



Chemical Sciences
Physical Sciences

Call for pre-proposals

Science Industry Cooperation The Netherlands - China
Sino-Dutch partnership in research and innovation - Hé Programme

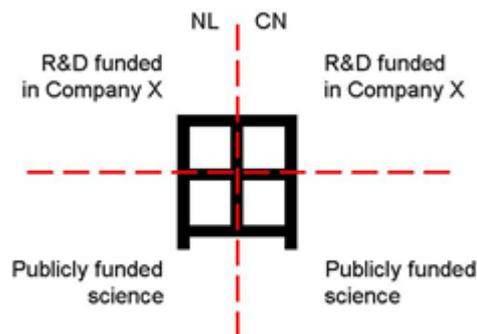
2012



Introduction and purpose

The Netherlands and China are long-term partners in international research cooperation. In both countries, policies are in place to boost innovation. Collaboration between researchers in the academic and industrial sectors is an important means to contribute to the innovation policies in both countries. The Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) have jointly established the 合(Hé) Sino-Dutch partnership in research and innovation, aimed at starting Sino-Dutch science-industry projects.

The 合 programme aims at realizing Sino-Dutch research projects, where academic and industrial researchers in both countries collaborate. The 合 programme will provide research funding for projects that are of excellent scientific quality, that are of importance for both the Dutch and Chinese branch of a company, demonstrate complementary expertise between Chinese and Dutch researchers, and address research questions within the scope of the priority-themes set for this pilot. The 合 programme connects four parties: R&D-workers in a company operating and performing research in both The Netherlands and China, and Dutch and Chinese academic scientists supported by their respective public funding organizations. It reflects a 'double symmetry': between The Netherlands and China, and between academic and industrial research.



Key Characteristics

- At least four parties participate in a project: 1) one Chinese industry partner; 2) one Dutch industry partner; 3) a Chinese academic research institution; 4) a Dutch academic research institution.
- The research theme is based on a demand from the company. The theme fits with the priorities in this pilot that have been jointly identified by MoST and NWO.
- The research results of the 合 programme are eligible for exploitation.
- The financial structure of the projects reflects their 'double symmetry'. Per project, both the company and NWO/MoST fund 50% of the costs 'in cash' in each country.
- There is active involvement of both senior and young researchers in the project, as well as interaction between researchers in the Netherlands and in China, and between researchers in the academic institution(s) and in the company involved.

The research themes to be addressed in the Sino-Dutch projects have to fit within the Science & Innovation priority areas of China and the Netherlands. For the Netherlands the roadmaps of the "topsectors" provide the policy context, e.g. the ICT Roadmap and the Chemistry Innovation Contract. Within this context, MoST and NWO have agreed on priority areas of common interest in their 'Programme of Innovation Cooperation' for 2012-2013. These priorities are:

- LED;
- Semiconductors;
- Sustainable new materials;
- Quality of healthcare;

- Production and safety of food.

Projects focusing on other research areas are not eligible and will not be considered for further assessment.

Budget

The budget covers funding for 4-6 Sino-Dutch projects. Projects will be jointly funded by MoST, NWO and the companies. The participating academic research institutions will contribute in-kind.

Who can apply

In a research team at least four parties are represented: 1) one Chinese industry partner; 2) one Dutch industry partner; 3) a Chinese academic research institution; 4) a Dutch academic research institution.

Each project has two Principal Investigators (PI's), one on the Chinese side and one on the Dutch side. These two PI's are senior researchers at an academic research institution. The PI's should meet the following eligibility criteria:

Dutch PI

Professors, associate professors and assistant professors as well as other senior researchers can apply if they:

- are employed at a Dutch University or a research institute recognised by NWO;
- have at least a master's degree in science or engineering or an equivalent qualification;
- have an employment contract for at least the duration of the application procedure and the duration of the research the grant is applied for. For co-applicants an exception can be made if the applicants can prove that adequate supervision of all researchers for whom funding is applied can be guaranteed for the full duration of the grant.

Chinese PI

The Chinese PI should meet the MoST eligibility criteria. For further details on these criteria see the weblink:

http://www.cistc.gov.cn/introduction/info_4.asp?column=375&id=78239

or contact mr. Dai Qian at MoST (contact details in section below).

The PI's have to submit two versions of the same proposal: one in English and one in Chinese. The Dutch PI submits the English version to NWO, the Chinese PI submits the Chinese version to MoST. The PI's are jointly responsible for the application and progress of the research project. The contactpoint for NWO is the Dutch PI. The Chinese PI will be the contactpoint for MoST.

What can be applied for

Funding can be applied for joint Sino-Dutch research and innovation projects with a duration of 2 to 4 years, carried out in the form of a public private partnership.

Requirements for the project as a whole

- The research themes to be addressed in the Sino-Dutch projects have to fit within the Science & Innovation priority areas of China and the Netherlands. For the Netherlands the roadmaps of the "topsectors" provide the policy context, e.g. the ICT Roadmap and the Chemistry Innovation Contract. Within this context, MoST and NWO have agreed on priority areas of common interest in their 'Programme of Innovation Cooperation' for 2012-2013. These priorities are:

- LED;
- Semiconductors;
- Sustainable new materials;
- Quality of health care;
- Production and safety of food.

- The project should employ at least two full time researchers (PhD students and/or postdocs) for at least two years, one based at a Dutch academic institution and one based at a Chinese academic institution.

- The project can be larger, e.g. two PhD student or postdoc positions on each side. Symmetry within the project between the Netherlands and China is envisaged, but not necessary, given the differences in PhD student/postdoc wages in the Netherlands and China.

- The duration of the employment of the researchers can be either 2, 3 or 4 years. There may be a difference between the positions in The Netherlands and China (for example one 2 year postdoc in NL and one 3 year PhD student in China).

- The project team also includes one or more senior researchers within the company as well as the academic institutions (supervisors).

- The project teams will participate in at least one Platform meeting per year. In the project budget, each team has to include an amount to cover the costs of participating in the platform meetings (travel and subsistence).

Requirements on the Dutch side

- The maximal Dutch governmental subsidy that can be requested per research proposal is k€ 500. Private contributions in excess of k€ 500 are welcome but shall not be eligible for matching by governmental subsidy.

- The grant can be used to cover the labor costs of temporary personnel (PhD students and postdocs only), and the costs of equipment, materials, travelling, conferences and cooperation and exchange fees.

- There has to be a reasonable relation between the labor costs and all the other costs. The other costs should not be estimated too low (there will be a lot of travel and meetings in this type of projects), but not too high either (the focus should be on personnel, not on the purchase of equipment etc.).

- Labor costs are subsidized in accordance with the 'Agreement on Employers' responsibilities NWO - VSNU'. The fixed amounts (including a k€ 5 bench fee) are: PhD student (4 yr) – k€ 208, postdoc 2 yr – k€ 132, postdoc 3 yr – k€ 205.

- NWO funded PhD students and postdocs shall be employed by NWO acknowledged knowledge institutes for the duration of the project. However, they are expected to perform a part of their research work in the laboratories of the company project partner as well as in the academic research institution abroad (either in the Netherlands or in China) through short- and medium-term secondments.

Required contribution of the company

- The company contributes 50% of the project expenses 'in cash', both on the Dutch side and on the Chinese side.

- On the Dutch side, the company pays the cash contribution to NWO. NWO provides the total granted Dutch budget to the research institute of the Dutch PI.

- On the Chinese side, the company pays the cash contribution to the academic project partner.

- On top of the 'in cash' contribution, the company contributes 'in-kind' by providing:

- man hours of R&D personnel and/or supervisors;

- materials;
 - (use of) equipment;
 - temporary hosting of the PhD student(s) and/or postdoc(s), including access to facilities needed for the project.
- The company must identify an intended project manager. Within the research team that is under the responsibility of the supervising PI's, the project manager monitors the project progress and is the responsible coordinator for valorisation of the project results.

Required contribution of the academic partner(s)

The academic partner(s) contributes in-kind to the project by providing:

- hosting of the PhD('s) and/or postdoc(s), including access to computer and laboratory facilities needed for the project;
- man hours of supervisors;
- materials;
- (use of) equipment.

When can applications be submitted

Pre-proposals can be submitted at any time up to **16 April 2012 12.00 CET / 19.00 CST**. The pre-proposal is a brief research proposal and contains a brief description of the research project as well as basic information about the participants. Both versions of the pre-proposal have to be submitted on the same day, the English version to NWO and the Chinese version to MoST. Applications received after the deadline are not eligible for further assessment. Pre-proposals can only be submitted using the application form that is available on the NWO-website of the Hé-programme. Please see the MoST website for the details of the MoST application procedure in the Chinese language:

http://www.cistc.gov.cn/introduction/info_4.asp?column=375&id=78239

Drawing up an application

The application to NWO consists of two parts: a factsheet (containing basic details of the application) and the research pre-proposal itself.

- The factsheet must be completed directly in NWO's Iris electronic application system.
- The pre-proposal must be attached to the Iris factsheet in the format of a PDF file. A Word-template of the pre-proposal form can be downloaded.
- A letter of commitment is compulsory for the participating company. See Annex-section for an example of a standard letter of commitment. A letter of commitment is not yet required when drawing up a pre-proposal (only in case of a full proposal).

Specific conditions

The "NWO general terms and conditions of NWO Grants" apply unless this Call provides otherwise. Applications that are granted must start within six months after the date of granting. Appropriate action may be taken by NWO in relation to projects that have not yet started by that date. Partners in granted projects must sign a project agreement between the involved partners from academia, industry and NWO before the project can start. A model project agreement is available on the dedicated website of the 舍 programme (www.nwo.nl/he). In the project agreement the

question of ownership of the research results, publications as well as the background information that the various research parties want to make available for use, will be addressed.

Submitting an application

- Pre-proposals must be submitted via Iris, the electronic grant application system of NWO. The operating procedure and instruction manual for Iris can be found at <http://www.iris.nwo.nl>. For questions of a technical nature, contact the Iris-helpdesk (iris@nwo.nl).

- An application consists of two parts: a factsheet containing the key details of both the applicant and the application, and the research pre-proposal itself;
- The factsheet is completed and submitted electronically using Iris. One of the parts of the factsheet is a summary of maximally 1 page, which is the same as the English scientific summary in the pre-proposal;
- When you electronically submit this factsheet, you also submit the pre-proposal as an attachment in pdf-format;
- When filling out the factsheet you can only use ASCII characters ('plain text'). The use of formulas, italics, et cetera on the factsheet is not possible, although these can be used in the research pre-proposal;
- Any annexes to the application (e.g. letter of commitment) should be submitted to NWO via the Iris system as separate PDF documents;
- Please note that the original signed letter of commitment should be sent to NWO by regular mail as well. These original(s) must reach NWO ultimately within a week after the submission deadline.

Procedure

On behalf of the research team, the Dutch PI submits the joint Sino-Dutch research pre-proposal to NWO (in English) and the Chinese PI to MoST (in Chinese). NWO and MoST will assess the pre-proposals in parallel.

Step 1: Eligibility check

The NWO programme office will perform an initial eligibility check on the English version of the pre-proposal submitted to NWO to verify whether the criteria concerning the composition of the consortium and the research themes specified in the previous sections are met. The pre-proposal contains a brief description of the research project as well as basic information about the participants. MoST will check the eligibility of the Chinese version of the pre-proposal.

When the pre-proposal meets the eligibility criteria in both the Netherlands and in China, the PI's will be invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposals will be assessed in parallel in the Netherlands and in China. If an applicant does not meet all the criteria on the Dutch side, the programme office (NWO) will contact the main applicant. Pre-proposals that do not meet the eligibility criteria in both countries will be rejected.

Step 2: Quality Assessment NWO

The full proposals will be assessed according to the criteria below. In the Netherlands, NWO will apply the following procedure:

1. The quality of the proposals will be assessed by two or three (international) independent scientific experts ('referees'). This will take maximally 8 weeks.

2. The anonymised written reviews are sent to the applicants. The applicants are given the opportunity to write a single reply ('rebuttal') within 2 weeks to the comments of the referees. This reply should not exceed three pages.
3. Each English version of a proposal, its referee reports and the applicants' response are sent to either the NWO Board for Chemical Sciences or the NWO Board for Physical Sciences (depending on the thematic focus of the proposal).

Step 3: Decision NWO

The NWO Board for Chemical Sciences or the NWO Board for Physical Sciences will assess the proposal for all the criteria as specified below. and will decide on the NWO funding of the projects. This will take up to 6 weeks.

Procedure MoST

In China, MoST will execute its selection procedure in parallel, following the MoST procedures. The schedule is roughly: 16 April – August: eligibility check and quality assessment; late October: decision on quality; November: budget check; December: final decision.

Start of projects

In principle projects granted in both The Netherlands and China start in January 2013, after the completion of both assessment procedures. Some teams might want to start earlier, due to e.g. budget considerations within the companies. Since the NWO assessment is expected to be completed early September 2012 at the latest, an early start can be discussed. However, in case MoST decides not to fund the project, NWO and the project team have to reconsider structure and budget of the project. In that case NWO reserves the right to withdraw a part or the whole of its funding to the project.

Criteria

The following assessment criteria apply:

1. Scientific quality of the proposal
 - a. Scientific approach
 - b. Scientific relevance
 - c. Feasibility, e.g. the availability of the necessary infrastructure and the sufficiency of the budget; are the expectations realistic?
 - d. Novelty: potential to make an important contribution to the advancement of science or technology
2. Quality of the consortium
 - a. Track record of the academic partners
 - b. Track record of involved R&D personnel of the company
 - c. Synergy and complementarity of the partnership
 - d. Availability of infrastructure within the consortium
 - e. A clear and effective organizational structure and good programme management
3. International cooperation
 - a. Added value of Sino-Dutch cooperation to the research project, including complementarity of the Dutch and Chinese research teams, urgency and strategic importance
 - b. Added value of science-industry cooperation to the research project
 - c. Quality of exchange programme between The Netherlands and China and between the company and academic institutions.
4. Quality of the valorisation plan; valorisation potential

Contact details and other information

Contact

The Netherlands

NWO

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China

MoST

Mr Dai Qian

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Other information

For technical questions about the use of Iris please contact the Iris helpdesk. Please read the Iris manual before consulting the helpdesk.

The Iris helpdesk is available from Monday to Friday from 11.00 to 17.00 hours on +31 900 696 4747. Unfortunately not all foreign phone companies allow you to phone to a 0900 number in the Netherlands. You can also send your question by e-mail to iris@nwo.nl.

Annexe(s)

Model Letter of Commitment 合 projects

A copy of the "letter of commitment" has to be added electronically as an appendix to both the English and Chinese version of the full proposal before submitting it to NWO and MoST respectively. The original hard copy versions of both letters has to be sent to the NWO office within a week after submitting the proposal.

[Copy the text below on paper of the company. There will be two versions: one in English added to the English version of the proposal, and one in Chinese added to the Chinese version of the proposal. The letters have to be signed by (a) company representative(s) with the authority to sign this type of letters.]

Dear <principal investigator>,

On behalf of <company name, department name> I am more than happy to support the 合 proposal entitled <"project name"> (<acronym>).

We consider this initiative as a very important contribution to our strategic needs, and are therefore willing to participate in the project. Provided the project is granted in the pilot round 2012 we will contribute

- to the Dutch side of the project <€> in cash and <x number of hours and/or €> in-kind.

- to the Chinese side of the project <¥> in cash and <x number of hours and/or ¥> in-kind.

Our in-kind contributions include man hours / materials / (use of) equipment [please select one or more types of in-kind contribution].

We are aware that NWO and the responsible Chinese partner will invoice the cash contribution in accordance with the Project Agreement.

Name, signature, date

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