NWA Research along Routes by Consortia (NWA-ORC)

Dutch Research Agenda

Call for proposals 2020/21
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

What does the Netherlands want to know? This was the idea behind the creation of the Dutch Research Agenda (Dutch acronym NWA). The NWA has been created by an innovative process with input from scientists and citizens: the Dutch general public was invited to submit questions about science online. The national knowledge community, united in the Knowledge Coalition\(^1\), grouped the questions collected into 140 cluster questions that were used to formulate 25 routes\(^2\).

The NWA includes questions where coordination and cooperation have added value in order to achieve scientific and societal breakthroughs. The NWA therefore encourages cooperation between the various partners to ensure that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. The aim of the NWA is to make a positive, structural contribution to the global knowledge society of tomorrow, in which new knowledge flows easily from researcher to user and new questions arising from practice and society lead quickly and automatically to new research.

The core elements of the NWA are:
- The substantive agenda constituted by the 25 routes and 140 cluster questions;
- The knowledge-chain-wide approach, which means that NWA projects encompass fundamental, applied and practice-oriented research\(^3\). This means that knowledge institutes, universities and applied and practice-oriented research institutions all work together in the NWA. The rule of thumb here is that 80% of the budget made available by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) for the entire NWA programme is earmarked for researchers from knowledge institutes such as universities, university medical centres, NWO and KNAW institutes; 20% is available for researchers from applied and practice-oriented research institutes, such as universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and National Knowledge Institutes (RKIs);
- Bringing disciplines together: the research is interdisciplinary;
- Close cooperation between science and society: between researchers, civil society organisations (both public and private) and the general public, and actively giving back the results to society and dialogue/interaction with society.

In 2018, the Ministry of OCW entrusted NWO with implementing the Dutch Research Agenda. The NWA comprises four programme lines\(^4\):
1. Research along Routes by Consortia (ORC);
2. Thematic Programming in consultation with government ministries;
3. Innovations and Networks;
4. Science Communication and Outreach.

This call for proposals “Research along Routes by Consortia (ORC)” falls under programme line 1. The call is specifically intended to fund research by consortia focusing on one or more of the 140 cluster questions within one or more of the 25 routes.

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\(^1\) The Knowledge Coalition consists of Dutch research universities (VSNU), universities of applied sciences (VH), university medical centres (NFU), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), employers (VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland) and the institutes for applied research (TNO/TO2).

\(^2\) The 25 routes and corresponding cluster questions can be found in [https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/nwa_deel_eng_digitaal.pdf](https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/nwa_deel_eng_digitaal.pdf). The 140 cluster questions can also be found in a PDF file available from [https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/publicatie/dutch-national-research-agenda-english/](https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/publicatie/dutch-national-research-agenda-english/).

\(^3\) The broad knowledge chain in the NWA-ORC 2020/21 call comprises the public knowledge institutions: universities of applied sciences, universities, NWO and KNAW institutes, university medical centres and TO2 institutes, as well as other public knowledge organisations such as National Knowledge Institutes (see Annex 6.1 for a full list of public knowledge organisations).

In the NWA-ORC, each consortium is essentially knowledge-chain-wide (involving parties from the full breadth of the knowledge chain) and interdisciplinary, and involves cooperation with civil society organisations, including industry.

Proposals will be assessed for their knowledge-chain-wide and interdisciplinary character and for the “productive interactions” within the consortium (see Section 2). Proposals will also be assessed for the knowledge utilisation associated with productive interactions. Knowledge utilisation promotes the potential contribution of research to questions from society and societal breakthroughs.

In the NWA-ORC, NWO will apply two approaches to knowledge utilisation: the Impact Plan approach and the Impact Outlook approach. Which approach applies to a proposal will depend on the nature of the cluster question(s) addressed. This is explained in Section 2.2.

To promote the forming of consortia between parties and to avoid overlaps in research programming, NWO will organise matchmaking meetings in this ORC 2020/21 round. Attendance at a meeting is mandatory for applicants in this round. A more detailed explanation is given in Section 4.1.2.

1.2 Available budget

A budget of 132.3 million euros\(^5\) is available for the NWA-ORC 2020/21 funding round.

In this round, proposals can be submitted in the following budget ranges:

- \(500,000 \leq 2,000,000\) euros;
- \(> 2,000,000 \leq 5,000,000\) euros;
- \(> 5,000,000 \leq 10,000,000\) euros.

The range into which a proposal falls is determined by the amount of funding requested from NWO. The allocation of the total budget between the different budget ranges is not pre-determined. The budget available per budget range will be determined in proportion to the cumulative budget requested for the full proposals considered in each budget range. This will ensure that proposals receiving a positive assessment in each band can be awarded funding. NWO is aiming for a similar granting rate for all three budget ranges.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

Please note that the Dutch version of this call is the leading legal document.

The NWA-ORC 2020/21 funding round has three phases:

- Registration of initiatives and mandatory attendance at a matchmaking meeting;
- Submission of pre-proposals;
- Submission of full proposals.

The deadlines for the three phases are as follows:

The deadline for online registration of an initiative is **1 October 2020** at 14:00:00 CEST.

Aanvragen kunnen op ieder moment ingediend worden. Er zijn geen deadlines. The deadline for submission of full proposals is **24 June 2021** at 14:00:00 CEST.

The NWA-ORC 2020/21 call for proposals is valid until the date on which the NWO Executive Board decides on the full proposals (see Section 4.1 for the complete time schedule for this funding round). For projects awarded funding under this call for proposals, the conditions mentioned in this call will continue to apply for the full duration of the project.

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\(^5\) Because of the corona measures, the start of the NWA-ORC 2020/21 round has been considerably delayed. For this reason, NWO is organising two ORC funding rounds instead of three in the period 2020-2022. NWO will use the budget of the 2021 round to increase the funding for this and the next round, and therefore this budget is higher than that of the ORC 2019 round.
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2 Aim

The aim of the NWA-ORC 2020/21 call for proposals is to encourage research and innovation focused on the portfolio of 25 routes and the 140 corresponding cluster questions in the NWA. This research will be set up and carried out by interdisciplinary consortia that will include representatives from the full breadth of the knowledge chain as well as relevant societal partners, including industry. The added value of the consortium will be evidenced by the joint approach to the research, with the individual strengths and expertise of each participant demonstrably reinforcing those of the others. Which knowledge partners are involved and which societal partners are relevant will depend on the objectives of the project.

2.1 Characteristics of NWA-ORC projects

The NWA-ORC 2020/21 call invites the submission of proposals that express the broad and innovative character of the NWA. Proposals should fall within one or more NWA routes and address one or more of the 140 cluster questions. The starting point for this is the Portfolio for Research and Innovation, which elaborates the routes in more detail. If a route has drawn up a knowledge agenda elaborating cluster questions in more detail, the submitting consortium should also state clearly in the proposal how the proposal relates to this knowledge agenda.

The projects in the NWA-ORC will focus on innovative research with the aim of bringing about scientific and/or societal breakthroughs. The term “breakthroughs” implies that a change will take place in either science or society. This change can be interpreted broadly, according to the breadth of the NWA as an agenda, the cluster questions and the related routes. Projects will relate to society and focus on research with societal parties and/or the general public, and are therefore not only scientifically relevant, but also societally relevant.

Some projects will work towards a specific societal breakthrough or impact. NWO defines societal breakthroughs or impact as cultural, economic, industrial, ecological or societal changes resulting wholly or partly from knowledge and skills generated by research. These changes usually occur after the research has been conducted. Other projects will focus more on answering a question that relates to society, rather than on achieving a societal change.

All projects will involve innovative (ground-breaking) research with a broad impact on science: the proposed research should be at the forefront of science both nationally and internationally.

The NWA includes questions that cannot be answered by one party alone and where coordination and cooperation bring added value. This added value lies in the mutually reinforcing diversity and complementarity of knowledge, (technical) skills and expertise of individual consortium partners. It also lies in the resulting encouraging effect on talent development within the group, with top researchers in the consortium attracting talented young researchers who are able to develop quickly and attract new talent in turn.

All consortia should therefore include organisations from across the knowledge chain. The rule of thumb here is that 80% of the budget made available by OCW for the NWA programme is earmarked for researchers from knowledge institutes. The remaining 20% is available for researchers from applied and practice-oriented research institutions (see Section 1). In the budget for an individual NWA-ORC proposal, the knowledge-chain-wide character does not have to be reflected exactly in a 80:20 ratio, but should be close to the rule of thumb. A ratio between 75:25 and 85:15 is allowed in individual NWA-ORC proposals.

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6 The pdf file of the Portfolio can be downloaded at https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/publicatie/pdf-portfolio-research-and-innovation/?lang=en
In addition, **all relevant scientific disciplines and relevant civil society organisations** should be used in order to achieve the desired scale or depth of impact in finding the answers. Where appropriate, the general public can also be involved in the research through Citizen Science\(^7\) initiatives (see Annex 6.2).

Within a consortium, there should be **productive interaction**: exchanges between researchers and with other stakeholders that generate and value knowledge that is both scientifically robust and societally relevant. Productive interaction takes shape because all parties in the consortium are actively involved in formulating the research questions, working out the approach to answer these questions and achieving the desired scientific and societal breakthroughs. This also stresses the cyclical nature of research and innovation processes: on the one hand, acquired basic knowledge flows through to application in policy and practice; on the other hand, problem-oriented questions from practice inspire further research.

Cooperation with civil society parties therefore requires not only the involvement of these parties – including industry – in the research questions, but also the creation of social practice around the project: the societal parties that can advance the knowledge and incorporate it into, for example, products, policy, guidelines, education, cultural institutions, working methods or societal debate. Civil society organisations should also contribute actively to the project by means of co-funding (in cash and/or in kind).

Proposals should be based on a concisely formulated core question that describes the objectives, the **added value of the consortium** and the intended research. The proposal should answer questions such as: what does the consortium stand for; what does the consortium aim to achieve; why is precisely this consortium necessary; what is the involvement of various consortium members in formulating the research questions; what is the approach to answering these questions; and are the appropriate disciplines involved in formulating the questions, potential solutions and, if applicable, societal breakthroughs? The consortium should also indicate how, if possible, society at large will be involved in implementing and possibly designing the proposed research project.

**Knowledge utilisation** is an essential part of any NWA-ORC project. Productive interactions with societal and other stakeholders will promote possible contributions from research to questions raised by society. The aspect of knowledge utilisation is further explained below.

### 2.2 Knowledge utilisation explained

Knowledge utilisation promotes the potential contribution of research to questions from society and societal breakthroughs and is therefore a key part of the NWO strategy for 2019–2022. Knowledge utilisation means the application of knowledge through productive interactions with targeted stakeholders to create societal – including economic – value. Knowledge utilisation is seen as an iterative process during both the development and implementation of research.

To meet the various expectations in terms of societal impact across the NWA agenda, NWO will apply two approaches to knowledge utilisation in this call for proposals: the **Impact Plan approach** and the **Impact Outlook approach**. NWO expects the Impact Plan approach to suit most of the routes and cluster questions.

For NWA-ORC projects that focus on both scientific and societal breakthroughs in addressing one or more cluster questions, the **Impact Plan approach** will apply.

For NWA-ORC projects that do not focus directly on societal breakthroughs in addressing one or more cluster questions, due to the nature of the cluster question(s), the **Impact Outlook approach** will apply. In these projects aimed mainly at answering the cluster question, knowledge utilisation can focus on identifying unforeseen opportunities for societal breakthroughs and on advancing prospects.

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\(^7\) Citizen Science means involving the public in research projects. For example, citizens can help researchers by collecting data (e.g. in the annual bird census), by providing computing capacity (e.g. in simulating molecular interactions such as protein configurations and computational drug design), or in formulating research questions and research projects.
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All NWA-ORC projects must demonstrably involve key stakeholders8 at each stage from consortium forming through to completion of the project, in order to increase the potential for societal breakthroughs following the proposed research. Consortia in the NWA-ORC must always draw up a plan for knowledge utilisation together with stakeholders.

NWO will ask consortia to indicate in their pre-proposal which approach they have chosen and to substantiate this choice. The selection committee will assess whether the chosen approach is suitable and well-founded and will take this assessment into account in its non-binding advice on the pre-proposal. As a result, a consortium may be advised to develop a different approach in its full proposal. If a consortium does not accept the selection committee’s advice, this decision should be clearly substantiated in the full proposal. There is no a priori preference for projects following either knowledge utilisation approach, provided the approach suits the proposal.

NWO will provide two different forms for the full proposal, one focusing on the Impact Plan approach and the other on the Impact Outlook approach. Both approaches are explained below.

2.2.1 Impact Plan approach

For NWA-ORC projects focusing on both scientific and societal breakthroughs, the Impact Plan approach will apply. In this approach, societal breakthroughs are understood as societal impact9, which involves a number of considerations. For example, scientific quality is a precondition for societal impact, and societal impact is never solely the result of knowledge and insights gained from research. Moreover, societal impact is often not achieved until (many) years after a research project has been completed.

This approach to knowledge exploitation will be integrated into the research design and serves as an aid to increase the impact potential of the proposed research. The pre-proposal form asks a number of general questions that can serve as a first step towards creating an Impact Plan.

The full proposal should describe how the approach for increasing the chances of impact is integrated into the research design and how it will be carried out by consortium partners together with stakeholders from fields such as policy, practice and industry. An Impact Plan is a mandatory part of the full proposal. The Impact Plan approach is included in its entirety in the form for full proposals.

2.2.2 Impact Outlook approach

The NWA includes cluster questions2 aimed at gaining knowledge rather than achieving societal breakthroughs9, and which are therefore unsuitable for an Impact Plan approach. This does not alter the fact that opportunities (foreseen or unforeseen) for societal breakthroughs or impact may occur during such a project. However, the nature of the cluster question is not suitable for the prospect of a societal breakthrough and is therefore not suitable for an Impact Plan approach. In these cases in the NWA-ORC, the Impact Outlook approach will apply.

In the Impact Outlook approach, the emphasis will be on answering a cluster question arising from society, on expanding opportunities for societal impact during the project, and on how researchers intend to address this. The project will be carried out in productive interaction with various parties in a consortium. Consortia opting for this approach will have general ideas about potential areas where the research could be applied or about prospects for societal impact, but considerable development is still required to achieve societal impact.

The proposal should describe how the researchers intend to take steps towards societal impact. It should also indicate how unforeseen opportunities will be monitored, how they will be handled, and which processes and factors may play a role in this.

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8 A stakeholder is any person or group that can influence or is influenced by the achieving of goals.

9 By societal breakthroughs or impact, NWO means cultural, economic, industrial, ecological or societal changes resulting wholly or partly from knowledge and skills generated by research. These changes usually occur after the research has been conducted.
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The form for the pre-proposal asks a number of general questions about the project. In the form for full proposals, the Impact Outlook approach is elaborated on the basis of additional questions.

2.2.3 Information sessions

More information on knowledge utilisation and the two approaches (besides the descriptions given above and on the grant page) will be provided during the matchmaking meetings (mandatory attendance) for the different routes in October/November 2020 (see Section 4.1.2). In addition, NWO will organise a workshop in Utrecht in April/May 2021. At this workshop, the application of the Impact Plan approach and the Impact Outlook approach will be explained in greater detail to the consortia that received a positive advice on their pre-proposal (see Section 3.4.3). This workshop is not mandatory, but attendance is strongly recommended. More information about the workshop will be available on the programme website in due course.
3 Guidelines for applicants

Proposals should be submitted by a consortium in which the various types of research in the knowledge chain (fundamental, applied and practice-oriented) must be represented. The budget requested does not have to reflect exactly the 80:20 ratio between fundamental research on the one hand and applied and practice-based research on the other hand, but should be close to the 80:20 ratio (see Section 1 for the allowed ratios).

There are four categories of participant within a consortium:
1. Main applicant
2. Co-applicant(s)
3. Co-funder(s)
4. Cooperation partners (optional)

The application should describe the following for each participant:
- the participant’s role in the consortium;
- the participant’s contribution to the proposed project.

3.1.1 Main applicant

The main applicant submits the application on behalf of the consortium and is the point of contact for NWO. The main applicant receives the funding and is responsible, on behalf of the consortium, for scientific coherence, results and financial accountability.

Researchers from the following knowledge institutions may act as main applicants:
- Universities established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- University medical centres;
- KNAW and NWO institutes;
- Universities of applied sciences as referred to in Article 1.8 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW);
- TO2 institutes;
- the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- the DUBBLE Beamline at the ESRF in Grenoble;
- NCB Naturalis;
- Advanced Research Center for Nanolithography (ARCNL);
- Princess Máxima Center.

The main applicant should:
- have obtained a PhD degree, or be a lector or senior researcher;
- and have an appointment period for at least the entire duration of the research for which the grant is being applied for. Personnel with a zero-hour appointment is excluded from applying.

A lector or senior researcher employed by a university of applied sciences (HBO) or a TO2 institute must be able to demonstrate three or more years of research experience in order to act as a main applicant.

An exception to the required duration of appointment may be made for:
- lectors employed by a university of applied sciences (HBO) and senior researchers employed by a university of applied sciences or a TO2 institute under a temporary appointment that does not cover the entire duration of the project.
- applicants with a “tenure track” appointment that does not cover the entire duration of the project.

10 See Sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017.
11 In this call for proposals, ‘researchers’ refers to both women and men.
12 The members of the TO2 federation are Deltares, Marin, NLR, TNO and WUR/DLO. See also http://www.to2-federatie.nl (in Dutch)
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If main applicants take up any of the above exceptions, they must demonstrate by letter that adequate supervision for all researchers for whom funding is requested will be guaranteed for the full duration of the research.

In the 2020/21 NWA-ORC round, the main applicant may submit only one proposal in that capacity. In addition, a main applicant may participate in another consortium as a co-applicant no more than once.

An main applicant who received funding in the 2018 or 2019 NWA-ORC round is excluded from submitting a proposal as main applicant in the 2020/21 NWA-ORC round. However, this person may participate in a consortium in another role (see Section 3.1 for categories of participants).

3.1.2 Co-applicant(s)

A co-applicant is a participant in the consortium and receives funding via the main applicant. In the 2020/21 NWA-ORC round, a co-applicant may participate in that capacity in up to two consortia. A consortium may have more than one co-applicant.

Co-applicants may be affiliated to the institutions listed in Section 3.1.1 or to the public knowledge organisations listed in Annex 6.1, but also to other organisations. If the organisation to which a co-applicant is affiliated is not listed in Section 3.1.1 nor Annex 6.1, then it must meet the cumulative criteria indicated below:

- It must be located in the Netherlands and
- have a public task and
- carry out research independently and
- have no profit motive other than for the purposes of conducting further research.

Please note: NWO will have to assess these conditions before the pre-proposal is submitted. For this purpose, the co-applicant’s organisation should submit the following documents by email no later than ten working days before the submission deadline as stated in Section 3.3:

- a recent extract from the Commercial Register;
- the current deed of incorporation or current articles of association or other current formal document evidencing the public task and absence of profit motive;
- the latest available annual accounts accompanied by an audit statement.

NWO may request additional information if the above documents are not sufficiently conclusive to determine whether the organisation may act as a co-applicant.

If new co-applicants are added to the consortium in the full proposal and these new co-applicants are not affiliated to an institution listed in Section 3.1.1 nor Annex 6.1, the conditions will be assessed again. Here too, the above documents should be submitted by email no later than ten working days before the submission deadline as stated in Section 3.3.

If the co-applicant’s organisation does not submit the necessary documents for the assessment in time, NWO cannot accept the organisation as a co-applicant.

NWO will not award funding if, in its view, the provision of funding would constitute State aid within the meaning of Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

3.1.3 Co-funders

Co-funders are organisations that participate in the consortium and contribute to the project in cash and/or in kind. Co-funders do not receive any funding from NWO. The co-funders should jointly contribute a minimum of 10% and a maximum of 49% of the total budget for the proposal. The conditions regarding co-funding are specified in Section 3.5.
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Knowledge institutions permitted to participate as main applicants and co-applicants as described in Section 3.1.1 may not participate as co-funders in the 2020/21 NWA-ORC call for proposals.

An exception will be made for TO2 institutes. They may participate in a consortium as co-funders, unless they also participate in the same consortium as a main applicant or co-applicant.

3.1.4 Cooperation partners

A cooperation partner is a party that does not receive funding and does not contribute co-funding to the proposal but is closely involved in conducting the research and/or in knowledge utilisation. This may include parties that are involved via participation in an advisory, guidance or user committee, or parties that are unable to capitalise their contribution in advance. It is not mandatory to have cooperation partners.

3.2 What can be applied for

In this round, proposals can be submitted in the following budget ranges:

- $500,000 \leq 2,000,000$ euros;
- $> 2,000,000 \leq 5,000,000$ euros;
- $> 5,000,000 \leq 10,000,000$ euros.

The amount of funding requested from NWO determines the range in which the proposal is submitted. Applicants are not permitted to change budget range in the phase between the pre-proposal and the full proposal.

It is not necessary to attach a specified budget when submitting the pre-proposal; it is sufficient to indicate the relevant budget range. When submitting the full proposal, attachment of an specified budget is mandatory.

The budget modules (including the maximum amounts) that are available within this call for proposals are stated in Annex 6.2 to this call. You should only request that which is essential for realising the research.

The following modules can be requested in this call:
- Personnel costs;
- Material costs;
- Investments;
- Knowledge utilisation;
- Internationalisation;
- Money follows Cooperation;
- Project management.

3.2.1 Citizen Science

Public involvement in research projects, or “citizen science”, can contribute to the quality of science. With the public's help, data and insights can be obtained that would otherwise not be available to science. NWO is therefore keen to encourage citizen science and from 2020 will allow researchers to request funding for public involvement in research projects via the budget module “Material, project-related goods/services – work by third parties”.

This addition to the module is an opportunity for researchers, not an obligation. Researchers can decide for themselves whether it is appropriate to involve the public in their research and how precisely to spend this part of the budget (e.g. reimbursing expenses, skills training or technical aids for participating members of the public).
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Researchers must ensure the responsible use of citizens\(^\text{13}\) and guarantee the quality of the work/data. This means that public involvement in the research entails obligations and requires constant time and attention. With regard to managing citizen science, NWO recommends that researchers:

- Organise sufficient interaction, ideally by combining virtual and physical events;
- Ensure regular feedback to participating citizens, for example from the project manager.

The effective implementation of citizen science also requires:

- That researchers are transparent towards the citizens/participants about the goals, working methods and phases of those parts of the research project in which the citizens are involved.
- That researchers explicitly state and monitor the quality standards. The same principles and standards apply to citizen science as to the assessment of scientific practice in general. The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity also applies to citizen science. This means that participating citizens must also comply with privacy legislation.
- That researchers should fully recognise the participation of citizens involved in research, for example through acknowledgements in scientific publications.

Citizen Science is subject to the maximum rates for volunteer allowances: https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontentnl/belastingdienst/prive/werk_en_inkomen/werken/werken-als-vrijwilliger/vrijwilligersvergoedingen/vrijwilligersvergoedingen (Dutch only).

3.3 When can applications be submitted

The NWA-ORC 2020/21 funding round has three phases (see Section 4.1) and therefore has three deadlines.

The deadline for online submission of an initiative is 1 October 2020 at 14:00:00 CEST.

The deadline for submission of pre-proposals is 14 January 2021 at 14:00:00 CET.

The deadline for submission of full proposals is 24 June 2021 at 14:00:00 CE(S)T.

If NWO needs to assess whether an organisation may participate in a consortium as a co-applicant, the co-applicant’s organisation should submit the necessary documents by email no later than ten working days before the submission deadline for the pre-proposal or full proposal, as stated in Section 3.1.2. If the co-applicant’s organisation does not submit the necessary documents for the review of conditions in time, NWO cannot accept the organisation as a co-applicant.

If a main applicant is considering submitting a full proposal despite a negative advice on the pre-proposal (see Section 4.1.3), then the main applicant should contact the NWO Office by email (see Section 5.1.1 for contact details) within four weeks of receiving the advice on the pre-proposal.

When submitting your application to ISAAC, you will also need to enter additional details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least three working days before the deadline for pre-proposals or full proposals under this call.

NWO will not consider initiatives or proposals submitted after the deadline.

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\(^{13}\) By “responsible use”, NWO means that the use of citizens must have a clear added value for the research, that occupational health and safety and privacy legislation must be complied with, and that clear agreements must be made concerning hours to be contributed, supervision and further training. One way in which this can be implemented is by a volunteer agreement (for a model agreement in Dutch, see https://www.movisie.nl/tool/model-vrijwilligersovereenkomst).
3.4 Preparing an application

3.4.1 Mandatory registration of initiatives; matchmaking meetings

Before submitting the pre-proposal, main applicants **must** register the initiative online on the NWO website. Registration of initiatives has been introduced so that potential partners can come forward and possibly join the consortium. An initiative consists of a brief explanation of the research question, an initial indication of the parties involved in the consortium (if already known), a number of keywords to help potential partners find the initiative more easily, the main applicant and the contact details. To register an initiative, main applicants must fill in the online initiative form. A link to this form can be found on the NWA-ORC 2020/21 funding page. Registered initiatives will be posted online after a brief review.

**Please note:** initiatives must be registered in English.

A matchmaking meeting for each NWA route will be organised in October/November 2020. All main applicants registering an initiative **must** attend the matchmaking meeting for the primary route of the initiative, as they will be required to present their initiative at the meeting (see Section 4.1.2 for an explanation).

3.4.2 Preparing a pre-proposal

The application form for pre-proposals is available in ISAAC and on the grant page for the NWA-ORC 2020/21 round. Instructions on drawing up the pre-proposal can be found on the application form.

- Download the application form for pre-proposals from the electronic application system ISAAC or from the NWO website (at the foot of the grant page for this programme);
- Complete the application form for pre-proposals;
- Save the application form as a pdf file and upload it in ISAAC;
- Attach the mandatory annexes listed below.

**Annexes:**
The following annexes are **mandatory** when submitting the pre-proposal:

- The signed form “Confirmation of competent body submitting pre-proposal” in ISAAC (see Section 3.5.3);
- The joint declaration of intent from all consortium partners (see Section 3.5.4).

When submitting pre-proposals, no annexes may be attached other than the mandatory annexes mentioned above.

**Please note:** Pre-proposals must be drawn up in English.

**Please note:** Pre-proposals will not be considered if the corresponding initiative was not registered before the deadline stated in Section 3.3.

**Please note:** Pre-proposals will not be considered if the main applicant or another representative of the consortium did not attend the matchmaking meeting for the primary NWA route after registration of the initiative.

The following information in the pre-proposal should be the same as in the registered initiative:

- the main applicant;
- the primary NWA route;
- the cluster question, i.e. the choice of one or more of the 140 cluster questions and the reference (if any) to a knowledge agenda.

If the main applicant, the cluster question or the primary NWA route in the pre-proposal differ from those in the registered initiative, then NWO may, after inviting the main applicant to rectify the proposal within five working days, take a reasoned decision not to consider the pre-proposal.
3.4.3 Preparing a full proposal

The application form for full proposals and templates for the annexes mentioned below are available in ISAAC and on the grant page for the NWA-ORC 2020/21 round. The instructions on drawing up full proposals can be found on the application form.

- Download the application form and other documents from the electronic application system ISAAC or from the NWO website (on the grant page for this programme);
- Complete the application form;
- Save the application form as a pdf file and upload it to ISAAC;
- Attach the other annexes requested.

Annexes:
The following annexes are permitted when submitting the full proposal:
- the budget sheet;
- letters of support from co-funders (see Section 3.5.7);
- letters of commitment from cooperation partners (see Section 3.5.8);
- the response form for replying to the selection committee’s comments on the pre-proposal (see Section 3.5.9);
- confirmation of contribution to investment (see Annex 6.3.3).

Letters of support from co-funders, the completed budget sheet and the response form are mandatory annexes. The annex “Confirmation of contribution to investment” is mandatory if investment funding is requested in the proposal. Letters of commitment are optional.

Other types of annexes are not permitted at the submission stage for full proposals. Annexes should be uploaded to ISAAC separately from the proposal. All annexes except for the budget sheet should be uploaded as PDF files. The budget sheet should be uploaded to ISAAC as an Excel file.

Please note: Full proposals must be drawn up in English.

Please note: NWO provides two different forms for the full proposal, one focusing on the Impact Plan approach, the other on the Impact Outlook approach (see Section 2.2). Please make sure you use the correct form.

The following information in the full proposal should be the same as in the pre-proposal:
- the main applicant;
- the primary NWA route;
- the cluster question, i.e. the choice of one or more of the 140 cluster questions and the reference (if any) to a knowledge agenda;
- the budget range in which the proposal was submitted.

In addition, the consortium as defined in the full proposal should be broadly the same as the consortium defined in the pre-proposal. In particular, the elements of knowledge chain breadth and interdisciplinarity should be present to the same extent. However, it is possible to expand the consortium with respect to the pre-proposal, for example based on the selection committee’s assessment of the pre-proposal (see Section 4.1.3).

If the main applicant, the primary NWA route, the cluster question or the budget range in the full proposal differ from those in the pre-proposal, or if the consortium in the full proposal differs significantly from that in the pre-proposal, then NWO may, after inviting the main applicant to rectify the proposal within five working days, take a reasoned decision not to consider the full proposal.

3.5 Conditions on granting

The NWO Grant Rules 2017 and the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research apply to all applications.
3.5.1 Duration

Proposals in the NWA-ORC 2020/21 call for proposals should have a minimum duration of four years and a maximum duration of eight years. NWO will not consider proposals with a shorter or longer duration than stated above.

3.5.2 Restrictive submission conditions

An main applicant whose proposal was awarded funding in the 2018 or 2019 NWA-ORC round may not submit further proposals in the NWA-ORC programme as a main applicant within the duration of the funded research.

3.5.3 Confirmation of competent body on submission of pre-proposals

The competent body of the organisation to which the main applicant is affiliated should declare that it is aware of the pre-proposal submitted. For this purpose, NWO offers the template “Confirmation competent body submission pre-proposal” to be used by the main applicant.

The template is available on the funding page of the NWA-ORC 2020/21 call for proposals and in ISAAC. If no such declaration accompanies the pre-proposal, then NWO may, after inviting the main applicant to rectify the proposal within five working days, take a reasoned decision not to consider the pre-proposal.

3.5.4 Joint declaration of intent annexed to the pre-proposal

In a joint declaration of intent, the applicants indicate the parties with which they are discussing roles as co-funders and the co-funders express their willingness to commit themselves to the proposed research project in the event of admission to the full proposal phase. The declaration must state that co-funders have contributed to drafting the pre-proposal. At this stage, it is not yet necessary to draw up an actual letter of support. Specific substantive and financial support in the form of a signed letter of support from co-funders is not required until the full proposal stage (see Section 3.5.7).

3.5.5 Involvement and development of young researchers

NWO considers it important that projects in the NWA-ORC programme should serve as a breeding ground for talented researchers. For this reason, proposals should focus on how the project will create scope for the development of talented young and mid-career researchers both within and outside academia (i.e. postdocs, tenure trackers, assistant professors). This should be explained in the proposal by means of a brief plan for the development of these researchers. This plan is a mandatory part of the full proposal and the quality of this plan will be taken into account in assessing the full proposal. A template for this will be included in the application form.

3.5.6 Co-funders

The co-funders (see Section 3.1, category 3) should jointly contribute a minimum of 10% and a maximum of 49% of the total project budget in the form of co-funding (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Structure of total project budget of proposal in NWA-ORC call in the case of 10% minimum co-funding](image)

A distinction is drawn between in-cash co-funding, which serves to cover the budget for the project activities described in the proposal, and in-kind co-funding, which may comprise contributions of resources (other than cash) from the organisations involved.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / NWA Research along Routes by Consortia (NWA-ORC)

The co-funding requirements apply to the consortium as a whole, not to individual co-funders. The consortium itself may decide how much each co-funder contributes. If it is expected or intended that the consortium will be expanded at a later stage of the project and that these new partners will provide co-funding, a different party should at the time of application guarantee that part of the co-funding that is necessary to meet the co-funding requirements. This could have consequences for agreements and rights in the field of intellectual property and publication (see below).

Conditions for in-cash co-funding

Pledged in-cash co-funding is deemed to be exclusive of VAT. After the proposal has been awarded funding, NWO will invoice the private or public party that has committed to a cash contribution. If applicable, VAT will be invoiced on top of the pledged contribution. Once the funds have been received, they will be allocated to the project.

Conditions for in-kind co-funding

In-kind co-funding should be capitalised, in other words expressed in financial terms (i.e. number of units at cost price or hours x rate), and forms part of the budget. The co-funding organisation should clarify the rates used for this in its letter of support.

Admissible as in-kind co-funding:

− Personnel input and material contributions on condition that these are capitalised and form an integral part of the project. This should be made clear in the description and planning/phasing of the research. For pledges of equipment, the current market value is used. For both personnel input and material contributions, it must be possible to demonstrate that the pledged in-kind contribution has been made. Voluntary organisations and citizens’ initiatives must unite in a foundation or association in order to provide co-funding.

− Part of the research may be conducted by third parties. Personnel input is subject to the condition that the expertise provided in the form of man-hours is not already available at the research institution(s) and is therefore used specifically for the project. The capitalising of personnel input by third parties is subject to the valuation of in-kind co-funding referred to below.

− Material contributions in the form of supplies of services are subject to the condition that the service can be identified as a new endeavour. The service should not already be available at the research institution(s) conducting the research. Consortia may wish to claim services already supplied (such as a database or software) as in-kind co-funding. Acceptance is not automatic in these cases. The main applicant should contact NWO about this in advance. NWO will determine whether a specific value can be defined for this supply of services.

Valuation of in-kind co-funding

The hourly rate can be based on the maximum cost-covering rate including the applicable increments. The hourly rate is calculated on the basis of the standard productive number of hours used by the organisation. For the calculation of a cost-covering hourly rate, the following elements can be included:

− (average) gross salary for the post of the employee who will contribute to the project;
− holiday allowance and 13th month (if applicable in the relevant collective labour agreement) in proportion to the use in FTE;
− social security contributions;
− pension costs.

Hourly rates for in-kind personnel contributions from co-funders are capped at € 119 per hour regardless of tax laws or regulations applying to the co-funder. The use of students is subject to a maximum rate of € 25 per hour. The use of volunteers is subject to the maximum rates for volunteer allowances (https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontentnl/belastingdienst/prive/werk_en_inkomen/werken/werken-als-vrijwilliger/vrijwilligersvergoedingen/vrijwilligersvergoedingen, Dutch only).

NWO may request additional substantiation and documentary evidence for the rates used; it may also request adjustment of the rates.
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Accounting for in-kind co-funding
Private and public parties should account to NWO for their in-kind contributions by providing the main applicant with a statement of costs contributed, within three months of the end of the research project to which the contribution was made. The main applicant should submit the co-funders’ statements and the financial accounts of the project to NWO for the purposes of determining the grant. If the in-kind contribution to be accounted for by a single co-funder exceeds € 125,000, this co-funder should submit an audit statement; otherwise, it is sufficient to submit a written declaration from the main applicant stating that the in-kind endeavours made were actually allocated to the project.

In the event of failure to account for the pledged co-funding or to deliver the pledged co-funding, NWO is entitled to withdraw the entire grant.

Non-admissible co-funding
The following are not admissible as co-funding (neither in cash nor in kind):
- funding previously awarded by NWO, in particular to research projects of the main applicant and/or co-applicant(s);
- co-funding from the organisations in which the main applicant or co-applicant(s) are employed;
- previously awarded PPP allowance, in particular to research projects of the main applicant and/or co-applicant(s);
- discounts on commercial rates, such as on materials, equipment and services;
- overheads of the co-funding organisation;
- costs (including travel expenses) relating to supervision (e.g. of PhD students), consultancy and/or participation in the Advisory Committee or consortium meetings (see Annex 6.3.5) or similar activities.
- costs of services that are conditional. No conditions are imposed on the provision of co-funding. The provision of co-funding is not contingent upon reaching a certain stage in the research plan (e.g. go/no go point);
- costs of equipment if one of the objectives of the application is to improve or add value to this equipment;
- costs that are not paid according to the NWO Grant Rules 2017 (version dated 30 January 2019) and this call for proposals (see Annex 6.2);
- other forms of co-funding excluded on the basis of applicable laws and regulations.

3.5.7 Letter of support from participating co-funders annexed to the full proposal
In a letter of support, the co-funder expresses both substantive and financial support for the project and confirms the pledged co-funding. The letters of support from all co-funders are mandatory annexes to the full proposal. The letter(s) of support submitted with a full proposal must cover the total claimed amount of co-funding. If this is not the case, then NWO may, after inviting the main applicant to rectify the proposal within five working days, take a reasoned decision not to consider the full proposal.

The letter of support must state the amount of co-funding pledged, be signed by an authorised signatory of the co-funder and be printed on the co-funder’s headed paper. NWO provides a standard letter, and all letters of support should follow this model. If funding is awarded, NWO will ask the co-funder to confirm the contribution(s) (e.g. for invoicing purposes).

3.5.8 Letter of commitment from cooperation partners annexed to the full proposal
A cooperation partner (see Section 3.1.4) may submit a letter of commitment indicating its reasons for acting as a cooperation partner in the research and its intended role within the project. Letters of commitment may only be submitted at the full proposal stage and are not mandatory. Submitted letters of commitment will be forwarded to the referees and selection committee.

3.5.9 Response form for replying to the non-binding advice
An main applicant submitting a full proposal must use the response form to reply to the advice on the pre-proposal. The response will be taken into account in assessing the full proposal. NWO provides this form on the funding page.
3.5.10 **Open Access**

As a signatory of the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities* (2003), NWO is committed to making the results of scientific research funded by NWO freely available in open access on the internet. In doing so, NWO is implementing the ambitions of the Dutch government to make all publicly funded research openly available. All scientific publications of research funded on the basis of this call for proposals should therefore be available in open access immediately (at the time of publication). NWO accepts various routes:

- publication in a full open access journal;
- deposit a version of the article in a repository; or
- publication in a hybrid journal covered by one of the agreements between the VSNU and the publisher.

See [https://www.openaccess.nl/en](https://www.openaccess.nl/en).

Any costs for publication in full open access journals can be incurred in the project budget. NWO does not reimburse costs for publishing in hybrid journals. These conditions apply to all forms of scholarly publications arising from grants awarded on the basis of this call for proposals, including academic monographs, edited volumes, proceedings and book chapters. For more information on NWO’s open access policy, see: [https://www.nwo.nl/openscience-en](https://www.nwo.nl/openscience-en).

3.5.11 **Data management**

The results of scientific research must be replicable, verifiable and falsifiable. In the digital age this means that, in addition to publications, research data must also be freely accessible. As much as possible, NWO expects that research data resulting from NWO-funded projects will be made publicly available for reuse by other researchers. “As open as possible, as closed as necessary” is the guiding principle in this respect. Researchers are expected to publish at least those data and/or non-numerical results that underpin the conclusions of works published within the project at the same time as the publication itself. The costs for doing so are eligible for funding and can be included in the project budget. In the data management section, and in the data management template if the project is awarded funding, researchers explain how they plan to manage the data expected to be generated by the project.

1. **Data management section**

The data management section is part of the research proposal. Researchers are asked to prospectively consider how they will manage the data the project will generate and plan for which data will be preserved and made publicly available. Measures will often need to be taken during the production and analysis of the data to make their later storage and dissemination possible. If not all data from the project can be made publicly available, the reasons for not doing so must be explained in the data management section. Due consideration is given to aspects such as privacy, public security, ethical limitations, property rights and commercial interests.

2. **Data management plan**

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. In this plan, the researcher describes whether use will be made of existing data, whether new data will collected or generated, and how the data will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. The data management plan must be completed in consultation with a data steward or equivalent research data management support staff at the home institution of the project leader. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within four months after the proposal has been awarded funding. NWO will approve the plan as quickly as possible. Approval of the data management plan by NWO is a condition for disbursement of the funding. The plan can be adjusted during the research. Further information on the NWO data management protocol can be found at [https://www.nwo.nl/datamanagement-en](https://www.nwo.nl/datamanagement-en).
3.5.12 Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol became effective on 12 October 2014 and ensures an honest and reasonable distribution of benefits emerging from the use of genetic resources (Access and Benefit Sharing; ABS). Researchers who make use of genetic resources from the Netherlands or abroad for their research should familiarise themselves with the Nagoya Protocol (www.absfocalpoint.nl). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.13 Ethical aspects

In order to carry out scientific research, it is important that research proposals that may raise ethical issues are handled carefully. Certain research projects may require approval from a recognised Medical Research Ethics Committee (MREC) or an Animal Experiments Committee (CCD). In addition, certain research proposals require a licence under the Population Screening Act (WBO). More information on the MRECs and WBO is available from the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO).

A consortium itself is responsible for checking whether the research proposal may raise ethical issues and for obtaining approval from the relevant ethics committee(s) and/or obtaining a licence under the WBO, or from similar organisations.

NWO endorses the Code on Openness in Animal Testing and the Biosecurity code. For ORC proposals, applicants must endorse and comply with these existing codes.

An ORC project should start within six months after the funding is awarded. A research project cannot start until NWO has received a copy of any necessary ethics approval and/or WBO licence.

NWO expects applicants to take into account the time schedule of the assessment procedure and the time required for an ethics committee review or to obtain a WBO licence. In the event of complex ethical issues, NWO reserves the right to consult an external advisor. If, after consulting the applicant, NWO is of the opinion that an ethics review of a proposal is necessary, the applicant is still obliged to take measures for a review by an ethics committee. In the absence of a necessary approval from an ethics committee, the grant award will lapse. Applicants can contact the coordinator if they have any questions. See Section 5.1.1 for contact details.

3.5.14 Scientific integrity

The NWO Grant Rules 2017 specify that research funded by NWO must be carried out in accordance with nationally and internationally accepted standards of scientific conduct as laid down in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018). By submitting a proposal, applicants undertake to comply with this code. In the event of a (possible) breach of the above-mentioned standards in research funded by NWO, the applicant must inform NWO immediately and submit all relevant documents to NWO. More information about the NWO code of conduct and policy on research integrity can be found on the website: https://www.nwo.nl/en/policies/scientific-integrity-policy.

3.6 Submitting an application

Registering an initiative

Initiatives should be registered via the NWO website (see Section 3.4.1). Main applicants should register their initiative themselves, but may enter a colleague’s contact details if desired.

Please note: Main applicants should bear in mind that the information they provide in the form will be published on the NWO website and is therefore in the public domain.

Pre-proposal and full proposal

Proposals can only be submitted to NWO via the online application system ISAAC. Applications not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.
Main applicants must submit their application via their own ISAAC account. If the main applicant does not have an ISAAC account yet, then this should be created at least two days before submitting the proposal. This is to ensure that any registration problems can be resolved in time. If the main applicant already has an NWO-account, there is no need to create a new account in order to submit an application.

When submitting the proposal in ISAAC, you are also required to enter data online, in addition to the completed forms. You should therefore begin submitting your proposal at least three working days before the deadline for pre-proposals or full proposals under this call. This is to ensure that any problems with your account or with entering data can be resolved in time. NWO will not consider proposals submitted after the relevant deadline.

Please note: Before submitting the full proposal, the main applicant should convert the pre-proposal in ISAAC into a full proposal. Do not use the “apply for this funding” button on the funding page to submit the proposal. More information about converting a pre-proposal into a full proposal is available in the ISAAC manual, which can be found under the “help” button on the ISAAC website (www.isaac.nwo.nl).

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk; see Section 5.1.2.
# Assessment procedure

## Procedure and schedule

### General

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process. See also: [www.nwo.nl/en/code](http://www.nwo.nl/en/code)

**Selection committee**

The selection committee is appointed by the NWO Executive Board. In view of the nature of the NWA-ORC programme, the selection committee is composed of experts from the full breadth of the knowledge chain as well as societal parties such as companies and NGOs. NWO allocates the proposals received across various clusters. A selection committee is set up for each cluster.

When drawing up their proposals, applicants should bear in mind that the members of the multidisciplinary selection committees cannot be experts on every specific subject covered in the proposals. NWO will ensure that the committee members are spread as evenly as possible across the areas of expertise.

**Assessment of proposals**

NWO uses referees (only for full proposals) and multiple selection committees in the procedure for assessing proposals submitted under this call.

### Registering initiatives on the website; attendance at matchmaking meetings

In accordance with the conditions in Section 3, main applicants **must** register their initiative. If no initiative has been registered for a pre-proposal, NWO will not consider that pre-proposal.

In addition, a matchmaking meeting will be organised for each NWA route. All main applicants registering an initiative **must** attend the matchmaking meeting for the primary route of the initiative. During the matchmaking meetings, main applicants can initiate contact with the network for the route in question and present their initiatives to each other and to the route management. The route management provides feedback on the initiative. The matchmaking meeting will also provide more information about the Impact Outlook approach and the Impact Plan approach (see also Section 2.2).

These meetings are a good opportunity for parties who are not involved in an initiative, but wish to participate in the NWA-ORC, to join existing initiatives. Potential partners can therefore also register for these meetings in order to make contact with a consortium and perhaps join it.

Submitted proposals will not be considered by NWO if the main applicant or another representative of the consortium did not attend the matchmaking meeting in October 2020 for the primary NWA route after submission of the initiative.

### Pre-proposals

**Check of conditions for submission**

The first step in the assessment procedure for pre-proposals is to test whether an application is admissible. The conditions set out in Section 3 of this call for proposals are applied to this end. Only pre-proposals that meet these conditions will be taken into consideration by NWO.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / NWA Research along Routes by Consortia (NWA-ORC)

If NWO decides that the proposal does not meet the administrative conditions, the main applicant will be given a one-off opportunity to amend the proposal within five working days\textsuperscript{14}. If the corrected proposal is not received within the set time frame, NWO will not consider the proposal. If the corrected proposal is received within the set time frame but still does not meet the conditions, NWO will not consider the proposal. Corrected proposals that have been received on time and meet the conditions after being corrected will be accepted once they have been approved.

In the following cases, the main applicant will not be given the opportunity to correct the pre-proposal and the proposal will not be considered:

- The proposal was received by NWO after the relevant deadline stated in Section 3.3;
- The proposal was not submitted via ISAAC;
- No initiative was registered before the pre-proposal was submitted;
- Neither the main applicant nor another representative of the consortium for a pre-proposal attended the matchmaking meeting for the primary NWA route after submission of the initiative.

Prioritisation

A selection committee for a particular cluster assesses and prioritises the pre-proposals for its own cluster on the basis of the criteria for pre-proposals in Section 4.2, without using external referees. The outcome of this review constitutes the selection committee’s recommendation. In its review, the committee applies a reasonable ratio between the number of proposals to be elaborated into a full proposal and the number to be awarded funding. It then makes the final assessments of the pre-proposals in each cluster. As a result, each pre-proposal receives a reasoned non-binding advice as to whether it should be elaborated into a full proposal.

The selection committee may take policy reasons into account in its recommendation. Policy reasons include distribution across the 25 routes and/or scientific areas, diversity, and distribution of proposals to be elaborated across the three budget ranges (see Section 3.2). The selection committee will also consider the total number of proposals in the round and the different budget ranges and apply a reasonable ratio between the number of full proposals and the number of proposals to be awarded funding.

Non-binding advice on pre-proposals

In the NWA-ORC 2020/21 call for proposals, NWO has chosen to use non-binding advices on pre-proposals. This means that main applicants who receive a negative advice may still submit a full proposal. Main applicants who are considering submitting a full proposal despite receiving a negative advice must report this intention to the NWO office by email (see Section 5.1.1 for contact details) within four weeks of receiving the negative advice.

All consortia submitting a full proposal must respond to the selection committee’s assessment on the pre-proposal by means of a separate annex to the full proposal.

4.1.4 Full proposals

Check of conditions for submission

The first step in the assessment procedure for full proposals is a test to check whether the proposal can be accepted for consideration. The conditions set out in Section 3 of this call for proposals are applied to this end. Only full proposals that meet these conditions will be taken into consideration by NWO.

If NWO decides that the application does not meet the administrative conditions, the main applicant will be given a one-off opportunity to amend the application within five working days\textsuperscript{14}. If the corrected application is not received within the set time frame, NWO will not consider the application. If the corrected application is received within the set time frame but still does not meet the conditions, NWO will not consider the application. Corrected applications that have been received on time and meet the conditions after being corrected will be accepted once they have been approved.

\textsuperscript{14} “Working days” means working days as defined in Dutch law. When setting the deadline for submitting a corrected proposal, NWO cannot take personal working days into account.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / NWA Research along Routes by Consortia (NWA-ORC)

In the following cases, the main applicant will not be given the opportunity to correct the full proposal and the full proposal will not be considered:

- The proposal was received by NWO after the relevant deadline stated in Section 3.3;
- The proposal was not submitted via ISAAC.

Referees

Full proposals accepted for consideration will be submitted for review by at least two (more in the case of substantial proposals) independent external referees. Main applicants will be given the opportunity to respond in writing (rebuttal) to the referees’ anonymised comments.

Interview selection

Full proposals, together with referees’ comments and rebuttals, will then be submitted for review by the selection committee for the relevant cluster. Each selection committee reviews the full proposals in its own cluster in accordance with the criteria for full proposals in Section 4.2.

Based on the proposal, referees’ reports and rebuttal, the selection committee makes an independent assessment of the full proposals. The referees’ reports provide important guidelines for the final assessment, but are not adopted in full by the committee. The committee weighs up and compares the referees’ arguments and considers whether the rebuttal mounts a good response to the critical comments in the referees’ reports. Moreover, unlike the referees, the committee has an overview of the quality of the other proposals and rebuttals submitted. As a result, the committee may arrive at a different assessment than the referees.

Based on its assessment, the committee will draw up a ranking and invite the highest-ranked consortia for an interview. In doing so, the selection committee will apply a reasonable ratio between the number of interviews and the number of proposals to be awarded funding over the total for the round and over the three budget ranges.

Interview

A selection of full proposals from each cluster will be invited to an interview. During the interview, the selection committee has the opportunity to ask questions, including new questions not previously raised by the referees. The consortium can respond to these questions during the interview, in the discussion with the committee. This is a further opportunity for both parties to be heard. The interview is a key part of the assessment and may lead to an adjustment of the proposal’s current rating.

Again in the interview phase, the selection committee makes an independent assessment of the full proposals based on the proposal, referees’ reports, rebuttal and interview. The referees’ reports provide important guidelines for the final assessment, but are not adopted in full by the committee, as is also the case in the interview selection.

After the interviews, each selection committee draws up a new ranking for its cluster based on the assessment. This proposed ranking is then submitted to a broad, science-wide committee composed of delegations from the various cluster committees. Based on the independent cluster rankings drawn up after the interviews, the broad committee draws up a single final ranking in which the order of proposals in the individual cluster rankings is preserved.

The broad committee provides the NWO Executive Board with advice on allocation or rejection for decision-making purposes. The broad committee may recommend that policy reasons be taken into account in the decision. Policy reasons include distribution across the 25 routes and/or scientific areas, diversity, and distribution of proposals to be awarded funding across the three budget ranges. In principle, NWO aims for a similar award rate for each budget range. If there are not enough proposals of sufficient quality in one or more ranges, the broad committee may propose that (part of) the remaining funds in the 2020/21 round be used for one or more proposals in a different range.
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Decision-making on full proposals
The broad committee provides advice on granting or rejection to the NWO Executive Board for decision-making purposes. The Executive Board reviews the procedure and determines the final assessment of the proposals based on the broad committee’s recommendation. Based on this advice, the Executive Board decides whether to grant or reject the proposals.

NWO assigns a qualification to all full proposals and will make this known to the main applicant with the decision about whether or not the application has been awarded funding. Only applications that receive the qualification “excellent”, “very good” or "good" will be eligible for funding. For more information about the qualifications please see https://www.nwo.nl/qualifications.

Data management
The data management section in the full proposal is not evaluated and therefore not included in the decision about whether to award funding. However, both the referees and the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section. After a proposal has been awarded funding, the consortium should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. The consortium can use the advice of the referees and committee when writing the data management plan. A project awarded funding can only start after NWO has approved the data management plan.

4.1.5 Intended time schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration of initiatives</th>
<th>Deadline for registering initiatives</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 October 2020, 14:00:00 CEST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between 26 October and 6 November 2020</td>
<td>Mandatory matchmaking meetings (precise dates will be communicated to main applicants registering initiatives and will be listed on the programme page from September 2020)</td>
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<table>
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<td>30 December 2020, 14:00:00 CET</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting documents for assessment of co-applicants (see Section 3.1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 January 2021, 14:00:00 CET</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting pre-proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January to March 2021</td>
<td>Assessment of pre-proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late March 2021</td>
<td>Main applicants receive a non-binding recommendation on elaboration into a full proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late March to late April 2021</td>
<td>Main applicants wishing to submit a full proposal despite a negative advice should contact NWO</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full proposals</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Deadline for submitting documents for assessment of co-applicants (see Section 3.1.2)</td>
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<td>24 June 2021, 14:00 CEST</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting full proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>June to September 2021</td>
<td>Consulting of referees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second to third week of September 2021</td>
<td>Request for rebuttal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First half of November 2021</td>
<td>Selection committee meeting regarding selection for interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First half of December 2021</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2021/ January 2022</td>
<td>Decision of Executive Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / NWA Research along Routes by Consortia (NWA-ORC)

4.2 Criteria

The NWA-ORC 2020/21 call for proposals introduces differentiation in the assessment criteria used for pre-proposals and full proposals. In addition, different assessment criteria apply to full proposals with an Impact Outlook approach and full proposals with an Impact Plan approach. A good score can be achieved with both approaches, provided the appropriate approach has been followed. An explanation of when to follow the Impact Outlook approach or the Impact Plan approach can be found in Section 2.2.

4.2.1 Assessment criteria for pre-proposals:

I. Alignment with the objectives of the NWA-ORC programme (75% weighting):

Project

a. The proposal addresses a problem relevant to one or more NWA routes. It is clear on which of the 140 cluster questions the research will focus and to what extent it will answer the question(s). If the relevant NWA route has drawn up a knowledge agenda, the proposal substantiates convincingly how the research relates to this knowledge agenda.

b. The proposed activities and the structure of the project make a convincing contribution to achieving the intended scientific and/or societal breakthroughs. This is expressed as follows:

- The consortium indicates clearly and convincingly how questions from society will be answered;
- The consortium indicates clearly and convincingly how it will work to achieve scientific breakthroughs and, where applicable, societal breakthroughs. The intended breakthroughs are also clearly defined;
- The choice of Impact Plan approach or Impact Outlook approach is appropriate to the intended breakthroughs and is also convincingly substantiated.

c. The added value of this specific consortium in addressing the problem is clear.

d. The composition of the consortium follows logically from the research question or problem statement. This is expressed as follows:

- The consortium is interdisciplinary: the proposal demonstrates convincingly that the disciplines relevant to the problem statement are participating in the consortium and are actively involved in creating and implementing the proposed project;
- The consortium is knowledge-chain-wide: the proposal demonstrates convincingly that the various types of research – fundamental, applied and practice-oriented – are represented in the consortium and are actively involved in creating and implementing the proposed project;
- The contribution of the relevant disciplines and knowledge partners is convincingly substantiated in relation to the problem statement.

e. The societal stakeholders relevant to the research question or problem statement, including civil society parties and/or citizens, are part of the consortium and are actively involved in creating and implementing the proposed project.

f. The contribution of the relevant societal stakeholders and relevant parties in the broader sense is convincingly substantiated in relation to the problem statement.

g. The consortium describes the individual roles in a team with a focus on aspects such as management, diversity, talent development and knowledge utilisation.

II. Scientific importance of the proposed project (25% weighting):

a. The research question or problem statement is clear and has been coordinated with cooperation partners. The intended scientific breakthroughs relate logically to the research question or problem statement.

b. The research question or problem statement is important and original from a scientific perspective.

c. The proposal involves innovative (ground-breaking) research with a broad impact on science; the proposed research is at the forefront of science both nationally and internationally.
4.2.2 Assessment criteria for full proposals

I. Alignment with the objectives of the NWA-ORC programme (33.3% weighting):
   a. The proposal addresses a problem relevant to the NWA routes. It is clear on which of the 140 cluster questions the research will focus and to what extent it will answer the question(s). If the relevant NWA route has drawn up a knowledge agenda, it is convincingly substantiated how the research relates to this knowledge agenda.
   b. The consortium indicates clearly and convincingly how questions from society will be answered and what the added value of the consortium is in answering the question.
   c. The consortium indicates clearly and convincingly how it works to achieve scientific breakthroughs and, where applicable, societal breakthroughs. The intended breakthroughs are also clearly defined.
   d. The choice of Impact Plan approach or Impact Outlook approach is appropriate to the intended breakthroughs.
   e. The consortium responds convincingly to the committee’s comments on the pre-proposal regarding alignment with the objectives of the NWA-ORC programme and the choice of Impact approach.

   If the consortium applies the Impact Plan approach:
   f. The problem statement is important, original and innovative from a scientific perspective.
   g. The problem statement is important from a societal perspective.
   h. The contribution of the research to the intended societal breakthroughs/impact is convincingly demonstrated by the Impact Pathway presented. Assumptions made have been identified and clearly described. Indicators are appropriate for monitoring progress. The strategic activities described to achieve impact are logical, appropriate and complete.
   i. The analysis of stakeholders to be involved is appropriate. Relevant stakeholders – such as civil society organisations, government bodies and companies – have been identified and strategies to engage stakeholders on a continuing basis and possibly involve additional stakeholders in the future are convincing.

   If the consortium applies the Impact Outlook approach:
   j. The problem statement is important, original and innovative from a scientific perspective.
   k. The scientific breakthroughs follow logically from the problem or question identified and the proposed research.
   l. The contribution of the research to answering the question from society is convincingly demonstrated by the proposal and the Impact Outlook approach.
   m. The consortium indicates convincingly that there is potential for research results to contribute to its own field and related fields.
   n. The consortium describes a clear approach to promoting knowledge utilisation. There are convincing strategies to seek unforeseen opportunities during the project and/or to advance the prospects outlined for societal breakthroughs. The analysis done for this purpose is appropriate.

II. Quality of the consortium (33.3% weighting):
   a. The elements of interdisciplinarity, knowledge chain breadth and societal involvement have been defined with sufficient clarity and are convincingly guaranteed.
   b. The consortium is coherent, complementary and diverse.
   c. The composition of the consortium is convincingly appropriate to the intended breakthroughs, and the consortium describes the individual roles in a team with a focus on aspects such as management, diversity, talent development and knowledge utilisation.
   d. There is a strong, logical and clearly designed organisational structure within the consortium.
   e. There is a specific, feasible plan for the professional development of talented young and mid-career researchers both within and outside academia.
   f. There is active involvement and financial commitment of the co-funders, as evidenced by the work plan and the letters of support.
   g. The consortium responds convincingly to the committee’s comments on the pre-proposal regarding the quality of the consortium.
III. Quality of the research proposal (33.3% weighting):
   a. The scientific question is clear and specific.
   b. The objectives are clear and specific.
   c. The proposed approach and methodology are appropriate to achieve the intended objectives and answer the question. Approach and methodology are clear and coherent.
   d. The individual work packages are clearly described and it is clear how the work packages cohere to contribute to the intended breakthrough.
   e. The consortium convincingly describes the feasibility of the proposed research, including a risk analysis and back-up plan.
   f. The budget is appropriate to the proposed activities and reflects the knowledge-chain-wide nature of the proposal in terms of the division between fundamental research on the one hand and applied and practice-oriented research on the other, in a ratio between 75:25 and 85:15. There is a clear and specific justification of costs.
   g. The consortium responds convincingly to the committee’s comments on the pre-proposal regarding the quality of the research proposal.
5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions
For specific questions about NWA Research along Routes by Consortia (NWA-ORC) and this call for proposals
please contact:
Varsha Kapoerchan
email: nwa-orc2020@nwo.nl
tel: +31 (0)70 349 44 42

You can also visit the webpage with frequently asked questions (FAQ) about the NWA-ORC programme.

5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system ISAAC
For technical questions about the use of ISAAC please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual
first before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between
10:00 and 17:00 hours CE(S)T on +31 (0)20 346 71 79. However, you can also submit your question by e-mail
to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.
Annexes

6.1 Public Knowledge Organisations

The public knowledge organisations listed below may act as co-applicants in a consortium, with the exception of the TO2 institutes, which may also act as main applicant or co-funder in a consortium. The check mentioned in Section 3.1.2 is not required for these organisations.

TO2 institutes (from: https://www.to2-federatie.nl/nl/to2federatie/Organisaties.htm):
1. Deltares – Independent institute for applied research in the field of water and subsurface
2. MARIN – Maritime Research Institute Netherlands
3. NLR – Nederlands Lucht- en Ruimtevaartcentrum (Netherlands Aerospace Centre)
4. TNO – Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research)
5. Wageningen Research / formerly DLO – Dienst Landbouwkundig Onderzoek

National knowledge institutes (from: https://www.to2-federatie.nl/nl/to2federatie/Organisaties.htm - Dutch only):
6. CBS – Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands)
7. CPB – Centraal Planbureau (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis)
8. KiM – Kennisinstituut voor Mobiliteitsbeleid (Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis)
9. KNMI – Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute)
10. NFI – Nederlands Forensisch Instituut (Netherlands Forensic Institute)
11. PBL – Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency)
12. RCE – Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands)
14. RKD – Nederlands Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis (Netherlands Institute for Art History)
15. RWS – Rijkswaterstaat (Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management)
16. SCP – Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (Netherlands Institute for Social Research)
17. WODC – Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (Research and Documentation Centre)

18. Boekman Foundation – Institute for arts, culture and related policy
19. Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations
20. Geonovum – Knowledge organisation for geographic information
21. Movisie – Centre for social issues
22. Mulier Institute – Centre for sports research
23. (N) IFV – (Netherlands) Institute for Safety
24. NIVEL – Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research
25. NIJ – Nederlands Jeugdinstituut (Netherlands Youth Institute)
26. Police Academy – Training, knowledge and research for the Dutch National Police
27. SWOON-NLDA – Stichting Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs en Onderzoek Nederlandse Defensieacademie (foundation for scientific education and research of the Netherlands defence academy)
28. SWOV – Stichting Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Verkeersveiligheid (Institute for Road Safety Research)
29. Trimbos Institute – Institute for mental health, drug abuse and addiction
30. VeiligheidNL – Organisation to promote safe behaviour
31. Vilans – Research into long-term care
6.2 Budget modules

In this NWA-ORC 2020/21 round, proposals can be submitted in the following budget ranges:
- 500,000 – ≤ 2,000,000 euros;
- > 2,000,000 – ≤ 5,000,000 euros;
- > 5,000,000 – ≤ 10,000,000 euros.

The amount of funding requested from NWO determines the budget range in which the application is submitted. Applicants are not permitted to change budget range in the phase between the pre-proposal and the full proposal.

The budget modules (including the maximum amounts) that are available within this call for proposals are stated in the table below. You should only request that which is essential for realising the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget module</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Maximum amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>According to VSNU rates or NFU rates(^{15})</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate in Engineering (PDEng)</td>
<td>In combination with PhD students and/or postdoc(s), according to VSNU rates or NFU rates(^{15})</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoc</td>
<td>According to VSNU rates or NFU rates(^{15})</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-scientific staff (NSS) at universities</td>
<td>According to VSNU rates or NFU rates(^{15}), in combination with PhD students and/or postdoc(s)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other scientific staff (OSP) at universities</td>
<td>In combination with PhD students and/or postdoc(s)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research leave</td>
<td>Per budget item 5 months, 1 fte. According to VSNU rates or NFU rates(^{15}) The total amount of funds requested for research leave may not exceed 10% of the total requested budget.</td>
<td>Maximum depending on budget applied for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel of universities of applied sciences and other institutions/applicants (such as TO2 institutes, government knowledge institutions and other public knowledge organisations)</td>
<td>Cost-covering rate based on <em>Handleiding Overheidstarieven 2017</em> (HOT)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material costs</td>
<td>€ 15,000 per year per scientific position (including positions at universities of applied sciences and other institutions/applicants)</td>
<td>The total number of scientific positions x € 15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>With 25% own contribution by the applying research institute</td>
<td>Greater than or equal to € 150,000 (for data collections a minimum of € 25,000 applies) and less than or equal to € 500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge utilisation</td>
<td>Mandatory for all proposals; minimum 5% and maximum 20% of the total budget applied for</td>
<td>Minimum and maximum depending on budget applied for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum € 100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money follows Cooperation</td>
<td>Less than 50% of the total budget applied for</td>
<td>Maximum depending on budget applied for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>Mandatory for all proposals; maximum 5% of the total budget applied for.</td>
<td>Maximum depending on budget applied for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{15}\) For personnel outside the Netherlands, the local rates are reimbursed up to a maximum of the VSNU rates.
The rates for all budget modules are included in the budget form accompanying the application form for full proposals. Funding should comply or be compatible with European legislation on state aid and procurement\(^\text{16}\).

### 6.2.1 Explanation of budget modules for personnel

Funding for the salary costs of personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research can be applied for. Funding for these salary costs depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the personnel are or will be appointed. In the NWA-ORC 2020/21 call a distinction is made between funding for personnel appointed to academic institutions as referred to in Section 3.1.1 and personnel at universities of applied sciences and other institutions\(^\text{17}\).

- For university appointments, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the VSNU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (https://www.nwo.nl/salary-tables).
- For university medical centres, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the NFU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (https://www.nwo.nl/salary-tables).
- For personnel from universities of applied sciences and other institutions, the salary costs are funded on the basis of the collective labour agreement salary scale of the employee concerned, based on the *Handleiding Overheidstarieven 2017*.
- For the Caribbean Netherlands, the Dutch government employs civil servants on Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba under different conditions than in the European part of the Netherlands. https://www.rijksdienstcn.com/werken-bij-rijksdienst-caribisch-nederland/arbeidsvoorwaarden.

The rates for all budget modules are included in the budget form that accompanies the application form. For the budget modules “PhD”, “PDEng” and “Postdoc”, a one-off individual bench fee of € 5,000 is added on top of the salary costs. This bench fee is intended to encourage the scientific career of the project employee funded by NWO. Remunerations for PhD students/PhD scholarship students at a Dutch university are not eligible for funding from NWO.

The available budget modules are explained below.

**Personnel of academic institutions**

**PhD student (including MD-PhD)**

A PhD student is appointed for 1.0 fte for a duration of 48 months. The equivalent of 48 full-time months, for example an appointment of 60 months for 0.8 fte is also possible. If a different duration of appointment is considered necessary for the realisation of the proposed research, then as long as this is properly justified, the standard time can be deviated from. However, the duration of appointment must always be at least 48 months.

In line with the NWO strategy, Industrial and Societal Doctorates are included in this category under this call. In the case of an Industrial or Societal Doctorate appointment, the private or public organisation to which the candidate is affiliated should bear part or all of the salary costs. NWO funds the salary costs in accordance with the applicable VSNU rate up to a maximum of 1 FTE for 48 months. Any surplus salary costs should be covered by the public/private employer and may be contributed to the project as in-kind co-funding. To calculate a surplus – due to an actual salary above the VSNU rate – NWO uses employer’s contributions minus VSNU rates for the same size of appointment.

**Professional Doctorate in Engineering (PDEng)**

Funding for the appointment of a PDEng can only be applied for if funding for a PhD student or postdoc is also applied for.

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\(^{16}\) See Regulation EU 1407/2013 of 18/12/2013, Regulation EU 651/2014 of 17/06/2014 and European Commission Communication 2014/C 198/01 to check compatibility with state aid rules. For Dutch public procurement rules, please see: http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0032203/2016-07-01

\(^{17}\) Universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and public knowledge organisations (see Annex 6.1) participating as co-applicants but not falling under the academic institutions mentioned above.
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The appointment for a PDEng position is a maximum of 1.0 fte for 24 months. The PDEng trainee is employed by the institution applying for funding and can realise activities within the research at an industrial partner for a specified time. If the research proposal is awarded funding, then an agreement must be concluded with the industrial partner(s) concerned. The underlying “Technological Designer Programme” should be described in the funding proposal.

Postdoc
The size of the appointment of a postdoc is at least 6 full-time months and at most 48 full-time months. The size and duration of the appointment is at the applicant’s discretion, but the appointment is always for at least 0.5 fte or for a duration of at least 12 months. The product of fte x duration of appointment should always be a minimum of 6 full-time months.

The material budget is available to cover the costs of a more limited appointment of a postdoc.

Non-scientific personnel (NSS) at universities
Funding for the appointment of non-scientific personnel necessary for the realisation of the research project can only be applied for if funding for a PhD student or postdoc is also applied for. This includes personnel such as student assistants, programmers, technical assistants and analysts. Depending on the level of the position, you can choose from salary tables for non-scientific personnel with vocational (MBO), higher education (HBO) or university (Academisch) qualifications.

The size of the appointment is at least 6 full-time months and at most 48 full-time months. The size and duration of the appointment is at the applicant’s discretion, but the appointment is always for at least 0.5 fte or for a duration of at least 12 months. The product of fte x duration of appointment should always be a minimum of 6 full-time months.

The material budget is available to cover the costs of a more limited appointment of non-scientific personnel.

Other scientific personnel (OSP) at universities
Budget for other scientific personnel, such as AIOS (doctor training to be a specialist), ANIOS (doctor not training to be a specialist), or employees with a university master’s degree or a Dutch drs. or ir. title, can only be applied for if funding for a PhD student or postdoc is also applied for.

The size of the appointment is at least 6 full-time months and at most 48 full-time months. The size and duration of the appointment is at the applicant’s discretion, but the appointment is always for at least 0.5 fte or for a duration of at least 12 months. The product of fte x duration of appointment should always be at least 6 full-time months.

Research leave for applicants
With this budget module, funding can be requested for the research leave costs of the main applicant and/or co-applicant(s) working at the institutions described in Section 3.1.1. The employer of the applicant can use this to cover the costs of relinquishing the applicant from educational, supervisory, administrative or management tasks (not research tasks). The time that is released through the research leave grant can only be used by the main applicant and/or co-applicant(s) for activities in the context of the project. The proposal must describe which activities in the context of the project the main applicant and/or co-applicant(s) will carry out in the time relinquished.

For each budget item, the maximum amount of research leave that can be applied for is the equivalent of five full-time months. The total funding requested for research leave in the NWA-ORC call may not exceed 10% of the total budget requested from NWO. NWO funds the research leave in accordance with the salary tables for a senior scientific employee (scale 11.0) at the time the grant is awarded (https://www.nwo.nl/salary-tables).

Personnel of universities of applied sciences and other institutions
For the funding of salary costs for personnel employed at a university of applied sciences, TO2 institute, government knowledge institution or other non-academic institution, the following maximum rates (hours/day) are used in accordance with the Handleiding Overheidstarieven 2017 (HOT). For the NWA-ORC call, the HOT table kostendekkend is used to calculate a cost-covering rate (Table 2.2, hourly cost-covering rate).

6.2.2 Explanation of budget module Material
For each fte scientific position applied for (PhD, postdoc, PDEng), a maximum of €15,000 material budget can be applied for per year of the appointment.
For personnel affiliated to universities of applied sciences and other institutions, for each year of the appointment, a maximum of € 15,000 in material budget can be applied for per 0.2 fte scientific employee (junior, intermediate and senior level, with a minimum appointment of 0.2 fte for 12 months).

Material budget for smaller appointments can be applied for on a proportionate basis and will be made available by NWO accordingly.

The applicant is responsible for distributing the total amount of material budget across the NWO-funded personnel positions. The material budget that can be applied for is specified according to the three categories below:

**Project-related goods/services**
- consumables (glassware, chemicals, cryogenic fluids, etc.);
- measurement and calculation time (e.g. access to supercomputer, etc.);
- costs for acquiring or using data collections (e.g. from Statistics Netherlands), for which the total amount may not be more than € 25,000 per proposal;
- access to large national and international facilities (e.g. cleanrooms, synchrotron, etc.);
- work by third parties (e.g. laboratory analyses, data collection, Citizen Science initiatives, etc.);
- personnel costs for the appointment of a postdoc and/or non-scientific personnel for a smaller size than those offered in the personnel budget modules.

**Travel and accommodation costs for the personnel positions applied for**
- travel and accommodation costs;
- conference attendance (maximum of two per year per scientific position applied for);
- fieldwork;
- work visits.

**Implementation costs**
- national symposium/conference/workshop organised within the research project;
- costs of Open Access publishing (solely in full gold Open Access journals, registered in the Directory of Open Access Journals, [https://doaj.org/](https://doaj.org/));
- data management costs;
- costs involved in applying for licences (e.g. for animal experiments);
- audit costs (only for institutions that are not subject to the education accountants protocol of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), maximum € 5,000 per proposal; for projects with a duration of three years or less, a maximum of € 2,500 per proposal applies.

Costs that cannot be applied for are:
- basic facilities within the institution (e.g. laptops, office furniture etc.);
- maintenance and insurance costs;

NWO encourages public involvement in research. In this module, the applicant can also request funding for the use of citizens for the purposes of the research, according to the rates set at: (https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontentnl/belastingdienst/prive/werk_en_inkomen/werken/werken-als-vrijwilliger/vrijwilligersvergoedingen/vrijwilligersvergoedingen - Dutch only).

If the maximum amount of € 15,000 per year per full-time scientific position is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if a clear justification is provided in the proposal.

### 6.2.3 Explanation of budget module Investments

In this budget module, funding can be requested for investments in scientifically innovative equipment and/or data collection of national or international importance. The minimum amount that can be applied for is € 150,000.

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18 Citizen Science means involving the public in research projects. For example, the public can help researchers to collect data (e.g. in the annual bird census), by providing computing capacity (e.g. in simulating molecular interactions such as protein configurations and computational drug design) or in formulating research questions and research projects.
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NWO funds a maximum of 75% of the total investment costs, up to a maximum of €500,000. The applicant’s institution must contribute at least 25% to the total cost of the investment. This contribution to the investment should be confirmed in writing by the applicant’s institution when the proposal is submitted.

The costs of investments should be adequately specified and motivated in the proposal. Funding can be requested for:
- costs for investment in scientific equipment;
- costs for investment in datasets;
- personnel costs for the setting up of databases and the initial digitalisation of the bibliographical equipment, if these cannot be purchased;
- personnel costs for employees with specific, essential technical expertise needed in order to build or develop an investment.

If funding for personnel costs is applied for, then the need for these personnel costs should be justified. If the applicant does not have this expertise available, then it should be stated that this expertise needs to be procured with these costs.

The internal procurement procedures and/or guidelines of the applicant apply.

Funding cannot be requested for:
- costs of infrastructure facilities that can be regarded as part of the usual infrastructure;
- data collections and any associated software and bibliographies that are already available in other ways;
- other personnel costs, including personnel costs required to operate and conduct research with the facility;
- maintenance and use of the equipment.

The costs for researchers using equipment for a project can be covered via the material budget.

6.2.4 Explanation of budget module Knowledge Utilisation

The aim of this budget module is to facilitate the use of the knowledge that emerges from the research. At least 5% but no more than 20% of the total project budget should be spent on knowledge utilisation activities via this budget module.

Knowledge utilisation takes many different forms in different scientific fields. Examples include producing a teaching package, conducting a feasibility study into potential applications, filing a patent application, or employing a business developer.

It is up to the consortium to specify in the proposal which costs are required.

Under the Impact Plan approach, consortia are expected at least to estimate costs within this module for the following activities:
- Specific activities to promote knowledge utilisation towards intermediary or other parties not funded in the projects, e.g. knowledge platforms. These activities include joint learning, training and communication activities.
- Stakeholder engagement: activities organised by the consortium aimed at involving stakeholders, such as consultation workshops, expert meetings, round table meetings, etc.
- Communication: activities organised by the consortium such as national and international learning events, development of videos, blogs, newsletters and other media communications. This may include the hiring in of communication expertise.
- Skills development: Activities aimed at developing skills beyond the levels of individual students, PhD students or postdocs, such as developing courses for stakeholders or Master’s students.
- Monitoring and evaluation moments in which knowledge utilisation is discussed, such as interim evaluations and Advisory Committee meetings (see Annex 6.3.5).
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The above elements can also be included under the Impact Outlook approach. In addition, applicants can specify costs for seeking unforeseen opportunities and/or costs to advance existing prospects. Only within the Impact Outlook approach 50% of the budget requested for knowledge utilization can be reserved without a more detailed specification. In that case, this part can be used only to exploit unforeseen opportunities.

Travel expenses for consortium partners are explicitly not eligible for funding in this module. However, travel expenses for cooperation partners and external parties in the social practice of the project are eligible. The budget applied for should be adequately specified in the proposal.

6.2.5 **Explanation of budget module Internationalisation**

The budget for internationalisation is intended to encourage international collaboration. The budget applied for may not exceed € 100,000. The amount requested must be specified. If the maximum amount is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if a clear justification is provided in the proposal.

Funding can be requested for:
- travel and accommodation costs in so far as these concern direct research costs emerging from the international collaboration and additional costs for internationalisation that cannot be covered in another manner, for example from the bench fee;
- travel and accommodation costs for foreign guest researchers;
- costs of organising international workshops/symposia/scientific meetings.

6.2.6 **Explanation of budget module Money follows Cooperation (MfC)**

The Money follows Cooperation module provides the possibility of realising a part of the project at a publicly funded knowledge institution outside of the Netherlands.

The main applicant must convincingly argue how the researcher from the foreign knowledge institution will contribute specific expertise to the research project that is not available in the Netherlands at the level necessary for the project.

This condition does not apply if NWO has concluded a bilateral agreement concerning Money follows Cooperation with the national research funder of the country where the foreign knowledge institution is located. This NWO webpage lists the research funders with which NWO has concluded such an agreement.

The budget applied for within this module cannot be more than 50% of the total budget applied for.

The co-applicant from the participating foreign knowledge institution should satisfy the conditions set for co-applicants in Section 3.1 of this call for proposals, with the exception of the condition that the co-applicant should be employed in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The rates for the personnel costs of researchers working at the foreign knowledge institute are calculated using the correction coefficients table of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grants (EU, Horizon 2020), with the Dutch VSNU rates being the starting point. The table can be found on this NWO webpage.

The main applicant receives the grant and is responsible for transferring the amount to the foreign knowledge institution and for providing accountability for the MfC part of the grant. The MfC part will be accounted for as part of the overall final financial report for the project.

The exchange rate risk lies with the main applicant. Therefore, gains and losses due to the exchange rate are not eligible for funding. The main applicant is responsible for:
- the financial accountability for all costs in both euros and the local currency, for which the exchange rate used must be visible;
- a reasonable determination of the size of the exchange rate. If requested by NWO, the main applicant must always be able to provide a description of this reasonable determination.
If more than € 125,000 is requested within this module, the final financial report must be accompanied by an audit statement.

NWO will not issue any funding to co-applicants in countries that fall under national or international sanction legislation and rules. The EU Sanctions Map (https://www.sanctionsmap.eu) is guiding in this respect.

6.2.7 Explanation of budget module Project Management

The Project Management module offers the opportunity to request a project management post up to a maximum of 5% of the total budget requested from NWO. In the NWA-ORC, this module is mandatory for all proposals. The main applicant must adequately justify this post.

Project management includes the following: optimising the organisational structure of the consortium, supporting the consortium and the main applicant, safeguarding the coherence, progress and unity of the project, and coordinating between the sub-projects within the project. These tasks may also be carried out by external parties if they are not available within the main applicant’s knowledge institution. This module also includes the costs of organising the kick-off meeting (as mentioned in Annex 6.3.5).

Knowledge institutions should take account of public procurement rules in the tender procedure for selecting a third party and, where appropriate, follow a European procurement procedure. The activities of main applicants and co-applicants themselves in relation to the project or project management may not be funded under this budget module.

The budget to be requested for project management can consist of material or implementation costs and personnel costs. For personnel costs, a maximum rate of € 119.00 per hour can be claimed. The hourly rate of personnel to be appointed must be based on a cost-covering rate and is calculated on the basis of the standard productive number of hours used by the organisation. The cost-covering rate includes:

- (average) gross salary corresponding to the position of the employee who will contribute to the project (based on the collective labour agreement grade of the employee concerned);
- holiday allowance and 13th month (if applicable in the relevant collective labour agreement) in proportion to the FTE deployed;
- social security charges;
- pension costs;
- overheads.

Project management tasks may be carried out by external parties, but the part of (commercial) hourly rates that exceeds the rates stated is not eligible for funding and therefore cannot be included in the budget.

6.3 After granting

A main applicant whose proposal is awarded funding in the 2020/21 NWA-ORC round may not submit proposals in subsequent NWA-ORC rounds as a main applicant within the duration of the funded research.

The following table shows the actions to be taken after a project has been awarded funding within this call for proposals. An explanation of each action is given below the table. If funding is awarded, the decision letter will describe in detail when each action must be taken and how to submit the relevant documents to NWO.
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>When?</th>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Who?</th>
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<td>After announcement of ORC projects awarded funding</td>
<td>Kick-off meeting for all projects awarded funding</td>
<td>Organised by NWO, mandatory attendance of delegation from each project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before the start of the project</td>
<td>Submit signed consortium agreement to NWO</td>
<td>Main applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the start of the project</td>
<td>Submit start form to NWO</td>
<td>Main applicant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before the start of the project</td>
<td>Submit details of project employees in ISAAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before the start of the project</td>
<td>Submit data management plan to NWO</td>
<td>Main applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the start of the project</td>
<td>Submit confirmation of contributions by consortium partners to NWO</td>
<td>Main applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the start of the project</td>
<td>Submit copy of any necessary ethics approval and/or WBO licence (if applicable, see Section 3.5.13)</td>
<td>Main applicant</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the start of the project</td>
<td>Initial discussion</td>
<td>NWO and main applicant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before the start of the project</td>
<td>Appoint an advisory committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the start of the project</td>
<td>Kick-off project meeting for entire consortium</td>
<td>Main applicant, after consortium agreement is ready and signed</td>
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<tr>
<td>During the project</td>
<td>Thematic meetings per cluster/route</td>
<td>Organised by NWO, main applicants or other parties join in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Submit progress report to NWO (before the advisory committee meetings)</td>
<td>Main applicant with consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Meeting with Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>Annually</td>
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<td>Main applicant and NWO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midway through project</td>
<td>Interim evaluation of project (for projects with a duration of more than six years or a budget of more than 5M€)</td>
<td>Consortium with cooperation partners and stakeholders</td>
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<td>Midway through project</td>
<td>Joint interim evaluation meeting for all projects awarded funding</td>
<td>Organised by NWO, mandatory attendance of delegation from each project</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of project</td>
<td>Submit substantive and financial final reports to NWO</td>
<td>Main applicant or project manager on behalf of consortium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.1 Consortium agreement

Consortium partners must sign a consortium agreement before the start of the project awarded funding. As a minimum, this agreement should govern rights (e.g. copyrights, intellectual property & publication rights, etc. on products or matters developed within the project), knowledge transfer and other matters such as payments, progress reports, final reports and confidentiality. In addition, the consortium agreement should contain agreements on the structure, management and governance of the consortium (which should provide an adequate guarantee of effective cooperation), finances, basic knowledge to be contributed where appropriate, liability, disputes and mutual sharing of information.
The initiative for making these agreements, including agreements on IP rights (see the following section) lies with the main applicant. NWO will check the agreements against the NWO Grant Rules 2017. NWO provides a standard consortium agreement. The use of this template is mandatory for projects awarded funding.

### 6.3.2 Intellectual Property & Publications (IP&P)

To increase the chances of new inventions and innovations, NWO encourages the acquisition, retention and use of intellectual property rights (patents and copyrights) by the knowledge institutions. Consortia in NWA programmes are therefore asked to consider intellectual property rights. It is important that research results are handled responsibly with a view to contributing to science and the application of knowledge. The aim is, on the one hand, to exploit and publish the research results as broadly as possible and, on the other hand, to stimulate cooperation between the knowledge chain and (semi-)public partners and industry. The NWO Grant Rules 2017 provide options for applicants to establish Intellectual Property (IP) rights and also for any transfer or licensing of rights to co-funders.

IP rights are subject to the provisions set out in Chapter 4 of the Grant Rules, under which the IP rights to research results accrue to the beneficiary knowledge institute whose employee generated the results in question (ownership follows inventorship). Co-funders’ IP rights to research results are subject to the percentages shown, unless there is a justified reason for deviating from these.

### 6.3.3 Starting date

The ultimate starting date of the research is six months after receipt of the award letter. The main applicant should give an indicative starting date in the proposal. Funded projects start as soon as the start form has been received by NWO, the details of the project employees are submitted via ISAAC, the data management plan has been approved by NWO, the co-funding contributions have been confirmed by the consortium partners and a signed consortium agreement has been received from the consortium, containing at least the agreements concerning Intellectual Property and Publications (IP&P).

### 6.3.4 Kick-off meeting

Within three months from granting, NWO will organise a joint kick-off meeting for all projects awarded funding in the NWA-ORC 2020/21 round. The main applicant and a consortium representative from each project awarded funding must attend. Topics for this meeting include information on starting up the project, supervision and monitoring.

### 6.3.5 Monitoring, supervision and reporting

Monitoring, supervision and reporting should focus on scientific progress and knowledge utilisation, both for projects with an Impact Plan approach and for projects with an Impact Outlook approach. The characteristic features of consortia for NWA projects, i.e. far-reaching multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, a knowledge-chain-wide approach and cooperation with societal partners, will be monitored and evaluated in each case. The questions asked during monitoring, supervision and reporting may differ between the two approaches.

### Meetings

After the award date, a number of meetings will be held to discuss the start or progress of the project. Funds for organising these meetings will be set aside in the budget. These costs are part of the “knowledge utilisation” budget module.

**Initial discussion**

Shortly after the award date, an initial discussion will take place between the NWO employee supervising the project and the main applicant. The aim will be to get to know each other and to discuss wishes and expectations regarding the conditions and conduct of the project. Points that will be discussed include the composition of the Advisory Committee and the kick-off meeting.

**Advisory Committee**

Each consortium will appoint an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee has a supervising and advisory role with regard to the project’s progress in terms of science and knowledge utilisation.
The Advisory Committee meets at least once a year and consists of:
- Representation from the co-funder(s);
- Representation from the cooperation partners (if applicable);
- At least one independent scientific member not involved in this consortium;
- At least one independent societal member not involved in this consortium and relevant for advancing the results.

The consortium runs the secretariat and meetings are attended by the main applicant and the project manager, as well as the NWO employee responsible for supervising the project.

**Project kick-off meeting**
In addition to the joint kick-off meeting organised by NWO, each project awarded funding organises its own kick-off meeting. This kick-off meeting is held within around six months after the award date and after the consortium agreement has been completed and signed. During the kick-off meeting, the entire consortium and the Advisory Committee meet to discuss the start of the project and the cooperation. During this meeting, the plans for achieving societal impact are discussed and supplemented if necessary.

**Annual progress meeting**
An annual progress meeting is held between the main applicant and the NWO employee to discuss whether the project is progressing to plan for both parties and where improvements could be made (on both sides).

**Interim evaluation meetings**
Funded projects with a duration of more than six years and/or a grant amount in excess of 5 million euros will be subject to an interim evaluation, based on self-evaluation by the consortium, carried out in a joint workshop with cooperation partners and other stakeholders. Part of the self-evaluation for projects that have completed an Impact Plan is a review of the Theory of Change and Impact Pathway based on reflection on progress made in the first half of the project. For projects that have opted for an Impact Outlook approach, the parties will discuss whether opportunities for societal impact have been identified in the interim and which activities can be introduced to exploit these opportunities. The self-evaluation is discussed with the Advisory Committee, which then uses it to make recommendations.

After this self-evaluation, NWO organises a joint interim evaluation meeting for all ongoing projects within this call for proposals. A representative of the consortium attends this meeting.

**Final meeting**
Upon completion of the project, the consortium organises a (public) final meeting during which results are presented to the relevant stakeholders.

Around the end date of clusters of projects, NWO organises a final meeting at which results are presented jointly to the relevant stakeholders. A representative of the consortium attends this meeting.

**Cluster meetings**
The NWA organises regular thematic meetings, oriented by cluster/route. Where appropriate, main applicants of funded projects are invited to join these meetings.

**Progress reports**
The main applicant will be responsible for progress reporting during the project. With a view to monitoring the progress of the project, NWO will request interim substantive and financial reports, as well as an account of the co-funding provided.
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Annual reports
The consortium submits an annual progress report to NWO in preparation for the Advisory Committee meeting. In the report, the consortium describes the progress made with regard to the objectives, results and recommendations. For projects that have completed an Impact Plan, an integral part of this annual reporting is the adjusting or revision of the Theory of Change and Impact Pathway based on the testing of previous assumptions.

Interim evaluation
The progress reporting at the interim self-evaluation (see above) focuses on progress made in the first term of the project and looks ahead to the second term.

Accountability and project completion
Upon completion of a project, NWO requests final substantive and financial reports. In the substantive report, the consortium presents (if an Impact Plan has been drawn up) the output achieved and, where applicable, the outcomes. After NWO has approved both reports, the final amount of the grant and co-funding is determined.