



National Initiative **Brain & Cognition**

Brain & Cognition

Societal innovation in health care, education and social safety



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Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

Content

1	Introduction	3
2	Aim	5
3	Guidelines for applicants	6
	3.1 Who can apply	6
	3.2 What can be applied for	6
	3.3 When can applications be submitted	6
	3.4 Drawing up an application	6
	3.5 Specific conditions	7
	3.6 Submitting an application	7
4	Assessment procedure	9
	4.1 Procedure	9
	4.2 Criteria	9
	4.3 Composition of committee	10
5	Other information	11
	5.1 Contact	11
6	Annexe: timetable	12

1 Introduction

The programme Brain & Cognition: societal innovation in health care, education and social safety aims at scientific progress and societal implementation of recent scientific insights with respect to the functioning of our brain, cognitive abilities and behaviour. This knowledge is applied to urgent societal questions in health care, education and social safety. To this end the programme combines interdisciplinary research with innovation of day-to-day practice in its three focus areas.

Societal innovation: the challenge

Within the programme Brain & Cognition: societal innovation in health care, education and social safety interdisciplinary research is achieved in consortia in which scientists collaborate with private and public societal partners. The programme stimulates collaboration between scientists from a broad range of disciplines such as psychology, neuroscience, medical science, psychiatry, pedagogy, informatics, didactics, philosophy, sociology, behavioural genetics, ethology, food sciences, and criminology.

Participation of societal partners including business companies, health care institutions, schools and educational institutions, judicial organisations and branch agencies guarantees a transdisciplinary approach. This approach leads to the creation of scientific knowledge with a substantial potential for applications, essential from a scientific as well as a societal perspective.

Focus areas

The programme covers three focus areas:

1. Health

In the focus area Health the aim is to define ways to support the resilient brain to function as a healthy organ, from early childhood to old age. For this purpose we have to gain a better understanding of the normal and the diseased brain. Brain disorders affect the lives of more than 100,000 people in the Netherlands. The consequences of cognitive disorders like dementia, Parkinson's disease, ADHD, autism and cognitive deterioration are drastic and mostly chronic. New methods to diagnose diminishing cognitive functions in an early phase are much needed, as well as effective methods to restrict the consequences as much as possible.

This focus area covers two Innovative Programmes:

- Functional markers for cognitive disorders,
- Treatment of cognitive disorders based on functional brain topography.

2. Learning

Our current knowledge-oriented society calls for new scientific insights, new skills and new methods to educate children, adolescents and adults (including instructors) effectively. The focus area Learning comprises fundamental, translational, and applied research in the domain of learning and education. It aims to provide evidence-based learning environments, tailored to the individual, and employable throughout life span.

This focus area covers three Innovative Programmes:

- The learning child,
- The learning adolescent,
- The learning teacher and the aging teacher.

3. Social safety

Violent crimes and antisocial behaviour lead to the experience of insecurity in our society. Insight in the biological and (social-) psychological mechanisms of aggressive behaviour may help to prevent or restrain aggression in young

children and also in violent criminal offenders. Furthermore, knowledge of psychological effects of stress and emotions may help professionals like policemen, soldiers, fire fighters and health care workers to function better in stressful situations and to improve mental resilience afterwards.

This focus area covers three Innovative Programmes:

- An excellent start: early prevention of antisocial behaviour,
- Mastering aggressive behaviour,
- Resilience and vulnerability after exposure to stress.

Budget

The programme is funded by the Dutch government through the Fonds Economische Structuurversterking (FES).

A budget of up to 5.1 million euro is available for this Call for Proposals.

This budget is divided in three separate parts which means that for each of the three focus areas a maximum budget of 1.7 million euro is available.

2 Aim

Aims of the programme Brain & Cognition

The programme Brain & Cognition aims to promote research dedicated to societal innovation in health care, education and social safety.

Within this framework, three specific goals are set:

1. Stimulation of excellent interdisciplinary research,
2. Participation of private or public societal partners aimed at structural changes needed in health care, learning and social safety,
3. Societal implementation of results.

Call for Proposals

This Call for Proposals specifically asks for proposals that fit the aims and research questions of the Innovative Programmes within one of the three focus areas.

Proposals may contribute to the integration of research activities within a specific focus area by addressing research questions that cross the borders of the Innovative Programmes in the focus area.

The present Call offers scientists the possibility to apply for a subsidy up to k€ 500.

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Senior scientists holding a doctor's degree and employed by a Dutch university or other research institute recognized by NWO (as specified in the 'Regeling subsidieverlening NWO' (2007), available on www.nwo.nl/subsidieverlening) may apply.

The main applicant will be responsible for both the scientific coherence and results and the reporting of the financial results of the project. All applicants should be listed in the proposal (see 3.4). Please indicate which applicant will be the co-ordinator of the project. If this is not specified, the applicant on top of the list will be considered as main applicant.

At most you can act as applicant twice, but only once as main applicant. This means: (a) you act as main applicant for one proposal and as co-applicant for another proposal or (b) you act as co-applicant for two different proposals.

3.2 What can be applied for

PhD student and post doc positions can be applied for based on a standard remuneration that has been set at k€ 200 either for a PhD student (over 4 years) or a postdoc (over 3 years). This remuneration applies to the FES programme only. Consumables, analysis expenses and overhead costs can be funded up to a maximum of k€ 50 per position. Costs of computers, regular software, and other costs that come under the standard facilities of the university or research institute are excluded. You may apply for a total budget with a maximum of k€ 500.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

Submission of preliminary applications should be done no later than **Tuesday 2 March 2010, 12.00h**. Applications received after the deadline are not eligible for further assessment.

In case you are invited to submit a full proposal, this should be done no later than **Thursday 2 September 2010, 12.00h**.

Applications must meet criteria of technical admissibility, i.e. do applications meet the formal requirements as specified in 3.4. For an overview of the procedure, please see 4.1.

3.4 Drawing up an application

Preliminary proposals

You are advised to consult the programme brochure, available on the NWO subsidy guide website, before writing your application. This document gives a general description of the FES programme and includes information on the programme's focus areas and Innovative Programmes (only available in Dutch).

You are also strongly advised to consult the coordinator of the focus area you intend to submit a proposal to to discuss how your application fits the aims and research questions of the Innovative Programmes in this specific focus area. The coordinator will also provide more detailed information on a specific Innovative Programme on request.

The preliminary proposal should meet the prescribed format. If your application does not meet the format, it will not be eligible for further assessment. The proposal must be written in English. The proposal is composed of two parts; the Iris fact sheet and the core proposal.

Basic information concerning the title of the proposal, a concise summary (not exceeding 250 words) and personal information of the main applicant, should **ONLY** be entered in the Iris fact sheet. You need to fill out an application form for the core proposal; please download the preliminary application form from the subsidy guide on the NWO website. This core proposal should be submitted in PDF format as a supplement to the Iris fact sheet. Please consult the Iris user manual before submitting the proposal. The Iris user manual is available on the Iris website (www.iris.nwo.nl).

Full proposals

Full proposals are subject to a similar procedure and format as the preliminary proposals (see 3.4 Preliminary proposals). Again, you need to fill out an application form for the core proposal. You can download the full application form from the subsidy guide on the NWO website in due course.

3.5 Specific conditions

Participation of third partners in the proposed project is obligatory. Examples of these partners are business companies, health care institutions, schools and educational institutions, judicial organisations, branch organisations and research institutes. Participation of each individual societal partner should be confirmed in a letter of intent, which should be included in the full proposal. For preliminary proposals this is not yet required, but intended partners should be listed.

Financial or *in natura* contributions by third parties will add a surplus value to the application, and will, if the application also meets the other evaluation criteria, enhance its priority. Financial contributions are not obligatory for submitting an application.

You are required to indicate clearly in which focus area and in which Innovative Programme(s) within this specific focus area your proposal fits. If your proposal is funded, you are expected to collaborate closely with the coordinator of this focus area as well as with the (existing) projects within the focus area.

For this Call, the general criteria in the 'Regeling subsidieverlening NWO' (2007), available on www.nwo.nl/subsidieverlening are applicable, if not specified differently in this Call or in the criteria of the Fonds Economische Structuurversterking.

3.6 Submitting an application

Applications can only be submitted through Iris, the NWO electronic application system, using the account of the main applicant. To access Iris you need to request

an access code on the NWO website (www.iris.nwo.nl). For any technical problems, please contact the Iris helpdesk (iris@nwo.nl, 0900-6964747).

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

This Call for Proposals is formulated by the programme's management team and published on November 23, 2009. The evaluation procedure is split into two stages: a first stage in which preliminary proposals are submitted, and a second stage in which selected applicants are invited to submit a full proposal.

First stage: Preliminary proposals

After the deadline on March 2, 2009, applicants of proposals that do not meet criteria of technical admissibility as specified in 3.4., will be offered a chance to comply to these requirements on short notice. Proposals that do not fit within the framework of the Innovative Programmes will not be admissible.

An independent evaluation committee of international scientists and representatives from the societal focus areas will together with the management team assess the proposals. The evaluation committee will assess the criteria mentioned in 4.2. The management team will determine if the application fits the aims and research questions of the Innovative Programmes. The Supervisory Board of the National Initiative Brain & Cognition will receive a combined advice of the evaluation committee and management team on whom to invite to submit a full proposal. The Board will formalise this advice. Subsequently applicants either are invited to submit a full proposal or are recommended not to.

Second stage: Full proposals

The full proposals will be assessed based on the programme's criteria (see 4.2) by international peer review and in accordance with the usual system of hearing both sides of the argument.

The independent evaluation committee of international scientists and representatives from the societal focus areas will assess and rank the full proposals. The committee will use its specific expertise of scientific, societal and practical insights to formulate a recommendation that will be submitted to the Supervisory Board of the National Initiative Brain & Cognition for approval. Subsequently, applicants will be notified of the Board's decision.

4.2 Criteria

Preliminary proposals

In evaluating and ranking the preliminary proposals, the evaluation committee will consider the following five criteria:

1. The application fits the aims and research questions of the Innovative Programmes and focuses on societally relevant research questions.
2. Interdisciplinary scientific collaboration (i.e. satisfying the conceptual schemes of different broad disciplines (neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, sociology, etc.) should be embedded in the application, as well as international collaboration, both of which enhance the strength of your application.
3. Active participation of third partners is required and should preferably be demonstrated in the form of co-funding as a guarantee of involvement from the applicant's side (see 3.5). Its value for the project will be assessed.

4. Societal implementation of the anticipated results should be part of the research project, and the approach to realise implementation will be evaluated.
5. The scientific quality should be of a guaranteed high level.

Full proposals

In evaluating and ranking the full proposals, the evaluation committee will consider the following five criteria:

1. The application fits the aims and research questions of the Innovative Programmes and focuses on relevant societal research questions.
2. The scientific quality is of a guaranteed high level; the application will be assessed on the track record of the involved scientists, as well as the scientific quality of the proposal itself (originality and innovative strength, approach and methodology, hypotheses, potential for broadening or refinement of knowledge, feasibility).
3. Interdisciplinary and international scientific collaboration should be embedded in the application. Joint (inter)national publications are of importance, and the disciplinary expertise within the research groups should complement each other in an innovative and truly interdisciplinary way (i.e. satisfying the conceptual schemes of different broad disciplines (psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, sociology, etc.)).
4. Active participation of third partners is required and should preferably be demonstrated in the form of co-funding as a guarantee of involvement from the applicant's side. A willingness of societal partners to provide facilities, subjects, data sources and labour may, in this context, constitute a contribution (see 3.5). Its value for the project will be assessed.
5. Societal implementation of the anticipated results should be part of the research project, and the approach to realise implementation will be evaluated. The applicants should thus have demonstrable experience and impact in converting scientific findings into practical applications.

4.3 Composition of committee

The composition of the Supervisory Board, the management team, and the review panel is or will be published on the National Initiative Brain & Cognition website (www.brainandcognition.nl).

5 Other information

5.1 Contact

Dr. M.J. (Annemieke) van der Kooij

Telephone +31 (0)70 344 08 66, email: a.vanderkooij@nwo.nl

Drs. M. (Mayke) van Gelder

Telephone +31 (0)70 344 09 03, email: m.vangelder@nwo.nl

Mrs. K. Snijders

Telephone +31 (0)70 344 09 33, email: k.snijders@nwo.nl

For specific information on one of the focus areas, i.e. The Healthy Brain, The Learning Brain or The Secure Brain you are advised to contact the coordinator of the focus area:

Prof. dr. N. Ramsey (Health)

Telephone: +31 (0)88 7556863, email: n.ramsey@umcutrecht.nl

Prof. dr. J. Jolles (Learning)

Telephone: +31 (0)20 5988859, email: j.jolles@psy.vu.nl

Prof. dr. F. Leeuw (Social safety)

Telephone: +31 (0)70 3706466, email: f.leeuw@minjus.nl or frans.leeuw@maastrichtuniversity.nl

or

Dr. C.H. de Kogel (Social safety)

Telephone: +31 (0)70 3706587, email: c.h.de.kogel@minjus.nl

Further information on the programme and its activities, such as symposia and other events, will be announced via the e-mail alert service and on the programme website (www.brainandcognition.nl). You can subscribe to this free monthly e-mail alert service by sending an e-mail with your name and address to info@brainandcognition.nl.

For more information on the National Initiative Brain & Cognition we refer to the Initiative's website (www.brainandcognition.nl).

6 Annexe: timetable

Additional information

Programme brochure FES Brain & Cognition

This document (PDF, 47 pages) gives a general description of the programme and includes information on the programme's focus areas and Innovative Programmes (only available in Dutch). You are advised to consult this brochure before writing your application.

Timetable

November 23, 2009	Publication Call for Proposals
March 2, 2010	Deadline submission preliminary proposals
March - May 2010	Selection of preliminary proposals
June 2010	Advice on submitting a full proposal by Brain & Cognition Supervisory Board; subsequently applicants either are invited to submit a full proposal or are recommended not to
September 2 2010	Deadline submission full proposals
September – November 2010	Proposals under peer review
November 2010	Applicants are invited to comment on the assessment by the reviewers
December 2010	Assessment and ranking by evaluation committee
December 2010	Decision on funding by Brain & Cognition Supervisory Board; subsequently applicants will be informed of the decision