Dutch Research Agenda

Theme: SDG Interactions and Policy Interventions in Developing Countries

Call for proposals

This is a revised version of the call for proposals (7 May 2020), with new submission deadlines, due to the corona outbreak. In section 3.4.2, the requirement to attach CVs of consortium members to full proposals has been added.
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Chapter 1: Introduction / Dutch Research Agenda

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Dutch National Research Agenda (NWA) describes broad, societal challenges which require a national approach whereby the Dutch (and global) knowledge economy as well as society at large can benefit from research performed in The Netherlands. The NWA was created by an innovative process with input from citizens and scientists: every Dutch resident was given the opportunity to submit questions online. The national knowledge community, under the guidance of the Knowledge Coalition, compiled the resulting questions into 140 scientific challenges, which have been translated into 25 pathways, i.e. routes.

The NWA programme above all aims to build bridges: between various scientific fields, between various forms of research (fundamental, applied, practice-oriented) and between diverse national and international knowledge agendas. Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, an approach spanning the entire knowledge chain and cooperation with societal partners including Ministries, corporations, start-ups and NGOs are therefore crucial features of the consortia involved in NWA projects and programmes.

The overarching ambition of the NWA programme 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 naturally to new research. This can only be achieved by building bridges today in order to address the scientific and societal challenges together, both locally and globally.

The call for proposals on the theme ‘Sustainable Development Goals Interactions and Policy Interventions in Developing Countries’ is part of programme line 2 of the NWA programme. In this programme line, NWO is working with relevant ministries. The initiator of this call is the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); the programme is managed by NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development.

This call for proposals aligns with:
- The NWA pathway Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for inclusive global development\(^1\), a research agenda established in 2016 to promote integrated and comprehensive analyses and understanding of SDG interactions, both synergies and trade-offs.
- The Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in particular its policy on Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (BHOS, 2018)\(^2\), which is guided by the SDG agenda. The policy promotes four closely connected objectives: preventing conflict and instability; reducing poverty and social inequality; promoting sustainable and inclusive growth and climate action worldwide; enhancing the Netherlands’ international earning capacity.

Applicants are advised to consult the full NWA pathway and the BHOS policy texts to obtain a better understanding of the background of this call for proposals.

A focus on knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation and application of results throughout the duration of the projects is of vital importance for this call. This contributes to the societal embedding of the call and creates support for the results to be used for policy and implementation.

The decision-making body for this NWA call is the NWO executive board. This also means that the NWO Grant Rules 2017 apply to this call.

\(^1\) https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/routes/?lang=en
1.2 Available budget

The budget available for this call for proposals is 6.15 million euros. The maximum budget for a single research project is 2 million euros.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

The call for proposals has two phases:

- Phase 1 submission of a preliminary proposal;
- Phase 2 submission of a full proposal.

The call for proposals is valid until the date on which the NWO executive board takes a decision on the full proposals. The deadlines for the two phases are stated in section 3.3 and the expected decision dates are shown in the schedule in section 4.1.
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2 Aim

2.1 Aim of the programme

The United Nations defined 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ‘make the world a better place in 2030’\(^2\). The first and overarching goal is to end extreme poverty, which according to the UN is ‘the biggest challenge of our time’. Other SDGs target for example health, education and potable drinking water, but also sustainable energy, reduced inequality and climate action.

Inclusive global development is a ‘wicked problem’. Insecurities, opposing values, changing conditions and mutual dependencies may complicate the pursuit of coherent solutions; partial solutions in one sector may evoke new challenges elsewhere. The separate goals therefore have to be addressed comprehensively. What is the impact of specific policy choices and interventions on sustainable development at large?

In the face of the complexity of these global challenges, new approaches are needed. The aim of this call for proposals is to generate new insights into the ways in which SDG goals interact – both positively and negatively – and about the impact on policy interventions and outcomes. This research programme aims to rigorously map, analyse and explain the complex interactions of SDGs to inform integrated and evidence-based SDG policies in the Netherlands and around the world. Evidence-based knowledge is needed to test and investigate the assumptions of the Netherlands BHOS policy.

The main focus of this programme is on developing countries, in particular in the focus regions (Middle East and North Africa, Sahel and Horn of Africa) and in the focus countries (Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see 2.3.1). Research should be sensitive to the BHOS policy’s cross-cutting aspects of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and youth employment (see 2.3.3). It should also reflect on the opportunities and risks digitalisation presents in the context of inclusive and sustainable development.

The main objectives of this programme are:
- To generate high-quality knowledge of SDG interactions and the need/scope for synergies between SDGs;
- To design, apply and learn from creative, out-of-box research and interactive approaches to systematically integrate, monitor and adapt the interweaving of research, development and policy-making;
- To provide evidence-based findings and tailored recommendations to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local policy makers in the focus regions/countries regarding more coherent and effective SDG policies and interventions;
- To create regular flexible and constructive interactions between policy makers and researchers so as to enhance mutual information and inspiration and to contribute to strengthened research capacity in the Netherlands and in the focus regions/countries studied.

The specific focus areas, approaches and characteristics of proposals and consortia are outlined in the sections below.

2.2 Research foci

This call for proposals focuses on three themes. Applicants have to address one of the three themes, but are encouraged to describe the potential linkages with the other two themes.


The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has formulated a number of policy questions for each of the three thematic research foci (see annex 6.2). These policy questions will primarily be used in the policy dialogues between research consortia and MFA (see sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4). These policy questions may also be used as a source of inspiration for the formulation of proposals. The policy questions may be refined along the way during the programme, based e.g. on policy changes or intermediate programme findings.

**2.2.1 Theme 1 – SDG governance and decision-making**

Implementing the universal and holistic SDG agenda demands new governance approaches. Research under this theme will address the challenges of SDG implementation with a focus on effective results in the developing world and with a specific (and changing) role for Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Specifically, collaboration for the global achievement of the SDGs is a political process involving a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. The current approach of SDG implementation in the Netherlands assumes that it is best to build on existing partnerships and frameworks, and to align these with the SDGs. Research funded under this theme will empirically investigate this assumption, identify existing bottlenecks and gaps in SDG implementation, and to provide detailed recommendations for enhanced SDG governance. Starting point for analysis are the main objectives of the Netherlands BHOS policy, in particular the objective of reducing poverty and social inequality.

Consortia are expected to focus on the political process of SDG governance in a multilevel perspective. SDG goals and targets have been designed to influence global, regional and national policy systems in complex arrangements that involve a range of stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental. Research will have to provide novel insights into how stakeholders (traditional and new) can best be encouraged to work towards achieving the SDGs in a more complementary, coherent and integrated manner (SDG17, partnership for the goals).

Research funded under this theme should take into account that the SDG agenda requires implementation by actors at the global, regional, national and subnational levels, which might result in various governance gaps. Also, SDG implementation might be negatively impacted in some regions by political instability, limitations in the rule of law or a shrinking civic space. These factors complicate an effective implementation of an integrated and inclusive SDG agenda.

Next to the political process, consortia have to study instruments that can best contribute to SDG attainment in developing countries, including (but not restricted to) leveraging ODA and other financing mechanisms, policy coherence for development, and the role of science and (digital) technology in initiating and scaling up transformations.

Consortia will need to embrace a multi-level and multi-actor perspective with an application to at least one of the countries in the BHOS focus regions. Research funded under this call will provide tailored recommendations to the Netherlands BHOS policy and to relevant policymakers and stakeholders in the studied country(ies) and around the world.

**2.2.2 Theme 2 – Addressing trade-offs between food and nutrition security (SDG2) and other SDGs**

Increased knowledge about the trade-offs between SDGs is crucial for enabling more informed policy making and implementation. This is of particular importance to the Netherlands BHOS policy, as this agenda aims to coherently integrate development cooperation with foreign trade in focus countries. While the conjunction of sustainable development and long-term economic investments and partnerships is often assumed, research funded under this theme should empirically investigate this assumption from the perspective of SDG2. SDG trade-offs and potential synergies will be studied for at least two localised food systems in developing countries. Research consortia should couple a location-based approach with a comprehensive and comparative approach.
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Consorția are expected to focus on SDG trade-offs and potential synergies, straddling the social, economic and ecological domains. Within food systems and value chains, the production and the consumption (nutrition) sides as well as the actors and processes in between (such as processors, transport and trade) are relevant, as is the ecological sustainability of agricultural systems. Interactions with interrelated domains outside food systems and value chains should also be studied, for example infrastructure development and logistics; climate policy; energy production and access; water availability, quality and use; adaptation potential and resilience; biodiversity loss; employment creation, skills development and health; and instability and security.

Research funded under this theme will, in consultation with policymakers and other stakeholders, identify and analyse SDG trade-offs in the selected localised food systems, main value chains and most important interrelated domains. It will compile good practices on how specific SDG trade-offs are addressed in other contexts and explore how local practices already partially deal with such trade-offs. Moreover, research will also investigate how to enhance potential synergies. Finally, research will focus on operationalising policy implications, in interaction with policy makers and other public, private and civil stakeholders, and on developing pilot interventions to address specific SDG trade-offs and enhance synergies.

2.2.3 Theme 3 – Climate change (SDG13) and conflict (SDG16)

Both climate change and (violent) conflict can be obstacles for the attainment of the SDGs. Sustainable development is difficult to achieve in a situation of political instability, let alone in a context of violent conflict. Climate change is often assumed to be a ‘threat amplifier’ for violent conflict, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. It is also a relevant factor during and after violent conflict, when peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction activities are going on. Especially in areas where the ecological context is already unpredictable and has led to natural disasters, there are many complex interactions between society, climate and violent conflict and development interventions. However, the empirical evidence for this relation is highly contested.

The relationship between climate change and conflict is much more complex than often assumed in policy discourse. Factors like demography, fluctuations in resource availability, the nature of governance, resource management regimes, inherent conflict dynamics, patterns of political and economic exclusion must be taken into account. In areas like the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and parts of the MENA and Central Asia regions, climate change may interact with other underlying conflict dynamics in society such as food insecurity, social and economic inequality, political oppression, and the existence of a large group of marginalised youth, but the precise mechanisms are far from clear and direct and therefore need further investigation. In many areas there are increasing tensions between nomadic livestock production systems and sedentary farm production systems, often translating themselves in intercommunity violence. The role of new communication technologies but also traditional conflict resolution mechanisms should be highlighted here as they provide avenues for aggravating conflicts and opportunities for conflict resolution.

Research under this theme will focus on unravelling these mechanisms in order to identify clearer intervention points for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It concerns the mapping and analysing of specific contexts, existing conflict dynamics and tipping points towards violent conflict and the role of climate change therein. Relevant questions may include how climate change affects fluctuations in the availability of resources and their management in situations of conflict and non-conflict, and focusing on the influence of improved technologies in soil and water conservation, the availability of small-scale water resources, and how this relates to larger issues like demographic growth and large-scale population mobility, religious extremism and the increasing role of the clandestine economy. Both a location-based case study in at least one of the BHOS focus countries and systematic and comparative analyses in other countries of regions and/or on other scales is required.

Research has to provide relevant insights regarding policy interventions in conflict dynamics and situations of violent conflict and enhancing resilience against climate risks. Also, research has to provide recommendations for incorporating climate-related risks in current development interventions in these areas and international/multilateral peace-keeping missions and/or peacebuilding efforts.
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2.3 Call framework

2.3.1 Geographical focus

The primary target of successful applications is on at least one of the countries of the Netherlands policy on Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (BHOS) in (mainly) the four focus regions: the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The Ministry has, in various levels of intensity, a development cooperation partnership with the following 27 countries:

- Least-developed countries with which the Netherlands maintain a broad SDG collaboration: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Palestinian, South-Sudan, Uganda, Yemen;
- Low and middle income partner countries for specific themes: Bangladesh, Benin, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mozambique, Somalia, Tunisia;
- Partnership countries as part of broader foreign policies: Algeria, Chad, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal.

The focus and plans of development cooperation with these countries can be consulted in one-page factsheets on the website of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.4

Applicants are requested to fine-tune their geographical focus to the research foci of this programme (section 2.2). Some countries present a more relevant and/or feasible setting for research into a specific programme theme than others. The geographical focus has to be clearly substantiated in the application form and will be assessed as part of the selection procedure.

The complexity and interrelatedness of sustainable development in today’s world challenges researchers to move beyond single local case studies towards an integrated multi-sited and/or multi-level approach, including comparison within and between developing countries (LMICs, according the OECD-DAC list5) and/or on a global scale.

2.3.2 Integrated research approach

The challenges addressed in this call are complex, interrelated and multi-scalar; successful implementation requires an integrated approach that spans the entire research and innovation chain:

- Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity: consortia should crosscut scientific disciplinary boundaries and integrate scientific and practitioners’ knowledge in a joint research process.
- Complementarity: proposals should be based on a thorough review of existing knowledge and should preferably be complementary to existing research initiatives and reinforce these where possible. Project teams are encouraged to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative and (quasi-)experimental research methods.
- Context analysis: proposals must be demonstrably linked to their political, economic, social and/or biophysical settings. These can be local, national, regional and/or global in nature. Context analysis is part of the research design. It should form the basis for effective stakeholder engagement and impact strategies. Firstly, it is important to understand how different actors – e.g. policy makers, political parties, religious authorities, community members (men, women and youth) – have different perspectives, opportunities and incentives to enable or block policy development and interventions. Secondly, factors such as institutional limits, power inequalities, available resources, capacities and capabilities may play a role.
- Sustainability and scalability: proposals should focus on the structural contribution (sustainability) and scalability (upscaling and/or outscaling) of results, innovations, interventions and approaches. How to cope with implementation challenges, such as constraints in government capacity, information availability, strains on other sectors of the economy, market conditions, risks connected to environmental change and political economy constraints?

4 https://www.government.nl/topics/development-cooperation/partners-in-development
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2.3.3 Inclusiveness and equality: Gender and youth employment

The impediments to global sustainable development are highly stratified. Inequality and exclusion are challenges to realising the SDG agenda. Research funded in this programme must explicitly include perspectives on inequality and exclusion. Research results should benefit vulnerable and excluded groups. There are manifold forms of inequality and exclusion; further to the BHOS policy framework, at least women and/or youth employment have to be targeted in research projects funded in this programme.

2.4 Characteristics of proposals within this call

2.4.1 Fair research collaboration

For research partnerships to be effective, they have to be fair. Proposals should be characterised by equal partnership and sustainable collaboration among the partners in the consortium and with relevant stakeholders. This includes gender equality. Evidence of such active engagement will be an element in the assessment of project proposals. It should be demonstrated through the report of the mandatory proposal elaboration workshop (see for more information section 4.1).

Consortium members, in close collaboration with team members and stakeholders, will steer the process of clarifying the demand; translate knowledge gaps into relevant research questions and approaches; formulate and submit the (preliminary) proposal; conduct, guide and advise on the research activities; coordinate and carry out communication and (possible) capacity strengthening activities; share (intermediary) research outputs with relevant practitioner communities; support and enhance the communication of the research outputs to a broader group of (local) stakeholders outside the consortium, and support the application of new knowledge and insights.

2.4.2 Impact Plan approach, including Theory of Change & Impact Pathway

An Impact Plan that sets out the potential for impact of the proposed research is required. This section describes a general approach; sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 detail specific approaches to this programme, including an iterative research approach with frequent policy dialogues.

The proposal should use a theory of change and impact pathway approach and state how approaches for achieving impact are integrated in the research design and conducted by the consortium in engagement with end users, such as practitioners, policymakers, and industry. A webinar on the Impact Plan approach will be held in December 2020 for applicants who have been invited to submit a full proposal.

The Impact Plan consists of the following elements:
- **Productive interactions**: Productive interactions are relational factors that support (intermediate) knowledge utilisation that can be steered intentionally. The productivity of the interaction defines its contribution to knowledge utilisation. Examples of productive interactions are: formulation of research questions and approaches jointly with potential end-users (co-design), joint execution of research projects and interactive dialogue on research results (co-creation). Interactions can be direct/personal, indirect or financial. The quantity as well as quality of the productive interactions forms an indicator for the potential for societal impact.
- **A Theory of Change** describes how the research process can contribute to societal/economic change, taking into account the context, actors involved and describing the sequence of logically-linked cause-effect relations. Developing a Theory of Change in a joint effort with research partners as well as stakeholders allows for making explicit which (and whose) problem is being tackled, and how the desired change is perceived to happen through research efforts. Projections on expected change will be based on a myriad of assumptions; documenting these assumptions allows for reflection on whether and how expected pathways to impact remain adequate or need adjustment. A Theory of Change is not fixed, but rather reflected on continuously throughout the research process. For this reason, it is also used as part of the monitoring, evaluation and learning trajectory.

6 NWO adheres to the Research Fairness Initiative of COHRED.
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- The Impact Pathway, which is part of the Theory of Change, is the visualisation of the change process following from research execution as described in the Theory of Change. It makes explicit how the research activities will lead to results (output) and how exchange of knowledge and the uptake of research output will contribute to desired changes in behaviour, relationships, actions and activities of partners and stakeholders (outcome) that are considered essential to achieving the desired impact.

- A Strategic Activity Planning spells out how the proposed productive interactions contribute to achieving outcomes. Outputs do not automatically lead to outcomes, thus strategies are needed of the research consortium to plan and monitor how their efforts will enhance the potential for outcomes. This planning should include specific activities for:
  - Stakeholder engagement: Who are the relevant stakeholders to engage with according to context analysis, how are the productive interactions organised and when?
  - Communication strategy: How are engagement dialogues organised and results exchanged and translated, and whose responsibility it is?
  - Capacity strengthening: How are required capacities (of consortium partners and stakeholders) strengthened in order to achieve the outcomes, how is this organised and whose responsibility is it?
  - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning: How are results of activities monitored and evaluated, such that assumptions can be tested and activities adjusted accordingly and whose responsibility is it?

- A Risk assessment entails a description of potential risks for the successful execution of your project and options for handling or mitigated these risks.

2.4.3 Iterative research approach

Research consortia have to adopt a flexible and stepwise research approach and project management, in order to accommodate the intermediate feedback and/or changing realities in policy and practice and to maximise the relevance, potential for use and the sustainability and scalability of results. Essential steps in this approach are the development and elaboration of the context analysis, the impact plan and a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) strategy. Throughout project duration, consortia will proactively engage with relevant stakeholders, including policy dialogues. As a consequence, research protocols, planning, work package design and budget may need further refinement or revision along the way to maximise the relevance and potential impact of research findings.

- Stepwise approach: a gradual development and elaboration approach from project idea via proposal development to project execution is taken. After the proposal elaboration phase (see section 4.1), the first 6 months of project execution – the inception stage – should be used to fully elaborate the project plans and strategies, including a thorough literature review.

- Stakeholder engagement and policy dialogues: after the inception phase and throughout project duration, consortia will continuously sound their intermediate findings with relevant stakeholders and accommodate the intermediate feedback and/or changing realities in policy and practice.

- Monitoring, evaluation and learning: rigorous MEL is the basis for learning and adapting the research approach during the project’s lifespan. Consortia have to demonstrate flexibility and agility to incorporate feedback and to respond to opportunities arising during project execution. Providing for innovative methods to apply and document monitoring and learning has to be an integral part of the research approach.

2.4.4 Joint programme activities and programme group

Research consortia funded within this programme are required to proactively collaborate with each other in all stages of research. The purpose of this collaboration is to facilitate productive interactions and learning, to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of this programme as a whole and to enhance the relevance, potential impact and sustainability of its results.
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Consortia together have to form a joint programme group throughout programme duration, with equal representation from all projects funded. This programme group will initiate and take ownership of the cross-cutting knowledge sharing, synthesis and scaling strategy, together with a supporting cross-cutting programme knowledge brokering initiative that will be contracted in parallel to this call for proposals. The programme group will report to and be monitored by the supervisory committee.

Collaboration between the research consortia aims to:
- facilitate frequent (semi-annual) policy dialogues with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local policy makers;
- enhance joint learning on contents and on approaches;
- promote programme-level knowledge sharing;
- facilitate synthesis, uptake and upscaling of findings, including the organisation of annual meetings and mid-term and final conferences.

The programme group will be encouraged to formulate innovative ideas for enhancing research uptake. NWO reserved a programme budget for joint programme activities. Implementation thereof requires prior NWO approval.

At project level, the main applicant, applicants and other consortium members are expected to contribute to knowledge exchange and knowledge utilisation at programme level, and to help organize and participate in programme meetings and activities. Therefore, consortia have to include expertise and respective work packages regarding synthesis and scaling and regarding knowledge exchange in their project design, planning and budget. Additionally, a maximum of 5 percent of the project budget may be reserved for project management.
3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Proposals must be submitted and carried out by a consortium of researchers and practitioners. For research partnerships to be effective, they have to be inclusive and fair (see section 2.4.1). All consortium members have to be involved in the formulation of the research questions, in the development of the proposal and in the execution of the research project. Consortia, consisting of organisations from various disciplines and backgrounds from across the globe, may apply for funding under this call. The minimum requirements for an eligible consortium are:

- One main applicant (defined in section 3.1.1.) holding a senior position at a research organisation located in the Netherlands;
- At least one applicant holding a senior position at a research organisation located in the developing country(ies) that is (are) targeted (see section 2.3.1 for geographical focus);
- One practitioner organisation (cooperation partner; defined in section 3.1.4.) located in the developing country(ies) that is (are) targeted.

Four categories of participants are differentiated within a consortium:

1. Main applicant
2. Applicant(s)
3. Co-funder(s)
4. Cooperation partners

3.1.1 Main applicant

The main applicant submits the proposal on behalf of the consortium and is the point of contact for NWO. The main applicant receives the funding on behalf of the consortium and is responsible for the project coherence, the results and the financial accountability. Researchers from the following knowledge institutions can act as the main applicant:

- Universities located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- University medical centres located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- KNAW and NWO institutes;
- Universities of applied sciences, as referred to in Article 1.8 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek, 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 for Paediatric Oncology.

The main applicant should:

- be in the possession of a PhD degree or have a lector/senior researcher appointment, and
- have an appointment for at least the duration of the application process and the proposed project.

The main applicant may only submit one proposal in this call. In addition, a main applicant may act only once as an applicant for another consortium.

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7 See Sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017. Applicants are referred to in the Grant Rules as co-applicants.
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3.1.2 Applicant(s)

An applicant participates in the consortium and receives funding via the main applicant. An applicant may participate in this capacity in no more than two consortia.

A consortium may have more than one applicant among its participants. Applicants can be located in the Netherlands and outside the Netherlands. A consortium includes at least one applicant holding a senior position at a research organisation located in the developing country(ies) that is (are) targeted (see section 2.3.1).

Applicants affiliated to an organisation listed in paragraph 3.1.1 can participate as an applicant. If the applicant is affiliated to an organisation not listed in paragraph 3.1.1, the organisation must meet the following cumulative conditions:
- it must have a public task;
- it must carry out research independently;
- it must have a non-profit status, other than for the purpose of further research.

Please note: These conditions will be assessed by NWO prior to submission of the full proposal.8

To this end, the applicant’s organisation should submit the following documents by email no later than 10 working days before the full proposal submission deadline:
- a recent extract from the Chamber of Commerce register;
- the deed of incorporation, articles of association or other formal document indicating the public task and the non-profit status;
- the latest available annual accounts accompanied by an auditor’s statement;
- If NWO has not assessed the applicants in advance, it cannot take the proposal into consideration.

3.1.3 Co-funder(s)

Co-funding is not mandatory in this call. It is, however, possible to add co-funders to the project proposal. 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 conditions with respect to co-funding are detailed in section 3.5.

Knowledge institutions permitted to participate in proposals in accordance with the description in section 3.1.1. may not participate as co-funders in this call for proposals. An exception applies in the case of TO2 institutes. A TO2 institute may participate in a consortium as a co-funder, provided it is not also participating in the same consortium as main applicant or applicant.

3.1.4 Cooperation partner(s)

A cooperation partner is a party that does not receive funding or contribute co-funding to the proposal, but is closely involved in implementing the research and/or in uptake of research findings. These could be parties involved through participation in an advisory, supervisory or user committee, or parties that are unable to capitalise their contribution in advance. A template for a declaration of commitment is available on the funding page of this call. The main applicant may also nominate external parties they wish to involve in promoting the uptake and use of knowledge generated.

A cooperation partner from a practitioners organisation is mandatory. Practitioners organisations include any type of organisation, other than research or higher education organisations, that represent a group of people actively engaged in policies and/or practices, including public organisations (governmental departments of line ministries, local or international governments, extension services, et cetera), as well as

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8 The 29 Dutch public knowledge organizations (for the list of these national knowledge institutions see: https://www.rathenau.nl/en/kennisgedreven-democratie/public-knowledge-organisations-netherlands/faq#faq-item1) and Public Universities in the targeted developing countries do not have to submit the mentioned documents in advance, since NWO assumes that these organizations in principle meet the conditions specified in section 3.1.2. If NWO considers further verification to be necessary after submission of the proposal, then the applicant of such an organization must still submit these documents at the request of NWO.
private non-profit organisations such as NGOs, cooperatives, social movements, unions and civil society organisations), et cetera.

A practitioners organisation has to meet the following cumulative criteria:
- it must have a public task;
- it must carry out research independently;
- it must have a non-profit status, other than for the purpose of further research.

Please note that personnel of these organisations is excluded from payment of salaries and research costs from the NWO grant, unless they are hired through the module 2 – work by third parties.

Research organisations looking for (private) practitioners partners are advised to contact the SDG Nederland portal: info@sdgnederland.nl (website: www.sdgnederland.nl).

3.2 What can be applied for

3.2.1 Available amount

A total budget of 6.15 million euros is available for this call for proposals, of which a maximum of 150,000 euros is reserved for proposal elaboration workshop grants. The maximum budget for a single research project is 2 million euros. An additional programme budget of a maximum of 0.5 million euros will be invested in programme-wide activities (cross-cutting programme knowledge brokering initiative and joint programme group).

At least 15 percent of the project budget should be earmarked for research uptake costs, including policy dialogues, stakeholder management and communication, both in the Netherlands and in the research country(ies). Applicants also have to budget for the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning requirements in this programme and for the contribution to and participation in the cross-cutting knowledge brokering and synthesis/upscaling objectives of this programme (see section 2.4). A maximum of 5 percent of the project budget may be reserved for project management.

3.2.2 Budget

The budget is built up using the NWO-wide standardised building blocks, the so-called budget modules. In the budget, applicants choose the combination of modules needed to answer the research question, and how often each module will be used.

In this call for proposals, the following modules are available:
1. Personnel costs
2. Material costs
3. Knowledge utilisation
4. Project management.

In this call, all modules can be used as often as is needed for the proposed research, except those for ‘research leave’ (for research leave, a maximum of 10 percent of the budget requested from NWO applies).

When the budget form is drawn up, applicants should explain how the proposed expenditure on the various items will contribute to the proposal. NWO will provide a budget form which must be submitted as a compulsory annex to the full proposal. In the budget template, minimum and/or indicated percentages per module are provided. Funding should be compliant or compatible with European legislation on state aid and public procurement9.

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Please note: the applicable budget template, which includes the new VSNU salary tables, which take effect from August 2020, will be made available shortly after 1 July 2020.

A specification of the costs that are covered per module can be found in Annex 6.1. This annex forms an integral part of this call for proposals.

### 3.3 When can applications be submitted

Deadline for the submission of a preliminary application is **15 September 2020, 14:00.00 hrs CE(S)T**.

Deadline for the submission of a full application is **26 January 2021, 14:00.00 hrs CE(S)T**.

Only consortia that have submitted a preliminary proposal may be invited to apply for a full proposal. Main applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal have to organize a mandatory multi-stakeholder proposal elaboration workshop prior to submitting the full proposal. Only those applicants can apply for an additional workshop grant of a maximum of 15,000 euros from NWO. The application procedure is detailed in section 4.1.

When submitting an application via ISAAC, the main applicant will need to enter additional details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least three working days before the deadline for this call. Applications received after the deadline will not be taken into consideration. For technical questions, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk (see section 5.1.2).

### 3.4 Preparing an application

#### 3.4.1 Application forms

The forms for preliminary and full proposals, and templates for the below specified annexes are available in ISAAC or on the funding page of this call. The instructions for preparing preliminary and full proposals can be found in the proposal forms. Note that the preliminary proposal contains a more concise project description, which – if the applicant is invited for the next phase – will have to be elaborated into a full proposal.

- Download the relevant documents from the online application system ISAAC or from the NWO website (at the foot of the web page for the relevant funding instrument).
- Complete the forms.
- Save the proposal form as a PDF file and upload it to ISAAC.
- Attach the requested annexes to the proposal.

Please note: The language to be used when preparing the proposal is English.

#### 3.4.2 Annexes

No annexes can be attached when submitting a preliminary proposal.

The following annexes have to be attached when submitting a full proposal:

- CVs of the consortium members (max. 1 page per member);
- letters of commitment from co-funders (if applicable);
- declarations of commitment from cooperation partners (optional; see section 3.1.4);
- the budget spreadsheet;
- two-page report of the mandatory multi-stakeholder proposal elaboration workshop.

Other types of annexes are not accepted. Annexes should be uploaded to ISAAC separately from the proposal. All annexes, with the exception of the budget spreadsheet, should be uploaded as PDF files. The budget spreadsheet should be uploaded to ISAAC as an Excel file.
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

Granted projects have a maximum duration of 5 years.

3.5.2 Conditions project start

Applicants are excepted to participate in a programme launch workshop immediately after their project has been awarded a grant (in April 2021) and to simultaneously initiate a project-level inception phase.

The project should formally start within three months after the date of the grant letter. At least one researcher must be appointed to the project at the time of its start. If the project has not started within three months, NWO can decide to revoke the granting decision.

The main applicant is responsible for ensuring the necessary documents for the start of the project are submitted to NWO, so that the project in its entirety can start on time.

The project can start if the following documents have been approved by NWO:
- A project notification form with information of project staff;
- A data management plan;
- A consortium agreement, signed by all consortium organisations;
- (If applicable) approval of relevant ethics committees;
- (If applicable) receipt by NWO of the first tranche of cash co-funding.

3.5.3 Co-funders

Co-funding is not mandatory in this call. It is, however, possible to add co-funders to the project proposal. A distinction is made 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 can consist of the use of resources from the organisations involved.

After a proposal has been awarded funding, NWO will invoice the private or public party that has pledged an in cash contribution. After the contribution has been received, the money will be allocated to the project.

Conditions for in kind co-funding

In kind co-funding should be capitalised, i.e. expressed in cash terms, consisting of the number of units against cost price or hours x hourly rate, and is part of the proposal budget.

The co-funding organisation must justify the rates used and provide evidence for them. NWO will determine whether the rates need to be adjusted.

Determining the value of in kind co-funding

The hourly rate can be determined on the basis of the maximum cost-covering rate including the associated premiums. The maximum rates are based on the standard productive hours of the organisation concerned. The following elements can be included to arrive at a cost-covering hourly rate:
- (average) gross salary for the post of the employee who will contribute to the project;
- holiday pay and 13th month (if applicable in the current collective labour agreement) in proportion to the deployment in terms of FTE;
- social security contributions;
- pension contributions.

10 A format will be made available on the funding page of this call.
Co-funders should justify the structure and amount of the quoted hourly rates in the letter of support. The maximum hourly rates for personnel in kind contributions from co-funders are € 125 per hour regardless of the applicable fiscal rules and regulations of the co-funder.

NWO may request justification and evidence for the rates applied, and may request adjustments.

A maximum rate of € 25 per hour applies for the use of students.

The following are permitted as in kind co-funding:

- The use of personnel and material contributions are accepted as co-funding on the condition that these are capitalised and are fully part of the project. This will be made clear in the description and the planning/phasing of the research. For equipment pledged, the actual current value will be used.
- It is possible that part of the research will be carried out by third parties. In the case of the use of personnel, the condition is that the expertise provided in the form of man-hours is not already available at the research institution(s) and is therefore specifically deployed for the project. The capitalisation of personnel deployed by third parties is subject to the value determination for in kind co-funding described above.
- A condition for material contributions in the form of services provided is that these can be identified as a new effort. The service should not already be available at the research knowledge institution(s) carrying out the research. It might be the case that a party wishes to use services already provided (for example a database or software) as in kind co-funding. However, this will not be automatically accepted. In such cases, the main applicant should contact NWO in advance. NWO will determine whether a concrete value can be established for the service provided.

Accountability for in kind co-funding

Private and public parties should justify their in kind contributions to NWO by providing the main applicant with an overview of costs contributed to the project. This should be submitted within three months of completion of the research project to which the contribution was made. The main applicant should submit the accountability overview from the co-funder(s) to NWO, together with the financial statement for the project, for the purpose of determining the funding. If the in kind contribution to be accounted for by a single co-funder is higher than € 125,000, then that co-funder should submit an auditor’s statement; in other cases, a written declaration from the main applicant stating that the in kind efforts contributed were actually allocated to the project will suffice.

If no accountability overview is provided for the pledged co-funding or if the pledged co-funding is not delivered, NWO has the right to withdraw all funding.

The following may not be contributed as co-funding (both in cash and in kind):

- funding awarded by NWO\footnote{Funding awarded by NWO is defined as funding obtained as the result of acceptance of a proposal submitted to NWO. It is irrelevant under which programme this funding was obtained or who the funding recipient was.};
- PPP allowance;
- co-funding originating from organisations where the main applicant or applicant(s) are employed;
- discounts on commercial rates, e.g. on materials, equipment and services;
- costs related to overhead, supervision, consultancy and/or participation in the user committee;
- costs of services that are conditional. The co-funding provided may not be subject to any conditions. The provision of the co-funding does not depend on whether a certain stage in the research plan is achieved (e.g. go/no-go moment);
- costs that are not reimbursed according to the call for proposals;
- costs of equipment if one of the (main) objectives of the proposal is the improvement or creation of added value for this equipment.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / Dutch Research Agenda

Letter of support from participating co-funders
In a letter of support, the co-funder declares support for both the content and financial aspects of the project and confirms the co-funding pledge. The letter of support from all co-funders is a compulsory annex to the full proposal. The letter should be signed by an authorised signatory of the co-funder and printed on the co-funder’s headed stationery. If the proposal is awarded funding, NWO will ask the co-funder to confirm the contribution(s) (e.g. for invoicing purposes). NWO will make a standard template available for the letter of support.

3.5.4 Declarations of commitment from cooperation partners
Cooperation partners (see Section 3.1.4) cannot provide letters of support as they do not contribute co-funding to the project. However, cooperation partners may provide a declaration of commitment in which they state their reasons for acting as a cooperation partner in the research and what their role within the project will be. Declarations of commitment are not compulsory.

3.5.5 Accountability and project closure
During the project, the main applicant will be responsible for reports on the project’s progress. With a view to monitoring the progress of the project, NWO will request interim reports on its content (see section on Monitoring and Evaluation below).

Upon completion of a project, final reports will be requested on both the content and the finances of the project. The final amount of funding (and co-funding) will be determined after approval.

3.5.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NWO will be responsible for the content monitoring of proposals that have been awarded funding. To reinforce this and to increase support for implementation of the projects, NWO will set up an international supervisory committee. The supervisory committee will have a broad membership, including researchers, societal stakeholders, representatives from NWO-WOTRO and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other key stakeholders. The committee will monitor linkages between the various themes and monitor the progress of projects and the results achieved, focusing on knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation, also in the shape of application of results for policy dialogue. Progress reports and assessments thereof will be used as input for programme meetings and workshops and for the policy dialogues and synthesis/upscaling trajectories.

Annual progress reports
Annually, consortia must submit a report to inform NWO on the overall project progress with regard to findings, recommendations and experiences. Reporting will be centred around the reflective approach with regard to research activities as spelled out the Impact plan, including a presentation of revisions made in the reporting period (to Theory of Change and Impact Pathway, the underlying assumptions and the indicators as well as scheduled strategic activities). The main applicant will receive instructions and a format for this report in advance. The annual reports will be assessed by the supervisory committee.

Mid-term evaluation
Two years after the start of the project, a mid-term evaluation will take place. The first step in this procedure is a self-assessment by consortia, based on a mid-term workshop with relevant partners and stakeholders. Consortia should include this workshop in their budget. The mid-term report will be based on the conclusions of the workshop, including a reflection on and (if applicable) revisions to the Impact Plan (Theory of Change and Impact Pathway, the underlying assumptions and the indicators as well as scheduled strategic activities). Reports will include a section in which the sustainability of findings is presented. The supervisory committee will evaluate the progress of the projects based on mid-term reports submitted by the consortia. Interviews and/or field visits may be organised to evaluate the progress and potential for impact of the projects. The supervisory committee will give recommendations to consortia based on their evaluations. Results of the mid-term review will be used as input for a mid-term programme conference.
Final reporting
A substantive final report should be submitted within three months after the end of the project’s duration, detailing how the project has achieved change, in terms of output as well as outcomes, including reflection on tested assumptions and achievement on indicators. The final report also includes an outlook on sustainability of findings post-project duration. As part of this, consortia will be asked to complete a self-assessment, and hold a final workshop, including interaction with stakeholders external to the consortium. The final substantive report will be evaluated by the supervisory committee. The final workshop should be taken into account in the consortium’s budget.

Simultaneously, the main applicant and the controller/financial manager of the main applicants’ institution should submit a signed financial end report, organised according to the budget lines of the approved NWO budget. The report should detail, among others, the effective duration (period) and size (fte) of the personnel appointed to the project using the module Personnel, and, if applicable, how eventual replacements were arranged. The realised in cash and in kind co-financing should also be accounted for. NWO reserves the right to conduct an external financial audit.

NWO reserves the right to externally evaluate projects financed under this call. The project ends with the issuing of the grant settlement decision. This decision is taken after approval of the final document(s) by NWO.

A flexible and iterative approach
As detailed in section 2.4.3, consortia have to adopt a flexible research design and reflexive project management. NWO encourages flexibility in conducting research, by which it is possible for researchers to coordinate with policy makers directly and refine research as appropriate. Major and substantial project deviations will have to be approved by NWO prior to implementation and are subject to the NWO Grant Rules 2017.

Joint programme activities
As detailed in section 2.4.4, research consortia funded within this programme are required to proactively collaborate with each other in all stages of research. Consortia have to form a programme team, with representation from all projects funded.

3.5.7 Consortium agreement
For research partnerships to be effective, they have to be fair. The consortium partners must sign a consortium agreement before the start of a project which has been awarded funding. A Consortium Agreement regulates consortium governance, task division, resource management and ownership of results between the collaborating consortium organisations. The initiative for producing these agreements lies with the main applicant. NWO will assess the agreements made for compliance with the NWO Grant Rules 2017 and the specific conditions in this call for proposals.

3.5.8 Intellectual Property & Publications (IP&P)
To increase the likelihood of new inventions and innovations, the acquisition, maintenance and use of intellectual property rights (patents and copyrights) by knowledge institutions is encouraged. It is important that research results are treated responsibly with a view to contributing to science and applying the knowledge concerned. The aim is both to ensure that the research results can be exploited and published as widely as possible, and to encourage collaboration between the knowledge chain and (semi-)public partners and industry. The NWO Grant Rules 2017 provide possibilities for the applicants to acquire intellectual property (IP) rights and possibly to transfer or license these to co-funders.

Further to the principles of Socially Responsible Licensing,12 ownership of and access to Results will be regulated in such a way as to encourage consortium partners to strive for knowledge transfer to Partners

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and/or third parties from developing countries and/or to translate the knowledge and discoveries that emerge from the research as quickly as possible into products or services that are accessible, applicable and affordable for developing countries. The following additional regulations apply:

2. All Results are and will continue to be available to all Parties for the purpose of execution of the Project and for non-commercial research and education and to stimulate research and innovation systems, in particular in developing countries.

3. Intellectual Property Rights to Results are owned by the Party that generated such Result. In the event Parties generate Results jointly, the Intellectual Property Rights to such Results are owned jointly by those Parties.

4. In the event a Result is capable of protection by Intellectual Property Rights and one or more of the Parties wish to protect such Result, the Parties, together with NWO-WOTRO will consult and agree who will bear the cost of such protection. Intellectual Property Rights are applied for in the name of the owning Party(ies).

5. In the event a Private Party wishes to obtain or (non)exclusively license Results that are protected by Intellectual Property Rights for commercial purposes, such Private Party, the Party(ies) owning the Intellectual Property and WOTRO shall negotiate an agreement in which at least the following issues are incorporated:
   a. compensation in conformity with the market price of such Results. 50% of the revenues received is allocated to the Academic Party that generated the Results, the other 50% is allocated to WOTRO, to be reinvested in future research funding;
   b. an obligation for the Private Party to enhance the accessibility, affordability and applicability of Results in developing countries and, where relevant, include support of humanitarian use licenses, independent of any market value;
   c. an obligation for the Private Party to grant affordable licenses to the Results to third parties from developing countries that need such licenses to exploit results from follow up research.

6. All Results of the Project for which it is decided not to apply for a patent and/or which have appeared to be not patentable or otherwise protected through intellectual property rights, shall become public knowledge and be made available through Open Access.

3.5.9 Publications

When publishing the results of the subsidised research, the support by NWO should be mentioned.

3.5.10 Open Access

As a signatory to 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 an full open access journal,
- depositing a version of the article in a repository or
- publication in a hybrid journal covered by one of the agreements between the VSNU and publishers.

See www.openaccess.nl.

Any costs for publication in full open access journals can be incurred in the project budget. NWO does not reimburse costs for publications in hybrid journals. These conditions apply to all forms of scholarly publications arising from grants awarded on the basis of this call for proposals. Also academic monographs, edited volumes, proceedings and book chapters. For more information on the NWO’s open access policy, see: www.nwo.nl/openscience
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. As a minimum, NWO requires that the data underpinning research papers should be made available at the time of the article’s publication. 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.

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.

Data management plan
After a proposal has been awarded funding, consortia should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. In this plan, consortia describe 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, 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 www.nwo.nl/datamanagement-en.

3.5.12 Data analytics

In case external primary data regarding developing countries are used in the research, consortia have to give priority to datasets collected by local public institutes, such as National Statistics Bureaus (NBSs) and National Resource Mapping Organisations (NRMOS). If possible and relevant, consortia are encouraged to proactively involve these institutes in elements of the research process, and, by doing so, to contribute to their strengthened institutional capacity.

3.5.13 Research Integrity and Research Ethics

As stipulated in the 2017 NWO Grant Rules, researchers funded by NWO have to act in accordance with the nationally and internationally accepted standards of scientific activity, as set out in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity13. In order to guide research activities in – and with partners from – developing countries, consortia funded in this call also have to adhere to the Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings14. In case research is conducted in fragile states, it is advised to consult the Security Guidelines for field research in complex, remote and hazardous places15.

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13 https://www.vsnu.nl/files/documents/Netherlands%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20Research%20Integrity%202018.pdf
14 http://www.globalcodeofconduct.org/
Any research proposal that raises ethical issues must be carefully considered in advance. The applicants need to assess what ethical challenges will be met in the proposed research, consider how these will be addressed, and how ethical clearance will be obtained. In the Netherlands, certain research projects require a statement of approval from a recognised (medical) ethics review committee or an animal experiments committee. In addition, some research proposals require a licence under the Population Screening Act (WBO). Similar laws and regulations in the respective developing countries must be adhered to if required and applicable. Applicants must subscribe to and comply with the prevailing codes.

For complex questions related to ethical issues, NWO reserves the right to consult an external adviser. If after consulting the applicant, NWO is of the opinion that an ethical assessment is needed for the application, then the applicant is obliged to take the necessary measures for such an assessment. If the applicant fails to obtain the necessary statement of approval from an ethics review committee then the grant shall be immediately withdrawn.

3.5.14 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.

3.5.15 Sustainability impact strategy

In order to reduce their carbon footprint, consortia are advised to develop a sustainability impact strategy, including an explicit less-flying strategy and novel attempts at more virtual, remote collaboration.

3.6 Submitting an application

Applications can only be submitted via the online application system ISAAC. Applications not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

A main applicant must submit the application via his/her own ISAAC account. If the main applicant does not yet have an ISAAC account, it should be created at least three working days before the application is submitted, to ensure that any registration problems can be resolved in time. If the main applicant already has an NWO account, then he/she does not need to create a new account to submit an application.

In addition to the completed forms, when you submit your proposal to ISAAC you will also need to enter details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least three working days before the deadline of this call so that any problems with your account or data entry can be resolved. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see section 5.1.2.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / Dutch Research Agenda

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process (www.nwo.nl/en/documents/nwo/legal/nwo-code-of-conduct-on-conflicts-of-interest).

4.1.1 Admissibility

The first step in the assessment procedure is to test whether a preliminary proposal or full proposal is admissible. Only those proposals that satisfy the criteria stated in Chapter 3 are admissible and will be taken into consideration.

If correction of a proposal is necessary and possible, the main applicant will be given the opportunity once to adjust his or her proposal. If the proposal is not corrected within the given time frame of two working days, NWO will not include the proposal in the assessment process. Corrected proposals will, after approval of eligibility by NWO, be included in the assessment procedure. The main applicant will receive written confirmation of receipt within two weeks after the deadline for submitting proposals of this call, stating whether or not the application has been accepted into the selection procedure.

4.1.2 Selection procedure and preliminary proposals

If eligible, preliminary proposals will be reviewed by an International Advisory Committee (IAC) on the basis of the selection criteria mentioned in section 4.2. Applicants of a restricted number of high potential proposals will be invited to elaborate their proposal into a full proposal. All other applicants will not be invited to submit a full proposal. NWO intends to award one grant per call theme; a maximum amount of 2 million euros is available per theme.

4.1.3 Proposal elaboration workshop

Engagement of relevant stakeholders and joint problem analysis is a prerequisite in the process of elaboration of the full proposal. In order to facilitate this process and enhance collaboration with and input from all consortium partners and other relevant stakeholders a collaborative workshop needs to be organised by the consortia that will submit a full proposal. A budget for this workshop needs to be described in the preliminary proposal; an additional workshop grant of a maximum of 15,000 euros can be applied for by main applicants who have been advised to submit a full proposal for organising this workshop. The precise granting procedure will be corresponded in due time.

4.1.4 Webinar

A webinar on the Impact Plan approach will be held in December 2020. In this webinar, you will be given more information regarding this approach, as well as have the opportunity to ask questions. Participation in this webinar is advised, but not mandatory. More information, including the link to join the webinar, will be made available on the programme page.

4.1.5 Selection procedure full proposals

Based on the assessment of their preliminary proposals, main applicants will receive notice on whether or not they are invited to submit a full proposal. If eligible, full proposals will be reviewed by the International Advisory Committee on the basis of the selection criteria mentioned in section 4.2. The criteria for full proposals are more elaborate than for preliminary proposals. Note that no external peer review will be sought in this assessment procedure.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / Dutch Research Agenda

4.1.6 Interview

Each consortium will be offered an opportunity to present and explain the proposal and to answer to questions and comments of the IAC. During a subsequent assessment meeting, the IAC will discuss all proposals and interview proceedings, will assess the overall quality of each proposal and subsequently will rank the proposals according to the three call themes. Based on the ranking, the IAC will present an advice on funding to the executive board of NWO. The IAC may also provide an advice to NWO regarding the feasibility of the planning and the value for money of the project proposal.

4.1.7 Decision

The executive board of NWO will verify that the procedure has been conducted properly before taking a decision on granting. In principle, a maximum of one proposal per call theme can be granted; the executive board of NWO may decide to deviate from the allocation of means per theme based on the ranking advice provided by the IAC. There will be three separate rankings, one for each theme. Only proposals that have an overall qualification of at least ‘very good’ will be taken into account for funding. The executive board of NWO will decide on funding of proposals, taking advice from the IAC into consideration and depending on the available call budget.

All main applicants will be informed in writing about the outcome of the selection procedure. NWO gives all full proposals a qualification. The applicant is informed of this qualification when the decision about whether or not to award funding is announced. For further information about the qualifications see www.nwo.nl/qualifications.

The data management section in the proposal is not evaluated and is therefore not included in the decision on whether to award funding. However, the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section. After a proposal has been awarded funding, the applicant should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants can draw on the committee’s recommendations when writing the data management plan. Projects which have been awarded funding can start as soon as the data management plan has been approved by NWO.

4.1.8 Composition of the committee

The IAC has an advisory role and consists of international members, both with academic and practitioner background. Members have broad expertise regarding SDGs interactions and policy interventions in developing countries and specific expertise regarding one or more of the call themes. A representative of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be an observer member of the IAC. The composition of the IAC will be published on the programme website after the assessment procedure has been completed. The IAC will be dissolved after the project grants have been awarded.

Subsequently, NWO will install a supervisory committee that will supervise, monitor and evaluate the research projects granted throughout project duration.

4.1.9 Indicative timetable

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<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 September 2020 14:00 hrs CE(S)T</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting preliminary proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early November 2020</td>
<td>Decision on invitation for full proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2020 – January 2021</td>
<td>Mandatory proposal elaboration workshop; Optional training/webinar on Theory of Change and Impact Pathway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 January 2021 14:00 hrs CE(S)T</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting full proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2021</td>
<td>Assessment of full proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early March 2021</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
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Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / Dutch Research Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early April 2021</td>
<td>Decision on funding by NWO executive board; NWO informs the applicants about the decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2021</td>
<td>Programme start: opening workshop; projects begin inception phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2021</td>
<td>Latest administrative start of funded projects</td>
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Whilst NWO aims to meet the target dates provided above, it reserves the right to change these at any stage. Substantial deviations will be published on the programme website.

4.2 Criteria

Preliminary proposals and full proposals will be assessed on the basis of the following three criteria:

I. Quality of the research proposal;
   - Originality and innovativeness: creative, out-of-the-box idea or approach.
   - Adequacy and feasibility of the inter- and transdisciplinary research approach, including the clarity and validity of the conceptual framework.

II. Quality of the consortium
   - Quality, coherence and complementarity of the consortium, across disciplines and the knowledge chain.
   - Quality of the proposal elaboration workshop plan.

III. Potential scientific and/or societal breakthroughs
   - Relevance for society, regarding the focus of the call, including gender and youth.
   - Policy relevance: connection to relevant policy actors and strategies, including assumptions, in the Netherlands and in focus region(s)/country(ies) and quality of the policy dialogue plan.

4.2.1 Criteria preliminary proposals

I. Quality of the research proposal
   - Originality and innovativeness: creative, out-of-the-box idea or approach.
   - Scientific importance of the proposed research project and complementarity to other research programmes or (inter)national research agendas.
   - Adequacy and feasibility of the inter- and transdisciplinary research approach, including the clarity and validity of the conceptual framework, research questions and methodology.
   - Quality of the comparative design and of potential synthesis.

II. Quality of the consortium
   - Quality, coherence and complementarity of the consortium, across disciplines and the knowledge chain.
   - Fairness of the consortium: equitable governance, task division, resource management and ownership of results.
   - Sustainability and scaling: potential for improving the capabilities of individuals and institutes to learn and innovate and create a supportive learning environment.
   - Iterative research approach: resolution and flexibility of the project management.

III. Potential scientific and/or societal breakthroughs
   - Relevance for society, regarding the focus of the call, including gender and youth.
   - Policy relevance: connection to relevant policy actors and strategies, including assumptions, in the Netherlands and in focus region(s)/country(ies) and quality of the policy dialogue plan.
III. Potential scientific and/or societal breakthroughs
   – Relevance for society, regarding the focus of the call, including gender and youth.
   – Policy relevance: connection to relevant policy actors and strategies, including assumptions, in the Netherlands and in focus region(s)/country(ies) and quality of the policy dialogue plan.
   – Relevance and feasibility of the geographical focus.
   – Quality and ambition of the Impact Plan.
5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions
For specific questions on this call for proposals please contact:
– Dr Martijn Wienia (nwa-sdg@nwo.nl, +31 (0)70-3494352, available Monday, Thursday and Friday);
– Dr Nadine Herold (nwa-sdg@nwo.nl, +31 (0)70-3440910, available Monday-Thursday).

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.
6 Annexes

6.1 Budget modules

For a research proposal in this round, a maximum of € 2,000,000 can be applied for. 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>Maximum amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>according to VSNU or NFU rates(^{16})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate in engineering (PDEng)</td>
<td>in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s), according to VSNU or NFU rates(^{16})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoc</td>
<td>according to VSNU or NFU rates(^{16})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-scientific staff (NSS) at universities</td>
<td>according to VSNU or NFU rates(^{16}), in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other scientific staff (OSS) at universities</td>
<td>in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research leave</td>
<td>maximum of 10% of the budget requested from NWO applies, according to VSNU or NFU rates(^{16})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel universities of applied sciences and other institutions (such as applied research organisations (TO2) and SMEs)</td>
<td>rates based on Handleiding Overheidstarieven 2017 (HOT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material costs</td>
<td>€ 15,000 per year per scientific position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge utilisation</td>
<td>at least 15% of the total budget applied for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>maximum of 5% of the total budget requested from NWO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the budget for the proposal is drawn up, arguments should be provided about how the proposed expenditures in the various categories will contribute to the proposal. NWO will make a budget form available which must be submitted as an annex to the proposal. The funding should be in agreement with the European legislation for state support and tendering\(^{17}\).

6.1.1 Personnel costs

\(^{16}\) For personnel outside the Netherlands, the local rates are reimbursed up to a maximum of the VSNU rates.

\(^{17}\) See Directive EU 1407/2013 dated 18/12/2013, EU 651/2014 dated 17/06/2014 and the announcement of the European Commission 2014/C 198/01 to check whether there is compliance with these rules for state support. For the tendering rules, we refer you to: http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0032203/2016-07-01
Funding for the salary costs of personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research can be applied for. A distinction is made between personnel appointed at an academic institute and personnel appointed at other institutes.

The organisation where the personnel is appointed determines according to which rates the salary costs will be granted:
- For university appointments, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the VSNU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (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 (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).
- For personnel employed outside the Netherlands, the local rates are reimbursed up to a maximum of the VSNU rates (max. 4,500 euros per month).

**Personnel academic institutes**

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.

**PhD (including MD-PhD)**

A PhD 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.

For the employment of PhD students from abroad, three possible modalities are in place:
- Full employment by a research organisation in the Netherlands in accordance with the VSNU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded.
- Employment by a research organisation abroad with a net monthly living allowance to cover all personal costs, including housing, organisational overhead, medical costs, insurances, travel to and from work, et cetera. The regulations of the research organisations involved should be guiding for determining the amount of the living allowances. The local rates are reimbursed up to a maximum of the VSNU rates.
- Sandwich PhD students from developing countries: PhD students with affiliation to research organisations both abroad and in the Netherlands will be remunerated as follows: whilst in the Netherlands, PhD students have to be employed in accordance with the VSNU salary tables. Whilst in developing countries, costs are reimbursed according to in-country regulations and up to a maximum of the VSNU rates. These different tariffs should be specified in the budget.

The following additional conditions are:
- PhD students are offered full participation in the applicable Graduate School training and services offered by the respective research organisation(s);
- Students have to stay in the Netherlands for at least 12 months during at least two visits;

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18 Universities and university medical centres located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, NWO- and KNAW institutes, the Netherlands Cancer Institute, the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, researchers from the DUBBLE Beamline at the ESRF in Grenoble, NCB Naturalis, Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL), Princes Máxima Center for pediatric oncology.
19 Universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes, Governmental Knowledge Institutes and other organisations that participate as applicant and are not the academic institutes mentioned above.
20 In line with the NWO strategy, Industrial and Societal Doctorates are also understood to fall under this category. If an Industrial or Societal Doctorate is appointed, the private or public organisation where the doctorate will obtain his or her PhD will be responsible for (part of) the salary costs.
c. Both research organisations in the Netherlands and abroad commit to effective and fluent support and supervision of the project and the student. Next to these conditions, the pursuit of a double degree – a PhD degree from both research organisations – is encouraged. Fulfilment of these conditions has to be explained in the project notification form upon funding.

Professional Doctorate in Engineering (PDEng)
Funding for the appointment of a PDEng can only be applied for if funding for a PhD or postdoc is also applied for. 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 staff (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 or postdoc is also applied for. This includes personnel such as student assistants, programmers, technical assistants or analysts. Depending on the level of the position, the appropriate salary table for non-scientific staff at MBO, HBO or university level applies.

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 staff (OSS) at universities
Budget for other scientific personnel such as AIOS (doctor training to be a specialist), ANIOS (doctor not training to be a specialist), scientific programmers or employees with a master’s degree can only be applied for if funding for a PhD or postdoc is also applied for. For this category, a maximum of € 100,000 can be applied for.

The size of the appointment is at least 6 full-time months and 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.

Research leave for applicants
With this budget module, funding can be requested for the research leave costs of the main and/or co-applicant(s). The employer of the applicant concerned can use this to cover the costs of relinquishing him or her 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 applicant(s) for activities in the context of the project. The proposal must describe which activities in the context of the project the applicant(s) will carry out in the time relinquished.

The maximum amount of research leave that can be applied for may not be more than 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) at the time the grant is awarded (www.nwo.nl/salary-tables).
Chapter 6: Annexes / Dutch Research Agenda

Personnel universities of applied sciences and other institutes

For the funding of salary costs of personnel employed at a university of applied sciences, TO2 institute, government knowledge institutions and other non-academic organisations in the category applicants (see paragraph 3.1.2), the following maximum rates (hours/day) are used in accordance with the Handleiding Overheidstarieven 2017 (HOT). The HOT table *kostendekkend* is used.

6.1.2 Material costs

For academic institution, for each fte scientific position (PhD, postdoc, PDEng) applied for, a maximum of €15,000 material budget can be applied for per year of the appointment.

For universities of applied sciences and other institutes, per 0.2 fte scientific employee (junior, medior and senior level, with a minimum appointment of 0.2 fte for a period of 12 months), a maximum of €15,000 material budget can be applied for each year of the appointment.

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. cleanroom, synchrotron, etc.)
- work by third parties (e.g. laboratory analyses, data collection, etc.)
- personnel costs for the appointment of a post-doc and/or non-scientific personnel for a smaller appointment size than those offered in the personnel budget modules

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

*Implementation costs*
- national symposium/conference/workshop organised within the research project
- costs for 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, desks, etc.);
- maintenance and insurance costs.

Applicants employed by a research organisation in developing countries may apply for overhead costs up to a maximum of 5% over the overall project budget dispersed to their organisations.

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

The aim of this budget module is to facilitate the use of the knowledge that emerges from the research. In view of the aim and objectives of this research programme, in the proposal at least 15% of the total budget requested from NWO must be reserved for activities in this area.

Because knowledge utilisation takes many different forms in different scientific fields, it is up to the applicant to specify the costs required, e.g. costs of producing a teaching package, conducting a feasibility study into potential applications, or filing a patent application.

The budget applied for should be adequately specified in the proposal.

6.1.4 Project management

Project management is understood to include the optimal shaping of the organisation structure of the consortium, support of the consortium and the main applicant, safeguarding the coherency, progress and coherency of project, and harmonisation between the subprojects. These tasks may also be realised by external parties.

The funding requested for project management can consist of material or implementation costs and personnel costs. Budget for project management can be reserved up to a maximum of 5% of the total budget requested from NWO. To determine the hourly rate, the maximum cost-covering rate including the associated premiums (see paragraph 3.2.1 ‘personnel other institutes’ for the calculation of the cost-covering rate) should be used, to a maximum of € 119 per hour. It is allowed to let external parties execute project management tasks, but the part of the (commercial) hourly rate that exceeds the rates stated is not eligible for funding and therefore cannot be included in the budget.

6.2 Illustrative policy questions for the three thematic research foci

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has formulated a selection of illustrative policy questions for each of the three thematic research foci. These policy questions may be used as a source of inspiration for the formulation of proposals, and will form the basis of further policy dialogues between research consortia and the MFA (see sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4). The policy questions may be refined along the way during the programme, based amongst others on policy changes or intermediate programme findings.

6.2.1 Theme 1 – SDG governance and decision-making

Political process

1. **Multilateral**: decision-making regarding the global achievement of the SDGs takes place in various multilateral and regional organisations and conferences e.g. the UN, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), EU, AU, OECD and the World Economic Forum (WEF). How can the Netherlands leverage its influence in multilateral decision-making for the benefit of the SDGs? How do other states operate in this context and what can be learned from those experiences? What are relevant partners and platforms? How to manage the diversity of actors and multi-stakeholder partnerships with (local) governments, private and financial sector, philanthropy, knowledge institutions and civil society and youth organisations?

2. **Bilateral**: countries, and various stakeholders within, all have a responsibility to implement the SDGs. The BHOS policy intends to align with the SDG strategies and plans of countries in the focus regions in which the Netherlands concentrates its activities. What opportunities arise for the Netherlands to improve its engagement, both in terms of involvement of stakeholders, and using the SDG agenda as an instrument for dialogue? A complicating factor is that reduced collaboration with and financing of governments in these regions allows for fewer dialogue options. How and with whom can SDG progress be made in this context, often characterised by failing democracy and rule of law and shrinking civic space? To what extent can the SDG...
agenda be implemented amidst conflict, in the absence of properly functioning institutions? Could the pursuit of specific SDGs contribute to institution building? How does (shrinking) civic space make or break the attainment of SDGs that are pivotal to the Netherlands? How to stimulate private sector development in such contexts? What governance opportunities emanate from the collaboration with non-state actors?

Instruments

1. **Financial:** according to UNCTAD estimates, 2.5 trillion dollars of additional investments are required annually to finance the required SDG-investments in developing countries. For LDCs, ODA continues to be main source of funding, but this will not be enough. How to mobilise additional means and promote the ‘Financing for Development’ agenda? What is the leverage effect of Dutch ODA and how can it be increased? What is the impact of the various financial flows on SDG attainment and how can this impact be enhanced? How to make best use of the available bilateral and multilateral arrangements and instruments?

2. **Policy coherence for development (PCD):** to release the global finance for the SDGs, it is necessary to tackle specific bottlenecks that impede developing countries in the realisation of the SDGs. The PCD Action Plan, coordinated by the MFA, envisages to do so by improving the coherence between domestic policy domains that affect developing countries. The Action Plan (revised in 2018) focuses on five themes for which the Netherlands can make a substantial positive contribution. The Action Plan is additional to integrated policy in the areas of BHOS, foreign policy and security, and migration. Also, the integrated assessment framework (IAK) has been revised in 2019 to clarify the contribution of laws and policies to the SDGs, and specifically the effects on developing countries. Are these instruments, and their thematic foci, fit for purpose in view of ongoing trends (e.g. population growth, inequality and climate change) towards 2030?

3. **Science and technology:** It is known now that certain SDGs will not be achieved or even fall increasingly beyond reach. Transformations are required to counter these trends, initiated by ‘out-of-the-box thinkers’ in science, technology and culture from outside the current political-economic system. What is the best policy strategy to initiate and scale up these transformations? What should the Netherlands do differently? In which areas or sectors should the Netherlands intensify its efforts? How can the Netherlands make better use of big data/analytics/digitalisation to adjust BHOS policies in real-time and to increase their impact?

**6.2.2 Theme 2 – Addressing trade-offs between food and nutrition security (SDG2) and other SDGs**

1. A body of literature claims that LDC economic transformation starts with raising agriculture (factor) productivity and rural transformations. Particularly for Sub-Saharan Africa reference is often made to what has happened in Asia. Dominant (input) models for such agricultural and rural transformation are promoted and claimed as being inherently sustainable. From a food systems perspective and under the assumption that such transformations are (ultimately) successful, are they consistent with other goals such as the energy (SDG7) and climate transitions (SDG13), countering biodiversity loss, land degradation (SDG15) or health and nutrition outcomes (SDG3, 2)? What are the early and most pertinent trade-offs to be faced along such a transformation trajectory and who or what is affected? Or what is the phasing of impact over time along such a trajectory? What role do global agricultural value chains play in intensifying or mitigating such local trade-offs?

2. The BHOS policy encompasses multiple goals, including those related to FNS and SDG8 (decent work and economic growth). What are preconditions for economies/countries in SSA to have activities aiming for SDG2 and SDG8 reinforce each other and vice-versa in what types of economies/countries (when, where, why) are trade-offs between such activities more common? What policies and socio-economic environments are conducive to prevent trade-offs between activities aiming for SDG2 and SDG8?

3. The introduction of information technology is sometimes seen as a near-silver bullet for furthering development goals and helping the marginalized. There is by now a wide range of applications in or affecting the economic space of smallholder agriculture, although many of the applications are not yet to scale. Next to access to information and knowledge, transparency in value chains is often seen as empowering. However, not only smallholders benefit as actors in a chain and there are engrained power imbalances. Smallholders themselves consist of men and women. Under what circumstances are these developments reducing or aggravating information asymmetries? Are they gender neutral in their impact, empowering women or
empowering men (SDG5)? When or under what conditions are they reducing or increasing inequalities (SDG10)? What are key characteristics and impacts of the “digital divide”?

4. Tradeoffs arising from transitions (climate/energy, biodiversity, food systems) from the perspective of an (un)equal N-S distribution. Example: does the European Green Deal have positive, negative or no effects on the for SDG2 required environmental use and development space in selected countries in Africa. How are these effects to be mitigated/optimized?

6.2.3 Theme 3 – Climate change (SDG13) and conflict (SDG16)

Conflict prevention and mitigation
1. Circumstances under which climate change causes or aggravates conflict/instability: why does climate change trigger or aggravate instability or even conflict in some countries, but not in others? Which are the main factors for climate change to act as ‘threat multiplier’? Can possible ‘tipping points’ be detected and if so, could (new sorts of) preventive mechanisms be designed to prevent these effects?
2. Mapping of countries and regions at risk: where can fragility or conflict triggered by climate change be expected in the short (until 2030) and long run (2050)? Which are the other, complementary factors in these cases and how significant is the impact of climate change in these regions or localities?
3. Possible interventions: how can development cooperation interventions contribute to strengthening a population’s resilience to climate change-related security risks? What new mechanism and solutions can be identified and what lessons can be learned from current interventions? How to respond to local (in)formal leaders, who have the legitimate desire to take ownership over situations that need resolution, but are de facto not in the position to resolve the situation by themselves? What role can new technologies play in addressing climate change-related security risks? What ‘no regret options’ can be formulated? Which ‘knowledge gaps’ can be identified?

Peacebuilding/missions
1. Climate change in peace missions: how can climate change-related security risks be acknowledged and handled in peace missions (even in case climate change is not explicitly in the peace mission’s mandate)? What lessons can be learned from recent missions and how can these lessons be accommodated in future missions?
2. Climate dialogue in peacebuilding: can dialogue about climate change positively influence political peace negotiations and if so, how? How can international actors and stakeholders, such as UN country teams, facilitate such dialogues? How to effectively make climate change an accepted theme in dialogues with local governments? How can youth and women become ‘change agents’ instead of victims of climate change?
3. Implementation of climate measures: how to scale up the existing measures in response of climate change-related security risks, e.g. those of regional organisations like ECOWAS and IGAD, in order to comprehensively stimulate peacebuilding at different levels? How can this be done in a coherent and coordinated way and by accommodating the potentially conflicting short and long term needs? How to transform climate change-related security risks into climate change-related opportunities and to build lasting peace by way of integrated climate change and sustainable development interventions?