1. **What are the SSH research areas?**
   The Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) research disciplines are available on the NWO website: [https://www.nwo.nl/en/social-sciences-and-humanities-ssh](https://www.nwo.nl/en/social-sciences-and-humanities-ssh). The Domain Board has established six SSH roundtables to structure the discussions with the field: Behaviour and Education, Economics and Business Administration, Law and Public Administration, Social Sciences, Cultural Sciences and Linguistics, and Philosophy, Historical Sciences and Religious Studies.

2. **What is the main discipline of my research proposal?**
   Your application can only have one main discipline, and you must indicate this main discipline on the information form. If you are in doubt about the discipline of your research proposal because your application has a (partially) interdisciplinary character, please contact the programme’s contact person via sgw-ocxs@nwo.nl well before the submission deadline of the round. The contact person can advise you under which (main) discipline your application can best be submitted. You are responsible for the final choice of the (main) discipline and thus the panel in which the application is assessed.

3. **Why is the SSH Open Competition XS a pilot programme?**
   In 2022, the Open Competition of the Social Sciences and Humanities Domain was given a makeover. The instrument now serves a broader group of researchers in different phases of their academic career.

   In the new set-up, the Open Competition SSH has three variants: XS, M and L. For the XS variant, a fast assessment procedure has been designed. A unique aspect of this variant is that the applicants are also the assessors. They are divided into panels and per panel into two groups and assess each other’s proposals via anonymous peer reviews. To assess whether this set-up matches the needs and wishes of the SSH research field, SSH XS will run as a pilot for a period of one year.

4. **What is the aim of the SSH Open Competition XS pilot programme?**
   The aim of the programme is to enable researchers with an XS grant up to € 50,000 to fund small projects or start research based on a promising idea. It also will allow them to try out innovative and risky initiatives. Furthermore, it gives researchers the opportunity to explore the development of their own line of research.

5. **How many years after the PhD graduation is someone allowed to submit?**
   The target group of the SSH Open Competition XS are researchers who obtained their PhD between five and ten years ago.
6. **Which reference date applies for calculating the period after the PhD graduation?**

The submission deadline for the round is the reference date for the period of five to ten years after the researcher’s PhD graduation date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Submission deadline 14:00:00 CE(S)T</th>
<th>Promotion date must be between</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round 1</td>
<td>Deadline 8 September 2022</td>
<td>9 September 2012 and 7 September 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 2</td>
<td>Deadline 15 November 2022</td>
<td>16 November 2012 and 14 November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 3</td>
<td>Deadline 9 February 2023</td>
<td>10 February 2013 and 8 February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 4</td>
<td>Deadline 20 April 2023</td>
<td>21 April 2013 and 19 April 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. **Does the extension clause apply?**

No. The extension clause does not apply to the SSH Open Competition XS pilot.

8. **How often may a researcher submit an application?**

A researcher may submit once in one of the four rounds during the SSH Open Competition XS pilot programme. This programme runs from September 2022 to July 2023.

9. **Which requirements must the applicant’s appointment satisfy?**

Researchers who have a tenured position (and therefore a paid position for an indefinite period), a tenure track agreement or have a temporary appointment that spans the entire term of the proposed project at one of the organisations below may submit an application to the SSH Open Competition XS pilot:

Eligible 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.

10. **I have a temporary appointment and can obtain a letter of intent from my employer, which is an eligible organisation. Does my appointment meet the eligibility criteria?**

For round 3 and round 4, the requirements for the appointment of the applicant at an eligible institution have been adjusted: researchers with a temporary appointment that spans the entire term of the proposed project may submit an application to the SSH Open Competition XS pilot.

If the temporary appointment does not span the entire term of the proposed project, the appointment does not meet the eligibility criteria. A letter of intent from an eligible organisation is not sufficient.

11. **What is a tenure track appointment?**

A tenure track appointment is an appointment of an experienced scientific researcher with the prospect of fixed employment and, in due course, a professorship. A tenure track appointment must be documented in writing and funded from the research institute’s structural resources. This must be demonstrated by a written statement issued by the university.

12. **Can researchers who hold two PhDs submit an application?**

Yes. For researchers who have completed a PhD trajectory twice, the date of the doctorate of the SSH discipline identified centrally in the application is leading. This may be the researcher’s first or second PhD.

13. **Can a research proposal involving co-applicants be submitted?**

No. An SSH Open Competition XS application has one applicant and no co-applicants.
14. **How do you write an anonymous research proposal?**
In an anonymous research proposal:
- applicants should include neither their own name nor those of any individuals in their research group;
- applicants should not include details of any affiliations with institutes or knowledge institutions;
- applicants should not include references to any publications that they have authored or co-authored;
- applicants should not include the names of any partners (or potential partners).

15. **What is an appropriate research proposal for the XS programme?**
The SSH XS grants are intended to support promising ideas, innovative and more speculative initiatives and
to explore high-risk, high-gain research or the possibility to develop an own, innovative line of research.
The applications are anonymous; therefore, the assessment is based purely on the research idea.

Proposals must be drawn up with a wide scientific audience in mind so that assessors from the panel
concerned within the NWO SSH disciplines can properly evaluate the research plan and the assessment
aspects (see the next question).

16. **What are the assessment aspects of an application in this programme?**
The application has two assessment aspects:
- **Innovative aspect**
  Is the proposed research innovative, highly speculative, and groundbreaking? Could the research
  proposal potentially have a scientific impact? Will the proposed research take the applicant down a
  new path?
- **Feasibility of the research plan**
  The objective, rationale, and work plan must be clearly described. Can the project be carried out
  within the maximum period of twelve months and within the requested budget?

17. **Who will assess the applications?**
The assessment is carried out by the applicants themselves via anonymous peer review.

When submitting their proposal, applicants agree to assess proposals submitted by other applicants within
the same round. If an applicant misses the deadline for submitting assessment reports, then that
applicant’s own proposal will not be included in the procedure. See Section 4.1 of the Call for proposals for
details of the procedure.

18. **Can different grants within NWO programmes be applied for simultaneously?**
Candidates may simultaneously participate in the application process for different grants within NWO
programmes. Check with the other programme whether this applies to the other programme as well.
Please note that NWO does not, under any circumstances, engage in double funding. The research
proposals must therefore not overlap and stand alone. In addition, you should take into account the
schedules of the various programmes to which you commit yourself when you submit.

19. **Can the maximum grant budget be exceeded?**
Yes. It is possible to exceed the maximum grant amount. However, the maximum contribution of € 50,000
from NWO is fixed. In the case of a higher project budget, co-funding is required from the own institution
and/or a third party. Co-funding is optional for the SSH Open Competition XS pilot programme. If the
institution or a third party makes an in-kind or cash contribution to the project, then the applicant should
always include a co-funding statement from this party when the application is submitted.

20. **Which salary tables apply?**
For a postdoc appointment, non-scientific staff (NSS) at universities and research leave for the applicant,
the current UNL and NFU salary tables apply. For more information about these salary tables, see:
21. Can application file formats other than PDF be uploaded?
   No. The submission system ISAAC only accepts application documents in PDF format, as only then can it be
guaranteed that the files received by NWO are identical to the files sent by the applicants. The PDF files
may not contain any encryption or tabs.

22. Must an application always be submitted via the ISAAC system?
   Yes, applications must be submitted via ISAAC. Applications received outside of ISAAC cannot be
processed. ISAAC can be reached via www.isaac.nwo.nl/en.

23. Is technical support available for the ISAAC system?
   Yes. Please consult the user manual for any technical questions you have about using ISAAC. You will find
general user information as well as information for submitting an application, for composing and
submitting a referee report, for committee members and for project leaders.

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual
before you ask the helpdesk for advice. You can contact the ISAAC helpdesk via isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl or
by phoning +31 70 344 0600. The ISAAC helpdesk is available from Monday to Friday from 10.00 to 17.00
hours CE(S)T.

24. Can an application be dealt with differently due to personal circumstances?
   Please contact the contact person of the programme directly via sgr-ocxs@nwo.nl or by phoning +31 70
349 4346.