

## Nuffic NICHE/NFP gender strategy

### **Preamble: Higher Education Institutions' specific mission for women's advancement, gender equality and the nation's development.**

The way men and women perceive themselves and each other is determined by social values and norms, which often translate in stereotypes that are hard to modify. Institutions like churches, schools, and businesses, all encompass sets of norms, values, rules, habits, customs and routines<sup>1</sup>. Organizations<sup>2</sup> are the 'units' where these norms, values, rules, habits, customs and routines and related stereotypes and perceptions of men and women are replicated. Although they may change over time, according to new insights and knowledge, they are persistent and hard to transform into new ones.

The question is: whose norms, values, customs and routines govern 'what we do and how we interact'? We know that institutions and organizations may incorporate norms and values, habits and practices which pose a constraint to women's social and/or economic empowerment. The following is a simple example to explain this: women in Africa engage heavily in subsistence agriculture, whereas men are more involved in agricultural commodity production. Often, this economic role of women is heavily undervalued. Universities are supposed to provide a scientific and knowledge support system able to assist the development of the agriculture sector. How do their training and research agenda's look like? To what extent do they address the needs of female subsistence agriculturalists? How much of the research budget is spent on subsistence agriculture and how much on commodity production? What is the impact of such a scientific and knowledge support system on the development of these sub-sectors, and thus on the opportunities of men and women to improve their livelihood?

Universities deliver the cadres who will take up future leadership responsibilities in governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations. In the university, the future cadres are being trained and impregnated with prevailing sets of norms, values, customs and routines. If these are ignorant/blind to the different roles of women and men in society and the economy, it will not be surprising that the cadres will not be able to address these in their future occupations. New, gender sensitive practices in universities will represent a new reference model for students and graduates, which is likely to be replicated by them in their future functions. Thus, Higher Education Institutions can be considered as key actors in a process of change. Capacity development programmes such as NFP, NPT and NICHE which take place at universities and education institutes offer an excellent opportunity to pay attention to gender. While implementing gender sensitive practices, these institutes can contribute to more equitable societies.

Another major issue is the growing awareness that violence against women is an issue in higher education. A gender strategy needs to recognize this problem and has to formulate an answer in order to make sure that the safety of women can be guaranteed in higher education.

### **Introduction: Did NPT/NFP contribute to a process of engendered change?**

Since the start of NPT implementation in 2003, Nuffic observed that the gender dimensions of Higher Education were not well integrated in NPT projects. Attention for the differential needs of women and men in the capacity building endeavors (NPT projects) was hardly visible, despite references in the project outline formats and Tender criteria. This experience made Nuffic realize that more insights were needed into the enabling and disabling factors which hamper gender integration in the NPT programme. How gender specific are the courses and how gender aware is the teaching staff? At the same time, Nuffic wanted to have more information on how the NFP programmes contributed to equitable access of women to higher education scholarships. Such insights should

<sup>1</sup> 'Institutions are the norms, rules, habits, customs and routines (both formal and written, or, more often, informal and internalized) which govern society at large'; 'sets of rules that structure social interactions in particular ways'. (Dorcas Robinson, Tom Hewitt, John Harris, 2000. Managing development, understanding inter-organizational relationships. The Open University, UK.

<sup>2</sup> Organizations: 'groups of individuals bound by some common purpose, who come together to achieve joint objectives', *ibid*.

help to adjust the NICHE and new NFP programmes and improve our performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Dutch policy regarding development cooperation 'Our common Concern' (Koenders, 2007) gives specific importance to gender and sexual & reproductive health and rights. Acknowledging the perceived weaknesses in the NPT and NFP, Nuffic, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commissioned a gender Review of the NPT and NFP programmes. It took place between 1 September and 31 December 2008 in the Netherlands, in Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Vietnam and Yemen. Its findings and recommendations were discussed at the Gender Seminar of 26 January 2009, with the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/DSO and DSI/ER, the platform for International Education (PIE), the Profound (platform of universities for applied sciences) and with gender experts of Dutch institutions of higher learning and Nuffic staff. One of the main findings of the Review is that throughout the program, there are major flaws in commitment, knowledge and individual capacity to integrate gender in our daily work. The Review observed this at all levels and, grosso modo, it applied to all actors. Commitment and accountability, essential for gender integration in programmes, were perceived as generally weak at all levels.

### **Strategy: How will Nuffic address the observed weaknesses?**

Here, we have made an effort to translate the Review findings and recommendations in so far applicable to Nuffic into a set of objectives, outcomes and actions that is needed to ensure that the NICHE and NFP programmes contribute to improved gender equality and to the advancement and empowerment of women.

#### **Objective 1 Engendering NICHE country programmes, by analysing international, national and sector policies on women. The specific capacity building needs in HE to address the different needs of women and men are identified by involving women and gender stakeholders and actors.**

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| Outputs           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National PO describe the main components of national gender policies in relation to the selected sectors. Gender priorities in a country (e.g. discrimination and violence against women) should be reflected in the PO if relevant for the selected sectors.</li> <li>- Programme Outlines, implementation plans, sector plans and project outlines have gender-specific objectives, outputs, outcomes, budgets and measurable and verifiable indicators.</li> <li>- The objectives and outcomes of the NICHE programme are supported by sex disaggregated information and data.</li> <li>- Gender experts are involved in stakeholder consultation processes.</li> </ul> |
| Assumptions       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All actors in NICHE acknowledge the importance to engender NICHE and provide the necessary information.</li> <li>- Studies systematically address the gender dimensions.</li> <li>- Nuffic PAs have the capacity and reflex to incorporate the gender dimension in a systematic way.</li> <li>- RNEs, other donors and national governments actively and effectively pursue the Paris Declaration paragraph 42.</li> </ul>   |
| Actions by Nuffic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to systematically promote and mainstream gender issues in the NICHE programme at all levels</li> <li>- to build internal capacity on gender and gender accountability.</li> <li>- to ensure that selected consultants/institutions have sufficient expertise and experience on gender.</li> <li>- to ensure that gender experts are involved in stakeholder consultation processes.</li> </ul>   |

- to include gender specialists in the pool of regional consultants.

- Key indicators:
- Measurable and verifiable relevant gender specific indicators in TORs, Programme Outlines, Implementation Plan, Sector Plan, Project Outlines
  - The 23 Programme Outlines, Implementation Plans, Sector Plans and Project Outlines provide an analysis of the specific gender issues in relation to the capacity needs in post-secondary education and ensure that these issues are sufficiently addressed.

## **Objective 2 NPT/NICHE projects address the gender dimensions of the capacity building endeavours at all levels.**

- Outputs
- Project outlines, project documents and revised project documents have gender specific objectives, outputs, outcomes and measurable and verifiable indicators. They specify the gender expertise required and incorporate the cost of gender interventions in the budget and in the M&E framework. Reporting formats include gender.
- Assumptions
- The selected organisation in the NICHE country is committed to identify and address the gender needs, both internal and related to the specific outputs of the project.
  - The pool of women among the staff is adequate and benefits from training and other capacity building.
- Actions
- The 'institutional profile' (analysis of the selected organisation in NICHE countries) incorporates a gender analysis. On this basis, Nuffic will discuss the gender objectives for the organisation and the project.
  - Use and adjust existing reference materials to NICHE (OECD/DAC, EC, AAU-toolkit).
  - The consultant's TORs specify the expected outcomes in a gender specific manner and consultants are selected on the basis of gender expertise (organisational and institutional gender analysis, gender sectoral analysis and gender labour market analysis).
  - Where the pool of women to benefit from the project is small, Nuffic will encourage the SP to recruit female staff among graduates. Nuffic will be flexible with regard to the period that such staff has been employed in order to benefit from training.
  - SP facilitates the monitoring of Dutch and Southern implementers.
  - Nuffic gender taskforce facilitates meetings with PIE and Profound.
- Key indicators
- Gender specific AO documents.
  - All projects include a gender analysis and at least one gender objective to address organization and institutional gender issues in a quantitative and qualitative way.
  - NICHE projects benefit female and male staff in equal numbers.

## **Objective 3 The NFP programmes gender specific**

- Outputs
- Consensus reached with all stakeholders, including RNEs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch Institutions on the way a gender focus is incorporated in NFP. Topics include:
    - 1) making the course list more explicit in terms of gender topics;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) offering more (gender) courses in the region and in The Netherlands.</li> <li>3) making MA/MSc courses more flexible, for example by providing distance MAs/MSc.</li> <li>4) Dialogue with Ministry of Foreign Affairs DSO/OO on additional affirmative measures for female candidates.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The importance of NFP for women is prominent in Nuffic Information (website, NFP-NPT-NICHE e-Newsletter etc.).</li> <li>- Nuffic will have developed a toolkit for RNEs, institutions and NAAs regarding the promotion of female users of NFP.</li> <li>- M&amp;E will systematically collect data on female applications, awards and achievements (per modality) and demonstrates that 50% targets are reached.</li> <li>- Nuffic reporting to Ministry of Foreign Affairs includes a paragraph on gender.</li> </ul>
Assumptions	Funding will be available for more regional courses.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To design a strategy to reach consensus with the stakeholders, including courses in the region, gender courses and extended MA courses for women.</li> <li>- To design questions and criteria to make gender explicit in the course lists.</li> <li>- To design gender specific reporting formats.</li> <li>- To undertake tracer studies/ to make tracer studies gender specific.</li> </ul>
Key indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is realistic to achieve the result of 50% of the available scholarships to female applicants. However, it does not seem realistic to make and implement a country specific gender policy in order to achieve the 50% goal for every country. Nuffic proposes to implement a gender specific policy in those countries where gender is imbalanced amongst the NFP target group (see annex).</li> <li>- Course lists with courses indicating gender issues; number of fellowships (to females and males) for such courses.</li> </ul>

#### **Objective 4 NICHE is renowned for its attention for gender.**

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nuffic publications on gender include: NFP/NICHE newsletter contains a gender page; Specific publications on good (and not so good/bad) practices; Annual articles in Transfer.</li> <li>- Nuffic has taken the lead in bringing NICHE stakeholders/actors together for sharing experiences, including PIE and Profound.</li> </ul>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collecting information, writing of publications, organising annual workshops (1/2 to 1 day each) with partners in NL and in the countries.</li> <li>- Nuffic participates in fora and conferences on HE and gender.</li> <li>- In its media endeavours, Nuffic systematically addresses the gender dimension of HE in general and of NICHE and NFP in particular.</li> </ul>
Key indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific Nuffic website page on Gender.</li> <li>- Number of publications on gender: NFP-NPT-NICHE e-Newsletter 4x/yr; 1 separate publication/year on good/bad practices.</li> </ul>

## For all objectives

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Nuffic NICHE instruments systematically incorporate gender: Project outlines, checklists, tender documents, tender evaluation criteria, TORs for tender evaluation committees, reporting formats etcetera are specific to gender.</li><li>- A gender taskforce has been established and it has effectively and significantly contributed to the gender goals of the NICHE and NFP programmes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- It has effectively informed and monitored VSNU, PIE and Profound.</li><li>- It has effectively communicated and trained Southern partners.</li><li>- It has effectively worked with, among others, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs DSO/OO and DSI/ER on the development of a strategy to address violence against women.</li></ul></li><li>- Nuffic staff has the capacity and exercise ability and competence needed for effective gender integration in NICHE.</li><li>- NICHE implementers have the capacity and exercise ability and competence to incorporate the gender dimensions in projects and their monitoring.</li><li>- Gender audit/self assessment organised in 23 countries and in the Netherlands.</li></ul>
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Actors are committed to the gender cause.</li><li>- Resources available and management commitment and support to make the taskforce effective.</li></ul>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review and adjust the instruments.</li><li>- TOR will be developed with tasks, responsibilities, outcomes and the resources needed (in terms of staff time and budget).</li><li>- Organize regular internal training sessions for Nuffic staff, focussing on creating a better understanding gender concepts and gender integration (analytical tools and instruments), on creating more awareness and on building reflex, commitment and accountability.</li><li>- Organize regular sessions where experiences are shared, possible gaps identified and measures for improvement examined.</li><li>- Adjust the management systems so that recruitment and staff appraisal instruments as well as personal development plans (POPs) incorporate gender.</li><li>- Nuffic systematically communicates its gender policy for NICHE and NFP to the Dutch and Southern partners involved in these programmes.</li><li>- In the Netherlands and in NICHE countries, regular training/experience sharing workshops will be held focussing on the creation of a common view on gender in NICHE projects.</li><li>- Nuffic organizes annual sessions with the 2009 seminar to share experience and to monitor the 'good intentions'.</li><li>- Adjust the M&amp;E framework for NICHE. Liaison with DSI/ER and DSO/OO is required to specify and agree upon the information needs.</li></ul>
Key indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- AO reviewed (number of NICHE instruments reviewed); MIS: Results agreement, Personal development plans and appraisal document.</li><li>- All NICHE and NFP staff trained; visible learning and adjustment regarding gender practices in implementing NICHE by Nuffic</li><li>- Number of workshops in NICHE countries and in the Netherlands.</li></ul>