openness of the cooperation with the KPSRL. The evaluators confirm that significant steps forward have been taken to improve this tripartite relationship throughout the lifespan of the SRoL Programme, although some obstacles – in particular with regard to research uptake – remain.

In terms of **efficiency**, this evaluation concludes that the changes to the scope of the programme activities introduced in 2015 implied a severely increased workload on the limited staff available at NWO-WOTRO, which affected the cost-efficiency of the programme, as costs increased without a parallel increase of the overhead budget.

With regard to the efficiency of the projects themselves, the evaluation finds that the majority of the projects requested a **budget-neutral extension**. ARF project participants in particular regretted the short length of the project vis-a-vis the perceived expectations for research output and impact. The extensions were mainly requested in order to: a) finalise project outputs and/or organise dissemination activities at a more convenient time; b) mitigate issues arising from unexpected security challenges; c) mitigate project-management related issues. The evaluation finds that a reflection already at proposal stage on expected project management risks and mitigation strategies could have helped avoid this last issue.

The evaluation finds that the projects had sufficient budget available for implementation. A high trend of **underspending** is noticeable across the full spectrum of projects, with all but three projects not managing to spend the full grant that was allocated to them. The majority of the underspent funds (which were then returned to NWO-WOTRO) were originally allocated to knowledge dissemination (23% of the total grant), with research costs (15% of the total grant) and personnel costs (2% of the total grant) following. The underspending trend clashes with the information gathered during this evaluation, which shows that organisations (in the majority of cases southern partners) often report spending unpaid time on the project. In this sense, the trend could be a reflection of the imbalanced relationship between northern and southern partners, where the northern lead is responsible for budget allocations. Other identified explanations behind this trend include a lack of awareness of NWO-WOTRO policies on reallocation of funds across budget lines; a relative short inception phase which does not allow for proper planning of dissemination activities; unforeseeable changes posed by the fragile context; and poor project management by the grantees. The fact that the majority of the returned funds were originally allocated to knowledge sharing activities ultimately casts doubts on the effectiveness of the overall SRoL Programme's knowledge uptake strategy.

Recommendations

Based on these findings and conclusions, the following main recommendations are put forward:

1. In order to ensure better uptake on the local level, continue emphasising the importance of the research process (i.e. through co-creation) in order to engage local decision makers from the start.
2. Ensure ownership of the MFA and/or embassies at the start of the project, as well as ownership of respective local public institutions. For example, assign contact points within organisations to individual or clusters of projects. Make sure to have in-person or online introductory meetings with research teams.
3. Rather than differentiating between the ARF and SRF fund, concentrate the resources in one 'overarching' fund and specify per call what the exact objectives of the projects should be. Where deemed necessary, the development of 'applied' or 'strategic' research can be mentioned as an objective. The calls can, depending on their objectives, vary in length and available funding.
4. In order to more accurately assess projects' impact, it is recommended to extend the evaluation process with the inclusion of an 'impact assessment' one or two years after their completion. This would allow more time for research uptake to take place. In order to ensure a comprehensive review, it is recommended to include all relevant stakeholders in this process (grantees and intermediate beneficiaries, both locally and within the Dutch MFA) as well as the KPRSL and NWO-WOTRO. An independent reviewer could be tasked to conduct this assessment.
5. As capacity building, in practice, benefited both northern and southern organisations, it is recommended to address this relationship consistently as a two-way mentorship process. In order to ensure all partners benefit from capacity building activities, consortia should be asked to provide a detailed plan towards capacity building throughout the project's lifespan already at proposal stage.
6. Co-creation activities were repeatedly found to be as important as the actual results of a project. Therefore, revisit the assessment of impact that projects generate by also paying attention to more qualitative aspects such as fostering dialogue and relationship building (through co-creation activities). Such focus can enhance and make the relevance to the local community more explicit.
7. Actively encourage consortia to work with practitioner organisations. In the call for proposals, a dedicated paragraph could outline the potential added value of such partners and promote the inclusion of practitioners in the consortia. Depending on the objectives of the call, the inclusion of a practitioner organisation might even be added as a requirement.
8. Reflect on how to better institutionalise M&E in the SRoL Programme, irrespective of the duration of the project. This can be done either by paying closer attention to the application of impact pathways through periodic checks or by requesting that projects regularly report progress and challenges in writing. A brief email overview could suffice.
9. Consider the possibility of simplifying the selection procedure, without compromising on the quality of the research selected. This could imply the creation of a dedicated fast-track

procedure for calls created with the aim of responding to needs for quick, applicable research. One critical factor is the reduction of the number of committees involved in the selection.

10. Revisit the selection criteria so as to enhance the 'openness' of the calls and draw in applications from different types of organisations across the world. Specific examples could include a) the possibility of submitting an application also through regular mail; b) the possibility of submitting annexes or supporting administrative documentation in languages other than English (French and Arabic could be an initial step); the inclusion of tailor made criteria depending on the typology of stakeholder the call looks to attract (i.e. different criteria for academics and local practitioners).
11. Institutionalise the relationship between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL in the context of the SRoL Programme by creating formal contractual arrangements with a clear division of tasks and responsibilities.
12. Explore the possibility of relaxing requirements related to the secrecy of proposals in favour of better cooperation with the KPSRL and increased exposure of the research through their network. In practice, this could be implemented by providing timely information to the Platform on the research projects that have been awarded. Applicants should be informed already in the call for proposal that a short application abstract could be made public on the Platform's website.
13. Consider the setting up a dedicated budget (either within NWO-WOTRO or the KPSRL) for knowledge dissemination activities. Possibly draw lessons from the relationship between NWO-WOTRO and the INCLUDE platform in the context of the 'New roles of Civil Society Organisations for Inclusive Development' research programme.
14. NWO-WOTRO is recommended to request applicants to be explicit about risks and their mitigation measures in the proposal phase, both at content level (i.e. security challenges delay research activities or low quality of collected data) as well as at project management level (i.e. turnover of team members). A template risk matrix could be provided already in the call for proposals.
15. Provide clearer guidelines as to how budgets should be submitted in proposals to allow for maximum flexibility (in view of the context-specific situation in fragile settings) and on what grantees are allowed to do in terms of reallocating funds across budget lines during the implementation phase. These guidelines should be explicitly presented in the call for proposal.
16. Pool unspent project resources for knowledge dissemination into an uptake fund, to be used for all programme activities more broadly. The fund should be monitored jointly by NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL to ensure that there is full coordination on which activities the funds should be funnelled into.
17. Consider an overhead budget for NWO-WOTRO that is in line with the expected amount of work. Should this amount increase during the course of the programme due to requested programme changes, there should be flexibility in re-negotiating overhead.

1 Introduction to the SRoL programme

NWO-WOTRO contracted Ecorys in June 2019 to conduct an external programme-level final review of the Security and Rule of Law (SRoL) research programme. This final report provides the findings of the evaluation. This chapter introduces the SRoL Programme and its governance structures (1.1), its target groups (1.2) and beneficiaries (1.3), and programme timeline (1.4).

1.1 Context

The origins of the SRoL research programme¹ are rooted in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) Knowledge for Development Policy² and the Dutch SRoL Policy. At the core of the SRoL policy is the idea that the Netherlands can contribute to increasing SRoL in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) by helping tackle the root causes of conflicts, instability and social exclusion and by supporting positive forces in society. The policy is underpinned by the following **five key objectives**³: strengthening and establishing security for people; strengthening the rule of law by fostering a functioning legal order; promoting inclusive political process; promoting a legitimate and capable government; promoting the peace dividend by supporting the creation of jobs and access to basic services.

To support the implementation of these policies, the **Knowledge Platform for Security and the Rule of Law** (KPSRL) was established in 2012. This platform identified the need for:

1. Generating new knowledge and fostering knowledge exchange through activities strengthening cooperation, in particular with local partners in the global South;
2. Promoting and funding new research, both at a strategic and at an applied level, bridging the gap between research and practice by bringing together academics and practitioners.

There is growing consensus amongst academics and practitioners alike that knowledge-based policy can help address the multiple challenges faced by developing countries.⁴ The idea is that the KPSRL can help strengthen SRoL in LMICs by identifying, defining and answering relevant research questions and by promoting the exchange of knowledge. To help achieve these ends, the **SRoL research programme** was developed in 2013 and launched in 2014 in close cooperation between the KPSRL⁵, the MFA and the SDutch Research Council (NWO), specifically its **WOTRO Science for Global Development** division.

The SRoL research programme seeks to promote research that contributes to strengthening the knowledge base of SRoL policies, interventions and programmes in fragile and conflict-afflicted settings (FCAS), in order to improve their effectiveness⁶. It does so by funding research through

¹ See Annex 1.

² *Kennisbrief* (2011)

³ A focus on the political and economic role of women in peace and reconstruction processes is streamlined across all activities. All objectives are tailored and prioritised during implementation according to country specific context.

⁴ Sutcliffe, S. and Court, J. (2006). *A toolkit for progressive policymakers in developing countries*. Overseas development institute; Hornby, P. and H.S.R. Perera (2002) 'A Development Framework for Promoting Evidence-based Policy Action: Drawing on Experiences in Sri Lanka', *International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, Vol. 17, No. 2 pp165-83.

⁵ When launched in 2012, the KPSRL was run by the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations and the Hague Institute for Global Justice. The consortium changed in 2017, and the platform is currently run jointly by Clingendael, Safeworld (UK), and the International Development and Law Organisation. The change in consortium implied additional activities for the platform, including the strengthening of its role as knowledge broker n as well as changes to its governance structure, with the KPSRL Steering Group being transformed into an Advisory Committee.

⁶ The programme aims to provide evidence base for the broader SRoL sector, not exclusively policies of the MFA.

two competitive grants: the **Strategic Research Fund (SRF)**;⁷ and the **Applied Research Fund (ARF)**.⁸

Eight calls for proposals were launched under the SRoL research programme, two under the SRF and six under the ARF.⁹ The themes for the calls were developed by the KPSRL, in consultation with the MFA, and with feedback from NWO-WOTRO. These calls have generated 58 projects, which have addressed a number of key themes in FCAS countries - in line with the Dutch SRoL policy - and with a broad geographical scope that ranges from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Sahel, the Middle-East, North-Africa, Europe, South-East Asia to West Asia.¹⁰

Envisaged outputs varied depending on each project, ranging from awareness raising to policy recommendations and toolkits. The table below provides a general overview of the number of projects awarded for each fund.¹¹ Each of the calls has been developed based on a specific theme with a series of overarching objectives.¹²

Table 1.1 Overview of projects awarded per fund

Year	Fund	Title/theme	Projects
2014	SRF 1	Employment for Stability	3
	ARF 1	Embedding Justice in Power and Politics	6
2015	ARF 2	Open Call for Evidence-based policy advice and tools	20
	ARF 3	Open Call for Evidence-informed ideas	3
	SRF 3	Comprehensive Approaches to Human Security	6
	ARF 4	The influence of transnational challenges in Fragile and Conflict Afflicted Settings	1
2016	ARF 5	Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in Fragile and Conflict Afflicted Settings	12
2018	ARF 6	The Political Dilemma of Legitimate Stability	7

1.2 SRoL stakeholders

The SRoL research programme includes a wide range of stakeholders. The MFA is the main donor of the SRoL research programme and maintains oversight through participation in the Programme Committee (PC). The PC also consists of: the KPSRL and NWO-WOTRO; an external representative of the SRoL international community; and an independent technical chair. The PC is responsible for translating the research agenda elaborated by the KPSRL into concrete calls for proposals. Based on the advice of other bodies, such as the International Advisory Committee

⁷ Aimed at strengthening the evidence basis of SRoL theories, policies and interventions for development actors in SRoL. Projects should contribute to creating new evidence based knowledge on effective policies and intervention strategies and raise awareness on this new knowledge, facilitating research uptake amongst relevant stakeholders.

⁸ Aimed at bridging the gap between policy and practice by sponsoring research looking into the practical implementation of SRoL policies and how it can be improved. Projects must be designed to solve practical problems, and should contribute to creating evidence-based knowledge on the practical implementation of policies, as well as help raise awareness on new knowledge-based implementation methods and instruments amongst relevant stakeholders, facilitating research uptake.

⁹ Initially, the ARF was expected to have only one open call for proposal and one thematic call. This was changed in 2015 following consultation with the MFA, in order to accommodate a desire for more immediate and visible outcomes and outputs, readily usable by policymakers, as well as for additional thematic focus and for innovative ideas.

¹⁰ Countries in which projects were implemented per region: Sub-Saharan Africa: Burundi, DRC Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda. Sahel: Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Central African Republic, South-Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia. Middle-East: Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Yemen. North-Africa: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia. Europe: Turkey, Ukraine. South-East Asia: Indonesia, Timor-Leste. West Asia: Afghanistan, Iraq.

¹¹ See Annex 2 for a more detailed overview.

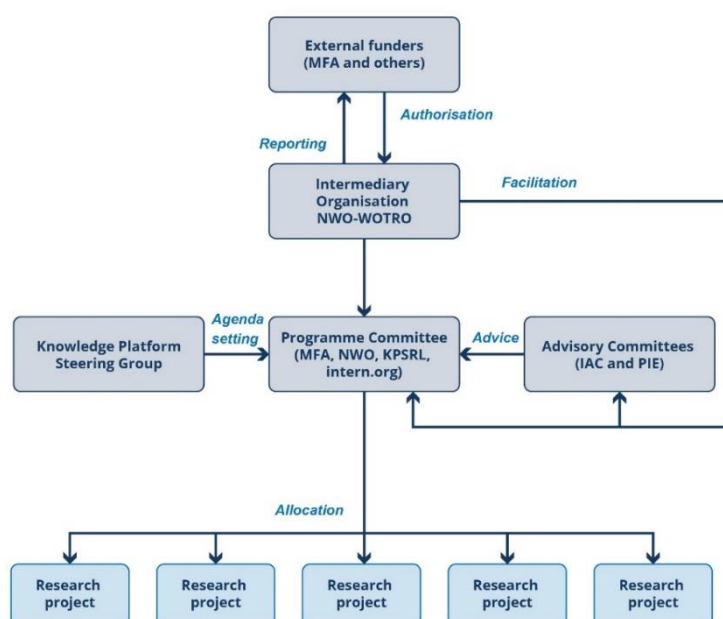
¹² These are complemented by an additional set of more specific objectives for each call (see section 3.1.2 for more analysis and Annex 3 for a more detailed overview).

(IAC)¹³ and the Pool of International Experts (PIE)¹⁴, the PC also decides on awarding funding for project proposals.

The NWO–WOTRO SRoL Secretariat manages the SRoL research programme and played a key role in its development in close cooperation with the KPSRL¹⁵ and the Dutch MFA. It advised on setting research themes for the calls and developed project requirements. The Secretariat provides administrative and managerial support to the SRoL funds, and is responsible for their lawful, efficient and effective administration. In practice, it launches the calls for proposals, organises the selection process, administers the awarded projects, and monitors progress and use of financial means.

The below figure illustrates how the different SRoL stakeholders relate to each other.

Figure 1.1 Overview of SRoL governance structure



Adapted from 2013 Programme Document¹⁶

1.3 Beneficiaries

The programme's **direct beneficiaries** (grantees) are the teams implementing research projects under the funding calls. These are (transdisciplinary and) transnational teams of researchers and practitioners in the field of SRoL, mostly including at least one representative of a LMIC.

Intermediate beneficiaries differ according to the theme of each call, but broadly speaking are those individuals or institutions, local and international, that have been directly impacted by the outcomes of the projects, such as donors and practitioner organisations involved in the design and

¹³ The IAC consists of independent Dutch and international external experts, both researchers and practitioners. The IAC is in charge of assessing the quality of the proposals received, ranking them and advising the PC on their selection. The IAC also assesses the quality of project evaluation reports and advises the PC on their approval.

¹⁴ The PIE consists of international researchers and practitioners, each with expertise specific to one of the five priority areas of the SRoL policy. The role of the PIE is to provide an unbiased, external review of the proposals received in response to a call. Different members of the PIE will be called upon depending on the topic of the individual calls.

¹⁵ The KPSRL Steering Group (changed to Advisory Committee in 2017) is responsible for the overall management of the SRoL Knowledge Agenda, and contributes to sharing and discussing the knowledge generated by the granted projects.

¹⁶ The boxes representing research projects refer to both ARF and SRF projects. The number of research projects presented in the image above is indicative and for illustration purposes only.

implementation of development interventions in the field of SRoL. Practitioner organisations can range from governments and municipal departments, to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations, cooperatives, and private companies.

The **final beneficiaries** are the citizens of the target and partner countries and regions, in particular the most marginalised and vulnerable ones. As one of the aims of the SRoL research programme is to facilitate research uptake, final beneficiaries also include the societies where the institutions cooperating on the project are based, in low-, middle-, and high-income level countries.

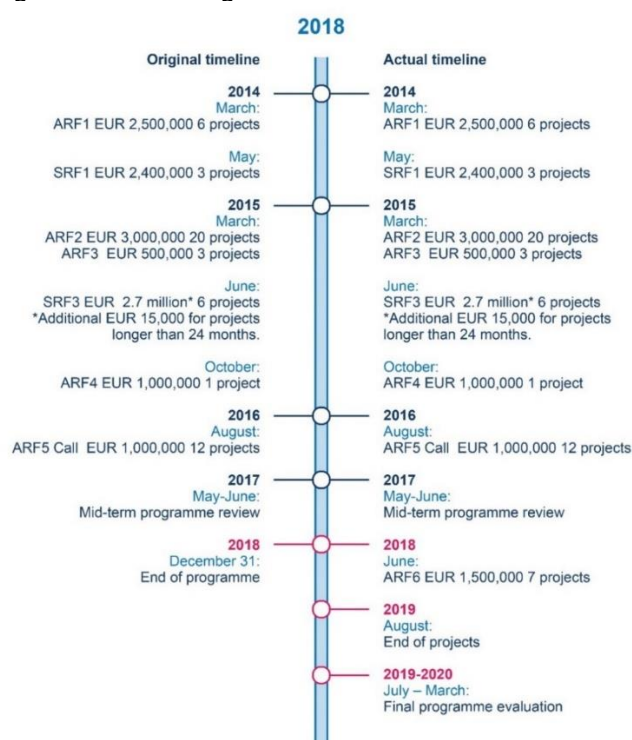
1.4 Programme timeline

A total of EUR 14.6 million was made available for funding. The SRoL research programme originally was foreseen to run for four years, from 2014 to 2018. In agreement with the MFA it was extended to 2020. The extension allowed for the inclusion of the ARF6 round and for this final programme evaluation.

Table 1.2 Overview of grant allocation per fund

Year	Fund	Title/theme	Grant
2014	SRF 1	Employment for Stability	EUR 2.400.000
	ARF 1	Embedding Justice in Power and Politics	EUR 2.500.000
2015	ARF 2	Open Call for Evidence-based policy advice and tools	EUR 3.000.000
	ARF 3	Open Call for Evidence-informed ideas	EUR 500.000
	SRF 3	Comprehensive Approaches to Human Security	EUR 2.700.000
	ARF 4	The influence of transnational challenges in Fragile and Conflict Afflicted Settings	EUR 1.000.000
2016	ARF 5	Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in Fragile and Conflict Afflicted Settings	EUR 1.000.000
2018	ARF 6	The Political Dilemma of Legitimate Stability	EUR 1.500.000

Figure 1.2 Programme Timeline



Adapted from 'Research Programme on Security & Rule of Law in Fragile and Conflict-affected Settings (SRoL): Mid-Term Review'.

2 Methodology

This chapter presents: the scope and purpose of this evaluation (2.1); its evaluation method (2.2); data collection tools used (2.3); the approach to the data analysis (2.4); and limitations to the evaluation (2.5).

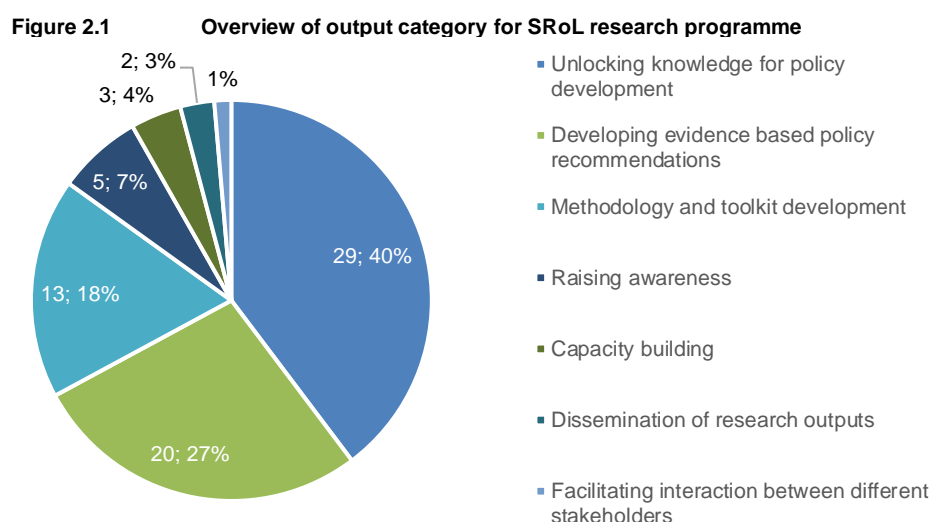
2.1 Scope and purpose of this evaluation

The evaluation has the following objectives:

- To assess whether research carried out as part of the SRoL research programme **contributed meaningfully** to the improvement of SRoL policies, interventions and programmes in LMICs;
- To assess the **adequacy** of the NWO-WOTRO approach to achieving the aims and objectives of the programme and identify the factors that have affected the achievement (or non-achievement) of the aims and objectives;
- To assess the **efficiency** of the available resources for achieving the objectives of the programme.

The scope of this evaluation covers the 58 projects and the overall SRoL research programme. The evaluators have assessed the selection procedure and project implementation between 2013 and February 2020. The evaluators hereby focused on the grantees and intermediate beneficiaries.¹⁷

For the purpose of this evaluation, the projects have been grouped on the basis of call objectives in the following output categories.¹⁸ methodology and toolkit development; dissemination of research outputs; unlocking knowledge for policy development; developing evidence-based policy recommendations; facilitating interaction between different stakeholders; capacity building and raising awareness.



¹⁷ Final beneficiaries were not included in the scope of this evaluation.

¹⁸ See Annex 3 for a detailed breakdown.

2.2 Evaluation method

The evaluators have applied a mixed research design of both qualitative and quantitative nature, consisting of different data collection methods to assess the programme design and outcomes. A Theory of Change (ToC) was used to assess the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the programme.¹⁹ The assessment of the various criteria was based on specific evaluation questions. For each question, a number of indicators were identified.²⁰

For this evaluation, two considerations were taken into account:

1. The programme research agenda is partially determined by the KPSRL and thus NWO-WOTRO has limited influence over the topics selected for the calls. Nonetheless, by designing and implementing the call procedures, NWO-WOTRO does have the opportunity to influence the programme's relevance on SRoL.
2. The ToC specified a series of pre-conditions for project designs, which for the purpose of this evaluation have been assessed: difference between ARF and SRF fund; North-South collaboration; transdisciplinary research teams; co-creation; agenda setting by the KPSRL; and inclusion of impact pathway to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.

2.3 Data collection

Data collection consisted of desk research, interviews, a survey, field visits and meetings with NWO and the MFA.

The bulk of the **desk research** took place in the first phase of the evaluation and aimed at obtaining an understanding of the (self) assessment of all projects, as well as of the changes that occurred throughout the projects' lifespan. Findings were recorded systematically into a spreadsheet which allowed the evaluators to meticulously record information on individual projects and compare between projects.²¹

Most **interviews** were conducted between October and December 2019 and covered the following stakeholders: project grantees and intermediate beneficiaries; staff from the Dutch MFA dealing with the SRoL portfolio;²² NWO-WOTRO SRoL research programme staff; KPSRL staff (current and former). With close support from NWO-WOTRO, the evaluators took several steps to ensure a satisfactory sample of 59 interviewees.²³ This allowed the evaluators to get a complete and balanced overview of the programme:

- The evaluators spoke with 18 representatives of the SRoL programme (i.e. NWO-WOTRO staff, KPSRL, SRoL committee members). The interviewees played different roles in the programme, covered certain periods of time, and varied in terms of how intense their involvement was with the programme.
- Three policymakers of the MFA Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH) and three local MFA embassy staff were interviewed.
- A total of 35 interviews were conducted in the context of the field visits. These include interviews with grantees, as well as intermediate beneficiaries.

¹⁹ See Annex 4 for an illustration of the ToC.

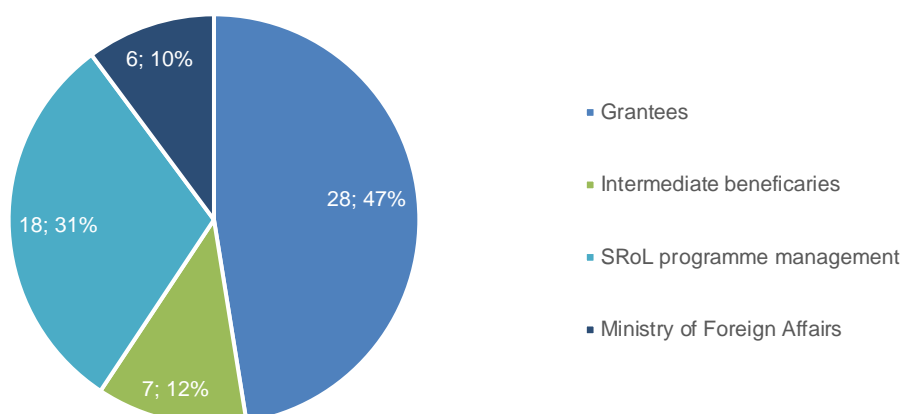
²⁰ See Annex 5 for a detailed overview of the questions and indicators for measurement.

²¹ See Annex 6 for a full overview of reviewed documentation.

²² Given the topic, interviews were conducted with staff from the MFA DSH and embassy staff in the case study countries.

²³ These included: a letter of introduction by NWO-WOTRO; several e-mail reminders and follow-up calls; if needed, referral through NWO-WOTRO and other interviewed stakeholders.

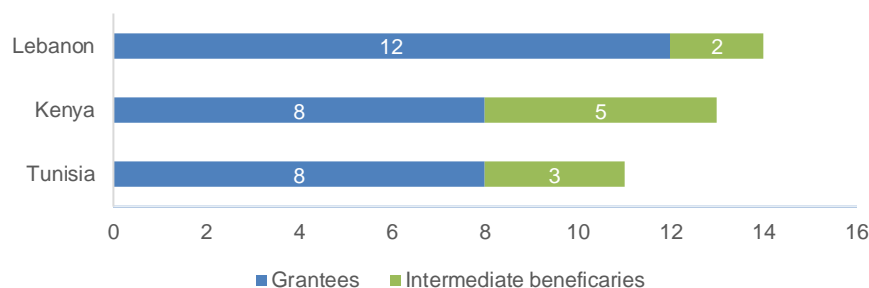
Figure 2.2 Overview of different types of interviewees consulted



The **field visits** aimed to obtain in-depth insights on grantees' experiences with the SRoL programme. In addition, through direct observation the evaluators were able to get a sense of the context in which the projects were implemented and thus better enable the assessment of relevance. The targeted countries were selected in agreement with NWO-WOTRO on the basis of: the number and type of funded projects; the calls and funding mechanisms; the variety of thematic scopes; the projects' duration; the languages spoken; and the security situation.

The evaluators conducted three field missions²⁴: Tunisia (7–11 October 2019); Lebanon (21–25 October 2019) and Kenya (19–22 November 2019). Due to the tight planning of the evaluation, there was limited flexibility in scheduling the field visits. This posed several challenges: the Tunisian mission coincided with the national elections; and the Lebanese mission was affected by the start of the civil uprising. As a result, it was more difficult to arrange meetings, particularly with intermediate beneficiaries. This was mitigated by following up, if possible, with phone interviews.

Figure 2.3 Overview of number of interviews per case study²⁵



Findings from the field missions have been processed into case study reports and integrated throughout this evaluation report.²⁶

To ensure full coverage of project stakeholders, the evaluators conducted a **survey** targeting all grantees and the intermediate beneficiaries that participated in the SRoL programme.²⁷ The survey

²⁴ See Annex 7 for a full list of interviewees.

²⁵ For the project that was implemented in all three countries, interviews were counted towards only one country. Intermediate beneficiaries also includes the embassy staff

²⁶ See Annexes 8-10 for full case study reports.

²⁷ The evaluators received contact details of grantees and, through desk research, identified contact details of various intermediate beneficiaries who were then also invited to participate in the survey.

was active for eight weeks²⁸ and generated 89 responses, of which 79 were complete for all questions²⁹. Given the fact that the participation in the SRoL programme for some stakeholders was already years ago, the evaluators consider that the response rate of 17.9% is satisfactory. However, it is noted that the survey results are merely used complementary to feedback collected through interviews and desk research which provided a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the implementation of the programme.

The majority of the entire pool of survey respondents are project grantees, with 87% (79) indicating to be a main-applicant, co-applicant, part of the project management staff or a practitioner organisation. Only few intermediate beneficiaries were approached through the survey due to lack of contact details. Responses were thus limited, most likely due to limited actual engagement with the project.

The survey resulted mostly in responses from representatives of private non-profit organisations (43%/38), public research organisations (42%/37) and private non-profit practitioners' organisations (13%/12). Furthermore, respondents represented 22 different countries. Most of them live in the global North (62%/55). The majority of these northern respondents is located in Europe (93%/51), and within this group specifically in the Netherlands (61%/31). With regard to respondents from the global South (34), most (47%/16) come from Africa,³⁰ followed by (32%/9) the Middle East³¹ and Asia (21%/7)³². This sample is in line with the geographic distribution of grantees documented in the desk research.

In addition to the interviews, the evaluators also conducted several in-person discussions with the NWO-WOTRO SRoL research programme staff, including a pre-kick off meeting on 13 June 2019 and a kick-off meeting on 4 July 2019. The evaluators also met with the staff on 13 November 2019 and 13 January 2020 for a formal interview and in order to discuss the final phase of the study. Furthermore, the evaluators participated in the ARF6 uptake event on 11 July 2019.

2.4 Data analysis

The different data collection methods have been combined and triangulated in order to validate findings and to fill knowledge gaps where possible. The insights obtained through desk research and interviews serve as the foundation of this evaluation. The field visits have yielded useful insights and allowed the evaluators assess the relevance of the individual projects and the SRoL programme in its entirety.

However, as the interviews and field visits focused on a sample of the projects, the evaluators conducted desk research and issued a complementary survey to address all SRoL projects. The survey obtained quantitative insights into the implementation of the projects and the experiences of the grantees. The survey response was limited, most likely because a number of respondents were asked about their experience with a project that was completed years ago and due to the differing degrees of involvement in the projects of respondents (i.e. project coordinators versus support staff).

²⁸ Several steps were taken to ensure follow up on these requests for participation: the creation of a dedicated mailbox; updating of email recipient database (in collaboration with the NWO-WOTRO secretariat); an introduction email by NWO-WOTRO; an invitation email; frequent reminders (to uncompleted and partially completed recipients)

²⁹ When presenting survey results throughout this report, we will always reference the number of complete responses for the specific questions we are analysing. The overview of results presented in this section refers to N = 89.

³⁰ Five respondents reside in the DRC, two in Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and one in Burundi, CAR, Kenya, Mali and Niger.

³¹ Six respondents reside in Lebanon, three in Jordan and two in Iraq.

³² Three respondents reside in Afghanistan, one in Pakistan and three in Ukraine.

The final report presents findings per evaluation criteria and question. Each question will commence with a broad description of the overall findings, followed by relevant³³ and/or significant differences between the different funds and the different calls. Where relevant, the evaluation has distinguished between programme and project level results.

2.5 Limitations to the evaluation

The evaluators note that some limitations were encountered in the context of this evaluation.

- Firstly, there was limited feedback collected from local policymakers in the target countries. This likely was due to: limited actual involvement of policymakers in the projects; the fact that some projects were completed years ago; possible turnover of staff in government institutions in LMICs and thus incomplete contact details. As a result, the evaluators encountered challenges in assessing the impact of projects on the local policy context, and had to rely mainly on the insights provided by grantees. This limitation was partly countered by collected feedback from Dutch embassy personnel in the case study countries, as well as that of a number of policymakers in the Hague.
- Secondly, a number of projects were conducted and concluded several years ago, which had an impact on the response rate of the grantees involved.
- Finally, the evaluators paid particular attention to the architecture of the SRoL Programme and its experimental nature, and whether this was a successful experiment or not. A more in depth comparative analysis on what the best approach would be for the donor organisation (i.e. the MFA) for these type of programmes is warranted, but requires additional research and falls outside the scope of this evaluation.

³³ In case the breakdown does not provide relevant results, the evaluators have indicated this and will refrain from presenting this the findings.

3 Evaluation findings

This chapter presents the preliminary findings of the evaluation per criteria: relevance (3.1); effectiveness (3.2); and efficiency (3.3). However, it starts by analysing the more abstract question on the success of the programme design as applied in the case of the SRoL programme.

3.1 Relevance

Are the activities and outputs of the SRoL Programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?

This section looks at whether the activities and outputs of the SRoL Programme are consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives. The evaluators have looked at this from two perspectives: that of the SRoL Programme design and how this aligns with the goals of NWO-WOTRO, the KPSRL, and the MFA; that of the projects implemented and how these align with the goal of the SRoL Programme to contribute to the domain of security and rule of law.

Findings concerning the former are included below in section 3.2.9. The latter is discussed in this section on relevance of the SRoL Programme which attempted to obtain a holistic understanding by collecting feedback from the grantees and intermediate beneficiaries in order to identify uptake and change resulting from outcomes. For this purpose, the evaluators looked at whether the different research calls generated new insights, raised awareness and ultimately: 1) strengthened the evidence basis of security and rule of law theories, policies and interventions for development actors in SRoL; 2) bridged the gap between policy and practice by sponsoring research looking into the practical implementation of SRoL policies and how it can be improved.

3.1.1 Has the SRoL Programme contributed meaningfully to the improvement of SRoL policies, interventions and programmes in LMICs in the field of the themes addressed in the respective calls for proposals?

This evaluation looks both at (1) whether meaningful contributions were based on knowledge generated through SRF or ARF and (2) at whether 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).

Programme-wide findings

Feedback collected from grantees, intermediate beneficiaries and staff involved in the implementation of the SRoL Programme confirms that the thematic topics addressed through the SRoL Programme are contemporary and of importance to SRoL. This is supported by the fact that the themes of the calls align with the wider thematic SRoL focus of the KPSRL agenda, added an additional layer of relevance. It is likely that research could ultimately lead to policy changes, however several internal programme and external obstacles have been identified for the achievement of this specific objective.

The main internal obstacle has been the **relatively short duration of some of the projects, particularly those within ARF³⁴**.

³⁴ ARF 1 had foreseen up to 24 months for research projects and thus provided more space for dissemination. ARF 1-6 varied in duration between maximum 3, 6 or 9 months.

Interviewed grantees stated that short projects focused mostly on research and did not lend themselves for actual dissemination of findings or policy outreach. Only one dissemination event would be held, while multiple events³⁵ would be needed throughout the project phases in order to “really” engage stakeholders. Despite this obstacle, almost all interviewees were positive about the response to the research during and after the launch events. During the dissemination events, researchers would present the findings and enter into debate with participants. In one specific project, the researchers also prepared a photo exhibition, which allowed the participants to “visualise the research” before the actual presentation. The interviewed grantee suggested this resulted in more lively debates.

Story of change

A recent project aimed to understand what everyday practices bestow legitimacy on state and non-state actors attempting to exercise public authority in fragile urban settings.

The fieldwork of this project was fundamental for accessing knowledge and allowed researchers to obtain insights on the role of state and non-state actors’ in ensuring governance of those areas. This work was particularly relevant because it helped shed light on the fact that non-state actors should be included in policy considerations by state actors because they have a governance role in practice.

One of the most interesting aspects of this project is that it included innovative methodologies such as participatory videos, photo exhibitions, etc. One of the project implementers personally conducted several ‘photo walks’, collecting visual testimonies of the situation in fragile urban settings. This helped better contextualise the research and was believed to have had strong positive impact on recipients.

The second internal obstacle in the dissemination of research, but also in the co-creation of the projects, has been the **ability of grantees to engage decision-makers**.

Local partners in the project teams were expected to engage the decision-makers in target countries given that the main-applicants often were from the global North. However, collected feedback shows that local partners were only partially successful in engaging decision-makers. Different reasons were noted: limited involvement of partners in the global South (i.e. mostly for data collection); limited resources available to partners to engage with decision-makers (i.e. in the case of individual researchers). In those projects where the role of the global South partner was bigger (i.e. in Jordan), policy outreach was perceived by grantees as more successful and partners (often participating in an institutional setting) were better equipped to engage local decision-makers.

Apart from the engagement of local decision-makers, the evaluators also looked at policy engagement with the MFA and/or Dutch embassies in the target countries. Global North partners emphasised that at times there was contact with the MFA on specific SRoL issues related to the programme. However, this contact often took place under the setting of an event or workshop, i.e. as those organised by the KPSRL. In fact, also various global South partners that had participated in KPSRL events in The Hague expressed high satisfaction. This gave the stakeholders not only the chance to meet other SRoL Programme beneficiaries, but also to engage with Dutch decision-makers.

There was some interaction in relation to the SRoL Programme with Dutch embassies in the research countries. However, most interviewed grantees were unsure whether the embassies were

³⁵ This could mean a kick-off event, research workshops, a launch event and subsequent discussion round tables.

aware of their projects, as their principal interlocutor was always the main-applicant in the global North. The same counts for the embassies interviewed for this evaluation. In one instance, the embassy was surprised it was not informed about the projects implemented in its respective country. The relevance of reaching out to the embassies was confirmed by most of the interviewees, not only in order to do policy outreach with the (international) donor community, but also to support on dissemination events. At the same time, it was mentioned that the capacity within embassies differs per country and thus they are not always in a position to provide active support. One interviewee emphasised the fact that despite the strong support for human rights issues, the embassies in the country were careful when interacting with local decision-makers.

The main external obstacle to contribute to improvements of SRoL policies has been the (lack of) **willingness of local decision-makers to engage on politically sensitive topics**.

In some case studies conducted for this evaluation, the decision-makers were described as cautious when discussing security issues and in particular those by non-state actors. Also studies that took a critical stance vis-à-vis the government were likely to have less engagement with decision-makers. One interviewed grantee confirmed:

'Regarding the objective of the results' uptake by relevant decision makers, this indicator was not traceable at the time of this evaluation; however, the results had some resonance in the media. Important stakeholders such as the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence were not reactive neither to participate nor to acknowledge the results'

In order to better understand the interaction with decision-makers and the extent to which this enabled projects to influence SRoL policies, the evaluators looked into the type of stakeholders targeted. In some instances, researchers noted that low and mid-level public officials could only be reached via high-ranking officials and thus activities needed to target these actors. In other instances, grantees suggested that high-ranking officials would not be easily engaged when speaking about non-state actors in security.

Finally, also **external political factors** have played a role in terms of research relevance.

In one case study, a project studying government vetting processes of law enforcement was affected by a change in government which according to the researchers impeded the vetting activities and the research. It shows that the political fragility of countries that face SRoL problems requires research projects to adapt to the situation on ongoing basis. The evaluators noted that interviewed grantees almost always took this challenge for granted. Seldom concrete mitigation measures were put in place as this was considered a day-to-day challenge. Some interviewees did mention that when such external challenges occurred, mitigation measures were discussed with the main-applicant and at times with NWO-WOTRO. All interviewed grantees confirmed that partners and the donor organisations were willing to find solutions.

Noteworthy observations

Desk research shows that most of the grantees confirm that that **knowledge generated through ARF and SRF fills gaps** identified by projects, and they confirm that knowledge generated through the calls addresses challenges of a specific country/region. This is particularly the case for the ARF projects.³⁶ These views were shared by interviewed grantees as part of the case studies. Interviewed intermediate beneficiaries generally confirmed that the goal and topic of the research projects was relevant and accurate. Several interviewees confirmed that the projects had an impact

³⁶ It was not an explicit question posed in the SRF mid-term and final reports.

on their respective target groups. Further details on this are provided also in section 3.2.³⁷ In terms of the added-value, grantees confirm that **research outcomes have contributed to achieving the objectives of the respective calls**. Intermediate beneficiaries also underscored that the projects improved the SRoL context in a specific country, region or community. Unfortunately, the limited timeframe between the completion of some projects and this evaluation does not allow for a comprehensive impact assessment in this regard.

Finally, due to limited response from (local) policymakers to invitations for interviews, the evaluators are not in the position to assess the local policymakers' perspective on the relevance of the projects for the policy domain and/or the difference between projects funded under an ARF or SRF call.

Story of change

One project looked into systems of formal and informal access to justice. The project was deemed to have been a steppingstone towards regulating the state of refugees in the country, because it helped to provide evidence of discrimination of refugees when accessing justice. The project resulted in visible changes for CSOs working in the field, which was considered highly timely and relevant as the research was conducted at the height of a refugee crisis. The research conducted on informal justice is believed to be to this day unique and relevant. The study provides the only body of comprehensive evidence on this topic in the country, which can be used by advocacy organisations in the field.

The evaluators find that overall the **difference in relevance between ARF and SRF is unclear**, with the exception of the length of the projects (ARF projects were shorter than SRF projects). In fact, some interviewees suggested a difference in expectations from the MFA which was looking for contemporary insights into SRoL issues and the focus of the project call which suggested more in-depth academic research needs. Feedback from the MFA also confirmed the difficulty that (neither final nor interim) research findings were made available to them in a timely way, which affected the relevance. The reasons identified were: no clear agreement on when to share findings; no clear appointment of who is responsible to follow up on projects within the MFA; the fact that some projects did not require mid-term reporting and thus only communicated findings to NWO-WOTRO at the end of the project.³⁸

Finally, the evaluators find that there were **no significant differences in relevance between the types of projects** implemented through the calls. The relevance of the research was confirmed independently of the type of outputs produced. A number of interviewees indicated that the process of achieving the project's objectives was as valuable as the actual outcomes of the projects; in particular when looking at the local relevance of the projects. This is illustrated by one of the projects, where the perceived gap between the community and law enforcement was decreased through community dialogues that were held. These dialogues were initially meant for the researchers to obtain a better understanding of radicalisation in the community, but also led to a slightly improved relationship between the police and the community, thereby positively impacting the relevance of the research.

Based on the results of the desk research, survey, interviews and case studies, **no significant differences in terms of relevance of research between different regions** was observed.

³⁷ For a more in-depth overview, please consult the case study reports.

³⁸ These issues were addressed in ARF 6 which resulted in better alignment between the MFA and NWO-WOTRO on the research findings.

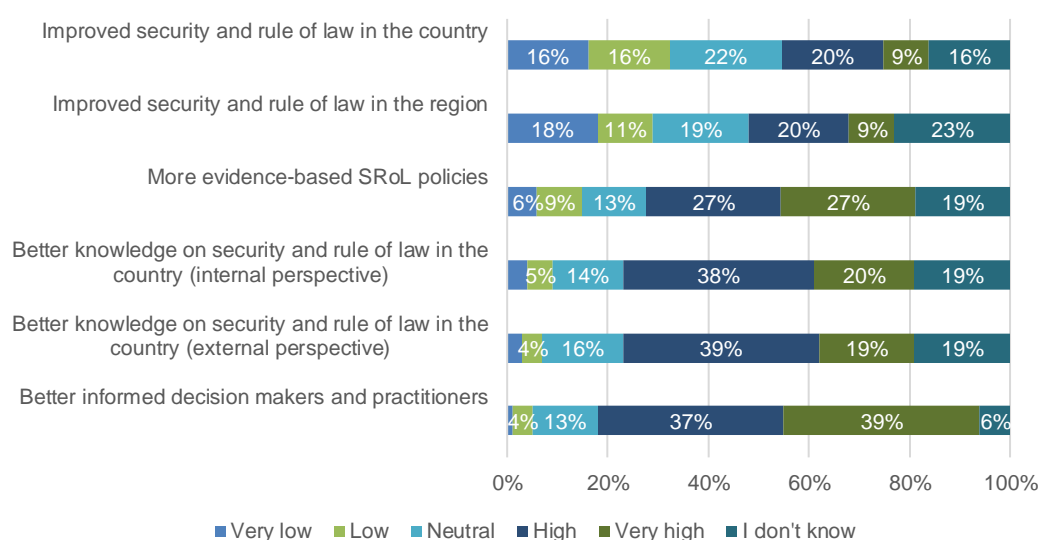
3.2 Effectiveness

To which extent were the programme, fund aims and objectives realised, and what major factors have influenced the achievement and non-achievement?

In order to determine the effectiveness of the SRoL programme, the evaluators looked at the different aspects of the programme design³⁹ and assessed if and how these contributed to reaching the set aims and objectives.

The survey provides overall insight into the perspectives of grantees related to the effectiveness of the projects and SRoL Programme (see figure below). The majority of respondents (mainly grantees) (76%) consider that the projects contributed (very) highly to better informing decision-makers and practitioners.⁴⁰ Similar high ratings are given to improving knowledge on SRoL from an internal and external perspective.⁴¹

Figure 3.1 Contribution of the projects to the following mid-to long term effects (N = 79)



Interviewed grantees shared similar views, although expressed reservations with regards to the uptake of outcomes by local policymakers, mainly due to limited engagement of these stakeholders throughout the research.⁴² Grantees would emphasise the relevance of the project to the (local) community, especially the case for global South organisations that have strong ties to the local context. One practitioner organisation stated:

'Prior to this project, the people did not dare to go to the police whenever something happened. After the community dialogues we had, the relationship improved and community members became more open to the police and vice-versa'.

The interviews with grantees confirm that the process of developing the research outcomes (i.e. desk research, interviews, workshops, etc.) was as valuable as the final product of the research itself (i.e. the report). The co-creation aspect seems to have had a positive influence on the effectiveness of the project as it allowed different stakeholders to exchange perspectives. In

³⁹ For example the different types of funds, co-creation, North-South partnerships, transdisciplinary teams, the development of impact pathways, monitoring and evaluation activities, the selection procedure and the mid-term programme monitoring

⁴⁰ The evaluators note that the survey mostly asks for perceptions of respondents (often grantees) and thus should be assessed with care.

⁴¹ Internal referring to the view from residents of the country under scrutiny, external referring to the views of non-nationals.

⁴² It should be noted that the perceptions of the grantees with regards to effectiveness of their projects might be biased.

countries with a tense political and security-related dynamic, establishing dialogue between various parties can be perceived as a major step forward. In other words, co-creation sessions did contribute to the relevance and effectiveness of the project. This was also confirmed by the IAC in its assessments. In several cases, it complements the project team for reaching out to relevant stakeholders throughout the data collection and/or dissemination phase of the study. One excerpt illustrates IAC's positive assessment in this regard accurately:

'The models for new methodologies to explore land issues' don't seem to have materialized in the [country] activity. Demonstrating the importance of a collaborative approach to peace building in [name of the region] was a highlight of the project.'

Both grantees and the IAC seem to be positive towards the effectiveness of the projects.

3.2.1 *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 SRoL policies, interventions and programmes? Why (not)?*

The SRoL Programme is deliberately structured around two distinct calls. The SRF fund aims to **strengthen the evidence basis** of SRoL theories, policies and interventions for development actors in the SRoL domain. Projects funded under this grant should contribute to creating new evidence based knowledge on effective policies and intervention strategies and raise awareness on this new knowledge, facilitating research uptake amongst relevant stakeholders. The SRF describes strategic research as follows: 'research designed to develop and help decide on a strategy to reach specified policy goals. It addresses the academic basis and underlying assumptions of policy theories and intervention logic. Here, strategic research is meant to lead to informed advice and policy prescriptions for development practitioners.'⁴³

The ARF fund, on the other hand, **aims to bridge the gap between policy and practice** by sponsoring research looking into the practical implementation of SRoL policies and how it can be improved. Projects must be designed to solve practical problems, and should contribute to creating evidence-based knowledge on the practical implementation of policies, as well as help raise awareness on new knowledge-based implementation methods and instruments amongst relevant stakeholders, facilitating research uptake. The ARF fund defines applied research as: 'a form of systematic inquiry involving the practical application of science. Applied research deals with solving practical problems and generally employs empirical methodologies. It includes research aiming at providing proof of concept and may include action research that involves active participation in a change process whilst conducting research' in the ARF1 call document'.⁴⁴

Programme-wide findings

While section 3.1 elaborated on the relevance of ARF and SRF projects, this section will dive into the effectiveness of both type of funds. As noted earlier, the **difference between projects funded as part of the ARF and SRF fund appear to be small**. The calls describe the differences between strategic and applied research, however this is not fully translated throughout the specific call objectives.⁴⁵ As shown in the table below, while the overall objective of the SRoL Programme is to unlock knowledge; each of the calls has specified two to four objectives for the projects funded under the respective call.⁴⁶

⁴³ SRoL SRF1 call.

⁴⁴ SRoL ARF1 call.

⁴⁵ See Annex 3 for descriptions of each of the objectives.

⁴⁶ This overview is based on the categorisation as presented in the methodology chapter (and Annex 3).

Table 3.1 Overview of call-specific objectives per call

Call-specific objectives	ARF1	ARF2	ARF3	ARF4	ARF5	ARF6	SRF1	SRF3
Methodology development	X							
Dissemination of research outputs	X						X	
Toolkit development		X		X				
Develop evidence-based policy recommendations		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Unlocking knowledge for policy development		X	X	X	X			
Facilitate uptake of knowledge						X		X
Raising awareness							X	X
Capacity building								X

The two funds aim to conduct research into the implementation of activities (ARF; ‘are we doing things right?’) and into the academic basis and underlying assumptions of policy theories (SRF; ‘are we doing the right things?’).⁴⁷ While different call-specific objectives would fit both overarching objectives, some seem to be better fit to the main goal than others. In obtaining a better understanding of the academic basis and underlying assumptions (SRF), call-specific objectives such as ‘raising awareness’ seem to be less suitable. However, for projects conducting research into implementation of activities (ARF), ‘raising awareness’ could be particularly relevant. Interestingly, the above table shows that call-specific objectives do not always seem to match the overarching objectives of a fund.⁴⁸ This illustrates how SRoL projects tend to have similar or different objectives regardless of ‘their’ fund. This blurs the distinction between the two types of grants already starting at the proposal stage.⁴⁹

The difference between the ARF and SRF fund appears to be limited given that the objectives that projects are requested to focus on are not always in line with the overarching objectives of the respective funds. This complexity is further amplified by the assessment criteria of the IAC when analysing the project’s outcomes and outputs (see the table below). The IAC applies criteria linked to the call-specific objectives, rather than the overarching aims of the fund. Furthermore, the IAC only covers a portion of all criteria presented in the calls⁵⁰.

Table 3.2 Overview of assessment criteria by IAC

Call	Assessment criteria
ARF1	Developing analytical methodologies and instruments;
	Sharing the generated methodologies and instruments with relevant stakeholders
ARF2	(Develop tools that) provide new evidence-based insights
	Unlock the generated knowledge for practitioner organisations
ARF3	Provide evidence-informed, new ideas
	Unlock the generated ideas for practitioners
ARF4	(Develop tools that) provide new evidence based insights;
	Unlock the generated knowledge for practitioner organisations
ARF5	Develop evidence based insights
	Unlock the generated knowledge
ARF6	Develop evidence based insights
	Facilitate uptake of knowledge

⁴⁷ As presented in the SRoL mid-term evaluation.

⁴⁸ The evaluators understand that applied and strategic research are not always mutually exclusive.

⁴⁹ NWO-WOTRO added that capacity development had been part of ARF and SRF calls. However, as the short timeframe of the ARF projects was deemed unrealistic to realise capacity building, this objective was removed from the ARF calls.

⁵⁰ See Annex 8 for an overview of these criteria.

Call	Assessment criteria
SRF1	(Develop tools that) provide new evidence-based insights
	Unlock the generated knowledge for practitioner organisations
SRF3	Contribute to new insights and evidence-based knowledge
	Facilitate the development of policies & sharing new insights and knowledge

The IAC assessments show that the outputs of the different projects vary from project to project, but do not show significant differences between those linked to ARF and SRF.⁵¹ This is illustrated by the following excerpt of an ARF project assessment by the IAC which is positive about the project's contribution to research on strategic insights (rather than applied):

'New insights about the context and internal dynamics in the three countries which should be useful to donors and those implementing policy relating to governance, conflict, and peacebuilding. The findings are based on extensive interviews and focus group discussions, along with more formal engagement with relevant actors. Good quality data'.

The above assessment of an ARF project shows little variance with the assessment of an SRF project:

'[This project is] substantially strengthening [the] evidence base. Generated high quality and reliable evidence. The main achievement of the study may be that we need to reconsider the value of entrepreneurship training itself in more far reaching ways'.

In other words, the IAC seemed to have paid little attention to whether projects contributed to strategic or applied research. Therefore, the question needs to be asked whether an assessment against the 'overarching' objectives of the calls is desired or if lack of variance between the funds takes away the need for such differentiation.

Desk research of IAC assessments shows that while the review of outputs differs between projects, the assessment of outcomes is often similar. The IAC notes that impact cannot be assessed due to: the fact that the applied dissemination strategy is unclear; the IAC assessment takes place too soon after finalisation of the project. This view was echoed by grantees that mentioned that the relative short duration of projects did not allow for generating impact (i.e. the uptake of outputs). They perceive research (i.e. data collection and analysis) to be the core of the project and, therefore, they tend to dedicate more resources to this than to the dissemination of results. This is corroborated by the analysis of the project financial reports⁵², which show that a large number of projects were asked to return budget that was originally set aside for knowledge sharing activities.⁵³

Story of change

One of the projects aimed at studying the potential inclusion of non-state security groups (NSSGs) in security arrangements. In fragile contexts, governments might be perceived as illegitimate actors whereas NSSGs sometimes receive more trust from the population. Non-state security groups may in such circumstances combine formally illegal activities with community development and force of arms with popular legitimacy. As part of the project, a community was studied where the police was not perceived to be a fair security provider. As a response, community policing had become increasingly relevant.

⁵¹ At the time of writing, only one final report of an SRF3 project was available.

⁵² See section 3.3 for an elaborate analysis.

⁵³ Some projects had finished a while ago and provided an opportunity for the evaluators to assess their impact. However, due to a lack of engagement from grantees, and intermediate beneficiaries, it was difficult to assess the realised impact.

The project organised community dialogues between members of the community, NSSGs and the police. The objective of these meetings was to create an understanding of the perspectives of each of the actors and to, thereby, take away prejudices and misunderstandings. As a result of the community dialogues, both parties expressed their views and thereby the relationship between the community and the police was smoothened and the foundations for building trust were laid.

Noteworthy observations

Interestingly, calls ARF2, ARF4 and SRF1 encouraged the development of tools that help to provide evidence-based insights.⁵⁴ Given the applied nature of a tool, one could understand this objective to be more relevant for ARF projects rather than for SRF. From the IAC assessments it shows that the committee was critical towards the development of most of the tools, regardless under which fund they were developed. For example, the excerpt from this ARF project shows:

“The project has produced a gender and conflict sensitive framework document that should guide policymakers in implementing programmes conflict affected settings. The document of 8 pages contains a number of important questions, but does not give any guidance on how policymakers should go about to answer them. The fieldwork guide is problematic - for academic research it is not sufficiently rigorous, for policy organisations, it is too superficial and does not address the actual challenge, the conflict dynamics. It is hard to see how this guide would be used as a tool in the future.”

Another interesting observation is the fact that both ARF1 and SRF1 explicitly emphasise the importance of capacity building within the project team⁵⁵, while SRF3 calls for capacity development of external stakeholders⁵⁶. The survey and interviews showed no statistically significant difference across funds with regards to the perceptions towards capacity building activities. In fact, one interviewee mentioned:

‘[Is there a] capacity building component for researchers themselves? Yes, but to the extent that every project does. We all learned something about conducting country specific research, understanding local community etc but it wasn't unique to this project’.

Grantees seemed to have enjoyed personal development as a result of participation to the SRoL programme, however, this has occurred throughout the different projects – regardless of the fund they were part of. Respondents indicated that participation to the SRoL Programme benefitted their networking skills, professional visibility and project management skills most.

3.2.2 To what extent did the North-South and transdisciplinary project teams contribute to reaching the planned objectives?

Grantees at times were formally requested to establish a team consisting of experts and organisations of different backgrounds and/or to ensure a cooperation between an organisation from the global North with one from the global South. The table below shows which calls for proposals requested this compulsorily.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ For ARF2 and ARF4 the calls stated the objective to ‘(Develop tools that) provide new evidence-based insights’

⁵⁵ SRF1 mentions that ‘projects should contribute to “on-the-job” capacity strengthening, for example through mentoring junior (PhD) researchers and possibly master students’. ARF1 refers to ‘capacity strengthening and training activities beyond the individual PhD and postdoc levels, such as capacity strengthening of master students on the job, developing courses for practitioners, training fees and consumables to improve communication and research skills of project staff members and of practitioners beyond the consortium’.

⁵⁶ The objective aims at ‘increasing the capacity of local actors to design such policies and identifying opportunities for capacity building throughout the process’.

⁵⁷ This table provides an overview of whether transdisciplinarity and north-south collaboration was a formal requirement in the calls for proposals. It does not illustrate whether consortia actually consisted of transdisciplinary teams and/or of partners from the global North and South.

Table 3.3 Overview of compulsory transdisciplinary/N-S requirements per call

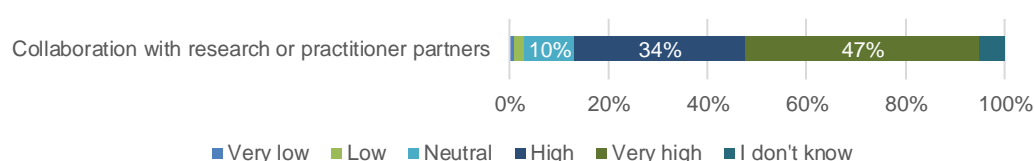
	ARF1	ARF2	ARF3	ARF4	ARF5	ARF6	SRF1	SRF3
Transdisciplinary team	X	X		X	X			X
North-South collaboration						X	X	X

Programme-wide findings

North-South collaboration

Grantees generally indicated that the North-South partnerships were successful. Despite that this was only a requirement in ARF6, SRF1 and SRF3, throughout most calls such partnerships were foreseen. The survey shows that a majority of the respondents indicate that the collaboration with research or practitioner partners (i.e. North-South collaboration) has contributed significantly (34% high, 47% very high) to the achievement of the project's objectives. This was also confirmed by interview feedback.

Figure 3.2 Extent to which the North-South collaboration helped to reach project's objectives? (N = 79)



While both North and South grantees expressed satisfaction with the partnership, the reasons explaining this differed.

Northern partners stated that the collaboration allowed for access to **local networks**. It has opened doors which would have remained closed without a (particular) southern partner, especially due to the difficult context of the countries as well as the relative short duration of projects. The southern partners were able to bring existing local networks to the table, comprising of local researchers, community members and/or, to a lesser extent, policymakers.

Northern partners also emphasised that southern counterparts were **highly knowledgeable of the local context**, trends and sensitivities. Merely knowing the local language would not have been enough. This is particularly the case for projects geared towards communities where ongoing developments could have impacted the community's willingness to participate in research. One southern partner stressed that a holistic approach to community involvement is required in this type of research:

'It is essential not to jeopardize the government activities neither the actions by the community. Therefore, one needs to understand very well how a community functions and who are the influential people. In order to set up community structures, all members of the community should be represented. These include young leaders, business owners, etc. These should represent different levels of standards of living, groups who were born in the settlement, newcomers, different ages, different gender, different quality of settlements, etc. It is important to recognise all voices'.

Southern partners emphasised the importance of northern counter parts in leading the **development of the research methodology** and granting access to **existing literature and sources**. Even though it seemed that not all research proposals were the result of a joint effort by

the entire consortium⁵⁸, southern partners generally indicated that they had improved their research capabilities (i.e. with regards to methodological approaches or data management).

Southern partners also emphasised that the collaboration with northern partners increased **visibility**. Collaboration helped them to gather data and disseminate research in a more structured manner as well as to broader international circles:

'We were able to develop an international network, intensify our relationship with the local community, and attend high level meetings which created exposure for our organisation. When working on a follow-up EU project, we were able to contribute significantly to the proposal writing'.

The partnership has allowed the southern partners to extend their networks with international researchers and research institutions. Interviews confirm the positive experiences of grantees. One southern partner indicated that after the project ended, it applied with the northern partner for other opportunities.

Despite these positive iterations, the evaluators also identified concerns with relation to the collaboration. With northern partners often leading the consortium, some interviewees perceived their role to be more as data collectors rather than full partners. One survey respondent noted:

'The perception by Southern organisations is not positive. [The grant] is seen as a way to fund Dutch or Nordic organisations who have connections [and] as a way for Northern NGOs or [universities] to use Southern organisations to collect data'.

Some interviewed southern partners (involved in different projects) also reported being 'used' as data collectors and hardly having been involved in the analysis of the research results. One local partner stated:

'We have the expertise, the field knowledge, the capacity to adapt (...) we felt that there wasn't a proper recognition of our role, we were like fixers (...)'.

This local organisation also suggested that insufficient funds were allocated to them in order to fulfil the tasks on the ground. This was echoed by several representatives of local organisations in the context the case studies⁵⁹.

The perception that the collaboration with local partners could have been better was also reflected by of some of the Northern lead organisations:

'We probably could have strengthened the input from country researchers. We had locals collaborating with us which provided a great deal of access, that would otherwise not have been possible. However, their input could have been strengthened'.

Finally, from a programme management perspective the North-South collaboration did put additional pressure on the NWO-WOTRO team. Some southern partners had no or very limited experience with NWO and/or research projects in general. Sorting all administrative matters was therefore at times quite complex and required substantial effort from the programme management staff.

⁵⁸ In some cases, southern partners were not involved in drafting the proposal as northern organisations would take the lead.

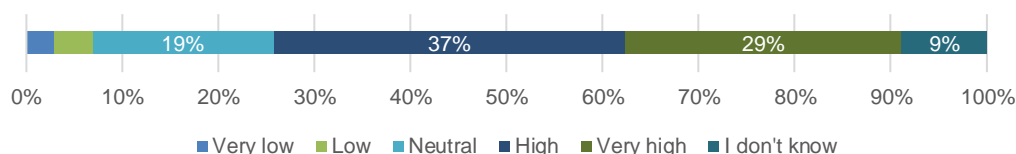
⁵⁹ Further detailed in section 3.3.1.

Transdisciplinary teams

The transdisciplinary set up of the teams was an official requirement for the calls ARF1, 2, 4, 5 and SRF3, but a vast majority of the consortia consisted of such teams. These teams consist of researchers with different academic backgrounds (i.e. economist, political scientists, social scientists, lawyers) in combination with practitioners and/or civil society representations.

Grantees indicated that the mixed backgrounds of team members helped to research issues from various, at times surprising, angles.⁶⁰ This is corroborated by the survey findings.

Figure 3.3 Extent to which the transdisciplinary nature of the team helped to reach project's objectives (N = 79)



One of the interviewees part of the case studies addressed the role of a transdisciplinary team in developing interdisciplinary research:

'The transdisciplinary team combining experience in different fields of expertise such as social sciences, demography sciences, political sciences, etc. contributed to come up with a comprehensive methodology and a deep analysis of the results which tackled all relevant features of a complex situation'.

Interviews show that **collaboration with practitioner organisations** was perceived to be the most valuable. Practitioner organisations based in the global South are generally very familiar with the local context and have access to large networks. A southern partner involved in a community-centred project states:

'Although the role of the our organisation was mainly centred around data collection, we were a valuable partner because of our strong knowledge of the community. The founder of the organisation was a gang member himself and understands very well the dynamics of the community. This has helped him to identify and reach out to the influential players that could participate to dialogues as part of the research'.

A concern raised was the fact that the involvement of practitioner organisations might require additional time and energy as these partners might not be familiar with work processes applied in the global North. An interviewed representative of a practitioner organisation said that they had professionalised significantly as a result of participation in the SRoL project. Prior to their involvement in the study, they would hardly use emails to communicate and they did not work with computers. This changed throughout the project, but did require some degree of flexibility from the side of the other partners.

Finally, a substantial number of interviewees mentioned that the transdisciplinary consortium had been effective in communicating and coordinating because the organisations had previously worked together in another study. Although this was not a formal requirement in all calls (only in ARF6), it can be perceived as a best practice.

⁶⁰ Grantees were more inclined to speak about the North-South partnership when discussing the constellation of the research teams. One reason for this might be the applicant's experience in participating in research projects where transdisciplinary research teams are required. The North-South collaboration is less common and might thus explain why this aspect was discussed more intensively.

Story of change

Having had little previous experience with large research projects (such as the one funded by the SRoL Programme), one of the southern partners indicated that participation in this project significantly enhanced their methodological and project management know-how. Throughout the project's lifespan, the southern partner enhanced its network both on the national and international level. The rich experiences that this partner gained through its participation to the MFA funded-project, enabled them to take on a larger role in a new EU-funded project. Based on the experiences from the SRoL project, the partner contributed significantly to the design of the research approach.

3.2.3 To what extent did co-creation contribute to reaching the planned objectives?

In the majority of the ARF calls (with the exception of ARF3), co-creation was explicitly mentioned as an element to be included in the project proposal.⁶¹

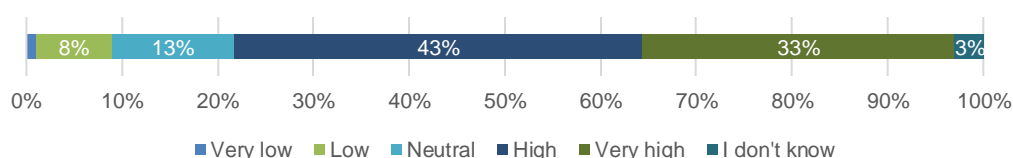
Table 3.4 Overview of requirements per call

	ARF1	ARF2	ARF3	ARF4	ARF5	ARF6	SRF1	SRF3
Co-creation	X	X		X	X	X		

Programme-wide findings

Generally, interviewees were satisfied with the way the different partners collaborated in developing and implementing the research design. Grantees enjoyed working intensively with other team members, while intermediate beneficiaries appreciated getting their voices heard. The survey supports this finding by showing that co-creation contributed (very) highly to the achievement of the project's objectives.

Figure 3.4 Extent to which the project reached its objectives and the importance of co-creation in terms of having contributed to this result (N = 79)



Grantees were generally positive about the inclusion of views and perspectives of various relevant stakeholders. Different reasons were provided.

The inclusion of a variety of actors would help grantees **to better understand the local and to fine-tune the research strategy and the approach towards data collection**. This proved to be particularly relevant in the cases where projects were dealing with sensitive topics and complex groups of stakeholders. The added value of practitioner organisations was again emphasised in order to finetune the research design (based on their knowledge of the local community) as well as involve the local community. One of the southern partners stated:

"We were involved as a practitioner organisation and were tasked with data collection. Since I (the head of this organisation) used to be part of a gang myself, I know the community very well. The organisation started mapping interest areas for the research and identified influential youth (i.e. leaders of the

⁶¹ Co-creation refers to the collaboration between different types of actors (i.e. academics, societal stakeholders and practitioners) in joint problem definition, the design of the research, conducting research and the assessment of outputs.

community). Based on this initial work they started community dialogues where they discussed extremism, the role of the community and the role of young people in combatting extremism".

Co-creation in an early stage of the research would help generate **buy-in with the relevant stakeholders**. For studies where data collection required the involvement of certain groups of a population, it was found to be useful to engage with (representatives of) those groups at an early stage. One of the grantees confirmed strong co-creation with end-users that were consulted at the beginning of the project (and as such involved in the project conceptualisation) and at the end of the project's life:

'There was active buy-in by end users on the ideas discussed. The co-creation process was particularly useful in that it allowed to see the issues practitioners are facing when dealing with non-state actors on the ground.'

Some grantees indicated that they did not only invite relevant groups to discuss the study approach at an early stage, but also engaged them later on to discuss preliminary findings. This helped them to understand whether the first set of findings was in line with the expectations of the stakeholders and whether upcoming research activities would require a specific focus.

Moreover, the co-creation activities in order to **open dialogue and enhance mutual understanding** were found particularly relevant in fragile contexts⁶². This could be understood as a foundation for reducing the fragility and, therefore, co-creation (with stakeholders) can be perceived as an essential component for projects with a SRoL focus.

Nevertheless, it became clear from the interviews that grantees also struggles with co-creation. Various challenges were identified.

Engagement of policymakers in the co-creation process was difficult due to the **sensitivity of the research topics**. This did not only affect the relevance of the project research (i.e. policymakers could have helped improving the research approach by indicating which discussions are ongoing in policy-circles), it is likely to have also impacted the uptake of research outcomes. As mentioned by a number of interviewees, co-creation helps to create buy-in with relevant stakeholders. With relevant stakeholders being absent, the ability and willingness to take up research outputs was affected. Interestingly, however, some grantees suggested that, while co-creation with local practitioners and NGOs was undoubtedly useful, strong involvement of governmental actors and policymakers could have been counter-productive, precisely because of the sensitivity of the topics discussed:

'In the first place, it is very difficult to have them fully engaged for a true co-creation project. Secondly our views would differ too much. Involving them could, in the end, turn out to be counter-productive and limiting the research'.

In addition, some grantees also reported **administrative or legal constraints** which hampered their co-creation activities. This was for example the case in Libya when needing to study the role of Hezbollah as a non-state security actor. Legal constraints for researchers to engage in dialogue with this organisation meant that the team had to converse with secondary stakeholders that maintained dialogue with the organisation. One interviewee stated:

⁶² Also highlighted in section 3.2.1.

‘We had encountered challenges in true co-creation because of the impossibility of dealing with proscribed groups such as Hezbollah. These challenges were mitigated by cooperating with organisations that deal with such groups in their daily work’.

Another challenge with co-creation has been the **limited time and funding**. Grantees were sometimes not able to engage certain stakeholders as much as they would have liked.⁶³ One grantee regretted that the timeline did not allow for more extensive co-creation with stakeholders, for example through a more thorough consultative process.

‘Six months is too tight for work like this. From other experience we found useful to have a more consultative process of reviewing findings also to ensure buy-in. Longer time frames would have been more helpful. From our end the major hindrance was skipping steps – we would have liked to have had more consultations to refine the messaging’.

One intermediate beneficiary expressed disappointed that her organisation had only be included in one co-creation session where the community had formulated. Members of the community were positive about the session and expected a follow-up activity in order to discuss these recommendations with law enforcement. A second session never took place due to time and budget constraints. The intermediate beneficiary then decided to host such a session by itself, without involvement of the grantees.

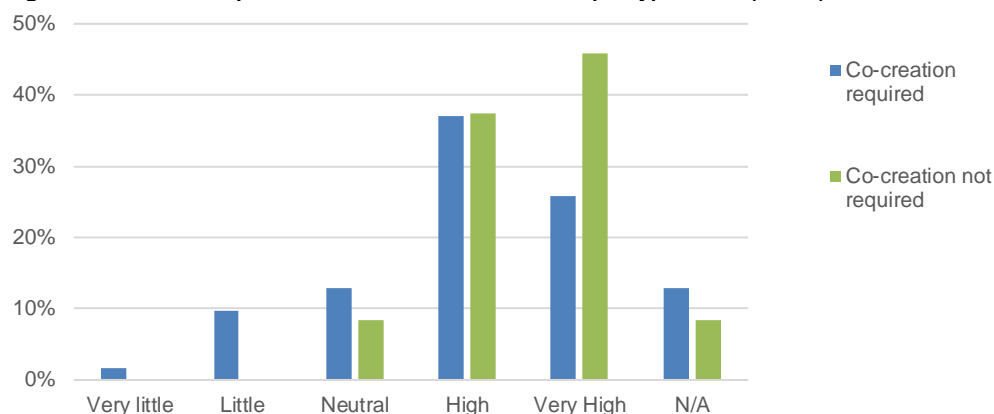
Similarly, another interviewed intermediary beneficiary was identified as co-creation partner in the proposal, but was unaware of the project and of any events. This person did show great interest in the research outcomes, particularly given the fact that it received funding from a different donor for a similar project. It is unclear what the internal (i.e. lack of visibility, coordination of the grantees, and/or limited capacity or institutional memory at the site of the intermediate beneficiary) and external (i.e. lack of overall coordination in an international donor environment) reasons are for the limited involvement of this stakeholder. In a similar vein, it is challenging to pinpoint the role that NWO-WOTRO could potentially have played in verifying whether organisations actually adhere to what they propose (and if they do not, what the reasons for this are). Continuous monitoring would require substantial additional resources, while unannounced checks by the SRoL management might harm the implementation of the project. Despite this, the evaluators do note that this is arguably a missed opportunity to foster co-creation.

An interesting finding is that respondents from projects where co-creation was not a requirement⁶⁴ are generally more positive about the relevance.

⁶³ See section 3.3.2 for a more elaborate analysis.

⁶⁴ ARF3, SRF1 and/or SRF3.

Figure 3.5 Responses to relevance of co-creation per type of call (N = 86)



SRF grantees were generally more positive towards co-creation than ARF grantees, possibly due to the availability of more time. Co-creation is considered a time-consuming activity, especially when intermediate and final beneficiaries are to be engaged. The relatively short run-up to the start of the projects (after award) is understood to have intensified this issue. A key question is whether the SRoL programme made a realistic estimation of how much time would be required for co-creation.

The management of the SRoL Programme was aware of the challenges faced by the grantees as a result of the lack of time. They therefore required applicants to the ARF6 fund to submit support letters that showed the commitment of relevant external stakeholders to the project. A part of the work related to co-creation was thus moved from the actual project lifespan to the proposal phase. The responses provided by ARF6 beneficiaries show that these respondents indeed perceived co-creation to be more relevant than grantees who participated to other ARF calls. This supports the assumption that a lack of time affected the added-value of co-creation.

It has to be noted, however, that the requirement to prove commitment from external stakeholders in the proposal phase was not received well by all grantees. One of them indicated:

'The letters of support were certainly helpful, they would give you a sense of the sensitivities whenever they would request changes to the proposed letter. On the other hand, it takes a lot of energy and time to reach out to those stakeholders and, subsequently, collect those letters – especially in such an early phase of the study. It really puts a lot of pressure on the researcher and I wonder whether an investment of such a size pays off, in the end'.

Both grantees as well as the SRoL programme management confirmed that the research as part of the ARF6 call was particularly tense as a result of the lack of time. Although the new requirement to present support letters alongside the proposal took away pressure from the implementation phase of the study, it seems like this pressure was shifted towards the preparatory phase.

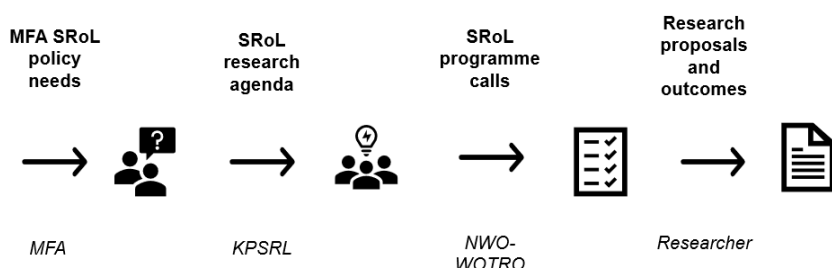
Noteworthy observations

Throughout the interviews, it had become clear that the concept of co-creation is understood differently by the different stakeholders. Whereas some grantees understand co-creation as exchanges with the 'client' (i.e. NWO-WOTRO and/or the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs), others perceive co-creation as local stakeholder engagement and focus on the inclusion of communities on the ground. Each of the understandings of co-creation can be useful to enhance the relevance of the project. As specified in section 3.1, the SRoL Programme is aimed at enhancing knowledge on the field of security and rule of law in general, thereby targeting various audiences. In an effort to unravel these different views, the evaluators identified three levels of co-creation, namely co-

creation with the SRoL Programme management, co-creation within the consortium and, thirdly, co-creation with the relevant stakeholders in the field.

By **co-creation with the SRoL management**, the evaluators do not necessarily refer to the ‘regular’ donor-grantee relationship. Policymakers in the Netherlands constitute one of the key audiences for which the SRoL projects develop their outputs and outcomes. Therefore, co-creation with the SRoL management is relevant in order to understand the needs of these policymakers. The MFA is partially involved (through its role in the KPSRL) in setting the research agenda. However, as other parties are also involved in this process and, ultimately, applicants design the research approaches, the MFA’s influence on the studies topics is limited. The illustration below depicts how the policy needs by the MFA are ultimately transformed into research outcomes.

Figure 3.6 Illustration development of SRoL research agenda and calls



This shows how the MFA, while being the main donor and an actor in steering the SRoL research agenda, has limited interaction with the researchers that ultimately translate their policy research needs into studies. Based on the interviews with various representatives of the MFA in The Hague and at the embassies located in the case study countries, two caveats became apparent. Firstly, research that is proposed and conducted does not always meet the needs of the MFA. This is due to the fact that the MFA has limited influence on how the research agenda is ultimately translated into research. Secondly, not all project teams are connected to the embassies in the country where the research is implemented. In fact, none of the embassies in the case study countries were aware of the SRoL projects that were implemented in their respective countries.

In other words, there is a lack of co-creation with the MFA, the KPSRL and/or NWO-WOTRO. This results in research projects leaving potential avenues to increase relevance untapped. Furthermore, feedback collected suggested that communication between the grantees and the SRoL management at an early stage of the projects was deemed successful. Those who participated in the ARF6 call, appreciated the webinar at the start of the project cycle as it helped them to put a “face to the name” and enabled them to ask direct questions to those involved in the management of the programme (both content- and admin related). Some of the interviewed co-applicants shared that they would have appreciated to interact with the SRoL management in order to obtain a better understanding of their objectives and expectations.

On the **consortium or team level**, co-creation is deemed essential in order to cumulate the experience and knowledge of the different researchers involved. With teams consisting of experts of different academic and geographic backgrounds, this form of co-creation also plays a role in enhancing the relevance of the research. As elaborated upon earlier, both the transdisciplinary aspect as well as the North-South collaboration are perceived to be relevant elements which play a significant role in achieving the project’s objectives. However, in order to make the most effective use of the knowledge within the consortium, co-creation is deemed pivotal to unlock the consortium’s potential.

The interviews showed consortium co-creation does not necessarily happen in a natural way. Based on discussions with various grantees, it became apparent that the research proposal was not always developed by all parties in the consortium. Due to a lack of time, main-applicants sometimes opted to develop the proposal with a selection of the partners. Some partners that were not included in this process indicated that they would have been able to contribute to the proposal writing (i.e. with community-specific insights). In addition, grantees involved in studies which included various cross country components indicated that there was sometimes little to no communication between the members of the consortium. They perceived this to be a missed opportunity as exchanges between the various teams could have helped to advance the research findings.

Finally, **co-creation with relevant stakeholders in the field** is understood as organising multi-stakeholder activities such as workshops, cultural events or less formal activities such as day-to-day community dialogues. Project outcomes and outputs are also intended to be relevant for these actors and, therefore, this third layer of co-creation is deemed highly relevant. Interviewees confirmed that the involvement of stakeholders requires ample preparation and a good understanding of the needs of actors. The involvement of southern (practitioner) organisations seems essential in this regard as they are able to make use of their local networks. Given the, at times, complex local contexts, interviewees underscored that sufficient time is required to adequately prepare for such co-creation sessions. In addition, as the security context in research countries is precarious, co-creation sessions are vulnerable to changes. One representative of a practitioner organisation shared:

‘Elections and the political climate play a big role. I had selected a group of people to participate in a dialogue, however, due to political developments this group was not deemed to be the most relevant group anymore and I had to change my approach. This costs a lot of time’.

3.2.4 *To what extent did the use of impact pathway by grantees to plan and track outcomes and impact contribute to reaching the planned objectives?*

In the majority of the calls, grantees were obliged to develop an impact pathway as part of the proposal phase. These impact pathways were intended as a monitoring mechanisms to force the researchers to think about how the project activities would result in outputs and, eventually, impact, and grantees were requested to develop a set of indicators to track the success of their activities.

Table 3.5 Overview of requirements per call

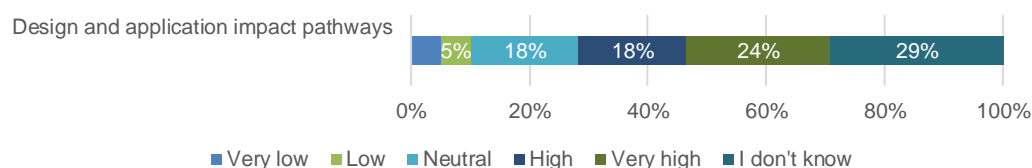
	ARF1	ARF2	ARF3	ARF4	ARF5	ARF6	SRF1	SRF3
Creation of an impact-pathway	X	X		X	X	X	X	X

Programme-wide findings

Interviews and case studies show that main applicants have a positive perception of the **relevance of impact pathways**. One of the interviewees described developing an impact pathway as ‘an excellent way to make the implicit explicit’. The interviewee indicated that many applicants, in particular academics, are generally not used to thinking about research output, uptake and indicators. This exercise forced the team to think about these elements, which would otherwise remain implicit. Survey data also corroborates this finding, with 39% of respondents rating the pathways usefulness as high and very high.

Grantees overall were positive about the support by the SRoL Programme staff in developing their impact pathway, with 42% (35) of survey respondents rating this support as good or very good.

Figure 3.7 Rate the organisational support you received from NWO-WOTRO in design and application of impact pathways (N = 82)



The collected feedback indicated that a number of respondents needed support to develop an impact pathway. This was confirmed by interviewed NWO-WOTRO representatives. Therefore, **training on working with impact pathways** was provided at the beginning of ARF6 during the kick-off webinar. This training was very positively assessed by the interviewed ARF6 grantees.

A critical note is that interview feedback suggests that **mostly main-applicants are aware of the impact pathways**. Co-applicants, local researchers, support staff, etc. generally are less familiar with existence of this specific mechanism in SRoL project management. The survey shows that co-applicants would often indicate 'not applicable' with regard to the usefulness of the pathways, presumably pointing to the fact that they were less involved in their design and implementation. An interviewed grantee explained:

'We used impact pathways and found them useful, but it was not easy for our partners to do so, as they found them to be not immediately clear and difficult to report on. It emerged also as an issue in our collaboration'.

The risk that local partners might be less familiar with the concept of impact pathways, and how to produce them, can have implications for the selection procedure of the SRoL Programme. If organisations are not familiar with the use of impact pathways, it risks limiting access to calls where the use of this tool is required.⁶⁵

Another concern is that interviewees indicated that after the creation of the impact pathway, they had hardly used it throughout the implementation of the project. The pathway had helped them at the start of the project, however, once the research activities started demanding an increasing amount of attention, the **ability and interest to work with the tool** reduced.

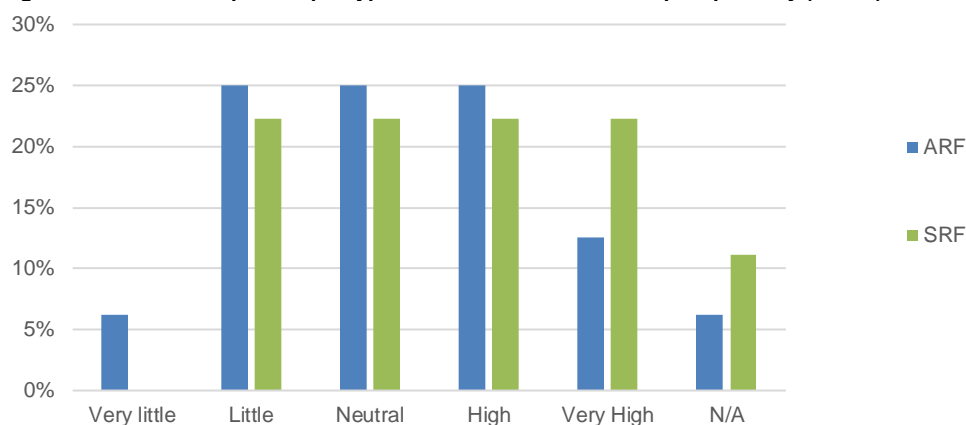
Noteworthy observations

It is possible that there is a correlation between the perceived relevance of the pathways and the length of the projects. The figure below shows that SRF survey respondents generally rate the usefulness of impact pathways more positively. This could be explained by the fact that those projects enjoyed a longer lifespan, which allowed them to spend more time implementing the tool. Interviewees from ARF6 projects confirmed that the impact pathway was less relevant because there was little time to push the tool from paper to reality. In addition, they questioned to what extent impact can be measured when projects only last maximum 9 months (which was the case for ARF projects). One grantee explained:

'The idea is good. The [SRoL] programme wants to obtain inputs from projects to inform its overarching programme pathway. The principle is good but there is a risk of this becoming meaningless in the case of a nine-month project. It's too much to ask: you can't change course easily in nine months'.

⁶⁵ This can be linked back to the broader discussion on the selection criteria for the SRoL programme, further elaborated in section 3.2.8.

Figure 3.8 Responses per type of fund on relevance of impact pathway (N = 25)



3.2.5 To what extent did project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) contribute to keeping the project on track in regard to research, research uptake and capacity development⁶⁶?

The presence of M&E activities was explicitly stated in the SRF1, SRF3, ARF1, ARF2, ARF4 calls.⁶⁷

Table 3.6 Overview of requirements per call

	ARF1	ARF2	ARF3	ARF4	ARF5	ARF6	SRF1	SRF3
Monitoring and evaluation	X	X		X			X	X

Programme-wide findings

For the SRF1 projects that lasted longer than 24 months, NWO-WOTRO included in the call criteria the submission of mid-term content and financial reports, as well as the organisation of a self-assessment workshop. These requirements were expanded in the SRF3. The mid-term reports would then be assessed and evaluated by the IAC. Being significantly shorter, ARF projects were not requested to conduct a mid-term self-assessment. Projects across all calls were asked to fill out a self-assessment report at the end of their lifespan, which would then in turn also be evaluated by the IAC.

Desk research shows that SRF1 projects that received mid-term feedback from the IAC addressed this feedback and adjusted their approach as a result of it. As SRF3 projects have only been finalised recently, only one final IAC evaluation report was available at the time of writing of this final evaluation. NWO-WOTRO SRoL Programme staff confirmed that, where needed, mid-term check-ins were organised with SRF3 grantees and with ARF6 grantees, together with the KPSRL.

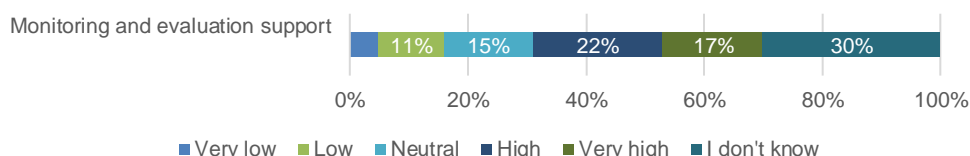
Grantees confirmed that the M&E support provided by NWO-WOTRO was generally good, with 39% (32) of survey respondents rating it as good or very good. One of the grantees interviewed in the context of a case study confirmed:

‘The monitoring of the project [by NWO-WOTRO] was appropriate and not burdensome. The mid-term assessment was useful and the input received both by the KPSRL and NWO-WOTRO was constructive. [It did not consist of] micro managing the research but rather of driving lessons learned’.

⁶⁶ In light of the similarities of the questions answered in this and the following section, joint conclusions are presented at the end of 3.2.6.

⁶⁷ I.e. there was a dedicated ‘Impact pathways, monitoring & evaluation’ section in the calls for proposals. Impact pathways are foreseen as a way to monitor the project’s progress and the final self-assessment workshops and reports (as well as the IAC assessment) as a way to evaluate it.

Figure 3.9 Rate the organisational support you received from NWO-WOTRO in M&E (N = 82)



Noteworthy observations

It is noteworthy that 30% (25) of the respondents to the survey, indicated that the question on organisational M&E support was not applicable to them. Indeed, interview feedback suggests that **direct contact with NWO-WOTRO was only carried out by the main applicants**. While this can facilitate interaction from an administrative perspective, some interviewees confirmed that communication with partners other than the main-applicant could be beneficial for the entire team. One interviewee, for example, remarked that while the lead applicant did an excellent job at coordinating the work, direct interaction with NWO-WOTRO would have sometimes been appreciated and also useful in structuring and adapting the research as the project progressed.

The research conducted so far shows that **no significant difference** can be detected between projects that did or did not have to undergo a mid-term review. However, the evaluators were not able to assess all SRF3 projects as their final reports and assessments were not available at the time of writing of this final report.

Lastly, some mid-term evaluation reports discuss project management challenges and suggest that these could have been anticipated. Along the same lines, the evaluators noted that there is **limited attention to risk and mitigation strategies** in the project proposals, with no inclusion of a dedicated section on risks related to personnel changes. When the evaluators discussed this aspect with the SRoL Programme staff they agreed that this was a point that needed additional consideration.⁶⁸

3.2.6 To what extent did project M&E contribute to project learning and the improvement of research, relevance and research uptake (generation of project outcomes)?

Programme-wide findings

No significant difference in terms of better project learning and generation of outcomes can be detected between projects that did or did not have to undergo a mid-term review.⁶⁹ The available final self-assessment reports show that grantees were not asked to explicitly reflect on the steps made to achieve their outputs and outcomes, or on the adjustments made during the implementation of the project as a result of external challenges.

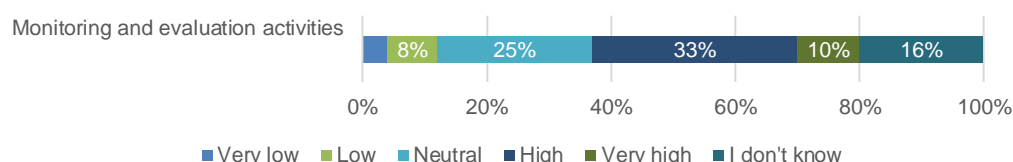
Survey recipients were asked to rate the importance of a series of elements of the programme design in achieving project objectives. This included M&E activities.

As shown the figure below, 43% (34) of the respondents rated M&E activities as highly or very highly relevant in order to achieve project objectives, including generation of outcomes.

⁶⁸ Issues related to the lack of project management risk assessment are further elaborated upon in section 3.3.2 of this report.

⁶⁹ Note that at the time of this final report, the evaluators did not have access to all the final reports of projects that underwent a mid-term review.

Figure 3.10 Rate the usefulness of M&E activities (N = 79)



Noteworthy observations

No specific M&E activities were envisioned for ARF projects; however the survey shows that 33% of ARF respondents (22 out of 66) rated the impact of M&E measures on the achievement of project objectives as high or very high. After following up with these grantees, it became clear that project teams had developed and implemented their own M&E mechanisms, regardless of the SRoL Programme requirements. This is noteworthy in the sense that the SRoL Programme did not foresee **formal monitoring mechanisms** for projects of a duration shorter than 24 months. Annual reports of the SRoL Programme include a section on M&E of projects. However, this seems to describe more the administrative support provided to grantees (e.g. processing requests for changes such as no-cost extensions or budget reallocation) rather than true M&E of outputs and outcomes from a research perspective.

3.2.7 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?

A mid-term evaluation of the SRoL Programme was conducted and published in August 2017. The evaluation aimed to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the SRoL Programme with a view to drawing lessons learned, improving the design and/or management of the ARF and SRF grants, and improving accountability towards funding agencies, government and society at large. This resulted in a series of recommendations made by the mid-term external evaluator.⁷⁰

Programme-wide findings

Some of the recommendations provided in the mid-term programme evaluation were taken up and reflected in the development of the ARF6 call for proposals:

- As suggested by the recommendations, at call development stage, NWO-WOTRO, the KPSRL and the MFA held several meetings to address the question of who the research should be relevant for;
- The ARF6 call included, as suggested in the mid-term evaluation, a two-step selection procedure. Applicants were invited to first submit an expression of interest, which was then

⁷⁰ 1.To introduce a two-step process for submitting proposals to enhance the likelihood of selecting projects that are based on genuine partnerships. Under this scheme, only applicants that pass the first assessment, based on the evaluation of an expression of interest, would be invited to submit a proposal; 2.To develop a communication strategy to improve the outreach of the calls to research organisations in the Global South and to practitioner organisations in the Global North and South; 3. For the PC to commission research into the outcomes and impact of a selection of completed projects a year or more after their conclusion, with the aim of generating enhanced insights on: (a) The knowledge uptake of research findings by intermediate beneficiaries; and (b) The relation between knowledge uptake and the sustainability and quality of the collaboration between researchers and practitioners, and between northern and southern consortium partners. These insights should be used to improve the calls, to guide applicants and to improve the selection of projects. 4. For NWO-WOTRO to critically review its overheads in relation to the workload of the Secretariat, the IAC and the PC and adjust costs to ensure that staff can deliver the work in a timely manner without being affected by chronic stress; 5. For the SRoL research programme to: (a) Restore the original maximum project duration of two years for ARF funds; (b) Expect projects to take as little time as possible, but as much time as needed to generate relevant and well-researched findings. 6.For the SRoL research programme to include the MFA as an intermediate beneficiary in future calls and include relevance for MFA policy as one of the assessment criteria for selecting research projects. Distinction should be made between two categories of projects: (a) Projects that will be assessed on relevance for MFA policymaking and implementation; (b) Projects (within the KPSRL/MFA priority areas) that will be assessed on relevance for practice and policymaking and implementation of other intermediate target groups. Each of these categories of projects will be allotted part of the budget for one call.

assessed by the Societal Panel, a committee created ad hoc for this purpose. At this stage of the selection process, the MFA also provided advice on the relevance of these preliminary proposals. With the MFA providing input already at this stage of the selection process, it was hoped that the calls selected would be also more reflective of their needs;

- An additional selection criterion was created, which requested applicants to provide proof of a successful history of collaboration amongst consortium partners. This decision was also based on NWO-WOTRO experience with previous calls – where projects with a history of collaboration had often escaped project management hurdles.

Looking at the outputs of ARF6 projects, including the assessments of the final reports by the IAC, all projects seem to have contributed to developing evidence-based insights on the focus area of the call. Furthermore, several projects reported involvement or contact by the researchers with Dutch policymakers. This was evaluated positively by the IAC and represents a step forward towards better linking the SRoL research with the needs of the MFA compared to previous calls. One representative of the MFA stated:

‘The KPRSRL linked me to the researcher halfway through their project implementation. This was very useful and helped us both disseminate the findings through the Ministry’.

However, the IAC assessments also note that, while most projects have a high potential for impact, effective uptake by policy makers is difficult to estimate, much like was the case with previous calls.⁷¹ As such, it is hard to establish whether the changes to the programmed design made as a result of the mid-term evaluation effectively contributed to improvements, in particular with regard to relevance of the programme for Dutch policymakers⁷².

Noteworthy observations

Overall, the quality of the mid-term report was deemed unsatisfactory by both the MFA and NWO-WOTRO. In particular, the MFA regretted that the neither the first draft, nor the final report were timely shared with them, and questioned the methodology and findings obtained. Similarly, interviewed representatives of NWO-WOTRO confirmed that:

‘The mid-term evaluation came at a very tense and complex time [in the relationship between NWO-WOTRO and the MFA]. The SRoL team also felt the report was incorrect in some of its findings. It has had some effect, but was not a massive success’.

The dissatisfaction expressed on the MFA’s side with regard to the dissemination of the mid-term evaluation report fits into a broader pattern identified by the evaluators of lack of clarity in the interactions between the MFA, NWO-WOTRO and the KPRSRL in the management and implementation of the SRoL Programme.⁷³

3.2.8 Was the selection of research projects conducted in an impartial and independent manner?

The selection procedure of projects is spelled out in detail in each of the calls. Applicants are made aware that project bids are to be submitted through an online platform (ISAAC) and that the NWO-WOTRO staff will do a first screening on eligibility. Proposals will then be assessed in a ‘first round’ by the PIE against the selection criteria defined for the specific call. After this initial assessment, applicants are allowed to respond to the feedback and comments provided by the PIE. During the second round, the IAC will review the proposal, the comments by the PIE and the rebuttal by the

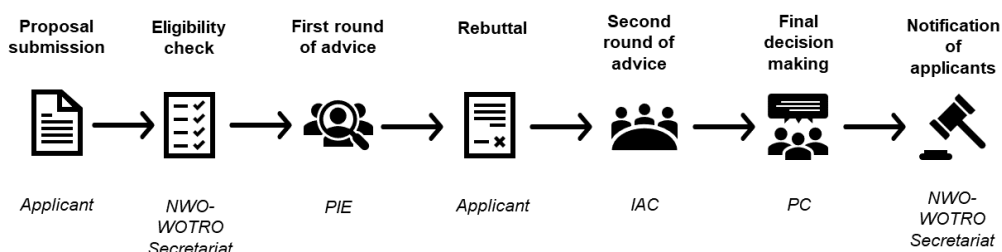
⁷¹ As discussed in section 3.2.1.

⁷² The evaluators have encountered difficulties in getting in touch with policymakers that were aware of and/or involved in the programme since the beginning and which could have been capable of answering this question adequately. The representatives of the MFA we interviewed were unsatisfied with the Mid Term Review and challenged its findings.

⁷³ This is discussed in more detail below in section 3.2.9.

applicant and will, subsequently, rank the submitted proposals based on their quality. This ranking is then presented to the PC who has the final say in the award of the grants. The PC bases its decision on the recommendations by the IAC. If the PC decides to deviate from the IAC's advice, they need to provide solid argumentation for this change. Once the PC has made its final decision, applicants are informed accordingly. If desired, they can then appeal the decision. The image below helps visualise the application procedure.

Figure 3.11 Visualisation of application procedure



Programme-wide findings

Generally, most interviewees perceive the selection procedure to be rather **complex**. Despite the fact that the calls describe the selection process in a transparent manner, the full procedure is difficult to grasp because it involves a number of different advisory and decision making bodies, all somewhat interdependent. This is echoed by various interviews with staff involved in the management of the SRoL Programme, which also indicated that the large variety of actors and many consecutive steps make the process vulnerable to delays. It was mentioned that the high pressure placed on the various bodies involved in the selection process resulted in deadlines not always being met and individuals involved in the process suffering from work-related stress.

Role the PIE

A particularly interesting element in the selection procedure is the use of the PIE, who remain anonymous to the IAC, the PC and the evaluators of this final programme evaluation.⁷⁴ The identities of these **international experts** are not revealed in order to ensure objectivity. However, several interviewees questioned this approach. On the one hand, the anonymity allows the international experts to assess the projects in a fair manner as they cannot be approached by applicants or individuals involved in the application procedure. On the other hand, as one interviewee mentioned, even though proposals are submitted in an anonymised fashion, one cannot disguise the style of writing of the applicant or avoid the possibility that researchers know each other professionally.

'The quality of the reviews by the PIE evaluators was generally good. However, the amount of time and effort spent on a review would sometimes differ. The anonymity of the PIE evaluators could pose a problem: it is unclear whether they are affiliated with the one who wrote a proposal and even the slightest detail (i.e. style of writing) could help someone to identify the applicant'.

In addition, as evidenced by the quote above, the **quality of the advice** provided by the PIE differs per proposal evaluator. The difference in quality of these advices impacts the rest of the application procedure as it sometimes results in a low-quality advice to be disregarded. Moreover, the PC would sometimes advise the NWO-WOTRO staff to refrain from asking a specific international expert in the future. As the international experts are granted anonymity, it is challenging for the IAC

⁷⁴ Interestingly, the composition of the PIE was published in the SRoL Annual Report for 2014 (which is not a public document but is shared with the MFA).

and PC members to deal with such varying degrees of quality, in particular because they cannot be sure what to expect each time.

Role of the IAC

The role of the IAC is that to provide expert advice to the PC on the quality of the proposals received. IAC members evaluate and rank research proposals, advise the PC on funding, assess the quality of mid-term (when applicable) and final evaluation reports and advise the PC on their approval⁷⁵.

The interviewed IAC members confirmed that the evaluation procedure is relatively straightforward: after an initial assessment by the PIE, the proposals are received by each individual IAC member, who assign individual ratings and provide comments on their quality. All proposals received are then discussed in a face-to-face/Skype exchange, and the ratings assigned by each IAC member are compared. The interviewees reported initial difficulties in comparing and assessing the advice received by the PIE, as the type of scoring used differs between the two committees.

All interviewees judged the procedure to be **thorough and fair**. However, it was highlighted that this is a very elaborate and academically oriented process. In the opinion of the interviewees, whether such an elaborate procedure is justified or not is something that needs to be linked back to broader discussions on what the objectives of the SRoL research programme, also in line with expectations of the donor organisation. The IAC interviewees, as did others in the course of this evaluation, expressed their belief that further clarity is needed on who the target beneficiaries of the SRoL research programme are, in order to also improve the selection procedure and ensure that the most appropriate proposals are identified.

'The proposals ranking system looks at both academic and policy relevance – but the heart of the matter is to really establish what this programme is for. NWO-WOTRO comes from an academic background and this is reflected in the nature of the calls. If the MFA is looking for quick, policy oriented research then perhaps this setup should be reconsidered'.

Interestingly, it seems that not all IAC members are involved in reviewing project reports. One interviewee was not aware that the IAC conducted this task. Some of the members interviewed also had difficulties remembering the total number of Committee members, or how often they would meet. Overall, in practice, the Committee seems to be more disjointed than it appears to be on paper.

Procedures to avoid conflict of interest

The evaluators noted that the number of different organisations involved in the selection procedure represented a risk of possible **conflict of interest**. One applicant found itself in a situation where a member of one of these organisations took up a role in the KPSRL, while also being involved in an application process for a SRoL Programme grant. As a result, measures to avoid a potential conflict of interest were put in place and the staff member withdrew from the proposal. All interviewees indicated that the measures taken to avoid such conflict of interest were adequate and sufficient.

⁷⁵ When first created, the IAC was made up of five independent international experts employed by research organisations outside the Netherlands, four independent international experts employed by practitioners organisations outside the Netherlands, and one independent technical chair from the Netherlands. In the following years, the Committee expanded to adjust to the increased workload. In 2015, the IAC split in IAC1 and IAC2, with six researchers and five practitioners, one coming from a LMIC. Four original committee members were retained to ensure continuity. The following year, a third IAC was created for the assessment of ARF5 proposals, bringing the number of members to nine researchers and seven practitioners, of which four representing a LMIC. IAC practitioners also contributed to the selection procedure of preliminary applications during the ARF6 call, through the ad-hoc created Societal Panel. In spite of the guidelines on the geographic diversity of IAC members, the evaluators found that at least one of them has been a long time employee of a Dutch organisation and one other is of Dutch nationality.

Application procedure and call requirements

Information gathered through desk research and interviews shows that grantees were overall satisfied with the application procedure for the SRoL Programme. Amongst survey respondents, 69% (57) furthermore reported having received good or very good **support by NWO-WOTRO** during the overall grant and application procedure.

The **two-step application procedure** which was introduced in ARF6 after the mid-term programme review was generally perceived by grantees as positive. One interviewee indicated that this forced them to establish a consortium in the early phases of the application procedure, something that tends to be pushed forward in other grant applications. As a result of this, there was more room for co-creation within the consortium, which helped advance the project proposal.

One ARF6 interviewee expressed concerns about the level of detail and the set requirements that the consortium had to fulfil in relation to the relatively short time span allowed for call preparation. The collection of support letters from end-users requested in the ARF6 call was particularly challenging for the applicants: approaching relevant stakeholders and co-developing support letters was an intense task which added to the already heavy workload of proposal preparation. While on the long-run this was a useful exercise, on the short run this posed challenges. Nevertheless, once the consortium was awarded the grant, the team enjoyed the clarity that the call requirements provided: it was clear what was expected from both the applicant as well as from NWO-WOTRO which helped to smoothen the process of kick-starting the project.

Finally, interviewees shared doubts on the openness of the calls towards global applicants. A number of interviewees, both amongst representatives of NWO-WOTRO, the KPSRL and grantees, expressed concerns regarding **call requirements** which could arguably be more easily met by organisations with stronger research and tender capacity.⁷⁶ One KSPRL representative commented:

'A disappointing aspect is the limited inclusion of researchers from the South because of the structure of the review process. More could have been done in terms of being more open to a broader understanding of appropriate credentials. It would be beneficial to include selection criteria which allow for a more diverse geographic base'.

There are concerns that the call requirements may automatically disadvantaged grantees from less developed countries. Looking at the geographic distribution of grantees, it is clear that projects have generally been led by organisations located in the global North, which skews the diversity of the project teams (and, possibly, their findings): out of 58 projects, only seven were implemented with a southern organisation in the lead. Of the remaining 51, 24 had a Dutch organisation as a main applicant.⁷⁷

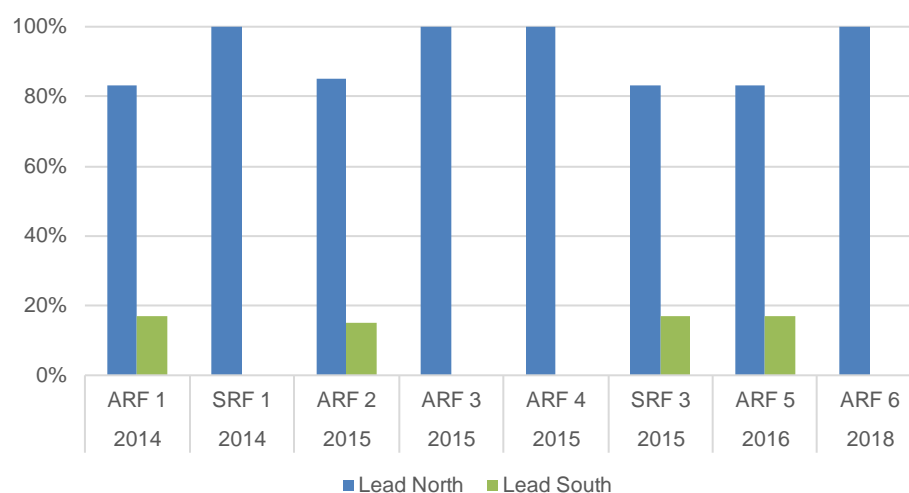
An overview of the grantees also shows that the situation has remained constant throughout the lifespan of the programme and did not improve over time: the most recent grants, ARF 5 and ARF 6, were almost fully implemented with Northern organisations in the lead (in all cases for ARF6⁷⁸ and in 10 out of 12 cases for ARF5).

⁷⁶ A full overview of the call requirements for each grant can be found in Annex 8.

⁷⁷ A full overview of the geographical distribution of project grantees can be found at Annex 2.

⁷⁸ For one project the lead was an INGO with a local office in the South.

Figure 3.12 Geographical distribution of lead applicants over time (N = 58)



The table below provides an overview of the number of proposals received for each call and the geographical spread of the lead applicant for those that were deemed eligible.

Table 3.7 Geographical spread of lead applicants per received proposals

Fund	Proposals received	Eligible proposals	Lead N	Lead S
SRF1	<i>Pre-proposals. Lead N (on all proposals received)⁷⁹ = 75%</i>			
	16	10	12	4
	<i>Full proposals. Lead N = 100%</i>			
	4	4	4	0
SRF3	<i>Pre-proposals. Lead N (on eligible proposals) = 74%</i>			
	20	19	14	5
	<i>Full proposals. Lead N = 91%</i>			
	12	12	11	1
ARF1	<i>Lead N (on all proposals received) = 86%</i>			
	21	19	18	3
ARF2	<i>First round. Lead N = 60%</i>			
	10	10	6	4
	<i>Second round. Lead N (on eligible proposals) = 91%</i>			
	13	11	10	1
	<i>Third round. Lead N (on eligible proposals) = 81 %</i>			
ARF3	<i>First round. Lead N (on eligible proposals) = 67%</i>			
	5	3	2	1
	<i>Second round. Lead N (on eligible proposals) = 80%</i>			
	8	5	4	1
	<i>Third round. Lead N (on eligible proposals) = 67%</i>			
ARF4	<i>Lead N (on eligible proposals) = 100%</i>			
	4	3	3	0
ARF5	<i>N/A</i>			
	27	25	4	5

⁷⁹ The data presented in this table was taken from the Annual reports of the SRoL programme. Any discrepancies in the way the geographical lead is assessed (i.e. based on all proposals received or only on eligible proposals) and in the figures derive from the reports themselves.

Fund	Proposals received	Eligible proposals	Lead N	Lead S
ARF6	<i>Lead N (on eligible proposals) = 77%</i>			
	25	22	17	5

Source: NWO-WOTRO, SRoL Annual Reports 2014-2018

The data suggests that (a) the selection criteria are not broad/flexible enough for a global audience (and in particular for organisations located in fragile settings) and/or (b) that the calls for proposals were not disseminated widely enough. Annual SRoL reports (2014, 2015 and 2016) do indicate that the calls are disseminated broadly, including through social media channels. However, the first point of contact is, in the majority of the cases, a northern organisation, which could explain the higher number of northern (lead) – southern (co-applicant) relationships.

It is also interesting to note the comments provided by one of the grantees in relation to the call requirements:

'The call for proposals and requirements to meet are awkward and artificial for this type of research, especially because we work in very volatile environments'.

The starting point for understanding which criteria can be too restrictive for (some) southern organisations is to analyse the factors that constitute a research capacity gap in these areas. Research into this field has been able to identify several of these gaps⁸⁰ in LMIC countries, ranging from fragmented policy frameworks for research, to poor project management capacities, but also a lack of adequate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure. In such a setting, an online application system - such as used in the SRoL Programme - favours organisations that are more familiar with the use of such technology and have adequate project management systems in place.⁸¹ The system itself appears to be, even from the calls for proposals, fairly complex, including the need to fill out forms directly on the platform itself. This is not ideal for organisations based in contexts where access to Internet can be intermittent and/or unavailable. And while a phone helpdesk is available to support registration and submission, the number provided (up until ARF5 calls) was not open to calls from all foreign telephone providers.

The needs to provide all annexes to the proposals in English, including legal proofs of registration of non-Dutch organisations applying⁸² and letters of support, are also arguably more easily met by northern outfits. Opening up these requirements to other languages spoken in LMIC countries (such as French and Arabic) could also facilitate application by local southern organisations.

3.2.9 *Were the working arrangements between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL effective in achieving the programme objectives?*

The KPSRL was established in 2012 to support the implementation of the Dutch SRoL policy⁸³. To help achieve this, the platform developed the SRoL Programme in close cooperation with the MFA and NWO-WOTRO. Its role within the framework of the programme consists of providing NWO-WOTRO with identified knowledge gaps, which NWO-WOTRO then translates into calls for proposals, as well as promoting knowledge exchange in the specific field of security and rule of law.

⁸⁰ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d42be4eed915d09d8945db9/SRIA_-_REA_final_Dec_2019_Heart__003_.pdf

⁸¹ Formal eligibility criteria for all funds require that main applicants submit their application through an online platform (up until ARF4 Iris, then changed to ISAAC), and that all co-applicants must be registered on the platform as well.

⁸² We note this is marked as 'preferable' and not compulsory.

⁸³ When first launched in 2012, the KPSRL was run by a consortium of the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael) and the Hague Institute for Global Justice. The consortium changed in 2017, and the platform is currently run jointly by Clingendael, Saferworld (UK), and IDLO.

Programme-wide findings

The SRoL programme is unique in its design, not only for the specificity of its research agenda, but also for the working arrangements between the two implementing parties and the donor organisation. Perhaps in view of the experimental design of such arrangements, the relationship between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL has been fraught with a series of challenges.

Lack of contractual arrangements

One of the first issues identified by all relevant interviewed stakeholders is the **lack of formal contractual arrangements** between the NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL. Both organisations have a formal contract with the MFA, but not with each other. Instead, the basic principles of the interaction between the two actors are laid down in the SRoL Programme document, which states that ‘the Platform will provide substantive guidance to both the Strategic Research Fund and the Applied Research Fund [in determining the research agenda], but it will not play a formal decision-making role in the allocation of research funds’. In turn, ‘NWO-WOTRO will manage the Calls for proposals derived from the research Agendas of the Knowledge Platforms and the research projects selected from these Calls’.⁸⁴

Interview feedback with representatives of the SRoL Programme staff and the KPSRL confirm that, indeed, the broad arrangements laid down in the original programme document were not enough to be effective. First and foremost, while the KPSRL role was initially foreseen to be only related to setting the research agenda for the calls, the platform’s input was in practice more extensive. As remarked by a KPSRL representative at the time:

‘Our cooperation was quite intense: WOTRO had experience and knowledge of how to design calls, arrange procedures, etc. But they weren’t as experienced in translating inputs received from platform members into research calls. The KPSRL provided substantive input and co-designing of the calls. We tried to stay as much in the substantive part and focus on content, but we also ended up involved in the procedural aspects by extension’.

Furthermore, as confirmed by multiple interviewees, the lack of formal arrangements also initially contributed to significant confusion over the allocation of responsibilities, in particular with regard to **knowledge sharing activities**. Initially, there was no dedicated budget for these activities within the SRoL Programme, and no plan with the KPSRL on how to manage this specific aspect.

Interview feedback suggests that the lack of clear responsibilities resulted in **communication deficiencies** on project outputs, as well as missed opportunities for coordination of new grant calls. KPSRL representatives that took up their role during the second phase of the platform (after 2017) stressed that right from the beginning of the handover it was clear that a lack of clarity on the division of tasks amongst the two parties - and the understanding of uptake responsibilities in particular - had affected their relationship from the start.

That being said, lack of clarity on “who-does-what” and difficulty in implementing in practice theoretical arrangements are also issues that every new programme faces at the beginning, especially those where cooperation between the implementing parties is experimental. One interviewee stated:

‘In hindsight, clearer instructions [on task allocation] would have been better, but we were experimenting at the time’.

⁸⁴ Programme document: Applied Research Fund and Strategic Research Fund of the SRoL Knowledge Agenda; p.2;15.

It is also worth noting that the lack of clarity over the role of the KPSRL was reflected in the interview feedback received from grantees. Responses on the level of satisfaction with the KPSRL interaction vary across projects, seemingly with no visible pattern. Desk research has shown that, within the same fund, some beneficiaries report to have been very happy with the support received by the KPSRL in disseminating project outputs, while others express significant disappointment and lack of interaction.

'The SRL platform is very active and supportive and knowledge and very much strengthened and supported the dissemination activities. The platform is very results-driven and values high impact, which was stimulating, in return it offers valuable contacts and supported meetings for dissemination in relevant ways'. (ARF5 grantee)

'We would like to get in touch with the Knowledge Platform in order to find the best way to share on the platform our study.' (ARF5 grantee)

Lack of dedicated funds for knowledge dissemination and uptake

The lack of dedicated knowledge uptake funds was another frequently mentioned issue by SRoL/KPSRL representatives alike with regard to the challenges in their interaction. An NWO-WOTRO interviewee reported:

'One of the issues we encountered right away was that there was no budget for communication activities reserved at WOTRO, because it was understood that the communication to the outside would be done by the KPSRL. Knowledge dissemination and uptake suffered because of this: the communication around the projects could have produced more if a dedicated budget had been available. The synergies between the projects (with a similar thematic focus and/or within the same call) in particular could have benefited from this'.

KPSRL representatives also confirmed:

'There is no dedicated fund within the KPSRL for uptake of NWO projects, and vice-versa. It's manageable informally but not ideal, also because this is not the only thing that the KPSRL does – we also have our own projects, deal with knowledge more broadly, etc. At some point, you reach a limit'.

Lack of staff capacity

Limited staff capacity within both organisations, frequent turnover and leaves of absence also affected the cooperation between the KPSRL and NWO-WOTRO and caused delays in programme implementation. The lack of staff capacity and its impact on the work of both organisations and their cooperation was clearly documented in SRoL Programme annual reports, which stated:

'For the other calls (Open ARF and two future SRF calls) serious delay has occurred because the knowledge platform suffered from lack of manpower to formulate the thematic demand'. (Annual report 2014)

'During the second part of 2017, personnel issues within both the SRoL team at NWO-WOTRO and the Platform led to a period in which of collaboration and streamlining of activities was less intensive'. (Annual report 2017).

Incidentally, frequent staff turnover within NWO-WOTRO also affected the relationship with grantees, as evidenced by both the desk research and the survey results. One of the survey respondents indicated frustration at being:

'Often left dangling at the end of a phone conversation. People were just not around to take our calls or respond to requests for support'. (ARF4 grantee)

Another grantee also confirmed that the turnover in the team made it sometimes difficult to deal with the organisation and caused delays. This is consistent with the feedback received from SRoL Programme staff, who confirmed that responsiveness to grantees became slower as number of projects increased (and their duration decreased) and acknowledged that grantees might have felt that.

Other structural issues

Other issues constraining to some extent the collaboration emerged during conversations with programme management representatives on both sides, also with regard to the working methods of NWO-WOTRO (and NWO more broadly).

KPSRL representatives reported frustration at the lack of willingness to share information on projects by NWO-WOTRO, which results from their established institutional practices:

'NWO is a large organisation, and the four-person unit dealing with SRoL at WOTRO cannot necessarily deviate from established organisational practices. An example is the existence of codes and standards to maintain the secrecy of proposals received – in the context of ARF5, NWO was not willing to share the awarded proposals. This was problematic for the KPSRL because they felt it did not allow for true engagement'.

This feeling of a lack of engagement was also confirmed by another interviewee, who stated that the highly secretive and bureaucratic selection procedure, including the lack of KPSRL participation⁸⁵, was not conducive to cooperation. On the other hand, NWO-WOTRO remarked a similar lack of engagement with regard to KPSRL involvement in the dissemination of SRF3 projects in particular:

'So much more could have been done with SRF3 projects, but we found that there was zero to little engagement because the KPSLR in its current composition wasn't there when these projects started and does not feel ownership'.

Cooperation with the MFA – the tripartite relation

The relationship between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL cannot be analysed without considering the broader context of their interaction with the MFA.

Representatives from all stakeholder organisations involved agreed that there were several difficulties over the years in establishing and strengthening cooperation mechanisms between the MFA, NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL. This can, to some extent, also be attributed to the experimental nature of the SRoL Programme and of this tripartite design in particular.

On the one hand, while MFA representatives conceded that the interaction between the KPSRL and NWO-WOTRO had initially been taken for granted, they felt there was a lack of communication on NWO-WOTRO's side and of understanding of their research needs. On the other hand, both the KPSLR and NWO-WOTRO representatives reported that a clearer establishment of goals and allocation of responsibilities on part of the MFA would be beneficial to their overall interaction. NWO-WOTRO representatives explained that coordination with them and requests for their input

⁸⁵ NWO-WOTRO maintains that the non-inclusion of the KPSRL to the selection procedure is, as detailed in the programme document, a way to ensure absence of conflict of interests.

during the tendering phase for the second iteration of the KPSRL would have been useful in order to develop a common strategy for the future of the SRoL Programme:

'We were not consulted on the activities to include as part of the KPSRL role when the call for tender was launched, and we did not have access to the proposals received, so our cooperation was again not described on paper'.

This is regarded by NWO-WOTRO as a missed opportunity. Similarly, KPSRL representatives regretted a lack of real ownership of the programme on the donor's part, and believe that it would be a key aspect to work on for a new successful iteration of the programme:

'One of the key steps forward for this programme would be to have a true three-way ownership, with active participation on the MFA's side'.

Reflections on the experimental programme design and utility vis-à-vis the MFA

During the presentation of the interim results of this evaluation in The Hague on 13 December, MFA representatives raised the question of whether 'the experimental programme design is consistent with the attainment of the programme's goals and objectives'. This question stemmed from the findings that this tripartite reflection was fraught with the challenges already described.

When looking at rationale of the tripartite arrangement, the evaluators note that the decision of the MFA to involve both the KPSRL and NWO-WOTRO in 'procuring' SRoL research is justified. It is noted, however, that this does not mean the approach is necessarily the most suitable. In fact, in the beginning the MFA could have also decided for a uni-partite (i.e. the MFA alone) or a bipartite (i.e. MFA with only KPSRL or with only NWO-WOTRO) arrangement. Which options can be considered best, needs to be further researched and falls outside the scope of this evaluation. However, there are lessons to be learned from looking at the way in which this tripartite arrangement was designed and operationalised.

Table 3.8 Overview of possible trade-offs

	Possible advantage	Possible disadvantage
Pooled research requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More transparent selection process • Independent awarding of research funds • Competitive process allows for more candidates • Possible procurement efficiency gains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less direct contact with researchers • Less control over the selection of researchers/projects
Centralised thematic research scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better harmonisation of research • Possible spill-over of knowledge within and outside the organisation • Higher chance of being aware of relevant research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain information is not accessible because it falls outside the scope • Possible lack of utility

Firstly, the decision was taken to pool resources via NWO-WOTRO in order to procure research. Rather than procuring individual research assignments directly from the Ministry, this 'pooled' approach would allow for a more transparent, independent and competitive process. At the same time, there could be possible efficiency gains given the Ministry would not have to initiate for

each request specific procurement processes. The trade-off of this approach would be that the Ministry has less control over the selection of researchers/projects and during the implementation of the research and less direct interaction with the researchers. Arguably, the choice to ask NWO-WOTRO to manage the pooled research funds is adequate given that this is part of the core business of the entity. NWO-WOTRO has a network, extensive experience, and in-house expertise in running large research funds and thus could ensure that this would be done in a transparent, independent and competitive manner. The KPSRL, while also having the mandate to procure research, would, due to its smaller size and recent establishment, not be in the position to manage funds of this size.⁸⁶

The evaluators indeed found that the choice of having NWO-WOTRO running the research grants allowed for a more transparent, independent and competitive process.⁸⁷ It is however unclear to which extent this resulted in efficiency gains, for the MFA as one of the end-users of the research, but also for the SRoL community more broadly. From the perspective of the MFA, interview feedback with Ministry representatives suggests that the trade-off identified above of having less direct interaction with the researchers did play an important role in the usability of the research. The fact that outputs were shared at the end stage of projects reduced the relevance for decision-makers that were seeking on-the-spot, ad hoc information.

Secondly, rather than having the MFA members of staff requesting specific, on-demand studies from researchers, a 'centralised' approach allowed for more streamlining of the thematic scope of requested SRoL research⁸⁸. This would allow knowledge collected by the MFA to spill over to other practitioners and researchers inside and outside the Ministry. Further, it would provide access to information that the Ministry might not have had access due to lack of awareness. A possible trade-off of this approach was (similar to the one above) that stakeholders interested in certain information might not be able to access this if the topic does not align directly with the thematic scope. Also, less control over the content of the requested research could affect its usability for decision-makers. Arguably, the choice to ask the KPSRL to work as a knowledge broker and bridge the gap between practitioners and researchers has been adequate.

The evaluators find that while the idea of the tripartite on paper is good, in practice the results from the arrangement have been less successful. Indeed, the decision of having the KPSRL lead on setting the research scope allowed for more thematically centralised approach. A key factor for its success vis-à-vis the MFA was the deployment of a KPSRL staff member within the Ministry in order to ensure alignment of research needs. However, it is by no means clear whether the knowledge collected by the MFA through the SRoL research funds spilled over within and outside the Ministry. A question mark remains on whether the content of the research produced by the SRoL Programme has been useful for decision-makers at the MFA. Interview feedback suggests that the objective of being able use evidence-based information for decision-making in the area of SRoL has been limited for the MFA, and interviewed representatives could not point directly to examples in which research of the SRoL Programme contributed to evidence-based decision making on their part.⁸⁹

Noteworthy observations

Looking at the development of the SRoL programme over the course of the past six years, it is clear that the relationship and the interactions between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL have changed significantly, taking into account the lessons learned with the development and implementation of each new call. All NWO-WOTRO/KPSRL stakeholders interviewed, as well as the MFA, agreed that

⁸⁶ This was also confirmed by interview feedback from the MFA.

⁸⁷ This was confirmed by interview feedback from the MFA.

⁸⁸ As discussed in detail in section 3.2.3.

⁸⁹ Interview feedback from one policymaker of the MFA confirmed there was spillover.

the relationship has changed positively in the most recent years, also triggered by a shared understanding that the interaction was not as effective or efficient as it could have been. This was also evidenced in the Mid-Term Review of the KPSRL, which defines the ‘clarification in working arrangements and improvement in working relations between the KPSRL and NWO-WOTRO’ as a most remarkable achievement.⁹⁰

Significant steps into redressing cooperation issues were taken with the development of a comprehensive Action Plan for ARF6, detailing roles, responsibilities and action points for NWO-WOTRO, the KPSRL but also the MFA. All interviewees agreed that significant improvements stemmed from the Action Plan, including an increase in mutual trust. Other steps forward to redress structural issues, such as the secrecy of proposals and project documents were also made in the context of the ARF6 fund, with grantees now being informed in their self-assessment report that the information they provide will be shared with the KPSRL and could be published on their website. More visibility was also given to both the MFA and the KPSRL directly in the call for proposals (already from ARF5).

Furthermore, the establishment of a KPSRL-MFA liaison officer seconded once a week to the Ministry has helped generate interest in the SRoL research and translate requests for knowledge by the MFA into suggestions for research proposals. KPSRL representatives also confirmed that there are attempts at keeping the interaction with NWO-WOTRO constant through the organisation of biweekly meetings and monthly meetings with the MFA (although the latter are more difficult to implement, reportedly). The most recent appointment to the MFA of the former head of the KPSRL also leads to hope that opportunities for new synergies will be more easily identified and built upon.

The effort at improving relations – and the programme itself – during ARF6 is also reflected in the opinion of grantees. While survey respondents (41%/33) have indicated that KPSRL support on research activities was overall (very) good, ARF6 grantees in particular found that participation to organised events, such as the KPSRL Annual Conference and the ARF6 uptake seminar in July 2019, were very useful for fostering interaction with other international researchers and practitioners. This enthusiasm was also shared by the grantees interviewed in the context of the case studies. One grantee highlighted that these meetings are particularly important for local organisations, and that efforts should be made to ensure that these southern partners are always invited and represented.

The ARF6 projects also interacted more closely with the KPSRL and the other relevant stakeholders in the Netherlands through the setting up of an introductory webinar before the awarded projects kicked off. The webinar was deemed highly useful by grantees, the MFA, the KPSRL and NWO-WOTRO alike, as it also helped shed light on the role and responsibilities of the KPSRL vis à vis project dissemination activities. One grantee in particular who had participated to both the ARF6 and another call highlighted the stark difference in the KPSRL role across grants, stating:

‘I have had the opportunity to compare the work of the KPSRL between the [ARF]6 call [and a previous call] and I have seen a clear improvement here. I really appreciated the effort that [the liaison officer] made to keep the Ministry involved in the research project and to set up meetings for us. In the [first] project, turnover within the Ministry resulted in us losing our counterpart for this project early on in the process. In the [ARF]6 project, [the liaison officer] took it upon himself to keep identifying key stakeholders within the Ministry and to bring them all around the table. This ensured that the consortium could continue to focus on our own work and really to some pressure off of us’.

⁹⁰ Mid-term review (MTR) of the (KPSRL), 2019 <https://www.kpsrl.org/kpsrl-2019-mid-term-review-mtr>.

The comments and feedback from all parties involved in the SRoL Programme – ranging from grantees, to KSPRL/NWO-WOTRO management, to the MFA – clearly show that positive and concrete steps forward have been taken in the past few years towards ensuring increased effectiveness in the cooperation between the KPSRL and NWO-WOTRO.

Despite these improvements, structural obstacles remain, including, for example, the perceived limited capacity and financial resources for knowledge brokering of the SRoL Programme. In this context, lessons could be learned by looking at the relationship between NWO and other Knowledge Platforms. One example could be the work conducted with the INCLUDE Knowledge Platform in the context of the programme ‘New roles of Civil Society Organisations for Inclusive Development’ (also funded by the MFA and linked to their ‘Dialogue and Dissent’ policy framework). Within this relationship, knowledge brokering is part of the NWO funding. Although the balance between NWO and INCLUDE in this case is skewed - as this platform reports directly to NWO rather than the MFA, as in the case of the KPSRL – this approach is deemed to be a positive experience by SRoL programme management representatives, and could be studied as a starting point to further improve the NWO-WOTRO/KPSRL relationship.

3.3 Efficiency

To which extent have the programme resources been adequately used to reach the programme and fund objectives?

For the purposes of this evaluation, efficiency is intended as ‘the extent to which the SRoL research programme resources (i.e. financial resources, capacities, time) have been well used to reach the programme and fund objectives’.

In order to assess this, the evaluators have investigated whether a) the programme activities carried out were cost-efficient and b) whether the programme objectives were achieved on time. Where relevant, the evaluators looked at how and if efficiency differed depending on the fund (ARF or SRF) and the individual calls (ARF1, ARF2, etc.).

3.3.1 Were the programme activities carried out cost-efficient?

Programme wide findings

The data collected during the course of this evaluation shows that the changes made in 2015 to the programme structure (specifically with regard to the ARF grants) affected the programme’s overall performance from an efficiency perspective. Already at mid-term review stage, observations were made with regard to the increased workload of the secretariat after such changes, with the mid-term evaluator noting that:

‘as a result of changes that were made in the course of the programme, NWO-WOTRO had to perform a lot more work than initially planned. This has taken its toll on the health and wellbeing of WOTRO staff working on the programme and has resulted in delays’.⁹¹

This is in line with collected feedback. Interviewed NWO-WOTRO representatives also confirmed:

⁹¹ Research Programme on Security & Rule of Law in Fragile and Conflict-affected Settings (SRoL research programme), Mid-Term Review (2017).

'The 6% overhead costs that were negotiated for us at the start of the project are not enough. We are expected to do all project management from this 6% budget, however, with the selection periods sometimes being very short, this is too much work for our small team'.

The additional workload resulting from the unexpected frequency and shorter length of the ARF grants also increased the composition, as well as the costs of remuneration for the IAC, as documented in the annual reports for 2015 and 2016.

On a project level, looking at how time and money were spent and perceived within each individual grant, the following considerations can be made.

Time

Throughout the lifespan of the programme, 41 projects out of 58 asked for a budget-neutral extension, which was always granted by the SRoL project management.⁹² The survey, desk research and interviews show that extensions requests were generally attributable to one or more of the following reasons:

- Finalising project outputs (finishing reports, policy briefs, etc. and organising dissemination activities at the time/location that would ensure as broad an output dissemination as possible);

'We intentionally delayed the project to ensure quality of research'.

'We requested a no-cost extension of 3 months in order to capture dissemination opportunities that only presented themselves after or in the last days of the project'.

- External factors (in particular unforeseen security challenges);

'The schedule was affected due to the political climate (Nigeria 2019 election) at the time and rising insecurity in the project site (Bauchi, North East of Nigeria)'.

'The security situation in the study area worsened - making field work impossible for a period of time'.

- Difficulties with project management/team (including administrative issues such as delayed payments and slow bureaucracy).

'Modifications had to be made due to: (1) health issues with the project lead and quality of the work of one project partner not meeting expectations; and (2) the security and political situation for the regional partners deteriorating during the project, having one institute even closed'.

'To confirm the accuracy of the results and that financial and narrative reports are reflective of Main and co-applicants, an extension by NWO-WOTRO was granted'.

SRF grants

The evaluators note that 78% (seven out of nine projects) of the SRF grantees requested a budget neutral extension. The requests stemmed from issues at project management level, such as changes in consortium and personnel issues (two SRF3 projects); issues with the data collection phase, which was more complex and took longer than expected (two SRF1 projects); and finally

⁹² At a programme management level, the representatives of the SRoL secretariat confirmed that budget neutral extensions and other changes were not seen as a particular issue, and they were often granted. However, this was deemed to be more problematic when the changes requested affected significantly the methodology of the project, and in particular changed aspects that had potentially been relevant in making the decision to award the grant to that project.

from the need to finalise project outputs and dissemination strategies (one SRF1 and two SRF3 projects). It is interesting to note that the Annual Report of the SRoL Programme records a lower number of projects (only two rather than seven), which requested a budget neutral extension than documented in project reports⁹³.

ARF grants

Looking at the ARF projects, 63% of the grantees (31 out of 49 projects) requested a budget neutral extension. The requests stemmed from issues ranging from the need to finalise project outputs, to administrative issues related to the project consortium, difficulties related to conducting the fieldwork and adjustments made to organise dissemination activities at a more convenient time⁹⁴.

A specific note must be made on ARF6 projects. Because of the ending of the funding of the SRoL Programme in September 2019, ARF6 grantees were not allowed to request budget neutral extensions beyond 1 September. Two projects (out of seven) were given short extensions (respectively two weeks and one month), but under the condition that compliance with the financial and content reporting schedule would be ensured. ARF6 beneficiaries found this to be a significant challenge, as emerged from the case study interviews, survey and the final project reports analysed by the evaluators. This was also confirmed by the representatives of the management of the SRoL Programme, who reported noticing significant stress from grantees involved in shorter timeframe grants overall, and ARF6 in particular.

Budget

An analysis of the information collected through the desk research, survey and interviews shows that, overall, grantees were satisfied with the financial means allocated to them to conduct their research. This was true across all grants, with only a few exceptions. In some cases, partners within the project team reported that the budget had not been adequately distributed internally, resulting in the lead partner allocating too little funds to the co-applicants. This was highlighted both by respondents in the surveys and during the case study interviews. In all cases, the complaint was made by local partner organisations. One grantee interviewed in the context of one of the case studies reported:

'The budget not enough for [our local organisation] – we had to do more than expected'.

Amongst survey respondents, 73% (60) confirmed they were able to fulfil their grant obligations according to the original allocated budget, whereas 7% (6) declared this had not been the case.⁹⁵ Within the latter group, three respondents indicated (a) having spent significant unpaid time on the project (due to alleged unfair budget allocation by the lead organisation); and (b) little NWO-WOTRO flexibility in fund redistribution, which resulted in the project team having to subsidise the research themselves (this was reported by two respondents):

⁹³ In the case of SRF3, this could be attributed to the fact that at the time of drafting of the Annual Report, only one SRF3 project had been finalised. Interviewed SRoL management representatives also confirm this assumption.

⁹⁴ In detail: In ARF1, two grantees out of six requested a short budget neutral extension, in both cases in order to finalise project outputs; In ARF2, 15 out of 20 grantees asked for a budget neutral extension, with five of them asking more than once. The extensions were needed to overcome difficulties related to conducting the fieldwork; administrative issues related to the project consortium; and to organise dissemination activities at the most convenient time; Only one grantee asked for a budget-neutral extension in ARF3 to help organise a knowledge sharing event at a more convenient time; In ARF4, the only receiver of the grant requested a two month budget neutral extension in order to organise dissemination activities; In ARF5, 10 out of 12 projects requested budget neutral extensions to overcome administrative issues, finalise project outputs and properly conduct dissemination activities. As in the case of SRF1 projects, here too it is interesting to note that in the Annual Report of the SRoL research programme for 2018, four ARF1 projects were indicated as having requested a budget neutral extension, whereas project documents only record two grantees requesting an extension. Interviewed SRoL management reports that these discrepancies might be due to the fact that some changes were registered in ISAAC and not in the local files.

⁹⁵ The remaining 20% (16) responded 'I don't know'.

‘My involvement with the project was on an advisory basis as a [local subject matter expert]. I led field research activities but unfortunately operating with half the requested budget as enforced by the project coordinator, with significant unpaid time (58 hours) spent on the project’.

‘Our lead researcher left during the course of the project. Delivering the project required us to subsidise the project from our own resources - particularly because NWO-WOTRO’s approach to how funds could be used was not as flexible as it should have been’.

When discussing the NWO-WOTRO guidelines on budget allocation, the interviewed representatives of the SRoL Programme staff explained that projects do have administrative flexibility. While personnel costs are quite fixed, other lines can be moved within 20% without asking for approval. It is also important to write the budget in a flexible way when submitting the proposal, in order to ensure that such changes can happen smoothly.

The desk research also confirmed that re-allocation of funds across budget lines was a fairly common practice, with beneficiaries of 35 out of 58 projects (60%) carrying out budget neutral amendments.

Interestingly, while many grantees requested (and were granted) a budget neutral extension, as detailed in the section above, the evaluators found that **many projects did not exhaust the full grant they were awarded**. Indeed, out of 53 projects,⁹⁶ only three exhausted their grant completely. In the remaining cases, the money that was not spent was returned to NWO-WOTRO after the project had ended.⁹⁷

In total (for the 53 projects that did have this information available) EUR 7.894.543,00 were allocated as part of the SRoL Programme. Interestingly, the projects report to have spent EUR 7.218.932,97, which leaves EUR 675.571,03 of funding to be returned to NWO-WOTRO after the projects had ended.⁹⁸ This accounts for 9% of the total budget.

When analysing the project’s financial reports in more detail, it appears that the majority of the funds that were revoked by NWO-WOTRO were originally reserved to be spent on knowledge sharing activities. A smaller portion of the returned funds was foreseen to be spent on research and personnel costs. The table below provides an overview of the funds granted, spent and returned on the SRoL programme level.

Table 3.9 Overview of SRoL funds granted, spent and returned (in EUR)

	Granted	Spent	Revoked	Revoked relative to total
Personnel costs	4.493.392,00	4.397.115,98	96.276,02	2%
Research costs	1.367.821,21	1.164.529,63	203.291,58	15%
Knowledge sharing costs	1.541.791,79	1.193.635,23	348.156,56	23%

⁹⁶ Financial reports are not yet available for the remaining five SRF3 projects.

⁹⁷ The evaluators confirmed with the SRoL management that the funds that were revoked were either used in one of the later calls or they were returned to the MFA. Annex 9 provides an overview of the budget awarded and spent per project as well as the amount that was returned to NWO-WOTRO. The evaluators based this overview on the financial reports it received from the SRoL Programme management.

⁹⁸ This analysis does not include the following five SRF3 projects as their financial reports were not available at the time of writing this final report: Security Assistance and Non-State Actors in Iraq, Syria & Afghanistan: Comprehensive and Inclusive Human Security Beyond the State?; Preventing the spill-over: combatting violent extremism with a human security approach in Palestine, Egypt and Iraq; Securing the Local: The Role of Non-state security groups (NSSGs) in the Struggle against Extremism in Kenya, Nigeria and Indonesia; Political dynamics in the Sahel and the appearance of nomadic pastoralist movements; and Towards more effective human security approaches in the context of the threat of violent radicalisation in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia emerging

	Granted	Spent	Revoked	Revoked relative to total
Total⁹⁹	7.894.543,00	7.218.932,97	675.571,03	2%

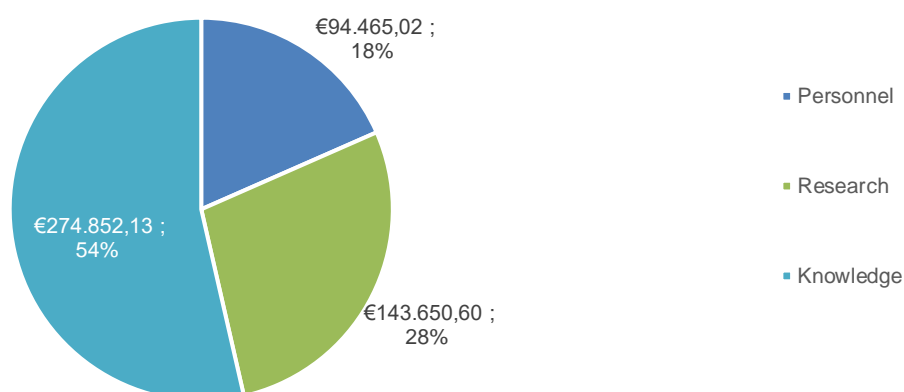
When breaking down these findings between the ARF and SRF funds, little variance can be found, as visible from the table below. Given the higher number of ARF projects, the total amount of revoked funds is higher (in comparison to the SRF fund).

Table 3.10 Overview SROl funds granted, spent and returned by ARF and SRF (in EUR)

	ARF			SRF		
	Budgeted	Spent	Revoked	Budgeted	Spent	Revoked
Personnel	3.395.826,00	3.301.360,98	94.465,02	1.097.566,00	1.095.755,00	1.811,00
Research	1.173.410,21	1.029.759,61	143.650,60	194.411,00	134.770,02	59.640,98
Knowledge	1.230.262,79	955.410,66	274.852,13	311.529,00	238.224,57	73.304,43
Total¹⁰⁰			540.613,05			134.756,41

The two graphs below illustrate the breakdown of the total amount of revoked funds for both ARF and SRF. These show how the largest chunk of returned funds was originally foreseen to be spent on knowledge sharing activities.

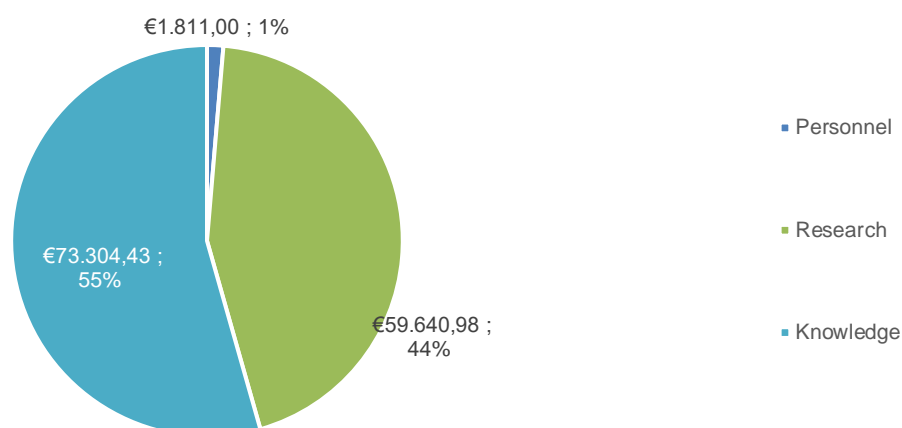
Figure 3.13 Overview of original allocation of revoked funds for ARF fund



⁹⁹ Please note that the totals do not fully add up from the rows above as some projects only reported the total amount of funds granted (i.e. ARF1: A transitional justice barometer: measuring the needs for and impact of transitional justice processes in Tunisia, ARF2: The Justice Box - a tool for evidence-based policy and legal empowerment in Mali and ARF5: T-STAN: Toolkit on Smuggling and Trafficking and a security and rule of law approach to their possible Nexus - with a focus on the route from Libya to the EU).

¹⁰⁰ Please note that the totals do not fully add up from the rows above as some projects only reported the total amount of funds granted (i.e. ARF1: A transitional justice barometer: measuring the needs for and impact of transitional justice processes in Tunisia, ARF2: The Justice Box - a tool for evidence-based policy and legal empowerment in Mali and ARF5: T-STAN: Toolkit on Smuggling and Trafficking and a security and rule of law approach to their possible Nexus - with a focus on the route from Libya to the EU).

Figure 3.14 Overview of original allocation of revoked funds for SRF fund



Despite that the constraints posed by the fragile context in which the projects have been executed should not be underestimated, they do not justify the high level of underspending. This amount is particularly surprising given the fact that interviewed grantees (predominantly southern partners) repeatedly reported having spent significant unpaid working time and/or having had to subsidise the project from their own resources. Several hypotheses can be advanced as to the reasons behind this:

1. The financial data reflects the sometimes unbalanced relationship between lead organisation and other consortium partners. The lead applicant bears the responsibility of allocating the budget among the partner organisations and co-applicants have a weaker position in terms of financial matters.
2. The underspending reflects a lack of (awareness on) flexibility to move funds across budget lines. With the exception of personnel costs, which, as discussed in the section above, are quite fixed, other lines can be moved within 20% without asking for approval from the SRoL management, but grantees are reportedly often not aware of this. This is also reflected in the financial data, which shows that personnel costs are the ones with the least difference between the amount granted and the amount spent.
3. The short time window between the award notification and the start of the projects might have affected the ability of applicants to adequately schedule their research and in particular dissemination activities. Various grantees indicated that, as a result of the quick start of activities upon awarding of the grant, the preparatory phase was not optimal. This might have led to less efficient spending of the budget (i.e. dissemination activities that were originally foreseen took place in a different shape). With data collection and validation activities being postponed (as a result of limited preparation time), it could be the case that the time that was originally reserved for dissemination activities was, in reality, used for research purposes. Although there are no significant differences between the ARF and SRF projects in this regard, one can assume that the impact of a limited run up time to the implementation phase was particularly felt by ARF projects as their duration was shorter in the first place.
4. Finally, a part of the revoked funds might be the result of poor project management from the side of the applicants. The general absence of a solid management risk section in project proposals might be one of the factors contributing to this.

It has to be mentioned that the assumptions listed above can have influenced the potential impact of the SRoL Programme. It has been mentioned several times that research uptake was affected due to limited outreach activities, which ultimately impacted the relevance of the programme.

An important note to make with regards to the above analysis is that the projects that were funded by the SRoL Programme also made use of co-funding. An assessment of the received co-funding is outside of the scope of this evaluation.

3.3.2 *Were the objectives achieved on time?*

Programme wide findings

The information gathered during the course of the evaluation shows that, overall, 71% of grantees requested a budget neutral extension (41 projects out of 58)¹⁰¹. This was done in 39% of the cases (mentioned 16 times as a reason by grantees) to finalise project outputs (and in particular to boost knowledge uptake activities and ensure as broad of an output dissemination as possible); in 46% of the cases (mentioned 19 times as a reason by grantees) because of external factors (in particular unforeseen security challenges); and in 17% of the cases (mentioned as a reason 7 times by grantees) because of difficulties with the project management/team (including administrative issues such as delayed payments and slow bureaucracy).¹⁰² Interview feedback has helped consolidate these findings by providing concrete examples of the challenges caused by external factors that the projects had to face.

When asked in the survey whether they felt that their objectives had been achieved in line with the foreseen timeline, 63% (52) of the respondents stated that grant obligations had been fulfilled within the scheduled time. While these two elements might seem contradictory, the discrepancy can be attributed to survey respondents interpreting the 'foreseen timeline' as the adjusted timeline (i.e. post-budget neutral extension).

According to 89% (73) of the survey respondents, the objectives of their respective projects were overall met. On the other hand, 11% (9) of survey respondents highlighted that the objectives of the grant were not always realistic in correlation with the time available and the scale of operations. The combination of an overly ambitious project design, with a short time frame was cited by this group of respondents as the main reason behind this. One respondent in particular also indicated that too much pressure was put on the local organisation without providing them with the necessary monetary resources to conduct the work effectively and efficiently.

SRF grants

Looking at the SRF grants, all participants who responded to the survey reported that their respective project objectives had been met. Several of the respondents attributed this to good coordination amongst the consortium partners, as well as their motivation and genuine interest in the research. Grantees participating to the SRF grants interviewed in the context of the case studies also confirmed this view. Out of 23 survey respondents for the SRF grants, five (21%) declared that their project objectives had not been met in accordance with the original timeline.

No significant differences were detected between SRF1 and SRF3.

ARF grants

Looking at the ARF projects, among the survey respondents for these grants, only two respondents out of 66 (3%) indicated that their project objectives had not been met. This was attributed to the

¹⁰¹ As already discussed in section 3.3.1.

¹⁰² Note that percentages do not sum up to 100% as some projects experienced multiple challenges combined.

short project timeline in one case and external factors affecting the project methodology on the other. Fifteen respondents (22%) declared however that the objectives had not been achieved within the original time schedule.

While no significant differences were detected across ARF grants, it is important to note that eight ARF survey respondents (12%) highlighted that the time frame allocated for these projects was too short. This often meant that grantees felt that the research objectives were not realistic, and that their work was conducted under significant pressure. This was confirmed also through the face to face interviews conducted for the case studies. One grantee stated:

'We could have done so much more if we had had more time. I think research quality and the extent of output could have been higher if we could have pushed further and dedicate more time to exploring innovative methodologies. We won't opt to bid for such a short project in the future'.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter provides an overview of the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings presented in the previous chapter. The conclusions are presented following the same structure as the analysis chapter and will address relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The subsections on each of the three themes will be concluded with an overview of recommendations, which, where relevant, have been divided specifically according to their target group (i.e. NWO-WOTRO, the MFA and project grantees).

4.1 Relevance

SRoL Programme

The thematic topics addressed through the SRoL Programme are contemporary and of importance to SRoL. However internal and external obstacles have limited the extent to which this caused actual policy changes.

The main internal obstacle has been the relative short duration of research projects limiting the emphasis on dissemination activities. Another obstacle has been the capacity of grantees to engage decision-makers. This partially had to do with the sometimes limited involvement of southern research partners in the target countries. The same for main (North) grantees where limited systematised interaction was identified with decision-makers (i.e. with the MFA).

The main external obstacle has been the lack of willingness of local decision-makers to engage on politically sensitive topics. Also other external political factors played a role, such as change of government and overall political fragility of the countries.

Further, in terms of relevance the findings show that knowledge generated through the ARF and SRF fills gaps identified by the project researchers in the respective countries. In addition, research outcomes have contributed to achieving the objectives of the different calls. These findings however cannot be corroborated by local decision-makers, due to limited access for this evaluation to this stakeholder group.

Finally, there is little difference in terms of relevance between ARF and SRF calls, nor the different types of projects or the regions.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

1. Continue emphasising the importance of the research process in order to engage local decision-makers from the start (i.e. through co-creation).
2. Ensure ownership of the MFA and/or embassies at the start of the project, as well as ownership of respective local public institutions. This could be in the form of a letter of support or a more formal memorandum of understanding.

Recommendations for MFA

3. Assign at the start of projects points of contact/policy makers to the research teams.
4. Schedule in-person or online introductory meetings with research teams.

Recommendations for grantees

5. Ensure sufficient (institutional) capacity on the ground to engage local decision-makers.
6. Involve local decision-makers at an early stage of the research process and build trust in order to be able to work on politically sensitive issues.

4.2 Effectiveness

Difference between the ARF and SRF funds

The findings show that there is a minimal difference between the effectiveness of the projects funded under the ARF and SRF funds. This is partially a consequence of the lack of specific call objectives under each of the funds; the calls for proposals under the different funds would sometimes list similar objectives. Hereby, the distinction between the ARF and SRF projects was blurred from the start.

Further, the outputs of the different projects vary only to a small extent, regardless of which fund they belong to. In addition, there was limited focus on the difference in strategic versus applied research when the project outputs and outcomes were assessed by the IAC which focused on the call objectives rather than based on the overarching objectives of the funds. Moreover, it was found that the actual impact generated by the projects (and thus, the programme) is difficult to assess due to lack of clear dissemination strategies by the projects, as well as limited time between the end of the projects and programme and the evaluation. In addition, the findings show that the relatively short time span of some of the projects (i.e. ARF) limited the possibility to generate impact.

Finally, an unexpected outcome of the SRoL Programme has been the positive contribution in both funds to personal capacity development. No significant difference was identified between the ARF and SRF.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

7. Rather than differentiating between the ARF and SRF fund, concentrate the resources in one 'overarching' fund and specify per call what the exact objectives of the projects should be. Where deemed necessary, the development of 'applied' or 'strategic' research can be mentioned as an objective. The calls can, depending on their objectives, vary in length and available funding.
8. In order to more accurately assess projects' impact, it is recommended to extend the evaluation process with the inclusion of an 'impact assessment' one or two years after their completion. This would allow more time for research uptake to take place. In order to ensure a comprehensive review, it is recommended to include all relevant stakeholders in this process (grantees and intermediate beneficiaries, both locally and within the Dutch MFA) as well as the KPRSL and NWO-WOTRO. An independent reviewer could be tasked to conduct this assessment.

North-South collaboration

The findings show that one of the unique features of the SRoL Programme is its explicit focus on collaboration between northern and southern organisations. Despite that this type of cooperation was not a formal requirement in all of the calls, the vast majority of the teams consisted of parties from both the global North and South. Transnational cooperation was experienced positively by the grantees, bringing to the table new (research) skills, knowledge, and networks (both for the northern and the southern partners). This clearly benefited the relevance and effectiveness of the projects. It is clear that capacity building did not occur in a one-way direction from northern organisations towards southern ones (as originally envisaged), but instead a two-way process.

Nevertheless, the findings point to an imbalance with northern organisations being in the lead more often. Furthermore, it is found that northern organisations would often develop the methodology and analyse the findings, while the southern partners would predominantly focus on data collection activities. As a consequence, the capacity building opportunities for southern partners were limited.

Furthermore, the North-South collaboration also added additional pressure on the NWO-WOTRO team responsible for managing the projects.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

9. As capacity building, in practice, benefited both northern and southern organisations, it is recommended to address this relationship consistently as a two-way mentorship process. In order to ensure all partners benefit from capacity building activities, consortia should be asked to provide a detailed plan towards capacity building throughout the project's lifespan (i.e. Which capacities will be enhanced? Who will benefit? How will these capacities be developed? Which activities will contribute to the development of these capacities?) already at proposal stage.
10. Ensure sufficient resources for NWO-WOTRO staff in order to maintain in-person and online contact with southern partners in project teams.

Transdisciplinary teams

Transdisciplinary teams were considered valuable by grantees, however not always utilised/noticeable in the day-to-day implementation of projects. Particularly valued were practitioner organisations due to their strong ties to the local community. In this capacity, they were able to help other partners set up context-sensitive research approaches and help with the interpretation of research findings. This was particularly useful in the cases where projects would focus on sensitive or controversial topics.

However, the findings also show that the involvement of practitioner organisations in consortia requires specific attention as such organisations are not always familiar with the administrative matters that stem from participation in research programmes.

Finally, previous experience of collaboration in the consortium was found to be an asset.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

11. In order to simplify the application requirements, consider removing the need for transdisciplinary teams from the calls for proposals or merely recommend teams to take this into consideration.

Recommendations for grantees and NWO-WOTRO

12. Include practitioner organisations in project consortia. In the call for proposals, NWO-WOTRO could dedicate a paragraph outlining the potential added value of practitioner organisations and promote the inclusion of such organisation in the consortia. Depending on the objectives of the call, the inclusion of a practitioner organisation might even be added as a requirement¹⁰³.
13. Opt for pre-existing partnerships when setting up consortia, especially for projects of shorter duration. NWO-WOTRO could consider adding a requirement which explicitly mentions that a history of collaboration between (some of the) partners is favoured¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰³ The calls for proposals for ARF1, ARF2, ARF4, SRF3, ARF5 and ARF6 requested that applicants include a practitioner organisation. We encourage to build on this existing practice and carry it forward.

¹⁰⁴ The call for proposals for ARF6 already includes a proved history of collaboration as a requirement for the main applicant and the co-applicant responsible for the largest share of the research/human resources. Other co-applicants do not have to comply with these requirements. We encourage to build on this existing practice and carry it forward.

Co-creation

Grantees are positive towards co-creation activities. It has helped them to finetune their research approach with relevant stakeholders. It has also served to create buy-in from certain communities and/or stakeholders which, ultimately, has helped them achieve the project's objectives.

In the fragile context that the projects were implemented, co-creation activities that help to foster dialogue and establish relationships between different stakeholders, at times, have had more impact on a local community than the actual output of a project (i.e. a research paper).

It has been particularly difficult to have policymakers participate in (various types) of co-creation activities. Policymakers were difficult to reach and/or had different priorities. Also the sensitivity of topics affected the extent to which grantees engaged with decision makers.

Although co-creation was generally perceived to be of added-value, the findings show that related activities require ample preparation, time and budget. For grantees that participated in calls with a relatively short time span, it was particularly challenging to organise co-creation sessions. It remains unclear whether this was caused by the available budget or project management at the project team's end.

As co-creation involves a variety of different actors; it became apparent that strong communication and management of expectations is needed. In order to avoid stakeholders being left out and/or to ensure both the stakeholder as well as the project consortium are on the same page, clear communication is required from the side of the project.

The findings show three levels of co-creation that are beneficial to the relevance and effectiveness of the SRoL projects. Co-creation with the SRoL Programme management (involving the MFA in the research design and implementation in order to ensure research outputs are relevant) ensure alignment with donor expectations. Co-creation within the consortium (making optimal use of the internal skills and knowledge) benefits the ultimate quality of the research. Co-creation with stakeholders in the field ensure that outcomes are evidence-based, context-sensitive, and ultimately usable in the target countries.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

14. Revisit the assessment of impact that projects generate by also paying close attention to more qualitative aspects such as fostering dialogue and relationship building (through co-creation activities). Such focus can enhance and make the relevance to the local community more explicit.
15. Request project teams to determine their strategies towards co-creation with the consortium members and local stakeholders, and ensure that the research approach is tailored to the needs of these actors. The co-creation strategies of teams can help to disseminate research findings and to generate uptake, which ultimately generates impact. Operationally these strategies can consist of, for instance, a mapping exercise and a workplan on how to interact with co-creation stakeholders.

Recommendations for MFA

16. Ensure that the appointed contact person/policy maker can play a role in disseminating the research outputs within the MFA and trace the uptake of these outputs. Maintain contact throughout the project lifespan. In an effort to reduce the burden on the MFA, clustering various projects might be an alternative.

Impact pathways

The findings show that the impact pathway as a monitoring mechanism in the early stage of the project is important as it helps grantees to think about how to achieve project outputs and outcomes in a structured manner. This is particularly the case for projects of a longer duration (i.e. more than 9 months). NWO-WOTRO support in designing and applying the pathways was beneficial, and in particular the online training provided during ARF6 was found to be helpful.

Findings show that, apart from the lead applicants, other members of the consortium are not or only partially aware of the pathways and their potential added value. This particularly affects southern partners. As the preparation of a solid impact pathway is one of the criteria for the selection and award of proposals, the lack of familiarity of southern organisations with this instrument can place them in a disadvantaged position when applying for funds. Finally, it remains unclear whether consortia continued to make use of the pathway throughout project implementation.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

17. In order to ensure a fair selection procedure that does not disadvantage applicants less familiar with the concept of impact pathways, consider a) removing this as a criterion for the selection of applications or b) inviting all prospective applicants (in the case of a two-step application) to a (brief) online course on their development.
18. Given the varying level of familiarity with the development of impact pathways, always provide online training on use of the tool upon awarding of the project.
19. Conduct periodic check-ins to assess whether the impact pathways are used throughout project implementation. This can contribute to strengthening the M&E framework for projects and ensuring that grantees are on track with the achievement of their objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

M&E activities are generally perceived by grantees as highly relevant to achieving projects objectives. While impact pathways are usually intended as monitoring mechanisms, all projects, as part of the evaluation approach, are requested to submit self-assessment reports. Projects with a duration longer than 24 months are also subject to a mid-term evaluation, which grantees confirmed to be a useful exercise helping them to steer projects. M&E support by NWO-WOTRO was perceived positively by grantees

Findings also suggest that grantees make use of their own M&E mechanisms, even when not requested by the SRoL Programme management as part of sound project management.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

20. Reflect on how to better institutionalise M&E in the SRoL Programme, irrespective of the duration of the project. This can be done either by paying closer attention to the application of impact pathways through periodic checks (see the recommendations above) or by requesting that projects regularly report progress and challenges in writing. A brief email overview could suffice.
21. In order to contribute to better project and (programme) learning, consider including a specific section in the final project self-assessment reports where the M&E mechanisms implemented are described, as well as the challenges encountered and the mitigating measures taken to ensure the project remained on track.

Mid-term programming monitoring

The mid-term programme review provided some relevant recommendations for the future development of the programme design, in particular with a view to adjusting calls in order to ensure that the resulting research would be more directly relevant for the MFA. Although some of these recommendations were taken up in the call for ARF6, the impact of the research resulting from this call and effective uptake by Dutch policymakers is not immediately evident.

Selection procedure

The SRoL Programme was based on a transparent and fair selection procedure. However, the process is lengthy and complex, with numerous actors involved at different stages (i.e. at least three different committees). The length of the process in particular (up to six months between the launch of the call and the granting of the award) conflicts with the needs of the donor organisation when seeking relatively fast answers to (policy) questions.

Findings show that most lead applicants are northern organisations and thus the selection process results in a skewed geographical diversity. While this might not be intentional, call criteria appear to be formulated in a way that the majority of the applications received – and awarded – are led by a northern organisation, amongst which Dutch outfits are the vast majority. The possibility to only apply electronically – something not easily achievable by organisations located in countries with poor ICT services – is one of these criteria.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

22. Consider the possibility of simplifying the selection procedure without compromising on the quality of the research selected. This could imply the creation of a dedicated fast-track procedure for calls created with the aim of responding to needs for quick, applicable research. One critical factor is the reduction of the number of committees involved in the selection.
23. Revisit the selection criteria so as to enhance the 'openness' of the calls and draw in applications from different types of organisations across the world. Specific examples could include a) the possibility of applying also through regular mail; b) the possibility of submitting annexes or supporting administrative documentation in languages other than English (French and Arabic could be an initial step); the inclusion of tailor made criteria depending on the typology of stakeholder the call looks to attract (i.e. different criteria for academics and local practitioners).

Effectiveness of working arrangements between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL

While the architecture of the SRoL Programme and in particular the design of the cooperation between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL were a logical and justified choice on paper, in practice their functioning has been suboptimal. The reason behind this can be traced back to overlapping objectives between the two organisations and undefined separation of competences. More concretely, the findings show practical challenges: a) a lack of contractual arrangements between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL; b) lack of dedicated budget for SRoL programme specific knowledge dissemination activities; c) limited staff capacity and frequent turnover; d) structural issues inherent to NWO procedures more broadly. The lack of clarity amongst the two with regard to responsibilities on knowledge uptake and sharing in particular were also felt by the grantees, who were often confused (and sometimes unaware) on the role of the KPSRL, especially in earlier grants.

While several steps have been successfully taken to improve this working relationship, obstacles rooted in those first design flaws remain and prevent it from being as effective as it could be. Furthermore, structural issues, such as NWO-WOTRO standards for scientific rigour and the codes of conduct surrounding the secrecy of proposals, should be considered in the context of the broader

question of whether this programme design is adequate in achieving the outcomes expected by the donor organisation.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

24. Explore the possibility of relaxing requirements related to the secrecy of proposals in favour of better cooperation with the KPSRL and increased exposure of the research through their network. In practice, this could be implemented by providing timely information to the Platform on the research projects that have been awarded. Applicants should be informed already in the call for proposal that a short application abstract could be made public on the Platform's website.

Recommendations for the MFA

25. Institutionalise the relationship between NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL in the context of the SRoL Programme by creating formal contractual arrangements with a clear division of tasks and responsibilities.
26. Clearly define in writing the reporting channels from NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL to the MFA. The practice of regular tripartite meetings should be enforced.
27. Consider the setting up a dedicated budget (either within NWO-WOTRO or the KPSRL) for knowledge dissemination activities. Possibly draw lessons from the relationship between NWO-WOTRO and the INCLUDE platform in the context of the 'New roles of Civil Society Organisations for Inclusive Development' research programme.

4.3 Efficiency

At programme level, the findings show that the complexity and length of the selection procedure and the increased project monitoring activities resulting from the adjustments of the programme structure in 2015, have put increased and unexpected pressure on NWO-WOTRO staff, and would have required more overhead budget.

At project level, two consistent trends have been identified with regard to timeline and budget: a) a high number of requests for budget-neutral extensions (higher for SRF projects than ARF ones); and b) a significant trend of underspending, with the majority of projects returning granted funds which had originally been allocated to knowledge sharing activities. Overall grantees were satisfied with their allocated budget, although some respondents remarked a lack of flexibility in NWO-WOTRO's approach to requested changes. Furthermore, comments were raised by some local organisations pointing to an unequal budget division among consortium partners, which link back to a broader debate on the need for balanced North-South relationships in the consortium.

Findings show that in most cases, budget neutral extensions are requested to organise dissemination events at most convenient times and mitigate issues arising from project management or unexpected security challenges. While the latter is an intrinsic characteristic of working in a fragile context, project management risks could be anticipated and mitigated with the inclusion of a dedicated section in the call application.

The significant trend of underspending funds for knowledge sharing activities indicates that the approach adopted in the SRoL Programme to knowledge dissemination and uptake is inadequate. The trend is particularly interesting in light of the fact that some local organisations reported having spent a significant number of unpaid hours working on the project. Reasons behind this trend could be either a reflection of: a) an unbalanced relationship between lead and co-applicants; b) of a lack

of (awareness) on the possibility of moving funds across budget lines; c) poor planning and project management on part of the grantees, also as a result of a relatively short project inception phase.

Recommendations for NWO-WOTRO

28. Ensure that projects have an inception phase of adequate duration to (re)assess the feasibility of the proposal and adapt it as needed. A solid inception phase would also contribute to more careful planning of dissemination activities.
29. Request applicants to be explicit about risks and their mitigation measures in the proposal phase, both at content level (i.e. security challenges delay research activities or low quality of collected data) as well as at project management level (i.e. turnover of team members). A template risk matrix could be provided already in the call for proposals.
30. Provide clearer guidelines as to how budgets should be submitted in proposals to allow for maximum flexibility (in view of the context-specific situation in fragile settings) and on what grantees are allowed to do in terms of reallocating funds across budget lines during the implementation phase. These guidelines should be explicitly presented in the call for proposal.
31. Pool unspent project resources for knowledge dissemination into an uptake fund, to be used for all programme activities more broadly. The fund should be monitored jointly by NWO-WOTRO and the KPSRL to ensure that there is full coordination on which activities the funds should be funnelled into.

Recommendations for MFA

32. Consider an overhead budget for NWO-WOTRO that is in line with the expected amount of work. Should this amount increase during the course of the programme due to requested programme changes, there should be flexibility in re-negotiating overhead.

Annex 1: Dutch SRoL context

The origins of the SRoL research programme are rooted in the Knowledge for Development Policy published by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 2011¹⁰⁵. With this new approach to fostering the creation and sharing of scientific knowledge and research, the Dutch government meant to refocus its efforts in the field of global development. The underlying aim was: to use resources and research in a less fragmented way, shifting the focus to selected thematic priorities; to enhance the relevance of available knowledge and research capacity for development, both at a national level and in partner countries in the global South; and to strengthen cooperation between research and practitioner institutions, in particular reinforcing the link between Northern and Southern institutions.

Between 2012 and 2014, this approach led to the setting up of five **Knowledge Platforms**, one for each of the key focus areas of Dutch development cooperation policy: food and nutrition security; sexual and reproductive health and rights; water and sanitation; inclusive development policies, and security and the rule of law.

The Knowledge Platforms – three key goals:

1. **Knowledge for policy** – supporting more effective policy formulation and implementation in Dutch development policy;
2. **Knowledge for developing countries** – supporting development and self-reliance in developing countries;
3. **Policy for knowledge** – promoting and supporting enhanced knowledge sharing within the Dutch MFA.

Underpinning these three goals is the ambition to **enhance exchange and cooperation across different sectors** in the development field, bringing together academics and practitioners, NGOs and private companies, and national and international institutions.

Adapted from: Lammers E. and D. de Winter (2017). 'The gold standard' – Exploring the Added Value of the Dutch Knowledge Platforms.

The **Knowledge Platform for Security and the Rule of Law** (KPSRL) was established in 2012 to support the implementation of the Dutch SRoL policy. At the core of the SRoL policy is the idea that the Netherlands can contribute to increasing security and the rule of law in low and middle-income countries by helping tackle the root causes of conflicts, instability and social exclusion and by supporting positive forces in society. The policy is underpinned by the following **five key objectives**¹⁰⁶:

1. Strengthening and establishing security for people;
2. Strengthening the rule of law by fostering a functioning legal order;
3. Promoting inclusive political process;
4. Promoting a legitimate and capable government;
5. Promoting the peace dividend by supporting the creation of jobs and access to basic services.

¹⁰⁵ *Kennisbrief* (2011) <http://knowledgeplatforms.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Letter-14-November-2011-Ben-Knapen-Knowledge-Policy.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ A special focus on the political and economic role of women in peace and reconstruction processes is streamlined across all activities. All these objectives are tailored and prioritised during implementation on the ground according to country specific context and bilateral agreements.

Under the management of the KPSRL, the SRoL policy was combined with the Ministry's broader Knowledge for Development Policy to develop the [SRoL Knowledge Agenda](#).

In particular, looking at the global development landscape, the KPSRL identified the need for:
Generating new knowledge and fostering knowledge exchange through activities strengthening cooperation, in particular with local partners in the South;
Promoting and funding new research, both at a strategic and at an applied level, bridging the gap between research and practice by bringing together academics and practitioners.

There is growing consensus amongst academics and practitioners alike that knowledge-based policy can help address the multiple challenges faced by developing countries¹⁰⁷. In this case, at the core of the SRoL Knowledge Agenda, is the idea that the KPSRL can help strengthen the security and rule of law in low and middle-income countries by identifying, defining and answering relevant research questions and by promoting the exchange of knowledge. To help achieve these ends, the [SRoL research programme](#) was developed in 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Sutcliffe, S. and Court, J. (2006). *A toolkit for progressive policymakers in developing countries*. Overseas development institute; Hornby, P. and H.S.R. Perera (2002) 'A Development Framework for Promoting Evidence-based Policy Action: Drawing on Experiences in Sri Lanka', *International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, Vol. 17, No. 2 pp165-83.

Annex 2: Overview of projects

In the table below, the blue colour represents the projects which were included in the field visits. Green represents the lead organisation (northern or southern) in the consortium.

Figure 4.1 Detailed overview of projects (coloured projects are part of case studies)

	Name	Call	Focus country	Region	Categorisation	Lead N	Lead S	Lead name
1	Entrepreneurship, Employment and Social Stability in Rwanda	SRF1	Rwanda	Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)	Capacity building	NL		Prof. dr. ir. E.H. Bulte - Wageningen University, Social Sciences and Development Studies, NL
2	Conflict Sensitive Employment under Construction: Peace and Stability Strategies for the Private Sector in Afghanistan	SRF1	Afghanistan	West Asia	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations			Dr. E.G. Grawert (Prof. Dr. C.S. Schetter) - Bonn International Centre for Conversion, Peace and Conflict Studies, Germany
3	Does Opportunity Reduce Instability? A Meta-Analysis of Skills and Employment Interventions in LMICSS	SRF1	Africa Afghanistan Yemen	SSA West Asia Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			Prof. dr. T. Brück - SIPRI, Economics, Sweden
4	Securing the Local: The Role of Non-state security groups in the Struggle against Extremism in Kenya, Nigeria and Indonesia	SRF3	Kenya Nigeria Indonesia	SSA South-East Asia	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations Raising awareness	NL		Dr. L.G.H. Bakker – University of Amsterdam, NL
5	The Fulani in the Sahel: Caught between the Hammer of Muslim Extremism and the Anvil of the State (Mali, Nigeria)	SRF3	Mali Nigeria	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Prof. dr. ir. J.W.M. van Dijk - Afrika Studiecentrum, NL
6	Human Security and Conflict in Ukraine: Local Approaches and Transnational Dimensions	SRF3	Ukraine	Eastern Europe	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Prof. dr. A.W.M. Gerrits – University Leiden, NL

	Name	Call	Focus country	Region	Categorisation	Lead N	Lead S	Lead name
7	Preventing the spill-over: combatting violent extremism with a human security approach in Palestine, Egypt and Iraq	SRF3	Palestine Egypt Iraq	Middle East North Africa	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations Dissemination of research outputs	NL		Dr. B.T. van Ginkel LL.M. - Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', NL
8	Towards more effective human security approaches in the context of the emerging threat of violent radicalisation in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia	SRF3	Jordan Egypt Lebanon Tunisia	Middle East North Africa	Capacity building Raising awareness			.H. Harper - West Asia - North Africa (WANA) Institute, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
9	Security Assistance and Non-State Actors in Iraq, Syria & Afghanistan: Comprehensive and Inclusive Human Security Beyond the State?	SRF3	Iraq Syria Afghanistan	West Asia Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			P. Rotmann - Global Public Policy Institute, Germany
10	Looking through the lens of land - Enhancing justice through land governance reform in DR Congo's eastern Kivu Provinces and South Sudan's Greater Equatorial Region	ARF1	South Sudan DRC Congo	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Dr. ir. M. van - Leeuwen Radboud University Nijmegen, NL
11	Supporting pathways for primary justice in South Sudan and Afghanistan	ARF1	Afghanistan	West Asia	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Prof. J.M. Otto - Leiden University, NL
12	A barometer for transitional justice in Tunisia	ARF1	Tunisia	North Africa	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations			Prof. P. Gready - CAHR, University of York, UK
13	Intersections of conflict and justice in South Sudan	ARF1	South Sudan	SSA	Methodology and toolkit development	NL		Dr R Willems – UPEACE, NL
14	Accommodation of justice for displaced in DRC	ARF1	DRC Congo	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			Dr. K. Vlassenroot - University of Ghent, BE
15	Access to justice for Syrian refugees in Lebanon	ARF1	Lebanon	Middle East	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations			Dr K. El Mufti, CHS, Lebanon

	Name	Call	Focus country	Region	Categorisation	Lead N	Lead S	Lead name
16	The Justice Box - a tool for evidence-based policy and legal empowerment in Mali	ARF2	Mali	SSA	Methodology and toolkit development	NL		Dr S. Muller – The Hague Institute for the Internationalisation of Law
17	Enhancing Local Peace Committees - facilitating stakeholder debate on the strategic choices involved in transitional justice in Burundi and DR Congo	ARF2	Burundi DRC Congo	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Methodology and toolkit development	NL		Dr. ir. M. van Leeuwen - Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, NL
18	Informing policy on plural security provision in urban contexts: Comparative insights from Lebanon, Kenya, and Tunisia	ARF2	Lebanon Kenya Tunisia	Middle East SSA North Africa	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Developing evidence-based policy recommendations	NL		M.A. Price - Nederlands Instituut voor Internationale Betrekkingen Clingendael, NL
19	Urban refugee protection in Lebanon's hybrid security system: a research and action agenda	ARF2	Lebanon	Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Developing evidence-based policy recommendations			Dr. M.N. Abi Yaghi, Lebanon Support, Lebanon
20	Trialling tools for participatory gender analysis of conflict in Uganda	ARF2	Uganda	SSA	Methodology and toolkit development			Dr. C. Harris, University of London
21	Learning from Design in Mali: A Critical Review and M&E Framework for the CSO-led Human Security Strategy 2014-2015	ARF2	Mali	SSA	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations Methodology and toolkit development	NL		Dr. D. Connolly, The Hague Institute for Global Justice, NL
22	When will transitional justice join the transitional decade in Afghanistan?	ARF2	Afghanistan	West Asia	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Raising awareness			Dr. C.E. Echavez - Afghanistan research & Evaluation Unit, Afghanistan
23	Towards inclusive security governance of the Tunisian-Libyan border: Developing evidence-based approaches to enhancing border security in Tunisia	ARF2	Tunisia	North Africa	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			Dr. O.L. Lamloum - International Alert, Tunisia
24	The 2013 NDC in Yemen: Why did it fail to prevent conflict?	ARF2	Yemen	Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Dr. M.A.A. Elayah - Radboud University Nijmegen, NL

	Name	Call	Focus country	Region	Categorisation	Lead N	Lead S	Lead name
25	Codifying water rights in contested basins of Afghanistan	ARF2	Afghanistan	West Asia	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Developing evidence-based policy recommendations	NL		Dr. L.G. Hayde (was Dr. A. Mehari Haile) UNESCO-IHE, NL
26	Mass Atrocity Prevention Toolkit: The Effectiveness and Ethics of Mass Atrocity Prevention Policies with Case Studies of Syria and Kenya	ARF2	Syria Kenya	Middle East SSA	Methodology and toolkit development	NL		E.T. Aloyo, The Hague Institute for Global Justice, NL
27	Land rights and access to land survey in Timor-Leste a tool for evidence-based policy and advocacy	ARF2	Timor-Leste	South East Asia	Methodology and toolkit development Dissemination of research outputs	NL		Dr. A.W. Bedner, Universiteit Leiden, NL
28	Women's role in peace and security in Kurdish self-administered areas in Syria	ARF2	Syria	Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Prof. dr. ir. G.E. Frerks, Universiteit Utrecht, NL
29	Youth exclusion and violence in Burundi and South Sudan: Improving economic opportunity interventions for young people in fragile settings	ARF2	Burundi South Sudan	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Methodology and toolkit development	NL		Dr. ir. G. van der Haar, Wageningen Universiteit & Researchcentrum Maatschappijwetenschappen, NL
30	Enhancing Women's Role in Peace and Security in Yemen	ARF2	Yemen	Middle East	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations Capacity building			M.C. Heinze, Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient, Bonn
31	Governance mechanisms in opposition-held areas in Syria	ARF2	Syria	Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			Dr. S.A. Hellmüller, Swisspeace, Bern
32	Breaking the Cycle of Violence in Post-Conflict Settings: The Potential of Community-Based Sociotherapy in Rwanda	ARF2	Rwanda	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Dr. B. Hola, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, NL
33	Cross-Border Access to Justice in the Palestinian territories	ARF2	Palestine	Middle East	Methodology and toolkit development			Prof. B. Messick, Columbia University

	Name	Call	Focus country	Region	Categorisation	Lead N	Lead S	Lead name
34	Policy tools to reduce radicalization against Ahmadiyya	ARF2	Indonesia	South East Asia	Methodology and toolkit development			Dhr. J. Townsend, Seefar
35	Addressing statelessness in the Syria crisis context	ARF2	Syria	Middle East	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations Raising awareness	NL		L.E. van Waas, Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, Eindhoven, NL
36	Civil society involvement in Tunisia's security sector reform process	ARF3	Tunisia	North Africa	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			D. Alpher - Saferworld, UK
37	Combating prolonged pre-trial detention in Ukraine	ARF3	Ukraine	Eastern Europe	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			J.C. Czerep - The Open Dialog Foundation, Poland
38	Improving synchronicity between political party assistance and international conflict resolution interventions in fragile and conflict affected settings: Lessons from Burundi and Mali	ARF3	Burundi Mali	SSA	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations	NL		D.T.F. Magolowondo – Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, NL
39	Security of transnational flows of natural resources in Indonesia	ARF4	Indonesia	South East Asia	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations			Prof. N. White - University of Nottingham, UK
40	Drivers for onward migration: the case of Iraqi IDPS in the Kurdistan region leaving the country	ARF5	Iraq	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Developing evidence-based policy recommendations			Prof. D. Ala'Aldeen - Middle East Research Institute (MERI), Iraq
41	Drivers of mixed migration: analysing the determinants and the role of development and security policies in the MENA region with a special focus on Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Eritrea and Syria.	ARF5	Afghanistan Iraq Libya Eritrea Syria	West Asia North Africa SSA Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Methodology and toolkit development			Prof. dr. T. Brueck - ISDC – International Security and Development Center, Germany
42	T-STAN: Toolkit on Smuggling and Trafficking, and a security and rule of law approach to their possible Nexus - with a focus on the route from Libya to the EU	ARF5	Libya	North Africa	Methodology and toolkit development	NL		Dr. J.E.B. Coster van Voorhout – The Hague Institute for Global Justice, NL

	Name	Call	Focus country	Region	Categorisation	Lead N	Lead S	Lead name
43	Ensuring that policy responds to the realities of trafficking and smuggling of mixed migrants from Eritrea and Ethiopia	ARF5	Eritrea Ethiopia	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			Dr. Lucy Hovil - International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), Uganda
44	Everyday justice and security provision for displaced and residents in Bukavu, DRC	ARF5	DRC Congo	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Dr. ir. C.I.M. Jacobs Van Vollenhoven Institute, NL
45	Developing capacity for protection-sensitive border management in mixed migration settlements: Lessons from the Border Region Mali-Niger	ARF5	Mali Nigeria	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Developing evidence-based policy recommendations			Dr. K. Kinzelbach – Global Public Policy Institute, Germany
46	Comparative study on the impact of youth interventions on mixed migration in Afghanistan and Somalia	ARF5	Afghanistan Somalia	West Asia SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			J. Kurtz – Mercy Corps, US
47	Evidence-based assessment of migration deals: the case of Turkey	ARF5	Turkey	South East Europe	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Dr. I.C. van Liempt – Utrecht University, NL
48	Wellbeing of Urban Refugees: Syrians and Hosts in Jordan and Lebanon	ARF5	Jordan Lebanon	Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			Dr. D.J.H. te Lintelo – Institute of Development Studies, UK
49	Irregular migration economies in northern Niger: the lasting economic, governance and social implications of a booming industry	ARF5	Nigeria	SSA	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations	NL		M.A. Price (was F.Molenaar) - The Netherlands Institute for International Relations, Clingendael, NL
50	Causes and dynamics of mixed unskilled migrants trafficked within the Horn region. A study including Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan	ARF5	Eritrea Ethiopia Sudan	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development Raising awareness	NL		Prof. M. van Reisen – Tilburg University, NL
51	Syrian refugees and conflict in Lebanon: local resilience for long-term peace	ARF5	Syria	Middle East	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			T.J.W. Wheeler (was C. Snow) – Saferworld, UK

	Name	Call	Focus country	Region	Categorisation	Lead N	Lead S	Lead name
52	A question of legitimacy: How civil society organisations can and do provide rehabilitation and reintegration services for violent extremist offenders in (post-) conflict settings in the Sahel (Nigeria)	ARF6	Nigeria	SSA	Facilitating interaction between different stakeholders Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		E. Entenmann LLM - Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations
53	External stabilization interventions in CAR and DRC: The assumptions of peacekeeping operations and (I)NGOs, local 'realities', and the risks of discrepancies for legitimate stability	ARF6	Central African Republic DRC Congo	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development			Dr. J. van der Lijn - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
54	Grounded legitimacy – strengthening local land registration in conflict-affected Northern Uganda	ARF6	Uganda	SSA	Unlocking knowledge for policy development	NL		Dr. ir. M. van Leeuwen - Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
55	Improving stability in settings of fragile or limited statehood: Harnessing the potential of traditional authorities for local government interventions in Libya, Mali, and Niger	ARF6	Libya Mali Nigeria	North Africa SSA	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations	NL		Dr. F.F. Molenaar - Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations
56	Promoting Fair Vetting in Kenya and Beyond	ARF6	Kenya	SSA	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations	NL		Prof. dr. J.M. Ubink - Universiteit Leiden
57	Public Authority and Legitimacy Making (PALM): host-refugee relations in urban Jordan and Lebanon	ARF6	Jordan Lebanon	Middle East	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations Methodology and toolkit development			Dr. D.J.H. te Lintelo - Institute of Development Studies (at University of Sussex)
58	Returning to stability? Lessons from the Great Lakes region	ARF6	Burundi DRC Congo	SSA	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations			T. van Laer - International Refugee Rights Initiative

Annex 3: Fund themes and objectives

The table below provides an overview of the objectives of each of the calls (left column) as well as the assigned category (right column, based on the specific call objective).

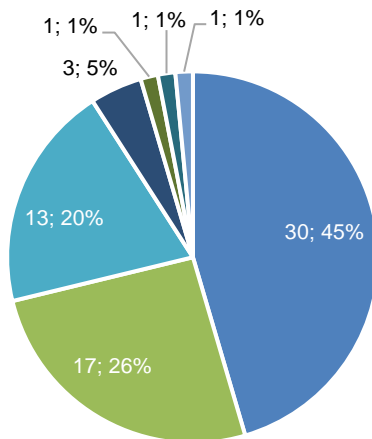
Table 4.1 Overview of objectives and project categories

Objective	Category
Embedding justice in power and politics (ARF1)	
Developing analytical methodologies and instruments to gain insight in people's justice concerns and/or the (institutional) responses to those;	Methodology development
Sharing the generated methodologies and instruments with relevant stakeholders for designing more relevant (inclusive and conflict-sensitive) and effective rule of law reform programmes.	Methodology development Dissemination of research outputs
Evidence based-policy advise and tools (ARF2)	
(Develop tools that) provide new evidence-based insights in the underlying assumptions, feasibility and/or impact of (local, national or international) policies on, or approaches for, Security & Rule of Law in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings as listed;	Toolkit development Developing evidence-based policy recommendations
Unlock the generated knowledge for practitioner organisations involved in policy and practice of Security & Rule of Law in FCAS as listed, in such a way that they can easily apply them for (re-)designing relevant (conflict-sensitive) and effective security & rule of law reform programmes in those FCAS.	Unlocking knowledge for policy development
Evidence-informed ideas (ARF3)	
Provide evidence-informed, new ideas (for research, projects, programmes, policies, approaches or tools) for international responses in face of new threats and challenges to peace, security and development	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations
Unlock the generated ideas for practitioners in such a way that they can easily be applied for agenda setting or for (re-)designing relevant (conflict-sensitive) and effective reform programmes in FCAS and/or for developing further research programmes.	Unlocking knowledge for policy development
Influence of transnational challenges (ARF4)	
(Develop tools that) provide new evidence-based insights to enhance the effectiveness of policies and/or programming for Security & Rule of Law addressing the effects of transnational flows on stability in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings as listed;	Toolkit development Developing evidence-based policy recommendations
Unlock the knowledge generated by this research for practitioner organisations involved in policy and/or its implementation (programming) on Security & Rule of Law in FCAS as listed, in such a way that these organisations can easily apply such knowledge for (re-)designing relevant, conflict-sensitive, and effective Security & Rule of Law reform policies and/or programming in those FCAS.	Unlocking knowledge for policy development
Addressing mixed migration flows (ARF5)	
Develop evidence-based insights on how 1) donor-supported Security & Rule of Law policies and/or programmes; or 2) security measures (see section 2.2 for specific policy and programme research foci) can more effectively and more sustainably address the causes, dynamics and consequences of mixed migration flows;	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations

Objective	Category
Unlock the knowledge generated by this research for practitioner organisations, including public policy organisations, involved in these policies and/or programmes in such a way that these organisations can easily apply such knowledge for (re-)designing the above-mentioned policies and/or programmes.	Unlocking knowledge for policy development
Political dilemma of legitimate stability (ARF6)	
Develop evidence-based insights on how Security & Rule of Law policies and/or programmes focusing on human security, rule of law and/or political governance can become more sensitive to, or stimulate, legitimate stability (see section 2.2 for specific policy and programme research foci);	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations
Facilitate the uptake of the knowledge generated, so that it can be applied by practitioner organisations, including public policy organisations, involved in SRoL research programme policies and/or programmes. Findings should be communicated in such a way that these organisations can easily use the knowledge to (re-)design, or integrate the knowledge into, the policies and/or programmes described under A.	Facilitate uptake of knowledge
Employment for stability (SRF1)	
Contributing to new insights and evidence-based knowledge on policies and intervention strategies addressing employment and stability in fragile and conflict-affected environments;	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations
Raising awareness and sharing the generated new insights and knowledge with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the development of well-informed theories of change connecting employment and stability.	Raising awareness Dissemination of research outputs
Comprehensive approaches to human security (SRF3)	
Contributing to new evidence-based knowledge and insights on policies and intervention theories and strategies regarding inclusive, comprehensive approaches to human security in view of transnational security threats;	Developing evidence-based policy recommendations
Strengthening linkages between academia, policymakers and practitioners to facilitate the development of policies and interventions, thereby raising awareness and sharing generated new insights and knowledge with relevant (inter-)national practitioners in different knowledge domains;	Facilitating interaction between different stakeholders Raising awareness
Increasing the capacity of local actors to design such policies and identifying opportunities for capacity building throughout the process.	Capacity building

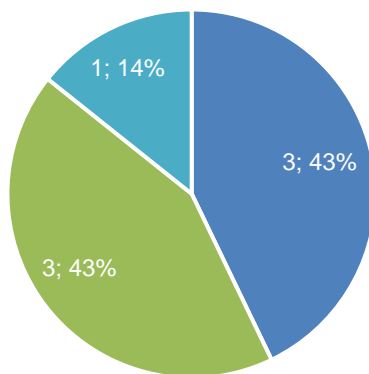
The following charts provide an overview of the way projects under certain calls are labelled. Please note that some projects have been categorised under multiple categories. The categorisation has been made based on the objectives listed in the project proposals.

Categorisation ARF projects



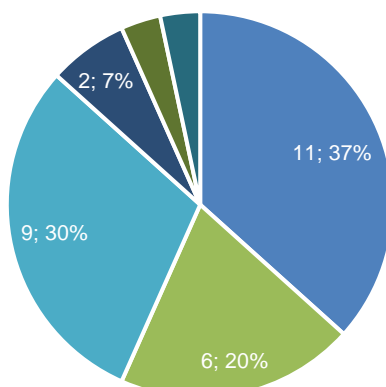
- Unlocking knowledge for policy development
- Developing evidence based policy recommendations
- Methodology and toolkit development
- Raising awareness
- Dissemination of research outputs
- Capacity building
- Facilitating interaction between different stakeholders

Categorisation ARF1 projects



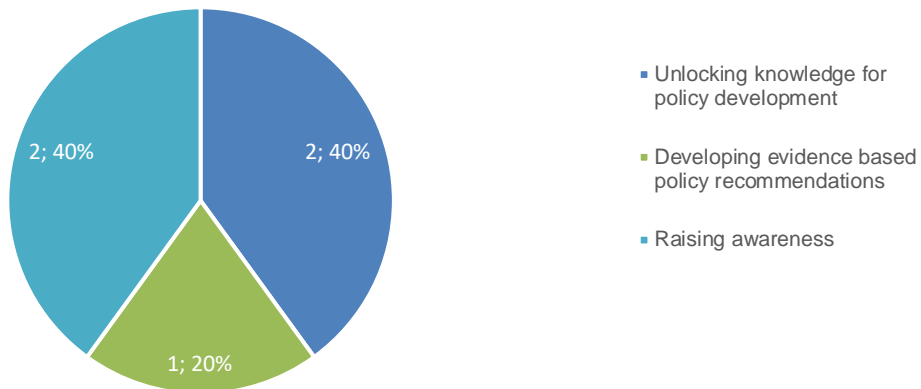
- Unlocking knowledge for policy development
- Developing evidence based policy recommendations
- Methodology and toolkit development

Categorisation ARF2 projects



- Unlocking knowledge for policy development
- Developing evidence based policy recommendations
- Methodology and toolkit development
- Raising awareness
- Dissemination of research outputs
- Capacity building

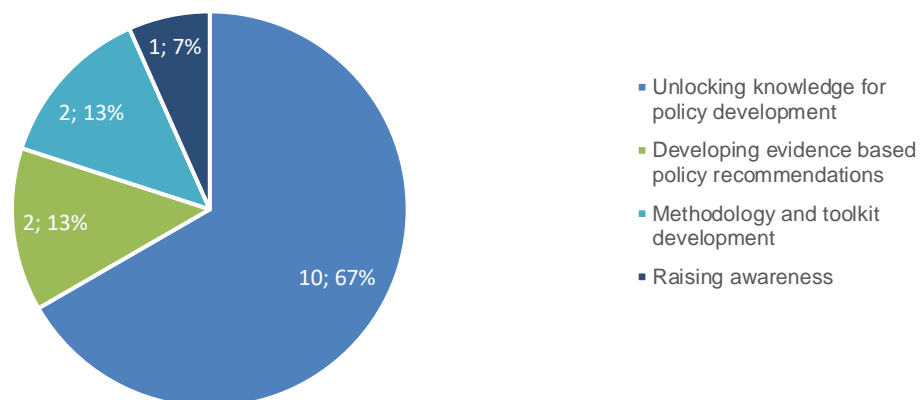
Categorisation ARF3 projects



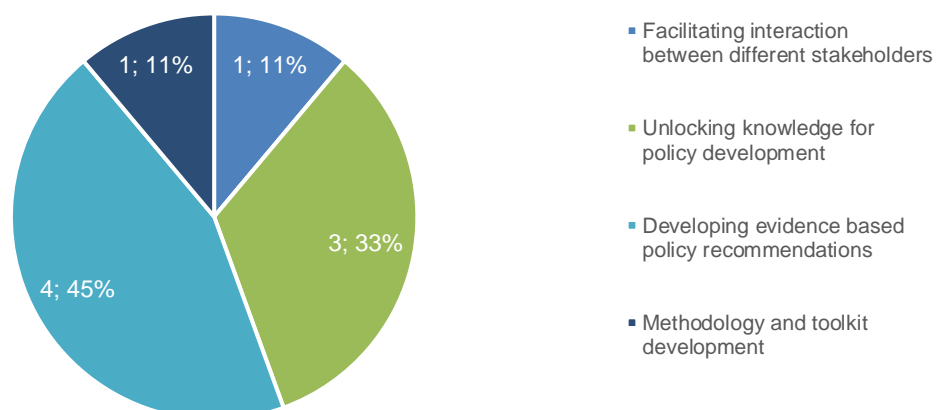
Categorisation ARF4 projects

A graphic overview of ARF4 has not been included as only one project was awarded under this fund, whose output was classified as 'developing evidence-based policy recommendations'.

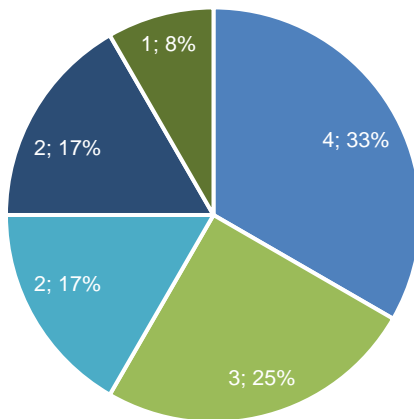
Categorisation ARF5 projects



Categorisation ARF6 projects

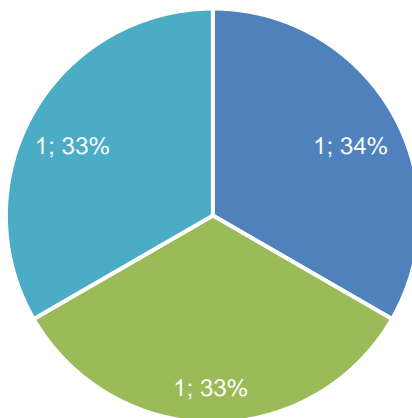


Categorisation SRF projects



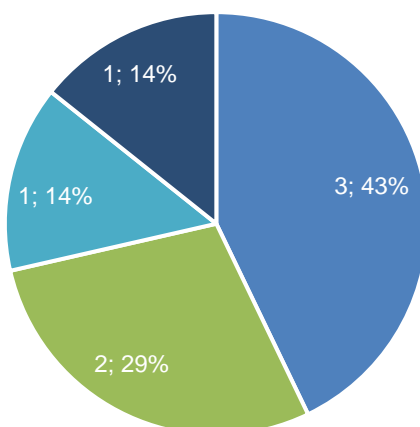
- Unlocking knowledge for policy development
- Developing evidence based policy recommendations
- Capacity building
- Raising awareness
- Dissemination of research outputs

Categorisation SRF1 projects



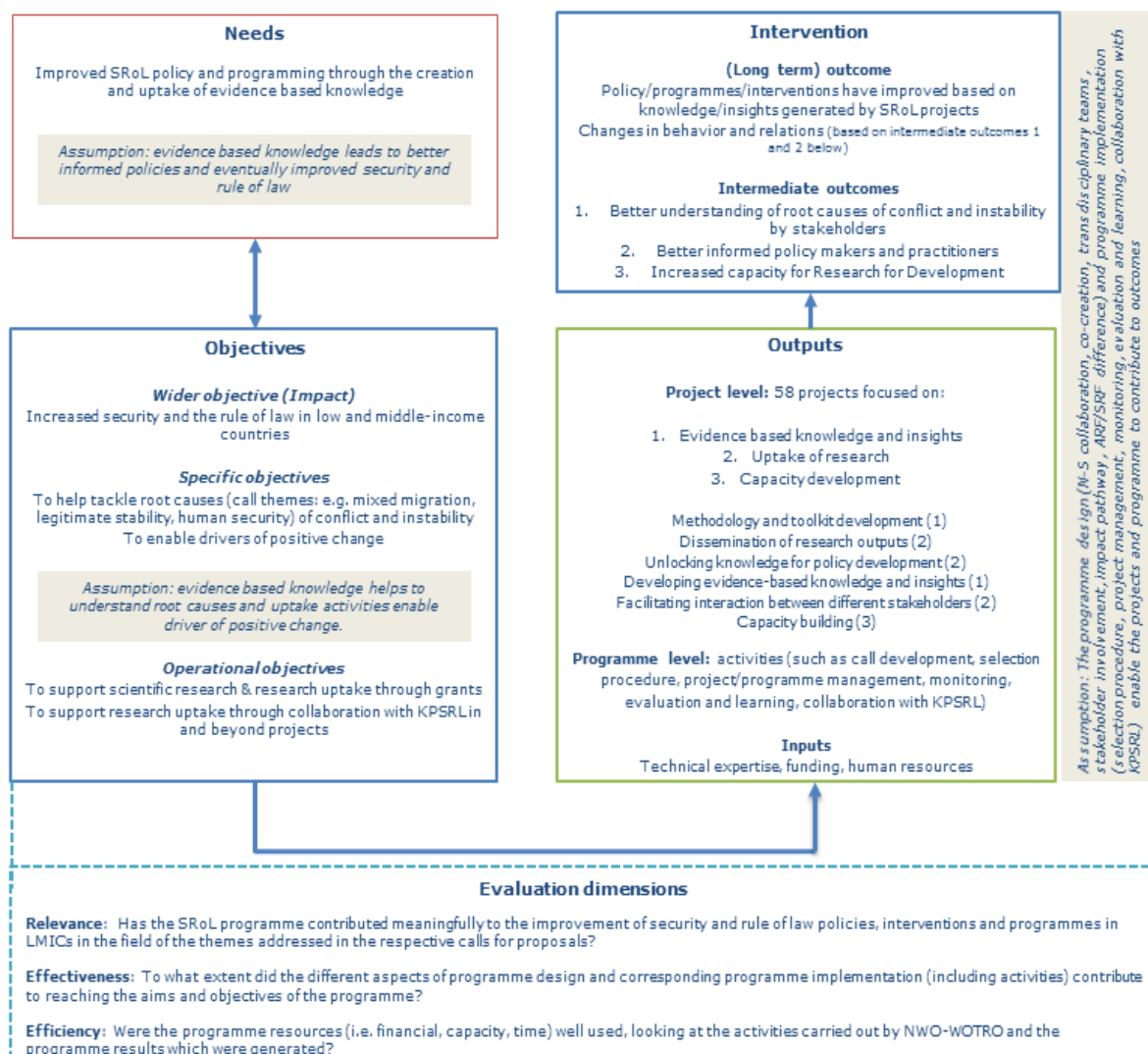
- Capacity building
- Unlocking knowledge for policy development
- Developing evidence based policy recommendations

Categorisation SRF3 projects



- Unlocking knowledge for policy development
- Developing evidence based policy recommendations
- Dissemination of research outputs
- Capacity building

Annex 4: Theory of Change



Annex 5: Evaluation matrix

Criteria	Question	Target groups	Indicator	Data collection method
	Are the activities and outputs of the SRoL Programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?			
Relevance	1. Has the SRoL Programme contributed meaningfully to the improvement of SRoL 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 SRF or 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).	PB, IB	A. Majority (%) of grantees ¹⁰⁸ confirm that knowledge generated (output) through the ARF and SRF fills gaps identified by the projects themselves. ¹⁰⁹ B. Majority (%) of intermediate beneficiaries ¹¹⁰ confirm that knowledge generated (output) through the ARF and SRF addresses needs/challenges that pertain to the respective country or region. C. Majority (%) of intermediate beneficiaries, co-creation participants indicate that they have changed their opinion(s) based on insights of project and uptake activity. D. Majority (%) of grantees, co-creation participants indicate that they have made changes to SRoL policy, behaviour or relations based on insight of project and uptake activity. E. Majority (%) of grantees, co-creation participants indicate that there is increased security based on the project intervention. F. Majority (%) of grantees confirm that output ¹¹¹ has contributed meaningfully to the objective under the respective calls. ¹¹²	I, C, S, D
	To which extent were the programme, fund aims and objectives realised, and what major factors have influenced the achievement and non-achievement?			
Effectiveness	2. Did the ARF and SRF fund make distinctive contributions (in terms of types	PB, PM	A. Majority (%) of IAC members indicating that the outcomes of the ARF projects were inherently different from those produced by the SRF fund.	I, C, S, D

¹⁰⁸ By project beneficiary, the evaluators refer to the representative of project consortia.

¹⁰⁹ Gaps differ per call and fund, for SRF gaps refer to knowledge gaps whereas for ARF this refers to gaps between policy and practice.

¹¹⁰ By intermediate beneficiary, the evaluators refer to the individuals and institutions that can be impacted by the project's outcomes (see section 1.3).

¹¹¹ Examples of output include written outputs (i.e. scientific publications, book chapters, conference papers, newspaper articles), practical outputs (i.e. workshops, training, toolkits), visual outputs (posters, infographics, videos), etc.

¹¹² The different calls have different objectives. The evaluators have categorized the different objectives into the following groups: Methodology and toolkit development, Dissemination of research outputs, Unlocking knowledge for policy development, Developing evidence-based policy recommendations, Facilitating interaction between different stakeholders, Capacity building.

Criteria	Question	Target groups	Indicator	Data collection method
	of knowledge/insights, type of policy advice, research uptake approaches) to the meaningful improvement of SRoL policies, interventions and programmes? Why (not)?		<p>B. Difference between contribution ARF and SRF to improvement of SRoL policies (in terms of types of knowledge/insights, type of policy advice, research uptake approaches).</p> <p>C. Majority (%) of grantees confirming that co-creation and research uptake activities (i.e. dissemination event, report published, etc.) have contributed to the use of research results by policy makers, practitioners and other development actors.</p> <p>D. Majority (%) of grantees confirming that co-creation and research uptake activities (i.e. dissemination event, report published, etc.) fill gaps identified by the projects.¹¹³</p>	
	3. To what extent did the North-South and transdisciplinary project teams contribute to reaching the planned objectives?	PB	<p>A. Share of grantees that assess the interaction between Northern and Southern research institutions in their projects as positive in terms of aspects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information seeking; - information sharing; - responsible behaviour; - personal interaction; - feedback; - advocacy; - helping; - tolerance. <p>B. Share of consortia members that claim they obtained valuable insights from exchange between Northern / Southern consortia members.</p> <p>C. Majority of grantees indicating that research partner brought in new views/networks/perceptions/methodologies/stakeholders.</p> <p>D. Majority of grantees consider N-S teams more effective compared to S-S/N-N.</p> <p>E. Grantees confirm that there was no communication deficit</p> <p>F. Share of research projects that involve researchers from two or more disciplines.</p>	I, C, S

¹¹³ Gaps differ per call and fund, for SRF gaps refer to knowledge gaps whereas for ARF this refers to gaps between policy and practice.

Criteria	Question	Target groups	Indicator	Data collection method
			<p>G. Share of consortia members that report intense knowledge exchange between researchers of different disciplines.</p> <p>H. Share of consortia members that claim they obtained valuable insights from exchange with researchers of different disciplines.</p> <p>I. Majority of grantees indicating that (transdisciplinary) research partner brought in new views/networks/perceptions/methodologies/stakeholders.</p> <p>J. Majority of grantees consider transdisciplinary teams more effective compared to single-disciplinary teams.</p> <p>K. Grantees confirm that there was no communication deficit.</p>	
	4. To what extent did co-creation contribute to reaching the planned objectives? ¹¹⁴	PB	<p>A. Grantees confirm that working with societal stakeholders through co-creation allows for access to information from public or private organisations.</p> <p>B. Grantees confirm that working with societal stakeholders through co-creation allows for generation of more relevant research (through reframing of research approach due to multi-stakeholder discussions).</p> <p>C. Grantees confirm that working with societal stakeholders through co-creation allows for improved impact of research.</p> <p>D. Grantees confirm that co-creation does not cause inefficiencies in task implementation (# of participants and meetings, and perception of quality of the interaction).</p> <p>E. Grantees and co-creation partners confirm that co-creation represented all relevant sides (diversity of perspectives).</p> <p>F. Grantees and co-creation partners confirm that co-creation enhanced research uptake.</p> <p>G. Grantees and co-creation partners confirm co-creation contributed to a change in views.</p> <p>H. Co-creation partners have disseminated research output within their respective organisation.</p>	I, C, S

¹¹⁴ Where co-creation is considered as a form of cooperation in research where different parties (researchers and stakeholders) in the knowledge process (demand and supply) interact and engage in joint learning to define problems, formulate possible solutions, design the research, conduct the research, assess the results and to translate these into new practices and products (as defined by NWO).

Criteria	Question	Target groups	Indicator	Data collection method
	5. To what extent did the use of impact pathway by grantees to plan and track outcomes and impact contribute to reaching the planned objectives?	PB	<p>A. Number of grantees confirming making use of the impact pathway.</p> <p>B. Grantees anticipate risks and apply mitigation measures.</p> <p>C. Grantees adjust resources, project activities, etc. in order to achieve objectives</p> <p>Grantees confirm use of impact pathway contributes to objectives compared to projects without impact pathways.</p> <p>D. Grantees identify adequate stakeholders Programme team confirms impact pathway contributed to monitoring the individual projects.</p> <p>E. Grantees confirming that impact pathway helped to strategise.</p> <p>F. Grantees indicating that impact pathway helped to link output and uptake strategy (integrative approach).</p>	I, C, S
	6. Was the selection of research projects conducted in an impartial and independent manner?	PB, PM	<p>A. Number of declared cases of conflict of interests.</p> <p>B. Number of appeals to selection outcome granted.</p> <p>C. Use of clearly defined proposal evaluation criteria (expert assessment)</p> <p>D. Number of KPSRL partners that are also grantees.</p> <p>E. Number of Grantees and IAC and PC members indicating that impartiality was ensured (and how).</p> <p>F. IAC and PC members indicating that impartiality was ensured in the cases of declared conflict of interest.</p> <p>G. IAC and PC members indicating that impartiality was ensured in granting appeals of selection outcomes.</p> <p>H. Composition of evaluation committees/panels (pool of experts).</p> <p>I. Number times that IAC fully adopted the advice of the pool of experts.</p> <p>J. When the Programme Committee deviated from the proposed ranking as advised by IAC, was this justified (as described in the call for applications).</p>	I, D
	7. To what extent did project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) contribute to keeping the project on track in regard to research, research uptake and capacity development?	PM, PB	<p>A. Number of adjustments made in the implementation approach (knowledge generation and research uptake) as result of monitoring and evaluation feedback.</p> <p>B. Number of adjustments made as a result of self-assessment by the Grantees.</p> <p>C. Grantees indicate that planning/implementation/financial challenges were identified and addressed in a timely manner as a result of M&E.</p>	I,C,S,D

Criteria	Question	Target groups	Indicator	Data collection method
			D. Grantees Likert rating on satisfaction with support from SRoL (in M&E the projects). E. Experience of beneficiaries with mid-term project evaluation (for those that enjoyed one).	
	8. To what extent did project M&E contribute to project learning and the improvement of research, relevance and research uptake (generation of project outcomes)?	PB	A. Number of adjustments made as result of monitoring and evaluation feedback. B. Number of adjustments made in research uptake strategy as a result of M&E. C. Number of adjustments made in targeted stakeholders necessary for dissemination as a result of M&E. D. Contribution of the monitoring and evaluation framework in developing lessons learned (after project ended). E. Number of beneficiaries indicating that the M&E framework allowed for continuous adjustments (based on lessons learned). F. Number of beneficiaries indicating that they have reproduced research strategies tested by previous projects under the SRoL programme.	I,C,S
	9. 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?	PB, PM	A. Number of recommendations adopted from the mid-term programme monitoring report. B. Grantees confirming usefulness of these adjustments (through Likert rating 0 not at all useful - 10 very useful). Adjustments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear calls for proposals; - Generating more succinct calls. C. Perception of NWO-WOTRO and MFA on adjusted management structure after the mid-term programme monitoring report. Adjustments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A smoother process of jointly developing calls for proposals; - More effective project requirements; - Better M&E; - Improved collaboration (with KPSRL) enabling research uptake to go beyond the project level. 	I,S,D
	10. Were the working arrangements between WOTRO and the KPSRL	PB, PM	A. Perception of NWO-WOTRO/KPSRL/MFA on collaboration. B. Perception on changes in collaboration throughout the programme.	I, S, D

Criteria	Question	Target groups	Indicator	Data collection method
	effective in achieving the programme objectives?		<p>C. Perception quality (vis-a-vis other projects and other donors) of the project proposals.</p> <p>D. Number of clarification requests (comparison over time between calls).</p> <p>E. Number of grantees indicating awareness of cooperation NWO-WOTRO and KPSRL.</p> <p>F. Majority (%) of grantees confirm satisfaction with cooperation NWO-WOTRO and KPSRL.</p> <p>G. Number of grantees indicating they enjoyed support and coordination from NWO-WOTRO and KPSRL in disseminating their research findings.</p> <p>H. Majority (%) Grantees indicate the support and coordination they enjoyed from NWO-WOTRO and KPSRL in disseminating their research findings was useful.</p> <p>I. Number of NWO-WOTRO secretaries indicating that research outputs received from projects were promptly shared with KPSRL.</p>	
	To which extent have the programme resources been adequately used to reach the programme and fund objectives?			
Efficiency	11. Were the programme activities carried out cost-efficient?	PB, PM	<p>A. Percentage of total budget spent.</p> <p>B. Number of projects that asked for budget-neutral extension.</p> <p>C. Number of projects that received a budget-neutral extension.</p> <p>D. Grantees confirming that the budget-neutral extension has helped them to achieve the project objectives (which would not have been possible without the extension).</p> <p>E. Grantees indicating that allocated budget was (in)sufficient.</p>	I, S, D
	12. Were the objectives achieved on time?	PB, PM	<p>A. Majority (%) deliverables submitted in timely manner.</p> <p>B. Majority (%) Grantees indicating that the timeline set to achieve the objectives was realistic.</p>	I, S, D

Annex 6: Overview of consulted documents

On SRoL Programme level

- 'The Gold Standard, Exploring the Added Value of Dutch Knowledge Platforms' (Ellen Lammers, Daniëlle de Winters, 2017);
- Administrative documents (2013 Framework Contract with the MFA; 2017 and 2018 Requests to the MFA for budget extension);
- Annual programme plans (2017-2019);
- Annual programme reports (2014-2018);
- Calls for proposals (SRF1; SRF3; ARF1; ARF2; ARF3; ARF4; ARF5; ARF6);
- NWO-WOTRO Strategy Plan 2011-2014;
- Reports of IAC and PC meetings (1st PC/IAC meeting report; 8th PC meeting report; 9th IAC meeting report);
- Research Programme on Security & Rule of Law in Fragile and Conflict-affected Settings (SRoL research programme) Mid-Term Review (Heinz Greijn, 2017);
- The 2013 Programme Document;
- WOTRO's Research for Development approach: A pilot study of eight cases exploring the project outcomes and WOTRO's contribution (Ellen Lammers, Daniëlle de Winters, 2018).
- WOTRO's Research for Development approach: A Theory of Change - Component of a pilot study of eight cases exploring the project outcomes and WOTRO's contribution (Ellen Lammers, Daniëlle de Winters, 2018);

On project level

- Project proposal;
- Award letter;
- Project final report/self-assessment form;
- IAC assessment during the selection procedure;
- IAC assessment of the final report;
- Email exchanges regarding changes such as budget neutral extensions, changes in the project team, allocation of resources, etc.

Annex 7: List of interviewees

Representatives involved in management of SRoL research programme

1. Representative 1 MFA DSH;
2. Representative 2 MFA DSH;
3. Representative 3 MFA DSH;
4. Representative 4 MFA DSH;
5. Representative 1 KPSRL;
6. Representative 2 KPSRL;
7. Representative 3 KPSRL;
8. Representative 4 KPSRL;
9. Representative 1 NWO-WOTRO;
10. Representative 2 NWO-WOTRO;
11. Representative 3 NWO-WOTRO;
12. Representative 4 NWO-WOTRO;
13. Representative 5 NWO-WOTRO;
14. Representative 6 NWO-WOTRO;
15. Representative 7 NWO-WOTRO;
16. Representative 8 NWO-WOTRO;
17. Representative 1 IAC;
18. Representative 2 IAC;
19. Representative 3 IAC;
20. Representative 4 IAC;
21. Representative 5 IAC;
22. Representative 1 PC.

Case study Tunisia

1. Representative 1 International Alert Tunisia office;
2. Representative 2 International Alert Tunisia office;
3. Representative University of Sfax;
4. Former member of the Military Retirees Association in Dhiba;
5. Representative 1 Al Kawakibi Democracy Transition Centre (KADEM);
6. Representative 2 Al Kawakibi Democracy Transition Centre (KADEM);
7. Representative 1 University of York, Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR);
8. Representative 2 University of York, Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR);
9. Civil society representative;
10. Representative Jasmine Foundation.
11. Representative of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Tunisia

Case study Lebanon

1. Representative WANA Institute;
2. Representative 1 LCPS;
3. Representative 2 LCPS
4. Representative CISH;

5. Representative International alert;
6. Representative ALEF;
7. Representative Lebanon support;
8. Representative Clingendael;
9. Representative Cordaid;
10. Representative IDS;
11. Representative OCCLUDE;
12. Representative ACTED;
13. Representative IMPACT
14. Representative Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Lebanon

Case study Kenya

1. Representative Leiden University;
2. Representative ICTJ;
3. Representative Kayole Social Justice Centre;
4. Representative Mathare Social Justice Centre;
5. Representative Hague Institute for Global Justice;
6. Representative 1 Rift Valley Institute;
7. Representative 2 Rift Valley Institute;
8. Representative BIEA;
9. Representative Ghetto Foundation;
10. Representative ISS;
11. Representative Kenya Youth Muslim Alliance;
12. Representative Peace Brigades International;
13. Representative Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kenya

Annex 8: Call requirements

Table 4.2 Overview of call requirements

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
ARF1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research organisation as main applicant; and • Practitioner organisation involved in the design or implementation of policies for security and rule of law reform programmes in the targeted countries <p>The main applicant should hold a senior position at the consortium member research organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research projects must be rooted in the demands of practitioners. Consortia must provide a proper contextualisation. • The project design should address the linkages among project partners. • A project proposal must consist of a coherent set of different activities (a.o. research, knowledge sharing, communication, capacity strengthening). • The project proposal should explain how it will plan, organise and budget the foreseen activities. • Proposals should be clear and comprehensible to international practitioners (from different sectors) and to research experts from different disciplinary backgrounds. • The project application must show how research activities will contribute to new methodologies that are applicable in practice and contribute to implement 	<p>Formal eligibility criteria</p> <p>Formal criteria include (but may not be limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project proposal entails both applied research activities and knowledge sharing activities; • Timely received Letter of Intent via e-mail; • Timely received application via electronic application system Iris; • Completed and signed application form; • Format, length of text, language; • Composition of consortium; • Budget conditions; • Completed annexes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CVs of applicants employed by the consortium member organisations and project staff (if relevant); - Work plan, agenda, invitation list and budget for the kick-off meeting; - Letters of support outlining the availability and commitment of consortium member organisations, including the valorised co-funding commitment of consortium member organisations (signed by the head of the organisation/department). <p>a) Scientific quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validity of the conceptual framework (coherence of the objectives, research questions and methods, including accountability for conflict dynamics); • Feasibility of the research approach; • Potential to generate evidence-based insights on people's justice concerns and the (institutional) responses thereof; • Potential of co-creation: complementarity and level of integration of scientific knowledge and practitioner knowledge. 	<p>Provide a list of a maximum of five key publications (policy or company briefs, websites, scientific manuscripts etc) of each consortium member organisation, applicant or, if relevant, individual staff member</p>

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<p>better security and rule of law reform programmes in the LMIC(s) targeted. Action research is welcomed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal should be based on a clear analysis of the knowledge questions addressed. Furthermore, the research project should be trans-disciplinary in character, meaning that it revolves in a process of co-creation of knowledge. In addition, projects preferably contribute to “on-the-job” strengthening of research skills in LMICs. The consortium is expected to maintain regular dialogue with external stakeholders to safeguard that the project is on track in addressing stakeholders demands. Moreover, the project is expected to include activities for active knowledge sharing with a broader group of relevant (local, national, international) practitioner organisations in order to enhance the potential for implementation. Consortia members must be prepared to participate in activities for the exchange of experiences (both challenges and best practices) with consortia members of other 	<p>b) Relevance for development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the proposal is rooted in the demands of practitioners and aligns with the Call's aim, objective and foci; Contribution of the project approach to “on-the-job” research capacity strengthening; Potential to generate methodologies and instruments to support effective rule of law reform programmes; Quality of the impact pathways and indicators concerning both objectives. 	

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		projects granted under this or other Calls of the research programme on Security & Rule of Law. These activities will be organised by the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law .		
SRF1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two research organisations of which at least one is based in a low or middle income country; • Preferably also includes a practitioner organisation involved in the development and implementation of policies and intervention programmes in the area of employment for stability. <p>The consortium member organisations must appoint an individual ("main applicant") from their midst. He or she should hold a senior position with the participating research organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as for ARF1. Note that the KPSRL is explicitly cited as "responsible for knowledge sharing of the experiences and results deriving from all projects awarded by the Research Fund". 	<p>Formal eligibility criteria include (but may not be limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely application via Iris; • The project entails both strategic research activities and knowledge sharing activities; • Completed and signed application form; • Format, length of text, language; • Composition of consortium, target countries; Budget conditions; • Completed annexes (full proposals only): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CVs of applicants employed by the consortium member organisations and project staff; - Letters of support outlining the availability and commitment of consortium members, including the valorised co-funding commitment of consortium members (signed by the head of the organisation/department); - Work plan, agenda, invitation list, budget for the kick-off workshop. <p>a) Scientific quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to generate new, evidence-based knowledge and insights; • Validity of the conceptual framework (coherence of the objectives, research questions and methods, including accountability for conflict dynamics); • Feasibility of the research approach; • Complementarity and level of integration of the multidisciplinary approach. 	Provide a list of a maximum of five key publications (policy or company briefs, websites, scientific manuscripts etc) of each consortium member organisation, applicant or, if relevant, individual staff member

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
			b) Relevance for development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the project proposal aligns with the aim, objectives and foci of the Call; Extent to which the proposal is rooted in the demands of stakeholders; Contribution of the project's approach to "on-the-job" research capacity strengthening; Quality of the impact pathway and indicators concerning both objectives. 	
ARF2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A research organisation and A practitioner organisation involved in the design and/or implementation of policies for security and rule of law reform programmes in targeted countries. <p>The main applicant must be employed by the research consortium member organisation. He or she should hold a senior position (at least a demonstrable six years of relevant experience)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project proposal must provide a proper contextualisation of the project within the relevant national, regional or international policy frames and knowledge demands or practical need; The project must aim to deliver new insights that may lead to innovative policy approaches or practices; The project must consist of a coherent set of research and knowledge sharing activities; Outputs and outcomes must contribute to both objectives of this Call as stated in Section 2.1. Applications should be written for a broad audience: proposals should be clear and comprehensible to international practitioners (from different sectors) and to research experts from different disciplinary backgrounds. 	Formal criteria include (but may not be limited to) the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will be executed by a consortium consisting of at least a research organization and a practitioner organization; Application has been submitted by the main applicant who holds a senior position at a research organization; Application has been received timely via electronic application system Iris; Application form has been completed and correctly signed; Project proposal entails both research activities and knowledge sharing activities; Format, length of text, language; Specific conditions (e.g. target LMIC as depicted in footnote 2) have been applied; Budget conditions have been applied; Annexes are completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV of each applicant employed by the consortium member organisations involved in the application; Letters of support outlining the availability and commitment of consortium member organisations, including the valorised co-funding commitment of consortium member organisations (signed by the head of the organisation/department). a) Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the proposal contributes to innovation: providing new insights or tools that may lead to innovative policy approaches; Validity of the conceptual framework (coherence of the objectives, research questions and methods); 	Provide a list of a maximum of five key publications (policy or company briefs, websites, scientific manuscripts etc) of each consortium member organisation, applicant or, if relevant, individual staff member

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal must show that it answers a knowledge need of local, national or international practitioner organisations involved in policy and practice of Security & Rule of Law in FCAS as listed; The project should be based on a clear analysis of the knowledge questions addressed. The proposal must show how research activities will contribute to new insights and/or tools that are applicable in policy or practice and contribute to improved security and rule of law reform programmes in the LMIC(s) targeted; The research methodology should be conflict-sensitive, carefully designed, and include an objective analysis of scientific/academic (empirical) information to make it possible to formulate recommendations for evidence-based policy and practice; The project proposal preferably pays special attention to the political and economic role of women in peace and reconstruction processes. The project is expected to include activities for active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robustness of the research methodology; Suitability of the (multi- and transdisciplinary) expertise of the applicants/collaboration (including track record). <p>b) Relevance for policy and/or practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the proposal aligns with the Call's aim and the objective to provide evidence-based insights or tools for policy or practice (objective a); Potential to generate accessible and applicable output for practitioners (objective b), robustness of knowledge sharing activities and probability to generate impact (including realistic impact pathway); Appropriateness of the contextualisation and sensitivity of the project for conflict dynamics; Extent to which the proposal has been demonstrably developed in collaboration with local, national or international practitioners. 	

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<p>knowledge sharing with a broader group of relevant (local, national, international) organisations that are not directly involved in the project in order to enhance the potential for implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal must include a communication plan that shows how knowledge sharing activities will contribute to making the knowledge available, accessible to and applicable for policy and practice; Strengthening a learning culture in a broader group of stakeholders can enhance the development impact of the Research Fund Security & Rule of Law at large. Applicants must be prepared to participate in activities for the exchange of experiences with applicants of other projects granted under this or other Calls of the research programme on Security & Rule of Law. These activities will be organised by the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law. 		
ARF3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers with a demonstrable track record in security & rule of law policy research employed by any organisation from across the globe that has a focus on research on or on the design and/or 	<p>A proposal must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A proper contextualisation of the project in the relevant national, regional or global policy frames; 	<p>Formal eligibility criteria include (but may not be limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application has been received timely via electronic application system Iris; Application form has been completed and correctly signed; 	No requirement for publications

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
	<p>implementation of policies or approaches for security and rule of law reform programmes in the LMI countries and regions specified (as main applicant). Researchers from non-traditional (research) organisations (such as think-tanks and NGOs) are encouraged to apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main applicant is encouraged to collaborate with a co-applicant employed by a legally registered, practitioner organisation based in a LMIC. <p>The main applicant needs to be an experienced [holds a PhD or has published at least three research publications under the auspices of a research organization acknowledged by international peers] researcher employed by a recognized organisation from around the globe that has a focus on research on, or design and/or implementation of, policies for security and rule of law reform programmes in the LMI countries and regions specified;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear description of the idea explaining why this is new and may lead to new insights for international responses; A clear motivation on how the project contributes to both objectives of this Call as stated in Section 2.1; The (methodological) approach (of the scientific/academic analysis) to found the idea; A motivation of the relevance of the expertise involved; It must be clear from the proposal that the idea is rooted in the demand of (international) practitioners; The project must be forward looking, geared towards formulating new ideas for responses to new threats and challenges; Preferably, special attention is given to the political and economic role of women in peace and reconstruction processes. Applications must be written for a broad audience: proposals should be clear and comprehensible to international practitioners (from different sectors) and to experts from different disciplinary backgrounds; Strengthening a learning culture in a broader group of stakeholders beyond the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main applicant is an experienced⁹ researcher employed by a recognized organisation from around the globe that has a focus on research on, or design and/or implementation of, policies for security and rule of law reform programmes in the LMI countries and regions specified¹⁰; Format, length of text, language are correct; Budget conditions are fulfilled; Annexes are completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV of the applicant(s), including an overview of publications showing his/her research experience; Letter(s) of support outlining the availability and commitment of the organisation(s) employing the main (and, if applicable, co-)applicant, including any valorised co-funding commitment (signed by the head of the organisation/department). <p>a) Innovativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential of the project to deliver new ideas for international responses to new threats & challenges for peace, security and development in FCAS; The extent to which (a) new, non-traditional partner(s) is/are actually involved in / contribute to the project formulation and execution and to knowledge dissemination of the outputs thereof; Appropriateness of the scientific/academic base of the proposal. <p>b) Relevance for policy and/or practice Extent to which the proposal aligns with the Call's focus and objectives;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the proposal is demonstrably rooted in the demand of practitioners; Potential of the proposal to generate evidence-informed, accessible and applicable ideas for practitioners. 	

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		applicants' organisations/project team can enhance the development impact of the Research Fund Security & Rule of Law at large. Applicants must be prepared to participate in activities for the exchange of experiences with applicants of other projects granted under this or other Calls of the research programme on Security & Rule of Law. These activities will be organised by the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law .		
ARF 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A practitioner organisation involved in the design and/or implementation of policies for security and rule of law reform programmes in fragile and conflict-affected settings and whose knowledge demand is addressed by the consortium; and A research organisation. <p>The consortium appoints one main applicant from its midst. He or she should hold a senior position within his/ her organisation (with at least a demonstrable six years relevant research and/or policy/practice experience).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project proposal must provide a proper contextualisation of the project within the relevant national, regional or international policy frames and knowledge demands or practical need; The research project must aim to deliver new insights that may lead to applicable policy approaches/programming; The three indicated key characteristics that manifest transnational flows should be a central concern for consideration and exploration by research proposals. Besides this, the project proposal must address knowledge demands that are related to one or 	<p>Formal eligibility criteria include (but may not be limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research project will be executed by a consortium consisting of at least one practitioner organisation (which is involved in the design of policies and/or programming for SRoL reform programmes in FCAS and whose knowledge demand is addressed by the consortium) and one research organisation; Application has been submitted by the main applicant who holds a senior16 position at one of the consortium member organisations; Application has been received timely via electronic application system ISAAC; Application form has been completed and correctly signed; Project proposal entails both research activities and knowledge sharing activities; Format, length of text, language (English); Specific conditions (e.g. target FCAS as depicted in Section 1.2) have been applied; Budget conditions have been applied; Annexes are completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV of each applicant employed by the consortium member organisations involved in the project proposal; 	Provide a list of a maximum of five key communications of each consortium member organisation. It is possible to refer to reports (e.g. of successfully implemented programmes), convened policy discussion events, key note speeches, community outreach meetings, facilitation local dialogue processes, facilitating grassroots surveys, revenues/profits, policy or company briefs, websites, scientific publications, (chapters in) books etc.

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<p>more of the five thematic areas and should consider one or more of the four key dimensions in the design;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project must consist of a coherent set of research and knowledge sharing activities; • Outputs and outcomes must contribute to both objectives of this Call as stated in Section 2.1; • The project design should explain the relevance and complementarity of the expertise involved; • The project proposal should explain how it will plan, organise and budget the foreseen activities; • Project proposals should be written for a broad audience: proposals should be clear and comprehensible to international practitioners (from different sectors) and to research experts from different disciplinary backgrounds. • The project proposal must show that it answers a knowledge demand of local, national or international practitioner organisations involved in the design and/or implementation of policies for security and rule of law in FCAS as listed; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letters of support outlining the availability and commitment of consortium member organisations, including the valorised co-funding commitment of consortium member organisations and/or third parties (signed by the head of the organisation/department); - A statement from the Chamber of Commerce for each non-Dutch consortium member organisation; - An overview of the legally determined salary scales of all consortium member organisations is requested. <p>a) Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the project proposal (develop tools that) provides new evidence-based insights to enhance the effectiveness of policies and/or programming addressing the effects of transnational flows on stability in FCAS (objective a); • Validity of the conceptual framework (coherence of the objectives, research questions and methods); • Robustness of the research design and methodology; • Suitability of the (multi- and transdisciplinary) expertise of the applicants/collaboration (including track record). <p>b) Relevance for policy and/or programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the proposal relates to/takes into account the aim, three key characteristics, one or more of the five thematic areas and one or more of the four key dimensions in the design; • Potential to generate accessible and applicable output for practitioners involved in policy and/or its implementation (programming) on Security & Rule of Law in FCAS (objective b); • Robustness of knowledge sharing activities and probability to generate impact (including realistic impact pathway, including realistic foreseen users of project results); • Appropriateness of the contextualisation and sensitivity of the project for conflict dynamics; • Extent to which the proposal has been demonstrably developed in collaboration with local, national or international practitioners. 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research project should be based on a clear analysis of the knowledge questions addressed. The proposal must show how research activities will contribute to new evidence-based insights and/or tools that are applicable in policy and/or programming and contribute to improved security and rule of law reform policies and/or programming in FCAS as listed; • The proposal must also include an impact pathway that shows how the research activities (and also the knowledge sharing activities) result in output and contribute to outcomes and impact, with verifiable indicators for the output and outcome levels. The impact pathway should explicate and specify the foreseen users of the project's results and how such users will be targeted; • The research methodology should be carefully designed, conflict-sensitive, and include an objective analysis of the current scientific (empirical) knowledge on the topic addressed, as a knowledge base for the proposed research and eventually to 		

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		<p>formulate recommendations for evidence-informed policy and/or programming;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project proposal preferably pays special attention to the political and economic role of women in peace and reconstruction processes. • The research project is expected to include activities for active knowledge sharing with a broader group of relevant (local, national, international) organisations that are not directly involved in the project in order to enhance the potential for implementation and to generate impact; • The proposal must include a communication plan that shows how knowledge sharing activities will contribute to making the knowledge available, accessible to and applicable for policy and/or programming; • Applicants must be prepared to participate in activities for the exchange of experiences with applicants of other project proposals granted under this or other Calls of the research programme on Security & Rule of Law. These activities will be 		

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		organised by the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law.		
SRF 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two research organisations of which at least one is based in a low or middle income country (LMIC); • A practitioner organisation located in the targeted country and which is involved in the development and implementation of policies and intervention programmes in the area of human security. <p>The main applicant must be employed by a research consortium member organisation. He or she should hold a senior position (at least 6 years of demonstrable experience in relevant research).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project proposal should provide a proper contextualisation of the research project within the relevant national, regional or international policy frames; • Outputs and outcomes should contribute to the objectives of this Call as stated in section 2.1; • A project proposal should consist of a coherent set of activities (research, knowledge sharing and capacity strengthening activities); • The project proposal should explain the relevance and complementarity of the capabilities/experiences of the consortium members and expertise involved; • Applications should be written for a broad audience: proposals should be clear and comprehensible to international practitioners (from different sectors) and to research experts from different disciplinary backgrounds. • The project should be based on a clear analysis of the knowledge question(s) to be addressed; 	<p>Formal eligibility criteria include (but may not be limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right application form has been used; • Application has been received timely via the electronic application system ISAAC; • Application has been submitted by the main applicant who holds a senior position at a research organisation; • The project will be executed by a consortium consisting of at least two research organisations of which one is located in a LMIC, and one or more practitioner organisations of which one is located in one of the specified target countries (see section 3.2); • The issue addressed is located in (one of the) specified target countries; • The project entails strategic research activities, capacity strengthening activities and knowledge sharing activities; • The application form has been completed and correctly signed; • Conditions on length of text, language have been fulfilled; • Budget conditions have been applied correctly; • A completed impact pathway; • Completed annexes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder analysis; - CVs of applicants and project staff members (excluding support staff) employed by the consortium member organisations involved in the application; - Final work plan (including agenda, invitation list, budget) for the kick-off workshop. - Letters of support outlining the availability and commitment of consortium member organisations, including the valorised co-funding commitment of consortium members (signed by the head of the organisation/department); - Official document that proofs that non-Dutch consortium member organisations are officially registered; <p>a) Scientific quality:</p>	<p>Provide a list of a maximum of five (scientific and other) key publications or communications of each consortium member organisation. The references should illustrate that the applicant has the relevant experience, expertise, and skills for the project. You may refer to scientific manuscripts, abstracts and reviews but also to publications that address non-scientific stakeholders such as policy or company briefs or reports, websites, convened policy discussion events, key note speeches, community outreach meetings, facilitation local dialogue processes, et cetera.</p>

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal should show how research activities contribute to new, evidence-based knowledge and insights on policies and intervention theories and strategies regarding inclusive, comprehensive approaches to human security in view of transnational security threats; A project proposal should include all three inter-related strategic research axes delineated in section 2.2; The proposal should explain why the research methodology applied is conflict-sensitive; The proposal should specify how the project will contribute to “on-the-job” capacity strengthening, for example through mentoring junior (PhD) researchers and possibly master students from LMICs, and what will be the expected output and outcome; The project proposal preferably pays special attention to the political and economic role of women in peace and reconstruction processes A (practitioner) stakeholder analysis is part of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to generate new, evidence-based knowledge and insights; Validity of the conceptual framework (coherence of the objectives, research questions and methods, coherence of the three axes); Robustness of the research methodology (including accountability for conflict-dynamics); Suitability of the expertise of the applicants/collaboration (including track record). <p>b) Relevance for development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the proposal relates to the aim, objectives and focus of the Call; Appropriateness of the (local/regional) contextualisation, including the extent to which the proposal is demonstrably developed and will be executed in collaboration with relevant local practitioners; Contribution of the project's approach to “on-the-job” capacity strengthening; Robustness of knowledge sharing activities and probability to generate impact (including realistic impact pathway). 	

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<p>knowledge sharing plan and should be attached as an annex to the application form. The choice of stakeholders to be involved (in the consortium or workshops) must be rationalised;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal should include a communication plan that shows how knowledge sharing activities will contribute to making the knowledge available and accessible to, and applicable for policy and practice; • The project is expected to include activities for active knowledge sharing with a broader group of relevant (local, national, international) practitioner organisations that are not directly involved in the project in order to enhance potential for knowledge sharing and implementation. Before the start of the project a kick-off workshop must be organised to fine tune the project with relevant stakeholders; • Strengthening a learning culture in a broader group of stakeholders can enhance the development impact of the Security & Rule of Law Research Programme at large. Applicants must be 		

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<p>prepared to participate in activities for the exchange of experiences with applicants of other projects granted under this or other Calls of the research programme SRoL. These activities will be organised by the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law, which is responsible for the research agenda-setting and for knowledge sharing of the experiences and results deriving from all projects awarded by the Strategic Research Fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimately, projects are expected to contribute to enhanced security for the most vulnerable people in the targeted fragile and conflict-affected countries or regions mentioned below. For full proposals, each project should explicate how the project works towards the realisation of this development aim by sketching an impact pathway (for an example, see Section 6.3). In this pathway, it must be envisioned how the project activities (both research and knowledge sharing activities) result in outputs and contribute to outcomes and impact, with verifiable 		

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		indicators for the output and outcome levels		
ARF 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A practitioner organisation involved in the design and/or implementation of policies and/or programmes in the field of Security and Rule of Law (including policies and/or programmes related to social and economic reconstruction, for instance aiming at the improvement of basic services or private sector development) (focus 1), or involved in donor-supported security measures (focus 2) designed to control and regulate mixed migration flows from/within FCAS; and A research organisation. <p>The consortium appoints one main applicant from its midst. He or she should hold a senior position within his/her organisation (individuals with at least a demonstrable six years research and/or policy/practice experience relevant).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-creation -The research project should be practitioner driven and evolve in a process of co-creation with different knowledge partners (both practitioners and research organisations): both practitioners and researchers should be actively involved throughout the entire project process; in defining and conducting the research as well as in communicating the progress and result. Impact pathway - Each project should explicate how the project works towards the realisation of the two objectives of this call and ultimately contribute to enhanced security for the most vulnerable people in the targeted FCAS or regions by sketching an impact 	<p>Formal eligibility criteria include (but may not be limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research project will be executed by a consortium consisting of at least one practitioner organisation (which is involved in the design and/or implementation of policies and/or programmes for SRoL reform programmes in FCAS and whose knowledge demand is addressed by the consortium) and one research organisation; Application has been submitted by the main applicant who holds a senior²² position at one of the consortium member organisations; Application has been received timely via electronic application system ISAAC; Application form has been completed and correctly signed; Project proposal entails research activities, an impact pathway and knowledge sharing activities; Format, length of text, language (English) are in line with the conditions (see Section 6); Specific conditions (e.g. target FCAS as depicted in Section 1.2) have been applied; Budget conditions have been applied (see Section 6.2.10); Annexes are completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV of the lead staff member of each consortium member organisation and either a CV or a job profile (a brief 	Provide a list of a maximum of five key communications of each consortium member organisation. It is possible to refer to reports (e.g. of successfully implemented programmes), convened policy discussion events, key note speeches, community outreach meetings, facilitation local dialogue processes, facilitating grass root surveys, revenues/profits, policy or company briefs, websites, scientific publications, (chapters in) books etc.

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<p>pathway (for a schematic example, see Section 6.4). In this pathway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it must be envisioned how the project activities (both research activities and knowledge sharing activities) result in output and contribute to outcomes and impact, with verifiable indicators for the output and outcome levels; it must be explicated and specified who the foreseen users of the project results (next users, final users, adopter-level users and community-level users) are and how users will be targeted. Knowledge sharing (activities) - Knowledge generated by projects receiving a grant must be easily accessible for and applicable: the research project is demanded to include activities for active knowledge sharing with a broader group of relevant (local, national, international) organisations that are not directly involved in the project (as member of the consortium) in order to enhance the potential for 	<p>description of the characteristics and skills of the vacancy) for other staff members involved in the project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters of support outlining the availability and commitment of consortium member organisations, including the valorised co-funding commitment of consortium member organisations and/or third parties (signed by the head of the organisation/department); Proof of registration for each non-Dutch consortium member organisation; An overview of the legally determined salary scales from the consortium member organisations, with the exception of Dutch universities. <p>a) Research quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the project proposal provides new evidence-based insights (objective A); Validity of the conceptual framework (coherence of the objectives, research questions and methods); Robustness of the research design and scientific methodology; Demonstrable quality of relevant expertise of the main- and co-applicants. <p>b) Relevance for policies and/or programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the proposal aligns with the call's aim and foci; Robustness of knowledge sharing activities and probability to generate impact for the ultimate target group (including a realistic impact pathway which incorporates realistic foreseen users of project results) (objective B); Extent to which the proposal has been demonstrably developed and will be executed in co-creation (collaboration with local, national or international practitioners, including policy makers); Appropriateness of the contextualisation and sensitivity of the project for conflict dynamics. 	

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		<p>implementation and to generate impact;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants must be prepared to participate in activities organised by the Knowledge Platform to create a feedback loop between the research projects and potential users/ beneficiaries, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands. In addition, these activities can stimulate exchange between peer researchers. These activities will be organised by the Knowledge Platform. Generated knowledge must be translated into policy briefs and preferably also into other tools like audio/visual products addressing how the new insights can be used to transform (new or existing) policies and/or programmes. <p>When the results from the funded research are published, the financial support received from NWO-WOTRO - commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands and developed in close collaboration with the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law - must be acknowledged.</p>		
ARF 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A practitioner organisation involved in the design and/or implementation of 	The proposal must:	Formal eligibility criteria for the <i>full application</i> include (but may not be limited to) the following:	Provide a list of a maximum of five key

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
	<p>policies and/or programmes in the fields of human security, rule of law and/or political governance within FCAS; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A research organisation with demonstrable experience working with human security, rule of law and/or political governance within FCAS. <p>The consortium appoints one main applicant from its midst. He or she should hold a senior position (individuals with at least a demonstrable six years experience relevant) within his/her organisation. The research organisation in the consortium should also be represented by a senior researcher (individuals with at least a demonstrable six years research experience).</p> <p>The inclusion of a partner actively working in an implementation country will be considered a strength. This call specifically requires consortium partners to demonstrate a prior history of successful collaboration (although this criterion can be negated in certain specific circumstances).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the role and added value of each of the consortium member organisations in terms of experience (including research and practice experience), skills, knowhow and expertise. Explain how co-creation will be achieved: how will the specific expertise and knowledge of the partners (both practitioner and research organisations) complement each other? Also explain how especially the practitioner organisation will be actively involved throughout the entire research process, in defining and conducting the research as well as in communicating the progress and results. Explicate the consortium's history of collaboration and highlight the complimentary qualities of both/all partner organisations towards the joint and efficient completion of the project (Include proof in annex 2). In case the consortium cannot meet this condition, the applicants should demonstrate the complimentary qualities of both/all partner organisations towards the joint and efficient completion of the research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research project will be executed by a consortium consisting of at least one practitioner organisation (which is involved in the design and/or implementation of policies and/or programmes for SRoL reform programmes in FCAS and whose knowledge demand is addressed by the consortium) and one research organisation (with demonstrable experience working with human security, rule of law and/or political governance within FCAS); Application has been submitted by the main applicant who holds a senior position at one of the consortium member organisations; The research organisation in the consortium is represented by a senior researcher with at least a demonstrable six years research experience; Application provides all information requested in the preliminary application form, and the project proposal includes research activities, an impact pathway and knowledge sharing activities; Format, length of text, language (English) are in line with the conditions for the application provided in section 6; Application has been received timely via electronic application system ISAAC; Application form has been completed and correctly signed; Specific conditions (e.g. target FCAS as depicted in Section 1.4, footnote 13) have been applied; Budget conditions applied (Section 6.2.10) and the Excel budget has been added as annex in ISAAC (Annex 8); Annexes are completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 1. Curriculum vitae of the lead staff member of each consortium member organisation involved in the project proposal, and of all other staff members either a curriculum vitae or a job profile (a brief description of the characteristics and skills of the vacancy) (Max. 1 page each in English). Annex 2. Proof of the consortium's history of collaboration (1 document), i.e. documentation, such as a project sheet or link to a project web-page, that demonstrates past collaboration between the main applicant and primary co-applicant. 	<p>communications of each consortium member organisation. It is possible to refer to reports (e.g. of successfully implemented programmes), convened policy discussion events, key note speeches, community outreach meetings, facilitation local dialogue processes, facilitating grass root surveys, revenues/profits, policy or company briefs, websites, scientific publications, (chapters in) books etc.</p>

Fund	Who can apply	What can be applied for	Evaluation criteria	Track record
		project, substantiating that no time will be lost to the consortium formation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annex 3. Support letter of consortium partners (including main applicant organisation), these letters should include the support for co-funding (max. 2 pages each in English – see section 6.2 call); - Annex 4. Support letter(s) of the end-user(s). - Annex 5. Draft Consortium Agreement (this does not need to be signed yet) - The WOTRO Regulations provide the conditions and requirements for the Consortium Agreement. A template for the Consortium Agreement can be found here: https://www.nwo.nl/en/documents/wotro/wotro---format-consortium-agreement - Annex 6. A proof of registration (preferable in English) for all non-Dutch organisations that are part of the consortium; - Annex 7. An overview of the legally determined salary scales or day rates of all consortium member organisations other than Dutch Universities (in English). <p>a) Research quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to provide new evidence-based insights (obj. A); • Adequacy and feasibility of the research methodology/approach and activities, in relation to research questions and objectives; • Demonstrable quality of relevant expertise of the main-and co-applicants. <p>b) Relevance for policies and/or programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which proposal aligns with the call's aim and foci; • Robustness of knowledge sharing activities and probability to generate impact on SRoL policies & programmes(including realistic impact pathway) (objective B); • Extent to which the proposal has been demonstrably developed and will be executed in co-creation (including integration of scientific knowledge and practitioners' knowledge and their involvement of end-users); • Extent to which the project answers to the demand of a policy maker or other type of practitioner; • Appropriateness of the contextualisation, and sensitivity of the project for conflict dynamics. 	

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			c) Feasibility, quality of collaboration and value for money <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength of partnership, based on the history of collaboration, experience of partners with the issue at stake, inclusion of a partner working in an implementation country, and embeddedness of all the partners in the consortium; • Value for money: adequacy of the budget and optimal use of resources to achieve the intended results; • Feasibility of the projects activities in the given timeframe and budget. 	

Annex 9: Budget spent per project

Table 4.3 Overview of budget allocated and spent per project (in euros)

Fund	Title	Total NWO grant	Budget spent	Budget not spent
ARF 1	Looking through the lens of land - Enhancing justice through land governance reform in DR Congo's eastern Kivu Provinces and South Sudan's Greater Equatorial Region	308.285	207.201	101.084
ARF 1	Supporting primary Justice in insecure contexts, South Sudan and Afghanistan	309.960	262.679	47.281
ARF 1	A transitional justice barometer: measuring the needs for and impact of transitional justice processes in Tunisia	267.000,00	254.713,13	12.286,87
ARF 1	Intersections of Justice and conflict in South Sudan	312.500,00	301.687	10.813
ARF 1	Accommodation of justice for displaced in DRC	311.000,00	284.437,62	26.462,38
ARF 1	Syrian communities Justice Concerns in Lebanon and Access to Formal and Informal Justice systems in Lebanon	278.898	278.898	/
SRF 1	Entrepreneurship training, social cohesion and horizontal inequality in Rwanda	374.110	328.696,89	45.413,11
SRF 1	Sustainable employment under construction: peace and stability strategies for the private sector in Afghanistan	423.950	394.984,58	28.965,42
SRF 1	Does opportunity reduce instability? A meta-analysis of skills and employment interventions in LMICs.	419.500	402.261	17.239
ARF 2	The Justice Box - a tool for evidence-based policy and legal empowerment in Mali	103.240	103.240	/
ARF 2	When will transitional justice join the transitional decade in Afghanistan?	106.082	104.535	EUR 1.547
ARF 2	Towards inclusive security governance of the Tunisian- Libyan border: Developing evidence-based approaches to enhancing border security in Tunisia	88.164	85.403,32	2.760,68
ARF 2	The 2013 National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in Yemen: Why did it fail to prevent conflict?	104.032	99.153	4.879
ARF 2	Codifying water rights in contested basins of Afghanistan	84.490	76.107	8.383
ARF 2	Enhancing Local Peace Committees - facilitating stakeholder debate on the strategic choices involved in transitional justice in Burundi and DR Congo.	99.750	77.062	22.688
ARF 2	Informing policy on plural security provision in urban contexts: Comparative insights from Lebanon, Kenya, and Tunisia	99.600	98.023	1.577

Fund	Title	Total NWO grant	Budget spent	Budget not spent
ARF 2	Urban refugee protection in Lebanon's hybrid security system: a research and action agenda	89.700	89.525,98	174, 02
ARF 2	Trialling tools for participatory gender analysis in Uganda	75.083	72.373	2.710
ARF 2	Learning from design in Mali: a critical review of the M&E framework for the CSO-led Human Security Strategy 2014-2015	96.630	83.474	13.156
ARF 2	Women's role in peace and security in Kurdish self-administered areas in Syria	78.546	78.033,45	512,55
ARF 2	Land rights and access to land survey in Timor Leste: a tool for evidence based policy and advocacy	88.132	77.702	3.430
ARF 2	Breaking the cycle of violence in post conflict settings: the potential for community based socio-therapy in Rwanda	95.820	93.503	2.317
ARF 2	Governance mechanisms in opposition held areas in Syria	99.560	98.986	574
ARF 2	Cross border access to justice in Palestinian territories	54.297	51.022	3.275
ARF 2	Addressing statelessness in the Syria crisis context	94.483	92.840	1.643
ARF 2	Policy tools to reduce radicalization against Ahmadyia	78.700	68.769	9.931
ARF 2	Youth exclusion and violence in Burundi and South Sudan	99.180	88.822	10.359
ARF 2	Mass atrocity prevention toolkit: the effectiveness and ethics of mass atrocity prevention policies with case studies in Syria and Kenya	52.940	46.613	6.327
ARF 2	Enhancing Women's Role in Peace and Security in Yemen	99.978,00	97.538,63	2.439,37
ARF 3	Civil Society Involvement in Tunisia's SSR Process	24.980	21.370	3.610
ARF 3	Combating prolonged pre-trial detention in Ukraine	16.884	16.296	548
ARF 3	Improving synchronicity between political party assistance and international conflict resolution interventions in fragile and conflict affected settings: Lessons from Burundi and Mali	24.974	24.310	664
SRF 3	Human Security and Conflict in Ukraine: Local Approaches and Transnational Dimensions	294.413,00	262.472,22	31.940,78
SRF 3	Security Assistance and Non-State Actors in Iraq, Syria & Afghanistan: Comprehensive and Inclusive Human Security Beyond the State?	No reporting available	No reporting available	No reporting available
SRF 3	Preventing the spill-over: combatting violent extremism with a human security approach in Palestine, Egypt and Iraq	No reporting available	No reporting available	No reporting available
SRF 3	Securing the Local: The Role of Non-state security groups (NSSGs) in the Struggle against Extremism in Kenya, Nigeria and Indonesia	No reporting available	No reporting available	No reporting available

Fund	Title	Total NWO grant	Budget spent	Budget not spent
SRF 3	Political dynamics in the Sahel and the appearance of nomadic pastoralist movements	No reporting available	No reporting available	No reporting available
SRF 3	Towards more effective human security approaches in the context of the emerging threat of violent radicalisation in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia	No reporting available	No reporting available	No reporting available
ARF 4	Security of transnational flows of natural resources in Indonesia - a study into the role of private and state security actors in protecting the interests of the international extractive industry and their impact on the human rights and security of local people	96.733	85.334,90	11.398,10
ARF 5	Ensuring that policy responds to the realities of trafficking and smuggling of mixed migrants from Eritrea and Ethiopia	67.532	54.843	12.689
ARF 5	Drivers for onward migration: the case of Iraqi IDPS in the Kurdistan region leaving the country	98.913	93.102	5.811
ARF 5	Irregular migration economies in northern Niger: the lasting economic, governance and social implications of a booming industry	99.995	EUR 99.995	/
ARF 5	Evidence-based assessment of migration deals: the case of Turkey	78.914	73.381	5.533
ARF 5	Syrian refugees and conflict in Lebanon: local resilience for long-term peace	99.999	94.808,87	5.190,13
ARF 5	Everyday justice and security provision for displaced and residents in Bukavu, DRC	71.818	69.083,63	2.734,37
ARF 5	T-STAN: Toolkit on Smuggling and Trafficking, and a security and rule of law approach to their possible Nexus - with a focus on the route from Libya to the EU	99.058	EUR 84.199	14.859
ARF 5	Drivers of mixed migration: analysing the determinants and the role of development and security policies in the MENA region with a special focus on Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Eritrea and Syria.	99.560	82.626,82	16.933,18
ARF 5	Wellbeing of Urban Refugees: Syrians and Hosts in Jordan and Lebanon (WURSHJL)	99.756	90.774,08	8.981,92
ARF 5	Causes and dynamics of mixed unskilled migrants trafficked within the Horn region. A study including Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan	99.909	99.904,78	4,22
ARF 5	Comparative study on the impact of youth interventions on mixed migration in Afghanistan and Somalia	100.000	86.543,99	13.456,01
ARF 5	Developing capacity for protection-sensitive border management in mixed migration settings: Lessons from the Border Region Mali-Niger	99.380	95.288,88	4.091,12

Fund	Title	Total NWO grant	Budget spent	Budget not spent
ARF 6	External stabilization interventions in CAR and DRC: The assumptions of peacekeeping operations and (I)NGOs, local 'realities', and the risks of discrepancies for legitimate stability	225.000	208.397,55	17.147,55
ARF 6	Improving stability in settings of fragile or limited statehood: Harnessing the potential of traditional authorities for local government interventions in Libya, Mali, and Niger	224.998	219.933	5.605
ARF 6	GROUNDLED LEGITIMACY – strengthening local land registration in conflict- affected Northern Uganda	198.620	168.972	29.648
ARF 6	Returning to stability? Lessons from the Great Lakes region	222.861	203.746	14.314
ARF 6	Promoting Fair Vetting in Kenya and Beyond	224.906	184.380,82	40.525,18
ARF 6	Public Authority and Legitimacy Making (PALM): host-refugee relations in urban Jordan and Lebanon	224.997	207.350,68	17.646,32
ARF 6	A question of legitimacy: How civil society organisations can and do provide rehabilitation and reintegration services for violent extremist offenders in (post-) conflict settings in the Sahel (Nigeria)	117.000	108.200,25	8.750,25

About Ecorys

Ecorys is a leading international research and consultancy company, addressing society's key challenges. With world-class research-based consultancy, we help public and private clients make and implement informed decisions leading to positive impact on society. We support our clients with sound analysis and inspiring ideas, practical solutions and delivery of projects for complex market, policy and management issues.

In 1929, businessmen from what is now Erasmus University Rotterdam founded the Netherlands Economic Institute (NEI). Its goal was to bridge the opposing worlds of economic research and business – in 2000, this much respected Institute became Ecorys.

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- Economic growth;
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