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WOTRO Science for Global Development



WOTRO **Science for Global Development**

The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) is an independent, public organisation supporting innovative scientific research in the Netherlands in all fields. NWO also encourages the use of scientific knowledge for the benefit of society. Its primary activity is funding research on a competitive basis.

WOTRO is the science division within NWO which supports scientific research on development issues, in particular poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Its scope includes all low and middle-income countries. For its activities, WOTRO receives substantial funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

WOTRO aims for:

excellent scientific research with relevance for development;

the use of scientific research in development practice and policy;

synergy and interaction among relevant players and institutions.



Mission

The mission of WOTRO is to initiate, enhance and fund scientific research for the benefit of development and societal issues of local and global concern in the South. WOTRO acts at the interface of the Dutch government, the academic world and the arena of development organisations.

The aim of WOTRO is to contribute to a world in which independent scientific knowledge is available for the benefit of all societies and where development issues such as poverty and sustainable development are effectively targeted with evidence-based policies and interventions.

WOTRO believes in a world in which a growing interaction between individuals and institutions in science, government and society leads to effective approaches to answering many of today's challenging questions.

Policy

WOTRO funds high quality, innovative research projects under the joint leadership of scientists from the Netherlands and developing countries. Interaction with stakeholders and potential end-users is strongly encouraged, as is the transfer and use of research results.

WOTRO wishes to make a special contribution to mobilising scientific knowledge that benefits the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Four main themes have been identified: poverty and hunger, global health and health systems, sustainable environment and global relationships.

Operating in an increasingly global arena, WOTRO aims for international coordination and synergy with partners in research funding and development cooperation.



Funding instruments

WOTRO offers the following funding opportunities.

Integrated programmes

WOTRO offers grants for medium-sized research programmes (max. € 700,000), integrated sets of projects executed by PhD or postdoc researchers from the Netherlands and developing countries. Research programmes should be aimed at either development issues in a broad sense or at UN Millennium Development Goals. An interdisciplinary approach is favoured. Research plans are developed in international workshops with potential end-users and other stakeholders.

Thematic programmes

A variety of grants are available within the large thematic programmes in which WOTRO participates together with the NWO science divisions and external partners. The grant types, their scientific focus and scope depend on the strategic aims of the programme concerned.

WOTRO is participating in the following thematic programmes:

- Conflict and Safety
- Cultural Dynamics
- Global Health and Health Systems
- Infectious Diseases
- Responsible Innovation
- Sustainable Earth

Furthermore, WOTRO manages externally-funded programmes aimed at specific development issues, such as the Netherlands-African Partnership for Capacity Development and Clinical Interventions against Poverty-Related Diseases (NACCAP) funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Strategic support activities

Limited funding is available for a selected set of support activities to strengthen the general WOTRO strategy, for example, networking and knowledge-sharing activities.



Results

Several scientific breakthroughs have been achieved with WOTRO-funded research, for example in the fields of malaria prevention, malnutrition, pest management, the sustainable management of biodiversity and several aspects of cultural identity. WOTRO has acted as a catalyst for interdisciplinary approaches, North-South synergy and capacity strengthening.

Many talented Dutch and international scientists have successfully participated in more than 40 years of WOTRO-funded research. Of the researchers from developing countries who obtained a PhD degree over 90% continued their career in their home country of which 75% in research positions. WOTRO's activities have resulted in many partnerships between scientists and societal actors and multiple initiatives to transfer research results to local end-users and stakeholders.

Showcases



Water management



The dominant water resources challenge for the coming generations is how to secure water to meet the food demands of an expanding world population, while at the same time sustaining other critical ecological functions. The Smallholder System Innovations in Integrated Watershed Management (SSI) programme aims to increase food security of rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, through improving the productivity and resilience of rain fed based farming systems. Researchers together with farmers experiment with various indigenous and other water system innovations, such as terracing and supplementary irrigation. The research findings will be incorporated in agricultural support systems that offer farmers options for soil, water and crop management that together may double crop yields. The research is carried out by a consortium of research institutes in the Netherlands, Tanzania and South Africa.



Better diet, fewer diseases

As their diet largely consists of grains, many Africans fail to get enough of the vital micronutrients their immune systems need. They are therefore more susceptible to infectious diseases. Under the auspices of the WOTRO programme 'Effects of supplementation of zinc and other micronutrients' a multidisciplinary team in Tanzania is studying the extent to which zinc supplementation, with or without a cocktail of other micronutrients, can protect children against malaria. In partnership with UNICEF the WOTRO team will test the efficacy of new, cheap, chewable tablets containing nutritional supplements. The acceptability of these tablets for infants and toddlers will also be examined. Researchers from Wageningen University have developed a procedure to assess the nutritional status of the children. From just a small quantity of blood, the biochemical indicators for 12 micronutrients can be detected as well as indicators for immunity and infection.

Global food product chains

Developing country producers are becoming more and more integrated in modern markets. This is caused by an increase of consumer demand for year round supply of fresh produce. It means, however, that the producers must adapt to stringent quality and safety standards and regulations. They must also gain better control over production, trade and distribution, in order to guarantee quality and traceability of their products and to operate in a cost-effective way. In the integrated programme 'Globalisation, food quality and sustainable international agro-business chains' researchers from developing countries and Wageningen University investigate how forms of collaboration in food chains can contribute to better quality performance and value added in various markets. The product chains that are investigated are mango from Costa Rica, Nile perch from Kenya and vegetables in China.

For 2007-2010 WOTRO has formulated its strategy 'Science for international development'. For more information www.nwo.nl/wotro.

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