

# NWO Demand-Driven Partnerships – information brochure

NWO's research and innovation programmes for the Knowledge and Innovation Covenant (KIC) 2020-2023 makes a contribution to answering societal challenges from the Mission-Driven Top Sectors and Innovation Policy and can be tackled in public-private partnerships. [Knowledge and Innovation Agendas](#) have been formulated for the key themes in this policy. The instrument for Demand-Driven Partnerships with external partners (in short: *Demand for partners*) is intended for subjects and development questions from the KIAs that require focus and coherency, and for which parties enter into a partnership with NWO. Subjects that connect with several KIAs are also eligible for Demand-Driven Partnerships.



The instrument Demand for partners, offers private, public and combinations of public and private parties (partners) the possibility to initiate demand-driven fundamental, applied and practice-oriented research on urgent subjects for which they are prepared to make a considerable financial contribution themselves as well.

Partners are invited to register their knowledge and/or development questions and the financial resources they have available for this at the NWO Partnership desk. At the advice of the KIC Programme Committee, which, amongst other things, will assess the fit of these questions within the KIAs, NWO will make a strategic choice and reserve funds from the KIC budget for Demand-Driven Partnerships 2020-2023. In close consultation with the partner, the Demand-Driven Partnership will be elaborated into an associated call for proposals. NWO and the partner will contribute 50/50 to the budget for the call. The knowledge and development questions from the partner will be taken as the starting point for the call for proposals. With the publication of the call for project proposals, researchers will be invited to make a contribution to answering the knowledge development questions from the partner and in doing so contribute to the societal and economic impact of the Demand-Driven Partnership. Within the funding instrument Demand for Partners one explicitly asks how and where the acquired scientific knowledge is adopted by stakeholders and industrial parties.

Knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation, demand articulation, application of the results and societal, including economic, impact are vitally important throughout the entire process; from the registration of the initiative by the partner at the Partnership desk up to and including the realisation of the projects and the conclusion of the Demand-Driven Partnership. In accordance with the NWO vision for knowledge utilisation, the [Impact Plan approach](#) will be followed for all Demand-Driven Partnerships and research projects. With this approach, the societal embedding of the programmes throughout the entire process will be safeguarded, and a strong network will come into being for innovation with impact and support for the application of the research outcomes. Accordingly, the instrument Demand-Driven Partnerships will make an important contribution to the Mission-Driven Top Sectors and Innovation Policy with a focus on impact.

## CONDITIONS PARTNERS MUST SATISFY

Partners can contact NWO if they are a public or private party that cannot receive an NWO grant, and if they are willing to invest their own financial resources for the co-funding of the Demand-Driven Partnership. Also an initiative from several partners, for example several private parties together, or a combination of a public party with a private party, can also contact NWO. All partners must always have a clear knowledge and/or development question with societal impact, a clear interest in outcomes of research projects and are able to satisfy the conditions stated below.

## CONDITIONS SET FOR INITIATIVES FROM PARTNERSHIPS

NWO has defined the following basic conditions for Demand-Driven Partnerships with partners:

- the Partnership starts at the moment the Partnership Agreement becomes effective;
- the Partnership ends 6 months after the appointment of the last researcher appointed in the Partnership has ended;
- the Partnership has an overarching budget of at least 3 and at most 10 million euros;
- the partner and NWO contribute 50/50 in cash to the budget of the Partnership;
- in Partnerships with an overarching budget that is completely provided by public partners, co-funding by private partners is required at the project level (at least 30% in cash) to safeguard the PPP character of this instrument;

- the partner confirms the co-funding of a Partnership programme via a letter of intent and demonstrates that it is fully willing to collaborate in the realisation of a partnership agreement and call for proposals;
- the partner deploys its own financial resources that have not come from direct government funding or have not yet been pledged by NWO/ZonMw and that are directly transferred by the partner to NWO;
- the partner has a clear knowledge/development question that fits within (parts of) one or more knowledge and innovation agendas and contributes to the Mission-Driven Top Sectors and Innovation Policy with impact;
- Partnerships do not concern contract research but encourage the connection of the public knowledge chain with civil society partners (public and private) and interdisciplinary collaboration;
- for the realisation of research projects within a partnership, the academic freedom to operate is safeguarded, and the NWO policy for intellectual property (IP) applies;
- in a Partnership Agreement, all of the arrangements between the partners are recorded. These arrangements shall, in any case, be aligned with European state support rules, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy rules for PPPs, the GDPR and the NWO Grant Rules.

## HOW IS A DEMAND-DRIVEN PARTNERSHIP REALISED?

The development of a Demand-Driven Partnership has four phases:

- 1) registration and initial elaboration of an initiative by the partner(s);
- 2) consultation, advice and reservation of funds by NWO;
- 3) the development phase of the Demand-Driven Partnership with the call for proposals;
- 4) the realisation of the assessment procedure and monitoring of the Demand-Driven Partnership by NWO.

### *Registration of the initiative at the partnership desk, consultation and initial elaboration*

NWO has opened a desk for Demand-Driven Partnerships where detailed information can be found and a contact form is available. Public, private or a combination of public and private partners can make their interest for a Demand-Driven Partnership known to the desk. In the contact form, you will be asked for basic information, such as name of the partner, subject, contact details, et cetera. Afterwards, NWO will contact the partner(s) for an initial meeting, further explanation about the process and the sending of the necessary forms.

Further, the process will be characterised by consultation meetings and the elaboration of the concise description of the intended initiative by the partner. During the consultation, it will be jointly assessed whether the wishes and expectations of the partners are aligned with the intention of the Demand-Driven Partnership instrument, after which an expansion and refinement of the initiative description by the partners will be possible.

The concise descriptions of the Demand-Driven Partnership initiatives will be submitted to the KIC Programme Committee (PC). From 2021 onwards, there will be two evaluation moments per year. NWO recommends potential partners to report their initiative timely to the partnerships desk (3 to 4 weeks before the final submission date of the documentation) allowing sufficient time for consultation and refinement of the initiative to briefly describe the intended Demand-Driven Partnership.

The concise description of the Demand-Driven Partnership will also be used for the internal consultation at NWO. For example, KIA coordinators will use it for consultations about the fit within the KIAs and other NWO programme coordinators will use it to assess current activities within existing instruments, calls and initiatives within and outside NWO for the subject proposed.

### *Advice issued by the KIC Programme Committee and the decision to reserve NWO funds for Demand-Driven Partnerships*

Twice per calendar year, the KIC PC formulates a substantiated advice to the NWO Executive Board. The brief descriptions of the Demand-Driven Partnerships received will be evaluated on own merit and the KIC PC will advise whether or not to reserve financial resources from the KIC 2020-2023, and whether or not to elaborate the initiative into a Demand-Driven Partnership with an associated thematic call for proposals. The KIC PC has the opportunity to ask the partner a limited number of clarifying questions during this advice stage. For the strategic advice, NWO uses the following assessment framework:

- Relevance of Partnership initiative for Mission-Driven Top Sectors and Innovation Policy as elaborated in the KIAs;
- The partner, the development and innovation question and the subject
- The contribution of societal and industrial parties to the Partnership;
- Feasibility of the intended Partnership (incl. legal and financial feasibility)
- The coverage of the NWO constituency and the added value of the Partnership;
- The expected societal and economic impact.

### *Development phase; elaboration of Demand-Driven Partnership and the thematic call for proposals*

In this phase, the Demand-Driven Partnership will be elaborated in close consultation between NWO and the partner and the call for proposals with conditions for submission will be produced. The initiative for realising the thematic description in the call for proposals lies with the partners. The submission criteria and the assessment procedure for the proposals will be produced in accordance with the NWO Grant Rules and the NWO Intellectual Property Policy, and the NWO working methods and procedures will apply. In addition, specific conditions for the call and instrument are applicable that have been established for the entire KIC set of instruments, such as public-private and interdisciplinary collaboration, assessment criteria for research proposals (impact, quality of the consortium and quality of the research), co-funding requirements and knowledge utilisation via the Impact Plan approach.

Parallel to the development of the call for proposals, the arrangements between NWO and the partner(s) will be recorded in a collaboration agreement. These arrangements concern the financial obligation, the rights to intellectual property and other relevant arrangements with respect to accountability and responsibilities. Every effort will be made to complete this development phase up to and including the final publication of the call for proposals (after approval by the NWO Executive Board) within a period of at most 4 months.

### *Realisation phase: realisation of the assessment procedure and monitoring of the programme*

With the publication of the call for proposals for the Demand-Driven Partnership, NWO and the partner will invite researchers to submit research proposals that can make a contribution to advancing the knowledge/development question of the partner(s) and the defined theme and subject. NWO will realise the assessment procedure as described in the call for proposals after which the research activities within the Demand-Driven Partnership can start. NWO will be responsible for the supervision and monitoring of the Demand-Driven Partnership and the projects. After the Demand-Driven Partnership has been completed, an overall evaluation of the Partnership will take place.

## PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

Continuous		Registration at partnership desk
		Consultative meeting(s) with NWO* about the intended Demand-Driven Partnership
		Refining of registered initiative by partner, NWO internal consultation
Submission points	Year 2022	28 April 2022, 13 October 2022 <sup>§</sup>
Final date for submitting documents		31 March 2022 and 30 September 2022
For each submission point		Advice from KIC programme committee
	+ 2-4 weeks	NWO Executive Board decides about Demand-Driven Partnerships
Development phase	4 months	Elaboration Demand-Driven Partnerships by NWO and partner(s): collaboration agreement, thematic call for proposals and documents.
	+ 2-4 weeks	NWO Executive Board approves KIC Demand-Driven Partnerships, incl. call for proposals, and approves publication of call for proposals
	+ 1-2 weeks	NWO publishes Demand-Driven Partnership call for proposals
Realisation phase	+ 3-6 months <sup>#</sup>	Opening call and matchmaking meeting (optional)
	± 6 months	Realisation of assessment procedure described by NWO
	± 6-12 months	Starting of projects awarded funding, incl. award conditions
	± 5-6 years	Monitoring of project based on Impact Plan approach and with project committees
	+ 6 months	Conclusion and evaluation of the Demand-Driven Partnership programme

\* The NWO employee meant here is the KIC Partnership coordinator with a colleague (if relevant) who either already has a relationship with a partner from his/her domain and/or has specific knowledge of the subject and can potentially become/want to be the project leader for the thematic call that will be elaborated.

§ NWO recommends that the proposed initiative is announced to the Partnerships Desk at least 3 to 4 weeks before this date.

# The period that the call is open for can be determined by the NWO-wide coronavirus measures in relation to the primary process.