Faculty of Impact
Theme Life Sciences and Health

Call for proposals

Toegepaste en Technische Wetenschappen

2023
1 Introduction

In this Call for proposals, information is provided about the application procedure for the Faculty of Impact (FoI) funding round. This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

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

1.1 Background

Faculty of Impact programme
The Faculty of Impact programme (FoI programme) is aimed at researchers who want to realise impact with their research and are interested in setting up their own company. These researchers can now submit a grant application to become a so-called “fellow”\(^1\) at the Faculty of Impact.

The Faculty of Impact is a collaboration between Universities of The Netherlands (UNL), Dutch universities, Techleap.nl and NWO. The mission is to give talented researchers more opportunities to combine entrepreneurship and science.

The Faculty of Impact programme consists of two parts:
   i. The personal grant (fellowship);
   ii. The support programme (training/supervision part; if a proposal has been awarded for the part ‘personal grant’).

Personal grant (fellowship for (postdoctoral) researchers)
The personal grant is a two-year grant that makes it possible for (postdoctoral) researchers – who are employed at their own knowledge institution – to focus on applying their research in society. In this two-year period, these researchers are “fellows” at the Faculty of Impact, where they participate in the support programme.

Support programme (training/supervision part)
Fellows of the Faculty of Impact (‘fellows’) are supported in developing their talent for applied research and in obtaining access to research facilities, relevant knowledge and supportive networks. In addition, the Faculty of Impact supports them in raising funds to build and test prototypes and in carrying out pilots. With the personal grant, fellows work for three weeks per month at their own university, university of applied sciences or research institution in the Netherlands (the knowledge institution), on the case that they proposed in the application for the personal grant. In addition, the fellows come together for one week per month for intensive sessions to increase their skills in applied research and, in doing so, develop their entrepreneurial skills as well. They also participate in peer-to-peer sessions and masterclasses about specific subjects and liaise with relevant industrial sectors or the public sphere. In addition, they receive coaching and supervision and performance reviews will take place.

In each round, the recipients of the FoI grant form a group of fellows that focus on the specific societal theme of that round.

\(^1\) Fellows are PhDs, postdocs or assistant or associate professors (max. scale 11) or employees with comparable positions at universities of applied sciences as defined in Section 3.1.
This Call for proposals concerns the first mentioned part of the FoI programme: the personal grant for researchers.

**Implications for fellow and knowledge institution**
- To make sure that the fellow can actually commit themselves to the support programme, the knowledge institution ensures that the fellow can participate in the support programme for two years and, during that period, is released from standard activities such as teaching tasks, writing scientific publications and research that is not related to FoI. The knowledge institution also guarantees that the fellow can autonomously prioritise the (research) activities necessary for the support programme, and has access to the required facilities within the organisation.
- The supervisor, director and the knowledge transfer office (or a similar department) of the knowledge institution each add a letter of support, as described in Section 3.4.1, to the application. Should a fellow at any point in the project decide not to complete the project, or from the knowledge institution devote less time to the project than stated in the application, then the fellow and the knowledge institution should inform NWO about this immediately. In Section 6.1, you can find more relevant information about project proposals that have been awarded funding.

### 1.2 Available budget

The available budget for this Call for proposals is €2,640,000. For each fellow, a maximum budget of €185,000 can be requested. Within this Call for proposals, it is expected that a maximum of 14 proposals will be awarded funding.

### 1.3 Submission deadline(s)

The deadline for submitting proposals is **Tuesday, 31 October 2023**, before 14:00:00 CET.

When you submit your proposal in ISAAC, you also need to enter details online. Therefore, you should start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline for this Call for proposals. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.
2 Aim

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

2.1 Aim of the FoI programme

The Faculty of Impact aims to give talented fellows from all disciplines the opportunity to combine entrepreneurship with science. Fellows should have an innovative idea that can potentially create an impact on society. This can be a tool to stimulate behavioural change, a technological innovation, a new business model, consultancy to support not-for-profit ideas, et cetera. However, at this stage, there is not yet a fully working product, service or policy, nor a business selling to customers. This idea has, however, been validated through pilot testing in a lab environment (equivalent to TRL 4) or with relevant stakeholders (equivalent to SRL 4). During the two-year FoI programme, the fellows will be given the opportunity to further develop and scale up their creative and groundbreaking ideas. This includes the societal embedding of the idea as well as the conditions for its implementation and for creating awareness, developing dissemination plans, and finding ways to fund the idea.

During the two-year programme, the fellows will be supported and trained in the necessary technical, societal and business aspects so that they can successfully translate their idea into a scalable commercial or societal start-up. As fellows, they will be given an employment contract and salary by a university or university of applied sciences, as well as access to research groups, laboratories and office space. Besides which, the fellows will be exempted from standard duties such as teaching and publishing articles. As a result of the connection with one of the universities/universities of applied sciences, these fellows will have a flying start as they can benefit from both the academic network of the university/university of applied sciences and the business network of the Faculty of Impact.

After nine months, the progress of the fellows will be reviewed by their supervisor and mentors to evaluate the status of their project and their personal development. At this point, the fellow will discuss how to continue developing the idea and in which role they want to continue: as CEO of the business or as scientific lead within the company, or whether they prefer to stay in academia and contribute to the project in the role of academic advisor. At the end of the two-year trajectory, the fellows must be able to demonstrate that their idea works in a relevant environment and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, and show that their project idea is ready to attract funding for the next phase of development.

2.2 Theme - Life Sciences and Health (LSH)

The theme of this second Faculty of Impact call is Life Sciences and Health (LSH). We define LSH as all systems, procedures and instruments that are developed to solve health problems and improve the quality of life. LSH focuses on healthcare research and care innovation within the total innovation cycle. This can include, for example, the implementation of new treatments, interventions aimed at prevention or improvements in the structure of the healthcare system.

It concerns an area in which all scientific disciplines have made major contributions in previous centuries, from the discovery of penicillin to the development of mental healthcare, and it is an area where we can expect major future contributions to an increased quality of life. It is an area where scientific research can and must make a large impact.

2.3 Societal impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to solutions for societal issues of today and tomorrow. Examples are the energy transition, health and care, or climate

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For more information on SRL and TRL, see Annexe 1 and the FAQ.
Through interaction and alignment between researchers and potential knowledge users, the chance of knowledge utilisation increases and, with it, the chance of societal impact.

The theme Life Sciences and Health from this round is characterised by complex societal challenges for which a good alignment between technology, people and society is important (societal embedding).

Through its policy on impact, NWO promotes the potential contribution of research to societal issues by encouraging productive interactions with societal stakeholders, both during the development and implementation of research. It does so in a manner appropriate to the aim of the funding instrument.

2.3.1 Tailor-made impact

Depending on the aim of the funding instrument, NWO will select the approach that has the greatest chance of achieving societal impact. The primary aim of the funding instrument determines the method NWO deploys to facilitate knowledge utilisation in various phases of the project (proposal, realisation, project completion) and the effort required from the applicant(s) and partner(s).

In this programme, the Impact Focus approach is applied. With this, NWO supports researchers to bring research results one step closer to application(s) in society and increase the likelihood of societal impact.

The Foli programme starts with the development of a solution for a societal problem. Subsequently, fellows learn how they can translate their idea into a commercial or social start-up by developing strategies to strengthen capacity and for a favourable entrepreneurial climate. The entire Foli programme, from the application to the training and the network of the Faculty of Impact, has been set up to support fellows as well as possible and to maximise their chances of being able to apply their research results in society.

NWO offers an e-learning module that can help interested parties via NWO Impact - Online workshops. For more information about the impact policy, see the website: Knowledge utilisation | NWO.
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

- PhD students who have almost completed their doctoral research (i.e. PhD students who have already planned a date for the defence of that thesis or who have already submitted their thesis to the reading committee)

or

- Postdocs, associate professors, assistant professors or other scientific personnel (max. scale 11) or similar positions at a University of applied sciences3 may submit a proposal if they have an appointment at one of the following organisations:
  - Universities located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
  - University medical centres;
  - Institutes affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) or NWO;
  - Netherlands Cancer Institute;
  - the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
  - Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
  - Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
  - Princess Máxima Center.

Universities of applied sciences funded in accordance with Article 1.8 of the Dutch Higher Education Act4.

3.2 What can be applied for

For an application within this Call for proposals, a maximum of €185,000 is available per fellow of the FoI programme. This support programme has a duration of at most two years. For this Call for proposals, the budget can be used for the modules ‘Personnel costs’, ‘Replacement’ and ‘Materials’.

Personnel costs

Funding can be requested for the salary costs of the fellow (max. scale 11). The funding of these salary costs depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the fellow has an appointment:

- For university appointments, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the UNL salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (Salary tables | NWO).
- For university medical centres, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the NFU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (Salary tables | NWO).
- For personnel from universities of applied sciences, educational institutions and other organisations, salary costs will be funded based on the collective labour agreement pay scale of the employee concerned in accordance with the applicable rate at the time of awarding the grant as taken from Table 2.2, column ‘Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT’ from the Handleiding Overheidstarieven [HOT- Manual Dutch Government Rates] (Salary tables | NWO).
- For the Caribbean Netherlands, the Dutch government employs civil servants on Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba under different conditions than in the European part of the Netherlands

3 In case of doubt, please contact NWO. Further information about the requirements for the application can be found in Section 4.3.1.

4 For more information, please see: https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0005682/2021-01-01#Bijlage [in Dutch]
NWO will apply a mandatory one-off indexing of the salary costs with respect to:

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

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

The rates for the module personnel costs (max. scale 11) are incorporated in the budget template with the application form. In addition to the salary costs for the fellow, a one-off individual bench fee of €5,000 will be granted.

In the case of a tenured contract, the direct salary costs cannot be funded but, in this case, an application can be submitted for the costs of replacement for the duration of the support programme.

**Replacement for extra tasks of the applicant**

With this budget module, funding can be requested for the costs of the fellow to be replaced. The employer of the applicant concerned can use this to cover the costs of relinquishing him or her from educational, supervisory, administrative or management tasks (not research tasks). The time that is released through the research leave grant may only be used by the fellow for activities in the context of the project. In the application, the fellow must describe which activities will be performed in the context of the project in the time released.

The maximum amount of research leave that can be applied for is the equivalent of 24 full-time months. NWO funds the research leave in accordance with the salary tables for a senior scientific employee (scale 11) at the time the grant is awarded (Salary tables | NWO).

**Material (maximum €25,000)**

- **Travel and accommodation costs**
  - Travel and accommodation costs are awarded based on the rules and conditions of the institution’s employment contract
  - Congress visit (maximum 2 per year)
  - Work visit
  - Dutch VAT can only be entered if it is part of the costs for the fellow

- **Project-related goods/services**
  - Material costs for making prototypes
  - Work by third parties (for support/advice for acquiring IP and advice about establishing a start-up; maximum hourly rate € 125/hour)
  - Dutch VAT can only be included if it is part of the costs for the fellow

- **Non-fundable costs:**
  - Institutional basic facilities (laptop, office furniture, et cetera)
  - Maintenance and insurance costs
  - Implementation costs such as audits, costs for data management, et cetera
  - Costs related to the start-up (such as legal costs for establishing the company, costs for the Chamber of Commerce, et cetera)

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4 The relevant rates are generally adjusted on 1 July, 1 August and 1 January. In the case of indexation, the date of the actual annual adjustment will be taken into account.
PLEASE NOTE: If besides an application in this NWO Faculty of Impact instrument, you also have a current application in one or more of the NWO valorisation instruments (i.e. Take-off, Venture Challenge or Demonstrator), then it is not permitted in the application for this Faculty of Impact instrument to include costs that are already part of a current application (or applications) in one of the mentioned instruments. Should you nevertheless do this, then NWO will not take your application in this NWO Faculty of Impact instrument into consideration. You can only enter these costs again in a new application once the application under consideration has been rejected. Examples are costs for a measurement setup, costs for a coaching or training trajectory, or salary costs that amount to more than 1 FTE per appointment.

3.3 Preparing an application

The steps involved in writing your application are:
- download the application form from the NWO web application ISAAC or from the NWO web page (on the grant page of the funding instrument concerned);
- complete the application form; Please note: besides a completed application, you should also submit a link (as described below) to a short downloadable video;
- 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.

Short video

Besides a written proposal, you should also add a link to a downloadable, short video. The video may not exceed 3:00 minutes. You do not need to use professional equipment or hire in assistance. The video will be assessed for its content, not its quality. A quality that is comparable to HD quality on a mobile phone is acceptable. The language used in the video must be English. Keep a broad audience in mind: your well-educated neighbours must be able to understand your story. Check whether all audio files or visual materials you use are royalty-free.

The video should serve as an inspiring introduction to the following subjects (in random order):
- Who are you?
- What is your dream and what motivates you? (Discuss this in the context of the societal relevance of your idea: why does society need this? What is the problem?)
- Which opportunities does your idea offer? (How does your idea create value for society or how does it provide a solution - if applicable -for the stated problem?)
- In which phase is your idea? (Development phase and viability of the idea: is the idea validated and scalable? Provide evidence for this, if possible.)

The link to the video must remain usable until this call is closed (i.e. until you have received a decision from the NWO Applied and Engineering Sciences board).

Mandatory annexes:
- Budget.
- Video.
- Letter of support from the supervisor of the applicant to confirm the scientific quality of the idea and the quality of the applicant and (if applicable) to confirm that the applicant is in the process of completing their PhD, as defined in Section 3.1. The supervisor of the applicant should be an assistant, associate or full professor, or a lector at a university of applied sciences, or hold a comparable position, and must have an appointment for the duration of the programme.
- Letter of support from the director of the department to confirm that the applicant is part of the group, can make use of the research facilities during the Faculty of Impact programme and, if accepted as a fellow at the Faculty of Impact, will be released from standard university tasks (such as teaching tasks and publishing). It is compulsory to use the attached template for this letter.
- Letter of support from the knowledge transfer office of the organisation with an answer to the question as to why the idea can have societal impact. If the project proposal is awarded funding, then the knowledge transfer office will coach the fellow throughout the programme to improve the business case and increase the fellow’s entrepreneurial qualities.
If the organisation does not have a knowledge transfer office, a letter of support is required from a representative of the organisation’s executive board. In this letter of support, the representative states that the fellow will receive comparable coaching as would be the case if a knowledge transfer office were present. That is to say that a coach will be available to improve both the business case and the entrepreneurial qualities of the fellow throughout the entire programme.

If NWO has made a template available, the annex should be drawn up according to the NWO template. Annexes must be uploaded in ISAAC separately from the application. All of the annexes, except for the budget, must be submitted as PDF files (without encryption). The budget must be submitted in ISAAC as an Excel file. Any annexes other than those above-mentioned are not permitted.

You must write your application in English.

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

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

It is important to start with your application in ISAAC on time:
- if you do not yet have an ISAAC account, then you should create this on time to prevent any possible registration problems;
- any new organisations must also be added to ISAAC by 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 the Section ‘Contact’ (Chapter 5).

Do you work at an organisation that is not included in the ISAAC database? You can report this via relatiebeheer@nwo.nl so that the organisation can be added. This will take several days. It is therefore important that you report this at least one week before the deadline.

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

3.4 Conditions for submission

3.4.1 Formal conditions for submission

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

These conditions are:
- the main applicant meets the conditions stated in Section 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3;
- the application complies with the DORA guidelines as described in Section 4.1;
- the application form is, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions;
- the application form contains a downloadable video link as described in Section 3.3, and the video satisfies all of the requirements stated in Section 3.3;
- the application is submitted via the main applicant’s ISAAC account;
- the application is received before the deadline;
- the application is written in English;
- the proposed project has a duration of at most two years;
- all five annexes required, after a possible request to amend or supplement these, are complete and have been filled in accordance with the instructions in this Call for proposals and have been prepared and submitted pursuant to the conditions of this call.
3.5 Conditions on granting

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

3.5.1 Compliance with the National Knowledge Security Guidelines

World-class science can benefit from international cooperation. The National Knowledge Security Guidelines (hereafter: the Guidelines) help 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).
4 Assessment procedure

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

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO employees involved in the assessment and/or decision-taking process (Code for Dealing with Personal Interests | NWO). NWO strives to achieve an inclusive culture in which there is no place for conscious or unconscious barriers due to cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender, sexual orientation, health or age (Diversity and inclusion | NWO). NWO encourages the 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:

− submission of the statement of intent;
− admissibility of the proposal;
− interview selection;
− interview;
− assessment committee meeting;
− decision-making.

Due to the expertise present in the assessment committee and the small size of the grant, NWO has decided for the assessment of the applications to make use of the possibility given in Article 2.2.4, paragraph 2, of the NWO Grant Rules 2017, to assess all applications without involving referees.
4.2.1 Submission of a proposal

For the submission of the proposal, a standard form is available on the funding page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website. When you write your proposal, you must adhere to the questions stated on this form and the procedure given in the explanatory notes. You must also adhere to the conditions for the maximum number of words and pages.

Your complete application form must have been received before the deadline via ISAAC (see 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.

4.2.2 Admissibility of the proposal

As soon as possible after you have submitted your proposal, NWO will inform you whether or not your proposal will be taken into consideration. NWO will determine this based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, Section 3.4). NWO can only take your proposal into consideration if it meets these conditions.

Please bear in mind that within two weeks after the submission deadline, NWO may approach you with any possible administrative corrections that need to be made so that your proposal can (still) meet the conditions for submission. You will be given one opportunity to make the corrections, and you will be given five working days to do this.

4.2.3 Interview selection

The applications are assessed in competition with each other by a broadly composed assessment committee made up of external experts, such as experts from industry, programme coaches, entrepreneurs, representatives from universities and universities of applied sciences and/or investors. The assessment committee makes its own deliberation based on the proposal, the video and the letters of support. Applications are prioritised based on the average score according to the criteria described in Section 4.2. The highest-ranked applicants will receive an invitation for an interview with the assessment committee to discuss the submitted application. All invited applicants will receive written comments from the assessment committee and instructions so that they can prepare for the interview.

4.2.4 Interview

During the interview, the assessment committee has the opportunity to pose questions about the submitted application form and the video. During the interview, the applicant can respond to these in the discussion with the committee. In addition, the applicant can respond to the written comments of the assessment committee during the interview as well. In this manner, the principle of hearing and rebuttal is applied.

4.2.5 Meeting of the assessment committee

After the interviews, the assessment committee will once again assess the applications based on the selection criteria, followed by a discussion to reach a consensus about the final ranking. The committee will subsequently produce a written recommendation about the quality and ranking of the applications for the NWO Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES) Domain Board.

It will base this advice on the selection criteria. The application as a whole must receive at least the qualification ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ to be eligible for funding, and the separate sub-criteria should receive at least the qualification ‘excellent’, ‘very good’, or ‘good’.

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 there is an ex aequo situation (see the paragraph below about ex aequo).
4.2.6 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 limits set for the available budget or the selection borders. The existence of an ex aequo situation is determined as follows. The starting point is the ranking drawn up by the assessment committee, with the final scores rounded down to two decimal points. The reference score is the score of the lowest-ranked proposal within the limits set for 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 limits set for the available budget or the selection borders, then the proposal with the highest score for the criterion ‘Quality of the applicant’ will end as the highest. If the proposals subsequently still remain in a tie, then the assessment committee will determine the ranking with the help of an (anonymous) majority vote (in accordance with Article 2.2.7, third paragraph, sub a, part iv of the NWO Grant Rules 2017). If this vote provides no resolution either, or if it is not desirable to vote, the ex aequo situation will be sent on to the decision-making body.

4.2.7 Decision-making

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

4.2.8 Too few applications

The current round of the Faculty of Impact will not take place if, after the conditions from Chapter 3 have been assessed and satisfied, there are fewer than seven applications eligible for funding. In that case, the NWO AES Domain Board will set the grant ceiling at zero. Subsequently, all applications will be rejected.

4.2.9 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>Applications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 31 October 2023 before 14:00:00 CET</td>
<td>Deadline for proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 50 2023</td>
<td>Result pre-selection / Invitation interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4/5 2024</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
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<td>Week 6/7 2024</td>
<td>Meeting assessment committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2024</td>
<td>Decision NWO AES Domain Board</td>
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4.3 Criteria

4.3.1 Substantive assessment criteria

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

- Quality of the idea (33.33%)
The problem/challenge (what, why and for whom?) as well as the solution (which, why and why now?) are clearly addressed in the video, and it is convincingly argued how the proposed idea offers a (partial) solution to the problem/challenge. The technical quality of the video will not be assessed.

- The idea is based on sound scientific knowledge and results/insights.
- The idea is innovative and original.
- The idea was validated through pilot testing in a lab environment (equivalent to TRL 4) or with relevant stakeholders (equivalent to SRL 4). Furthermore, it is feasible to develop the idea further towards a concrete product, concrete service or concrete policy (as demonstrated in a relevant environment).
- The letters of support from the supervisor of the applicant and from the knowledge transfer office convincingly support the scientific quality of the idea.

**Societal impact for the Theme Life Sciences and Health (33.33%)**

- The intended societal impact for the theme Life Sciences and Health is clearly described with a goal formulated according to the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based) approach and further explained in the video.
- The intended change (cultural, economic, industrial, ecological or societal) is relevant, urgent and ethical.
- The anticipated success (intended change) is based on clear assumptions, and is credible and realistic; it is convincingly argued how the proposed idea contributes to long-term societal impact. The expected outcomes are clearly described and tangible.
- The proposed idea has the potential to achieve the proposed impact on Theme Life Sciences and Health. The feasibility, scalability and viability are convincing and realistic.

**Quality of the applicant (33.33%)**

- The applicant comes across as convincing, both in writing and verbally.
- There is a clear (entrepreneurial) motivation of the applicant as well as:
  - a clear motivation to participate in the two-year Faculty of Impact programme;
  - an appropriately requested personal budget to achieve the goals of the programme.
- The applicant possesses the ability and willingness to learn as well as to adapt and, if needed, to improvise.
- The applicant has the right skills and mindset to further develop the idea from the pilot stage to its implementation in society.
- The letters of support from the applicant’s supervisor and the knowledge transfer office convincingly support the applicant’s skills.

Each of the three criteria carries equal weighting and will be scored in the range of 1 (excellent) to 9 (poor). The quality requirement will subsequently be applied as follows: fellows will only qualify for funding if they do not score higher than 5.4 (good) for each of the criteria, and the average for all criteria does not exceed 3.4 (very good).
5 Contact and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

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

Policy officers:
Leon Gielgengs and Sandy Kalisingh
Telephone: +31 30 600 1318 or +31 30 600 1220
Email: FacultyofImpact@NWO.NL

Assistant:
Lisa Meuwissen and Radhika Makhan
Telephone: +31 30 600 1329 or +31 30 600 1379
Email: FacultyofImpact@NWO.NL

5.1.2 Technical questions about the web application ISAAC

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual first before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours on +31 70 34 40 600. However, you can also submit your question by email to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.

5.2 Other information

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

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

6.1 Other relevant information for granted project proposals

For the research proposals granted and realised at the knowledge institutions, the fellows will need freedom to operate regarding the exploitation of research results and intellectual property. Therefore, NWO strongly recommends the fellows to enter into negotiations and make arrangements with the knowledge institution concerned to ensure all necessary information can be used commercially after the project ends. These arrangements can be made in accordance with the VSNU Guidelines on Dealing with Intellectual Property Rights and the VSNU Guidelines on Dealing with Knowledge Institutions’ and Employees’ Equity Interest in Academic Start-Ups (or Spin-Offs). These documents can be found on the website https://www.universiteitenvannederland.nl/nl_NL/richtsnoeren.html

For the research proposals granted, the knowledge institution where the fellow is appointed will contribute to the programme of the Faculty of Impact. This contribution is outside the scope of this Call for proposals. The Faculty of Impact Bureau estimates the costs of participation to be about €50,000 per fellow. These costs are outside the scope of the NWO grant, and knowledge institutions of the fellows are expected to bear these costs themselves.

6.2 Explanation of Technological Readiness Levels (TRL) and Societal Readiness Levels (SRL)

TRLs and SRLs are important instruments to evaluate and supervise the development, implementation and acceptance of technologies. They facilitate a more informed and responsible approach to innovation with attention for both the technical and societal aspects. For an example of TRL 4 and SRL 4, please see the FAQ on the call page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRL 1</th>
<th>Basic principles observed: Lowest level of technology readiness. Scientific research begins to be translated into applied research and development (R&amp;D). Examples might include paper studies of the basic properties of a technology.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRL 2</td>
<td>Technology concept and/or application formulated: Once basic physical principles are observed, then at the next level of maturation, practical applications of those characteristics can be invented or identified. At this level, the application is still speculative-there is no experimental proof or detailed analysis to support the conjecture. Examples are limited to analytical studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRL 3</td>
<td>Critical function, proof-of-concept established: At this step in the maturation process, active research and development (R&amp;D) is initiated. This must include both analytical studies to set the technology into an appropriate context and laboratory-based studies to physically validate that the analytical predictions are correct. These studies and experiments should constitute proof-of-concept validation of the applications/concepts formulated at TRL 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRL 4</td>
<td>Laboratory testing of prototype component or process: At this level the design, development and lab testing of technological components are performed. Following successful proof-of-concept work, basic technological elements must be integrated to establish that the pieces will work together. The validation must be devised to support the concept that was formulated earlier, and should also be consistent with the requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of potential system applications. It is “low-fidelity” validation compared to the eventual system.

**TRL 5**
Laboratory testing of integrated system: The basic technological components are integrated with reasonably realistic supporting elements so they can be tested in a simulated environment. Examples include “high-fidelity” laboratory integration of components.

**TRL 6**
Prototype system verified: Representative model or prototype system, which is well beyond that of TRL 5, is tested in a relevant environment. Represents a major step up in the demonstrated readiness of a technology. Examples include testing a prototype in a high-fidelity laboratory environment or in a simulated operational environment.

**TRL 7**
Integrated pilot system demonstrated: TRL 7 is a significant step beyond TRL 6, requiring an actual system prototype demonstration in a real, relevant environment. The prototype should be near or at the scale of the planned operational system and the demonstration must take place in a real environment. The goal of this stage is to remove engineering and manufacturing risks.

**TRL 8**
System incorporated in commercial design: Technology has been proven to work in its final form under the expected conditions. Examples include developmental test and evaluation of the commercial design in its intended system to determine if it meets design specifications. In almost all cases, this level is the end of true system development.

**TRL 9**
System ready for full scale deployment: Actual application of the technology in its final form and under target conditions, such as those encountered in operational test and evaluation. At this point, the technology is ready for commercial deployment.

**SRL 1**
Identifying problem and identifying societal readiness

**SRL 2**
Formulation of problem, proposed solution(s) and potential impact, expected societal readiness; identifying relevant stakeholders for the project

**SRL 3**
Initial testing of proposed solution(s) together with relevant stakeholders

Stages SRL 1-3 reflect the early work in a research project, including suggesting and testing on a preliminary basis a technical and/or social solution to a technical or a societal problem. Here, reflections on the general societal readiness towards the idea and its proposed solution(s) are required, as well as on identifying relevant stakeholders and how to include them (such as end users, the right communities, etc.).

**SRL 4**
Problem validated through pilot testing in relevant environment to substantiate proposed impact and societal readiness

**SRL 5**
Proposed solution(s) validated, now by relevant stakeholders in the area

**SRL 6**
Solution(s) demonstrated in relevant environment and in co-operation with relevant stakeholders to gain initial feedback on potential impact

Stages SRL 4-6 represent the actual solution(s), the research hypothesis, and testing it/them in the relevant context in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, while keeping a focus on impact and
society’s readiness for the product. In these stages, expectations on the societal adaptation must be described in specific terms and, to the extent possible, be part of the test phase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SRL 7</th>
<th>Refinement of project and/or solution and, if needed, renewed tests in a relevant environment with relevant stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRL 8</td>
<td>Proposed solution(s) as well as a plan for societal adaptation complete and qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRL 9</td>
<td>Actual project solution(s) proven in relevant environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stages SRL 7-9 constitute the end stages of the research project, including refining the solution(s), implementation and dissemination of results and/or solution(s). Here, the plan will be carried out for addressing the societal readiness on a practical level to gain impact, creating awareness, disseminating results, et cetera.