

Programme Document
for the activity

Democracy and Governance in Malawi

1. Introduction

The Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe, with technical assistance from Norad, has committed funding for a three year social science research programme on the situation, development and challenges of democracy and governance in Malawi. The cooperation between Malawi and Norway in these areas is comprehensive and multifaceted, even if in budgetary terms it is limited in relation to the main sectors of health, agriculture and budget support. The democracy governance development has, however, strong impact on the development cooperation with the country in other fields, especially budget support. The research activity will be part of the Embassy's portfolio within the area of democracy and governance. The programme will be administered by the Research Council of Norway (RCN) as an activity under NORGLOBAL (Norway – Global Partner). The budget will be NOK 9 million for the period (2013-2016) for projects of up to three years.

2. Programme Goals

The goal of the activity is to produce new knowledge on the situation, the development and the challenges of democratic governance in Malawi.

The research goal is to stimulate high quality research into issues of democratic governance in Malawi.

The activity also aims at maintaining and strengthening research capacity in Norway and Malawi.

The activity is expected to finance at least two research projects on democracy and governance in Malawi

The research projects shall seek to develop knowledge for improving democracy and governance in Malawi and focus on four main topics:

- a) democracy consolidation, including institutions, processes and culture;
- b) political economy and power relations;
- c) gender and equality issues in democracy and governance;
- d) accountability of political institutions, the civil service and political parties, including anti-corruption.

3. Possible research questions

The following research issues are among those that may be addressed. The list is indicative only and not exclusive. Projects will not be expected to address all of these topics and questions. A well-focused proposal that addresses one or a few of the topics will be regarded favourably; covering a larger number of the topics if done in a scientifically unsound way will not be considered a merit. Proposals may incorporate other issues if deemed relevant to achieve the principal goal of the programme.

- a) *Democracy consolidation, including studies of institutions, processes and culture*
 - How has democracy been consolidated over the years and how has learning taken place and been institutionalized?
 - To which extent have civil society organisations, churches, and trade unions have contributed to a democratic development in the country?
 - The role of aid funded programmes in democracy and governance in the country, and
 - The role of traditional power structures in formal democratic processes and institutions.
- b) *Political economy and power relations*
 - Who are the main actors and politically interested drivers of politics in Malawi, and how do they affect the performance of institutions and delivery of public services?
 - Political parties, from “big man clans” to member-driven organisations
 - The role of the emerging business class in politics.
 - Factors, which are defining and constraining the situation for politicians in Malawi.
- c) *Gender and equality issues in democracy and governance*
 - The participation of women in Malawi politics over time: What has stimulated or been a hindrance?
 - How do gender aspects affect politics in Malawi?
 - How has democratization affected equality in Malawi?
- d) *Accountability of political institutions, civil service and political parties and actors (including anti-corruption).*
 - Which accountability mechanisms are critical for consolidating democracy in Malawi?
 - How have the civil service and political institutions assisted the democratization agenda?
 - The role of the judiciary and government “watchdog institutions” in the democratic development in Malawi.

- Forms and extent of donor influence on governance and democratic accountability.

4. Organisation

The programme is open to independent Norwegian research institutes not eligible to apply to Norad's NORHED-programme and to Malawian institutions ready to cooperate with such Norwegian institutes. Norwegian scholars are therefore requested to establish cooperation with research institutions in Malawi. Partners from Malawi will be funded from the project, and a letter of intent shall be attached to the application. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a consortium agreement before any disbursements can be made.

RCN will publish a call for proposals under the NORGLOBAL programme. Applicants will follow normal RCN application procedures. All research proposals will be reviewed by a panel of international experts. The final decision on the approval of proposal and the awarding of grants will be the responsibility of the NORGLOBAL Programme Board.

The total budget of the project is NOK 9,000,000. The total budget of each proposal should be a maximum of NOK 4 to 4.5 million.

All proposals are required to attach a detailed budget. The Embassy requires that approximately 25 per cent of each project budget will be allocated to Malawian institutions. This contribution must be clearly specified in the budget.

Communication and dissemination of results from the research are important and a communication plan must be part of the application. The Malawian project partners must participate in the process of reporting from the project. The Embassy may in addition organise seminars and/or workshops with participation from researchers and policymakers, embassy personnel, and others. The Embassy may, in cooperation with Norad, also request successful applicants, in addition to the regular reporting channels of RCN, to update the Embassy on the progress of the projects.

5. Publications and research outputs

The funded projects shall provide the Norwegian Embassy and the Foreign Service with knowledge as a basis for the dialogue and cooperation between Norway and Malawi. An important objective of the research is that the projects generate publications in internationally recognised journals. The output of the research is not limited to the publishable findings of particular studies. Increased general knowledge, competence, and awareness with regard to democratic governance are also an important part of the output. This general competence should, in addition to the particular results, be disseminated to a wider audience. Projects must incorporate

gender issues and will be expected to report both on gender issues of research and on the participation of women in the research projects.