Frequently Asked Questions NWA-ORC 2019, Full Proposal phase

Last update: 10 December 2019

Content

i. NWA-ORC in general

ii. Consortium
   a. General
   b. (main) Applicant
   c. Co-financier(s)
   d. Cooperation partner(s)

iii. Preparation of the proposal
   a. General
   b. Financial
   c. Submission via ISAAC

iv. Assessment

v. Useful websites
   a. General
   b. NWA-ORC
   c. Other NWA programmes

About this FAQ
This FAQ is a living document, that is updated on a regular basis. The questions and answers in this document only apply to the NWA-ORC 2019 call.
Indicative timeframe

**Full proposal**
- 30th of January 2020
- February/ March 2020
- End of March 2020
- End of April 2020
- Half of May 2020
- June 2020

**Deadline submission full proposal**
- Reference phase
- Request for rebuttal
- Interview selection meeting
- Interviews
- Decision on full proposal

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If you have any call related questions, please send an email to nwa-orc2019@nwo.nl, or contact one of the NWA-ORC 2019 coordinators.
i. **NWA-ORC in general**

**What are the requirements for research proposals in this funding round?**
In the *Call for proposals of 'Research on Routes by Consortia'* you will find the prerequisites for research proposals in this financing round of the NWA-ORC programme.

**What is the available budget?**
In 2019, 80.5 million euros will be reserved for the NWA-ORC programme. The total available budget from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the entire NWA programme is 108 million euros in 2019 and 130 million euros from 2020 onwards.

**Will each route be given a share of the resources?**
No, no funds are specifically allocated to the routes. The funds will be distributed via an open call, to which consortia can submit proposals that fit within (parts of) one or more NWA routes. These consortia do not need to have previously been associated with the route(s) in question. These proposals are then evaluated in competition.

**Why should academic and applied research be combined within the NWA?**
The NWA programme aims to build bridges between diverse scientific, innovation and policy agendas and to foster cooperation between the various players across the whole knowledge chain of research and innovation. The NWA therefore has a special emphasis on carrying out interdisciplinary research involving partners from the entire knowledge chain, from fundamental to applied and practice-oriented research. In addition, the funds that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has made available to the NWA are intended partly for fundamental research and partly for applied research, in a ratio of roughly 80/20. Following the origin of the resources made available by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the ratio between fundamental and applied research (80-20) should be reflected in the distribution of resources at project level.

**How are the terms 'fundamental' and 'applied' research defined in the funding round of the NWA-ORC?**
Fundamental research is defined as research carried out by organisations that can submit regular applications to the NWO, including universities, university medical centres and NWO and KNAW institutes. Applied research is defined as research carried out by universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and government knowledge institutes.

**When will the ORC call 2020 be published?**
The ORC call 2020 is expected to follow the same planning and to have the same deadlines as in 2019, but this is not definitive. As soon as this is known, it will be communicated via the NWO website.

**For what kind of activities in the field of knowledge utilization and entrepreneurship can I apply for a subsidy?**
NWO sees knowledge utilization as the application of knowledge through productive interactions with an interested target group in order to create social - including economic - value. Entrepreneurship in this case falls under the term knowledge utilization.

Means of knowledge utilization include, for example:
- Public/societal, such as feasibility studies into possible applications or contributions to teaching packages. Furthermore, communication activities, such as a workshop with potential users of research results or communication to a wider public, also fall under knowledge utilization.
- Economic, such as (in the context of intellectual property rights (IPR)) costs involved in obtaining copyrights of algorithms/software, screening and scouting by researchers for opportunities for IPR. This includes the costs of patent and copyright licensing agreements. In the context of entrepreneurship, you can also think of collaboration with start-ups or other companies outside the consortium, training, etc. entrepreneurial skills or setting up a start-up.

**We have received an invitation to submit a full proposal. Can NWO say anything about the remuneration opportunities per financial bandwidth?**
At the moment, NWO is not able to make any statements about the remuneration percentages per financial bandwidth, because this is related to the distribution of the requested funds within the various financial bandwidths. In determining the available subsidy amount per bandwidth, NWO compares the honoured budget within the bandwidth in relation to the requested budget within this bandwidth. These amounts will not be known to NWO until after the full proposals have been submitted. The call for proposals did, however, stipulate that “in principle, NWO applies a comparable granting percentage for each of the three ranges”. To illustrate this, a fictional calculation example is given below.

Example:
- Within bandwidth ‘0,5 – 2 M€’, a total of M€ 62.5 was applied for during the detailed application phase;
- This represents 15% of the total requested budget for all three chambers.
- The total budget available for the NWA_ORC 2019 is M€ 80.5. The available budget for bandwidth ‘0,5 – 2 M€’ is therefore 0.15 * 80.5 = M€ 12.075.
- The average application size within bandwidth ‘0,5 – 2 M€’ is M€ 1.5. The number of applications to be granted within bandwidth ‘0,5 – 2 M€’ therefore amounts to 12.075 / 1.5 = 8 applications.

How does NWO take into account the spread over the NWA routes in its award and remuneration decision?

Distribution over the routes is not part of the assessment criteria. This is therefore not taken into account by the assessment committee when determining its granting advice. However, the call does stipulate that “The Programme Committee may deviate from the prioritisation advice of the Assessment Committee for policy reasons. Policy reasons include, for example, the overall desirable distribution of fundamental applied research (80-20), distribution across the 25 routes and/or fields of science, diversity, and distribution of the applications to be honoured across the three bandwidths of applications.

ii. Consortia

a. General

Are there specific requirements for the composition of a consortium (for example: at least 3 different research institutes; or at least one non-university party; or at least two parties from the groups TO2, Universities of Applied Science, practice, industry)?

No, these kinds of requirements are not imposed. However, public and/or private consortium partners must be involved who provide the required 10% co-financing (in cash and/or in kind). It is essential that the partners necessary for the implementation of the application are part of the consortium.

The NWA programme aims to build bridges and promote cooperation across the entire knowledge chain of research and innovation. The programme therefore has a special emphasis on carrying out interdisciplinary research involving partners from the entire knowledge chain from fundamental to applied and practice-oriented research, if this is relevant to the core mission. In order to increase the potential impact of the research, the intention is to seek cooperation with public and private social partners.

Should there be social partners in the consortium?

Research proposals are assessed, among other things, on the extent of breadth of the knowledge chain involved in of the consortium. If it relates to the core assignment that social parties are involved, the inclusion of these parties in the consortium is highly recommended. The stakeholders, including the social parties, should reflect the breadth of the knowledge chain of the proposal. In addition, a required co-financing of 10% is applicable, which must be provided by public and/or private consortium partners who do not receive a subsidy. ‘Social partners’ is a broad term here, which can also include governments and the business community.
What does NWO mean by social partners?
For example, but not limited to: industrial partners, museums, foundations, specialist departments, nursing homes, zoos, municipalities, police, schools, planning offices, national governments.

How many consortia can an institute join?
An institute can join several consortia. It is also possible for several people within a consortium to be employed by the same institute. A TO2 institution cannot receive both money (main applicant and applicant) and contribute money (co-financier) within one application.

Are research groups from abroad also allowed to participate in the consortia, and can they also apply for funding?
The Money follows Cooperation principle allows national research budgets to be used for cross-border cooperation. See also section 3.5.2 in the call. Foreign researchers cannot be listed as applicants. This means that the organisation to which the foreign researcher is affiliated falls under the category 'Cooperation partner'.

Can companies also submit and receive grants?
No, only persons from non-profit organisations can act as main applicant or applicant and thus receive a grant. Private parties can, however, participate in the consortium as partners and provide co-financing, either in cash or in kind.

Can the consortium be extended to include parties between the preproposal and the full proposal?
It is permitted to expand the consortium, provided that this does not affect the core mission, approach and objectives of the research proposal (or the content of the research). Deviations in response to the recommendations of the assessment committee are also permitted.

If the consortium is extended to include organisations, to which an applicant is affiliated, that are not listed in section 3.1.1, the organisation must comply with the cumulative criteria set out below:
- is based in the Netherlands and
- has a public service mission and
- is independent in the conduct of research and
- has no profit motive other than for the purpose of carrying out further research.

Note: These conditions will be assessed by NWO prior to submitting the complete application. To this end, the applicant's organisation must submit the following documents by e-mail (nwa-orc2019@nwo.nl) no later than 10 working days before the deadline for submission:
- a recent extract from the Chamber of Commerce;
- Constituent instrument of incorporation according to statutes or other formal document proving the public task and the absence of a profit motive;
- provide an audit report on the latest available annual accounts.

If the NWO's assessment of the applicants has not taken place in advance, NWO will not be able to process the application.

Do I have to include the figurehead of the route(s) in my application?
No, any researcher can take the initiative to form a consortium and submit a research proposal that takes place within (parts of) one or more of the NWA routes.

How is Intellectual Property regulated?
NWO expects the main applicant to make agreements with the other consortium partners about intellectual property and publication. The NWO IP policy can be found in chapter 4 of the Subsidy Scheme 2017. Open access is the standard for publication.
b. (Main)Applicant

Is it still possible to change the main applicant between the preproposal and the full proposal?
No, that is not possible.

Does 'main applicant' or 'applicant' mean the knowledge institution/organisation as a whole or an individual person?
'Main applicant' or 'applicant' refers to an individual person. He/she can therefore participate in a maximum of two consortia; one organisation can be represented in more than two consortia. Upon granting, however, the funding will go to the applicant's institution and not to the individual person.

How many consortia can a person join, either as a main applicant or as an applicant?
Person A may only submit one application in the NWA-ORC 2019 round in the capacity of main applicant. In addition, person A may participate in another consortium as applicant no more than once. Person B may participate in a consortium a maximum of two times as applicant. Person B is not allowed to be the main applicant within the NWA-ORC 2019.

c. Co-financer

Can my university act as a co-financier in my consortium?
No, institutions that can act as the main applicant may never assume the role of co-financier within the entire NWA-ORC 2019, for any application. An exception is made for TO2 institutions. They are allowed to participate in a consortium as co-financier, provided that they do not also participate in the same consortium as applicant.

This means that (for example) a university or university medical centre may not act as a co-financier for any consortium.

Can co-financing also be provided by a foreign party?
Yes, a foreign (public or private) party can act as a co-financier.

d. Cooperation partner

I have international partners in the consortium, but they do not qualify as applicants. However, they do not provide co-finance either. Can I include them in the full proposal?
The description of the consortium in the full proposal may include international partners as cooperation partners.

Is a declaration of support required for a cooperation partner to participate in a consortium?
No, a declaration of support from the cooperation partner is not required, but can give the committee more insight into a party's involvement and their role in the project.

iii. Preparation of the proposal

a. General

Is it permitted to rewrite the summary and keywords of the proposal in ISAAC, after submitting a preproposal and before submitting a full proposal?
The summary and keywords should largely remain the same. These are in fact used to find referees for the assessment of the full proposal. The summary and keywords must therefore be informative and relevant, from the preproposal submission, and clearly describe what the core assignment of the intended research is. You can adjust the summary for the full proposal only in factual elements.
To what extent may the requested NWO amount - and the associated cash/in-kind contribution - in the complete application differ from the amount in the preproposal?

The amount requested in the complete application may still deviate from the amount in the preproposal, provided this does not affect the core task and content of the research proposal. If the deviation results in a different bandwidth for the application, the NWA office needs to be informed about this prior to the submission of a full proposal, if any.

Does the full amount of promised cash co-financing have to be available at the start of the project, or can these funds be made available during the execution of the project?

The cash co-financing can be made available by the co-financers during the project. Cash co-financing will be invoiced by NWO to the co-financers. NWO will ensure that the co-financing is transferred to the consortium, via the main applicant. In the event of an allocation, NWO will contact the partners to make further arrangements in this regard.

The dropdown menus (e.g. in sections 1 and 3) of the full application form do not work. What can I do?

NWO is aware that in some cases the use of the dropdown menus can cause problems depending on the combination of type of computer and software. To complete these sections, we recommend that you open the application form on a Windows computer with Word, and fill in the requested sections. If you are still experiencing problems after this, please contact the NWA office via nwa-orc2019@nwo.nl.

Is it possible in the full proposal to submit in a different budget range than the preproposal?

Changes between the preproposal and the full proposal should not affect the core assignment, approach and objectives of the research project as described in the preproposal. In special circumstances it is possible to switch between bandwidths. A reason such as, for example, the entry of new partners in the consortium, may influence the total budget and may therefore be such a special circumstance. These changes must be explained by the applicant. The agency would like to be/continue to be informed about this on time.

b. Financial

Does NWO invoice cash co-financing including VAT?

In principle, NWO invoices the cash co-financing without VAT; after all, NWO does not provide a service. If the external organisation that provides the in-cash co-financing requests invoicing including VAT, NWO may deviate from this standard situation. The phrase ‘and, if applicable, the required additional Dutch VAT’ from the format for letter of support can be omitted unless the co-financing organisation itself finds it invoicing including VAT important.

What is the definition of a start-up?

A legal entity that innovatively explores new markets in order to offer a sustainable solution to a social problem or to develop a new technology. The criteria for this legal entity are:

- is a maximum of 5 years old;
- has its registered office in the Netherlands;
- is in the start-up phase, this is for example the case when there is no marketable product yet or the product is still in development / test phase;
- is dependent on external funding and is already able to realise this in part with interested parties and does not pay out a profit;
- has little turnover but has considerable growth potential (scalability) and has insight into potential customers;
- makes use of new technologies to conduct business;
- does not employ many people and consists mainly of one or more employees who invest in time and / or money.

The English NWA-ORC 2019 call for proposals states that the de minimis declaration is a mandatory annex. Is that correct?

The English call for proposals does indeed state that the de minimis declaration is a mandatory annex. However, this is not correct. This declaration is only mandatory if funding is requested in the research proposal for a start-up under
entrepreneurship (see 3.2.4). A mandatory template is available on the NWA-ORC 2019 funding page for this statement.

**How do I know if my application complies with the 80/20 rule (fundamental/applied)?**
For pragmatic reasons, the NWA applies the labels 'fundamental' and 'applied' on the basis of institution. This means that researchers do not have to put a label on their research themselves. The consortia must pay attention to the 80/20 distribution themselves, whereby 80% of the money must be spent with organisations that can submit regular applications to the NWO, including universities, university medical centres and NWO and KNAW institutes. 20% of the money must be spent at universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes, national knowledge institutes, planning agencies and other social organisations. Little deviation from this 80/20 is acceptable.

The 80/20 distribution is not in itself an assessment criterion. However, the assessment committee evaluates the quality of the consortium, among other things, on the way in which the proposed research (insofar as relevant to the core mission of the application) pays attention to addressing the chain from fundamental research to the application of the results.

Following the origin of the resources made available by OC&W, the relationship between fundamental and applied research (80-20) should be reflected in the distribution of resources at project level.

**Can societal doctorates or industrial doctorates also be presented?**
Yes, this is allowed. See paragraph 3.2.1 of the call for proposals. A PhD candidate may therefore spend part of his or her time working for a private or public organisation.

**What falls under the budget item Other Scientific Personnel (OWP)?**
Other Scientific Personnel is mainly used by medical centres, as the examples (AIOS, ANIOS) show. As the call suggests, you can apply for this for a researcher or lecturer in salary scale 10, who has a master's degree but has not obtained a PhD.

**Should the amounts in the VSNU tables be used for the project management budget item and for personnel costs at the university?**
No, this is not necessary. Here you can make use of the actual classification on the basis of cost-covering rate according to accrual 3.2.1, up to a maximum of 119 euros per hour.

**How can I use the research leave funding?**
With the research leave funding, the main applicant and/or applicant(s), who are employed by an academic institution on a permanent basis, be exempted from teaching, administrative or management tasks. The money from the replacement subsidy is used to pay for the replacement of these tasks. The main applicant and/or applicant(s) must spend the time that has become available, as part of the submitted research project.

For the deployment in the project of researchers already employed by the university, use can be made of a research leave funding of 5 full-time months or a postdoc of at least 6 full-time months. Do you need to expand the appointment of the postdoc for a research leave funding through the use of a postdoc, or is this not necessary?
For a postdoc in permanent employment, the starting point is indeed that there is an expansion or renewal of the appointment. After all, you cannot double-finance an appointment. However, applying for a subsidy for a postdoc should be in accordance with the VSNU rates, even if it concerns a postdoc who is already employed by the university. This cannot be calculated on the basis of actual grading.

For example:
- The total budget for a project is € 1,000,000.
- The budget requested from NWO is € 900,000.
- The replacement grant can be used up to € 90,000.
What does this mean for the main applicant and/or applicant(s) for whom the replacement has been requested? With € 90,000, there is sufficient budget for hiring:
- 1 replacement for 1.0 FTE for 14 months, or
- 1 replacement for 0.25 FTE for 54 months, or
- 2 replacements:
  - 1 for 0.5 FTEs for 13 months and
  - 1 for 1.0 FTE for 8 months.

Can I also allocate the 5% of the project budget that has to be set aside for knowledge utilization via in-kind co-financing?
You still have to spend 5% of the budget obtained from NWO (the grant) on knowledge utilization, even if you spend part of it on knowledge utilization via co-funding.

Can an organisation also give the use of its lab as in-kind co-financing to a NWA-ORC project in those years where there is an overlap between two projects (2020 to 2023)? For example: by splitting the usage in months or by splitting the days per week between the 2 projects?
It is not a problem for the NWA-ORC if the organisation’s research lab is declared as co-financing, even if it is in the same period as for another project. Please note that clear agreements must be made about the number of hours that are available for the use of this lab. In the full proposal this can be recorded in the support letters for co-financer.

Which budget items are mandatory in an application?
1. Knowledge utilization and entrepreneurship: At least 5% of the subsidy amount requested from NWO must be reserved for activities in the field of knowledge utilization and/or entrepreneurship.
2. Programme management for projects in the range of € 2-5 million and € 5-10 million: A project management item must be reserved here up to a maximum of 5% of the total budget requested from NWO. For applications in the bandwidth of € 0.5-2 million, project management is the responsibility of the main applicant and no funds can be requested for this. These costs are not eligible.
All other budget items are optional.

To what extent may the budget of the full proposal deviate from the budget of the preproposal?
There is no provision for this; budgetary deviations can occur. It is important to inform the NWA office of this before submission of the full proposal. The deviation must be substantiated further to the committee in the application. However, it should not be the case that, as a result of adjustments in the budget, the core assignment changes.

Is it possible to reserve part of the budget within an application for a specific thematic call that will then be carried out later by NWO or the consortium itself?
No, this is not possible.

The consortium wants to meet regularly during the project. Can the travel and accommodation expenses of all the members involved be reimbursed?
The travel and accommodation costs of PostDocs and Doctoral Degree in Engineering (PDEng)/MD PhD fall within the scope of the bench fee. These costs have to be paid out of the €15.000 per year per FTE. For all (other) members of the consortium there is no room from the NWO subsidy for travel and accommodation costs. These costs must be paid by the employer of the consortium member.

When does 'Investment' include material?
Small scientific equipment costing more than € 160.000 must be included in Investments.

Can I apply for funding for specific knowledge utilization or entrepreneurship tasks for permanent employees at my university?
Yes, in two ways:
1. **Replacement grant:** financing can be requested for the exemption of the main applicant and/or applicant(s) from education, management and administration tasks. The replacement subsidy is subject to a fixed standard amount that the employer can use to cover the costs of the replacement, who will take over the non-research part of the duties of the applicant(s). The replacement costs in this NWA call may not exceed 10% of the total budget requested from NWO (excluding the co-financing).

2. **Non-scientific personnel:** the use of non-scientific personnel can be requested on a permanent basis, for knowledge utilization or entrepreneurship tasks.

c. **Submission via ISAAC**

*Do I have to enter my co-financers in ISAAC?*
Co-financers are not entered in any of the tabs in ISAAC. It suffices to fill in the application form and upload it to ISAAC.

*I cannot find the organisation of a consortium partner in ISAAC. Can this organisation be added to the system?*
Yes, the organisation can be added to ISAAC. To do this, you should contact NWO via relatiebeheer@nwo.nl. Make sure you do this in time, at least 5 working days before the submission deadline.

*I have trouble applying via ISAAC, who can I contact?*
On this [page](#) you will find the ISAAC manual, this will be opened as a pdf. In this document you will find general information about the use of ISAAC and specific information for applicants, referees, committee members and project leaders.

If you have any technical questions regarding the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual before asking the helpdesk for advice! Access to the ISAAC helpdesk: Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., telephone number 020-3467179. You can also send your question by e-mail to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer by e-mail within two working days.

iv. **Assessment**

*Are smaller applications (lower bandwidth) assessed in the same way as larger applications, are they in the same competition?*
Three ranges have been set for the comparison of applications:
- 500,000 - 2 million euros
- 2 million - 5 million euro
- 5 million - 10 million euro

Applications are therefore in competition with other applications of a similar budget range. The same assessment criteria apply to all three ranges, but the intended results of an application will be assessed in the light of the resources requested.

*How is the assessment committee composed?*
When setting up the committee, attention is paid to diversity, the spread of disciplinary backgrounds and knowledge of the various types of research in the knowledge chain. Representation by social parties (both public and private organisations) is also an important point of attention. This means that scientists/researchers and representatives from society together sit on a single committee and jointly assess the proposals on the basis of the assessment criteria. When drawing up your application, you should bear in mind that the members of the multidisciplinary assessment committee cannot, by definition, can’t be experts on all the subjects addressed in the applications.

*How is applied research assessed in the call?*
Applied research is assessed as an integral part of the research proposal. In general, it is evaluated whether the application, in so far as relevant to the mission of the research, pays attention to addressing the chain from
fundamental research to the application of the results. The assessment committee is composed in such a way that it has knowledge of the various types of research.

Do the figurehead or puller of one of the 25 NWA routes play a role in the assessment of applications?
No, they have no role in this process.

Is there any information available about the interviews?
The call for proposals section 4.1 contains an explanation of the interviews. Specific information will be shared with the consortia selected for the interview phase in the invitation for the interviews.

v. Useful links

a. General

Website Dutch Research Agenda
https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/

NWO funding page for the Dutch Research Agenda
https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/programmas/nationale+wetenschapsagenda

b. NWA-ORC

Awarded projects NWA-ORC 2018

Initiatives NWA-ORC 2019

NWO funding page NWA-ORC

c. Other NWA programmes

The Thematic Programming includes programmes that lend themselves to a broad NWA approach and that are developed in consultation with specialist departments.
https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/programmas/nationale+wetenschapsagenda/thematische+programmering

Innovations and Networks ensure innovation within the NWA and facilitate consortia and NWA routes.
https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/programmas/nationale+wetenschapsagenda/vernieuwing+en+netwerken

Science Communication and Outreach is responsible for the NWA’s commitment to bring science and society closer together through communication and outreach and to increase trust in science.