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Temporary Covid-19 exemptions for 2021

The Covid-19 epidemic continues to have profound worldwide consequences. In recognition of the challenges civil society organisations now experience with regards to the implementation of agreed-upon plans and budgets it has been decided to extend some of the temporary exemptions for these partners. This applies to all Norad's grant agreements with civil society partners. The extended temporary exemptions as stated below will be valid for the period 01.01.2021 - 31.12.2021. All other provisions of the grant agreements remain valid and in effect.

The following exemptions will be valid through 2021:

1. Standard requirement in the Agreement's General Conditions, Article 12.2 (d) on the requirement of preapproval of changes in the project's annual budget which entails a reallocation of more than 10% per budget line.

Temporary exemption: The threshold for preapproval has been increased to 20% for 2021. Necessary reallocations between budget lines of up to 20% to accommodate for changes in the working environment due to Covid-19 can now be made without written preapproval. This flexibility may be used for adaption and mitigation measures to reduce the spread of the virus among staff, partners and others directly affected by project activities, to facilitate the continuation of activities within the project, as well as for adjustments of input factors. This flexibility is limited to activities contributing to the agreed outcomes and impact of the project. Please note that deviations from the approved budget amounting to more than 10% from a budget line still requires a written explanation in the financial statement.

2. Standard requirement in the Agreement's General Conditions, Article 12.2. c) that any changes to the implementation plan which implies a delay of more than three months of any activity is subject to Norad's prior written approval.

Temporary exemption: Necessary adjustments to the implementation plan timeline and activities due to Covid-19 in order to achieve the agreed upon expected results can now be made without prior written approval. Future reports must reflect deviations from the original implementation plan and clearly explain and justify changes. Delays beyond the agreement period (no-cost extensions) still require a written approval from Norad.

3. Standard requirement in the Agreement's General Conditions, Article 12.2. b) that any changes to the results framework or scope of the Project is subject to Norad's prior written approval.

Temporary exemption: Necessary adjustments of the result frameworks at the output level due to Covid-19 in order to achieve agreed outcomes and impact can now be made without prior written approval if the following preconditions are ensured by our agreement partner:

- such changes will not imply entering into new countries.
- only existing networks and expertise are utilized.
- all project activities and outputs still qualify as official development assistance (ODA) according to OECD DAC's criteria.

Future reports must reflect the original results framework and clearly explain and justify all changes.

4. Coverage of the most necessary operating costs if implementation is disrupted due to Covid-19.

As an important measure to ensure continuity of projects and enable partners to restart activities without delay Norad will cover the most necessary direct project costs for Civil Society Organisations even when the projects temporarily are not delivering results according to the agreed plan. Norad may for example cover salary for project staff in ODA-countries also in situations where staff are unable to work due to lockdowns and curfew. The time not dedicated to specific project activities must be registered separately. This will also be an important contribution for staff with limited or no rights to compensation from their governments in the event of furlough. Importantly, we expect all organisations to keep project staff active as far as possible with alternative tasks in line with the project's objectives, in order to maintain the project's progress where it is possible.

The following exemptions will NOT be extended beyond 2020:

- Own-contribution:
Please note that in 2021 Norad will require ordinary own-contribution according to the agreements where such own-contribution is required.
- Changes to outcome:
Please note that in 2021 changes to the results statements at outcome level will require a signed addendum as per ordinary procedures.