NWO Open Competition SSH

Nonprogrammed, curiosity-driven research

Call for proposals

Social Sciences And Humanities

2020
Contents

1 Introduction 1
   1.1 Background 1
   1.2 Available budget 1
   1.3 Validity of the call for proposals 1

2 Aim 2
   2.1 General 2
   2.2 Target group 2

3 Guidelines for applicants 3
   3.1 Who can apply 3
   3.2 What can be applied for 3
   3.3 When can applications be submitted 9
   3.4 Preparing an application 9
   3.5 Conditions on granting 9
   3.6 Submitting an application 11

4 Assessment procedure 12
   4.1 Procedure 12
   4.2 Criteria 14

5 Contact details and other information 16
   5.1 Contact 16
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

NWO promotes excellent, curiosity-driven disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research. In doing so, NWO focuses on all scientific disciplines and the entire knowledge chain. Non-programmed, curiosity-driven research has no thematic constraints and, in principle, permits all forms of funding without limitation.

From 2018, research proposals for non-programmed, curiosity-driven research in the social sciences and humanities can be submitted in a single instrument: the Open Competition of the NWO Domain for the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH).

This call for proposals contains information about submitting research proposals in the NWO Open Competition – SSH. This funding instrument is open to research proposals with a research question and/or problem statement in the social sciences and humanities or related areas.

1.2 Available budget

For the 2020 funding round, the total budget available for awarding grants is € 22,686,687 euro. The budget will be divided between eight disciplinary panels in proportion to the number of admissible pre-proposals (see also Section 4.1).

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

The deadline for the submission of pre-proposals is 16 January 2020, 14.00 hrs CET.

The deadline for the submission of full proposals is 9 July 2020, 14.00 hrs CEST.
2 Aim

2.1 General

The funding instrument NWO Open Competition – SSH for non-programmed, curiosity-driven research is aimed at research projects with a research question rooted primarily in the social sciences and/or humanities. Proposals of an interdisciplinary or cross-domain nature may also be submitted under this instrument. To assess such proposals, expertise from other disciplines and domains will be brought in where necessary.

The NWO Open Competition – SSH expressly gives researchers the opportunity to request funding for different types of projects and cost items. Projects may be either large or small.

Funding may be requested for projects with or without scientific personnel (such as PhD students and postdocs). Projects with scientific personnel may consist of a single researcher and materials budget, or of a coherent programme with several sub-projects, researchers and materials budgets. In addition to funding for various types of personnel costs, this instrument also offers the possibility of requesting specific funding for investments in equipment or databases and/or national or international collaboration.

The Domain Board expressly invites researchers to make the best possible use of the various options available under this funding instrument.

It is up to the researchers themselves to decide which funding best suits their research ambitions.

2.2 Target group

The NWO Open Competition – SSH target group consists of experienced researchers with a strong fascination for challenging and groundbreaking research. The focus is on curiosity-driven research.

Given the aim of the programme, it is clear that researchers must be able to formulate and supervise a research project independently.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / NWO Open Competition SSH

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Full, associate and assistant professors and other researchers with a comparable appointment can submit an application provided that they:

- are employed (i.e. have a paid position) at one of the following organisations:
  - Universities established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
  - University medical centres;
  - KNAW and NWO institutes;
  - the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
  - the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
  - the DUBBLE Beamline at the ESRF in Grenoble;
  - the Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
  - Advanced Research Center for Nanolithography (ARCNL);
  - Princess Máxima Center.
- and have a contract of employment (duration of appointment) with that organisation for at least the duration of the research for which funding is requested. Personnel with a zero-hours appointment are excluded from applying.

Additional conditions1:

- An applicant may only submit a proposal if he/she can no longer apply to the Talent Scheme according to the formal admissibility criteria2;
- An applicant may only submit one application per calendar year in the Vrije Onderzoeksruimte (Non-programmed Research Area)3;
- Applicants may not submit in successive rounds under the NWO Open Competition – SSH;
- Applicants may submit a new application up to one year before the planned end date (= end date of the last appointment) of their longest-running NWO project in which they are applicants/project leaders4.

3.2 What can be applied for

The maximum amount of funding that can be requested per application is € 750,000. There is no minimum amount. The maximum funding period is six years for the entire project.

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1 “Applicants” refers to both main applicants and co-applicants. It should also be noted that the restrictions apply only to applications under the NWO Open Competition – SSH.

2 In the NWO Talent Scheme it is possible to make use of the Extension rule. If applicants remain eligible for the Vici scheme solely on the basis of an extension, they may apply to the NWO Open Competition – SSH. However, by submitting a pre-proposal to the NWO Open Competition – SSH, the main applicant and/or co-applicant must declare that they will not submit any future applications to the Talent Scheme. Choosing to submit to the NWO Open Competition – SSH therefore closes off all further opportunities to apply to the Talent Scheme.

3 In other words: within SSH, applying to all open SSH instruments, i.e. NWO Open Competition – SSH, PhDs in the Humanities, and Replication Studies. It should also be noted that applicants may not submit a new application in the Non-programmed Research Area until the formal decision on their current application has been taken.

4 This condition applies only to NWO projects awarded funding after 25 September 2018.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / NWO Open Competition SSH

The instrument explicitly provides the opportunity to submit different types of proposal. The Domain Board invites researchers to make use of the various options. Applicants should request only the amount that is essential to carry out the research, and justify it in their research proposal.

The budget modules (including the maximum amounts) available within this call for proposals are listed in the table below. Note: the table shows the maximum amounts per module. In this call, some modules can be used several times. See below for an explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget module</th>
<th>Maximum amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>3 positions, according to VSNU or NFU rates⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate in engineering (PDEng)</td>
<td>3 positions in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s), according to VSNU or NFU rates⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoc</td>
<td>3 positions, according to VSNU or NFU rates⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-scientific staff at (NSS) universities</td>
<td>€ 100,000, according to VSNU or NFU rates⁵ in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other scientific staff (OSS) at universities</td>
<td>€100,000, in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research leave</td>
<td>5 months, 1 fte, according to VSNU or NFU rates⁵ (As research leave for main and/or co-applicants, 1 FTE for five months can be requested for each applicant, up to a maximum of 3 research leave grants per application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material costs</td>
<td>€ 15,000 per year per scientific position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments (up to € 150,000)</td>
<td>maximum of € 150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments (€ 150,000 to € 500,000)</td>
<td>greater than or equal to € 150,000 (for data collections, a minimum of €25,000 applies) and less than or equal to € 500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge utilisation</td>
<td>€ 25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalisation</td>
<td>€ 25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money follows Cooperation</td>
<td>less than 50% of the total budget applied for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation of budget modules for personnel**

Funding for the salary costs of personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research can be applied for. Funding of these salary costs depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the personnel are or will be appointed.

- 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).

⁵ For personnel outside the Netherlands, the local rates are reimbursed up to a maximum of the VSNU rates.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / NWO Open Competition SSH

- 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.

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

The available budget modules are explained below.

**PhD (including MD-PhD)**
This module can be requested a maximum of three times. Funding for a maximum of three PhD students can therefore be requested under this call. The following conditions apply to each position:

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.

**Professional Doctorate in Engineering (PDEng)**
This module can be requested a maximum of three times. Funding for a maximum of three PDEng can therefore be requested under this call, provided that a corresponding number of PhDs and/or postdocs are also requested. The following conditions apply per position:

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**
This module can be requested a maximum of three times. Funding for a maximum of three postdocs can therefore be requested under this call. The following conditions apply per position:

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**
This module can be requested a maximum of three times under this call. For each PhD or postdoc requested, € 100,000 can be requested under this budget module, up to a maximum of € 300,000. The following conditions apply per module:
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / NWO Open Competition SSH

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. A maximum of € 100,000 can be requested for NSS. 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 personnel (OSS) at universities
This module can be requested a maximum of three times under this call. For each PhD or postdoc requested, € 100,000 can be requested under this budget module, up to a maximum of € 300,000. The following conditions apply per module:

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
Under this call, the research leave module can be requested once for each applicant or co-applicant, up to a maximum of three research leave posts per application. The following conditions apply per research leave post:

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 is the equivalent of five full-time months. 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).

Explanation of budget module Material
This module can be requested a maximum of three times. A maximum of € 45,000 per full-time scientific position requested (PhD, postdoc, PDEng) per year can therefore be requested under this call. The following conditions apply per module:

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. 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/)
- 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.

If the maximum amount of € 45,000 per year per full-time scientific position is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if a clear justification is provided in the proposal. This should be approved by NWO prior to submission.

**Explaination of budget module Investments (up to € 150,000)**

In this budget module, funding can be requested up to a maximum of € 150,000 for investments in equipment, datasets and/or software (e.g. lasers, specialised computers or computer programs).

**Explaination of budget module Investments (€ 150,000 to € 500,000)**

In this budget module, funding can be applied for project-related investments in scientifically innovative equipment and/or data collections of national and international importance. The costs for these project-related investments should be adequately specified and justified in the proposal. The minimum amount that can be applied for is € 150,000. The maximum amount that can be applied for is € 500,000.

The costs for investments should be adequately specified and motivated in the proposal.

Funding can be requested for:

- costs for investment in scientific equipment;
- costs for investment in datasets;
- personnel costs for the setting up of databases and the initial digitisation of the bibliographical equipment, if these cannot be purchased;
- personnel costs for employees with specific, essential technical expertise needed in order to build or develop an investment.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / NWO Open Competition SSH

If funding for personnel costs is applied for, then the need for these personnel costs should be justified. If the applicant does not have this expertise available, then it should be stated that this expertise needs to be procured with these costs. The internal procurement procedures and/or guidelines of the applicant apply.

Funding cannot be requested for:

- costs of infrastructure facilities that can be regarded as part of the usual infrastructure;
- data collections and any associated software and bibliographies that are already available in other ways;
- other personnel costs, including personnel costs required to operate and conduct research with the facility;
- maintenance and use of equipment. The costs for researchers using equipment for a project can be covered via the material budget.

Explanation of budget module Knowledge utilisation

This module can be requested a maximum of two times. A maximum of €50,000 can therefore be requested under this call as funding for knowledge utilisation activities. The following conditions apply per module:

The aim of this budget module is to facilitate the use of the knowledge that emerges from the research. The budget applied for may not exceed €25,000. 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. If the maximum amount is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if a clear justification is provided in the proposal. This should be approved by NWO prior to submission.

Explanation of budget module Internationalisation

This module can be requested a maximum of two times. A maximum of €50,000 can therefore be requested under this call as funding for internationalisation. The following conditions apply per module:

The budget for internationalisation is intended to encourage international collaboration. The budget applied for may not exceed €25,000. The amount requested must be specified. If the maximum amount is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if a clear justification is provided in the proposal. This should be approved by NWO prior to submission.

Funding can be requested for:

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

Explanation of the budget module Money follows Cooperation (MfC)

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

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6 In this budget module, the definition for “knowledge transfer” used by the European Commission in the Framework for State Aid for research and development and innovation applies (PdEU, 2014, C198).
The applicant must convincingly argue how the researcher from the foreign knowledge institution will contribute specific expertise to the research project that is not available in the Netherlands at the level necessary for the project.

This condition does not apply if NWO has concluded a bilateral agreement concerning Money follows Cooperation with the national research council of the country where the foreign knowledge institution is located.

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

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

The applicant receives the grant and is responsible for transferring the amount to the foreign knowledge institution and for providing accountability for the MfC part of the grant.

The exchange rate risk lies with the applicant. Therefore, gains or losses due to the exchange rate are not eligible for funding. The applicant is responsible for:

- The financial accountability for all costs in both euros and the local currency, for which the exchange rate used must be visible;
- A reasonable determination of the size of the exchange rate. If requested by NWO, the applicant must always be able to provide a description of this reasonable determination.

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

### 3.3 When can applications be submitted

The deadline for the submission of preproposals is **16 January 2020**, 14:00 hours CET.

The deadline for submission of full proposals is **9 July 2020**, 14:00 hours CEST.

When submitting your application in ISAAC, you will also need to enter data online. You should therefore begin submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

### 3.4 Preparing an application

- Download the application form from the electronic application system ISAAC or from NWO’s website (on the grant page for this programme).
- Complete the application form.
- Save the application form as a pdf file and upload it in ISAAC.

NB. The application form for drawing up a full proposal will be published on the funding instrument webpage towards the end of the pre-proposal phase.

### 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.
Open Access

All scientific publications resulting from research that is funded by grants derived from this call for proposals are to be immediately (at the time of publication) freely accessible worldwide (Open Access). There are several ways for researchers to publish Open Access. A detailed explanation regarding Open Access can be found on www.nwo.nl/openscience-en.

DORA

On 18 April 2019, NWO signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). DORA is a global initiative to assess research and researchers based less on bibliometric indicators (such as publications and citations) and more on other criteria. The Declaration contains a set of recommendations for how to improve research evaluation. NWO endorses the DORA principles and is adapting its procedures accordingly, for example by:

- more clearly formulating and substantiating the criteria it uses to assess quality;
- not referring to journal impact factors and h-index in this call and the application form;
- actively informing referees and members of the assessment committee about DORA’s implications for their activities, and training them to focus on the substantive quality of the researcher and the proposal when assessing research applications;
- limiting the number of publications listed in the application and asking researchers to provide a narrative explanation of their contribution to their field of science.

Data management

Responsible data management is part of good research. NWO wants research data that emerge from publicly funded research to become freely and sustainably available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers. Furthermore NWO wants to raise awareness among researchers about the importance of responsible data management. Proposals should therefore satisfy the data management protocol of NWO. This protocol consists of two steps:

1. Data management section

The data management section is part of the research proposal. Researchers should answer four questions about data management within their intended research project. Therefore before the research starts the researcher will be asked to think about how the data collected must be ordered and categorised so that it can be made freely available. Measures will often need to be taken during the production and analysis of the data to make their later storage and dissemination possible. Researchers can state which research data they consider to be relevant for storage and reuse.

2. Data management plan

After a proposal has been awarded funding the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. The data management plan is a concrete elaboration of the data management section. In the plan the researcher describes whether use will be made of existing data or a new data collection and how the data collection will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within a maximum of 4 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 about the data management protocol of NWO can be found at www.nwo.nl/datamanagement.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / NWO Open Competition SSH

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 sources 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.

Ethical aspects

Research proposals that may raise ethical issues need to be considered carefully before the research to be carried out. Certain research projects may require approval from a recognised Medical Research Ethics Committee (MREC) or an Animal Experiments Committee (DEC). In addition, certain research proposals require a licence under the Population Screening Act (WBO). More information on the MRECs is available from the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CUCO). Information on the DECs is available from the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Dierexperimenten commissies (Dutch Association of Animal Experiments Committees) and information on the WBO is available from the Health Council of the Netherlands.

An applicant is responsible for checking whether his/her research proposal may raise ethical issues and, if necessary, for obtaining approval in good time from the appropriate ethics committee and/or obtaining a licence in good time under the WBO.

NWO endorses the Code on Openness in Animal Testing and the Biosecurity code. Applicants should endorse and comply with the existing codes.

If the proposal is accepted, funding will be awarded subject to the condition of obtaining approval from the relevant ethics committee or a licence under the WBO. A research project cannot start until NWO has received a copy of any necessary ethics approval and/or WBO licence. NWO expects candidates to take into account the time schedule of the assessment procedure and the time required for an ethics committee review or to obtain a WBO licence. In the event of complex ethical issues, NWO reserves the right to consult an external advisor.

Scientific integrity

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

3.6 Submitting an application

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

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

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see Section 5.1.2.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / NWO Open Competition SSH

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

Eligibility

The first step in the assessment procedure is a test to check whether the application can be accepted for processing. On behalf of the SSH Board, the SSH office assesses whether the application is suitable and complete. Only applications which meet the conditions as described in Section 3 are eligible and are taken into consideration. The application should be written in English.

Pre-proposal

The assessment committee consists of eight disciplinary panels: Behaviour and Education, Cultural Sciences, Economics and Business Administration, Historical Sciences, Law and Public Administration, Linguistics, Philosophy and Religion, and Social Sciences. The committee assesses and ranks the pre-proposals for each panel based on the criteria set out in Section 4.2. The provisional assessment of the pre-proposal is sent to the applicants, who are then given the opportunity to respond. The committee will take this response into account in its final recommendation to the Social Sciences and Humanities Domain Board. No referees are consulted at this stage. Based on the assessment committee’s recommendation, the Domain Board decides which pre-proposals will be invited to submit a full proposal. The total number of applications admitted to the assessment phase with referees will be at least three times the number of proposals that can eventually be awarded funding.

In mid-May 2020, the applicants with the highest chance of being awarded funding will be invited to submit a full proposal. The other applicants will be informed that they have not been invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposal should be an elaboration of the assessed pre-proposal; significant changes in the research design are therefore not permitted in principle.

Full proposal

Referees and rebuttal

Once the admissibility test of the full proposal has been successfully completed and the application declared admissible, NWO will submit it to external referees. These are independent advisors who are experts in the discipline concerned. NWO aims to consult three referees per application; each application is assessed by at least two referees. The referees assess the application on the basis of the assessment criteria as set out in Section 4.2. The referees’ reports are anonymised and sent to the applicant for a written rebuttal.

Assessment committee

The applications (including referees’ reports and rebuttals) are assessed by the assessment committee. This is done in one of the eight disciplinary panels. The disciplinary panels have a broad composition. The committee is tasked with making its own, independent assessment of the quality of each application, on the basis of the application, the referees’ reports and the rebuttal. The committee weighs up and compares the referees’ arguments and considers whether the rebuttal mounts a good response to the critical comments in the referees’ reports. The referees’ reports provide important guidelines for the final assessment, but are not adopted in full by the committee. Moreover, unlike the referees, the committee has an overview of the quality of the other applications submitted.

In a meeting of the assessment committee, the applications assessed by each disciplinary panel are ranked on the basis of the assessment criteria. This ranking is presented to the Social Sciences and Humanities Domain Board as a recommendation.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / NWO Open Competition SSH

Decision-making, full proposal phase
For each panel, the assessment committee issues the Domain Board with a recommendation on the quality of the applications submitted. Based on this recommendation and the available financial resources, the Domain Board decides whether to grant or reject the applications. For each panel, the highest ranked applications are accepted on the basis of the available budget.

Each applicant is notified of the outcome by letter and also receives a report containing, for each individual or main assessment criterion, the committee members’ average standardised score, the standardised final score and a brief narrative explanation. An applicant may submit an appeal to the NWO executive board within six weeks of the decision date.

General

Personal interests

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

Qualification
NWO will award a qualification to all full proposals and will make this known to the researcher with the decision about whether or not the application has been awarded funding.

Only applications that receive the qualification "excellent", "very good" or "good" will be eligible for funding. For more information about the qualifications please see www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding+process+explained/nwo+qualification+system.

Schedule

16 January 2020, 14:00:00 CET Deadline for submission of pre-proposals
February to March 2020 Assessment of pre-proposals
Late March to early April 2020 Opportunity for applicants to respond following assessment committee’s recommendation
Mid-May 2020 Applicants are informed whether they have been invited to elaborate the pre-proposal
9 July 2020, 14:00:00 CEST Deadline for submission of full proposals
August to October 2020 External referees are consulted. Applicants receive referees’ reports with a request to submit a rebuttal
October to November 2020 Assessment of full proposals by assessment committee. Assessment committee drafts a recommendation on the award of funding
Mid-December 2020 Social Sciences and Humanities Domain Board takes a funding decision based on the assessment committee’s recommendation. Applicants are notified of the outcome.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / NWO Open Competition SSH

4.2 Criteria

The instrument gives researchers the opportunity to submit different types of proposals, both large and small. The appropriateness of the funds applied for in relation to the proposed research will therefore be considered during the assessment process.

Pre-proposals are assessed against the following three criteria:

1. Research idea
   - Clarity of the research questions and the problem statement;
   - Quality, urgency and innovative character of the theme, approach and methodology.

2. Scientific and/or societal impact
   - Expected scientific impact;
   - Expected societal impact;
   - Expected scientific and non-scientific output.

3. Researchers and organisation
   - Quality of researchers;
   - Relevance of publications to the research idea;
   - National and international collaboration;
   - Added value of the researchers for the proposed research;
   - Embedding and organisation of the proposed research;
   - Efficiency of the research design (structure, number of researchers, resources requested).

Criterion 1 carries a weighting of 50% in the overall assessment, criterion 2 a weighting of 30% and criterion 3 a weighting of 20%.

Full proposals are assessed against the following three criteria:

1. Scientific quality
   - Clarity of the research proposal, research question and objectives;
   - Scientifically innovative and/or groundbreaking elements of the research proposal/the investment;
   - Efficiency of the proposed methodology;
   - Urgency and relevance of the research proposal/the investment.

2. Embedding, organisation and budget
   - Quality of the researchers involved;
   - Suitability of the researchers for the proposed topic;
   - National and international collaboration;
   - Scientific embedding of the research;
   - Division of tasks and roles within the research team;
   - Quality and efficiency of the research design (structure, number of researchers, resources requested);
   - Efficiency and feasibility of the work plan.

3. Scientific and/or societal impact
   - Scientific impact
     - Importance of the expected research results for the researcher’s own and related discipline(s);
     - Expected contributions of research results to the researcher’s own and related discipline(s);
   - Societal impact
     - Expected societal impact;
     - Way(s) in which the proposed research and the potential research results may lead to societal impact;
     - Reasons for focus on scientific impact and/or societal impact.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / NWO Open Competition SSH

Criterion 1 carries a weighting of 50% in the overall assessment, criterion 2 a weighting of 30% and criterion 3 a weighting of 20%.

Explanation of scientific and societal impact

In the NWO Open Competition – SSH, applicants can choose whether their research proposal will focus on achieving scientific impact, societal impact, or a combination of both. Societal impact can be broadly defined as any cultural, economic, industrial, environmental and/or social change that is (partly) the result of the knowledge and skills gained through the proposed research. Applicants will be asked to state the reasons for their impact focus in the full proposal; this is not required at the pre-proposal stage.
5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

The latest information about the NWO Open Competition – SSH is available on the relevant webpage (https://www.nwo.nl/sshoc). A document containing answers to frequently asked questions is also available on the website. Applicants are advised to consult the website before contacting NWO. Questions about the content of this NWO Open Competition – SSH call for proposals can be emailed to sgwoc@nwo.nl. You may also contact:

– Eelco van Dongen, telephone: +31 70 349 4005, round coordinator
– Marleen van de Vate, telephone: +31 70 344 0967, round coordinator
– Charlotte Jalvingh, telephone: +31 70 344 0671
– Lydia Langerwerf, telephone: + 31 70 344 0700
– Maudy Lohaus, telephone: +31 70 349 4215
– Natalie Maasse, telephone: +31 70 349 4456

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.