Frequently asked questions NWA-ORC 2020/21

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I. General NWA-ORC

1. Why should I submit to the NWA-ORC and not elsewhere?
   Do you have a question related to one or more of the 25 NWA-routes and one or more of the 140 cluster questions? Do you want to investigate this question in a consortium that contains knowledge organisations, is interdisciplinary and knowledge-chain wide, and includes societal organisations? Then the NWA-ORC can be the right programme for you. 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.

2. What is typical for an application in the NWA-ORC round?
   The core elements of the NWA should be represented in each NWA-ORC application and are the following:
   - 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. This means that knowledge institutes, universities and applied and practice-oriented research institutions all work together in the NWA;
   - 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.

Proposals should fall within one or more NWA routes and address one or more of the 140 cluster questions. The projects in the NWA-ORC will focus on innovative research with the aim of bringing about scientific and/or societal breakthroughs.

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.

3. What is the available budget for the NWA-ORC 2020/21?
   132.3 million euros was reserved for the NWA-ORC programme in 2020.

4. Why is the budget for this ORC 2020/21 round higher than in the previous rounds?
   Because of the corona measures, the start of the NWA-ORC 2020/21 round has been considerably delayed. For this reason, NWO is not organising a separate funding round for 2021. Instead, NWO will use the budget of the 2021 round to increase the funding for the 2020/21 and the next 2021/22 round.

5. When is the next NWA-ORC round?
   The next ORC-funding round after this 2020/21 round will be the 2021/22 round. This round is expected to start in the fall of 2021.

6. Does each route receive a portion of the funds?
   No. No funds are allocated specifically to (clusters of) routes. In addition, there is no pre-determined allocation of the budget between the different budget ranges (also read question 62). 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. NWO is aiming for a similar granting rate for all three budget ranges.

7. Should every NWA-ORC application contain fundamental parts?
   Yes. A NWA-ORC project should always aim at achieving scientific breakthroughs, in addition, also societal breakthroughs can be aimed for.

8. Why should fundamental and applied research be combined within the NWA?
Scientific breakthroughs arise from groundbreaking research in the own research field, and from interaction between different scientific disciplines, between science, society and companies and between fundamental, applied and practice-oriented research. The NWA stimulates cooperation between parties to achieve more impact for science and society, and enables this impact.

9. How are the terms ‘fundamental’ and ‘applied’ research defined in the NWA-ORC grant round?
In this call, fundamental research is understood to be research carried out by universities, university medical centres, NWO and KNAW institutes and other organisations that can normally submit applications to NWO (also see section 1.1.1 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017). Applied and practice-oriented research is carried out by for instance universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and National Knowledge Institutes (RKIs), planning agencies and other public knowledge organisations (also see IIc).
Concerning the distribution in the budget of an application between fundamental research on one hand, and applied and practice-oriented research on the other hand, the NWA applies for pragmatic reasons the labels ‘fundamental’ and ‘applied’ on the basis of the institutes. This means that researchers do not have to define this themselves. The consortia must pay attention to the 80/20 distribution, so that 80% of the funds is spent on organisations that can regularly submit to NWO, including universities, university medical centres and NWO and KNAW institutes. 20% of the funds must be spent at universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutions, National Knowledge Institutes (RKIs), planning agencies or other public knowledge organisations.
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.

10. What kind of activities in the field of knowledge utilisation can funding be requested for?
NWO sees knowledge utilisation as the application of knowledge through productive interactions with an interested target group in order to create societal value. The actual knowledge utilisation activities for which you can apply for funding depend on the approach that you choose. 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 2020/21: the Impact Plan approach and the Impact Outlook approach (also see Section 2.2 of the call for proposals).
In Annex 6.2.4 of the call for proposals is described which activities consortia at least should estimate costs for with respect to the Impact Plan approach.
In the Impact Outlook approach applicants can, in addition to the elements that apply to the Impact Plan approach, specify costs for seeking unforeseen opportunities and/or costs to advance existing prospects.

11. Within this round different names have been given to the roles and proposals. Can this be presented clearly?
Below you will find a schematic representation of the different terms used in the call for proposals, the application form and ISAAC.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Call ronde 2020/21</th>
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12. What are the largest differences with the ORC 2019 round?
The ORC 2020/21 round is generally the same as the 2019 round, but based on the experiences from the previous rounds, some changes or clarifications have been made:
• NWO publishes the submitted initiatives online (in October 2020) and organizes a matchmaking meeting for each NWA-route. This in order to promote consortium formation and to offer organisations the possibility
to join an existing initiative. These (online) meetings will take place at the end of October/the beginning of November 2020.

- Main applicants registering an initiative, or other representatives of the consortium, must attend the matchmaking meeting for the primary route of the initiative and present their initiative during the meeting. If the main applicant or another representative of the consortium did not attend the matchmaking meeting, they cannot submit a pre-proposal.

- Proposals should address both one or more of the 140 cluster questions and one or more of the NWA routes. Obviously, the cluster question(s) and the route(s) mentioned on the application should fit together. An overview of which cluster questions fit which NWA-routes can be found here.

- In the pre-proposal stage, it is not necessary to already submit a specified budget. It is only necessary to indicate the budget range, together with (if possible) an estimate for the budget requested from NWO.

- In the pre-proposal stage, it is not necessary to add support letters from co-funders, this is only necessary for the full proposal. A short statement of intent that the co-funder is willing to support the application.

- In the pre-proposal stage, NWO does not ask for a statement of the ‘highest governing body’ of the organization of the main applicant, but of the ‘competent body’ instead. Organisations are responsible for monitoring the pre-proposals submitted from the organisation, and can determine themselves which body can sign the statement.

- Applicants of pre-proposals obtain a non-binding advice whether or not to elaborate the pre-proposal to a full proposal. By omitting the decision step, for which a hearing-rebuttal step is required, consortia have more time to prepare the full proposal.

- Assessment of applications no longer takes place by budget range. Instead, clusters are made of applications on routes that fit together.

- The aspect of knowledge utilization in projects is elaborated on by capturing the intentions for knowledge utilization via the Impact Outlook approach (in short: obtaining more knowledge) or the Impact Plan approach (in short: achieving societal change).

13. Is there a database available of the granted projects within the NWA-ORC?
Yes. All projects within the NWA-ORC can be found on the NWO-website.

II. Consortium
a. General

14. Why do applications have to be submitted by a consortium?
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. Therefore, in the programme there is special focus on performing interdisciplinary research where partners from the entire knowledge chain are involved, from fundamental to applied and practice-oriented. In addition, cooperation with public and private societal partners is expected, to enhance the potential impact of the research.

15. Are there specific requirements for the composition of a consortium (for example: at least 3 different research institutes; or at least one non-university party; or at least two parties from the TO2, UAS, practice, industry)?
No, there are no such requirements. It is essential that all parties that are necessary to perform the proposed project are part of the consortium. Of course, the consortium needs to be knowledge-chain wide and interdisciplinary. In addition, public and/or private consortium partners must be involved who provide the obligatory 10% cofinancing (in cash and/or in kind).

16. Is there a minimum or maximum number of participants per consortium?
No, there is no minimum or maximum to the number of participants in a consortium. It is essential that all parties that are necessary to perform the proposed project are part of the consortium, the entire width of the knowledge chain is represented, and relevant societal parties are involved.

17. How many consortia can someone join, either as main applicant or applicant?
Here, we distinguish two different situations:
A: A researcher can in the NWA-ORC 2020/21 round only submit one proposal in the capacity of main applicant. In addition, this person may participate as an applicant in another consortium no more than once.
A researcher may participate in a consortium as an applicant no more than twice, and is then not allowed to be the main applicant on any application within the NWA-ORC 2020/21.

18. What is meant with main applicant or applicant, is it the knowledge institution/organisation as a whole or an individual person?
This refers to an individual. She/he can therefore participate in a maximum of two consortia; an organisation can be represented in more than two consortia. In the case the proposal gets funded, the funding is transferred to the institution of the applicant and not the individual person.

19. How many consortia can an institute join?
There is no maximum to the number of consortia an institute can join. In addition, different persons within one consortium can represent the same institute.

20. Should there be societal partners within the consortium?
Yes. Research proposals are assessed, among other things, on the involvement of relevant societal partners in the consortium. 'Societal partners' here is a broad concept, which can also include governments and the business community. In addition, a co-financing of minimum 10% and maximum 49% is mandatory, to be provided by public and/or private consortium partners that do not receive funding within the proposal.

21. What does NWO mean by societal partners?
For example, but not limited to: industrial partners, museums, foundations, governmental departments, nursing homes, funds, zoos, municipalities, police, schools, planning offices, (local) governmental organisations.

22. Can the consortium between the pre- and full proposal be expanded to include more parties?
The full proposal is the elaboration of the pre-proposal. It is permitted to expand the consortium, provided that this does not affect the core challenge, approach and objectives of the research proposal (i.e. the composition of the research). Especially the elements of knowledge chain width and interdisciplinarity need to be present to the same extent as in the pre-proposal. Deviations based on recommendations of the assessment committee are permitted.

23. Should I include the figurehead of the route(s) in my proposal?
No, any researcher can take the initiative to form a consortium and submit a research proposal that fits within (parts of) one or more of the NWA routes and address one or more of the 140 cluster questions.

24. What are the regulations regarding Intellectual Property and publications?
NWO expects the main applicant to make agreements with the other consortium partners about intellectual property and publication. The NWO IP policy can be found in Chapter 4 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017.

For publications, open access is the standard. 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.

For more information on NWO’s open access policy, see: https://www.nwo.nl/openscience-en.

b. Main applicant

25. Who can submit?
In general, the following researchers can apply as main applicant:

- Researchers that have obtained a PhD degree and are working at organisations that can apply regularly at NWO;
- Researchers that have obtained a PhD degree and are working at TO2 institutes;
- Lectors working at universities of applied science.
The call for proposals section 3.1.1 specifies further who is entitled to submit as main applicant.

26. I currently am main applicant of a project that has been funded in the ORC 2018 round. Can I submit in the 2020/21 round?
Main applicants of a successful proposal from the 2018 round are excluded from participation as main applicant in the 2020/21 round. This person may, however, participate in a consortium as a co-applicant.

27. I currently have a proposal as main applicant that is competing for a subsidy in the NWA-ORC 2019 round, but the results of this round are not known yet before the deadline for submitting an initiative in the 2021 round. Can I still submit in the 2020/21 round?
Yes, this is allowed. To be able to submit a pre-proposal in the round 2020/21, an initiative must have been submitted, otherwise the pre-proposal will not be considered by NWO.

28. What do I do if I have already submitted an initiative as main applicant for the ORC 2020/21 round, and then get notified that the full proposal on which I am the main applicant in the ORC 2019 round is granted?
In that case, please contact the NWA-bureau. There are two possibilities: you do not continue with the initiative of the 2020/21 round, or you appoint – after discussing this with NWO - another member of the consortium as main applicant. You can then participate as co-applicant in the 2020/21 consortium.

29. What if I received a negative advice to elaborate on my proposal in the 2019 round?
The 2020/21 round is completely separate from the 2019 round. Main applicants who received a negative decision preparing a full proposal in 2019, may resubmit in the round 2020/21.

30. Can the main applicant on the initiative be different from the main applicant on the pre-proposal?
No, this is not allowed. The main applicant on the pre-proposal should be the same as on the initiative, unless you have been granted a proposal as main applicant in the 2019 round (also see question 25). In that case, please contact the NWA-bureau.

C. Co-applicant(s)

31. Who can act as a co-applicant?
Researchers from organisations that are entitled to submit as main applicant in accordance with paragraph 3.1.1 in the call for proposals may also submit as co-applicants. In addition, co-applicants may be affiliated to National knowledge institutions or other public knowledge organisations. These organisations are listed in annex 6.1 of the call for proposals.

If the organisation to which a co-applicant is affiliated is not explicitly listed in the call for proposals, then it must meet a number of cumulative criteria. NWO will have to assess these conditions before the pre-proposal is submitted. For this purpose, the co-applicant’s organisation should submit a number of documents by email no later than ten working days before the submission deadline. For more details on the assessment and the documents, please see Section 3.1.2 of the call for proposals.

32. Which National knowledge institutions and planning agencies can participate as a co-applicant in this ORC 2020/21 funding round?
The National knowledge institutions and planning agencies that are part of the RKI network (website in Dutch only) can participate as co-applicant. These are:

- CBS – Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands)
- CPB – Centraal Planbureau (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis)
- KiM – Kennisinstituut voor Mobiliteitsbeleid (Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis)
- KNMI – Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute)
- NFI – Nederlands Forensisch Instituut (Netherlands Forensic Institute)
- PBL – Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency)
- RCE – Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands)
33. Which other public knowledge institutions can participate as a co-applicant in this ORC 2020/21 funding round?

These are the following (from: https://www.rathenau.nl/en/kennisgedreven-democratie/public-knowledge-organisations-netherlands):

- Boekman Foundation – Institute for arts, culture and related policy
- Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations
- Geonovum – Knowledge organisation for geographic information
- Movisie – Centre for social issues
- Mulier Institute – Centre for sports research
- (N) IFV – (Netherlands) Institute for Safety
- NIVEL – Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research
- NJI – Nederlands Jeugd Instituut (Netherlands Youth Institute)
- Police Academy – Training, knowledge and research for the Dutch National Police
- SWOON-NLDA – Stichting Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs en Onderzoek Nederlandse Defensieacademie (foundation for scientific education and research of the Netherlands defence academy)
- SWOV – Stichting Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Verkeersveiligheid (Institute for Road Safety Research)
- Trimbos Institute – Institute for mental health, drug abuse and addiction
- VeiligheidNL – Organisation to promote safe behaviour
- Vilans – Research into long-term care

34. What does NWO mean by the term 'public task'?

Organisations that want to participate as co-applicant in a consortium must meet all the criteria mentioned in section 3.1.2 of the call for proposals, including the criterion 'has a public task'. In the legal literature, the concept of public service is broadly interpreted: (knowledge) institutions that perform governmental tasks exercise a public task regardless of the legal form of the institution. Examined are the method of financing (from the national budget) and all kinds of other factors (lower legislation, articles of association, subsidy decisions, policy memoranda and even actual behaviour). Private law organisations that perform public tasks are also referred to as hybrid organisations. Healthcare institutions, educational institutions and welfare institutions are examples of this.

In the light of the NWA’s objective, a broad interpretation of the term ‘public task’ is obvious. You should check beforehand with the NWA office whether the organisation to which the applicant is associated has a public task. Please contact the programme secretariat via nwa-orc2020@nwo.nl. At the request of the NWO, please provide further specification/information/evidence of the ‘public service remit’, as stated in Section 3.1.2 of the call for proposals.

35. My organisation had already participated in a consortium in the 2018 or 2019 round and NWO then declared that my organisation meets the criteria for co-applicants (Section 3.1.2 in the call). Can my organisation thus participate again as a co-applicant in consortia in round 2020/21?

No. In all cases that your organisation does not meet the requirements in Section 3.1.1, your organisation must be assessed by the NWO against the requirements in paragraph 3.1.2, even if your organisation was approved in the rounds 2018 or 2019. For instance, the task of an organisation might have changed between the assessment in one of the previous rounds and the assessment for the 2020/21 round. Please contact the programme secretariat via nwa-orc2020@nwo.nl. Please provide further specification/information/evidence of the ‘public service remit’, as stated in Section 3.1.2 of the call for proposals.
36. **What happens if I do not provide the documents for the assessment in time?**
Then your organisation cannot participate in a consortium as co-applicant. Of course, a role as cooperation partner or co-funder is still possible.

37. **Can research groups from abroad also participate in the consortia and can they apply for funding?**
The Money follows Cooperation (MfC) principle allows national research budgets to be used for cross-border cooperation. See also Annex 6.2.6 in the call. Foreign researchers for whom MfC budget is requested, must be presented as co-applicants. And in that case, the foreign organization needs to be assessed against the criteria mentioned in Section 3.1.2 of the call for proposals, even if it concerns a university from abroad.

38. **Can companies also submit proposals and receive funding?**
No. 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. Only persons coming from non-profit organisations can act as main applicant or co-applicant and thus receive a subsidy. Private parties can, however, participate in the consortium as partners and provide co-financing, either in cash and/or in kind.

d. **Co-funder(s)**

39. **Can all parties contribute as co-funder? Can my university act as a co-funder in my consortium?**
No. Institutions that can act as main applicant or co-applicant, according to the description in Section 3.1.1. of the call for proposals, may never take on the role of co-funder within the entire NWA-ORC 2020/21, for any proposal. An exception is made for TO2 institutions. However, they may participate in a consortium as co-funder, provided that they do not also participate in the same consortium as main- or co-applicant. This means that (for example) a university or university medical centre may not act as co-funder in any consortium.

40. **Can companies in this call participate as co-funder in a project?**
Yes, they can. Both public parties (with the exception of knowledge institutions that can participate as main- or co-applicant) and private parties can participate as co-funder in a project. Companies can contribute both in-cash, where the contribution serves to cover the budget for the project activities described in the proposal, and in-kind, where the contribution comprises contributions of resources (other than cash) from the organisations involved, for instance the input of personnel and material contributions.

41. **Can co-financing also be brought in by a foreign party?**
Yes, a foreign party (public or private) can act as co-financer.

42. **Is a support letter from my co-funders required?**
Support letters are only required in the full proposal. For the pre-proposal, these support letters are not required, only a ‘statement of intent’ where the co-funder declares that the co-funder is willing to participate in the project. 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.

e. **Cooperation partners**

43. **I have international partners in the consortium, but they are not eligible as applicants. They do not provide any co-funding either. Can I mention them in the pre-proposal form?**
In the description of the consortium in section 3 of the pre-proposal form, international partners may be included as cooperation partners.

44. **Is it necessary for cooperation partners to confirm their support by letter?**
A cooperation partner may submit a letter of commitment with the full proposal. NWO will provide for a format for this letter. In this commitment letter, the cooperation partner indicates 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.
45. How do I find partners for my consortium?
When you register your initiative, it will appear online. You will be asked explicitly to indicate what kind of partners or expertise you are looking for in your consortium, if applicable. Interested parties can find your initiative, contact you and possibly join your consortium. If you do not want your contact details mentioned online, please inform NWO about this. NWO will then act as an intermediary to connect different parties.

In addition, NWO organises a matchmaking meeting for each NWA route, in the period of 26 October until 6 November. All main applicants registering an initiative must attend the matchmaking meeting for the primary route of the initiative. These meetings are also open to interested parties who are not involved in an initiative, but wish to participate in the NWA-ORC. During the meetings, you therefore might also meet potential consortium partners.

46. I am not yet involved in an initiative but I want to be, how can I arrange this?
All submitted initiatives will appear online.

In addition, NWO organises a matchmaking meeting for each NWA route, in the period of 26 October until 6 November. All main applicants registering an initiative must attend the matchmaking meeting for the primary route of the initiative. These meetings are also open to interested parties who are not involved in an initiative, but wish to participate in the NWA-ORC. You can register for the meetings via the NWO-website. During the meetings you might come into contact with potential consortia which you may join.

The matchmaking meetings are shown in the calendar on the websites of NWO and the National Science Agenda. You can also find an overview of the contact persons per route at www.wetenschapsagenda.nl/routes. You can contact them for more information about the activities that take place within a route.

47. Where can I find the initiatives that are submitted?
The initiatives can be found via the NWO-website.

48. What is the purpose of the matchmaking meetings?
The matchmaking meetings serve different goals:
- For applicants:
  o Finding possible new consortium partners;
  o Bringing together overlapping or complementary initiatives: networking.
  o Getting advice from route management about the application;
  o Finding a connection with the network of the route;
  o Obtaining information about the call from NWO.
- For the route management:
  o Overseeing all applicants / consortia that are active on the route;
  o Being able to advise applicants in order to monitor and, where applicable, bring in the route goals, share cluster questions and knowledge agendas;
  o Link applicants and cooperation partners.
- For NWO:
  o Better overview of the field per route;
  o Central way to share information about the call.

49. Why are the matchmaking meetings mandatory?
The matchmaking meetings are mandatory in order to enable consortium formation. By letting initiatives being submitted and publishing these online, there research proposals are publicly visible. In this way, the route management can identify ideas for their routes and, for example, make suggestions for merging similar ideas or connect the consortium with new partners. In addition, potential consortium partners can also get in touch with main applicants of an initiative and possibly join a consortium. By actually bringing people together, and not only having consortium formation based on an online overview of initiatives, NWO wants to make more effective use of the initiative phase.
50. I have already invested a lot of time in composing my consortium, do I still need to attend a matchmaking meeting?
Yes. The matchmaking meeting is not only meant to enable consortium formation, but serves different other purposes (also see question 48). To reach these goals, each initiative should be represented on a matchmaking meeting.

51. When do the matchmaking events take place?
The matchmaking meetings will take place from 26 October to 6 November 2020.

52. Do the matchmaking events take place physically or online?
The matchmaking meetings take place online.

53. How do I register for a matchmaking event?
When submitting an initiative, you indicate whether you or a consortium partner will be present at the matchmaking meeting of the primary NWA-route. This is immediately your registration. If you, as a submitter of an initiative, also want to be present at matchmaking meetings for routes other than your primary route, register via the registration form on the NWO website. Persons who are not yet involved in an initiative at all, should always register via the registration form on the NWO website.

54. Can the main applicant delegate another representative of the consortium for the matchmaking meeting, if the main applicant is not available?
Yes that is allowed. When submitting an initiative, the main applicant indicates whether she/he is present at the matchmaking meeting or whether someone else from the consortium is participating in the meeting.

55. Is there a limit to the number of matchmaking meetings I can attend?
No. Since the matchmaking meetings are open meetings, you can attend as many meetings as you want. The only rule that applies is that the main applicant of an initiative (or a member of the associated consortium) must be present at the meeting of the primary NWA route as indicated on the initiative. In addition, the main applicant - or other members of the consortium - may also attend meetings of other routes. Parties that are not yet part of an initiative, but would like to join, can attend as many meetings as they deem necessary. Registration for events other than those of the primary NWA route is possible via the NWO website.

56. If my project idea, for example, fits two different NWA routes, do I have to attend both matchmaking meetings?
It is not mandatory to be present at both matchmaking meetings, but NWO strongly recommends this. Registration for events other than those of the primary NWA route is possible via the NWO website.

57. What is the schedule of the matchmaking meetings?
Depending on the number of participants in a matchmaking meeting, the exact program may differ per route. However, all meetings have a number of common elements:

- There is an informative presentation from NWO, in which the call for proposals is briefly discussed (conditions, criteria, planning, etc.) and the Impact Plan and Impact Outlook approaches are introduced. There is also room to ask questions.
- The route presents itself to the participants and can, for example, explain the developments in the route in recent years.
- For each registered initiative there is time to (briefly) pitch or present themselves to other participants.

III. Preparation of the proposal

a. General

58. Which phases are there in the NWA-ORC 2020/21 round?
The NWA-ORC 2020/21 grant round consists of three phases (see Section 1.3 of the call):

a. Registration of initiatives and mandatory attendance at a matchmaking meeting;

b. Submission of pre-proposals;
c. Submission of full proposals.

These phases are further specified in the call for proposals. A consortium can only submit a pre-proposal if an initiative has been submitted previously, and a consortium can only submit a full proposal if a pre-proposal has been submitted previously.

59. When can applications be submitted in the NWA-ORC 2020/21 round?
The NWA-ORC 2020/21 funding round has three phases 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.

60. Should the initiative and proposal be drafted in Dutch or English?
Both the initiative and the (pre- or full-)proposal must be drafted in English.

61. What is the minimum and maximum duration of a project?
Proposals in the NWA-ORC 2020/21 call for proposals have a minimum duration of 4 years and a maximum duration of 8 years. This round therefore explicitly is meant for long-term research.

62. What is the amount of funding I can apply for?
Proposals can be submitted in three 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, so with co-funding not included, determines the budget range in which the application is submitted. The total project budget including co-funding can therefore be more than €10 million. An application that requests for 2,000,000 euros of funding from NWO, and has 250,000 euros co-funding, is therefore submitted to the smallest budget range.

63. How do I know if my proposal complies with the 80/20 rule (fundamental/applied)?
For pragmatic reasons, the NWA applies the labels 'fundamental' and 'applied' on the basis of the institutes. This means that researchers do not have to specify this themselves. Please also see question 9 in this FAQ. Some deviation from this 80/20 is acceptable. A ratio between 75:25 and 85:15 is allowed in individual NWA-ORC proposals.

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

64. Can societal or industrial doctorates be included in the project?
Yes, this is allowed. See the call for proposals, Annex 6.2.1. paragraph 3.2.1. An employee of a public or private organization is allowed to spend a part of her/his time on PhD research. 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.

65. Do I have the option to amend my summary or complete application after I have submitted it?
It is not possible to adjust the application after you have submitted it.

After receiving the applications, NWO will carry out a test to determine whether the applications received meet the conditions. If this test shows that an application does not meet one or more administrative conditions, the main applicant will be given a one-off opportunity to adjust his/her application within five working days. If the corrected
application is submitted on time and meets the conditions after correction, NWO will still take this application into consideration. This correction period is only intended to adjust inaccuracies that have been identified by NWO. The correction period is explicitly not intended to further perfect the application, to adapt figures or text or to make additions. If NWO establishes that adjustments have been made other than those requested, NWO may decide not to take the application into consideration. GSo make sure you have completed the research proposal before submitting it!

66. Will every application submitted be taken into consideration?
No. There are a number of situations in which no correction is possible and NWO will not take the application into consideration. This concerns the following situations:

- The application was received by NWO after the applicable deadline (see section 3.3 of the call for proposals);
- The application has not been submitted via ISAAC;
- The pre-proposal has not previously been submitted by means of an initiative;
- The main applicant or another representative of the consortium of a submitted pre-proposal has not been present at the matchmaking meeting of the primary NWA route after submission of the corresponding initiative;
- The full proposal has not previously been submitted as a pre-proposal;
- The main applicant for the application has received funding as main applicant in the previous ORC rounds.

67. Will every corrected application be processed?
No. There are a number of situations in which an opportunity has been given to correct the application, but NWO will not take the application into consideration after the correction. This concerns the following situations:

- The corrected application does not yet meet the conditions;
- The corrected application has not been received by NWO within the set period of five working days.

68. Is there a checklist that I can use before submitting my application via ISAAC?
In all cases, the application must meet the conditions set out in Chapter 3 of the call for proposals. Below is a short checklist that you can use as a "final check" before submitting your pre-proposal. We advise you to perform this check well before the deadline.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, because there is always a chance that applications will be submitted that raise questions at NWO for reasons other than those listed below. Going through this checklist therefore does not guarantee that NWO will not ask you to correct your application.

Checklist:

Main applicant and co-applicants:
- The main applicant has an ISAAC account and logging into this account is without problems;
- The main applicant is the person who will submit the application in ISAAC;
- The main applicant and co-applicants may act as main- or co-applicants, in other words they meet the requirements set out in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 in the call for proposals;
- All applicants are entered in ISAAC and the same as the applicants listed on the application form;
- Collaboration partners and co-funders have not been entered in ISAAC, but they are on the pre-proposal form.

From initiative to application:
- The main applicant of a pre-proposal has previously submitted it as an initiative;
- The main applicant, the cluster question and the primary NWA route for a pre-proposal do not deviate from those stated in the initiative;

Application forms:
- You have used the correct application form and the correct formats for the attachments - the 2020/21 versions on the NWO website are always correct;
- The application form is completely filled in and signed (mentioning name, date and place is sufficient here);
The application and the appendices are drawn up in English;
- No word or page limits are exceeded in the application form and in the attachments;
- The application form and the attachments meet the (layout) requirements as stated in the formats themselves;
- All mandatory appendices (see section 3.4 in the call for proposals) are present, completed and signed where necessary;
- You have only added permitted attachments (see section 3.4 in the call for proposals);
- Application form and attachments are in PDF format;
- Text and images in the PDF files are sharp and readable;
- The PDF files are not protected.

Pay attention to the following:
- The proposed project has a minimum duration of 4 years and a maximum duration of 8 years and the duration of the project in ISAAC is the same as that indicated on the application form;
- You have submitted suggestions for referees and (if applicable) non-referees in ISAAC;
- The title, research fields, keywords and summary in the application are the same as those in ISAAC.

b. Initiatives

69. Why do I have to submit an initiative?
The registration of initiatives has been set up to stimulate consortium formation. By having initiatives registered and published online, these research proposals are visible to everyone. For example, the route management can identify the ideas for their routes and, for example, make suggestions for merging similar ideas or connecting the consortium with new partners. In addition, potential consortium partners can also get in touch with those submitting an initiative themselves, and possibly join a consortium.

Main applicants are obliged to register the initiative digitally via the NWO website. Submitted pre-proposals for which no initiative has been registered will not be taken into consideration by NWO.

70. Can I specify multiple initiators?
No, only one name can be specified in the 'Initiator' section. This must be the one who will act as main applicant when submitting the pre-proposal. You can write other participants in the consortium under ‘Other organisations involved in the initiative’.

Note: the main applicant may not be changed after this stage, unless the main applicant has been granted an application in the ORC round 2019 (see also question 25). In that case, the main applicant must contact the NWA office.

71. Can I submit an initiative to more than one NWA-route?
Yes, in principle this is possible. Please note that submitting an initiative means that you are obliged to participate in the matchmaking meeting of the primary NWA route stated on the initiative. If you are unsure whether the initiative is appropriate for a particular route, we recommend that you contact the route management of the route concerned. Contact details per route can be found here.

72. When submitting an initiative, I am asked if I want to have my name and contact details online as main applicant. Why is that?
All initiatives will be published online, so that potential partners can register and perhaps join your consortium. If you agree with the publication of your contact details by NWO, interested parties can contact you directly. However, if you do not want your contact details online, you can still submit an initiative. This choice will not affect the admissibility or the evaluation of the proposal. When submitting your initiative, you may indicate that you do not want your contact information to be published by NWO. If parties are interested in your consortium, they can contact the NWA team. The NWA team will then share the third party's details with you so that you can contact them. Please note: NWO will inform knowledge institutions on which initiatives were submitted from the respective institution.
73. How long will my initiative stay online?
Your initiative will be online from the moment you register this until the deadline of submitting the full proposals on 24 June 2021.

c. Pre-proposal

74. When will ISAAC open for submission of my pre-proposal?
ISAAC will be open after the matchmaking meetings, so by the end of October 2020.

75. Can I submit a pre-proposal if I have not submitted an initiative?
No. Pre-proposals of which no initiative have been announced before the 1 October deadline will not be considered.

76. To what extent should the pre-proposal and initiative correspond?
The main applicant, the cluster question and the primary NWA route must be the same between the pre-proposal and the initiative. 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 pre-proposal.

77. Can the pre-proposal cover multiple NWA-routes and/or cluster questions?
Yes, this is allowed. On the pre-proposal application form you can indicate multiple appropriate NWA-routes and/or cluster questions, as long as the main cluster question and the primary NWA route remain the same between the pre-proposal and the initiative.

78. Is it allowed to change the formatting of the pre-proposal form?
No, this is not allowed. The mandatory formatting has been introduced in order to give each consortium the same amount of space to write the proposal, so that a level playing field is created for all applicants.

79. Do my literature references count towards the page limit of ‘Section 3 - Project Description’?
No, you do not need to place your literature references in section 3: there is room for this under section 4 (Reference list).

80. Is it allowed to add figures/illustrations under ‘Section 3 - Project Description’? Do they count towards the page limit?
It is allowed to include figures and illustrations in this section, these figures count towards the page limit.

81. I have an important consortium partner who does not provide or receive money, where can I describe them?
It is possible to indicate "Cooperation partner(s)" in section 1.4 of the pre-proposal. Furthermore, it is possible for cooperation partners to provide a letter of commitment in the full proposal phase. In this statement the partner indicates what the reason is to act as a cooperation partner in the research and what his role within the project will be.

82. Why must I enclose a confirmation from my institution with the short application?
NWO wants to encourage institutions to make a critical selection of the applications to be submitted on behalf of the institution. This requires a central overview of the NWA-ORC applications for each institution. Submitting a confirmation from the institution helps the institutions to obtain an overview of the ORC applications that are submitted.

83. Which bodies in my institution have the authority to sign the confirmation?
NWO does not make any statements about this, it is up to the institutions themselves to determine which bodies are authorized to sign and this may therefore differ between institutions. Below you will find a general guideline that can help you on your way, but always check within your institution which body is actually authorized to sign.

- The Rector Magnificus or Dean of the relevant faculty signs for both universities and university medical centers;
- The KNAW director signs for KNAW institutes;
- The Foundation Board signs for NWO institutes;
- For universities of applied sciences, the chair of the Executive Board signs;
- For TO2 institutes and the Princess Máxima Center for pediatric oncology, the chairman of the board of directors signs;
- The general director signs for Naturalis.

84. For the signature of the authorised body; can the own authorised body of the University Medical Centre sign, or does the authorised body of the corresponding university have to sign?
If an application comes from a UMC, and this UMC and the associated university are one legal entity, then the signature of the university's authorised body is mandatory. If they are two separate legal entities, the signature of the authorised board of the UMC is mandatory. If NWO has any questions about the signature, the university or the UMC has to deliver clarification of the correct authorised body.

85. The letter "confirmation of the competent body" asks for the signature of the authorised body, possibly the Board of Directors. Can any member of the Executive Board sign or must it be done by the chairman?
The answer can be found in the mandate or powers of the specific institute. These regulations stipulate which of the Board of Directors may sign on behalf of the institute. NWO does not make any statements about this.

d. Submission via ISAAC

86. Is there a manual available for submission via ISAAC?
Yes, a manual is available. On the homepage of ISAAC you will see a "help" button at the top right. Clicking this button opens a separate window from which you can download the ISAAC manual as a PDF.

87. The call lists various times when it is best to start submitting the application. Which is the right one now?
There are a number of moments in the submission process, and a minimum term applies to each moment. This is shown schematically below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepare submission</th>
<th>Create ISAAC account (if not yet available)</th>
<th>At least two working days before the start of submission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check whether logging in to an existing ISAAC account goes smoothly</td>
<td>At least two working days before the start of the submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitting the application</td>
<td>Check whether the organization of the applicant is listed in ISAAC*</td>
<td>At least five working days before the start of the submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start submission process in ISAAC*</td>
<td>At least three working days before the deadline for submission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See also question 95. During submission in ISAAC, the main applicant must enter the data of the applicants in ISAAC, including the applicant's organisation. You must select the organisation from a drop-down list. You cannot proceed with the submission if you do not select an organisation from the list. Therefore, check in good time whether all organisations of all applicants are listed in ISAAC. You can assume that the known knowledge institutions, as stated in Section 3.1.1 of the call for proposals, are already in the selection list, as are the institutions listed in Annex 6.1 of the call.

88. Which attachments should I add?
The mandatory and allowed attachments are listed in paragraphs 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 of the call for proposals NWA-ORC 2020/21. Adding attachments other than those specified in the call will not be accepted and may result in the application not taken into consideration.

89. Is it mandatory to indicate (non)referees?
No, this is not necessary, but it is allowed.

90. If I want to indicate (non)referees, when should I do this?
If you want to submit (non)referees, you must fill in the fields 'referees' and 'non-referees' in the pre-proposal. Referees assess only the full proposals and not the pre-proposal, but suggestions for referees and non-referees should be submitted in the pre-proposal phase.
91. **Organisation tab: what do I fill in under ‘the organisation responsible for the proposal’?**
Here you enter the organisation of the main applicant.

92. **Organisation tab: what do I fill in for ‘the organisations where the research is carried out’?**
Here you should enter the organisations of the main applicant and co-applicants.

93. **Co-applicants tab: should people, not organisations be specified?**
That’s right. In this tab, the researchers involved from the co-applicant organisations are entered (i.e. the persons listed in the second table in section 1.3 of the pre-proposal form).

94. **Do I have to enter my cofounders and cooperation partners in ISAAC?**
Co-funders and cooperation partners are not entered in one of the tabs in ISAAC. It is sufficient to indicate who are the cofounders and cooperation partners in the proposal forms.

95. **I cannot find the organisation of a consortium partner in ISAAC, now what? Can this organisation be added to the system?**
Yes, the organisation can be added to ISAAC. To do so, you must contact NWO via relatiebeheer@nwo.nl. Do this well in advance, at least 5 working days before the deadline.

**V. Assessment of research proposals**

96. **Which applications are compared with each other?**
The pre-proposals received are divided into clusters, which are compiled on the basis of matching routes. The number of clusters is determined by the number of applications received, and each cluster contains applications from the different budget ranges.

For each cluster, a multidisciplinary assessment committee will be established, which carries out the assessment procedure for both the pre- and full proposals from that cluster. These committees assess all applications according to the same assessment criteria.

97. **Are the number and content of the clusters fixed in advance?**
No, the number of clusters and the distribution of routes across the clusters is not pre-determined in advance.

98. **How is the assessment committee composed?**
When composing the committee, attention is paid to diversity, spread in disciplinary background and knowledge of the various types of research in the knowledge chain. Representation from societal parties (both public and private organisations) is also an important point for attention. This means that scientists/researchers and representatives from society take part in one and the same committee and jointly assess the proposals on the basis of the assessment criteria. When preparing your proposal, you should take into account that the members of the multidisciplinary assessment committee cannot necessarily be experts on all the subjects covered in the proposals.

99. **How do I know who is part of the assessment committee?**
The composition of the assessment committee is published, usually after the round has finished, on the [NWO website](https://www.nwo.nl).

100. **Is there a preference in the assessment for proposals with the Impact Outlook or the Impact Plan approach?**
No, there is no a priori preference for projects following either knowledge utilisation approach. A good score can be achieved with both approaches, provided the appropriate approach has been followed. Given the character and the goals of the NWA programme, NWO expects the Impact Plan approach to suit most of the applications.

101. **Do I get the same committee for the interviews as for the interview selection?**
In principle, the interviews are conducted by the same committee members as those who made the interview selection. It is possible that the interview committee is smaller or has a slightly different composition than the interview selection committee, for example due to the dropout of committee members.
102. How is the practice-based research assessed in the call?
Applied research is assessed as an integral part of the research proposal. In general, the committee checks whether the proposal pays attention to addressing the chain from fundamental research to the proposal of the results. The assessment committee is composed in such a way that it has knowledge of the various types of research.

103. Do the figureheads of the 25 NWA routes play a role in the assessment of proposals?
No, they have no role in this process.

104. In the assessment, are the NWA routes for which projects were awarded funding in previous rounds taken into account, so that projects on all routes are ultimately awarded in the NWA-ORC?
No, this does not play a role in the assessment. All applications are only assessed on the assessment criteria. In its funding advice to the Executive Board, the assessment committee can take so-called 'policy reasons' into account in its advice (see also section 4.1 in the call for proposals), such as spread over the 25 routes. However, in order to be eligible for funding, an application must at least receive the qualification "very good". This means that an application that relates to an "under-represented" route, but has been classified as "good" or "insufficient", will not be eligible for funding due to policy reasons.

105. The pre-proposals are assessed on the criterion "Alignment with the objectives of the NWA-ORC programme", how should I interpret this?
With criterion I, the pre-proposals are assessed on the objectives of the NWA-ORC programme as expressed in chapter 2 of the call. This criterion is not about the scientific quality of the pre-proposal. The scientific importance of the proposed project is assessed on the basis of criterion II. Further clarification of the assessment criteria can be found in section 4.2 of the call for proposals.

106. Do I have to motivate why I want to submit a full proposal despite a negative advice on my pre-proposal?
No, you only need to notify us within four weeks of obtaining the advice that you are going to submit a full proposal anyway. Due to our internal processes, it is important to us that NWO knows in time which consortia will submit a full proposal. At that point, however, you do not need to motivate why you want to submit a full proposal despite a negative advice.
You can provide a detailed explanation of the reasons for submitting a full proposals in the response form regarding the comments of the assessment committee on the pre-proposals. This form is a mandatory attachment to the full proposal and must therefore always be submitted, regardless of the advice on the pre-proposal. This motivation is also taken into account in the assessment by the committee.

107. Is information available about the interviews?
In the call for proposals, section 4.1, you will find a general explanation of the interviews. Specific information will be shared with the consortia selected for the interview, in the invitation for the interviews.

108. Why is there an extra step after the interviews with a science-wide committee and who is on this science-wide committee?
The science-wide step has been introduced because no budget distribution has been established across the various clusters. The assessment procedure up to and including the interviews is carried out in clusters. This means that after the interviews, a ranking per cluster was created. In order to ultimately be able to determine which applications are eligible for funding, a step must then take place in which the various rakings are discussed and which results in a final ranking. This step is then carried out by the science-wide committee. This committee consists of a delegation from each cluster committee.