NWA Loneliness

Call for proposals
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Chapter 1: Introduction / NWA [Porgrammanaam]

1 Introduction

In this Call for proposals information is provided about the application procedure for the 'NWA Loneliness' funding round. This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

In this Call for proposals you will find information about the aim of this programme (Chapter 2), the conditions for the grant application (Chapter 3) and how your proposal will be assessed (Chapter 4). This is the information you need to submit a grant application. Chapter 5 states the obligations for grant recipients in the event you are awarded funding, Chapter 6 contains the contact details and Chapter 7 the annexes.

1.1 Background

What does the Netherlands want to know? This was the idea behind the creation of the Dutch Research Agenda (Dutch acronym NWA). The NWA has been created by an innovative process with input from scientists and citizens: the Dutch general public was invited to submit questions about science online. The national knowledge community, united in the Knowledge Coalition\(^1\), grouped the questions collected into 140 cluster questions that were used to formulate 25 routes\(^2\).

The NWA concerns complex issues where alignment and collaboration have added value for realising scientific and societal breakthroughs. The aim of the NWA is to make a positive and structural contribution to the global knowledge society of tomorrow, where new knowledge easily passes from researchers to users and where new questions arise from the field and society that quickly and automatically find their way into new research. The NWA programme therefore encourages collaboration between different partners so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The key elements of the NWA programme are:

- The Dutch Research Agenda that consists of 25 routes and 140 cluster questions.
- Knowledge-chain-wide\(^3\) and interdisciplinary consortia, in which researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds, knowledge and societal (public and private) organisations and, where relevant, citizens collaborate on complex issues.
- Projects that concern demand-driven research, connect with the routes and cluster questions and thereby adopt a fundamental, application-oriented and field-oriented approach.
- Giving back the results to society through dialogue and interaction.

In 2018 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Dutch acronym) OCW entrusted NWO with implementing the Dutch Research Agenda. The NWA comprises four programme lines\(^4\):

33. Research along Routes by Consortia (ORC);
34. Thematic Programming in consultation with government bodies;
35. Innovations and Networks;
36. Science Communication and Outreach.

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\(^1\) The Knowledge Coalition consists of Dutch research universities (UNL), universities of applied sciences (VH), university medical centres (NFU), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), employers (VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland) and the institutes for applied research (TNO/TO2).

\(^2\) The 25 routes and corresponding cluster questions can be found in nwa_deel_eng_digitaal.pdf (wetenschapsagenda.nl). The 140 cluster questions can also be found in a PDF file available from https://2.wetenschapsagenda.nl/publicatie/dutch-national-research-agenda-english/.

\(^3\) The broad knowledge chain comprises the public knowledge institutions: universities of applied sciences, universities, NWO and KNAW institutes, university medical centres and TO2 institutes, as well as other public knowledge organisations such as National Knowledge Institutes (see Chapter 7 for a full list of public knowledge organisations).

\(^4\) More information about the different programme lines is available at https://www.nwo.nl/en/researchprogrammes/dutch-research-agenda-nwa
The ‘NWA Loneliness’ call for proposals is being carried out in the context of programme line 2. This call was initiated by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

1.2 Available budget

The grant ceiling for this call for proposals is €5,685,000. The call consists of two phases. In phase I, €970,000 is available per target group project. In phase II, €835,000 is available for the cross-cutting project (see chapter 2). Under this call for proposals, a maximum of five applications (a maximum of one per target group) will be allocated in phase I and one application will be allocated in phase II. If no applications are submitted within one of the target groups or the submitted applications do not receive at least the qualification ‘good’, no application will be awarded within this target group. The remaining funds will not be allocated.

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

The deadline for submitting applications is in phase I is Thursday 29 June 2023, at 14:00:00 CEST. The deadline for submitting applications is in phase II is Thursday 10 October 2024, at 14:00:00 CEST.

When you submit your application in ISAAC, you will also need to enter some details online. Therefore please start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this Call for proposals. Applications that are submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.
2 Aim

This chapter describes the aim of the programme and the societal impact.

2.1 Aim of the programme

For some time now, a variety of activities have been undertaken at the national, regional and local levels to combat loneliness. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport’s Eén tegen Eenzaamheid (‘United against Loneliness’) action programme gave an initial boost to these activities, which are mainly aimed at older people, during the last cabinet’s term of office. However, we actually know little about the different forms of loneliness experienced by different groups in society or the causes of loneliness and effective approaches for tackling it. Moreover, the translation of available knowledge into practice, the promotion of expertise among professionals and volunteers, and the development of policy in the field of loneliness are lagging behind.

In some cases, there is a taboo associated with loneliness, which makes it difficult to talk about, and this may ultimately increase the loneliness. We do not know much about this potential taboo either, for example, who is affected by it and when, and how different groups can break it. Nor do we know how the taboo affects loneliness or what the impact and/or effectiveness are of the approaches used.

The NWA Loneliness programme aims to change all of this. The programme’s intended impact is to:

– Contribute to a better understanding of the causes and nature of loneliness;
– Contribute to the understanding of effective interventions to reduce specific forms of loneliness and prevent the adverse effects of loneliness; and
– Contribute to the understanding of the possible taboo of loneliness among some specific target groups in society.

To this end, the programme will be divided into two phases. In phase I, research will be conducted in among five target groups currently prioritised for further research on loneliness and effective approaches. These target groups are:

– Young people (11 to 17 years)
– Young adults (18 to 26 years)
– Informal carers of people with chronic or lifelong illnesses or disabilities
– People with mild intellectual disabilities
– Elderly people from a non-European country of origin

In phase II, the consortia of the target group projects will conduct joint research that will contribute to an understanding of the backgrounds of loneliness that transcends the target groups and thus enhance our knowledge of more widely applicable factors to reduce loneliness.

For these target groups, the outcomes of the programme will help to:

– Improve our understanding of the concept of loneliness.
– Improve our understanding of the circumstances in which loneliness occurs, the causes and nature of loneliness, and the impact and role of taboos in tackling loneliness.
– Improve our knowledge of the effectiveness of approaches to loneliness and how to put an approach into practice.
– Transfer this knowledge in consultation with professionals through professional associations and training courses, so the knowledge can be used to enhance the expertise of (future) professionals and volunteers.

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5 More information about this classification can be found at: https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/langread/statistische-trends/2022/nieuwe-indeling-bevolking-naar-herkomst/4-de-nieuwe-indeling-naar-geboren-in-nederland-en-herkomstland
Chapter 2: Aim / NWA Programmanaam

– Deepen our knowledge of the potential taboo of loneliness and how to make it acceptable to talk about loneliness. How big is the taboo, when does it occur (under what circumstances) and who does it affect? What factors feed the taboo and how can it be broken? What are the similarities and differences in the taboo on loneliness between different groups (or sub-groups) in society? Is it similar to taboos on other issues?
– Improve our understanding of how to effectively measure and monitor loneliness in a practical setting, with particular attention to young people and relevant sub-groups within this target group.

In addition, the programme will benefit the full range of target groups (phase II) as it will help to:
– Improve our understanding of the causes and nature of different forms of loneliness;
– Improve our understanding of the different factors, including taboos and related causes, that influence the use and effectiveness of approaches to loneliness;
– Provide concrete knowledge and tools for practitioners to (further) develop an effective means to reduce loneliness and deal with different forms of loneliness;
– (Further) develop concrete, effective approaches to loneliness and their practical application by professionals and volunteers. These approaches can target different levels, such as the individual, the social environment or the need to break taboos;
– Develop the expertise of (future) professionals (both in practice and policy) and volunteers to reduce loneliness in different (sub)groups; and
– Create a sustainable network with a learning community on loneliness that can continue beyond the programme.

This call for proposals invites knowledge institutions and societal parties to form consortia for the development of scientific and practice-oriented research proposals aimed at the theme of the programme. The consortia are required to work in an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary manner and should have a knowledge-chain-wide composition. Knowledge-chain-wide implies that proposals connect fundamental, applied and practice-oriented research and that connection is sought with the knowledge needs of societal parties.

This call for proposals aligns with the NWA Routes ‘Towards resilient societies’, ‘Health research, prevention and treatment’ and ‘Youth in development, upbringing and education’.

2.2 Substantive framework

Loneliness is a common problem that can have serious long-term consequences for those who experience it. Loneliness can result from a combination of factors, including personality, personal relationships, the social and physical environment, socio-economic status and health. Current approaches to loneliness, supported by research, can be improved. When approaches to loneliness are evaluated at all, they find that many approaches focused on the individual are ineffective or have limited (lasting) effectiveness, for example only during the implementation of the approach. Many approaches to loneliness have few effective elements and focus only on creating meeting places or organising activities. Often, they are not backed by theory and do not build sufficiently on practical experience. Moreover, often they are difficult to scale up and transfer to other initiatives. Delivery-oriented approaches frequently fail to address the specific problem of loneliness.

Approaches that focus on the context surrounding lonely people, such as the social network, housing and the environment, livelihood security or the ‘community’ are uncommon and/or under-evaluated. This also applies to approaches that address perceptions and stigma of loneliness, and the semantics and patterns of social inequality. There is a need for a larger arsenal of approaches that contribute to reducing loneliness in a sustainable and structural way and that are appropriate to the Dutch situation.
The research
The requested research will identify the characteristics of loneliness that provide leads for an approach and provide a theoretical basis for tackling loneliness. This will involve interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research into the concept of loneliness from different academic disciplines. Both the research and the approach to be developed or improved will be carried out and designed with the involvement of the target group and relevant stakeholders. The form of loneliness should be identified and substantiated.

The projects will provide in-depth knowledge of the nature and causes of loneliness in order to be more effective in reducing loneliness and preventing its negative effects. This will provide a better picture of the predictive factors of loneliness and lead to a targeted, appropriate approach that can be tested in practice.

When mapping the causes of loneliness, it is essential to look at the individual embedded in different social systems, as the individual and the context cannot be separated. Therefore, an approach does not always have to intervene at the level of the individual, but can also focus on the context, the social and physical environment, or on breaking the taboo. Context includes policy or legislation, or prevailing attitudes towards loneliness or specific target groups. Where relevant, factors such as gender, ethnicity, health or socio-economic status should be considered. It may also cover long-term influences as well as daily processes.

In addition to this research phase, projects will also design or improve and implement (and in the longer term evaluate) an approach, including interventions and practical improvements. The design or improvement and implementation and evaluation of an approach may be carried out simultaneously or sequentially.

The programme contributes to the development of expertise of (future) professionals and volunteers. In terms of evaluation, a robust research design is preferred (e.g. well-designed qualitative or mixed methods research or a large sample RCT).

Two phases
As mentioned, the research programme consists of two phases. In the first phase of the research programme, five projects are funded, with each project focusing on a different target group. In the second phase of the programme, after the start of the target group projects, the five projects submit a joint application for a cross-cutting project. For the purpose of this joint cross-cutting project, the target group projects address the designated five themes (see section 2.3): taboo, common conceptualisation of loneliness, effective elements in approaches, and the evaluation and sustainability of approaches. In the application for the target group projects, a specific work package already broadly addresses the possible contribution of the project to the cross-cutting project in phase II.

2.2.1 Phase I – target group projects
A consortium applying for a target group project will further develop the description of this target group and, if well substantiated, may select a narrower sub-target group. A framework for each target group is outlined below.

Young people 11 to 17 years
Loneliness among young people is common and has a negative impact on their physical and mental health. Particularly among young people, it is clear that a person does not have to be alone or socially isolated to experience loneliness. Even (seemingly) popular young people or young people with many friends can experience loneliness or develop it later in life. The causes of loneliness vary and lie within the individual (for example, mental health, self-esteem and social cognition), but also within different social systems (such as a perceived lack of social support from parents or friends, a sense of not belonging, experiencing discrimination or exclusion, or growing up in poverty).
Parents, friends and teachers of young people often do not recognise loneliness. Teachers and other professionals who work with young people are reluctant to take action when it comes to identifying, discussing and responding to loneliness. Initiating the discussion is important but difficult, partly because of the taboo surrounding it. The voice of young people is missing in this equation – do they also experience a taboo around loneliness? How and with whom would they prefer to talk to about it?

Focus areas and research questions for the ‘young people (11-17 years)’ target group

In addition to the general issues described above, the research focuses on the tools for measuring loneliness in this target group. There is a lack of a valid (and tested) tool to monitor loneliness among young people. Such a tool with valid (at-risk) cut-off scores is needed to better monitor loneliness on a national level, but also, for example, within a school. It is also needed to examine the effectiveness of existing and newly developed approaches. In the Netherlands, the De Jong-Gierveld Loneliness Scale is a widely used tool for (older) adults. Part of the research for this target group is the development of a valid and reliable De Jong-Gierveld Loneliness Scale for different groups of young people in the Netherlands, thus establishing a link with the research among Dutch adults.

Young adults 18 to 26 years

Loneliness among young adults is common and, according to the Gezondheidsmonitor 2020 (‘Health Monitor 2020’), its prevalence will increase between 2012 and 2020. Some of the causes of loneliness among young adults are similar to those of older adults, including little or poor quality social contact with family and friends, (unrealistically) high expectations of social contact, loss of significant others, loss or absence of a romantic partner and health problems. Some factors, such as contact with family and friends, income, education and health, have an age-specific effect on loneliness. Young adulthood is a life stage that requires special attention to understand and address loneliness.

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a relatively short period in one’s life with many important transitions, such as starting a new education, leaving the parental home, losing housing and income security, starting or ending a job or volunteering, and possibly providing informal care. In addition to these well-defined periods of transition, there are also periods of change with less obvious transitions, such as stages in identity development or changes in the meaning and interpretation of (sexual) intimacy, purpose, religion and spirituality. In each of these periods of transition, there is a risk of excessive stress, feelings of loneliness and isolation. Some transitions, such as marriage and parenthood, are experienced positively, but at the same time there can be loneliness as well. During these transitions, the institutional embeddedness of young adults is under pressure. This requires a lot of adjustment and can lead to temporary or long-term loneliness. It is not known what the specific causes or tipping points are for the emergence of long-term loneliness.

Focus areas and research questions for the ‘young adults (18-26 years)’ target group

The requested research focuses on developing a more specific picture of which life events and situations are relevant to loneliness in young adults, and how periods of transition lead to insufficient social embeddedness and loneliness. A clearer idea of the risk factors in young adulthood provides a starting point for developing and researching targeted, appropriate approaches to loneliness (including breaking the loneliness taboo) among young adults and the society around them. The institutional pressures on young adults are likely to play a role in loneliness. It is therefore important to consider the role of key institutions such as family, education, work and social clubs. What opportunities are there for establishing and maintaining meaningful social relationships, and what processes of access to social services prevent exclusion? Research into and opportunities for identity development, identification and purpose are also relevant at different levels, from the individual to society.

Informal carers of people with chronic or lifelong illnesses or disabilities

Research consistently shows that the importance of informal care within the overall care provision (in the Netherlands) cannot be underestimated. The main motivations for providing this care seem to be love and the sense that it is the right thing to do. In addition, informal carers often say that their efforts give them great satisfaction and, as a result, they feel a strong bond with the person they are caring for.
However, research also shows that providing informal care is often a heavy burden. This burden is most pronounced in situations where there is a long-term care relationship due to conditions such as (for example) progressive muscular diseases, neurological problems, rheumatism or disabilities resulting from non-congenital brain injury, spinal cord injury or cancer treatment in a member of the family or social network. The perceived burden has several components: in addition to the physical component of caring, combined with time pressure and organisational issues, socio-emotional aspects also play a role. These include grief, changes in relational roles and disruption of future prospects. The lack of intimacy, the loss of the role of partner, child, brother or sister can trigger feelings of loneliness. The loss or gradual erosion of the social network, the fear of family and friends to intervene, and the inability to participate in social activities due to informal caring responsibilities can also contribute to the loneliness experienced by the caregiver. This is felt and experienced all the more acutely when the need for care is associated with a taboo or when this condition leads to misunderstood behaviour. In addition, aspects such as cultural-ethnic identity, one’s own health and socio-economic situation, limited health literacy, unfamiliarity with the (Dutch) health care system or not feeling embedded in (local) society play a role in these informal carers’ experience of loneliness. In these situations, informal carers often feel torn between their obligation to continue to support the care recipient and their own desire for meaningful or, on the contrary, superficial social relationships outside their own family. Depending on their age or stage of life, they (also) want to study, work (for pay) outside the home, participate in leisure activities or otherwise develop and use their skills.

Focus areas and research questions for the ‘informal carers’ target group
The requested research will provide insight into the risk factors for loneliness in this group in order to identify leads for effective approaches and subsequently develop and implement them. As with the other target groups, here too there needs to be a focus on the influence of the social context (perception, active or non-active exclusion or inclusion and the ability to combine informal care with other activities) on loneliness.

People with mild intellectual disabilities
There are no clear figures on loneliness among people with mild intellectual disabilities in the Netherlands, and as a result, there is no clear picture of its extent either. Research thus far shows that loneliness is experienced by both children living at home and adults living independently in a neighbourhood, in a small residential facility or on the premises of an institutional facility. People with mild intellectual disabilities have fewer social contacts. They interact mainly with family, professionals and other people with intellectual disabilities. There are three main aspects that affect loneliness among people with mild intellectual disabilities, all of which are interrelated: attributes linked to the intellectual disability, limited opportunities for social interaction and negative attitudes from society. Focusing on the interaction between the person and the environment is key to increasing opportunities for social interaction.

Although few of the approaches focus specifically on tackling loneliness in people with mild intellectual disabilities, several types of approach focus on issues such as increasing social networks, social participation, social skills, inclusion and neighbourhood participation. Loneliness occurs in everyday places such as the neighbourhood, school or work, or the place where someone plays sports or has fun.

An increasing number of people with mild intellectual disabilities have independent supervised living arrangements in their community. It is important that there are enough opportunities to participate in activities and work, not only as a participant but also as a volunteer or employee. Participation is not the same as belonging. Contacts in a neighbourhood do not always lead to friendship, but they are valuable because they give people the feeling that they are important to others. Negative perceptions and mechanisms of exclusion are at the foundation of an inhospitable environment.
Focus areas and research questions for the ‘people with a mild intellectual disability’ target group
Approaches should therefore focus first on these everyday places. This includes devoting attention to periods of transition (such as from school to work and moving house) and the possible effects of moving from ‘sheltered’ to ‘regular’ housing or vice versa. The relatives of people with mild intellectual disabilities have an important role to play: indeed, they are an important part of the social network. It is therefore recommended that approaches to reducing loneliness take into account the role and position of these relatives. An approach should also focus on participation in activities and work, and a welcoming or hospitable environment.

The requested research for this target group will focus on at least one of the following three themes:

- Understanding what is needed to create a welcoming place and to be meaningful in everyday places. Consider opportunities for people with a mild intellectual disability to form social networks at work or to engage in the neighbourhood. Differences between living settings can also be considered, such as small-scale living initiatives by parents or mixed-living projects focused on an active social environment.
- Understanding how to develop and maintain social relationships. Consider themes such as friendship, equality and reciprocity in contacts and social relationships with people with and without disabilities.
- Understanding to what extent loneliness is an important underlying problem for issues that are already being addressed, such as substance use, various forms of abuse, poverty or problems caused by systems that hinder equal participation.

Elderly people from a non-European country of origin
The number of elderly people from a non-European country of origin has increased significantly and is still growing. Several national and international studies have shown that elderly people who have migrated to the Netherlands experience loneliness relatively often.

In general, too little research has been done to be able to make useful statements about the high number of lonely elderly people (50 years and older) from a non-European country of origin. Some risk factors for loneliness are known from research, such as low socio-economic status (SES), poor health, physical limitations and a limited social network. For some elderly people, there are protective factors, such as a sense of belonging to the Dutch community or to their own community. Strong contacts with family members can also have a protective effect. On the other hand, many elderly people do not have strong ties with family members. Social-psychological factors such as low mastery, stress, homesickness, discrimination, social exclusion and minority stress also seem to be important.

Knowledge of the underlying mechanisms and explanatory models has not been sufficiently developed yet. This is due to the limitations of previous studies. Most studies are limited in scope, cross-sectional, local and/or have other methodological shortcomings, such as the validity of measurement instruments and reaching a representative group of respondents. As a result, the groups studied represent only a small selection of the range of countries of origin and ethnicities known in the Netherlands. The most studied groups are first-generation elderly with a Turkish, Moroccan or Surinamese background living in big cities. Less is known about elderly people with a non-European country of origin from countries such as China or Ghana or about second-generation elderly people.

An intersectional perspective can be useful to gain insight into underlying mechanisms and explanatory models. This includes not only migrant backgrounds, but also related social categories such as SES and gender, and factors such as health and perceived discrimination. Together, these may influence experiences over the life course and in an ever-changing social context. It is not possible with the current knowledge to develop evidence-based approaches, whether or not they build on existing ones.

Focus areas and research questions for the ‘elderly people from a non-European country of origin’ target group
The requested research should focus on several themes, including:

- The prevalence of loneliness among different groups of elderly people with a non-European country of origin;
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- Explanations for the high levels of loneliness among these elderly people; and
- How to approach the issue of loneliness among these groups of elderly people.

2.2.2 Phase II – cross-cutting project

Once the target group projects have been launched, the five projects will jointly design a cross-cutting project. This will combine practical, scientific and experiential knowledge. The cross-cutting project will contribute to an understanding of the background to loneliness that transcends the target groups and thus pave the way for more widely applicable, effective ways of reducing loneliness. For the purposes of the cross-cutting project, it is therefore desirable that the individual target group projects focus on the following five common elements:

- The cross-cutting project focuses on the backgrounds and manifestations of the taboo of loneliness. This explicitly addresses the interaction between personal and contextual factors underlying the taboo of loneliness. A better understanding of the taboo on loneliness may help to approach target groups or individuals at risk of loneliness more effectively. It will also consider whether or not it is advisable to explicitly name the loneliness of those involved in the approach to loneliness and what underlies it.
- The cross-cutting project focuses on the common conceptualisation of loneliness (emotional, social and existential). It is expected that a shared understanding of loneliness will contribute to the recognition of loneliness and to the development of an appropriate approach to people who feel or experience loneliness.
- The cross-cutting project will identify (common) effective elements in the different approaches to be developed or improved.
- The cross-cutting project will address the development of ways to evaluate the different forms of approaches and the initiatives within which they are implemented. These evaluation methods are preferably cross-cutting and suitable for use in practice.
- Preferably, these evaluation methods will not only measure the short-term impact of an approach but also reveal the sustainability of the approach in the long term.

The cross-cutting project addressing these five elements will lead to the following outcomes:

- Knowledge that can be used to further develop and improve existing approaches and possibly extend them to other than the original target groups;
- A common strategy for designing and establishing new approaches;
- Developing the expertise of (future) professionals (both in practice and policy) and volunteers to reduce loneliness in different (sub)groups;
- This will be reinforced by building a sustainable network in the cross-cutting project, in which a learning community on loneliness will be nurtured based on the acquired knowledge, and which will be used and expanded after the projects have ended.

2.3 Societal impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to solutions for societal issues of today and tomorrow. Examples are the energy transition, health and care, or climate change. For more information about the NWO knowledge utilisation policy, see the website: Knowledge utilisation | NWO.

2.3.1 Tailor-made impact

Depending on the aim of the funding instrument, NWO will select the approach that has the greatest chance of achieving societal impact. The primary aim of the funding instrument determines the method NWO deploys to facilitate knowledge utilisation in various phases of the project (proposal, realisation, project completion) and the effort required from the applicant(s) and partner(s).
In this programme, the Impact Plan approach is applied. With this, NWO facilitates the development of an integrated strategy by researchers and partners to purposefully increase the likelihood of achieving the desired societal impact.

NWO offers an e-learning module that can help interested parties via impact.nwo.nl. For more information on the policy on impact see the website: Impact - Online workshops | NWO for more information.

For more information about the NWO knowledge utilisation policy, see the website: Knowledge utilisation | NWO.

2.3.2 Impact Plan approach in the NWA Loneliness call

The NWA programmes focus on complex issues where coordination and collaboration add value to achieve scientific and societal breakthroughs. The NWA encourages such collaboration between different partners to ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and new knowledge is developed to address societal issues.

Societal impact is never solely the result of knowledge and insights gained from the research. To increase the chances of research having a societal impact, it is necessary to demonstrate the involvement of key stakeholders from the formation of the consortium to the completion of the project and beyond. After all, societal impact is often only achieved years after a research project has been completed. Ensuring continuous alignment between researchers and potential knowledge users from the beginning of the research development (co-design) and while it is being conducted (co-creation) increases the likelihood of productive interaction and, ultimately, impact.

As part of the full application, consortia will develop an Impact Plan with stakeholders. This impact plan describes how the consortium expects to achieve societal impact and the role that productive interaction will play in this. It shows how the achievement of the intended impact is integrated into the research design and the role of consortium partners and stakeholders from policy, practice and industry.
Chapter 3: Conditions for applicants

This chapter contains the conditions that are applicable to your grant application. Firstly it describes who can apply for funding (Section 3.1) and what you can request funding for (Section 3.2). Subsequently, you will find the conditions for preparing and submitting the application (Sections 3.3 and 3.4) and the specific funding conditions (Section 3.5).

3.1 Who can apply

Phase I – target group projects
Proposals in Phase I will be submitted by a main applicant on behalf of a consortium meeting the conditions set out below. The main applicant is the contact point for NWO.

Phase II – cross-cutting project
Phase II will be launched if at least three applications are awarded in phase I. The successful consortia from phase I will form a new consortium that will submit a new joint application for phase II. For the cross-cutting project, a single main applicant will be designated following consultation between the projects from phase I. The main applicant of the project in phase II will also be the main applicant of one of the target group projects. The application will be submitted by this main applicant on behalf of the consortium. The main applicant is the contact point for NWO. Co-applicants (3.1.1), co-funders (3.1.3) and cooperation partners (3.1.4) may be included in the consortium to be formed for phase II.

There are four categories of participants within a consortium:
1. Main applicant;
2. Co-applicant(s);
3. Cooperation partner(s);
4. Co-funder(s) (optional).

A consortium should consist of at least a main applicant, a co-applicant and cooperation partner. The conditions for each type of participant are explained in more detail in the following sections.

Main and co-applicants
The main applicant submits the application through ISAAC, NWO’s electronic submission system. During the evaluation process, NWO will communicate with the main applicant. Once an application has been awarded, the main applicant becomes the project leader and contact person for NWO. The main applicant’s knowledge institution is the main beneficiary and becomes the main applicant.

Co-applicants will play an active role in the implementation of the project. The (sub)project leader(s) and beneficiary(ies) are jointly responsible for the implementation of the whole project.

3.1.1 Main and co-applicants

Main applicant
Full, associate and assistant professors, lectors employed by an university of applied sciences (HBO) and other researchers with a comparable position* may act as main applicant if they have a tenured position (and therefore a paid position for an indefinite period**) or a tenure track agreement at one of the following organisations:
- universities located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- university medical centres;
- institutes affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) or NWO;
- universities of applied sciences as referred to in Article 1.8 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW);
- TO2 institutes;
- Netherlands Cancer Institute;
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− the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
− Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
− Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
− Princess Máxima Center.

*A comparable position refers to a researcher that has a demonstrable and comparable number of years of experience in carrying out scientific research and supervising other researchers as a full, associate or assistant professor.

**Lectors employed at a university of applied sciences and researchers employed at a TO2 institute may also submit as a main applicant provided that they have at least a salaried position for a limited period of time.

Persons with a zero-hour employment agreement or with a contract for a limited period of time (other than a tenure track appointment and the exception stated above for lectors and researchers employed at a TO2 institute) are not allowed to submit a proposal as main applicant.

It could be the case that the main applicant’s tenure track agreement ends before the intended completion date of the project for which funding is applied for, or that before that date, the main applicant’s tenured contract ends due to the applicant reaching retirement age. In that case, the main applicant needs to include a statement from their employer in which the organisation concerned guarantees that the project and all project members for whom funding has been requested will receive adequate supervision for the full duration of the project. A main applicant employed by a university of applied sciences or a TO2 institute whose employment ends before the intended completion date of the project for which funding is applied must also include such a statement.

The main applicant submits the proposal via the NWO web application ISAAC. During the assessment process, NWO will communicate with the main applicant.

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the main applicant will become the project leader and point of contact for NWO. The knowledge institution of the main applicant is the main beneficiary and will become the official secretary.

An extra condition is that the main applicant may submit only one proposal in the role of main applicant.

Both main- and co-applicants with a part-time contract should guarantee adequate supervision of the project and all project members for whom funding is requested.

Co-applicants
Co-applicants have an active role in realising the project. The (sub)project leaders and beneficiary/beneficiaries are jointly responsible for realising the entire project.

Co-applicants can be affiliated to the institutions stated in Section 3.1.1 and the public knowledge organisations stated in Annex 7.3, but also to other organisations.

If the organisation to which a co-applicant is affiliated is not listed in Section 3.1.1 or Annex 7.3, then it must meet the cumulative criteria indicated below:

− be established in the Netherlands and
− have a public service mission and
− carry out research independently and
− have no profit motive other than for the purposes of conducting further research.

A private company (i.e. B.V.) is always excluded from participating as an applicant in the consortium.

The ‘implementation of research’ from the sub-criterion ‘is independent in the conduct of research’ means that carrying out research, as defined in the NWO Grant Rules 2017, Chapter 5, is the main task of the research organisation, as evidenced by official documentation such as articles of association,
Chapter 3: Conditions for applicants / NWA [Programmaam]

deed of incorporation or other formal documentation. The research should be carried out by the organisation’s own paid staff.

This call also focuses on knowledge for the benefit of practitioners, for example in the health or social sectors. An organisation can potentially act as a co-applicant, provided that the organisation meets the above conditions and has been pre-approved by NWO. Only one department per organisation can participate.

Please note: prior to the submission of an application, NWO will assess whether an organisation satisfies these cumulative criteria and may therefore participate as a co-applicant. NWO carries out this assessment amongst other things to check there is no provision of forbidden state support. This assessment should also be carried out if an organisation was previously assessed and permitted as a co-applicant within another NWA programme.

The organisation of the intended co-applicant should submit at least the following documents by email no less than 10 working days before the submission deadline (no later than Thursday 15 June 2023 at 14.00.00 CEST for phase I and Thursday 26 September 2024 at 14.00.00 CEST for phase II):

- a recent extract from the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce;
- the deed of incorporation or current articles of association or other formal document evidencing the public service mission and absence of profit motive;
- the latest available annual accounts accompanied by an audit statement.

Other relevant documentation may be added. NWO may request additional information if the above documents are not sufficiently conclusive to determine whether there would be the provision of forbidden state support or whether the organisation may act as a co-applicant.

If the applicant’s organisation does not submit the necessary documents for this check in time, NWO cannot accept the organisation as a co-applicant.

3.1.2 Cooperation partners

Cooperation partners are mandatory in this call for proposals, as the active involvement (from the formulation of questions and development of the project) of societal stakeholders, both public and private, is of great importance for developing knowledge on challenges and possible solutions. A cooperation partner is a party that is closely involved in the implementation of the research and/or knowledge utilisation but not in a position to capitalise on its contribution in advance. A cooperation partner is therefore not a main or co-applicant or co-funder.

This may include parties that are involved via participation in an advisory, guidance or user committee, or parties that are unable to capitalise their contribution in advance.

Please note: no funding may be requested for salary or research costs as a co-applicant for personnel of organisations that participate as a cooperation partner in the consortium. However, it is possible to remunerate costs by hiring in these organisations as third parties via the modules ‘material costs’, ‘knowledge utilisation’ or ‘project management (see Section 3.2 and Annex 7.1).

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6 See Commission Regulations EU 1407/2013 of 18/12/2013 and EU 651/2014 of 17/06/2014 and the Communication of the European Commission 2014/C 198/01 to check whether there is compliance with these aid regulations.

7 Organisations that are not legally obliged to have their annual accounts audited do not need to provide such an auditor’s statement. They must however be able to demonstrate that this legal requirement is not applicable to the organisation concerned.
3.1.3 Co-funders

Co-funding is not compulsory within this call. 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 regarding co-funding are specified in Annex 7.4 to this call.

Organisations whose employees are permitted to act as main applicants in accordance with the description given in Section 3.1.1 may not participate as co-funders in this call for proposals.

An exception will be made for TO2 institutes. They may participate in a consortium as co-funders, unless they also participate as a main applicant or co-applicant in the same consortium.

3.2 What can be applied for

For an application in phase I, a minimum of €800,000 and a maximum of €970,000 per target group project can be requested under this call for proposals. In phase II, a minimum of €700,000 and a maximum of €835,000 can be requested for the cross-cutting project.

The maximum duration for phase I projects is 54 months/4.5 years. The maximum duration of projects in phase II is 48 months/4 years. The budget modules available for this call for proposals (including maximum amounts) are listed in the table below. Only apply for what is essential for the implementation of the project. A more detailed explanation of the budget modules can be found in the annexes to this call for proposals (see 7.1).

Relationship between the target group project and cross-cutting

Each application includes in the budget an item 'Work package for cross-cutting project’. Target group project applicants must reserve approximately 5% of the total budget requested from the NWO for this item. It is from this work package that the target group projects contribute to the cross-cutting project with the aim of:

– Feeding the cross-cutting project with results from the target group projects on the five themes of taboo, common conceptualisation, effective elements, evaluation methods and sustainability, in order to reach shared insights and develop a common strategy for designing and establishing new approaches.

– Building a sustainable network, where knowledge is fed into a learning community on loneliness, which will be used and extended beyond the projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget module</th>
<th>Maximum amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Unrestricted number of positions, according to UNL or NFU rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate in Engineering</td>
<td>Unrestricted number of positions, in combination with PhD student(s) and or postdoc(s), according to UNL or NFU rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoc</td>
<td>Unrestricted number of positions, according to UNL or NFU rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-scientific staff (NSS) at universities</td>
<td>€100,000, according to UNL or NFU rates, in combination with PhD student(s) and or postdoc(s), up to a maximum of €300,000 per application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For personnel outside the Netherlands, the local rates are reimbursed. These rates are capped at a maximum equal to the UNL rates corrected by the NWO Country correction coefficients (CCC) table, see Money Follows Cooperation | NWO.
### 3.3 Preparing an application

This Call for proposals has two phases:

1. Submitting an application for a target group project
2. Submitting an application for the cross-cutting project

For a complete overview of all submission requirements, please see Section 3.4.1.

An application can only be submitted via the web application ISAAC. Applications that are not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

As the main applicant, you are required to submit the application via your own personal ISAAC account.

It is important to start with your application in ISAAC on time:

- If you do not yet have an ISAAC account, then you should create this on time to prevent any possible registration problems;
- Any new organisations must also be added to ISAAC by NOW;
- You also need to submit other details online.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration by NWO.

For technical questions, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see contact (Chapter 6).

Does a main and/or co-applicant work at an organisation that is not included in the ISAAC database?

You can report this via relatiebeheer@nwo.nl so that the organisation can be added. This will take several days. It is therefore important that you report this at least one week before the deadline.

The applicant must inform the organisation where she/he works about the submission of the application, and the organisation must accept the granting conditions of this Call for proposals.

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9 This budget category is not intended to fund the hours of main or co-applicants. For this, either the research leave grant (for institutions that use UNL or NFU rates), or personnel universities of applied sciences, educational institutions and other organisations grant (for institutions that use the HOT rates) is available.

10 This also includes positions at universities of applied sciences, educational institutions and other applying organisations.
3.3.1 Preparing and submitting a proposal in phase I

The steps involved in writing your application are:

− download the application form from the NWO web application ISAAC or from the NWO web page (on the grant page of the funding instrument concerned);
− complete the application form;
− save the application form in ISAAC as a PDF file and upload it with any compulsory annexes;
− fill in the requested information online in ISAAC.

Compulsory annexes:
− budget;
− declarations of commitment of cooperation partners (see section 3.1.2);
− declaration co-funding from co-funders (mandatory if applicable, see section 3.1.3);
− letter guaranteeing the continuity of the project supervision (compulsory if applicable, see paragraph 3.1).

In case NWO has made a template available, the annexe should be drawn up according to the NWO template. Annexes must be uploaded in ISAAC separately from the application. All of the annexes, except for the budget, must be submitted as PDF files (without encryption). The budget must be submitted in ISAAC as an Excel file. Upon submission of the application, the attached declaration of co-funding should state the co-funding pledged according to the conditions described in Section 3.5.5 / 7.4. Any annexes other than those above-mentioned are not permitted.

3.3.2 Preparing and submitting a proposal in phase II

The consortia awarded in phase I will work as a single consortium to develop an application for the cross-cutting project in phase II based on this call for proposals. The cross-cutting project application should be submitted to ISAAC via the designated main applicant’s account by 14:00:00 CEST on 10 October 2024.

The steps involved in writing your application are:

− download the application form from the NWO web application ISAAC or from the NWO web page (on the grant page of the funding instrument concerned);
− complete the application form;
− save the application form in ISAAC as a PDF file and upload it with any compulsory annexes;
− fill in the requested information online in ISAAC.

Compulsory annexes:
− budget;
− declarations of commitment of cooperation partners (see section 3.1.2);
− declaration co-funding from co-funders (mandatory if applicable, see section 3.1.3);
− letter guaranteeing the continuity of the project supervision (compulsory if applicable, see paragraph 3.1).

In case NWO has made a template available, the annexe should be drawn up according to the NWO template. Annexes must be uploaded in ISAAC separately from the application. All of the annexes, except for the budget, must be submitted as PDF files (without encryption). The budget must be submitted in ISAAC as an Excel file. Upon submission of the application, the attached declaration of co-funding should state the co-funding pledged according to the conditions described in Section 3.5.5 / 7.4. Any annexes other than those above-mentioned are not permitted.
3.4 Conditions for submission

3.4.1 Formal conditions for submission

Wherever this paragraph refers to ‘application’, both the applications from phases I and II are meant, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

NWO will assess your application against the conditions listed below. Your application will only be admitted to the assessment procedure if it meets these conditions. After submitting your application, NWO requests you to be available to implement any possible administrative corrections so that you can (still) meet the conditions for submission.

These conditions are:
- the main applicant and co-applicant(s) meet the conditions stated in Section 3.1;
- the application complies with the DORA guidelines as described in Section 4.1;
- the application form is, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions;
- the application is submitted via the main applicant’s ISAAC account;
- the application is received before the deadline;
- the application is written in English;
- the application budget is drawn up in accordance with the conditions for this Call for proposals;
- the proposed project for phase I has a duration of at least 48 and at most 54 months;
- the proposed project for phase II has a duration of at least 42 and at most 48 months all of the required annexes are, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions.

3.5 Conditions on granting

The NWO Grant Rules 2017 and the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research are applicable to all applications.

3.5.1 Compliance with the National Knowledge Security Guidelines

Guidelines (hereafter: the Guidelines) helps knowledge institutions to ensure that international cooperation can take place securely. Knowledge security concerns the undesirable transfer of sensitive knowledge and technology that compromises national security; the covert influence of state actors on education and research, which jeopardises academic freedom and social safety; and ethical issues that may arise in cooperation with countries that do not respect fundamental rights.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their project complies and will continue to comply with the Guidelines. By submitting an application, the applicant commits to the recommendations stipulated in these Guidelines. In the event of a suspected breach of the Guidelines in an application submitted to NWO for project funding, or in a project funded by NWO, NWO may ask the applicant to provide a risk assessment demonstrating that the recommendations in the Guidelines have been taken into consideration. If the applicant fails to comply with NWO’s request, or if the risk assessment is in apparent breach of the Guidelines, this may affect NWO’s grant award or decision-making process. NWO may also include further conditions in the award letter if appropriate.

The National Knowledge Security Guidelines can be found on the central government website at: Home | National Contact Point.
3.5.2 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 publicly accessible insofar as this is possible. NWO expects that research data resulting from NWO-funded projects will be made publicly available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers. “As open as possible, as closed as necessary” is the applicable principle in this respect. Researchers are at least expected to make the data and/or non-numerical results that underlie the conclusions of work published within the project publicly available at the same time as the work’s publication. Any costs incurred for this can be included in the project budget. Researchers should explain how data emerging from the project will be dealt with based on the data management section in the proposal and the data management plan that is drawn up after funding is awarded.

Data management section

The data management section is part of the proposal. Researchers are asked before the start of the research to consider how the data collected will be ordered and categorised so that this can be made publicly available. Measures will often already need to be taken, during the creation of data and analysis of the data, to make its later storage and dissemination possible. If it is not possible to make all data from the project publicly available, for example due to reasons of privacy, ethics or valorisation, then the applicant is obliged to list the reasons for this in the data management section.

The data management section in the proposal is not evaluated and will therefore not be weighed in the decision whether to award funding. However, both the referees and the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section.

3.5.3 Scientific integrity

In accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2017, the project that NWO funds must be carried out in accordance with the nationally and internationally accepted standards for scientific conduct as stated in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018). By submitting the proposal, the applicant commits to this code. In the case of a (possible) violation of these standards during a project funded by NWO, the applicant should immediately inform NWO of this and should submit all relevant documents to NWO. More information about the code of conduct and the policy regarding research integrity can be found on the website: Scientific integrity | NWO.

3.5.4 Ethical statement or licence

The applicant is responsible for determining whether an ethical statement or licence is needed for the realisation of the proposed project. The applicant should ensure that this is obtained from the relevant institution or ethics committee on time. If the project is awarded funding, then the grant is issued under the condition that the necessary ethical statement or licence is obtained before the latest start date for the project. The project cannot start until NWO has received a copy of the ethical statement or licence.

3.5.5 Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol 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 (ABS Focal Point - ABS Focal Point). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.6 Co-funding

Co-funding is not compulsory within this call. However, co-funders may be included in 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. Conditions for co-funding are specified in Annex 7 to this call.

Declaration co-funding
In a declaration co-funding, the co-funder expresses both substantive and financial support for the project and confirms the pledged co-funding. In the declaration co-funding, the co-funder also states whether the support pledged originates from private sources. The declarations co-funding from all co-funders are mandatory annexes to the full proposal. The declaration co-funding must be signed by an authorised signatory of the co-funder. NWO will provide a mandatory template for the declaration co-funding.

In the case of funding being awarded, the co-funder should state their contribution(s) in the consortium agreement (amongst other things for invoicing in the case of in cash co-funding). In this agreement, further agreements are also made between the co-funder(s) and the applicant(s) (see Section 5.1.3).

3.5.7 Declarations of commitment of cooperation partners

Vertalen: In een adhesiebetuiging spreekt de samenwerkingspartner steun uit aan het project en beschrijft diens rol binnen het project. NWO stelt een standaardbrief beschikbaar op de financieringspagina.

In geval van toekenning dient de samenwerkingspartner diens deelname aan het project te bevestigen in de consortiumovereenkomst. Tevens worden in deze overeenkomst verdere afspraken gemaakt tussen de samenwerkingspartner(s) en de aanvrager(s) (zie ook paragraaf 5.1.5).
4 Assessment procedure

This chapter first describes the assessment according to the DORA principles (Section 4.1) and the course of the assessment procedure (Section 4.2). Second, it states the criteria that the assessment committee will use to assess your application (Section 4.3).

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO employees involved in the assessment and/or decision-taking process (Code for Dealing with Personal Interests | NWO).

NWO strives to achieve an inclusive culture in which there is no place for conscious or unconscious barriers due to cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender, sexual orientation, health or age (Diversity and inclusion | NWO). NWO encourages members of an assessment committee to be actively aware of implicit associations and to try to minimise these. NWO will provide them with information about concrete ways of improving the assessment of an application.

4.1 The San Francisco Declaration (DORA)

NWO is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). DORA is a worldwide initiative that aims to improve the way research and researchers are assessed. DORA contains recommendations for research funders, research institutions, scientific journals and other parties.

DORA aims to reduce the uncritical use of bibliometric indicators and obviate unconscious bias in the assessment of research and researchers. DORA’s overarching philosophy is that research should be evaluated on its own merits rather than on the basis of surrogate measures, such as the journal in which the research is published.

When assessing the scientific track record of applicants, NWO makes use of a broad definition of scientific output.

NWO requests committee members not to rely on indicators such as the Journal Impact Factor or the h-index when assessing applications. Applicants are not allowed to mention these in their applications. You are, however, allowed to list other scientific products besides publications, such as datasets, patents, software and code, et cetera.

For more information on how NWO is implementing the principles of DORA, see DORA | NWO.

4.2 Procedure

The application process consists of the following steps for both phase I and II, unless otherwise stated:

- Matchmaking meeting(s) (only in phase I);
- Submission of the proposal;
- Consideration of the proposal;
- Pre-advice assessment committee;
- Interviews;
- Final assessment;
- Decision-making.
Assessment committee

For this NWA Call for proposals, an assessment committee will be appointed by the NWO Executive Board. The assessment committee will have a broad composition. This means that not only scientific expertise will be represented in the assessment committee, but also expertise from the entire knowledge chain, including societal stakeholders who are highly familiar with the subject and representatives from the target group.

Due to the special character of the Call for proposals and the expertise present in the assessment committee, NWO has decided for the assessment of the applications to make use of the possibility given in Article 2.2.4, paragraph 2, of the NWO Grant Rules 2017, to realise the assessment procedure without involving referees.

4.2.1 Matchmaking meeting(s)

Following the publication of the call for proposals, NWO will organise two physical matchmaking meetings to stimulate the formation of consortia. During the first matchmaking meeting, the various parties will get to know each other and, based on this call for proposals, explore the pressing questions from both a practical and a scientific point of view.

The second matchmaking meeting will focus on the questions identified in the first matchmaking meeting: who is best placed to answer these questions? Participants of the first matchmaking meeting are invited to bring partners that are needed to answer these questions. The purpose of the matchmaking meeting is to make applicants aware of all ongoing initiatives related to the call for proposals and to give social partners the opportunity to discuss possible collaborations, mergers or affiliations.

These meetings also serve as a good opportunity for parties not yet involved in an initiatives but interested to take part in a consortium to explore opportunities to connect with existing initiatives. These parties can therefore also register for this meeting so that they can come into contact with and possibly join a consortium.

Finally at the matchmaking meeting, further information will be provided regarding the application process and the Impact approaches (see Section 2.3).

4.2.2 Submission of a proposal

For the submission of the proposal, a standard form is available on the funding page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website. When you write your proposal, you must adhere to the questions stated on this form and the procedure given in the explanatory notes. You must also adhere to the conditions for the maximum number of words and pages. Your complete application form must have been received before the deadline via ISAAC (see paragraph 1.3). After this deadline, you can no longer submit a proposal. After submitting the proposal, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt.

4.2.3 Admissibility of the proposal

As soon as possible after you have submitted your proposal, you will hear from NWO whether or not your proposal will be taken into consideration. NWO will determine this based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, Section 3.4). NWO can only take your proposal into consideration if it meets these conditions. Please bear in mind that within two weeks after the submission deadline, NWO may approach you with any possible administrative corrections that need to be made so that your proposal can (still) meet the conditions for submission. You will be given one opportunity to make the corrections, and you will be given five working days to do this.
4.2.4 Pre-advice assessment committee

After this, your proposal will be submitted for comments to several members of the assessment committee (the pre-advisers). The pre-advisers will provide a written substantive and reasoned response to the proposal. They will formulate these comments based on the substantive assessment criteria (see Section 4.3.1) and will give the proposal a numerical score per assessment criterion. For this, the NWO score table will be used (on a scale of 1 to 9, where “1” is excellent and “9” unsatisfactory). In addition, the preadvisers identify which parts need to be clarified, explained or deepened during the interview.

4.2.5 Interview selection

In Phase I, essentially all consortia that have submitted a proposal will be invited to an interview with the assessment committee. If the number of proposals is four times the expected number of proposals to be allocated for the relevant target group, then the assessment committee may decide to invite only a selection of consortia for an interview.

Proposals will be submitted to the assessment committee to allow it to make a selection. The assessment committee will make its own assessment on this basis. The highest priority proposals will then be invited for an interview. This will be a maximum of three proposals for each target group, or as many more/less if, within five proposals of this maximum, there is a significant jump in the provisional prioritisation of 0.25 points, either upwards or downwards, between two consecutive proposals.

In phase II, the consortium that submitted the proposal will be invited for an interview.

It is up to the invited consortia to decide who will participate in the interview, up to a maximum of four people per consortium (including the main applicant).

4.2.6 Interview

During the interview, the assessment committee has the opportunity to pose questions. During the interview, consortium can respond to these in the discussion with the committee. In this manner, the principle of hearing and rebuttal is applied. The interview is an important part of the assessment and can lead to an adjustment of the assessment and the score of the proposal.

4.2.7 Meeting of the assessment committee

The committee will make its own assessment based on the available material. The pre-advises will to a large extent ‘guide’ the final assessment but will not be blindly accepted by the committee without question. The committee will consider and compare the arguments of the pre-advisers (also among each other) and examine whether the rebuttal contains a well-formulated response to the critical comments from the pre-advises.

Following the discussion, the committee draws up a written recommendation addressed to NWO’s Executive Board about the quality and ranking of the proposals. This recommendation is based on the assessment criteria. The proposal must receive an overall qualification of at least “good” to be eligible for funding. The proposal must also receive at least the qualification “good” for each of the individual assessment criteria. For more information about the qualifications, see Applying for funding, how does it work? | NWO.

If the proposal does not meet these requirements in phase II, the assessment committee will indicate which elements are insufficient and the consortium will be given a single opportunity to revise the proposal on these elements. The consortium will have one month from the notification of this decision to do so. The recommendations and instructions will be communicated in writing by the assessment committee. A second meeting with the assessment committee will then be scheduled. Thus, both sides of the argument will be heard.
If, after discussing the proposals in phase I, two or more proposals are indistinguishable based on their overall weighted scores, an *ex aequo* situation will apply (see Section 4.2.8).

### 4.2.8 Ex aequo

NWO understands *ex aequo* to be a situation in which two or more proposals based on their weighted score cannot be distinguished from each other. An *ex aequo* situation is relevant with respect to the borders of the available budget or the selection borders. The existence of an *ex aequo* situation is determined as follows. The starting point is the ranking drawn up by the assessment committee, with the final scores rounded down to two decimal points. The reference score is the score of the lowest-ranked proposal within the borders of the available budget or the selection borders. All proposals with a score that is within 0.05 or less of the reference score will be considered. In this way, the proposals that are equal within a score of 0.1 will be selected. If an *ex aequo* situation occurs at the borders of available budget or the selection borders, then the proposal with a better assessment pertaining to criterion ‘Alignment with the objectives of the programme’, will end as the highest. If the *ex aequo* situation is not resolved with this, then the proposal with the highest score for the criterion ‘Quality of the consortium’ will end highest. If the proposals subsequently in a tie, the assessment committee, with the help of an (anonymous) majority vote, will determine the ranking (in accordance with Article 2.2.7, third paragraph, sub a, part iv of the NWO Grant Rules 2017). If this vote provides no resolution either, or is not desirable to vote, the *ex aequo* situation will be send on to the decision-making body.

### 4.2.9 Decision-making

Finally, the NWO Executive Board will assess the procedure followed and the advice from the assessment committee. It will subsequently determine the final qualifications and take a decision about awarding or rejecting the proposals.

### 4.2.10 Timetable

Below, you will find the timetable for this Call for proposals. During the current procedure, NWO might find it necessary to make further changes to the timetable for this Call for proposals. You will be informed about this in time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fase I - doelgroepprojecten</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donderdag 29 juni 2023 – 14:00:00 uur CEST</td>
<td>Deadline aanvragen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2023</td>
<td>Interviews + vergadering beoordelingscommissie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medio oktober 2023</td>
<td>Besluit bestuur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medio maart 2024</td>
<td>Start doelgroepprojecten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fase II – dwarsdoorsnijdend project</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2024</td>
<td>Eerste programmabijeenkomst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juni 2024</td>
<td>Tweede programmabijeenkomst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donderdag 10 oktober 2024 – 14:00:00uur CEST</td>
<td>Deadline aanvraag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oktober/november 2024</td>
<td>Interview + vergadering beoordelingscommissie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2024</td>
<td>Besluit raad van bestuur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Januari 2025 (indien van toepassing)</td>
<td>Tweede interview + vergadering beoordelingscommissie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Phase I – target group projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 29 June 2023 – 14:00:00 hr CEST</td>
<td>Deadline proposals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2023</td>
<td>Meeting assessment committee + interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid October 2023</td>
<td>Decision by the board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid March 2024</td>
<td>Start target group projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Phase II – cross-cutting project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2024</td>
<td>First programme meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2024</td>
<td>Second programme meeting</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 10 October 2024 – 14:00:00 hr CEST</td>
<td>Deadline proposal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>October/November 2024</td>
<td>Meeting assessment committee + interview</td>
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<td>November 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2025 (if applicable)</td>
<td>Second meeting assessment committee + interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2025 (if applicable)</td>
<td>Decision by the board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2025</td>
<td>Start cross-cutting project</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## 4.3 Criteria

### 4.3.1 Substantive assessment criteria phase I

The applications submitted within this Call for proposals will be substantially assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Problem definition and analysis, contribution to a solution
2. Envisaged impact and route to impact
3. Quality of the consortium
4. Quality of the research

Criteria 1 and 2 weigh for 20% each and criteria 3 and 4 for 30% each in the total assessment.

The following specific aspects of the four assessment criteria will be assessed:

1. **Problem definition and analysis**
   - Clearly formulated definition of the problem and resulting research questions, logically related and contributing to the objective of the call.
   - Societal and scientific urgency and relevance of the defined problem.
   - Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary character of the problem definition and the research questions.
   - The research focuses on one of the five target groups and the research challenges developed for it. Within these, the research is broad and the consortium will consider useful boundaries.
2. **Envisaged impact and route to impact**
   − The envisaged scientific and societal impact is clearly defined and follows logically from the identified problem or question.
   − The Impact pathway describes a clear route to the impact, as well as the role of the partners involved.
   − Appropriate strategic activities to achieve the impact, such as stakeholder engagement, communication, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity development.

3. **Quality of consortium**
   − The composition of the consortium is a logical fit with the proposed project: interdisciplinary, involvement of relevant societal stakeholders and/or citizens and the wider knowledge chain.
   − Complementarity of the consortium partners in terms of the knowledge, skills and expertise required to execute the project.
   − Active involvement of the partners in the development of the project (co-design), from the articulation of the problem definition and the research questions, and in its execution (co-creation).
   − A clear division of tasks and roles within the consortium with respect to the execution of the research and the governance of the project.

4. **Quality of the research**
   − The scientific research question follows logically from the analysis of the problem and is original and innovative for the disciplines concerned.
   − The proposed approach and methodology are suitable for achieving the specified objectives and answering the research question. The consortium employs fundamental, applied and practical research in its approach.
   − The integrated character of the interdisciplinary research.
   − The structure of the proposed research plan: clearly defined and logically coherent work packages; suitable and well-substantiated budget; risk analysis; and, if necessary, a back-up plan.

### 4.3.2 Substantive assessment criteria phase II

The applications submitted within this Call for proposals will be substantially assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. **Problem definition and analysis, contribution to a solution**
2. **Envisaged impact and route to impact**
3. **Quality of the consortium**
4. **Quality of the research**

Criteria 1 and 2 weigh for 20% each and criteria 3 and 4 for 30% each in the total assessment.

The following specific aspects of the four assessment criteria will be assessed:

1. **Problem definition and analysis**
   − Clearly formulated definition of the problem and resulting research questions, logically related and contributing to the objective of the call.
   − Societal and scientific urgency and relevance of the defined problem.
   − Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary character of the problem definition and the research questions.
   − The research proposal describes how the cross-cutting project will work to disseminate the results to all target groups.

2. **Envisaged impact and route to impact**
- The envisaged scientific and societal impact is clearly defined and follows logically from the identified problem or question.
- The Impact pathway describes a clear route to the impact, as well as the role of the partners involved.
- Appropriate strategic activities to achieve the impact, such as stakeholder engagement, communication, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity development.

3. Quality of consortium
- The composition of the consortium is a logical fit with the proposed project: interdisciplinary, involvement of relevant societal stakeholders and/or citizens and the wider knowledge chain.
- Complementarity of the consortium partners in terms of the knowledge, skills and expertise required to execute the project.
- The consortia of the phase I target group projects are represented in the consortium and will contribute to the cross-cutting project on the themes addressed in the different projects.
- Active involvement of the partners in the development of the project (co-design), from the articulation of the problem definition and the research questions, and in its execution (co-creation).
- A clear division of tasks and roles within the consortium with respect to the execution of the research and the governance of the project.

4. Quality of the research
- The scientific research question follows logically from the analysis of the problem and is original and innovative for the disciplines concerned.
- The proposed approach and methodology are suitable for achieving the specified objectives and answering the research question. The consortium employs fundamental, applied and practical research in its approach.
- The integrated character of the interdisciplinary research.
- The structure of the proposed research plan: clearly defined and logically coherent work packages; suitable and well-substantiated budget; risk analysis; and, if necessary, a back-up plan.
5 Obligations for grant recipients

This chapter details the various obligations that - in addition to the conditions stated in Section 3.5 - apply after funds have been awarded.

5.1.1 Content monitoring

NWO will assume responsibility for the substantive monitoring of the proposals awarded funding. For the duration of NWA Loneliness NWO will organise programme meetings. All projects within this call theme will be invited to participate.

Supervisory committee
To strengthen the monitoring and to increase the support for the realisation of the projects, a supervisory committee will be appointed (see section 5.1.6). The committee will monitor the connection between the different themes, the progress of all projects and the results achieved with a focus on knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation and the application of the results. After granting, regular follow-up meetings will be organised. Representatives from all consortia will be asked to provide input and to take part in the meetings of the supervisory committee. Whenever that is desirable, additional experts will also be invited to the meetings.

5.1.2 Accountability and project completion

5.1.3 Programme activities

Throughout the duration of the programme, the consortia of target group projects and later of the cross-cutting project will meet at least twice a year in programme meetings. The supervisory committee will also attend these meetings. For the purpose of the joint proposal for the cross-cutting project, the first programme meeting will be organised before the start of the target group projects (after awarding the grant). NWO plays a facilitating role in the organisation of this first programme meeting.

5.1.4 Data management

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. For this, applicants can make use of the advice from the referees and committee. The applicant describes in the plan whether use will be made of existing data, whether new data will be collected or generated, and how the data will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. Before submission, the data management plan should be checked by a data steward or similar officer of the organisation where the project will be realised. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within 4 months after the proposal has been awarded funding. NWO will check 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. More information about the data management protocol of NWO can be found at: Research data management | NWO.

5.1.5 Intellectual property and consortium agreement

With respect to intellectual property (IP), the NWO IP policy applies. This can be found in Chapter 4 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017.

Applicants must carry out a project funded by NWO during the time that they work for the knowledge institution. If an applicant or a researcher funded by NWO is appointed by more than one employer, then the other employer should relinquish any possible IP rights that emerge from the project of the applicant.
NWO’s ambition is that research results can be applied by partners involved in the project. NWO aims that all research results from projects it funds are made publicly accessible while at the same time encouraging parties to further develop the research results by giving them the possibility to exploit these. For the exploitation of results, it can be desirable to transfer intellectual property rights or to license the use of these to (one of) the private parties involved in the project. The basic premise is that all research results can be published with due consideration for agreements made about publication procedures.

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the conclusion of a consortium agreement is one of the conditions for starting the project. In this agreement, arrangements are made about intellectual property and publication, knowledge transfer, confidentiality, co-financing payments, progress reports, and final reports. Approval from NWO is required before the project can start. The responsibility for arranging the project agreement lies with the applicant. Thereafter NWO checks whether the consortium agreement fulfil the conditions and does not sign the agreement itself. The model agreement that NWO makes available must be used and can be found on the funding page of this Call for proposals.

Parties can choose to use the standard text from NWO in the model agreement but the may also can choose to make their own agreement or to apply existing agreements for the component parts of intellectual property and publication procedure. The model project agreement provides for this. NWO will subsequently check whether the consortium agreement meets the conditions set in this call and the NWO Grant Rules.

5.1.6 Socially responsible licensing

The knowledge that emerges from the project could be suitable for use in society. When agreements about licensing and/or the transfer of research results developed under this Call for proposals are made, due consideration should be given to the ten principles for socially responsible licensing, as stated in the NFU factsheet “19.4511_Ten_principles_for_Socially_Responsible_Licensing_v19-12-2019.pdf (nfu.nl)”.

5.1.7 Supervisory committee

After awarding the proposals a supervisory committee will be appointed to supervise and advise the projects and the programme (see also Section 5.1.1). More details about this committee is to follow in the grant award letter.

5.1.8 Open Access

As a signatory to the Berlin Declaration (2003) and a member of cOAlition S (2018), NWO is committed to making the results of the research it funds openly accessible via the internet (Open Access). By doing this, NWO gives substance to the ambitions of the Dutch government to make all publicly funded research available in Open Access form. Scientific publications arising from projects awarded on the basis of this Call for proposals must therefore be made available in Open Access form in accordance with the Open Access Policy.

Scientific articles

Scientific articles must be made available in Open Access form immediately at the time of publication (without embargo) via one of the following routes:

- publication in a fully Open Access journal or platform registered in the DOAJ;
- publication in a subscription journal and the immediate deposition of at least the author accepted manuscript of the article in an Open Access repository registered in Open DOAR;
- publication in a journal for which a transformative Open Access agreement exists between UNL and a publisher. For further information, see Open Access.
Books
Different requirements apply to scholarly books, book chapters and edited collections. See the Open Access Policy Framework at Open Science | NWO.

CC BY licence
To ensure the widest possible dissemination of publications, at least a Creative Commons (CC BY) licence must be applied. Alternatively – in case of substantial interest – the author may request to publish under a CC BY-ND licence. For books, book chapters and collected volumes, all CC BY licence options are allowed.

Costs
Costs for publication in fully Open Access journals can be budgeted in the application using the budget module for “material costs”. Costs for publications in hybrid journals are not eligible for reimbursement by NWO. For Open Access books, a separate NWO Open Access Books Fund is available.

For more detailed information about NWO’s Open Access policy, see Open Science | NWO.
6 Contact and other information

6.1 Contact

6.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about this Call for proposals, please contact Lieke Nijland (programme secretary) via 070 344 0513.

6.1.2 Technical questions about the web application 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 on +31 70 34 40 600. However, you can also submit your question by email to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.

6.2 Other information

The whole text of this Call for proposals has been published in both Dutch and English. The Dutch version is deemed authentic. For legal interpretation the text of the Dutch version will be decisive.

NWO processes data from applicants received in the context of this Call in accordance with the NWO Privacy Statement, Privacy Statement | NWO.

NWO might approach applicants for an evaluation of the procedure and/or research programme.
7 Annexe(s):

7.1 Explanation of budget modules

It is possible to apply for the funding of the salary costs of personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research. Funding of these salary costs depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the personnel are/will be appointed.

- For university appointments, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the UNL salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (Salary tables | NWO).
- For university medical centres, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the NFU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (Salary tables | NWO).
- For personnel from universities of applied sciences, educational institutions and other organisations, salary costs will be funded based on the collective labour agreement pay scale of the employee concerned in accordance with the applicable rate at the time of awarding the grant as taken from Table 2.2, column ‘Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT’ from the Handleiding Overheidstarieven [HOT- Manual Dutch Government Rates] (Salary tables | NWO).
- 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 Employment terms and conditions | Working at the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland | Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland (rijksdienstcn.com).

NWO will apply a mandatory one-off indexing of the salary costs with respect to:

- UNL rates: for proposals submitted before 1 July and that are awarded funding after 1 July;
- NFU rates: for proposals submitted before 1 August that are awarded funding after 1 August;
- HOT rates: for proposals submitted before 1 January that are awarded funding after 1 January.

The mandatory one-off indexing has no influence on the level of the grant ceiling or on the maximum amount of the grant awarded per proposal. The level of the grant ceiling and the maximum amount of the grant awarded will remain unchanged during the assessment procedure. The mandatory one-off indexing will be applied after the decision-taking about awarding or rejecting proposals has been completed.

If co-funding is required or permitted then the one-off mandatory indexing will have no consequences for the co-funding requirement or the IP rights that can emerge from the co-funding.

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

The available budget modules are explained below.

PhD student (including MD-PhD student)

A PhD student 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 the standard time can be deviated from as long as this is properly justified. However, the duration of appointment must always be at least 48 months.

In line with the NWO strategy, Industrial and Societal Doctorates are included in this category under this call. Conditions regarding Industrial and Societal Doctorates are explained in Annex 7.2.

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11 1 July, 1 August and 1 January are the dates on which the relevant rates are generally adjusted, in the case of indexation the date of actual annual adjustment will be taken into account.
Engeneering Doctorate degree (EngD)

Funding for the appointment of a EngD can only be applied for if funding for a PhD student or postdoc is also applied for.
The appointment for a EngD position is a maximum of 1.0 FTE for 24 months. The EngD trainee is employed by the institution applying for funding and can realise activities that are part of 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” must be described in the proposal.

Postdoc

The size and duration of the postdoc appointment is at least 6 full 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 NSS required to realise the research project can only be applied for if funding for a PhD student or postdoc is also applied for. A maximum of €100,000 per PhD student of postdoc can be requested for NSS, up to a maximum of €300,000. This includes personnel such as student assistants, programmers, technical assistants or analysts. Depending on the level of the position, the appropriate salary table for NSS 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 NSS.

Other Scientific personnel (OSS) at universities

Budget for OSS such as A IOS (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 student 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 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.

Research leave for applicants

With this budget module, funding can be requested for the costs of the research leave of the main and/or co-applicant(s). The employer of the applicant(s) 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 5 full-time months. The total funding requested for research leave in the NWA-call may not exceed 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 (Salary tables | NWO).
Personnel universities of applied sciences, educational institutions and other organisations

With the exception of personnel that fall under UNL or NFU rates, costs for the funding of personnel employed at a university of applied sciences, educational institution or at other organisations will be remunerated in accordance with Table 2.2, column ‘Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT’ from the Handleiding Overheidstarieven [HOT- Manual Dutch Government Rates] (Salary tables | NWO).

For the calculation you should use the number of productive hours stated in the valid volume of the Handleiding Overheidstarieven.

Explanation of budget module Material

For each FTE scientific position (PhD student, postdoc, EngD) 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. Per 0.2 FTE scientific employee applied for at a university of applied sciences, educational institution or other organisation (with a minimum appointment of 0.2 FTE for 12 months) a maximum of €15,000 in material budget can be applied for per year.

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 (e.g. 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 [CBS]), 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, citizen science, etc.);
- personnel costs for the appointment of a postdoc and/or non-scientific personnel for a smaller appointment size than those offered in the personnel budget modules.

Travel and accommodation costs for the personnel 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 by the project researchers;
- costs for Open Access publishing (solely in full gold Open Access journals, registered in the “Directory of Open Access Journals” https://doaj.org/);
- costs data management;
- 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, office furniture, etc.);
- maintenance and insurance costs.

If the maximum amount is not sufficient for realising the research, then this amount may be deviated from, if a clear justification is provided in the proposal.
Citizen science

Involving citizens (citizen science) can contribute to the quality of the research. With the help of citizens, data and insights can be acquired that would not otherwise be available for research. NWO also funds citizen science. Applicants can use the budget module “material, project-related goods/services, work by third parties” to request a remuneration for the involvement of citizens in projects. The budget module offers a possibility and is not a requirement. Applicants are free to decide whether it is worthwhile involving citizens in the project and what exactly they use this budget for (for example, reimbursement of expenses of citizens, skills training for citizens or technical devices for the participating citizen).

Researchers must ensure the responsible use of citizens\textsuperscript{12} and guarantee the quality of the work/data. This means that public involvement in the research entails obligations and requires constant time and attention. With regard to managing citizen science, NWO recommends that researchers:

– organise sufficient interaction, ideally by combining virtual and physical events;
– ensure regular feedback to participating citizens, for example from the project manager.

The effective implementation of citizen science also requires:

– that researchers are transparent towards the citizens/participants about the goals, working methods and phases of those parts of the research project in which the citizens are involved.
– That researchers explicitly state and monitor the quality standards. The same principles and standards apply to citizen science as to the assessment of scientific practice in general. The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity also applies to citizen science. This means that participating citizens must also comply with privacy legislation.
– That researchers should fully recognise the participation of citizens involved in research, for example through acknowledgements in scientific publications.

Explanation 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).

Explanation of budget module Knowledge utilisation

The aim of this budget module is to facilitate the use of the knowledge that emerges from the research.\textsuperscript{13} At least 5% but no more than 20% of the total budget applied for should be spent on knowledge utilisation activities via this budget module.

As knowledge utilisation takes many different forms in different scientific fields, the applicant needs to specify the required costs, 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.

It is up to the consortium to specify in the proposal which costs are required.

In the context of the Impact Plan, consortia are expected to earmark budget for the following activities:

\textsuperscript{12} By “responsible use”, NWO means that the use of citizens must have a clear added value for the research, that occupational health and safety and privacy legislation must be complied with, and that clear agreements must be made concerning hours to be contributed, supervision and further training. One way in which this can be implemented is by a volunteer agreement (for a model agreement in Dutch, see https://www.movisie.nl/tool/model-vrijwilligersovereenkomst).

\textsuperscript{13} In this budget module, the definition for “knowledge transfer” as used by the European Commission in the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (PbEU, 2014, C198) applies.
− Specific activities to promote knowledge utilisation towards intermediary or other parties not funded in the projects, e.g. knowledge platforms. These activities include joint learning, training and communication activities.

− Stakeholder engagement: activities organised by the consortium aimed at involving stakeholders, such as consultation workshops, expert meetings, round table meetings, etc. Communication: activities organised by the consortium such as national and international learning events, development of videos, blogs, newsletters and other media communications. This may include the hiring in of communication expertise.

− Skills development: Activities aimed at developing skills beyond the levels of individual students, PhD students or postdocs, such as developing courses for stakeholders or Master’s students.

− Monitoring and evaluation moments in which knowledge utilisation is discussed, such as interim evaluations and supervisory committee meetings (see Section 5.1.1).

Travel expenses for co-funding partners are explicitly not eligible for funding in this module. However, travel expenses for cooperation partners and external parties in the social practice of the project are eligible. The budget applied for should be adequately specified in the proposal.

Explanation of budget module Internationalisation

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 an adequate justification is provided in the proposal.

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. 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. At Money Follows Cooperation | NWO you will find an overview of research councils that signed a bilateral MfC agreement with NWO.

The budget applied for within this module must be less than 50% of the total budget applied for.

The co-applicant from the participating foreign knowledge institution must meet 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 must be employed in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The rates for the personnel costs of researchers at the foreign knowledge institution are calculated on the basis of the correction coefficients table of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grants (EU, Horizon 2020), based on the Dutch UNL rates. The table can be found at Money Follows Cooperation | NWO.

The main 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 MfC part will be part of the overall financial accountability of the project.
The exchange rate risk lies with the applicants. 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.

If more than €125,000 is requested within this module, then the final financial statement must be accompanied by an audit report.

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

**Explanation of the budget module Projectmanagement**

The Project Management module offers the opportunity to request a project management post up to a maximum of 5% of the total budget requested from NWO. The main applicant must adequately justify this post.

Project management includes the following: optimising the organisational structure of the consortium, supporting the consortium and the main applicant, safeguarding the coherence, progress and unity of the project, and coordinating between the sub-projects within the project. These tasks may also be carried out by external parties if they are not available within the main applicant’s knowledge institution. Knowledge institutions should take account of public procurement rules in the tender procedure for selecting a third party and, where appropriate, follow a European procurement procedure. The activities of main applicants and co-applicants themselves in relation to the project or project management may not be funded under this budget module.

The budget to be requested for project management can consist of material or implementation costs and personnel costs. For personnel costs, a maximum rate of €121 per hour can be claimed. The hourly rate of personnel to be appointed must be based on a cost-covering rate and is calculated on the basis of the standard productive number of hours used by the organisation. The cost-covering rate includes:

− (average) gross salary corresponding to the position of the employee who will contribute to the project (based on the collective labour agreement grade of the employee concerned);
− holiday allowance and 13th month (if applicable in the relevant collective labour agreement) in proportion to the FTE deployed;
− social security charges;
− pension costs;
− overheads.

Project management tasks may be carried out by external parties, but the part of (commercial) hourly rates that exceeds the rates stated is not eligible for funding and therefore cannot be included in the budget.
7.2 Explanation of conditions regarding Industrial and Societal Doctorates

Industrial and Societal doctorates are understood to be PhD students who will do their research at both the knowledge institution and an organisation that is not a (co-)applicant. If an organisation and the knowledge institution closely collaborate, then this increases the chance that the knowledge will actually find its way into everyday practice. The research should be an integral part of the project. In the case that an Industrial or Societal Doctorate is appointed, the private or public organisation which is involved in the doctorate should assume responsibility for at least 25% of the salary costs. This contribution may be part of the minimum required co-funding and in that case should always be in cash.

The intended PhD student may be employed by the knowledge institution or the organisation. The activities realised by the PhD student must always fall under fundamental or industrial research. The salary costs of the PhD student are always remunerated in accordance with the valid UNL rate. NWO will fund a maximum of 75% of this amount and at least 25% of the amount must be contributed by the organisation that is not a (co-)applicant. Any additional salary costs – due to an actual salary that is above the UNL rate – should be covered by the employer and may be contributed to the project in the form of in-kind funding. For the calculation of a surplus, the employer costs minus the UNL rates for an appointment of the same size is assumed. The support/grant may not be transferred to the organisation that is not a (co-)applicant.

If an industrial doctorate or societal doctorate PhD position is applied for, then the parties should make agreements about possible IP rights that are generated by the PhD student concerned. With this, allowance should be made for possible access to the research results by other project participants, under FRAND (fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory) conditions or otherwise. The NWO grant is only awarded to the knowledge institution for the purpose of the PhD research project. In this context, it is relevant to state that in accordance with the application of the NWO Grant Rules 2017, all research results should be published as soon as possible in Open Access form and accordingly serve the public interest. Furthermore, all other provisions from Section 3.5, such as Consortium agreement and Intellectual Property & Publications, apply.

7.3 Public Knowledge Organisations

The public knowledge organisations listed below may act as co-applicants in a consortium. The check mentioned in Section 3.1.1 is not required for these organisations.

National knowledge institutes (https://www.knmi.nl/kennis-en-datacentrum/project/rki):
1. CBS – Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands)
2. CPB – Centraal Planbureau (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis)
3. KiM – Kennisinstituut voor Mobiliteitsbeleid (Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis)
4. KNMI – Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute)
5. NFI – Nederlands Forensisch Instituut (Netherlands Forensic Institute)
6. PBL – Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency)
7. RCE – Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands)
8. RIVM – Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment)
9. RKD – Nederlands Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis (Netherlands Institute for Art History)
10. RWS – Rijkswaterstaat (Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management)
11. SCP – Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (Netherlands Institute for Social Research)
12. WODC – Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (Research and Documentation Centre)
Other public knowledge institutions (from: Public Knowledge Organisations Netherlands | Rathenau Institute):

13. Boekman Foundation – Institute for arts, culture and related policy
14. Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations
15. Geonovum – Knowledge organisation for geographic information
16. Movisie – Centre for social issues
17. Mulier Institute – Centre for sports research
18. (N) IFV – (Netherlands) Institute for Safety
19. NIVEL – Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research
20. NJi – Nederlands Jeugdinstuut (Netherlands Youth Institute)
21. Police Academy – Training, knowledge and research for the Dutch National Police
22. SWOON-NLDA – Stichting Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs en Onderzoek Nederlandse Defensieacademie (foundation for scientific education and research of the Netherlands Defence Academy)
23. SWOV – Stichting Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Verkeersveiligheid (Institute for Road Safety Research)
24. Trimbos Institute – Institute for mental health, drug abuse and addiction
25. VeiligheidNL – Organisation to promote safe behaviour
26. Vilans – Research into long-term care

7.4 Conditions for co-funding

Invoicing in cash co-funding
After the proposal has been awarded funding, NWO will invoice the private or public party that has pledged an in-cash contribution. After these funds have been received, NWO will allocate the funding to the project.

The following are permitted as in kind co-funding:
The use of personnel and material contributions is permitted on the condition that these are capitalised and are fully part of the project. Services and know how may not already exist or be available to the applicant. In-kind contributions are only accepted under the condition that the part contributed by the co-funder is an integral part of the work plan and can be made visible as an identifiable effort.

Determining the value of in kind co-funding

- The use of personnel is valued on the basis of hours x rate, whereby the hourly rate is based on the actual salary costs (incl. a premium for social benefits and employer costs). Furthermore, 1400 hours is taken as the standard number of productive hours per year for the calculation of the hourly rate. This hourly rate may be no more than 119 euros per hour;
- The value for material in-kind contributions is determined on the basis of the cost price of consumables. The value of investments/equipment is determined based on standard depreciation costs bearing in mind the intensity of use and any existing deprecations according to applicable reporting principles;
- For in-kind contributions in the form of services or know-how (knowledge, software, access to databases or cell lines) the economic value must be established and only the actual costs that can be directly attributed to the project may be counted as co-funding. This is always without a profit margin. Furthermore, the service or know-how must not already be present at or available to the applicant.

Co-funders should justify the structure and size of the in-kind contributions provided (including hourly rates) in the letter of support. NWO can request substantiation and documented evidence of the rates used and can also request their adjustment.
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The following may not be contributed as co-funding (both in cash and in kind):

- funding awarded by NWO;\(^{14}\)
- PPP allowance;
- co-funding may not come from parties that on the basis of this call for proposals can submit a funding proposal to NWO;
- discounts on commercial rates, e.g. on materials, equipment and services;
- costs related to overheads, supervision, consultancy and/or participation in the supervisory committee (see Section 5.1.5);
- 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.

Accounting for in kind co-funding

The main applicant reports to NWO about the in kind co-funding that he or she has received from a co-funder. The main applicant provides accountability in accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2017 on an annual basis. If a co-funder fails to partly or entirely fulfil its obligations to the main applicant and/or NWO, then this can have consequences for the grant settlement (see Article 3.4.5 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017).

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\(^{14}\) Funding awarded by NWO is understood to be funding obtained through a proposal submitted to NWO that is granted funding. In this regard it does not matter from which programme this funding was obtained or who the recipient of the funding is.