



NWO Research Programme for the Cognitive Sciences

Call for Preparatory Grants: deadline Thursday 27 March 2003, 1200 h

The Second phase of a Special Programme for the Cognitive Sciences

The study of cognitive phenomena like perception, memory, attention, action, language, and problem solving, including relations to their neural substrates and social setting, is one of the fundamental challenges of modern times. The NWO special Programme on Cognition is meant to boost this highly interdisciplinary area across traditional academic boundaries. The Programme is an initiative of the General Board of NWO and the NWO councils ALW, EW, GW, MaGW and ZonMW within the strategic theme Cognition and Behaviour, based on the report 'Fruits of Enlightenment'. Its general aims are:

- A. Stimulating research on new cognitive interface themes between strong groups in the alpha, beta, and gamma sciences, to encourage new research areas, and new scientific communities;
- B. Stimulating the application of cognitive science in strategic areas of interest to society at large, such as education and industrial innovation;
- C. Strengthening the methodological foundations of the cognitive sciences, and contributing to their coherence as an active intellectual community;
- D. Supporting integrative cognitive science education programmes;
- E. Broadening public support for cognitive science research and its applications;
- F. Establishing cognitive science institutionally, within NWO universities, and elsewhere.

A major criterion for the success of this special Programme with a budget of 12.5 M-euro will be the emergence of lasting developments at the end of its term: new collaborative multidisciplinary research lines between strong research groups, new networks of researchers with a broad outlook, new interfaces between cognitive science and society, and larger follow-up investments in cognitive science by NWO, ZonMW, STW, KNAW and universities. Altogether the Programme aims at stimulating *research, forum activities, education, public presence and information dissemination*.

In its first phase in 2002, the Cognition Programme has funded nine broad disciplinary basic research projects after an open Call for Proposals with a budget of about 5 M-euro. In the second phase a similar budget will be available, albeit for a rather different type of project.

The programme committee and the steering committee wish to achieve further integration across the cognitive disciplines, and to explore strategic applications. The second call will therefore invite strong groups working in different domains of the cognitive sciences to submit proposals for collaborative research projects. Some of the relevant interfaces are (a) perception in (neuro-)psychology and computer science, (b) linguistic grammars and brain models, (c) logical reasoning and cognitive psychology, (d) learning in computational and biological systems, (e) social intelligence, games and multi-agent models of distributed cognition, (f)

situated cognition, (g) parallels between animal and human communication systems, (h) animal models for studying complex cognitive processes, (i) mathematical simulations and experimental analyses of cognitive processes, (j) mathematical and philosophical integration of cognitive frameworks and levels. In addition to such fundamental research themes, however, a strong need is also felt for research that can fruitfully connect to the problems that confront a society in which cognition and knowledge are becoming increasingly important. Prominent public issues include education and training, quality of life (e.g., health care, public safety), and behaviour under uncertainty. (The importance of the latter theme shows in the Nobel Prize awarded to psychologist Daniel Kahneman.) The Programme also encourages serious and well-founded efforts in this direction. As ground-breaking proposals of both kinds require a serious scientific effort, a budget for *preparatory grants* is available.

The present call is to solicit proposals for preparatory grants. The deadline for submission is Thursday 27 March 2003, 1200h.

Time-line and upcoming actions

The schedule for the second funding phase is as follows:

- * January 2003 Opening Call for Preparatory Grants (deadline 27 March 2002)
- * January 2003 Opening continuous Call for dissemination and educational activities
- * May 2003 Opening Call for Integrated Research Projects (deadline preliminary proposals September 2003; deadline Full Proposals December 2003)

Preparatory Grants

To facilitate the preparation of proposals for integrative multidisciplinary research projects a Call is now being made for proposals for *Preparatory Grants*. Researchers may request small grants for activities toward optimal preparation of research proposals in cognitive science serving one or more of the above broad goals. Such activities may comprise intensive workshops (following the Dahlem Conference format), short term exchanges of senior researchers, or visits by leading foreign researchers. Actual research costs or cost of equipment are excluded. The output of such activities must always be a proposal to be submitted in the subsequent final Call for integrated research projects in the Cognition Programme which will be opened next year, or directed toward some other funding scheme, such as STW, other NWO areas, ZonMW, or FP6.

Format Proposals must be submitted electronically to NWO via the Iris-system (accessible at www.nwo.nl/cognitie) in the prescribed format and should not exceed three pages A4 (max. 1500 words). They must specify:

- a) how the proposed theme will contribute to the major goals of the Cognition Programme: new research lines, community building, etc.;
- b) what practical result will be delivered: e.g. a full project proposal to a concrete funding source, or a proposed pilot for a new application area;
- c) a workplan, time schedule, and budget including the financial contribution of the groups involved.
- d) a list of intended partners and contributors.

Before submitting the proposal, first read the "Richtlijnen aanmelding Preparatory Grants" which can be downloaded from www.nwo.nl/cognitie.

Funding The maximum funding that can be requested for these preparatory activities is Euro 15 000. A budget of up to Euro 300 000 is available for this Call for Preparatory Grants.

Assessment Criteria In evaluating and ranking proposals, the Programme Committee will use the following criteria, with a certain tolerance for unorthodox features and risk-taking:

- * Contribution to main goals of the second phase of the Cognition Programme, as stated above;
- * Innovative potential and cross-disciplinarity of the proposal and research teams.

Timetable

Activity	Date
Call for proposals for preparatory grants	January 2003
Deadline proposals for preparatory grants	27 March 2003
Assessment and ranking by programme committee	April 2003
Decision on funding by steering committee	April 2003

What comes Next: Call for Integrated Research Projects May-September 2003

The final Call for Integrated Research Projects is scheduled for May 2003. Its budget amounts to 4.5 M-euro. For this final round of applications, projects are envisaged of maximally 300 000 Euro. The committee will pay special attention to the balance between project size and potential benefit for the programme. To decrease effort overall, applicants must submit a preliminary proposal in early September 2003. Only those who submitted a preliminary proposal may submit a full proposal in December 2003. Obtaining a preparatory grant in the current Call is no requirement for preliminary proposals. Assessment and ranking of full proposals by the Programme Committee will take place in May 2004. Shortly thereafter the Steering Committee will make the final funding decision.

In addition to this general Call, starting from January 2003, the Programme will open a continuous opportunity for smaller grant applications connected to its further action lines. See the guidelines on the Programme website www.nwo.nl/cognitie.

Further information on the Programme and its annual activities, such as public information days, strategic symposia, and other events, can also be found in the Cognition Newsletter (edited by Eva Hoogland: cognition@nwo.nl) which will appear three times a year.

For further information, please contact:

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