Guidelines for ongoing projects as result of the corona crisis

The corona crisis is also having an impact on scientific research. Researchers from all fields of science have been affected: it has become more difficult to recruit staff, some scheduled research activities cannot go ahead due to closure of buildings, and trips abroad have been cancelled, to name but a few examples. NWO will adopt a flexible and accommodating position in this respect, so that research delayed and impeded by the situation can be completed to the greatest extent possible.

The key starting points are as follows:
- Projects for which the starting date expires before 31-12-2020 will all receive an automatic extension until 31-12-2020. A further extension is possible at the request of the project leader, up to a maximum of what is usually permitted, plus three months (six months for consortium and/or co-funded projects).
- Deadlines for submitting reports will be extended by four months.
- NWO will be more flexible with budget neutral requests for project extensions and budget shifts, provided these aim to complete the project within the framework of the research proposal. NWO will use customised solutions in these cases.
- Problems with the delivery of co-funding should be reported to NWO immediately.

Starting awarded projects
The impact of the corona crisis will be felt most now and in the coming months. Previously awarded projects are also having to deal with these consequences. Therefore, we are automatically extending the starting date for projects for which the starting date expires before 31-12-2020 to no later than 31-12-2020. A further extension of the starting date is possible at the request of the project leader, taking into account the maximum extension periods: what is usually permitted within an instrument +3 months (projects without a consortium agreement) or +6 months (projects with a consortium agreement).

Reporting deadlines for ongoing research
NWO will extend reporting deadlines for ongoing research by four months. This does not mean that projects are automatically extended: if a report is delayed, the project leader must submit a request to that effect.

Delays and budget shifts in ongoing research due to corona measures
NWO will deal flexibly with requests to extend research projects. NWO will accommodate reasonable and well-founded requests for extension.

NWO will also deal flexibly with proposals from researchers to adjust the research plan if necessary due to the corona crisis. A condition is that proposals for amendments are aimed at completing projects that are delayed due to the crisis situation, and that the appointed PhD candidates conduct research that leads to a dissertation. In the case of PPP projects, the intended 'knowledge utilization products' must also be retained or adjusted in conjunction with the advisory/user committee, for example, and with the approval of NWO. Corona-related change requests must be submitted through the same channels as regular change requests; consult your regular contact person at NWO for the project in question.

Requests for budget shifts must be well substantiated and necessary for the completion of a delayed project. Budgets that have been reserved for organising or attending meetings that can no longer be used for this purpose (nor at a later stage in the project, for example because it is coming to an end) may be used for other purposes.
Changes in co-funding in ongoing projects as a result of the corona crisis

A specific aspect of collaborative projects is the possibility that partners are unable to deliver the intended co-funding (cash or in-kind) as a result of the corona crisis. **In such cases, the project leader should report this to NWO as soon as possible.** Loss of co-funding could mean that the conditions for awarding a grant have not been met and an alternative must be sought. If suitable alternatives are not available, the project may be stopped in consultation. This applies not only to ongoing projects, but also to projects for which a (positive) assessment has taken place but the partnership agreement has yet to be signed. In all cases, a customised solution will be required. The most important principle in how we handle these situations is that a commitment to co-funding is not without obligation.