

# FROM CAPACITY BUILDING TO FUNDING PLUS

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

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## OUTLINE

**‘From capacity building to Funding Plus’ (February 2017) by Deny de Jong and Suzanne Kooij is the report of an exploratory study of capacity building among applicants of private charitable foundations, with a particular emphasis on their needs and the available supply.**

The report identifies what organisations require at different stages of their development, and what foundations already offer over and above financial support on a project basis. De Jong and Kooij introduce a new term to the Dutch charitable funding sector, a model used in England: Funding Plus.

### **NEW KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WITH APPLICANTS**

Funding Plus means that a charitable foundation no longer finances applicants solely on a project basis, but enters into a new kind of relationship with them. Options include organising more tailor-made assistance, supporting consultancy and organisational development, starting to collaborate with other foundations in terms of applicants and/or specific societal issues, and/or offering more long-term organisational funding to organisations that are closely aligned with the foundation’s mission.

### **GAPS IN THE SUPPLY**

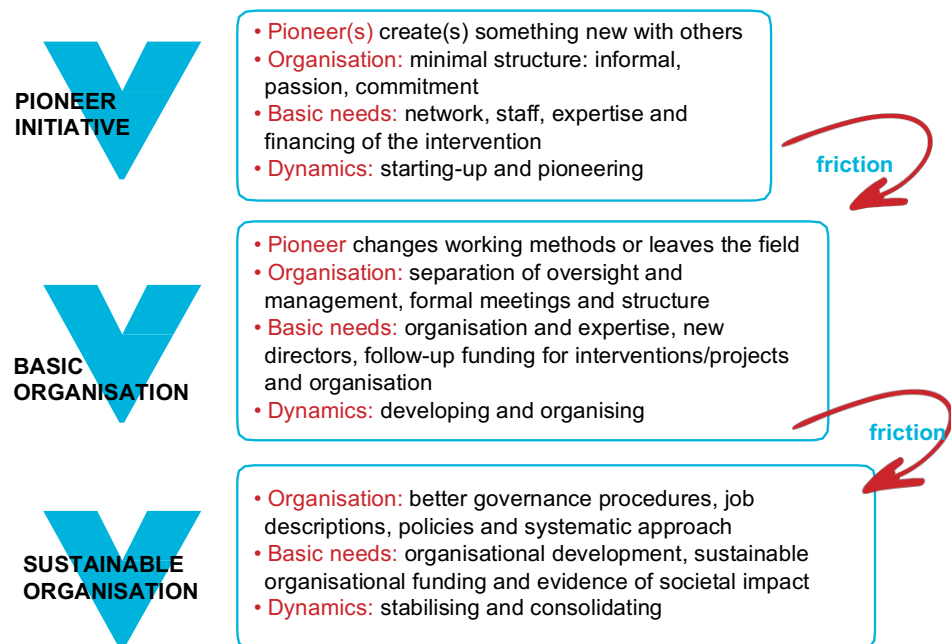
One of the conclusions from the study is that even though the available supply in the Netherlands (from foundations or other providers) offers societal pioneers an array of capacity building options in the areas of financing, organisational development and identifying societal impact, this supply is incomplete, difficult to find and fragmented.

### **NEED FOR MORE KNOWLEDGE SHARING**

The present Funding Plus policies are mostly developed and offered by foundations working in isolation. Their positive and less positive experiences, working practices and the lessons learnt are only shared to a minor extent with other charitable foundations.

Moreover, access to the current Funding Plus supply is limited, and only open to a select group of applicant organisations, while many more applicants could benefit from it. A first step in the right direction might be for charitable foundations to engage in more knowledge sharing in this area.

## DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF APPLICANTS



This diagram shows **the growth process** that many (but not all) of the 'bottom-up' organisations supported by charitable foundations go through. The steps from 'pioneer initiative' to what we call 'basic organisation', and from 'basic' to 'sustainable' do not usually run smoothly or according to a predetermined plan, but rather are accompanied by friction. Foundations that want to help applicants to grow, and are aware of the growth stages that organisations go through, can offer non-financial support particularly during the times of friction. Each developmental stage of an organisation is characterised by different needs in terms of financing and support.

The pioneers of societal initiatives that we interviewed have tremendous drive and energy and are often exclusively focused on achieving a concrete goal and supporting the target group with specific interventions. This is essential in the start-up stage of an initiative. However, if these organisations are to achieve their desired societal impact in the longer term, they need to **invest in their organisation**. This is not always easy, and they sometimes require support for this. Organisations that develop from the pioneer stage and become more sustainable and professional often go through a growth process involving considerable friction. We found from our interviews with initiatives and foundations that neither the organisations themselves nor the foundations that support them are always aware of this process, so the foundations are often insufficiently acquainted with an organisation's current stage of development and hence the kind of support it needs at that time. They do, however, observe that problems sometimes arise around the pioneer (often a powerful and charismatic figure), who may lack sufficient knowledge and expertise in many areas of management and organisation.

## TYPES OF CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDED IN VARIOUS STAGES OF AN ORGANISATION

	A. Pioneer initiative	B. Basic organisation	C. Sustainable organisation
<b>Financial sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding and contacting foundations</li> <li>• Achieving successful project-based financing, incl. applications, accountability etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding support from other foundations</li> <li>• Financing the organisation/ operation</li> <li>• Successfully accessing other funding sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving sustainable financing of organisation with stakeholders (new funding model) and treasury</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forming board and support group</li> <li>• Creating network and establishing legal entity</li> <li>• Expertise on the intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysing organisation, board members with expertise, division of roles, tasks of pioneer's board/ director etc.</li> <li>• More attention to management, facilities, future policy, visibility and network of contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm's length oversight, governance, finding the right people, retaining and reinforcing passion, organising and managing growth, encouraging self-management and collaboration with stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Societal impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining, attaining, measuring and accounting for project goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving and specifying methods</li> <li>• Setting and measuring goals</li> <li>• Performance management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulating 'theory of change', introducing new methods, giving evidence of the organisation's societal impact on the basis of strategy and access to the 'system world'</li> </ul>

In 2015 the European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA) published 'A Practical Guide to Adding Value through Non-financial Support'.

The EVPA distinguishes three core areas of development of societal initiatives ('social purpose organisations'):

- **Financial sustainability:** seeking to achieve optimum hybrid (and other) financing of the organisation to achieve its mission and vision
- **Organisational resilience:** enhancing the maturity of the organisation: development of the management team, governance, fund-raising capacity etc.
- **Societal impact:** determining the positive changes for the target population resulting from the interventions of the financed organisations

We combined these three EVPA categories with the three developmental stages of a societal initiative to produce the above matrix of needs in terms of capacity building.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financing is a crucial challenge for 'social purpose organisations'. Their role is not to sell products or services to customers (absence of a market function). The target group of the interventions is unable to bear the costs of the intervention. There are multiple stakeholders with an interest in the organisation's interventions, such as charitable foundations, NGOs, the government and even companies, which sometimes contribute to solving a societal problem. The initiators are certainly not always able to persuade all the stakeholders with an interest in their initiative to actually provide funding.

All the applicants of foundations are faced with specific issues in the area of financing, depending on their current developmental stage. A pioneer organisation mainly needs money to implement projects and interventions, and everything else that these entail. Pioneers often have very basic questions, like: 'how do you apply for grants or donations?', 'how do you formulate a good project plan?', 'which foundation should you choose?' and 'how do you make contact with a foundation?'. As the organisation continues to develop, new issues arise: 'how do you obtain financing for multiple projects at the same time and for the organisation itself (for overhead, communication, staff, equipment etc.)?'.

## ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

When establishing and developing societal initiatives, the initiators mainly focus on obtaining finance and implementing the interventions. They usually give less priority to structuring and building up the organisation. This is a finding from our interviews with organisations and also from our day-to-day work in mentoring societal initiatives.

One of the most urgent problems is that no money is available for organisational structuring and development. There are virtually no budgets for professionalisation, training and education, for a variety of reasons: project-based financing does not include money for overhead expenses; there is often a lack of focus on the organisation; and funders are also unwilling to pay for overhead.

## SOCIETAL IMPACT

In recent years, the philanthropy sector has been placing much more emphasis on impact measurement: identifying the effects within society. Impact measurement is increasingly seen by foundations as an important factor in making decisions and evaluating supported organisations. Identifying societal impact is a complex process of 'forecasting, reviewing and evaluating the impact activities have on beneficiaries and other stakeholders'. The fact that beneficiaries have little or no capacity to measure this impact means that the foundations themselves are also unable to identify their own impact. This puts pressure on applicants to work on a solution, but most applicants lack the necessary tools or skills to measure impact.

## CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE AVAILABLE SUPPLY OF CAPACITY BUILDING

- There is an abundant supply, sometimes overlapping, for start-up pioneer initiatives, but very little for growing initiatives;
- The type of supply is variable: large quantities of knowledge, online and courses, but very few integrated programmes and tailor-made elements, for which there is actually a greater need (mentoring and peer learning);
- The range of services offered, from which organisations can make a choice, has not been clearly inventorised;
- People are often not given support in determining their own needs (and moreover, organisations themselves do not always have a clear picture of what they really need);
- The supply is patchy: plenty of fund-raising, not so much organisational resilience and very little societal impact (few if any inexpensive tools for impact measurement);
- Outsourcing often seems more attractive to organisations than acquiring competencies themselves (especially for fund-raising, because a 'no cure no pay' basis is sometimes offered). However, outsourcing often does nothing to help the organisation become stronger.

## FUNDING PLUS

One of the conclusions from our study is that even though the available supply in the Netherlands (from foundations or other providers) offers societal pioneers an array of options in the areas of financing, organisational development and identifying societal impact, this supply is incomplete, difficult to find and fragmented. A first step in the right direction might be for charitable foundations to engage in more knowledge sharing in this area. There are many possible ways to do more for applicants.

### WHAT IS 'FUNDING PLUS'?

Funding Plus means that a foundation provides more than financing or project-based financing alone; for example:

- advice, mentoring, coaching, training of applicants (sometimes hands-on management support);
- access to relevant new networks;
- strategic financing (core funding or long-term support) in combination with substantive engagement.

### ASSUMPTIONS OF 'FUNDING PLUS':

- more attention to organisation/content and less to project/procedures/administration;
- greater societal impact;
- more attention to applicants' challenges in various stages of their organisational development;
- trust and a good relationship between applicant and funder.

Several Dutch foundations already pursue a Funding Plus policy (without using this term), but still on a small scale and generally only available to a limited group of applicants. The question is: how does a foundation organise the Funding Plus policy to achieve maximum benefit for applicants? This is closely related to the way in which the foundation organises its relationship with the applicant.

### THREE MAIN TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FOUNDATION AND APPLICANT

	Pioneer initiative	Basic organisation	Sustainable organisation
<p><b>Fund &amp; Forget</b></p> <p><b>Open to all applicants that fit within the mission</b></p> <p><i>(used for most applicants to e.g. Kansfonds, VSBfonds, Oranje Fund etc., and for nearly all the smaller foundations)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly suitable for pioneer stage; often makes the pioneer stage financially possible</li> <li>• Gaining access to foundations is often complex for 'start-ups'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not very suitable for basic organisation, but is still used in this stage by most of the Fund &amp; Forget foundations</li> <li>• Fund &amp; Forget creates problems for the basic organisation with 'projectisation' and financial continuity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for sustainable organisation's smaller, innovative projects</li> <li>• Not suitable for securing the entire financing of sustainable organisation (although this sometimes still happens, because no sources of income other than foundations are found)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Select &amp; Oversee</b></p> <p><b>Open to small group of organisations, foundation makes the selection itself</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Themed grant programmes of Oranje Fund, Kansfonds, Sluyterman van Loo Foundation/RCOAK, Oranje Fund Growth Programme etc.</li> <li>• Core funding, e.g. Postcode Lottery, Bankgiro Lottery etc.</li> <li>• Financing of organisational transition (e.g. Fonds 1818 'Uit de Bocht')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not often used for start-up organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for basic organisation</li> <li>• Selected organisations often benefit greatly from participation</li> <li>• Sometimes risk of 'just saying what the foundations want to hear' and 'drifting off mission' with themed grant programmes</li> <li>• After themed grant programmes have ended, organisations sometimes revert to Fund &amp; Forget</li> <li>• Core funding is the applicants' most preferred form of Select &amp; Oversee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for sustainable organisation</li> <li>• ditto</li> <li>• ditto</li> <li>• ditto</li> <li>• ditto</li> </ul>
<p><b>Commit &amp; Integrate</b></p> <p><b>Open to small group of organisations, foundation makes the selection itself</b></p> <p><i>(used by e.g. Adessium, Noaber Foundation, Start Foundation)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not suitable for pioneer stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for basic organisation</li> <li>• Has mainly been used up to now by 'venture philanthropists' or by foundations with a clear 'theory of change'</li> <li>• Not suitable for foundations without a clear 'theory of change' and difficult for use by foundations that have mainly organised their working methods administratively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for sustainable organisation</li> <li>• ditto</li> <li>• ditto</li> </ul>

Three types of practices can be distinguished in the relationship between foundation and applicant:

1. Fund & Forget
2. Select & Oversee
3. Commit & Integrate<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These categories come from 'Health Foundations Facilitate Translational Research Through Public-Private Partnerships: Diverse Funding Models and Integration Strategies', by Waseem Awad, Anne Stolk, Fred Dijkcs and Remco de Vruhe, published by TI Pharma, 2013, page 13



All three of these types of practices are suitable for specific groups of applicants; improvements in working methods could especially be made in the first two types, and all of them have both advantages and limitations.

## FUND & FORGET

Many of the Dutch foundations work with Fund & Forget: they receive an application, if this is approved a financial contribution is granted, and the foundation's engagement with the applicant and its mission ends there. The applicant will be asked for an accountability report but after receiving this, the foundation could quite possibly forget about the applicant altogether.

If this applicant submits another application in a year's time, it has to go through the same procedure again. If it then submits an application for the third time, the foundation either says that this is the last time or enters into a more long-term relationship with the applicant. In the case of Fund & Forget, this virtually never happens on the initiative of the foundation itself. It is the applicant that keeps applying, year after year. If the applicant did not do this, the 'forget' principle would immediately come into effect.

Our study shows that the Fund & Forget model is highly suitable for organisations in the pioneer stage. Foundations that operate according to the Fund & Forget principle prefer to support projects that are new or innovative, engaging, ground-breaking or unusual.

This is nearly always the case in the pioneer stage: 'something new' starts because a societal need is perceived, which is addressed with a new intervention in a new and hopeful way. A new project of this kind benefits from project-based financing.

However, Fund & Forget causes problems for applicants that have outgrown the pioneer stage. After the first few years, it is very difficult for them to find a successful business model without money from foundations. They will therefore generally continue to submit applications to foundations, and at a certain point all their working practice becomes structured around this: constantly thinking up new projects, simply to bring in money to survive. Over the years, this becomes an increasingly arduous process.

## SELECT & OVERSEE

There are also some foundations that use the Fund & Forget model for many of their applicants, but a different model for a smaller selection of them.

The principle applied in this case is Select & Oversee, which is put into practice in several different ways. This principle means that the foundation selects a group of initiators and builds up a substantive relationship with them over a finite length of time. The foundation makes the selection with a specific intention in mind. A foundation often wants to make a clear contribution to a specific societal problem, and it develops a substantive programme in which it selects applicants to work on their projects in the context of this problem.

Sometimes the intention is also to help promising initiators to become bigger and stronger. The aim during the Select & Oversee period is that the selected initiators will take steps towards achieving greater societal impact.



## COMMIT & INTEGRATE

The Commit & Integrate principle is mainly practised by foundations (especially venture philanthropists) with a concretely specified and demarcated societal mission and goals. The foundation ‘commits’ itself to realising a clear improvement in the societal area, and pursues an integrated policy for this purpose.

Often – but not always – these are foundations that provide support to social enterprises with market opportunities, which in the long term will be able to operate with a hybrid financing mix, largely without reliance on philanthropic or government funding.

We concluded that Commit & Integrate already involves a substantively designed relationship between the foundation and the funded organisation, and that particularly the foundations working with the Fund & Forget and Select & Oversee models could do more to help the organisations that they support financially become stronger. And they could do this in ways that are appropriate for these specific forms of financial support. The most urgent problem we observed is that the Fund & Forget model continues to be used systematically in organisations that have outgrown the pioneer stage.

	Pioneer initiative	Basic organisation	Sustainable organisation
<b>Fund &amp; Forget</b> <i>(supply open to all applicants)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses/workshops/ advice on fund-raising offered by larger foundations</li> <li>• Various initiatives introduced by foundations to make the process easier for applicants (accepting each other’s application forms, imposing less stringent criteria for start-up citizens’ initiatives etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some foundations offer the opportunity to apply for several years at once</li> <li>• ditto</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ditto</li> </ul>
<b>Select &amp; Oversee</b> <i>(supply only open to selected applicants)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oranje Fund Growth Programme</li> <li>• Themed grant programmes</li> <li>• Financing of organisational transition in individual organisations</li> <li>• Very occasionally: core funding</li> <li>• A group of foundations make a joint commitment to a project for several years (a finite period of time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core funding by Postcode Lottery, Bankgiro Lottery, occasionally by some foundations</li> <li>• Engage and pay for organisational consultants for applicants with which a long-term affiliation has been built up</li> <li>• Social Impact Bonds</li> </ul>
<b>Commit &amp; Integrate</b> <i>(supply only open to selected applicants, often social enterprises)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and tools for impact measurement and management, and non-financial support for strategy consulting, coaching and mentoring, governance, change management, income strategy, financial management and networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ditto</li> </ul>

## WHAT FOUNDATIONS ARE CURRENTLY DOING THEMSELVES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR APPLICANTS, AND REMAINING GAPS

Several foundations have already developed a variety of ways to support societal initiatives with more than project-based financing alone (such as the Oranje Fund Growth Programme, engaging and paying for good consultants for selected applicants, fund-raising courses organised by foundations themselves, themed grant programmes etc.). By offering more than the project-based financing, they are giving actual shape to the available supply of Funding Plus.

The current Funding Plus supply is diverse, and is usually developed and offered by foundations in isolation (mostly without consulting one another). Their positive and less positive experiences, working practices and the lessons learnt are only shared to a minor extent with other foundations (at present there is no provision for knowledge sharing in this specific area in the charitable funding sector). Moreover, access to the current Funding Plus supply is limited and only open to a select group of applicant organisations, while many more applicants could benefit from it.

## POSSIBLE STEPS TOWARDS WIDER USE OF 'FUNDING PLUS' IN THE DUTCH CHARITABLE FUNDING SECTOR AND MAKING 'CAPACITY BUILDING' AND 'FUNDING PLUS' AVAILABLE TO A WIDER GROUP OF APPLICANTS.

- With the support of a charitable foundation, we have now begun a detailed inventory with the aim of producing a **clear, accessible and easily findable online overview** of the capacity building supply in the Netherlands, which can be used by applicants and also consulted by foundations when they want to offer an organisation 'non-financial support' in a specific field. Foundations and societal initiators, when making use of the supply, must be **able to gain more insight into the quality of what is offered**, so that they know what to expect. They should also have the opportunity to report publicly on whether the offered support was effective or not. The search function and quality descriptions will be linked together in the online overview. There will also be an option to post reviews and ratings of the quality of service provision by organisations.
- We are also working to create a **pool of bona fide, reliable and dedicated consultants**, who know the sector well, have already been engaged by various foundations and applicants for specific issues and are willing, each with their own specific expertise, to work – pro or low bono – on sharing their knowledge in a new open consultants platform that will be set up. We want to discuss with them applicants' urgent and hard-to-solve issues, so that we can further assist them, develop our shared expertise and focus on issues such as promoting financial sustainability, for which no simple solutions are available. We aim to develop knowledge in this platform – by discussing case studies together – and to share it widely with the sector. Interested representatives of foundations would also be most welcome to participate in this platform.

This will also make it possible to develop new tailor-made supply options based on the needs of organisations and foundations: supply options that are more closely aligned with organisations' needs, that are available on a more long-term basis and can be used more strategically.

- When we presented our research at the consultative meeting of large foundations (*Grote Fondsen Overleg*) in October 2016, a proposal was made to set up a **Funding Plus working group within the Association of Foundations in the Netherlands (FIN)**, where best practices could periodically be exchanged among foundations, and where foundations with a great deal of experience in this area can share their knowledge with foundations that are also interested in using specific 'effective components', such as organising peer learning for groups of applicants. This working group could focus more attention within the FIN on the importance of applicants' organisational development (and also the development of Funding Plus policies). The experiences and 'lessons learnt' from existing practices (such as certain themed grant programmes) could be further disseminated by this working group. It could also identify how foundations can engage their networks to further assist applicants: what already happens in this area and how this can be used more structurally.
- Many foundations (especially those that work with the Fund & Forget model) have insufficient expertise to assist applicants with 'non-financial support'. They too **sometimes need 'capacity building' to develop more knowledge about the problems faced by applicants**, and how to address them effectively. A provision could be introduced, allied to the working group described above, which helps interested foundations with the do's and don'ts of offering non-financial support. Foundations that have been working with the Commit & Integrate model for some time could offer knowledge from their practice.
- Within foundations, knowledge is built up about certain societal problems and about various types of organisations with which they have become very familiar, through evaluating their applications on a daily basis. This **knowledge could be made more explicit, and then given back to the sector** in meetings, presentations or discussions. It is possible to develop a kind of methodology to help foundations make this knowledge explicit and more widely available. This could help applicants to tailor their supply more closely to the societal needs, and to learn about 'best practices' elsewhere in the Netherlands, since foundations are often the only ones with an overview of these.
- A **helpdesk** could be set up, which can be consulted by foundations that wish to provide non-financial support to a specific applicant. This helpdesk can do a 'quick scan' of an applicant, to determine the area(s) in which support and mentoring are needed, and what expertise this requires. The applicant will then be referred by the helpdesk to specific suppliers, and the outcome of this referral can be monitored, if so wished. Foundations that prefer not to combine the financing role with an advisory role could use this helpdesk as a means of outsourcing the contact with applicants that need support.

From our presentation of 28 June 2016 to a group of foundations, we found that people have different views about whether or not the foundations themselves should fulfil the advisory role for applicants: some representatives of foundations prefer to do it themselves, while others prefer to outsource it to avoid mixing roles (evaluator/funder and advisor/mentor).

- We have found **peer learning** to be an effective and relatively inexpensive instrument to help organisations make progress with their development. In various themed grant programmes established by foundations, the 'peer learning effect' has been very productive. However, peer learning initiatives established outside of foundations often simply dwindle away, because there is usually insufficient urgency to continue to meet. Foundations can play an important role in this, by e.g. periodically organising meetings of applicants that they support and that are working on the same societal theme or in a specific region, or that are in a similar developmental stage, to discuss topical issues. For these, a 'low bono' consultant from the network could be asked to assist.
- In Amsterdam, experiments are being conducted with the format of a **stakeholders meeting**, with invitations sent to all important funders (city council, private sector, foundations), which have often been involved in a societal initiative for a long time, without knowing about each other, to collectively look at what is needed for enhancing financial sustainability or improving other aspects. This format could be used more widely in the charitable funding sector for applicants that already receive long-term support from foundations.



Deny de Jong has worked for more than thirty years with and for societal organisations. Having graduated in andragogy and organisation studies, he initially focused mainly on project organisation, development and fund-raising. After working with e.g. Amnesty International and the Human Rights Institute of Utrecht University, he spent 20 years developing and realising projects and events for charitable organisations, together with his company *Ideëel Organiseren*. In the role of programme director, Deny was responsible for the Civil Society Congress for four years. For the last seven years he has mainly concentrated on mentoring and advising organisations in the area of care, welfare, education, development cooperation and the charitable funding sector within and outside of the Netherlands regarding strategy, organisational structure and financing. He is also a teacher and trainer.

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Suzanne Kooij founded the consultancy firm *Ars memorandi* in 2009. Focusing on policy development, research and strategy in the philanthropic sector, *Ars memorandi* has completed assignments for a wide range of national charitable foundations. Since 2013, Suzanne has mainly concentrated on developing a new system of oversight, accountability and quality improvement for the philanthropic sector: the Philanthropy Validation System. In 2014, together with Dedan Schmidt, she wrote the report 'Future of philanthropy oversight' (*Toekomst toezicht filantropie*), commissioned by the Netherlands Fundraising Regulator (CBF). This report formed the basis for the new charity recognition regulations. Since 2015, Suzanne has been the coordinator of development and implementation of these new recognition regulations, and since 2016 she has also been the secretary of the Association of Philanthropic Organisations (SBF).

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