Guide to Knowledge Utilisation in the Physical Sciences

It is important to NWO that scientific knowledge and skills are also applied outside of academia and/or in other scientific disciplines. In short: knowledge that is gained should also be utilised. Knowledge utilisation plays a role as a selection criterion in all of NWO’s funding instruments. NWO Physical Sciences is eager to help researchers form the contours of knowledge utilisation in their research proposals.

What is knowledge utilisation?

Knowledge utilisation is about making research results and scientific knowledge accessible to researchers in other areas of science, to society at large, to parties in industry or for educational purposes. To promote knowledge utilisation, NWO Physical Sciences endeavours to make researchers aware of the potential uses of their scientific knowledge and research results and to keep those uses in mind when formulating new research proposals.

Assessing knowledge utilisation

The discussion of knowledge utilisation within a research proposal will be assessed on the extent to which the possibilities that the research project offers are made explicit and described in detail. That is to say: if a research proposal offers concrete opportunities for knowledge utilisation in the foreseeable future, you will need to identify and explain those. If no concrete opportunities for knowledge utilisation are anticipated in the foreseeable future, you will be expected to provide convincing arguments to long-term effects. It will be up to the referees and the selection committee to test your argumentation.

Knowledge utilisation in the various funding instruments

The degree to which the discussion of knowledge utilisation will play a role in the assessment of proposals can vary between funding instruments. It is important to gear your proposal to the assessment criteria described in the call for proposals concerned.

For funding instruments such as those for the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme (Vernieuwingssimpuls) and TOP grants, the users need not be involved in the drafting of the proposal. For such funding instruments, the section on knowledge utilisation in a research proposal serves to identify potential users. For thematic research programmes and collaboration with public and/or private partners, specific or additional conditions may apply with regard to knowledge utilisation. If users are already involved in the drafting of a research proposal, knowledge utilisation will be expected to be fully integrated in the research proposal, for example through the embedding of results in the users’ environment.
Tips for addressing knowledge utilisation within research proposals

The intended role of knowledge utilisation will become most evident if the proposal gives attention to the following three topics:

1. **Relevance**: How can your research contribute to society or to other scientific disciplines? What is the relevance of your research to others and how well do your results fit in with the needs of potential users. It is advised to involve possible partners in answering these questions.

2. **Target group**: who stands to benefit from your research outside of your own field of science and outside of academia in general, and how can you involve that target group in your research? The target group might consist of a variety of individuals, institutions, organisations or scientific disciplines, on both the national and international level.

3. **Activity**: Which means will be used to involve the target group in your research? How will knowledge utilisation be achieved and what is your plan of approach in that regard?

When it comes to making your scientific knowledge and results available to and suitable for others, a number of activities could be performed. The following ingredients are mentioned here for inspiration, but they are by no means exhaustive:

- Describe how the results of the knowledge gained will be disseminated and how products stemming from the research can be made useful to non-scientists or to fields of science other than your own.
- Give attention to planning, to the necessary budget and to what each party specifically will contribute to the project (e.g. FTE, time, facilities, research data, supervision).
- Make solid agreements with the partners about what they will be expected to contribute (financially or otherwise) and, if applicable, about intellectual property.

Be as specific and complete as possible when describing the knowledge utilisation. It is also important to take into account the feasibility of the knowledge utilisation and the time frame in which it will take place.

More information

As from 2013, all NWO funding instruments require applicants to address the aspect of knowledge utilisation within their research proposals. If you would like to know more about knowledge utilisation for one of the funding instruments of NWO Physical Sciences, please send a message to the contact person mentioned in the call for proposals for which you intend to submit a research proposal.

For more information about what NWO understands by knowledge utilisation, see: [http://www.nwo.nl/en/our-ambitions/Facilitating+knowledge+utilisation](http://www.nwo.nl/en/our-ambitions/Facilitating+knowledge+utilisation)