



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

nuffic

NICHE

Netherlands Initiative
for Capacity development
in Higher Education
(NICHE)

Netherlands organization
for international cooperation
in higher education

Introduction

For nearly half a century, the Dutch government has supported the sustainable strengthening of institutional capacity for education and training in developing countries. NICHE aims to help reduce skilled labour shortages through sustainable capacity building and as such to contribute to the reduction of poverty in developing countries.

NICHE concentrates on sectors that are supported under the Dutch bilateral development cooperation programme and complements this with a focus on the post-secondary education sector. NICHE wishes to contribute to achieving the objectives in these sectors the government has determined in its sectoral policies.

In addition, the programme looks at a number of cross-cutting themes. NICHE pays special attention to gender issues and to the link

between integrated capacity development and labour market needs at all programme levels.

NICHE combines Dutch and local or regional expertise to assist requesting organizations. The programme can support a range of organizations, including post-secondary education institutions, government ministries, national commissions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The priority areas are selected in collaboration with the Embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKNs) in NICHE countries and national authorities.

The programme is administered by Nuffic, the Netherlands organization for international cooperation in higher education, on behalf of the Dutch government. A total budget of approximately € 150 million has been allocated for the period 2009-2012.

Basic characteristics of the NICHE programme

- Demand-driven approach
- Ownership of problems and solutions lies in NICHE countries
- Alignment with national policy priorities and the post-secondary education sector
- Alignment with the bilateral development cooperation programmes of the Netherlands
- Attention for gender and labour market needs
- Donor harmonization
- Matching demand and supply through subsidy tenders
- Substantial use of existing local and regional expertise
- Steered toward outputs and outcomes
- Flexible support
- Project coherence
- Integrated and sustainable capacity development
- Organizational learning approach

The logo for NICHE is displayed vertically on the right side of the page. It consists of three horizontal bars at the top, followed by the letters 'N', 'I', 'C', 'H', and 'E' stacked vertically in a large, bold, white font against an orange background.

Countries participating in the NICHE programme

The Dutch programme for development cooperation focuses on a limited number of countries. The following 23 may wish to participate in the NICHE programme:

Afghanistan	Mozambique
Bangladesh	Nicaragua
Benin	Rwanda
Bhutan	South Africa
Colombia	South Sudan
Egypt	Surinam
Ethiopia	Tanzania
Ghana	Uganda
Guatemala	Vietnam
Indonesia	Yemen
Kenya	Zambia
Kosovo	

Brief description of the six main steps in the NICHE programme cycle:

Identification of demand

NICHE is a demand-oriented and needs-based programme. This means that the national authorities, the EKNs and Nuffic jointly select focus sectors and themes.

The demand identification process includes national policy structures, sector and institutional capacity analyses, policy priorities and donor coordination mechanisms. Therefore, the process varies by country.

Demand is identified as much as possible on the basis of policy analyses and existing local plans. If necessary, Nuffic conducts additional studies and organizes stakeholder meetings to facilitate the identification process.

The process results in the selection of:

- sectors and themes
- objectives
- outputs and outcomes
- progress monitoring indicators
- possible organizations

These are laid down in a programme outline and in sectoral plans of implementation. In this process the national authorities identify organizations that could contribute to achieving the objectives of the programme outline. They are then invited to participate.



Articulation of a project outline

The articulation process starts with a diagnosis of the capacity needs of an organization, which looks at institutional and contextual factors. The outcome of this analysis is translated into a project objective and an indication of the planned results and expected longer-term effects. Nuffic then asks the selected organization to formulate a project outline. This process may be facilitated by local or regional experts to assist the requesting organization.

NICHE projects are expected to contribute to the realization of the objectives that have been formulated at sector level.

Nuffic decides who will be responsible for the project's financial management and administration based on advice provided by PricewaterhouseCoopers.



Matching demand and supply

Nuffic assesses the technical quality of project outlines and is responsible for finding a suitable partner in the Netherlands. The process of matching demand and supply depends on the size of the project budget.

A subsidy tender procedure in the Netherlands is used for projects of over € 200,000. A subsidy tender procedure consisting of a pre-qualification and an assessment phase is used for projects with a budget of between € 50,000 and € 200,000. Projects with a value of less than € 50,000 are directly granted to a Dutch institution.

The selected Dutch partner organization can form a consortium with partners from any country. A consortium may include any type of organization, provided it has expertise that is particularly relevant to the needs of the requesting organization. Nuffic strongly supports the inclusion of expertise from the region of the requesting organization.

Bids and letters of interest submitted by Dutch organizations are assessed by a Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC). The requesting organization is a member of this committee. Proposals are assessed in terms of both quality and price.

4 Types of support and interventions

The following types of support are available (separate or in combination):

- Technical Assistance, e.g.:
 - Staff training (HRD)
 - Curriculum development
 - Development of pedagogical resources
 - Quality assurance
 - Management strengthening
 - Information systems support
- Investments (max. 20% of the published project budget)
- Maximum project duration: four years

5 Award of the grant and approval of the final project plan

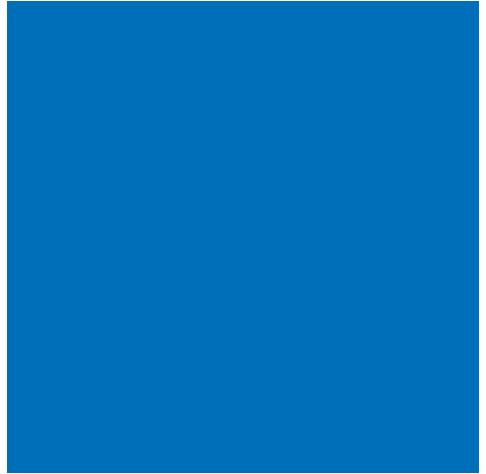
After the selection of a Dutch partner, Nuffic awards a grant to both partners for the implementation of the project. A short inception period may follow. During the inception period the organizations jointly formulate a final project plan, which includes a detailed work plan for the first year and an indicative operational and financial plan for the remaining years.

6 Project implementation

Cooperating partners are jointly responsible for the implementation of their project. They will involve regional and local expertise for training, technical assistance and institutional collaborations. This will increase the relevance and sustainability of project results.

Partners will jointly develop annual work plans and produce annual progress reports. Planning and reporting takes place via a simple format which highlights the indicators showing the progress in realizing the objectives, outputs and outcomes.

Nuffic monitors projects on the basis of progress reports, project visits and other communication with implementers. A project's logical framework forms the basis of internal monitoring by the partners and external monitoring by Nuffic.



Community of Practice

Nuffic actively supports the creation of a Community of Practice for all NICHE stakeholders enabling them to share information, expertise and experience in the participating countries and in the Netherlands.

Further information

Up-to-date information about the programme, procedures and projects can be found at www.nuffic.nl/niche.

NFP-NPT-NICHE e-Newsletter

Nuffic sends out an e-Newsletter every three months. The NFP-NPT-NICHE e-Newsletter contains the latest information about projects, tenders, country visits, deadlines and other important dates. You can subscribe to the e-Newsletter at www.nuffic.nl/niche.



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NICHE

This flyer is an introduction to NICHE,
a capacity building programme for
post-secondary education and training
in developing countries funded by the
Dutch government. More information
about the programme can be found at
www.nuffic.nl/niche.

Disclaimer

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