NGF AiNed XS Europe
Round 2023-2024

Call for proposals
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1 Introduction

In this Call for proposals information is provided about the application procedure for the NGF AiNed XS Europe 2023-2024 funding round, which is a part of the AiNed Programme. The Dutch government has approved the AiNed proposal in the context of the National Growth Fund (NGF). This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Dutch Research Council (NWO), and was created in cooperation with the AiNed Foundation. As this Call for proposals is specifically centred around the National Growth Fund, it might be subject to different requirements than standard NWO Calls.

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

NWO and the National Growth Fund
Over the next five years, the government will use the National Growth Fund to invest in projects that ensure sustainable economic growth in the long run. Among other initiatives, the National Growth Fund invests in projects focused on research, development, and innovation. NWO is one of the organisations operationally involved in projects such as setting up grant programmes for scientific research or scientific talent.

NGF AiNed Project
The NGF AiNed project, which was created by the Dutch AI Coalition, is designed to foster the development and implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within Dutch businesses and government bodies. This initiative places the Netherlands among the leading nations in the field of AI and significantly enhances the country’s international competitive standing. In addition, the initiative addresses sticking points related to innovation, knowledge base, labour market, societal impact, and data sharing. AiNed’s approach is based on a collaborative effort involving both public and private entities throughout the chain. These collaborative ventures aim to tackle key sticking points in the value chain that are critical to the development and implementation of novel AI products, processes, and services. The various sub-programmes centre around knowledge development, talent development, human capital, valorisation, and making the national AI ecosystem more robust. The programme concentrates on AI topics that are highly relevant to the wider public and have a significant spill-over effect across various areas of application, while also making knowledge and expertise available to all stakeholders in the quadruple helix.

The NGF AiNed XS Europe programme is part of the knowledge and innovation base sub-programme. It is intended to foster European collaboration with influential collaborative partner organisations in AI, to generate cutting-edge research focused on addressing the challenges outlined in Sections 3 and 4 of the national AI research agenda AIREA-NL.

Through this effort to enhance European collaboration with Dutch researchers in both fundamental and applied AI research, AiNed aims to bolster the standing of Dutch knowledge institutes within a European framework, eventually enabling them to compete for European research funding and potentially establish a European AI lighthouse for research and innovation.

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1 Government, teaching and research, business, social organisations and members of the public.
3 https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-CL4-2021-HUMAN-01-03
NGF AiNed XS Europe

NGF AiNed XS Europe grants are available for projects with a maximum budget of €80,000. The budget can be disbursed entirely at the researcher’s discretion. NGF AiNed XS Europe grants are available to researchers who hold a postdoctoral position that spans the entire term of the project. NGF AiNed XS Europe particularly welcomes proposals from postdocs. All of the conditions pertaining to the submission of a proposal are set out in Chapter 3.

The assessment procedure for NGF AiNed XS Europe differs from standard NWO procedures. Applicants who submit a proposal in NGF AiNed XS Europe also act as assessors for other submitted proposals.

Applicants should be aware that they will be required to assess proposals from across the full breadth of the AI research field. Their own proposals should, therefore, be written with a wide audience in mind.

This short-duration assessment procedure was designed to assess proposals for limited duration projects, involving a smaller budget. Details of this assessment procedure are given in Chapter 4.

1.2 Available budget

The available budget for this Call for proposals is €3.200.000. This amount will be divided equally between four packages of proposals, after which it will be divided equally into two groups. Each package has its own deadline, which is specified in Section 1.3. Proposals are assessed per package. The budget allocated to each package (€800,000) is divided into two groups of proposals, group A and group B. For details of this allocation system, see Section 4.1. If part of a group’s budget remains unused, it will be switched to a subsequent package (i.e. not to another group within the same package). It is anticipated that no more than 40 proposals will be awarded funding within this Call for proposals.

If fewer than 20 proposals are submitted for any given submission deadline or if, based on disclosed personal interests, the proposals cannot be divided into two groups (which, with the exception of just one application, must be of equal size), these will all be carried over to the next package. The assessment of the relevant package will then be postponed and the budgets allocated to these two packages will be combined.

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

Four deadlines for submitting proposals for NGF AiNed-XS Europe projects are specified for 2023-2024:

- **3 October 2023**, at 14:00:00 CEST. Decision anticipated on **7 December 2023**.
- **18 January 2024**, at 14:00:00 CEST. Decision anticipated on **25 April 2024**.
- **18 April 2024**, at 14:00:00 CET. Decision anticipated on **27 June 2024**.
- **8 October 2024**, at 14:00:00 CEST. Decision anticipated on **12 December 2024**.

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

The NGF AiNed XS Europe grants are intended to support promising ideas and to facilitate innovative and more speculative initiatives that:
- focus on one or more challenges in Sections 3 and 4 of the national AI research agenda, AIREA-NL2 and are designed in collaboration with at least one European collaborative partner organisation based outside the Netherlands. See the definition in subsection 3.5.1.

The proposed research is ground-breaking and involves a real risk of failure. What counts is that all results, be they positive or negative, must contribute to the advancement of science. This is “blue-sky thinking”. All proposals are anonymous, to ensure that the assessments are based purely on the research ideas they contain.

NGF AiNed XS Europe is specifically intended to encourage curiosity-driven and bold research that involves the relatively rapid exploration of a promising idea in the field of AI. At the end of NGF AiNed XS Europe project, applicants can decide for themselves whether or not to pursue this new line of research any further. That could involve submitting a proposal within another NWO or European funding programme.

In context of AiNed, AiNed and NWO want to focus more strongly on communicating the outcomes of all NGF AiNed XS Europe projects. For details, see subsection 5.1.1.

Collaboration is not precluded in the following situations, provided that all other requirements specified in this Call for proposals are met:
- collaboration with a European collaborative partner organisation based outside the Netherlands with which there is an existing or previous collaboration.
- collaboration with a European branch (outside the Netherlands) of a collaborative partner organisation that also has a branch in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
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

Researchers who are professors, lecturers and/or have a PhD may submit a proposal if they have a salaried position for at least the duration of the application process and conduct research for which the grant is being requested at one of the following organizations:

- Universities located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- University medical centres;
- Universities of applied sciences, as referred to in Article 1.8 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act;
- Applied research institutes;
- institutes affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) or NWO; Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- Princes Máxima Center;
- Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI);
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education.

Persons with a zero-hour employment agreement may not submit a proposal.

Grant preconditions:
- An NGF AiNed-XS Europe proposal has a single applicant and no co-applicants;
- one applicant may have one proposal dealt with for each package;
- applicants who had a proposal dealt with in the immediately preceding NGF AiNed-XS Europe package may not make a submission.

3.2 What can be applied for

For a research proposal in this Call for Proposals, applicants may apply for a sum of up to €80,000. The maximum term of the proposed project is 12 months. There are very few restrictions on the subjects of proposals. For instance, they could involve the appointment of temporary staff, material costs, the costs involved in performing citizen science, and travel expenses for commuting to other locations to conduct experiments. Postdocs are permitted to request their own salary.  

Applicants are required to draw up a realistic budget and explain why the spending choices are relevant to the project. This explanation must cover all of the personnel requested.

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4 Any postdocs who wish to use a ENW-XS grant to extend the duration of their own appointment must hold a salaried position that does not terminate until after the scheduled date of the decision concerning the allocation of the package within which the proposal was submitted. Any postdoc who expects their position of employment to be extended for at least the duration of the application process and the research for which the grant has been requested may also submit a proposal. If it emerges that the position is not extended, or not extended long enough, this could have consequences for the grant.
3.3 Preparing an application

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, information form
Optional annex: declaration appointment PhD (see section 7.1)
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. Any annexes other than those above-mentioned are not permitted.

You must write your application in English.

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;
3.5 Conditions on granting

3.5.1 Formal conditions for submission

NWO toest uw aanvraag op onderstaande voorwaarden. Alleen als uw aanvraag aan deze voorwaarden voldoet, wordt deze toegelaten tot de beoordelingsprocedure. U wordt gevraagd om na indiening van een aanvraag beschikbaar te zijn om eventuele administratieve correcties door te voeren en zo (alsnog) te voldoen aan de voorwaarden voor indiening.

Deze voorwaarden zijn:

- the main applicant meets the conditions stated in Section 3.1;
- a proposal must involve collaboration with at least one specified European collaborative partner organisation based outside the Netherlands;
- the European collaborative partner organisation based outside the Netherlands must meet the definition in subsection 3.5.1;
- 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 at or before the deadline set;
- the application is written in English;
- the application is anonymized – in other words, it must meet the following conditions:
  - applicants should include neither their own name nor those of any individuals in their research group;
  - applicants should not include details of any affiliations with institutes or knowledge institutions;
  - applicants should not include references to any publications that they have authored or co-authored;
  - applicants should not include the names of any partners (or potential partners);
  - (applicants, on the other hand, are obliged to specify the organisation of the European collaborative partner, as its quality will be evaluated as part of the assessment process);
- the application must comply with the DORA (Declaration on Research Assessment) guidelines specified in Section 4.1;
- the application budget is drawn up in accordance with the conditions for this Call for proposals;
- the proposed project has a duration of at most 12 months;
- All of the required annexes are, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions.

When submitting their proposal, applicants agree to assess proposals submitted by other applicants within the same package. If an applicant misses the deadline for submitting assessment reports, then that applicant’s own proposal will not be included in the procedure. See subsection 4.1.1 for details of the procedure.
All applications are subject to the NWO Grant Rules 2017, unless this Call for Proposals includes a derogation, and the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research.  

### 3.5.1 European collaboration

A proposal must involve collaboration with at least one specified influential European collaborative partner organisation in Al based outside the Netherlands.

**Definition of European collaborative partner organisation based outside the Netherlands**

A European collaborative partner organisation based outside the Netherlands is a collaborative partner organisation that has a legal form and that is established in Europe, outside the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In this call, ‘Europe’ is understood to mean: the countries belonging to the European Economic Area (EEA), the United Kingdom, and Switzerland.

### 3.5.2 Compliance with the National Knowledge Security Guidelines

World-class science can benefit from international collaboration. The National Knowledge Security Guidelines (hereinafter: the Guidelines) help knowledge institutes to ensure that international collaboration 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 teaching and research, which jeopardises academic freedom and social safety; and ethical issues that may arise in collaboration with countries that do not respect fundamental rights.

Applicants are responsible for checking that their project complies with the Guidelines and that it will continue to do so. By submitting a proposal, the applicant is making a commitment to abide by the recommendations set out 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 submit a risk assessment demonstrating that they have, in fact, abided by the recommendations set out in the Guidelines. If the applicant fails to comply with NWO’s request, or if the risk assessment indicates an 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.

Details of the National Knowledge Security Guidelines can be found on the central government website at: [https://www.loketkennisveiligheid.nl/](https://www.loketkennisveiligheid.nl/)

### 3.5.3 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.

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5 Upon approval, the rates will apply of the UNL (the Universities of the Netherlands) or the NFU (Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres) prevailing at the time of the deadline of the package for which the proposal was submitted. The minimum requirements for the duration of appointments do not apply to ENW-XS.

Researchers should explain how data generated by the project will be dealt with, in line with 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 a part of the proposal. Prior to the start of their research, researchers are asked to think about how the data collected could be sorted and categorised in a way that would enable it to be made freely available. In many cases, even before the data is collected and analysed, steps need to be taken to facilitate its subsequent storage and sharing. If not all of the data generated by the project can be made public, for reasons of privacy, ethics, or valorisation for example, the applicant must give substantiated reasons for this in the data management section.

The data management section in the proposal is not assessed and will, therefore, play no part in the decision about whether or not to award funding. Both the referees and the committee can, however, make recommendations about the data management section.

3.5.4 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: www.nwo.nl/en/scientific-integrity.https://www.nwo.nl/integriteit

3.5.5 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.

3.5.6 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 (www.absfocalpoint.nl). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol. http://www.absfocalpoint.nl/
4 Assessment procedure

This chapter first of all describes the course of the assessment procedure (Section 4.2). It then states the criteria that the assessment committee will use to assess your application (Section 4.3).


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 (www.nwo.nl/en/diversity-and-inclusion). NWO encourages referees and members of an assessment committee or jury 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 and referees 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 www.nwo.nl/en/dora.

4.2 Procedure

The procedure consists of the following steps:
- Submission of a proposal
- Consideration of the proposal
- Suitability
- Distribution of applications in packages, clusters, and groups
- Assessment by the applicants themselves
- Decision-making and ex aequo

4.2.1 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.
4.2.2 Consideration 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.

4.2.3 Suitability

NWO will assess the proposals being considered, to determine whether they are appropriate to the challenges specified in chapters 3 and 4 of the AIREA-NL Research Agenda. If the office sees fit, external experts can be asked to assess a proposal’s suitability in this regard. Proposals are deemed to be suitable if the essence of the research proposal is encompassed by any of the challenges in chapters 3 and 4 of the AIREA-NL Research Agenda. This research agenda can be found on the call for proposal webpage. Proposals that, in the office’s view (whether or not external experts were consulted), are not deemed to be compatible with one or more of the challenges in Sections 3 and 4 of AIREA-NL will be rejected. Accordingly, they will not proceed to the next phase of the assessment process.

4.2.4 Distribution of applications in packages, clusters, and groups

Four submission deadlines are specified over the period of one year (see subsection 1.3). All proposals submitted before a given deadline are treated as a single package.

For each package, the proposals being processed are divided into two groups, group A and group B. In principle, this takes place when proposals are submitted to NWO, with due regard to the personal interests disclosed by applicants.

4.2.5 Assessment by the applicants themselves

The proposals in group A are assessed by the applicants in group B, and those in group B assessed by the applicants in group A. The proposals in group A are randomly assigned to the applicants in group B (in the same cluster) and the proposals in group B are randomly assigned to the applicants in group A (again, in the same cluster). This means that every assessing applicant (hereinafter ‘assessor’) will receive a number of proposals from applicants who are not in the same part of the package as their own proposal. The proposals are allocated to assessors at random (with due regard to the personal interests expressed by applicants), without any account taken of the subject matter of the proposal or the assessors’ fields of expertise. The starting point is that each assessor is given ten proposals to assess and that each proposal is assessed by a similar number of assessors.

All applications are anonymous. A research proposal therefore makes no mention of the applicant’s name. This ensures that the assessor will make an unbiased assessment of the quality of the ideas contained in that proposal.

Each assessor will rank the proposals they have assessed, based on the assessment aspects (see subsection 4.3), whereby the applications must all be allocated a different ranking. The assessor writes a report for each proposal, giving the ranking (with regard to the proposals assessed by that particular assessor) and a short written explanation for each assessment aspect that justifies the ranking given.

The assessors must submit their reports within ten working days. If an assessor fails to meet the deadline, then their own proposal will be withdrawn from the procedure and will not be taken into consideration.

4.2.6 Decision-making and ex aequo

The assessors and applicants associated with a particular package of proposals do not meet. The Domain Science office will decide the final rankings of the proposals, based on the rankings submitted by the
assessors. Four final rankings are made for each package: one per group. There will be no opportunity to dispute the rankings.

The final ranking of the proposals is determined by taking the average of all the rankings received per proposal, with two figures – one corresponding to the highest ranking and one to the lowest ranking – not counting towards that average.

Ex æquo is defined by NWO as a situation in which two or more proposals are tied on the basis of their average score. In the event of a tied final ranking of two or more proposals (rounded down to one decimal place), the following principles will apply in this order:

– proposals by female applicants will have preference;
– proposals with the highest rankings overall will have preference; the only rankings considered here will be those that were used to determine the average for the final ranking.

Finally, the Executive Board of the NWO Domain Science will examine the procedure that has been followed and base its decision to approve or reject the proposals on the results of the four final rankings and the available funding.

Applicants will be informed of the results once the Executive Board of the NWO Domain Science has completed the decision-making process. In addition to the final ranking, the applicants will also receive the assessment reports concerning their proposal, including the rank provided by each assessor, plus details of each assessor’s rationale. Applicants will receive full details of the rankings and the assessors’ rationale, including those that were not included in determining the average for the final ranking.

4.2.7 Timetable

Below is the timetable for this Call for Proposals in relation to the first submission deadline. The timelines for subsequent packages are similar, with the submission deadline being week 0, and will be published on the funding page of the NWO website. NWO may be obliged to make adjustments to the timeline of this Call for Proposals during the current procedure. Applicants of course receive timely notification in this case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline for NGF AiNed XS Europe, deadline 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 October 2023, at 14:00:00 CEST</strong></td>
<td>Deadline for the submission of proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 October – 25 October</td>
<td>Assessment of conditions for submission; Office’s assessment of suitability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-18 October 2023</td>
<td>Disclosure of personal interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 October 2023</td>
<td>Proposals sent for assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 November, at 14:00:00 CEST</td>
<td>NWO receives assessment reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 December 2023</td>
<td>The Executive Board of the NWO Domain Science reaches a decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting date for project</td>
<td>No later than six months after the date on which funding is formally awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End date for project</td>
<td>No later than 12 months after starting date</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Criteria

4.3.1 Assessment criteria for content of proposal

The assessors who rank the proposals will focus on the following aspects. These aspects are not weighted. At the discretion of an assessor, both of these aspects may be used for the purposes of ranking. However, this ranking must be accompanied by a short written explanation, showing how it was awarded on the basis of the assessment aspects shown below.

**High-risk/high-gain**
Is the proposed research innovative, highly speculative, and ground-breaking? Could the research proposal potentially have a scientific impact?

**Feasibility of the research plan**
The objective, rationale, and work plan must be clearly described. Can the project be carried out within the maximum period of 12 months and within the requested budget?

**Quality of European collaborative partner organisation (or organisations)**
Does the proposed collaboration involve at least one influential European collaborative partner organisation based outside the Netherlands? Is the collaborative partner organisation the right one for the proposed research?

Proposals must be drawn up with a wide audience in mind, to enable assessors from all of Artificial Intelligence to properly evaluate the research plan and the above assessment aspects. The assessors may award a lower ranking to any proposal drawn up in a way that is not accessible.
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 Sharing results and AiNed programme meetings
Due to the emphasis on high-risk research, AiNed and NWO will be focusing more strongly on communicating the outcomes of all NGF AiNed XS Europe projects. It is vital to share details of these projects, not only those that exhibit new potential but also (and more particularly) those that do not yield the anticipated outcomes. Project managers are obliged to make every effort to attend AiNed programme meetings. A public summary of all accepted projects will be published online, and NWO will request a short report at the end of each NGF AiNed XS Europe project.

5.1.2 Data management
Researchers whose proposals have been approved must draw up a data management plan. 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: www.nwo.nl/en/research-data-management.

5.1.3 Intellectual property
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.

5.1.4 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 “Socially Responsible Licensing Toolkit for knowledge institutions”.

5.1.5 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;
Hoofdstuk 5: Obligations for grant recipients / NGF AlNed XS

- 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 www.openaccess.nl/en.http://www.openaccess.nl/

Books

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 www.nwo.nl/en/open-science.http://www.nwo.nl/openscience
6 Contact and other information

6.1 Contact

6.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about this Call for proposals, please contact:

Sam Woldringh
Tel. +31 (0)70 34 94 101
E-mail: NGF-AiNedXS@nwo.nl

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, www.nwo.nl/en/privacyverklaring.https://www.nwo.nl/privacyverklaring

NWO might approach applicants for an evaluation of the procedure and/or research programme.
7 Annexes

7.1 Explanatory notes concerning the budget for personnel

These explanatory notes have been specifically drawn up as an annex to the NGF AiNed XS Europe Call for Proposals, round 2023-2024. The conditions described in this annex only apply to this particular Call for Proposals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel appointments that may be requested</th>
<th>Maximum amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD Student</td>
<td>€80,000 according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- UNL rates or NFU rates + 50% surcharge, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to the integral cost system (ICS) as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>registered with RVO for the relevant applicant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoc</td>
<td>€80,000 according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- UNL rates or NFU rates + 50% surcharge, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to the integral cost system (ICS) as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>registered with RVO for the relevant applicant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic staff (NWP) at organizations listed under 3.1</td>
<td>€80,000 according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- UNL rates or NFU rates + 50% surcharge, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to the integral cost system (ICS) as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>registered with RVO for the relevant applicant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other academic staff (OWP) at organizations listed under 3.1</td>
<td>€80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff of universities of applied sciences and of applied research institutes</td>
<td>€80,000 according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the applicable rates when the grant is awarded,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from Table 2.1 ‘Average direct wage costs’, ‘Hourly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rate for productive hours, excl. VAT’ column, in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guide to Government Rates + 50%, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to the integral cost system (ICS) as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>registered with RVO for the relevant applicant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A grant to cover salary costs can be requested for any personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research in question. Funding for these salary costs depends on the type of appointment and the organization where the staff member is (or will be) employed.

For university institutions, salary costs are funded in accordance with: the UNL salary tables that apply at the time of the submission deadline + 50% surcharge (www.nwo.nl/salaristabellen) or; the rates according to the integral cost system (ICS) as registered with RVO for the relevant applicant. See also Section 7.2.2.

For university medical centres, salary costs are funded in accordance with: the NFU salary tables that apply at the time of the submission deadline + 50% surcharge (www.nwo.nl/salaristabellen) or; the rates according to the integral cost system (ICS) as registered with RVO for the relevant applicant. See also Section 7.2.2.

Funding for staff salaries at universities of applied sciences and at applied research institutes is based on: - the collective bargaining (CAO) salary scale classification of the employee in question, in accordance with the applicable rates at the time of the submission deadline, from Table 2.1 ‘Average direct wage costs’, ‘Hourly rate for productive hours, excl. VAT’ column, in the Guide to Government Rates + 50% (www.nwo.nl/salaristabellen) or the rates according to the integral cost system (ICS) as registered with RVO for the relevant applicant. See also Section 7.2.2.
In the case of the Caribbean Netherlands, the Dutch government appoints civil servants on the BES islands (Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba) subject to conditions that differ from those in the European Netherlands.


The rates for personnel costs are included in the proposal form’s budget template. Remunerations for PhD scholarship students (‘bursalen’) at a Dutch university are not eligible for funding from NWO. Below is an explanation of the available appointments.

PhD students (including MD-PhDs)

In NGF AiNed XS Europe, applicants may apply for sums of up to €80,000, which is insufficient for paying for a full four-year appointment of a PhD student. Accordingly, research proposals that include a request for a budget for a PhD student must be accompanied by a statement signed by the dean of the applicant’s faculty. This statement must indicate that the requested PhD student will be newly appointed for 48 months at 1.0 FTE, or the equivalent thereof, and that the difference will be adjusted by the applicant’s institution. However, the NGF AiNed XS Europe project itself must be completed within twelve months. Any further research carried out by the requested PhD student is not covered by the NGF AiNed XS Europe proposal. Accordingly, there is no need to include explanatory notes regarding such further research in the research proposal.

The budget may not be used to extend the appointment of an existing PhD student. A PhD student whose dissertation has already been approved can be appointed as a postdoc. The applicant is personally responsible for ensuring that this appointment is in keeping with any relevant guidelines drawn up by the institution at which the research is to be carried out.

Postdoc

Any postdocs who wish to use a NGF AiNed XS Europe grant to extend the duration of their own appointment must hold a salaried position that does not terminate until after the scheduled date of the decision concerning the allocation of the package within which the proposal was submitted. There are no additional conditions attached to the appointment of a postdoc.

Non-academic staff (NWP) at universities

These may include student assistants, programmers, technical assistants, or analysts. Depending on the level of the position, the appropriate salary table for NWO at MBO, HBO or university level applies. No additional conditions are attached to the appointment of non-academic staff.

Other academic staff (OWP) at universities

Funding can also be requested for the appointment of other academic staff (OWP), such as AIOS (doctor in training to become a specialist), ANIOS (doctor not in training to become a specialist), or people with a university Master’s degree or the Dutch academic titles of ‘drs.’ or ‘ir.’. The applicant is personally responsible for ensuring that this appointment is in keeping with any relevant guidelines drawn up by the institution at which the research is to be carried out. The appointment must also be in accordance with the applicable Collective Labour Agreement for the institution at which the research is to be carried out. No additional conditions are attached to the appointment of other academic staff.
Staff of universities of applied sciences and of applied research institutes

Table 2.1 ‘Average direct wage costs’ gives details of the funding of expenses related to the employment of staff members at a university of applied sciences or an applied research institute (see the ‘Hourly rate for productive hours, excl. VAT’ column of the Guide to Government Rates: +50% (www.nwo.nl/salaristabellen). The starting point for the selected rate is the employee’s actual hourly rate, which is determined by their organisation’s collective labour agreement.

7.2 Explanatory notes to the integral cost system (ICS)

Applicants are permitted to use the Integral cost system (as used by RVO), to fund staff costs, specifically and exclusively for Calls conducted by NWO in the context of the National Growth Fund. For the proposal’s budget, research organisations can only use ICS rates that have been filed with – and approved by – RVO in either 2022 (for submission deadlines in 2023 for this Call) or 2023 (for submission deadlines in 2024 for this Call), at the very least.

The positions entered in the proposal’s budget must match the positions listed in the ICS table, as filed with RVO. To assess the formal conditions for submission, NWO will contact RVO to compare the ICS rates listed in the proposal’s budget with the latest ICS rates known to RVO. NWO will contact the applicant if a discrepancy is found between the ICS rates listed in the proposal’s budget and the ICS rates at RVO.