NGF: AiNed ELSA Labs

Human-Centred Artificial Intelligence

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 – ELSA Labs” funding round which is part of the AiNed program. The proposal AiNed was awarded funding by the Dutch government in the context of the National Growth Fund (NGF). This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Dutch Research Council (NWO) and has been developed in cooperation with AiNed Foundation. As this Call for proposals is being realised in the context of the National Growth Fund, the conditions which apply to it can differ from those in standard NWO Calls for proposals.

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

By means of the National Growth Fund, the Dutch government will be investing over the next five years in projects that provide long-term economic growth. The National Growth Fund invests in, amongst other things, research, development and innovation projects. In some of these projects, NWO is involved as one of the implementing organisations, for example through organising funding programmes for scientific research or scientific talent.

The National Growth Fund AiNed programme

The National Growth Fund (NGF) AiNed programme (2021-2027), a venture of the Dutch AI Coalition (NLAIC), is designed to foster the development and implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within Dutch industry and government. AiNed adopts an approach involving the collaboration of public and private entities throughout the knowledge chain. These collaborative partnerships 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. A range of sub-programmes centre around knowledge development, talent development, human capital, valorisation, and making the national AI ecosystem more robust. These sub-programmes concentrate on AI issues that are highly relevant to the wider public and have a significant spill-over effect across a range of fields of application, while also making knowledge and expertise available to all stakeholders in the quadruple helix (academe, government, industry, civil society).

This Call for proposals falls under the sub-programme Knowledge and Innovation (Figure 1). In this Call for proposals, we adopt the definition of AI as specified in the AI4EU-NS agenda: AI is the science and engineering of making machines intelligent and collaborative. AI solutions enable machines to assist in tasks that require intelligence, such as reasoning, learning, finding information, understanding text, speech and images, listening and speaking in dialogue systems, and optimising complex systems.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

![Diagram of AI ecosystem](attachment:diagram.png)

Figure 1: AI Ned is divided into three sub-programmes, which are each made up of a number of component parts, and supports implementation of the sub-programmes within the AI ecosystem in the Netherlands.

AI can offer many advantages to industry, government and civil society organisations. At the same time, AI raises all kinds of ethical (E), legal (L), societal (S) and economic aspects (A). The AI Ned programme explicitly makes space for these aspects with its AI Ned ELSA Labs, because the development of AI technology must go hand-in-hand with its integration into society and the capitalisation of economic opportunities. Within the framework of the National Growth Fund, this is particularly relevant to fields of application that are of strategic social and economic importance for the Netherlands and key to the major transitions facing the Netherlands and Europe (see section 2.2.2.1).

AI Ned ELSA Labs are dedicated to research that makes use of specific public and/or private case studies across four fields of application, where the findings will contribute to methods, technologies and tools that enable the realisation of human-oriented AI. The applications involving AI will be demystified by such research, which in turn will encourage public trust in AI applications.

This Call for proposals is the second Call for proposals on this subject. In 2021, NWO – as part of the Dutch National Research Agenda (NWA) – issued the Call for proposals ‘Artificial Intelligence: Human-Centred AI for an inclusive society – towards an ecosystem of trust’ (‘ELSA Labs Call 1’). See also the projects that were allocated funding under this Call in Annex 7.7.

The results of AI Ned ELSA Labs will be scaled up and made generalisable for wider application in industry, government and civil society organisations by means of networking activities. The board of the AI Ned Foundation will be appointing a programme manager to help promote the activities generated under ELSA Labs Call 1 and the current Call for proposals.

**Artificial Intelligence – Human-Centred AI – Policy and Economic Contexts**

AI technology is globally seen as a transformational tool for solving social issues and aiding economic development. Since the end of 2018, the European Union (EU) has actively pursued an AI policy aimed at developing reliable and safe AI systems that harmonise with EU values and principles, including respect for the fundamental rights of citizens. Member States are preparing national strategies compliant with this policy. The vision of the Dutch government has been incorporated into the Dutch Digitalisation Strategy and the Strategic Action Plan for AI. With this vision, the government reaffirms its commitment to the importance of AI for our future economic prosperity and social welfare. The government has chosen to pursue an inclusive

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2 Government Gazette, publication of the programme NWA Human-oriented AI, [https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stcrt-2021-35929.html](https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stcrt-2021-35929.html)

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approach, with attention given to safeguarding public values while weighing up the diverse interests of various societal stakeholders (Rathenau, WRR).

In response to the European white paper on AI, which delineates a future for AI based on excellence and trust (ecosystems of excellence and ecosystems of trust), the Netherlands is committed to the key importance of additional regulations for AI development that safeguard public values and protect fundamental rights. For its part, the Netherlands is preparing a learning approach based on research and experimentation. On 21 April 2021, the European Commission launched an AI package consisting of a draft EU regulation for AI, a revised coordination plan for AI and a revised Machinery Directive. On 11 May 2023, this AI Act was approved by the European parliament, which put extra emphasis on the necessity of developing safe, secure, transparent, traceable, non-discriminatory and environmentally friendly AI, while asking that attention be given to a uniform definition of AI that achieves technological neutrality, making it capable of application to AI systems today and in the future.

The urgency of the need for incorporating technological, ethical, legal and socio-economic aspects into the development of AI from the outset has strongly increased over the past year, due to the explosive use of generative AI and large language models (LLMs) in such formats as ChatGPT, BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) and Google’s Bard. At the present time, the financial, marketing, media and design sectors, as well as security and law enforcement agencies, already have to grapple with considerable societal and economic challenges as a consequence of these technologies. The influence of AI on major socio-economic fields of application has already made its presence known. Working methods and job descriptions are changing; existing jobs are disappearing and new jobs are being created. Doubt is being cast on the trustworthiness and desirability of the results produced by AI, or such results are not being viewed with a critical eye. Questions also have to be asked about the ownership of applications that are being developed and the use or re-use of data (including data in the public domain), the quality and origin of which is not always clear. There is a general lack of clarity about the impact of AI on economic and societal processes, nor is there general clarity about the regulatory frameworks governing the new technology, as in current and future versions of the AI Act.

The ambition is to position the Netherlands in the vanguard of both expertise in and application of current and future AI technology in the interests of both the prosperity and welfare of its citizens, with due consideration for Dutch and European norms and values. One part of the AiNed programme is dedicated to human-centred AI, which includes setting up and deployment of the AiNed ELSA Labs.

Governance of the AiNed ELSA Labs programme

Executive Committee
The board of the AiNed Foundation is responsible for the design and general coherence of all AiNed activities, as well as taking direction of an integrated approach to all AiNed activities, safeguarding of progress at the project level and across the entire AiNed programme, and making adjustments to priorities should cause arise. AiNed is divided into three sub-programmes, which are each made up of a number of component parts, and supports implementation of these parts within the AI ecosystem (Figure 1).

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5 BNC fiches (the Dutch government’s standpoint on new Commission proposals) can be found at:
   - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Fostering a European approach to Artificial Intelligence
   - Proposal for a Regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence (Artificial Intelligence Act) and amending certain Union legislative acts
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The National Growth Fund AiNed ELSA Labs programme component is one of these activities under the oversight of the board of the AiNed Foundation, for which it is accountable to the National Growth Fund. Given this programme component is vested with NWO, the board of the AiNed Foundation will interact with the Executive Committee for Knowledge and Innovation. The Executive Committee consists of the AiNed programme lead for the sub-programme Knowledge and Innovation, the AiNed impact leads for ELSA Labs, the main applicants and technical project leaders of projects that are awarded funding, plus representatives of the organisation with which the board of the AiNed Foundation has partnered in the context of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). NWO itself is not a member of this group. These representative parties will meet on a regular basis – possibly in different configurations – and provide the board of the AiNed Foundation with relevant information about the ELSA Labs programme component (i.e. knowledge and project results).

1.2 Available budget

The available budget for this Call for proposals is €6,858,564. Within this Call for proposals it is expected that a maximum of four proposals will be awarded funding. No funding will be allocated in Phase I (initiative).

In Phase II, grant budgets will be awarded within one of the fields of application given below:
- Health and Care;
- Energy and Sustainability;
- Mobility, Transport and Logistics;
- Technical Industry.

In principle, there is funding available for one award for each field of application to a maximum of €1,714,641. Depending on the quality of the proposals, this may be increased to funding for two awards for a single field of application to a maximum of €3,429,282. (See the procedure for this in section 4.2.13.)

Applicants make their own decision about which field of application their proposal falls into (no more than one).

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

The deadline for submitting initiatives is 7 May 2024, before 14:00:00 CEST.
The deadline for submitting full proposals is 1 October 2024, before 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

The aim of this Call for proposals is to elicit projects that will help us acquire knowledge, expertise and insights for the development and application of human-centred AI. The overarching research question for the AiNed ELSA programme is:

What can we learn from specific case studies that will help us acquire scalable and generalisable knowledge and insights for human-centred AI applications?

By human-centred AI we mean here AI in the service of human beings and the public interest. The research conducted under this programme will foster, from the perspective of human-centred AI, the development of technological innovations that:

- are lawful, by ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. In the framework of the Call for proposals, the application and further development of the AI Act\(^8\) plays an important role, as well as the principles of human rights on which this Act is based\(^9\);
- are ethical, by ensuring compliance with ethical principles and public values\(^10\). In the framework of this Call for proposals, this is explained in terms of the Directives for ethical AI\(^11\);
- are robust, both from a technological and societal viewpoint, given that AI systems can inadvertently cause damage, even when the intentions are good.

Each AiNed ELSA Lab will collaborate from within their own research project with the other projects and the AiNed programme manager in finding scalable and generalisable solutions for industry, government and civil society organisations\(^12\). There will be coordination and interaction with other AiNed programme components, and collective pursuit of a blueprint for all AiNed ELSA Labs.

2.2 Substantive framework

2.2.1 Human-centred AI

Human-centred AI based on public values and human rights

AI applications raise both opportunities and challenges for the development of solutions to technological and social issues. Technology, including algorithms and data, are not neutral. This makes AI both powerful and vulnerable. That’s why a secure and resilient digital domain is needed. The core value of this digital domain is ‘trust’. How can we prevent, for example, automated decision-making or automatically generated content from being based on biased, incomplete or even manipulated data? How can we ensure that it is possible to deviate from automated decision-making and, vice versa, when can a system deviate from the decision of an individual? How can we ensure that AI-generated content can be tested against reality and truth? Following the European Union, the Netherlands will endeavour to foster society’s trust in AI by developing human-centred AI. Human-centred AI requires that respect for public values and human rights be built into AI.

\(^8\) EU Artificial Intelligence Act https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/
\(^9\) Guaranteeing respect for human rights means that in developing AI applications, researchers take account of prohibitions on discrimination, privacy, freedom of speech, human dignity, personal autonomy and the right to a fair trial.
\(^10\) Public values which must be taking account of in this programme are articulated in terms of the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union as the democratic rule of law, tolerance, diversity, pluralism, transparency, freedom, solidarity, justice.
\(^12\) This may be broader than the companies and civil society organisations who are acting as co-applicants.
applications. This will contribute, on the one hand, to citizens’ trust in AI applications, and, on the other, to the legal certainty industry and civil society organisations need to innovate using AI.

**Studying ELSA and technology together**

This programme deals with the impact of AI applications (including future applications) on individuals, the economy and society as a whole. If AI is to be in service of human beings, then the development and application of AI need to be directed towards this end. One might think here of the use of AI algorithms, such as in AI-based forecasting or AI generated software and code, or in systems models deployed by companies that will affect job opportunities as well as the autonomy and responsibilities of workers. Or AI-driven chatbots based on large language models used by government or public actors and industry that affect public values and human rights. How can we ensure that AI systems are created in such a way that they do not impede innovation, while at the same time offering protection to workers and consumers? How could AI challenge or reinforce existing socio-economic power structures? Developing AI we can trust demands such applications be capable of being studied in terms of their configuration of ethical, legal, societal and economic aspects (ELSA) based on material from actual case studies. Research problems can be investigated at the micro, meso or macro level (individual, organisational or societal level).

**Testing and further development of frameworks and directives in the interests of developing human-centred AI**

Human-centred AI innovation and its applications require fitting laws and regulations. What helpful legal frameworks would ensure basic human rights – such as privacy, autonomy, equality and human dignity – are protected when working with AI innovations and applications? One might think here of the general regulatory framework that oversees data protection (GDPR), equal treatment (Equal Treatment Act) and cyber security, as well as design principles developed in recent years for AI systems to avoid discrimination, such as the ‘human rights impact assessment’ for governments and the UN AI directive and the OECD framework for responsible use of data. More recently, the European Commission has published a regulatory framework for AI (the AI Act 2021), which, among other things, lists high-risk systems and sets requirements for AI systems that form a potential threat to security, livelihoods and human rights. The concrete application of the AI Act is, however, still in its infancy. The recent developments in generative AI (platforms) also demonstrate that the AI Act will have to continue to evolve in the years ahead in order to offer an appropriate legal framework for the rapid growth of AI.

### 2.2.2 Programme design

This Call for proposals is open to all those wishing to propose an AI@Ned ELSA Lab (section 2.2.2.2) that will, firstly, conduct research into human-centred AI within the themes outlined below, and secondly, start in on the development of networking activities – in partnership with all the AI@Ned ELSA Labs proposals allocated funding – which will allow us to generate insights above and beyond the projects themselves. The desired focus here is on the generalisability of research results and the upscaling of solutions in the interests of wider application by industry and public organisations, with a parallel focus on developing the AI ecosystem and a

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13 Creating trust does not take place in a legal vacuum. Existing (EU) regulatory frameworks, such as conventions on human rights, the GDPR and the Equal Treatment Act, today already form an important lower threshold for the regulation of AI.


16 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381137](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381137)


18 Artificial Intelligence Act, [https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/](https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/)
blueprint for AiNed ELSA Labs. The contribution of projects to these activities is described in a work package accompanying the application (see the proposal form).

All AiNed ELSA Labs will conduct research that addresses their own consortium-specific case studies, as described in section 2.2.2.1.

2.2.2.1 Case studies

Projects awarded under this Call for proposals will conduct research in AiNed ELSA Labs that contributes to the application and evolution of legislative frameworks (such as the AI Act) and data protection (such as the GDPR) based on specific use cases. Use cases will be chosen within fields of application that have a significant societal and economic interest for the Netherlands, and that are responsible for raising substantial transitional issues in both the Netherlands and across Europe. The fields of application are:

– Health and Care;
– Energy and Sustainability;
– Mobility, Transport and Logistics;

The central research question of a proposal should be derived from business and/or public organisations, which, in all instances, must make clear the relevant economic impact of the research.

For this Call for proposals, applicants must indicate which of the following categories their project proposal falls into: Category A, Category B, or Categories A and B.

A. The research question must address the ethical, legal, societal and economic aspects (ELSA) of applying current relevant AI regulations, such as the AI Act and the GDPR, for specific use cases within one of the four fields of application cited above. The focus is therefore on the ethical, legal and societal consequences of developing AI applications within current regulatory frameworks.

B. The research question must address ELSA with regard to the evolution of future regulatory frameworks under the influence of up-and-coming AI technologies, such as generative AI and large language models for specific use cases, within one of the four fields of application cited above. We are therefore looking for a research question that addresses the economic, legal and societal aspects that should be given priority when developing up-and-coming AI technologies (within one of the four fields of application cited), such as generative AI and large language models, plus the future regulatory frameworks they require.

2.2.2.2 AiNed ELSA Labs – ethical, legal, societal and economic aspects

AiNed ELSA Labs are virtual or physical environments within which knowledge, experiential practice, methods, techniques and tools are developed to facilitate human-centred AI innovations and applications. This entails configuring technological, ethical, legal and societal aspects with each other from the outset. AiNed ELSA Labs take the approach that parties from the quadruple helix (academe, government, industry, civil society) experiment together in a secure environment with concrete AI case studies. The conscientious collecting, recording and sharing of knowledge, experiential practice, methods, techniques and tools – and establishing linkages between research, practice, education and policy – are given a central place in order to maximise the impact of ELSA Labs.

The Dutch AI Coalition (NL AIC) has developed a value proposition for ELSA Labs (Annex 7.5) that outlines the specific characteristics of an ELSA Lab. These characteristics recur in a variety of places throughout this Call for proposals. Annex 7.4 indicates where the various characteristics can be found in the Call for proposals.

Proposals must describe which methodology is intended to be used to realise societal and economic impact.
2.3 Innovative and collaborative research development

The selection procedure for this Call for proposals will make use of knowledge and innovation workshops. NWO will organise these workshops jointly with the board of the AiNed Foundation and the Dutch AI Coalition. The workshops will be held over two days. These two-day knowledge and innovation workshops will offer an opportunity to enter into discussions about the further development and/or combination of research ideas, in order to encourage the formation of more wide-ranging consortia and concentrate the focus of the research. The first day will be devoted to physical workshops on each field of application, and will take place in June 2024 (see the timeline in section 4.2.14). Workshops are open to everyone who wants to contribute to the development of AiNed ELSA Labs. During the second day of the workshops, a pitch session will be organised for all fields of application so that the AiNed Foundation can provide feedback on the proposals.

Representatives of the board of the AiNed Foundation and the Dutch AI Coalition will also be present at the knowledge and innovation workshops in order to share with the consortia specific information about AiNed, the Dutch AI Coalition and the fields of application.

You can find more information about the selection procedure in section 4.2.3.

19 https://ained.nl/over-ained/bestuur-ained/ Board of the AiNed Foundation
Chapter 3: Conditions for applicants

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

Initiatives and full applications are to be submitted by a main applicant and one or more co-applicants. An application is written by a consortium in which besides the applicants, other participants can be involved as well.

There are four categories of participants that can participate in a consortium:

1. Main applicant
2. Co-applicant(s)
3. Cooperation partners
4. Co-funders

A consortium should consist of at least one main applicant (who is also the proposed project leader), one co-applicant (who is also the technical project leader), and one cooperation partner and/or co-funder. The conditions for each type of participant are explained in more detail in the following sections. Within this Call for proposals, only the main applicant and co-applicants can receive funding.

3.1.1 Main applicant

Full, associate and assistant professors and other researchers with a comparable position* may submit an application 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;
- universities of applied sciences as referred to in Article 1.8 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW);
- TO2 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);
- 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 act as a main applicant if they have a paid position under a fixed-term contract.

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 aforementioned exception for lectors employed at a university of applied sciences and researchers employed at a TO2 institute) may not submit an application.
Chapter 3: Conditions for applicants

If the applicant’s tenure track agreement ends before the intended end date of the project in the application, of if applicant retires before the end date of the project, the applicant must include a statement from their employer in which the knowledge institution concerned guarantees that the project and all project members for whom funding has been respresented will receive adequate supervision fo the full duration of the project. Such a statement must also be submitted by the applicant employed at a university of applied sciences or TO2 institution whose employment contract ends before the intended completion date of the project for which funding is requested.

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

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

Additional conditions:
– The main applicant may only submit one proposal for an AlNed ELSA Lab in the capacity of main applicant, and is not permitted to participate as a co-applicant in another consortium.
– The technical project leader is not permitted to participate as a co-applicant in another consortium.

3.1.2 Co-applicants

Employees from the following organisations may act as co-applicants:
1. The research organisations listed under ‘main applicant’ in section 3.1.1;
2. Enterprises and other public and private organisations (hereafter: enterprises and civil society organisations) other than the research organisations listed under ‘main applicant’ in section 3.1.1.

Ad 1

For the employees from research organisations listed under 1, the same conditions apply as those stated under section 3.1.1.

Ad 2

Employees of organisations listed under 2 can participate as a co-applicant in the consortium provided that:
– They have permanent employment contract for at least 0.6 fte;
– Their organisation has demonstrable Research & Development (R&D) activities in the Netherlands;
– They hold a master’s degree.

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.

3.1.3 Cooperation partners

A cooperation partner is a party that does not receive funding and does not contribute co-financing to the application, but is closely involved in the implementation of the research and/or the use of knowledge. A cooperation partner is therefore not a main or co-applicant or co-financier, but may, for example, be involved by participating in an advisory committee.
Cooperation partners may become members of the consortium during the course of an AiNed ELSA Lab project awarded funding. This will require coordination with the supervisory committee and approval of NWO. Such expansion could include involving parties through participation in an advisory, guidance or user committee, or parties who were unable to capitalise their contribution in advance.

**Please note:** for personnel of organisations that participate in the consortium as a cooperation partner, no funding for salary or research costs can be applied for as a co-applicant. It is possible to reimburse costs by hiring these organisations as third parties via the modules ‘material costs’, ‘knowledge utilisation’ or ‘project management’ (see section 3.2 and appendix 7.1).

3.1.4 **Co-funders**

Co-funders are organisations that participate in the consortium and contribute to the project in cash and/or in-kind. The conditions regarding co-funding in this Call for proposals are specified in paragraph 7.1) The role that these parties play in the preparation, realisation, and translation of the research to society should be described in the application.

3.2 **What can be applied for**

No funding will be allocated in Phase I (initiative). Funding will be allocated for AiNed ELSA Labs in Phase II.

3.2.1 **Proposal: AiNed ELSA Lab**

For an application in this Call for proposals, a minimum of €1.680.000 and a maximum of €1.714.641 can be applied for in total. NWO will fund a maximum of 74.08% of the total project budget. An application therefore requires at least €600.000 of the total project budget as Funding other than provided by NWO. A minimum of 50% of the requested funding should be directed to research organisations listed under ‘Main applicant’ in 3.1.1.

**Funding other than provided by NWO** consists of:

i. The own contribution, i.e. the non-fundable part of the eligible costs contributed by enterprises and civil society organisations (see later in this section).

ii. in cash (excl. Dutch VAT) or in-kind co-funding (see section 3.5.9).

Research organisations in section 3.1.1 mentioned under ‘Main applicant’ and at passage ‘Co-applicant’ under paragraph 3.1.2, cannot enter their own contribution as Funding other than provided by NWO or act as co-financier.

The maximum duration of the proposed project is 60 months/years.

The budget modules (including the maximum amount) available for this Call for proposals are listed in the table below (Tables 1, 2 and 3). This Call for proposals makes a distinction between the budget modules for the research organisations (as stated in section 3.1.1 and at passage ‘Co-applicant’ under 1) and the maximum of the eligible costs for funding for ‘enterprises and civil society organisations’ (as stated in section 3.1.1 at passage ‘Co-applicant’ under 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of organisation (see section 3.1.1 and at passage ‘Co-applicant’ under 1)</th>
<th>Funding percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research organisations</td>
<td>100% of the fundable costs for non-economic activities.</td>
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Enterprises and civil society organisations (see section 3.1.1 at passage ‘Co-applicant’ under 2) | Maximum 40% of the eligible costs for funding.

**Funding of personnel costs**

In this Call for proposals the following rate systems can be used for funding of personnel costs:
- Association of Universities in the Netherlands (UNL) salary tables + 50% premium (see section 7.1)
- Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU) salary tables + 50% premium (see section 7.1)
- Rates from Table 2.1 “Average direct labour costs”, column ‘Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT’ of the manual for government rates (HOT rates) + 50% premium (see section 7.1)
- Integral cost system (IKS) as filed at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) for the organisation concerned (see section 7.3)
- Fixed hourly rate of 60 euros (see section 7.3).

Table 2 and Table 3 indicate the rate system available per type of applicant. The different rate systems are incorporated in the budget format that NWO makes available.

Please note: it is not possible to apply for funding for the deployment of the main applicant and co-applicants themselves other than via the budget module Research leave and Personnel universities of applied sciences and TO2 institutions.

**Research organisations**

For the research organisations, as listed in sections 3.1.1 and at passage ‘Co-applicant’ under 1, the budget modules (including the maximum amounts) stated in Table 2 apply. Applicants should only request that which is essential to realise the project. A further explanation of the budget modules can be found in the annex to this Call for proposals (section 7.1). Activities for which the research organisation requests funding should qualify as non-economic activities as meant in section 20 of the European Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01). Research organisations that apply for funding in this Call for proposals must declare that these activities are non-economic in nature. The qualification of these activities as non-economic forms a threshold criterium, if this criterium is not fulfilled, the application will not be considered for funding. The assessment committee will therefore assess the proposed activities of research organisations for their degree of independent scientific research, aimed at more knowledge and better insight (see section 4.3.1).

**Table 2 Budget modules for research organisations.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget module</th>
<th>Amount to be requested</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Unlimited number of positions, according to: - UNL rates +50% premium, or</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

20 If an applicant wishes to use the IKS rates, this choice automatically means that they must give NWO permission to request its IKS rates from RVO and share them with the consortium partners of the application when a joint budget is drawn up.


22 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 [https://www.nwo.nl/en/money-follows-cooperation](https://www.nwo.nl/en/money-follows-cooperation).
Chapter 3: Conditions for applicants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engineering Doctorate degree (EngD)</th>
<th>Unlimited number of positions, in combination with PhD student(s) and or postdoc(s), according to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- UNL of NFU rates$^{22} +50%$ premium, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to integral cost system as filed at RVO for the concerned main or co-applicant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoc</td>
<td>Unlimited number of positions, according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- UNL or NFU rates$^{22} +50%$ premium, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to integral cost system as filed at RVO for the concerned main or co-applicant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-scientific staff (NSS) at universities</td>
<td>€ 300,000, according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- UNL or NFU rates$^{22} +50%$ premium, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to integral cost system as filed at RVO for the concerned main or co-applicant,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Scientific personnel (OSS) at universities</td>
<td>€ 100,000, according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to integral cost system as filed at RVO for the concerned main or co-applicant,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research leave</td>
<td>Maximum 10% of the budget requested from NWO according to UNL or NFU rates$^{22} + 50%$ premium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel universities of applied sciences and TO2- institutions</td>
<td>Unlimited number of positions, according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Valid rates at the time the grant is awarded taken from Table 2.1 ‘Average direct labour costs’, column ‘Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT’ of the manual for Dutch government rates + 50% premium, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate according to integral cost system as filed at RVO for the concerned main or co-applicants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material costs</td>
<td>Maximum €15,000 per year per FTE scientific position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments (up to €150,000)</td>
<td>Maximum €150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge utilisation</td>
<td>Minimum 5% and maximum 20% of the total budget applied for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalisation</td>
<td>€25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money follows Cooperation</td>
<td>Less than 50% of the total at NWO budget applied for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projectmanagement</td>
<td>Maximum 5% of the total budget applied for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If after submitting the proposal and before the proposal is awarded the UNL, and/or NFU and/or HOT rates increase, NWO automatically indexes the personnel rates once (see section 7.1).

Enterprises and civil society organisations

Under this Call for proposals, funding will be provided to enterprises and civil society organisations on the basis of article 2S of the General Block Exemption Regulation (Directive (EU) No. 651/2014 dated 17 June 2014, hereafter: “GBER”). The maximum eligible costs for funding for enterprises or civil society organisations are stated in table 3. For these organisations a maximum of 40% of the eligible costs will be reimbursed. A further explanation of these eligible costs can be found in the annex to this Call for proposals (see section 7.2).

The GBER stipulates that a maximum of € 15,000,000 per individual enterprise or civil society organization per project can be awarded.
Table 2 Eligible costs for enterprises and civil society organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible costs</th>
<th>Maximum amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel costs for researchers, technicians and other supporting staff insofar as they are involved in the research as meant in GBER article 25 para 3 sub a</td>
<td>Unlimited number of positions according to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Valid HOT rates at the time the grant is awarded taken from Table 2.1 ‘Average direct salary costs, column ‘Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT’ of the manual for Dutch government rates + 50% premium, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a fixed hourly rate of 60 euros, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a rate in accordance with the integral cost system as filed at RVO for the concerned main or co-applicants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational costs, as meant in GBER article 25 para 3 sub e</td>
<td>Maximum €75,000 total in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please note: costs in this budget item are depending of the salary system chosen by the organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Preparing an application

3.3.1 Phase 1 – Initiatives, knowledge and innovation workshops, pitch session

The knowledge and innovation workshops are open to any interested party who would like to participate in the development of AiNed ELSA Labs. Participation in the workshop for the specific field of application of the AiNed ELSA Lab for which the proposal will be submitted is mandatory for participants intending to take on the role of main applicant or technical project leader.

Those who wish to participate in these workshops can register in one of the following two ways – they can:

a. Register their own initiative digitally on the NWO website. Only submitters and co-submitters of an initiative (or one of the participants in the initiative who is already known and listed on the form) can subsequently take on the role of main applicant and technical project leader for the proposal.

b. Register themselves as someone interested in the knowledge and innovation workshops for one or more fields of application in order to contribute to the development of AiNed ELSA Labs from that position.

The initiative (as stated under a.) of an AiNed ELSA Lab should state:

– which field of application the proposed research for an AiNed ELSA Lab focuses on;

– which category the proposal falls into: Category A, B, or A and B (see section 2.2.2.1); how the proposal differentiates itself thematically from previously NWO-funded ELSA Labs, as outlined in Annex 7.9;

– who, if anyone, is opting for the role of main applicant and/or technical project leader;

– a publishable abstract;

– an initial indication of the parties involved in the proposed consortium (if known).

Those who wish to register an initiative should complete the online initiative form. A link to this form can be found on the programme page of this Call for proposals for NGF AiNed ELSA Labs.

After registration of the initiative, knowledge and innovation workshops will take place for each of the fields of application. After these workshops, a separate pitch session will be organised for all fields of application with feedback on proposals from AiNed (see section 4.2.3).
Chapter 3: Conditions for applicants

The following conditions apply to participation in the knowledge and innovation workshops and the pitch session:

- At least one representative of each submitted initiative must participate in the entire day of the knowledge and innovation workshop.
- If someone participating in the initiative has opted in the proposal for the role of main applicant or technical project leader, this person must be present at the knowledge and innovation workshop related to the field of application of the initiative.
- If someone participating in the initiative has opted in the proposal for the role of main applicant or technical project leader, this person must be present at the pitch session.

3.3.2 Phase II – Drafting proposals for AiNed ELSA Labs (proposal)

Submitting a proposal is open to anyone who participated in the knowledge and innovation workshops who also participated in the pitch session.

Requirements for AiNed ELSA Lab proposals (proposal)

Proposals for an AiNed ELSA Lab must include the following elements:

a. **Project activities and research approach** (including the choice of field of application and Category A, B, or A and B)

b. **Organisational form, and**

c. **Long-term viability** (see Annex 7.5 for further explanations of the elements).

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
- For enterprises and civil society organisations who are co-applicants: completed and signed statement
  General Conditions of the GBER (see section 3.5.3).
- If applicable: statement appointment and project supervision (see section 3.1.1);
- If applicable: declaration of support (see section 3.5.10);
- If applicable: declaration co-funding (see section 3.5.9);

The appendix must be drawn up in accordance with the template provided by NWO. Annexes must be uploaded in ISAAC separately from the application. The budget must be submitted in ISAAC as an Excel file. All of the other annexes, except for the budget, must be submitted as PDF files (without encryption). Any annexes other than those stated above 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 NWO;
- 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.

Applicants are expected to have informed the organization where they work about submitting the application and that the organisation accepts the grant conditions of this Call for proposals.

### 3.4 Conditions for submission

#### 3.4.1 Formal conditions for submission

NWO will assess your initiative and application against the conditions listed below. Your initiative and application will only be admitted to the assessment procedure if it meets these conditions. After submitting your initiative and 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 initiative and application form are, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions;
- the application is received before the deadline;
- the application is written in English;

Additional conditions for the full proposal:
- the application is submitted via the main applicant’s ISAAC account;
- the main applicant and technical project leader meet the requirement of participating in the knowledge and innovation workshop (see section 4.2.3);
- the main applicant and technical project leader meet the requirement of participating in the pitch session (see section 4.2.3);
- Applicants who use the IKS tariff system must therefore allow NWO to request their IKS rates from RVO;
- the proposal meets the condition of a total project scope of €600,000 minimum in *Funding other than provided by NWO* (see section 3.2.1);
- the application budget is drawn up in accordance with the conditions for this Call for proposals;
- the proposal has been previously registered by means of an initiative;
- the proposed project has a duration of at most 60 months;
- all of the required annexes are, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions.
- it is not one of the ELSA Lab projects that has already been awarded funding listed in section 7.7;
- the proposal and budget contain an item called ‘work package for networking activities’ (see next point).

**Relationship between AiNed ELSA Lab and networking activities**

It is mandatory for each proposal to include a work package for networking activities, and therefore to include an item in the budget called ‘work package for networking activities’. The consortium for each AiNed ELSA Lab should reserve in total €75,000 of the knowledge utilisation budget module (Table 2) and of the ‘Operational costs’, as referred to in Article 25(3)(e) of the GBER (Table 3). This work package will be used by the AiNed ELSA Labs to contribute to networking activities in connection with:
- the generalisability of research results and upscaling of solutions;
- AI ecosystems, learning network;
- blueprint for AiNed ELSA Labs.

This work package will not be evaluated by the assessment committee.
3.5 Conditions on granting

The NWO Grant Rules 2017, the Code for Dealing with Personal Interests and the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research apply to all proposals with the exception of:

- Article 1.4 para 1 and para 8 of the NWO Grant Rules and article 2.1 of the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research; in the sense that under project costs, overhead is also reimbursed in this Call for proposals.
- In addition to article 1.1 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017, enterprises and civil society organisations can apply for funding in this Call for proposals.
- Article 4.1.1 para 5 of the NWO Grant Rules; this does not apply to this Call for proposals.
- Article 5, definition “(Private) co-funder”, phrase “without being the main applicant or co-applicant” is not applicable in case enterprises or civil society organisations will be contributed in-kind co-funding (see section 3.5.9).

NWO shall not award funding and/or will withdraw funding if such funding is deemed to be unlawful state aid within the meaning of Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

3.5.1 Roles of main applicant and technical project leaders

During the knowledge and innovation workshops, the projected consortium partners will decide among themselves who will take the future roles of main applicant (from the organisations listed in section 3.1.1) and technical project leader (from the organisations listed in section 3.1.2) for each proposed project. The main applicant, along with the technical project leader, is responsible for the design, implementation and progress of the project. The main applicant will report to NWO. The main applicants and technical project leaders will sit on the Implementation Committee and, in this way, interact with the other representatives of the AiNed programme for ELSA Labs according to the governance model defined above (see section 1.1).

3.5.2 Networking activities

The main and co-applicants who accept funding during Phase II will be committing themselves to undertaking the development of networking activities, in collaboration with AiNed and all funded AiNed ELSA Labs, in order to generate insights above and beyond the projects themselves. Proposals must include a work package and reserve part of the budget for the development of networking activities (see section 3.4.1).

3.5.3 General conditions of the GBER

NWO funds project proposals in this Call for proposals in accordance with article 25 of the GBER (support for research and development projects) for the activities of enterprises and civil society organisations. NWO will not provide any funding if it is insufficiently plausible that the proposal fits within the definitions and conditions of the GBER.

NWO will not grant funding to undertakings against which a recovery order is outstanding as a consequence of an earlier decision of the European Commission in which state aid awarded by the Netherlands was declared unlawful and incompatible with the internal market, with the exception of support schemes for the recovery of damage caused by certain natural disasters. In addition, NWO will not grant funding to any undertaking in difficulty, as meant in article 2, para 18, of the GBER. Cumulation of grants (or other forms of state aid) for the same – entirely or partially overlapping – eligible costs may not lead to exceeding the threshold for research and development projects that applies pursuant to article 4 para 1 and under i) of the GBER.

Enterprises and civil society organisations, as referred to in paragraph 3.1.2 at passage ‘Co-applicant’ under 2, which are fundable under this Call for proposals must complete and sign the statement General Conditions of the GBER and upload this in ISAAC as an annex to the application.
3.5.4 Compliance with the National Knowledge Security Guidelines

World-class science can benefit from international cooperation. The National Knowledge Security 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 for Knowledge Security (loketkennisveiligheid.nl).

3.5.5 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, at very least, are expected to make the data and/or non-numerical results that underlie the conclusions of the published work resulting from 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, both during data generation and as part of analysing the data, to make its subsequent 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.

3.5.6 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.
3.5.7 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. The absence or presence of an ethical statement or licence at the time of the application process has no effect on the assessment of the application. 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.

3.5.8 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.

3.5.9 Co-funding

Co-funding is not mandatory in this Call for proposals. Note that a proposal requires at least €600,000 of the total project scope as Funding other than provided by NWO. Any co-funding will form part of the Funding other than provided by NWO (see section 3.2.1). A distinction is made between in-cash co-funding, which serves to cover the budget of the project activities described in the proposal, and in-kind co-funding, which can consist of the use of resources from the organisations involved. Co-funding can be contributed by organisations that do not receive funding under this Call for proposals.

Co-funding can also be provided by enterprises and civil society organisations (as meant in section 3.1.2, passage ‘Co-applicant’ under 2), whom as a co-applicant apply for funding on the grounds of this Call for proposals, albeit only in the form of in kind, in so far as these costs are necessary for realising the project. Co-financing should be pledged to the main applicant through a statement of co-financing. The committed co-financing concerns the net amount. If Dutch VAT is applicable to the pledged co-funding, then this will be added to the pledged amount.

Invoicing in cash co-funding

In cash invoicing, if applicable, is done via the pen manager.

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 125 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 depreciations 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 declaration co-funding. NWO can request substantiation and documented evidence of the rates used and can also request their adjustment.

Not acceptable as co-funding (both cash and in kind):
- All contributions from public funds (including funding awarded by NWO\(^23\), PPP allowance and other contributions from the government);
- discounts on commercial rates, e.g. on materials, equipment and services;
- costs related to overheads, supervision, consultancy and/or participation in the user 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 cash and 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, then this can have consequences for the grant settlement.

Declaration co-funding from participating co-funders
In a declaration co-funding, the co-funder declares financial support for the project and confirms the co-funding pledged. The co-funder also states in this declaration whether the contribution is a private or public contribution. Declarations co-funding from co-funders involved in the proposal are compulsory annexes to the full proposal. These must be signed by an authorised signatory of the co-funder and. NWO will make a standard template available for the declaration co-funding. Declarations co-funding pledging co-financing are unconditional and should not contain dissolving provisions.

Co-financers who also apply for funding under these Call for proposals must indicate this in their co-financing statement.
In the event that the project is awarded funding, the co-funder should confirm its contribution(s) in the consortium agreement (for example, for invoicing in the case of in-cash contributions). In this agreement, further agreements are also made between the co-funder(s), applicant(s) and NWO (see section 5.1.5).

3.5.10 Letter of intent from cooperation partners
In a letter of intent (without co-funding), the cooperation partner expresses their support for the project and describes their role within the project. Letters of intent may only be submitted for fully completed proposals. NWO makes a standard form available on the funding page.

If the project is awarded, the cooperation partner must reconfirm their participation in the project in a consortium agreement. This agreement must also contain any further arrangements concluded between the cooperation partner(s) and the applicant(s) (see also section 5.1.5).

\(^{23}\) 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.
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-making process (Code for Dealing with Personal Interests | NWO).

NWO strives to achieve an inclusive culture where 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 procedure consists of the following steps:

- Submitting an initiative;
- Admissibility of the initiative;
- Knowledge and innovation workshops for each field of application (participation mandatory);
- Pitch session (participation mandatory);
- submission of the proposal;
- admissibility of the proposal;
- initial advice from the assessment committee;
- rebuttal;
- interview selection;
- interview;
- assessment committee meeting;
- decision-making.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure

An independent external international assessment committee will be appointed to review submissions to this Call for proposals made up of representatives of the scientific community with expertise in the field and knowledge of the Dutch research landscape. The task of the assessment committee is to assess the applications and the relevant documents that are submitted, in conjunction with each other and with regard to both the respective merits of each application and the selection criteria outlined in this Call for proposals.

The assessment committee will be informed of the aims and objectives of the AiNed ELSA Lab instrument, this Call for proposals, the wider AiNed context and the NGF aspect under which this Call for proposals was formulated. They will be informed shortly before the calibration session, which takes place well before the assessment meeting.

Due to the particular form of AiNed ELSA Labs and the method of embedding the research, NWO has decided with regard to the assessment of these applications to exercise the option to assess all applications without involving referees, as outlined in Article 2.2.4, paragraph 2, of the NWO Grant Rules 2017.

4.2.1 Submitting the initiative

For this Call for proposals, submitting an initiative is mandatory. An initiative form has been made available on the programme page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website for preparing your initiative. Your completed initiative form must be uploaded on the NWO website before the deadline for submitting initiatives (see sections 1.3 and 3.4.1). Following submission of the initiative, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt by email.

4.2.2 Admissibility of the initiative

You will hear from NWO as quickly as possible after having submitted your initiative whether or not it will be taken into consideration. NWO will make this assessment based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, section 3.4). NWO can only take your initiative 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 pre-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 complete this.

For the purposes of the knowledge and innovation workshops, the following information about all admissible initiatives will only be shared with the other main applicants, participants and the board of the AiNed Foundation: name and affiliation of the main applicant; publishable abstract; list of the consortium’s participating organisations; field of application; Category A, B, or A and B.

By submitting an initiative you agree to share this information with the other main applicants, the other participants in the workshops, and the AiNed Foundation.

4.2.3 Knowledge and innovation workshops (participation mandatory)

For the purposes of the initiative phase, NWO will organise, jointly with the board of the AiNed Foundation and the Dutch AI Coalition, open knowledge and innovation workshops for each field of application on location. The workshops will be held over two days. The first day consists of a workshop for each of the fields of application. During the second day of the workshops, a pitch session will be organised for all fields of application so that the AiNed Foundation can provide feedback on the proposals.

Workshop participants

Participation in the workshops is open to those submitting initiatives. The workshops are also for parties who have not submitted their own initiative, but are interested in participating in a consortium and would like to explore the possibility of joining an existing consortium. It is possible to participate in more than one
workshop. See section 3.3.1 for the obligations attached to participation in the knowledge and innovation workshops. A maximum of five participants per initiative will be accepted as participants in the workshops.

Aim of the workshops
The aim of the workshops is:
- to build on the concrete proposals and foster collaboration;
- to make applicants aware of current initiatives related to this Call for proposals;
- to merge strongly similar initiatives or allow them to find linkages;
- to decide who will be the main applicant and the technical project leader (even if initiatives will be merged);
- to optimise harmonisation with AiNed aims and other AiNed programme components.

Set-up of the workshops
The workshops will be held over two days:
- Day 1: workshop where participants enter into dialogue with each other in order to pool initiatives and ideas, and sharpen the focus.
- Day 2: pitch session with the other fields of application where pooled or merged research ideas can be presented.

Ad a.
The registered initiatives will form the basis for discussions exploring whether and how initiatives could be merged. As organiser of the workshop, NWO will facilitate discussions between the participants to ensure everything runs smoothly. Any move to merge initiatives is the responsibility of the participants. The participants are responsible for creating collaborations and determining in mutual consultation by the end of the day whether they will merge, as well as who will be the main applicant and technical project leader.

Representatives of the board of the AiNed Foundation and the Dutch AI Coalition will be present at each workshop as observers to share general information about the two issues (categories A and B) and specific information about the field of application with the consortia, as well as to explain the best way of achieving broader embedding within the AiNed programme.

Outcome of the workshops
There are two possible outcomes for a workshop:
1. An initiative is merged with another initiative. In this case, by the end of the workshop, NWO must be informed who will be the main applicant and technical project leader of the merged initiative.
2. An initiative is not merged with another initiative, but additional insights have been acquired during the workshop. New or different partners within the consortium have also possibly been identified.

If the main applicant and/or the technical project leader of the initiative change, this must be communicated to NWO on the day of the workshop. The main applicant and/or the technical project leader may not thereafter be changed during the application and selection procedure.

Ad b.
Insights acquired and possible additional or different consortium members identified during the workshops can be incorporated into the pitch session, which will be held together with the other fields of application on one day.

The purpose of the pitch session is to get a clear picture of the projected proposals being put forward, and for participants to receive feedback on their proposals from the AiNed Foundation. For every projected proposal,

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24 https://ained.nl/over-ained/bestuur-ained/ Board of the AiNed Foundation
least the main applicant and technical project leader must participate in the pitch session. The pitch session will be accessible to everyone who submitted an initiative or who attended one of the knowledge and innovation workshops.

About the procedure for the pitch sessions:

- A short pitch will be made for each projected proposal based on the knowledge and innovation workshops;
- NWO will make a format available for the pitch;
- At these sessions, representatives of the AiNed Foundation will form a panel and provide feedback on the pitch.

A workshop will be held if at least one initiative has been received for that field of application. If no initiatives are submitted for any one of the fields of application, then that workshop will not take place. For such fields of application, no AiNed ELSA Labs funding will then be awarded.

Further information about the workshops will also be announced on the programme page on the NWO website.

4.2.4 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 section 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.

4.2.5 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.

4.2.6 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).

The committee will come to its own assessment based on the material available. The provisional final assessment will be guided to an important degree by the preliminary recommendations; however, such advice will not necessarily be adopted uncritically by the assessment committee. The assessment committee will weigh up the arguments of the preliminary advisors (including in relation to each other), and arrive at a provisional final assessment based on their deliberations.
4.2.7 Rebuttal

The main applicant subsequently receives the provisional assessment. You then have the opportunity to formulate a rebuttal. You will be given ten working days to submit your rebuttal via ISAAC. If you decide to withdraw the proposal, then you should do this as quickly as possible by sending an email stating this to the office and withdrawing the proposal in ISAAC. If NWO receives your rebuttal after the deadline, then it will not be included in the rest of the procedure.

4.2.8 Interview selection

During the interview selection meeting, the assessment committee will examine the rebuttals put forward by applicants to the provisional assessment report. This may lead to adjustments to the assessment and score the proposal had received up to that point. Proposals that do not receive a minimum rating of ‘good’ for the assessment criterion of part 1 will not be included in the rest of the assessment procedure and therefore also not invited for an interview (see section 4.3.1).

The assessment committee will then draw up a provisional prioritisation (ranking) of the proposals for each field of application, based on the assessment criteria of part 2 (I through III). Proposals must score a minimum rating of ‘good’ (see section 4.2.11) on each of the three separate assessment criteria of part 2 (2-I, 2-II, 2-III) in order to be eligible for an interview.

NWO reserves the right to select only certain proposals for an interview, if the total number of proposals that meet the minimum rating of ‘good’ for the assessment criterion of part 1 is more than the number of available proposals that can be funded by a factor of four, i.e. more than sixteen. In which case, the provisional ranking for each field of application, based on the assessment criteria of part 2 (maximum three for each field of application), will determine the top twelve prioritised proposals that will be invited for an interview.

The committee will deliberate on the proposals prior to the interviews. Any points of criticism or questions raised by the committee during their deliberations will be forwarded to the consortium members so that they can prepare for the interview.

4.2.9 Interview

During the interview, representatives of the consortium (up to 5) will explain their proposal to the assessment committee by means of a presentation. During the interview, the assessment committee will have the opportunity to pose questions. During the interview, the consortium will be able to respond to these in the discussion with the committee. In this manner, the principle of having a hearing and an opportunity for rebuttal is applied. The interview is an important part of the assessment procedure and can lead to an adjustment of both the assessment and the score of the proposal.

4.2.10 Meeting of the assessment committee

The committee will make its own assessment based on the available material. Although the preliminary assessments will ‘guide’ the final assessment to a large extent, it will not be blindly accepted without question by the committee. The committee will consider and compare the arguments of the pre-advisers (also in relation to each other) and evaluate during the interview whether a good response has been formulated to answer the criticism on points received in preparation and questions brought forward at the interview.
At their subsequent meeting, the assessment committee will review all the proposals and interviews, and reassess the proposals using the three assessment criteria given in part 2 of this Call for proposals. For each proposal, a weighted total score will be determined based on the assessment criteria in part 2. This weighted total score will determine the prioritisation of the proposals in relation to each other for each field of application. The assessment criterion of part 1 plays no part in the interviews.

Based on their deliberations, the committee will draw up written recommendations for the Executive Board of the NWO Social Sciences and Humanities Domain (SSH) about the quality of each proposal, and, for each field of application, the prioritisation of the proposals. These recommendations will be based on the assessment criteria of parts 1 and 2. The proposal must achieve an overall minimum rating of ‘good’ on the assessment criterion of part 1, as well as on each of the three separate assessment criteria of part 2, in order to be eligible for award (see section 4.3.2). For more information about the qualifications, see Applying for funding, how does it work? | NWO.

If, after the discussion of the full proposals, two or more of the full proposals cannot be distinguished from each other based on their weighted total score, then this will result in an ex aequo situation (see the paragraph about ex aequo).

ELSA Labs that have already been awarded funding (see Annex 7.7) and AlNed ELSA Labs proposals submitted for this Call for proposals that share a similar theme with these previously funded ELSA Labs (i.e. based on the same or similar research question backed by a similar consortium) are not eligible for funding, regardless of their position in the prioritised ranking.

### 4.2.11 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 in this process is the ranking drawn up by the assessment committee, with the final scores rounded down to two decimal points. The reference score here 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 margins of the available budget or the selection borders, then the proposal with a higher score for the criterion ‘Quality of the consortium’ will rank higher. If the proposals subsequently still remain tied, then 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 also fails to provide a resolution, or if it is deemed to be undesirable to vote, then the ex aequo situation will be sent onto the decision-making body.

### 4.2.12 Decision-making

Finally, NWO SSH Domain Board will assess the procedure followed as well as the advice from the assessment committee. They will subsequently determine the final qualifications and make a decision over awarding or rejecting the proposals.

### 4.2.13 Rules for allocation of awards

The following rules will be applied in descending order:
If within the four fields of application there is at least one proposal with the minimum rating ‘good’ in each field, then the proposal with the highest prioritisation in each field of application will be awarded funding.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure

If within three fields of application there is at least one proposal with the minimum rating ‘good’ in each field, and within the remaining field of application no proposals with the minimum rating, then the proposal with the highest prioritisation within these three fields of application will be awarded funding, as well as the proposal with the minimum rating ‘good’ and the best numerical score of the proposals with the second highest prioritisation from among the three fields of application.

If within two fields of application there are at least two proposals with the minimum rating ‘good’ in each, and there are no proposals with the minimum rating in the remaining two fields of application, then the proposals with the highest prioritisation in these two fields of application will be awarded.

If within two fields of application there are at least two proposals with the minimum rating ‘good’ in one of these two fields of application, in the other field one proposal with the minimum rating ‘good’, and in the remaining two fields of application no proposals with the minimum rating ‘good’, then the proposals with the highest prioritisation in these two fields of application will be awarded funding, as well as the proposal with the second highest prioritisation from among those fields of application that contain at least two proposals with the minimum rating ‘good’. In such a case, fewer than four proposals will be awarded funding.

If there are one or more proposals with the minimum rating ‘good’ within only one field of application, and no proposals with the minimum rating in the remaining fields of application, then the proposals with the highest prioritisation in this field of application with the minimum rating ‘good’ will be awarded funding, up to a maximum of two. In such a case, fewer than four proposals will be awarded funding.

4.2.14 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>Phase I: Initiatives</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 May 2024, 14:00:00 CEST</td>
<td>Deadline for initiatives (Phase I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June 2024</td>
<td>Knowledge and innovation workshops for the four fields of application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase II: Proposals</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 October 2024, 14:00:00 CEST</td>
<td>Deadline proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2024</td>
<td>Pre-advisers consulted and assessment committee meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2024/January 2025</td>
<td>Applicants can submit a rebuttal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2025</td>
<td>Interview selection meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2025</td>
<td>Applicants receive interview questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January/February 2025</td>
<td>Interviews and Assessment committee meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February/March 2025</td>
<td>Decision by the board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure

4.3 Criteria

The criteria for Phase II are laid out below. The proposal must achieve an overall minimum rating of ‘good’ on the assessment criterion of part 1. The criterion of part 1 will not count in the total evaluation of part 2. The criteria of part 2 will count in the total evaluation as follows:
criterion 2-I: for 30%
criterion 2-II: for 30%
criterion 2-III: for 40%.

The assessment criteria are operationalised for several subparts below.

4.3.1 Substantive assessment criteria

The application(s) submitted within this Call for proposals will be substantially assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

Part 1

Criterion 1: Comply with the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation and the GBER

For research organisations: the assessment committee assesses to what extent the activities denoted as non-economic in nature qualify as independent scientific research by the research organisation in the partnership, aimed at more knowledge and better insight.

Part 2

I. Alignment with the objectives of the NGF AiNed – ELSA Labs programme (30%):
   – The proposal both satisfies the guiding principles and fits within the generic themes of the substantive framework set by this Call for proposals, see section 2.2.
   – The proposal is designed to meet the objective and main question of the Call for proposals.
   – The proposal addresses a problem relevant to this Call for proposals and the problem definition is clearly formulated, see section 2.1.
   – The problem definition is relevant and significant when viewed from an economic and societal perspective. The relevance of the specific case studies for businesses and/or public organisations contributing to the proposal is clearly presented. The proposal fits within the chosen field of application and the chosen Category (A, B, or A and B).

II. Quality of the consortium (30%):
   – A cohesive, complementary and divers consortium has been set up.
   – Interdisciplinarity: All disciplines necessary to effectively tackle the problem have been included in the research proposal, and the role of each convincingly described.
   – Knowledge chain representation: The proposal convincingly demonstrates that partners from across the entire knowledge chain who are necessary for effectively tackling the problem have been included in the consortium and their roles have been convincingly described (fundamental, applied and practice-oriented knowledge; big companies, SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups), see section 3.1.
   – Collaboration: Collaboration within the consortium is clearly defined and likewise reveals each partner’s commitment. Wherever possible, the joint track record and current relevant activities are itemised. The consortium convincingly outlines to what degree it is open to new partners, especially not ‘the usual suspects’.
   – Organisational structure: The consortium has described the individual roles within a team, taking account of management, diversity and knowledge utilisation, among other things. The consortium is set up with a robust, logical and clearly designed organisational structure.
   – Ecosystem: Degree of connectivity with the relevant national and international hubs, building blocks and working groups within the Dutch AI Coalition and AiNed.
   – Integrity: Sufficient explanation has been supplied about how provisions will be made to safeguard the integrity of any participating citizens, for example using the frameworks of the GDPR.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure

III. Quality of the research proposal and impact (40%):
– The problem definition and the objectives have been clearly and concretely formulated.
– The methodology fits the research to be carried out (section 2.2.2). The approach and methodology are coherent and well formulated.
– Individual work packages are clearly described, and it is clear how the work packages cohere as a whole in order to aid achievement of the envisioned objectives. The substantive activities are clearly presented.
– The consortium convincingly outlines the feasibility of the proposed research.
– The budget fits the proposed activities and mirrors the representative character of the proposal from across the entire knowledge chain in terms of the division of fundamental research tasks, on the one hand, and applied and practice-oriented research tasks, on the other. Costs are backed up with clear and specific supporting reasons.
– The long-term viability of the AiNed ELSA Lab is backed up with concrete reasoning.
– The expected impact and route to impact are clearly outlined. A clear approach as to how to involve stakeholders and the wider public in the research is described, including what roles they might be assigned and what knowledge utilisation activities will be employed.
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 Start date

The project should start no later than 6 months after after the proposal has been awarded funding. The project has a maximum duration of 60 Months.

5.1.2 Substantive monitoring

Programme meetings

The board of the AiNed Foundation will organise regular meetings for participants. The main applicant and technical project leader, along with representatives of all projects awarded funding under this Call for proposals, will be taking part in these AiNed meetings. The meetings are directed at establishing links between the different projects, with a focus on knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation and the application of results. The Executive Committee will also participate in the programme meetings, to the extent necessary for fulfilling its responsibilities (see section 1.1). Where advisable, experts will be invited.

Supervisory committee

To assist in monitoring, NWO and the board of the AiNed Foundation will be setting up a supervisory committee made up of independent experts. The supervisory committee will monitor the connections between the different projects, the progress of all the projects, and both the quantitative results (output) and qualitative results (outcome and impact), with a focus on knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation and the application of results. This committee will also monitor the overall coherence of the different projects and their connections with the different parts of the AiNed programme. Regular meetings will be organised. Representatives of all the consortia will be asked for their participation and input for these meetings of the supervisory committee. Where advisable, experts will be invited.

Accountability during the project

During the project, the project leader will be responsible for annual reports on the project’s substantive and financial progress. With a view to monitoring project progress, NWO can request interim reports on a project’s content and finances. NWO will impose reporting obligations in accordance with Article 3.2.2 of the NWO Grant Regulations 2017. Obligations imposed on NWO by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) that are relevant to such reporting will be incorporated into the reporting formats. In accordance with these obligations, NWO will be sharing these reports or portions thereof with RVO for the purpose of compliant reporting under the National Growth Fund. Reports will be shared with the board of the AiNed Foundation and the above-mentioned supervisory committee to support their monitoring role. More information about this will follow in the grant award letter.

Project closure

Upon completion of a project, final reports will be requested on both the content and finances of the project. The final amount of funding will be determined after these final reports have been approved.

5.1.3 The open character of AiNed ELSA Labs

An AiNed ELSA Lab has an open character. Under the NWO Grant Regulations 2017 guidelines and the conditions for this Call for proposals, it is permissible for an AiNed ELSA Lab to accept new collaboration partners (see section 3.1.3) and co-funders (see section 3.1.4) during the course of an AiNed ELSA Lab project by means of a change request.
Chapter 5: Obligations for grant recipients

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 and committee. The applicant must describe in the plan whether existing data will be used, or whether new data will be collected or generated, and how this 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, whereby article 4.1.1. para 5 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017 is not applicable to this Call for proposals..

Subsidised activities should be carried out during the time the project participant is employed by the applicant’s organisation. If a project participant is employed by multiple employers, parties need to ensure that any copyrights and IP rights of these individuals do not prevent publication of the project results.

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 of NWO is required before a project can begin. The responsibility for arranging the consortium agreement lies with the applicant. NWO will not sign the agreement itself.

The names of the main applicant and the technical project leader must be laid down in the consortium agreement.

The model agreement that NWO makes available must be used and can be found on the funding page of this Call for proposals. This model agreement has been drawn up in accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2017.

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)”.

Chapter 5: Obligations for grant recipients

5.1.7 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.
Chapter 6: Contact and other information

6 Contact and other information

6.1 Contact

6.1.1 Specific questions

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

Dhr. dr. Job van der Schalk, tel: +31 (0)70 344 0654, e-mail: NGF-AiNedELSALabs@nwo.nl
Dhr. Sam Woldringh, tel: +31 (0)70 349 4101, e-mail: NGF-AiNedELSALabs@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 (0)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.
Chapter 7: Annex(es):

7 Annexes:

7.1 Explanation of budget modules for research organisations

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 + 50% premium (Salary-tables | NWO) or;
- the rates compliant to the Integral cost system (IKS) as filed at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) for concerned main or co-applicants. See also section 7.3.

For university medical centres, the salary costs are funded in accordance with:

- the NFU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded + 50% premium (Salary-tables | NWO) or;
- the rates compliant to the Integral cost system (IKS) as filed at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) for concerned main or co-applicants. See also section 7.3.

For personnel from universities of applied sciences and TO2 institutions, salary costs will be funded based on:

- the collective labour agreement scale of the employee concerned in accordance with the rates valid at the time funding is awarded as stated in Table 2.1 ‘Gemiddelde directe loonkosten’ [average direct labour costs], column ‘Uurtarief productieve uren, excl. btw’ [hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT] of the Manual Dutch Government Rates (Handleiding Overheidstarieven – HOT rates) + 50% premium (Salary-tables | NWO) or;
- the rates compliant to the Integral cost system (IKS) as filed at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) for concerned main or co-applicants. See also section 7.3.

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 www.rijksdienstcn.com/werken-bij-rijksdienst-caribisch-nederland/arbeidsvoorwaarden.

NWO will apply a mandatory one-off indexing of the salary25 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 does not affect the level of the grant ceiling or the maximum amount of the grant awarded for each proposal. Both 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-making process about awarding or rejecting proposals is 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, with the exception of the integral cost system rates (section 7.3), 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.

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25 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.
Chapter 7: Annex(es):

**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.

**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 €300,000 can be requested for NSS. This includes personnel such as student assistants, programmers, technical assistants or analysts. Depending on the level of the position, the appropriate salary table for 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 AIOS (doctor training to be a specialist), ANIOS (doctor not training to be a specialist), scientific programmers or employees with a master’s degree can only be applied for if funding for a PhD 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.

A maximum of 10% of the budget requested from NWO can be requested for research leave. NWO funds the research leave in accordance with the salary tables for a senior scientific employee (scale 11) + 50% premium 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 or TO2 organisation will be remunerated in accordance with Table 2.1 ‘Gemiddelde directe loonkosten’ (average direct labour costs), column ‘Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT’ (Uurtarief productieve uren, excl. btw) from the Manual Dutch Government Rates (Handleiding Overheidstarieven - HOT rates) +50% premium (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 university of applied sciences or TO2 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/);
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- 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).

**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.\(^\text{26}\) The proposed budget is a minimum of 5% and maximum of 20% of the total proposed budget, and includes no more than €75,000 for the work package on networking activities (along with Table 3, Operational costs, as referred to in Article 25(3)(e) of the GBER).

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.

**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.

\(^{26}\) 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 (PFUE, 2014, C198) applies.
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**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 personnel costs of researchers at foreign knowledge institutions should be calculated on the basis of the correction coefficient table for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (Horizon Europe, 2020), with the Dutch UNL rates forming the starting point. 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 foreign countries that fall under national or international sanction laws and regulations. The EU Sanctions Map (EU Sanctions Map) is guiding in this respect.

**Explanation of the budget module projectmanagement**

The module project management provides a possibility to request a budget for project management that is at most 5% of the total budget requested from NWO. This budget can only be used for activities that solely support the project for which the grant is requested. The applicant must satisfactorily justify this budget.
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Amongst other things, project management is understood to mean the optimal shaping of the organisation structure of the consortium, support of the consortium and the main applicant, monitoring coherency, progress and unity of the project, and alignment between the sub-projects within the project. This task may also be realised by external parties insofar as the expertise is not available at the knowledge institution of the main and/or co-applicant(s). During the tendering procedure for the selection of a third party, knowledge institutions should take into account the procurement rules of the government and, where necessary, follow a European tendering procedure. The activities of the main applicant and co-applicants in the context of the project (management) may not be funded from this budget module.

The budget to be requested for project management can consist of material costs, realisation costs and personnel costs. For personnel costs a maximum rate of 121 euros per hour may be used. The hourly rate of personnel to be appointed is based on the cost-covering rate (kostendekkend) and is calculated in accordance with the standard productive number of hours used by the organisation. The cost-covering rate includes:
- (average) gross salary for the post of the employee who will contribute to the project (based on the collective labour agreement scale of the employee concerned);
- holiday allowance and 13th month (if applicable in the relevant collective labour agreement) in proportion to the use in fte;
- social security contributions;
- pension costs;
- overheads.

Third parties may realise tasks in the context of project management, but the part of the (commercial) hourly rates that exceeds the hourly rates stated above is not fundable and can therefore not be included in the budget.

7.2 Explanation of eligible costs for enterprises and civil society organisations

Explanation of eligible costs for personnel

Costs for funding personnel who work at enterprises or civil society organisations will be reimbursed up to a maximum of 40% per personnel position requested according to:

1. the HOT rates valid at the time the grant is awarded from Table 2.1 ‘Gemiddelde directe loonkosten’ [average direct labour costs], column ‘Uurtarief productieve uren, excl. btw’ [hourly rate productive hours, ex. VAT] of the manual for government rates (Handleiding Overheidstarieven – HOT rates) + 50% premium (Salary-tables | NWO). The actual hourly rate of the employee based on the collective labour agreement of the employee’s organisation should be the starting point for the rate chosen. In the calculation, the number of productive hours stated in the valid edition of the HOT rates should be used,
2. a fixed hourly rate of € 60, or
3. a rate in accordance with the integral cost system as filed at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency for the concerned main or co-applicants. See also Section 7.4.

This could include personnel costs for researchers, technicians and other supporting personnel in so far as they work on the research project.

Explanation of eligible costs (other than personnel costs)

Insofar as costs eligible for funding of research and development projects concern other costs than personnel costs, the following costs are eligible for funding in this Call for proposals:

- Operational costs: associated general costs and other operational costs, including those for materials, supplies and similar products that emerge directly from the project: maximum €75,000 of the total project budget.
A maximum of 40% of the eligible costs will be provided as funding. The remaining costs of at least 60% of the eligible costs concern the own contribution of the organisation and will be included in the **Funding other than provided by NWO** (see also Section 3.2).

### 7.3 Explanation of the integral cost system (IKS) and the fixed hourly rate

#### Integral cost system (IKS)

Specifically and solely for Calls for proposals that NWO organises in the context of the National Growth Fund, main and co-applicants can make use of the integral cost system (IKS) as used by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) for the funding of personnel costs. In the application budget, these rates can only be applied by research organisations, enterprises and civil society organisations for which the IKS rates were deposited and approved by RVO.

If an applicant wishes to use the IKS rates, this choice automatically means that one must give NWO permission to request its IKS rates from RVO for the formal test of submission conditions by NWO. The choice also implies that one must share the IKS rates with the consortium partners of the proposal when a joint budget is drawn up.

As part of assessing on formal conditions for submission, NWO will compare the IKS rates in the application budget with the rates deposited and approved with RVO. If a deviation is found in the IKS rates of the application budget and the IKS rates at RVO, NWO will contact the main applicant, who has the responsibility to bring the application (including budget) into line with the conditions (see also section 4.2 with section ‘to consider the request’).

The positions entered in the proposal budget must agree with the positions stated in the IKS table as deposited at RVO. The corresponding hourly rates must further be entered in the application budget without indexation. There is no possibility of indexing rates.

For the final financial accountability, the applicant must include the personnel costs incurred for all years separately. The accountant (an audit is mandatory as part of the final financial accountability) will check whether this has in fact been done.

#### Fixed hourly rate

(Source: the fixed hourly rate system (rvo.nl) only available in Dutch). The fixed hourly rate system is a standard method to calculate the grant size for costs eligible for funding.

The fixed hourly rate is a reimbursement for the salary costs/labour costs and the indirect or overhead costs of your organisation, for example accommodation costs, costs of office equipment, and costs for journeys within the Netherlands for work meetings. In this Call for proposals, the hourly rate is € 60.

If you make use of this system, then in your administration you must clearly state the number of hours worked by your project employees and the costs of equipment, materials and third parties (invoices). Justification for the actual salary costs of employees who work on the project is not necessary.

### 7.4 Elements of the proposal for AiNed ELSA Labs

Completed grant proposals for AiNed ELSA Labs must contain the following elements:

a. Substantive activities and research approach  
b. Organisational structure  
c. Long-term viability
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a. Substantive Activities for the AlNed ELSA Lab and Research Project – alignment with the substantive framework of this Call and societal challenges:

1. Explain the aim, objectives, anticipated results (SMART), impact and planning for the AlNed ELSA Lab and the dissemination of results. Develop in some detail the ethical, legal and social aspects in relation to AI technologies;
2. Formulate the central research question for the research that will be conducted in the AlNed ELSA Lab;
3. Explain how the research aligns with the substantive framework set by this Call (section 2.2) in general, and with the generic themes and case studies in particular (section 2.2.2);
4. Explain how the research question arose from the needs of and relevance to the field of application, in addition to the public-private actors operating within it;
5. Explain how sustainable socio-economic impact will be realised;
6. Give supporting reasons to show why setting up an AlNed ELSA Lab is necessary so that it is clear that this research can only be done in that context;
7. Explain how the ELSA Lab functions as a collectivity where sharing knowledge and experience is given a central place;

Research approach

8. Describe the central approach and research method. Explain how the research method supports experimentation and iterative knowledge development;
9. Explain how the results of the research will contribute to scalable solutions (solutions and insights developed by the Lab can, for example, be translated into guidelines and best practices for developing human-centred AI applications);
10. Incorporate a work package dedicated to networking activities centring on scaling up results, forming networks and sharing knowledge.

b. Organisational structure

1. Describe the governance structure: direction, management, accountability structure, plus assignment of work packages, tasks, authorisations and responsibilities; outline the bodies/forums tasked with direction, management, supervision and implementation, plus the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability, authorisations (including budgetary authorisation), decision-making procedures, possibilities for intervention and risk management processes;
2. In conjunction with governance, describe the organisational plan: the organisational structure and assignment of roles to participants within the consortium, and a transparent multi-year budget;
3. Make it clear how the research will contribute to the different disciplines by developing scientific/academic domains and fields of application respectively;
4. Describe connections with existing networks within the Dutch AI Coalition and the AI Hubs, both for the field of application and for the results produced by the project. One might think here of contributions to recommendations, standards, legislation, public information, training and educational programmes;
5. Explain how free access to the AlNed ELSA Lab will be guaranteed;
6. Explain how the AlNed ELSA Lab will target/be open to building networks;
7. Describe the responsibilities and explain how authorisations will be allocated within the consortium;
8. Indicate how integrity, i.e. the privacy of and interaction with citizens and civil society organisations, will be safeguarded.

c. Long-term viability of the AlNed ELSA Lab

1. Within the context of the long-term viability, draw up an exit plan, i.e. a plan that shows what will happen with the AlNed ELSA Lab after the grant ends. What activities will be undertaken to ensure the continued existence of the AlNed ELSA Lab as a useful structural facility?
2. Include a draft investment plan for further development of the AlNed ELSA Lab in the proposal. What potential private and public investors are in the picture? Who has an interest or financial interest in the continued existence of the AlNed ELSA Lab?
3. Lay down intellectual property rights in writing. What, for example, will happen with the data that is developed within the AlNed ELSA Lab? Indicate which party is rights holder of the intellectual property
rights, which party has access to IP, how the access will be effected, how commercial secrets will be protected, as well as indicating that confidentiality agreements will be drawn up for IP and commercial secrets, incorporating potential change of control provisions.

7.5 AiNed ELSA Labs Value Proposition Canvas

In collaboration with the ELSA Labs funded under the Dutch National Research Agenda synergy programme, AiNed put together a value framework for ELSA Labs. The proposition has been incorporated into this research programme. For each of the items below we indicate the section of this Call that has the model incorporated into it.

1. Work in the lab deals with challenges drawn from industry and a wider public, formulated to realise economic prosperity across society. Some examples include: good healthcare for everyone; developing the talent of every child; life without hunger; work for everyone; guaranteed safety; eradicating loneliness; living responsibly; life-long learning, and so on. The UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals with their envisioned transformations offer inspiration for tackling social challenges. This requires the formulation of what the vision, mission and aim of the ELSA Lab are, and which SMART goals will be pursued (see section 2.2.2.2).

2. Insights will be collected, validated and documented in a multi-stakeholder context. Wherever possible, the insights will be validated using scientific methods and made available to all participants in the lab and the national AI ecosystem it is linked to. Significant in this regard are which responsible research principles or other scientific research methods will be applied (see section 2.2.2.2).

3. Solutions should be developed with the aid of one of the key enabling design methodologies (e.g. design thinking), where testing takes place by means of successive improvement cycles in relevant practical situations. Doing so should proceed from a broad understanding of the design process, which includes all stakeholders, i.e. end users, specialists, technicians, policy makers and civil servants (see section 2.2.2.2).

4. ELSA Lab projects are dedicated to meaningful and human-centred solutions that are data intensive and founded on AI. This requires formulating where the data came from, how it has been processed and what data models were used. In addition, attention must be given to data management and transparency of algorithms (see section 2.2.1).

5. ELSA Labs represent all four of the dimensions in the quadruple helix, who actively take part, have different responsibilities and roles, and jointly ensure the proper direction and coordination of activities, while also ensuring the active involvement and influence of the wider social ecosystem within which they function (see section 2.2.1).

6. ELSA Labs should have an active policy for communicating findings to stakeholders in a transparent way, involving stakeholders and entering into dialogue with the wider society. Possible solutions should be developed and evaluated according to a learning community method (see section 2.2.2.2).

7. ELSA Labs hold responsibility for upscaling solutions and transferring them to society at large. This makes it relevant how impact will be measured (see section 2.2.2.2).

7.6 Guidelines for Ethical AI


https://op.europa.eu/nl/publication-detail/-/publication/d3988569-0434-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1
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7.7 Grants awarded under the Dutch National Research Agenda’s Human-centred AI programme (Call 1)

In January 2022, five ELSA Lab projects were selected for funding under the Call ‘Human-centred AI for an inclusive society – towards an ecosystem of trust’, an AI synergy programme under the framework of the Dutch National Research Agenda\(^\text{27}\).

**Category 1: Economic Affairs, Interior Affairs, Defence**

**ELSA Lab for the Ministry of Defence**

Dr J. van Diggelen, TNO, The Hague

Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a crucial role within the Dutch Ministry of Defence (MoD) to provide safety and security. Examples are enabling high-speed processing of big data, and intelligent, unmanned robots. The introduction of AI technology in defence also raises a host of ethical, legal, and societal concerns, including how to keep AI-powered systems under meaningful human control, and how to maintain human dignity when giving autonomy to machines. The ELSA Lab Defence addresses this question by developing a future-proof, independent and consultative ecosystem that enables the responsible use of AI in defence.

**Consortium:** Delft University of Technology, Leiden University, T.M.C. Asser Institute (University of Amsterdam), The Hague University of Applied Sciences, the Dutch Defence Academy, the Ministry of Defence, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS), and The Hague Security Delta (HSD).

**Category 2: Economic Affairs, Interior Affairs, Justice and Security**

**AI for Multi-Agency Public Safety issues (AI-MAPS)**

Prof. dr. G. Jacobs, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Public Safety is vital for the functioning of societies: Without safety, there is no freedom, no happiness, and no prosperity. The public good of safety matters to all of us and therefore needs to be jointly shaped and maintained by all societal partners. Data generated by multiple agents play an increasingly important role in preventing, preparing for and mitigating harm or disaster. The development of an ecosystem of trust regarding AI-assisted public safety promotion is central to this ELSA Lab application. In a variety of use cases, benefits and safeguards are analysed against the private-public-machine agency backdrop.


**Category 3: Economic Affairs, Interior Affairs, Culture and Media**

**The AI, Media and Democracy Lab**

Prof. dr. N. Helberger, University of Amsterdam

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The AI, Media and Democracy ELSA Lab researches the impact of AI on the democratic functioning of the media. Together with journalists, media professionals, designers, citizens, researchers and public and societal partners, the Lab develops and tests value-driven, human-centred AI applications and ethical and legal frameworks for responsible use of AI. The aim of the Lab is to stimulate innovation of AI applications that strengthen the democratic function of media.

**Consortium:** University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Centre for Work and Income, RTL, DPG Media, NPO, Beeld en Geluid, Media Perspectives, NEMO Kennislink, Waag Society, City of Amsterdam, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Commissariat for the Media, HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, Utrecht University, Cultural AI Lab, National Library of the Netherlands (KB), BBC, and Bayrischer Rundfunk AI Lab.

**Category 4: Other social challenges**

**Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Food Systems: the AI4SFS Laboratory**

Dr V. Blok, MBA, Wageningen University

This proposal develops responsible and trustworthy AI in sustainable food systems through the development of an Ethical, Legal, Social Aspects (ELSA) lab. We will (a) develop insights into the ELSA challenges and opportunities related to AI applications for sustainable food systems, (b) design an ELSA lab methodology (including tools, ethical and legal guidelines and engagement strategies) for responsible AI for the agri-food sector, and (c) conduct multiple case studies where we will integrate ELSA aspects in AI (re)design. After the project, we will develop the ELSA lab into an independent hub for responsible AI for sustainable food systems.

**Consortium:** Wageningen University & Research, Aeres University of Applied Sciences, Province of Gelderland, Oost NL, Regio FoodValley, AI Hub Oost NL, FME, OnePlanet, ZLTO, FarmResult BV, ICT Campus Regio Foodvalley, Noldus Information Technology BV, VicarVision, and ConnectedCare.

**ELSA AI lab Northern Netherlands (ELSA-NN)**

Dr M. Plantinga, University Medical Center Groningen

The ELSA AI lab Northern Netherlands (ELSA-NN) is committed to the promotion of healthy living, working and ageing. By investigating cultural, ethical, legal, socio-political, and psychological aspects of the use of AI in different decision-making contexts and integrating this knowledge into an online ELSA AI tool, ELSA-NN aims to contribute to knowledge about trustworthy human-centric AI and development and implementation of health technology innovations, including AI, in the Northern region. The specific focus will be on investigating low socioeconomic status (SES) perspectives, since health disparities between high and low SES groups are growing worldwide, also in the Northern region.

**Consortium:** University Medical Center Groningen, DASH, University of Groningen, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, SterkuitArmoede, Zorgbelang Groningen, Zorgbelang Drenthe, Science LinX, Artistic Research Community in the North, Aimed, City of Groningen, ZorgpleinNoord, Personalised & Connected Health (PCH) Ecosystem, Privacy1, 8Dgames, Syntho, Dhealth, Evidencio, Life Cooperative, AI Hub Northern Netherlands, HANNN, University of Oxford, University of Southampton, SPRINT, Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health, and the Health Technology and Innovation Cluster (HTRIC).
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