

Investment Subsidy NWO Large

Subsidy round 2011-2012



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Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This brochure sets out the aims, conditions, selection criteria and procedures for the NWO Large Investment Subsidy programme. This programme can be used to fund not only the purchase of equipment, but also the purchase and development of data collections, necessary software and bibliographies. Investments are eligible only if there is clear evidence of their scientific importance and of national, if not international, support for them, and if the universities or institutes concerned are unable to fund them.

1.2 Available budget

A selection round is held once every two years. The budget for this round is € 20,000,000 and will be allocated by NWO.

1.3 Validity of this brochure

This programme brochure applies to the period from 1 March 2011 to 1 March 2013.

2 Aim

The aim of the NWO Large Investment Subsidy programme is to stimulate investment in innovative research equipment or data collections of national or international importance.

When assessing proposals, key considerations will therefore include both the importance of the proposed facility to the Netherlands and proposals for national coordination and external access, as well as its impact on quality, its effect in facilitating advances in research, and – where applicable – its social relevance. Selection procedures will also take account of the way the proposed investment will contribute to a balanced nationwide pattern of provision and of arrangements for continued funding after the expiry of the subsidy period.

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Researchers at the following knowledge institutions can submit proposals:

- a. Dutch universities;
- b. NWO institutes (incl. the *Dutch-Belgian Beamline at ESRF* in Grenoble);
- c. KNAW institutes
- d. Dutch academic libraries;
- e. the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- f. the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen.

3.2 What can be applied for

Subsidies under this programme are intended for the purchase of equipment and for the establishment, linkage and enrichment of data collections.

The lower limit for the NWO contribution will be € 1,500,000 for all divisions except the arts, social sciences and humanities, where it will be € 1,000,000.

Proposals may not be submitted in this round of applications for NWO Large Investment Subsidies if they also form part of projects competing in the current funding round of the *National Road Map for Large-scale Research Facilities* or the 2011 round of the NWO Roadmap. This is to prevent the duplication of applications in different NWO grant competitions and so minimise the burden of assessment procedures and the associated use of resources.

3.2.1 Eligible costs

- Costs of investment in research equipment;
- Staff costs for the establishment of databases and the initial digitisation of the bibliographical apparatus, if these products cannot be purchased;
- Staff costs relating to personnel possessing some form of specific technical expertise essential to the development or construction of the proposed facility.

If the application includes staff costs (or if staff costs are presented as part of the institution's co-funding contribution), the applicant must explain why it is necessary to incur them. Persuasive evidence should be presented that the proposed facility cannot be purchased and that the necessary expertise cannot be sourced from elsewhere at comparable expense. The budget estimates should include a detailed specification of the individual tasks concerned and the associated staff costs.

The level and specification of staff costs should be in accordance with the norms laid down for them in the NWO/VSNU agreement on the funding of academic research (Akkoord bekostiging wetenschappelijk onderzoek), see www.nwo.nl/contractvsnu

3.2.2 Non-eligible costs

- Costs of infrastructure, such as new buildings or building modifications, and costs of facilities which can be regarded as part of the normal infrastructure for the discipline concerned;
- Data collections, and any associated software and bibliographies, which already exist and can be obtained in some other way;

- Other staff costs, including those for the operation of the facility and the conduct of research using it;
- Costs of maintaining and using equipment (running costs).

3.2.3 Co-funding by the institution

The award of subsidy is conditional on co-funding by the institution concerned. The extent of co-funding will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The institution submitting the application must contribute to the non-staff costs of the required investment. Investments subsidised under the NWO Large programme frequently relate to facilities that are so sophisticated that they must be developed by the institution itself, possibly in cooperation with the private sector. In such cases, staff costs directly relating to the development and construction of the facility may be presented as part of the institution's own contribution.

The level and specification of staff costs should be in accordance with the norms laid down for them in the NWO/VSNU agreement on the funding of academic research (Akkoord bekostiging wetenschappelijk onderzoek), see www.nwo.nl/contractvsnu.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

The deadline for the submission of applications is **17.00 hours on Tuesday 1 November 2011**.

3.4 Drawing up an application

Your application must be in three parts: a factsheet (containing basic details of the application), the application itself and the submission letter from your governing board (see 3.6).

- The factsheet must be completed directly in NWO's Iris electronic application system.
- The application and the submission letter must be attached to the Iris factsheet in the form of PDF files. The application form can be downloaded from the NWO website.

So that applications can be understood by referees outside the Netherlands, they must be submitted in English. Applications must be as concise as possible and must not exceed a total of 30 pages, including all annexes.

3.5 Specific subsidy conditions

Applications that bracket together a number of smaller investments will not generally qualify for funding under this programme. They will only do so if they form a coherent investment package. In that case, the coherence of the package, the national importance of the investment, and nationwide access to the facilities must be convincingly demonstrated.

The applicant must indicate how access to the facility to be purchased or developed will be provided for researchers outside the host institution, where relevant making use of broadband networks available nationwide (SURFNet).

3.6 Submitting the application

Applications to NWO must invariably be submitted via the Iris electronic application system. Any application that is not submitted via Iris will not be considered. Principal investigators must submit their applications via their own personal Iris accounts.

Principal investigators who do not yet have an Iris account should set one up at least 24 hours before submitting the application. Once a principal investigator has an Iris account, he/she need not set up another one in order to submit a new application.

Please submit the signed submission letter from the relevant governing board and the actual application – as two separate documents – via Iris. The submission letter is required for three reasons. Firstly, facilities funded under this programme will often have a lasting and decisive influence on the image of the host institution. Secondly, it is extremely important that the institution should create the best possible conditions for optimum management of the facility. Thirdly, the institution will be expected to commit itself to co-funding the investment. For KNAW institutes, the relevant governing body is the board of KNAW; for NWO institutes it is the board of the relevant foundation or division. In the case of universities, it is the executive board of the university or the board of the faculty concerned.

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

In order to ensure balanced decision-making, the Governing Board of NWO will be advised by a multidisciplinary advisory committee. As part of the selection procedure, referees will be asked to review the applications and applicants will be given the opportunity to respond to their reports. At the same time, the relevant NWO divisional boards will be asked to draw up preliminary advisory reports based on the applications alone. These are to include priority ratings based on the strategic importance of the proposed facilities within the field of study.

As a rule, the advisory committee will hold two plenary sessions. At the first of these, it will short-list the most promising applications on the basis of the applications themselves, the referee reports, the applicants' responses to these, and the preliminary advice from the NWO divisional boards. A delegation from the committee will then conduct site visits in relation to the applications on the short-list.

At its second plenary session, the committee will use the documents mentioned above and the information from the site visits to decide which of the short-listed applications are to be recommended to the Governing Board of NWO. The advisory committee may modify this procedure if it so wishes.

Once the Governing Board has taken a formal decision on the committee's recommendations, applicants will be notified of the results of the selection procedure.

Timetable

1 November 2011	Deadline for submission of proposals to Governing Board by principal investigators.
November 2011 – January 2012	Consultation with referees and applicants' responses.
February 2012	First meeting of selection committee.
March – April 2012	Site visits.
May 2012	Second meeting of selection committee.
May 2012	Selection committee recommendations go to NWO Governing Board.
June 2012	Decision by NWO Governing Board.
June 2012	NWO informs applicants of results.

4.2 Criteria

Applications for grants under the NWO Large Investment Subsidy programme are assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

a Academic quality

- The quality of the research programme for which the proposed facility is to be used;
- The originality and innovative nature of the research programme for which the proposed facility is to be used;

- The importance and urgency of the investment for research in the relevant field;
- The technical feasibility of the proposed investment and the extent to which it is technologically innovative;
- The effectiveness of the approach;
- The quality and competence of the principal investigators or the research team;
- The international status of the proposed facility and any likely international cooperation.

b Social relevance

Where applicable:

- The extent to which the investment will contribute to technological or other innovation in industry or society at large;
- The extent to which the results achieved through the investment will contribute to major scientific or technological advances or to major social change.

c National interest

For example:

- Whether the Netherlands occupies a leading position in the relevant field, what international developments are taking place in it, and whether the investment will help to strengthen the Netherlands' position;
- Uniqueness or otherwise of the facility in the national context;
- Consistency of the investment with the (shorter and longer-term) research strategies of the institution and/or of a national research plan;
- Proposed arrangements for nationwide access to the facility;
- Proposals for national coordination.

In the case of projects with an explicitly international component or which form part of an international project, the following issues will also be considered:

- Whether there is sufficient focus and critical mass for the facility to be an international player;
- Whether there is sufficient confidence in the design and quality of the international project of which the facility will be a part;
- Whether the form and use of the Dutch contribution is satisfactory.

d Financial/technical criteria

- The extent of co-funding and whether this in proportion to the size and objectives of the overall project;
- Guarantee of physical accommodation for the facility;
- Adequacy of surrounding infrastructure;
- Soundness of the management and operation plan for the facility;
- Availability of a good risk analysis including proposals for possible solutions;
- Likely effectiveness of the investment. Whether the expected number of users, intensity of use and degree of capacity utilisation of the proposed facility justify the size of the investment;
- Soundness of the budget;
- Continuity of funding after the end of the grant period; arrangements for future replacement/modernisation.

4.3 Composition of the committee

The membership of the committee will be published on the NWO website (www.nwo.nl) after conclusion of the round.

5 Other information

5.1 Contact with NWO

5.1.1 Questions about the programme

a General

Questions about the NWO Large Investment Subsidy programme itself can be addressed to the NWO Policy Development and Support Department.

contact: Anko Wiegel
tel: +31 (0)70 344 06 44
e-mail: nwogroot@nwo.nl

5.1.2 Technical questions about the Iris electronic application system

For technical queries regarding the use of Iris, contact the Iris helpdesk but please read the manual before seeking help.

Iris helpdesk opening hours: Monday – Friday, 11.00 – 17.00, tel. 0900 – 6964747 (15ct/min). Unfortunately, some foreign providers do not permit calls to 0900 numbers. In that case, mail your query to iris@nwo.nl.