Inhoud

I. General: NWA-ORC 2024 2
II. Themes 4
III. Collaborative workshops 5
IV. Consortium 7
   a. Algemeen 7
   b. Main applicant 9
   c. Co-applicant(s) 10
   d. Co-funder(s) 12
   e. Cooperation partners 13
V. Drafting an application 14
   a. General remarks 14
   b. Full proposal 15
   c. Submitting via ISAAC 16
   d. Financial 16
VI. Assessment of the proposals 19
I. General: NWA-ORC 2024

1. What is typical for an application in the NWA-ORC?

The core elements of the NWA are:

- The National Science Agenda, shaped by 140 cluster questions and 25 NWA routes;
- Knowledge-chain-wide and interdisciplinary consortia, where researchers from various disciplinary backgrounds and knowledge organizations collaborate with societal (public and private) organizations to address complex issues;
- Societal organizations, society, and citizens play a clear role in the research;
- Sharing results with society through dialogue and interaction.

2. What is the available budget per theme for NWA-ORC 2024?

In this Call for Proposals, the maximum budget per theme is specified. The different financial ranges (small, medium, large) used in previous ORC calls have been eliminated. The same amount is available per theme: €6,750,000.

3. Which themes are participating in NWA-ORC 2024?

Out of the 25 routes within the NWA, 14 themes are participating in the NWA-ORC 2024. These themes are:

- Ab-initio circular materials design
- Nanomedicine in society: nanotechnology and societal implications for better diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of diseases
- New forms of collaboration between government and residents for transitions
- Empowerment of Dutch citizens through Transparent AI
- Emotion regulation and the brain: societal relevance of individual differences
- Disease, individual, and environment: the importance of interactions across two or more diseases and differences per individual
- Biomedical innovation, product development, and application of 3D models: bridging fundamental research and healthcare
- Youth through sports, exercise, and nutrition
- Working on climate-resistant and biodiversity-friendly plant protein production
- Strengthening social relationships between students at school to promote their mental health
- Places of values; context-aware negotiation about the future of historically charged places
- Resilience and justice in transition: building reflexive institutions
- Smart Industry 5.0
- Art research for new perspectives on climate justice

More information about the themes for NWA-ORC 2024 can be found in the Call for Proposals (chapter 7.5) or on the NWO website.

4. Must every NWA-ORC proposal also include fundamental components?

Yes, every proposal must include fundamental components. Submitted research proposals are assessed on four evaluation criteria. Part of the fourth criterion ‘Quality of the research’ is that the committee looks at whether the proposed approach and methodology of a proposal are suitable to achieve the formulated objectives and answer the research question. The execution of the research must involve both a fundamental and an application-oriented approach.

5. Why must fundamental, applied, and practice-oriented research be combined within an NWA-ORC proposal?

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Breakthroughs arise from groundbreaking research within one’s own field and from cross-pollination between scientific disciplines, between science and society, and between fundamental, practice-oriented, and applied research. The NWA encourages cooperation between parties to achieve more impact for science and society.

6. Where can I find the necessary documents to submit my application?
Submitting an application is done via ISAAC. In ISAAC, you will find the forms and documents you need to submit your application. If you do not have an ISAAC account yet, create one at least one working day in advance. U kunt ook een kijkje nemen op de website van NWO voor voorbeeldexemplaren van de benodigde documenten.

7. What does knowledge-chain-wide research mean within the NWA-ORC?
In NWA-ORC, knowledge-chain-wide research refers to consortia where researchers from different disciplines and knowledge organizations, along with members from societal (public and private) organizations, collaborate on complex issues.¹

8. In which language should I submit my application?
You must submit your application in English.

9. What is the deadline for submitting a full application?
The closing date for full applications for the NWA-ORC 2024 is October 1, 2024, 14:00:00 CET.

10. When is the next NWA-ORC round?
The round for the NWA-ORC 2025 will be announced on the NWO website.

¹ The broad knowledge chain encompasses a diversity of public knowledge institutions such as universities of applied sciences, universities, NWO and KNAW institutes, university medical centers, TO2 institutions, as well as other public knowledge organizations such as national knowledge institutions (see Chapter 6 for a complete list of public knowledge organizations).
II. Themes

11. How are thematic choices determined?
NWO asks the route networks to propose themes that fit the questions posed by society, the Research Portfolio, and the NWA program, and which are thus distinct from research in other programs. Additionally, NWO asks the routes to describe the creation of the theme and the support base. The NWA program committee then advises the NWO executive board on the inclusion of the theme in the call.

12. Why does NWO ask the route networks to propose themes?
This step follows the evaluation of the NWA program. Making thematic choices contributes to focus and alignment of the assigned projects with the National Research Agenda. It also helps prevent overlap between programs and projects. The Agenda, based on the questions from society, is linked to the routes and the program. NWO has asked the routes to propose themes with broad network support based on cluster questions.

13. What does a theme look like?
The themes have focus but offer sufficient room for creativity for applicants. They fit the NWA program and the cluster questions of the National Research Agenda, contribute to achieving scientific and societal breakthroughs, and promote interdisciplinary research that is knowledge-chain-wide and involves collaboration with societal organizations. The themes are also innovative: the research is not already conducted elsewhere. Each route names one theme, possibly with some sub-themes. Applicants can therefore submit on a limited number of themes.

14. In the themes, knowledge gaps are described, as well as the intended societal and scientific impact.
Do all the mentioned points need to be addressed in a proposal?
It varies per theme whether everything needs to be addressed or just some elements. Carefully read the relevant theme description for this. The evaluation committee uses four criteria for the substantive assessment of applications, in which the problem definition and analysis, as well as the expected impact and the route to it, are assessed. Clearly describe how and to which aspects the application contributes to the formulated theme.

15. I want to contact a route because I have ideas for a future theme, is that possible?
Yes, that is possible! Join the route networks! More information about the route networks can be found via www.nwo.nl/routes.

16. In totaal zijn er 25 routes, maar voor de NWA-ORC 2023 en 2024 tel ik in totaal 23 thema’s. Hoe kan dat?
The establishment of thematic focus, thereby increasing proposals that align with route priorities, reducing internal competition, and lowering workload, aligns with the recommendations of the NWA program evaluation. The themes in the NWA-ORC are proposed by NWA routes and are based on one or more of the 140 cluster questions. Themes in the ORC program are characterized by good focus and provide sufficient room for creativity for applicants. Themes fit with the NWA program and the cluster questions of the National Science Agenda and contribute to achieving scientific and societal breakthroughs. Inter- and transdisciplinary research that spans the knowledge chain is necessary for each theme - as well as collaboration with societal organizations and citizens. Themes are also innovative: the research is not already being conducted elsewhere. Only when themes meet these criteria can they be included in a round.
III. Collaborative workshops

17. In the Call for Proposals, it is stated that NWO organizes collaborative workshops; what is the purpose of these workshops?
For each theme, collaborative workshops consisting of two sessions are organized. The collaborative workshops are part of the procedure in this Call for Proposals (see paragraph 3.3.1 and 4.2.2). The purpose of the collaborative workshops is to bring interested parties (researchers and public and/or private societal parties) together around a specific theme, combine research ideas (synergy), and form broad, innovative consortia. This contributes to focus, reducing competition and workload.

18. Who are the workshops for? Can anyone participate?
The main applicant must attend both workshops. If the main applicant cannot be present, a substitute should be arranged. NWO must be informed of this at least one working day before the workshop via email (nwa-orc2024@nwo.nl). The workshops are also open to parties who have not submitted an initiative, giving them the opportunity to join (forming) consortia.

The collaborative workshops aim to promote optimal network formation around the themes and stimulate collaboration. The registered initiatives form the basis for the discussion during the workshops. The workshops provide the opportunity to combine research ideas and form broad, innovative consortia (synergy). It is then up to the participants to engage in collaboration within knowledge-chain-wide, inter- and transdisciplinary innovative consortia.

More information about the workshops will also be announced on the program page on the NWO website. There is no maximum number of participants per workshop.

19. How can I register for the workshops if I have not submitted an initiative?
You can register for the workshops on a specific theme via the NWO website.

20. Do I need to prepare for the workshops?
To get the most out of the workshops, you will receive a participant list and an overview of all submitted initiatives one week in advance, so you are familiar with the different project ideas and expertise within the theme before we start working interactively.

Additionally, participants are encouraged to read up on the Impact Plan approach, an essential method for all applications. More information about this approach is available on the NWO website.

21. How do the workshops differ from the matchmaking meetings of previous rounds?
NWO has found that matchmaking meetings work particularly well in a research field where all players already know each other (well).

In the NWA-ORC, there is a clear need for less competition and a lower application pressure. At the same time, it has become apparent that not all consortium players know each other yet. Therefore, the collaborative workshops are a useful tool: collaboration (combining research ideas) and the development of consortia are facilitated.

22. When and where do the workshops take place?
NWO is organizing collaborative workshops on the 14 themes of the NWA-ORC 2024 between 6 May and 28 June. For each of the fourteen themes, two consecutive workshops will be organized. These will take place in the afternoon (between 12:30 and 17:30). All workshops will be held at the Jaarbeurs in Utrecht. You can find an overview of the dates and times per theme on the page Collaborative Workshops NWA-ORC 2024 | NWO.
23. Can new project ideas still be introduced during the workshops, or is that only possible until April 9th?
The collaborative workshops are explicitly open to parties who have not submitted an initiative. This way, they also have the opportunity to join forming consortia. However, the registered initiatives serve as the starting point for discussions during the workshops. You can find the initiatives for each theme here.

24. I have a scientific or societal partner in mind for my consortium. Can they attend the collaborative workshops for a specific theme?
Certainly! The workshops are open in nature, meaning any party wishing to play an active role (lead applicant, co-applicant, collaborator, co-funder) in a consortium is welcome. However, it’s important for everyone to carefully consider which role they are best suited for. Participants should assess for themselves whether their presence, such as in the role of a (grant) advisor, is appropriate during the workshops.

25. I cannot attend both workshops for a specific theme. What should I do?
We emphasize that your presence is crucial for the success of the workshops. If you unexpectedly cannot attend the first and/or second workshop, kindly notify us in advance by sending an email to nwa-orc2024@nwo.nl. Timely notification not only contributes to the smooth running of the workshops but also helps prevent waste. Please note that failing to notify us in time may result in charges.

26. In which language will the workshops be conducted?
The language during the workshops will be tailored to the participants’ needs. We adopt a flexible approach, allowing both Dutch and English to be used as the working languages. There is no strict requirement to speak only Dutch. Flexibility was found to be desirable based on the workshops held in 2023.
IV. Consortium

a. Algemeen

27. Why must applications be submitted by a consortium?
The NWA involves complex issues where collaboration between researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds and knowledge organizations and societal (public and private) organizations adds value. New knowledge flows from researchers to users, and new questions from practice and society find their way into new research. The NWA program, therefore, promotes collaboration between different partners, believing that more can be achieved together than individually.

28. Is there a minimum or maximum number of participants per consortium?
No minimum or maximum is set for the number of consortium participants. However, each consortium must consist of at least one main applicant, at least one co-applicant, and at least one collaborative partner. It is essential that the necessary partners for the implementation of the proposal are part of the consortium, the entire knowledge chain is represented, and relevant societal parties and, where possible, citizens are involved.

29. What does the elimination of the co-financing requirement mean for the composition of consortia submitting project proposals within NWA-ORC?
Co-financiers are not required to be present in a consortium. Each consortium must consist of at least one main applicant, at least one co-applicant, and at least one collaborative partner. Co-financing (in-kind or in cash) is still allowed.

30. Must societal partners be part of the consortium?
Yes. Research proposals are evaluated, among other things, on the involvement of relevant societal parties in the consortium. "Societal parties" is a broad term that can include governments and businesses.

31. What does NWO mean by societal partners?
For example, but not limited to: industrial partners, museums, foundations, ministries, care homes, funds, zoos, municipalities, police, schools, planning agencies, national governments.

32. What is the position of social organizations in these NWA projects?
Each consortium in the NWA-ORC must be knowledge chain-wide and interdisciplinary. Researchers from different disciplines collaborate with knowledge organizations, public and private social organizations, and, where relevant, with citizens on complex issues. The projects involve demand-driven research that aligns with the themes outlined in the Call for Proposals. Each project employs both a fundamental and an applied and practice-oriented approach. Finally, the intention is for results to be returned to society through dialogue. Within each consortium, the partners, including the involved social organizations, collaborate with each other in all phases of the research. Both the referees and the assessment committee assess these elements. They look at the composition of the consortium and the quality of the research plan, which must fit the character of the project and the NWA program.

33. What does NWO mean by productive interactions?
Productive interactions take shape because all parties in the consortium are actively involved in all stages of the research process: in formulating research questions, developing approaches to answer these questions, and achieving the desired scientific and, where applicable, societal breakthroughs. This also underscores the cyclical nature of research and innovation processes, where on the one hand, basic knowledge flows into application in policy and practice, and on the other hand, problem-oriented questions from practice prompt further research.

34. How many consortia can an applicant participate in?
NWO distinguishes between main applicants and co-applicants, focusing explicitly on individuals rather than institutions:
- The main applicant may submit only one application in the NWA-ORC 2024 round as a main applicant. Additionally, the main applicant may participate once as a co-applicant in another consortium.
- A main applicant who received funding for a project as a main applicant in the NWA-ORC rounds 2018, 2019, 2020/2021, or 2022, 2023 is excluded from submitting an application as a main applicant in the NWA-ORC 2024 round unless the project is fully closed by the application deadline set by NWO. This person may still participate in another role within a consortium.
- A co-applicant may participate in a maximum of two consortia as a co-applicant in this round.

35. How many consortia can institutions/organizations participate in?
There is no maximum limit for institutions to participate in multiple consortia. Only individual persons submitting as main and/or co-applicants are subject to NWO’s limit on participation in consortia, as explained in question 24.

36. What roles can an organization fulfill within one consortium?
In a consortium agreement, an organization can sign the agreement from only one type of role. This includes either the role of main applicant, co-applicant, co-financer, or collaborative partner. Note: The assessment is based on the organizational level, not the faculty or department level. An institute cannot fulfill multiple roles simultaneously.

37. What does NWA-ORC mean by stakeholders?
A stakeholder or interested party is any person or group that can influence or be influenced by achieving goals. Within the NWA-ORC, it is desirable for a stakeholder to be part of the consortium because stakeholders are important for achieving the desired change. However, this is not always possible. In such cases, stakeholders can be added in section 3.1 and of the full application form (Impact Plan approach) or paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5 (Impact Outlook). The Impact Plan approach expects the consortium to budget for involving stakeholders/interested parties.

38. How is Intellectual Property and publication handled?
Agreements on IP rights and publications are laid down in a consortium agreement. This agreement specifies terms on intellectual property, publication, knowledge transfer, confidentiality, co-funding payments, and progress and final reports. Uploading to ISAAC is necessary before a project can start. The responsibility for reaching the consortium agreement lies with the main applicant. NWO does not sign the agreement itself. The model agreement provided by NWO must be used for this purpose. This model agreement is drawn up in accordance with the NWO Subsidy Regulations 2017. NWO’s IP policy can be found in Chapter 4 of the NWO Subsidy Regulations 2017. NWO provides a format for the consortium agreement.

For publication, open access is the norm. NWO accepts various routes:
- publication in an open access journal;
- depositing a version of the article in a repository; or
- publication in a hybrid journal covered by agreements between the VSNU and publishers. For more information on NWO’s open access policy, see www.nwo.nl/openscience.

39. What is the role of an Advisory Committee?
The primary task of the Advisory Committee is to advise the project leader (in broad terms) based on the progress report on the direction of the project, aiming to maximize the chance of scientific and/or societal impact. The advisory committee meets at least once a year.
The consortium manages the secretariat of the Advisory Committee. The annual meetings must include at least the main applicant and the project manager, as well as the NWO staff member responsible for project guidance.

40. Is an Advisory Committee a mandatory part of the proposal or is it formed after allocation?
No, the advisory committee is not a mandatory part of the research proposal. It is formed after the research proposal is allocated to enhance the monitoring of research progress.
b. Main applicant

41. Who can apply as the main applicant?
In general, those eligible to act as main applicants include:

1. PhD researchers from institutions regularly submitting applications to NWO;
2. PhD and/or senior researchers employed at TO2 institutions;
3. Lecturers working at universities of applied sciences.

The requirements for main applicants working at a university, university of applied sciences, or other knowledge institution are specified in paragraph 3.1.1 of the Call for Proposals. Individuals with zero-hour contracts are excluded from the role of main applicant in any case.

42. Does main applicant refer to the knowledge institution/organization as a whole or an individual person?
This refers to an individual person. They can participate in a maximum of two consortia; an organization can be represented in more than two consortia. In the case of grant funding, the funding benefits the institution of the applicant, not the individual person.

43. I meet the requirements to be a main and/or co-applicant in a consortium. How many consortia can I participate in?
There is a limit on the number of consortia to which main and co-applicants can commit within the NWA-ORC 2024:

- The main applicant may submit only one application in the NWA-ORC 2024 round as a main applicant.
  o Additionally, the main applicant may participate once as a co-applicant in another consortium.
  o A main applicant who received funding for a project as a main applicant in the NWA-ORC rounds 2018, 2019, 2020/2021, or 2022, 2023 is excluded from submitting an application as a main applicant in the NWA-ORC 2024 round unless the project is fully closed by the application deadline set by NWO. This person may still participate in another role within a consortium.

- A co-applicant may participate in a maximum of two consortia as a co-applicant in this round.

44. Does the initiator of an initiative (project idea) also have to become the main applicant?
No, this is not necessary. If during collaborative workshops it becomes evident that another participant is a more suitable candidate to be the main applicant, then this can be considered. A main applicant must meet the requirements as stated in the Call for Proposals (paragraph 3.1) and must have attended both collaborative workshops.

45. Can researchers involved in NWA Route Management and involved in formulating the NWA theme also apply?
During the collaborative workshops, the framework of the theme is explained. To prevent conflicts of interest, this person will not join a consortium of the same theme. All participants in a consortium must meet the requirements set for main and co-applicants.

46. How long should my appointment last minimum to be able to act as a main applicant?
The main applicant must have an employment contract (duration of appointment) for at least the duration of the application procedure and the duration of the research for which the grant is applied, or have a tenure track agreement with one of the organizations mentioned in paragraph 3.1.1 of the Call for Proposals. For
lecturers employed by a university of applied sciences and researchers employed by a TO2 institution, they may also apply as main applicants with a remunerated fixed-term employment contract.

c. Co-applicant(s)

47. Who can act as a co-applicant?
Researchers at organizations eligible to apply as main applicants according to paragraph 3.1.1 in the Call for proposals can also apply as co-applicants. Additionally, co-applicants may also be affiliated with national government knowledge institutions and some other public knowledge organizations. For a list of these organizations, see Annex 7.3 in the Call for proposals. Individuals with zero-hour employment contracts are excluded from the role of main applicant.

For organizations that provide applicants but are not explicitly mentioned in the Call for proposals, these organizations must meet a number of cumulative criteria:
- based in the Netherlands;
- has a public task;
- is independent in the execution of research; and
- has no profit motive other than for further research purposes.

Note! NWO performs an assessment based on these criteria. This assessment must also be conducted if a research organization has been assessed as a co-applicant within another NWA program. The applicant organization must submit the required documents to NWO by email (nwa-orc2024@nwo.nl) no later than 10 working days, September 17, 2024, 14:00:00 CET. For more details about this assessment and the documents to be submitted, see paragraph 3.1.1 of the Call for proposals.

48. Which national government knowledge institutions and planning agencies can participate as co-applicants in this funding round without needing to be assessed?
- CBS – Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands)
- CPB – Centraal Planbureau (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis)
- KIM – Kennisinstituut voor Mobiliteitsbeleid (Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis)
- KNMI – Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute)
- NFI – Nederlands Forensisch Instituut (Netherlands Forensic Institute)
- PBL – Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency)
- RCE – Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands)
- RIVM – Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment)
- RKD – Nederlands Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis (Netherlands Institute for Art History)
- RWS – Rijkswaterstaat (Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management)
- SCP – Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (Netherlands Institute for Social Research)
- WODC – Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (Research and Documentation Centre)

49. Which other public knowledge organizations can participate as co-applicants in this 2024 funding round without needing to be assessed?
These are the following organizations:
- Boekman Foundation – Institute for arts, culture and related policy
- Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations
- Geonovum – Knowledge organisation for geographic information
- Movisie – Centre for social issues

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1Source: [https://www.rathenau.nl/nl/kennisgedreven-democratie/publieke-kennisorganisaties](https://www.rathenau.nl/nl/kennisgedreven-democratie/publieke-kennisorganisaties)
50. I am unsure if my organization meets the description of ‘public task’ as understood by NWO. How can I find out?
In legal literature, the concept of ‘public task’ is broadly interpreted: (knowledge) institutions performing government tasks carry out a public task regardless of the legal form of the institution. This involves looking at the method of financing (from the national treasury) and various other factors (lower regulations, statutes, subsidy decisions, policy notes, and even factual behaviors). To determine if the organization to which the applicant is affiliated has a public task, you must have it assessed in advance by the NWA office. Contact the program secretariat at nwa-orc2024@nwo.nl no later than 10 working days before the deadline. The required documents for assessment must be submitted to the program secretariat by September 17, 2024, 14:00:00 CET.

Provide additional specifications/explanations/evidence of the ‘public task’, as stated in paragraph 3.1.1 of the Call for proposals.

51. What documents must co-applicants submit for NWO to assess if they meet the requirements?
The research organization of the intended co-applicant must submit the following documents by email no later than 10 working days before the submission deadline (by September 17, 2024, 14:00.00 CET):
- a recent extract from the Chamber of Commerce;
- the articles of association or current statutes or other formal current document demonstrating the public task and the absence of profit motive;
- the latest available annual accounts with an audit report.¹

The documents should be submitted via email to nwa-orc2024@nwo.nl. For more details about this assessment and the documents to be submitted, see paragraph 3.1.1 of the Call for proposals.

52. Can foreign knowledge institutions also be co-applicants?
Under the principle of Money follows Cooperation (MfC), national research budgets can be used for cross-border cooperation. Foreign researchers for whom MfC budget is requested must always be listed as co-applicants on the application. Note: the participating foreign knowledge institution to which the co-applicant is affiliated must also meet the requirements stated in paragraph 3.1.1 of the call, except for the condition that the institution must be established within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. These requirements must be assessed by NWO. Submit the required documents by September 17, 2024, 14:00:00 CET via nwa-orc2024@nwo.nl.

Refer to Annex 7.1 in the Call for proposals for an explanation of the Money follows Cooperation (MfC) budget module.

53. What happens if I do not submit the documents for assessment on time?

¹ Organizations that are not legally required to have their annual accounts audited do not need to provide such an audit report. However, they must be able to demonstrate that this legal obligation does not apply to their organization.
Then the respective organization cannot participate as a co-applicant in the consortium. However, a role as a collaborative partner or co-financier is still possible. All collaborative partners and co-financiers must sign a 'letter of support' or 'letter of cofunding' to be submitted before the deadline via ISAAC. The format can be found on our website.

d. Co-funder (s)

54. Why is the co-funding requirement eliminated?
Collaboration with societal organizations from the outset of proposal development is crucial in the NWA program. The co-funding requirement was intended to incentivize this collaboration but has proven to be inhibitive, particularly in certain sectors and themes (such as specific public organizations like schools and civic initiatives). Collaboration is still assessed substantively, both in terms of consortium composition and the quality of the research plan, aligning with the program’s nature. However, co-funding remains possible.

55. Can all parties contribute as co-funders? Can my university, for example, act as a co-funder in my consortium?
No, knowledge institutions eligible to participate as lead applicants under paragraph 3.1.1 of the Call for Proposals cannot participate as co-funders in NWA-ORC 2024. This means that a university or university medical center, for example, cannot participate as a co-funder in any consortium. An exception is made for TO2 institutions. They may participate as co-funders in a consortium, provided they do not also participate as lead applicant, co-applicant, or collaborating partner in the same consortium.

56. Can businesses participate as co-funders in this call?
Yes, they can. Both public entities (excluding eligible knowledge institutions as applicants) and private entities can act as co-funders. Companies can contribute either in cash or in kind. Cash contributions must cover the budget for project activities as described in the proposal. In-kind co-funding involves the provision of resources (other than cash) by the participating organizations, such as personnel or material contributions.

57. Can co-funding be provided by a foreign entity?
Yes, a foreign (public or private) entity can act as a co-funder.

58. Is a letter of support from my co-funders mandatory?
A co-funding declaration is required with the application. In this declaration, the co-funder specifies and confirms the pledged contribution, distinguishing between in-kind and cash co-funding. This declaration must be submitted simultaneously with the full application. Each co-funder must provide a separate declaration, using the format provided by NWO.

59. Does NWO invoice cash co-funding including VAT?
According to VAT law, if a service is provided in exchange for co-funding, VAT applies to the co-funding amount. Businesses paying co-funding plus VAT can typically reclaim the VAT from the tax authorities. If VAT payment poses an issue for the co-funder, the project agreement may include an option for the co-funder to waive any performance obligations arising from the agreement, thereby exempting the co-funding from VAT.
e. Cooperation partners

60. I have international partners in the consortium, but they are not eligible as applicants. However, they also do not provide co-funding. Can I still mention them in the application form?
Yes, you can. In the consortium description in the application, international partners can be listed as collaborating partners.

61. How should the role of collaborating partners be described in the application? Should there be clear agreements on responsibilities?
Active engagement of societal stakeholders, both public and private, is crucial for developing knowledge about challenges and potential solutions. A collaborating partner contributes to formulating research questions, executing research, and/or utilizing knowledge but is unable to capitalize on their contribution in advance. Collaborating partners agree to have their names shared on the NWO website. A collaborating partner may also be involved through participation in an advisory committee. The role of collaborating partners in the project is assessed in various evaluation criteria by the evaluation committee. After the allocation of a research proposal, final agreements can be made. For more information on starting a project, please refer to our website.

62. Must collaborating partners submit a letter to confirm their support?
Yes, collaborating partners (see Call for Proposals, paragraph 3.1.3) must submit a support statement with the application, declaring their support for the project and active contribution to drafting the research proposal. NWO provides a standard letter on the funding page. Upon allocation, the collaborating partner must confirm their participation in the project in the consortium agreement. This agreement also includes further agreements between the collaborating partner(s) and the applicants (see also paragraph 5.1.5).

63. Must all stakeholders be included as collaborating partners in my application?
Not every stakeholder needs to be a collaborating partner. Only stakeholders actively participating in your consortium must sign a letter of support. A template is available that must be completed and signed. Modifications to the format are not allowed.
V. Drafting an application

a. General remarks

64. What are the phases of the NWA-ORC 2024 round?
The NWA-ORC 2024 round consists of two phases:

Submission of initiatives and (mandatory) participation in collaborative workshops;
Submission of full proposals, with a deadline of October 1st, 2:00:00 PM CET.

65. Can I add a consortium partner after the workshops?
Certainly! The collaborative workshops are intended to stimulate and facilitate collaboration between
researchers and societal organizations, bringing together and combining research ideas. A consortium does not
need to be complete after the conclusion of the second workshop on a theme; ideally, participants will have
identified potential additional parties to be added.

66. Which Impact approach should be used for the full proposal?
The approach you should describe in your proposal depends on the chosen theme under which you are
submitting an application. Within NWA-ORC 2024, all themes require the Impact Plan approach. The required
impact approaches are detailed in the Call for Proposals, section 2.2.1. NWO provides e-learning modules to
guide interested parties through Impact-Online workshops | NWO.

67. What is the main difference between the Impact Outlook and Impact Plan approaches?
The main difference between the Impact Plan and Impact Outlook approaches lies in their starting points. In
the Impact Plan approach, the starting point is the societal challenge or breakthrough envisioned. In contrast,
the Impact Outlook approach starts from the scientific challenge and the results that emerge, which can be
utilized and potentially lead to societal impact, although much development is still needed before the intended
impact can be achieved.

68. What is a Theory of Change?
NWO defines a Theory of Change as a schematic representation with a narrative or illustration showing how a
program or project can bring about desired changes for a target group in a specific context. By making
underlying assumptions explicit, it facilitates a reflective approach, making clear how formulated activities can
contribute to the ultimate goal.

69. How are applications assessed and selected? Per theme or in competition with all other submitted
applications?
NWO aims to make allocations within each theme of the round. Therefore, applications compete within a
theme and not across different themes. The allocation of an application applies to that specific theme. More
information on the assessment and selection procedure can be found in the Call for Proposals, section 4.2.

70. What are NWO’s requirements regarding Intellectual Property?
Regarding intellectual property (IP), NWO follows its IP policy. The NWO IP policy is detailed in Chapter 4 of the
NWO Subsidy Regulations 2017. More comprehensive information on intellectual property and consortium
agreements can be found in Chapter 5.1.6 of the Call for Proposals.
b. Full proposal

71. Will every submitted application be considered?
No, submitted applications must meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in the Call for Proposals, section 3.4.1. There is a one-time opportunity to correct your application if it does not initially meet one or more points. However, there are situations where an application is immediately deemed ineligible, and no corrections are allowed thereafter. These situations include:
- The application is received by NWO after the applicable deadline (refer to section 1.3 of the Call for Proposals);
- The application was not submitted via ISAAC;
- The main applicant of the proposal had a previously funded proposal as main applicant in prior ORC rounds that has not been concluded by NWO by the deadline;
- The main applicant did not attend both collaborative workshops (or was represented).

72. Will every corrected application be considered?
No, there are situations where NWO will not consider the corrected application. These include:
- The corrected application still does not meet the requirements;
- The corrected application was not received by NWO within the specified five working days deadline.

73. Can societal doctorates or industrial doctorates be included?
Yes, this is allowed. Refer to Call for Proposals, Annex 7.1 and 7.2. An employee of a public or private organization may conduct part of their PhD research. NWO funds the salary costs according to the applicable VSNU rate up to a maximum of 1 FTE for 48 months. Any surplus salary costs must be covered by the public/private employer.

74. Can I submit an application if I have not submitted an initiative?
Yes, you may, provided you meet the conditions for main applicant as specified in the Call for Proposals, section 3.1.1.

75. Is it possible to modify my application after submission?
No, it is not possible to modify the application after submission.

Upon receipt of applications, NWO conducts a review to determine if the received applications meet the eligibility criteria. If the review indicates that an application does not meet one or more administrative requirements, the main applicant is given a one-time opportunity to adjust their application within five working days. If the corrected application is submitted on time and meets the requirements after correction, NWO will proceed with processing the application.

This correction period is solely intended to address deficiencies identified by NWO. It is explicitly not intended to further refine the application, amend figures or text, or make additions. If NWO finds that changes other than those requested have been made, NWO may decide not to proceed with the application. Therefore, ensure your research proposal is fully completed before submission!

76. Can I adjust the formatting of the application form?
No, this is not permitted. The required formatting is implemented to provide each consortium with equal space to describe the research proposal, ensuring a level playing field for all applicants. During the eligibility phase, NWO assesses whether your application meets the specified formatting requirements.

77. Do my literature references count towards the page limit of the 'Project Description' section?
No, they do not. You should place these under the 'List of literature references' section, where space has been allocated for them.

78. Am I allowed to include figures/illustrations under the 'Project Overview' subsection? Do these count towards the page limit?
Yes, you may include figures and illustrations, and these figures do count towards the page limit.
79. I have an important consortium partner who does not provide funding or receive funding. Where can I describe this?
This partner can be included as a cooperation partner. For the application, it is mandatory for cooperation partners to provide a letter of support, indicating their support for the project. NWO provides a standard letter available on the funding page. The role within the project should be described in the application.

c. Submitting via ISAAC

80. Is there a manual available for submitting an application in ISAAC?
Yes, there is a manual available. On the homepage of ISAAC, you will see a 'help' button at the top right corner. Clicking on this button opens a separate window where you can download the ISAAC manual as a PDF.

For technical questions regarding the use of ISAAC, contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual first before contacting the helpdesk for assistance! ISAAC helpdesk can be reached Monday through Friday from 10:00 to 17:00 at phone number 070-3440600. You can also email your question to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl and expect a response within two working days.

81. How do I submit my application?
The main applicant submits the application via ISAAC, NWO’s online application system. Create an account in ISAAC at least one day before the deadline.

82. The call mentions different times for starting the submission of the application. What is the correct approach?
When submitting your application in ISAAC, you also need to enter online data. Therefore, start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this Call for Proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be processed.

83. What attachments do I need to add in ISAAC?
The mandatory attachments for the application are:
- Budgetsheet;
- Generic expenditure plan if applicable (refer to section 3.2);
- Declarations of commitment from cooperation partner(s);
- Declaration co-funding from co-funder(s) (mandatory if applicable);
- Confirmation of contribution to investments (mandatory if applicable, see Annex 7.1);
- Letter guaranteeing the continuity of the project supervision (compulsory if applicable, see paragraph 3.1).
- Form 'Statement and signature'.

84. Organization tab: What should I enter under ‘the organization responsible for the application’?
Here you enter the organization of the main applicant.

85. Organization tab in ISAAC: What should I enter under ‘the organizations where the research will be carried out’?
Here you enter the organizations of the main applicant and all co-applicants.

86. Co-applicants tab in ISAAC: Is it correct that this involves entering individuals?
That’s correct. In this tab, you enter the involved researchers from the applying organizations. The ‘co-applicants’ you enter in ISAAC are the ‘co-applicants’ in the consortium, i.e., the individuals listed in the second table in section 1 of the full application form. Enter the details of each co-applicant as comprehensively as possible.

d. Financial

87. What budget is available for the themes?
For each theme in the NWA-ORC 2023 or 2024, the same budget will be available, namely €6,750,000.
88. Can I apply for funding for Citizen Science?
Yes, this can be done through the budget module 'material, project-related goods/services - work by third parties'. Applicants can request compensation for involving citizens in projects. The budget module provides an option, not an obligation. Applicants can decide themselves whether involving citizens in the project is beneficial and how exactly they will allocate this budget (e.g., reimbursement for citizens' expenses, skill training for citizens, or technical tools for participating citizens).

89. Can companies also apply and receive subsidies?
No. NWO does not grant subsidies if the provision of subsidies, in NWO's opinion, constitutes state aid within the meaning of Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Only individuals from non-profit organizations can act as principal applicants or applicants and therefore receive subsidies. Private parties can participate as cooperation partners in the consortium or contribute as co-financers in cash and/or in-kind.

90. Where can I find the budget forms?
The correct budget forms can be found in ISAAC, NWO’s online application system, and on the financing page under the 'prepare' tab.

91. I don't understand the budget form. Can the NWA-ORC office help with this?
An online 'input assistant' will be available on the website to clarify how to use the budget form.

92. Can an external person be hired for project management? Can this person be an employee of a co-financer?
No, this is not allowed because the co-financer would then indirectly receive subsidy from NWO. Co-financers never receive subsidies from NWO.

93. Can I use the position 'Non-scientific personnel (NWP) at universities' in the budget?
The budget module can only be used if funding is also requested for a PhD candidate or postdoc. For NWP, up to €300,000 can be requested.

94. What falls under the budget category 'Other Scientific Personnel (OWP)' and what budget can I request for this?
Other Scientific Personnel is mainly used by medical centers as the examples (AIOS, ANIOS) already indicate. As the call outlines, you can indeed apply for this for a researcher or lecturer who has completed a master's degree but has not obtained a PhD.

Funding for the appointment of Other Scientific Personnel (OWP) can only be requested if funding for a PhD candidate or postdoc is also requested. Up to €100,000 can be requested for this.

95. Which budget modules are mandatory to apply for?
- Knowledge Utilization: At least 5% and up to 20% of the subsidy amount requested from NWO must be reserved for activities related to knowledge utilization;
- Program Management: For each application, a post for project management must be reserved, up to a maximum of 5% of the total budget requested from NWO.
- All other budget modules are optional.

96. Is it possible to reserve part of the budget within an application for a specific thematic call that will be carried out later by NWO or the consortium itself?
No, this is not possible.

97. How can I use research leave?
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.

The total funding requested for research leave in the NWA-call may not exceed 10% of the total budget requested from NWO. 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).

98. Can I include costs in the budget for purchasing small equipment?
Through the Investments budget module, you can request funding of up to €150,000 for investments in equipment, data collections, and/or software.

99. Do work hours of PhDs, Postdocs, and other employees need to be registered for project accountability?
No, this is not necessary, but you must be able to demonstrate how many hours were spent on the project. To demonstrate this, you can also provide contracts or pay slips.

100. Can I request funding for international partners in my consortium?
Yes, this is possible under certain conditions. NWO offers various budget modules for international collaboration within a consortium, including the Internationalization budget module and the Money Follows Cooperation (MfC) budget module.

The Internationalization budget aims to promote international collaboration. The requested budget cannot exceed €100,000. The requested amount must be specified. If the maximum amount is insufficient for conducting the research, deviations can be justified in the application.

The Money Follows Cooperation budget module allows part of the project to be conducted at a knowledge institution with a public mandate outside the Netherlands. The requested budget within this module is less than 50% of the total requested budget. The institution outside the Netherlands must be assessed as a co-applicant. Refer to the Call for Proposals, section 3.1.1 for details.

Refer to page 35 (Chapter 7.1 ‘Explanation of Money Follows Cooperation budget module’) of the Call for Proposals for the conditions and requirements of the budget modules.

101. Do the same rates apply for personnel costs for individuals from different countries?
No, this varies by country. The rates for personnel costs of researchers at foreign knowledge institutions are calculated using the correction coefficient table of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grants (EU, Horizon 2020), with Dutch UNL rates as the starting point. The table can be found on the Money Follows Cooperation | NWO page. The principal applicant receives the subsidy and is responsible for transferring it to the foreign knowledge institution and accounting for the MfC portion of the subsidy. The MfC part of the accountability will be part of the overall financial accountability of the project. Exchange rate risk lies with the applicants.

102. Can my consortium include material costs for cooperation partners?
This can be done under certain conditions. For personnel from organizations participating as cooperation partners in the consortium, subsidies for salary or research costs cannot be requested as co-applicants. However, it is possible to reimburse costs from these organizations by hiring them as third parties through the ‘material costs’, ‘knowledge utilization’, or ‘project management’ modules (see section 3.2 and Annex 7.1). The maximum material budget that can be requested is €15,000 per year per FTE scientific position and is specified into three items: project-related goods/services, travel and subsistence costs for the requested personnel positions, and implementation costs. Work by third parties and personnel costs for an appointment of non-scientific staff for a smaller scale than offered under the described personnel budget modules are also included.
VI. Assessment of the proposals

103. How does the assessment process work?
Each application, once received, is reviewed by at least two external referees. The consortium can respond to these reviews. Subsequently, the assessment committee reviews the applications (including attachments), the referee reports, and the responses. Generally, all consortia that have submitted an application are invited for an interview with the assessment committee. If the number of applications for a theme exceeds three times the expected number of assignments, the assessment committee may decide to invite only a selection of consortia from that theme for an interview. Following this, the assessment committee provides a written recommendation to the board of directors regarding the quality and prioritization of the applications, after which the board of directors makes decisions on acceptance and rejection of the applications. For each theme, only one application can be awarded.

The assessment process is detailed in the Call for Proposals, section 4.2.

104. How is the assessment committee composed?
NWO distributes received applications (phase 2) across various thematic clusters. For each cluster, an external, independent, broadly composed cluster assessment committee is established by NWO's board of directors. These assessment committees consist of representatives from science and the entire knowledge chain, including societal stakeholders and representatives from the target group, with expertise in the field. Therefore, formulate your application clearly and understandably for experts with diverse backgrounds.

The assessment of applications takes place within a relevant thematic cluster. In the Call for Proposals, the term ‘assessment committee’ always refers to the ‘cluster assessment committee’.

105. How is practice-oriented research assessed in the call?
The assessment of your application is based on four criteria and is conducted by broadly composed assessment committees. These committees include representatives from science and the entire knowledge chain, including societal stakeholders and representatives from the target group, with expertise in the field. This composition equips the committee adequately to assess practice-oriented research.

106. Do the figureheads or leaders of the 25 NWA routes play a role in the assessment of applications?
No, the figureheads and leaders do not play a role in the assessment of applications. The 25 routes of the National Science Agenda (NWA) are self-organizing networks that address and investigate significant scientific, societal, and economic issues. The routes are organized by the route management, consisting of route leaders and figureheads. Route figureheads and leaders can also submit applications within the NWA-ORC2024.

107. How do I find out who is on the assessment committee?
NWO forms the assessment committee and will inform the members of the committee(s) to the applicants invited for an interview.

108. What is the role of referees in the assessment of applications?
Before the assessment committee reviews your application, NWO first seeks input from at least two external referees. These are independent advisors whose role is to provide an expert judgment of your application based on their expertise. The referees provide substantive comments based on the assessment criteria mentioned in the Call for Proposals (section 4.3). They do not score the application.

109. How does the assessment committee relate to the referee reports?
Before the assessment committee reviews your application, NWO first seeks input from at least two external referees. These are independent advisors knowledgeable in the subject matter of the application. They assess the application based on the assessment criteria mentioned in the Call for Proposals (section 4.3). The principal applicant receives anonymized referee reports. You then have the opportunity to prepare a response. You have ten working days to submit your response via ISAAC.
Based on the available material, the assessment committee makes its own judgment. While the referee reports are significantly influential in the final assessment, the assessment committee may not necessarily adopt them without question. The assessment committee weighs the arguments of the referees (including among themselves) and examines whether the response adequately addresses the critical comments from the referee reports. Additionally, unlike the referees, the assessment committee has visibility into the quality of other submitted applications and responses. This may lead the assessment committee to a different conclusion than that of the referees (see section 4.2.10).

110. **Can I specify individuals whom I do not want to assess my application as referees?**
Yes, you can. It is possible to nominate (up to three) non-referees. Applicants can specify these non-referees in ISAAC at the time of submitting the application. NWO will not approach these non-referees to assess the application as external referees.

111. **Will I encounter the same committee during both the interview selection and the interviews?**
Yes, the applications will be reviewed by the same assessment committee during both the interview selection and the interviews.

112. **Is there information available about the interviews?**
Generally, all consortia that have submitted an application are invited for an interview with the assessment committee. If the number of applications for a theme exceeds three times the expected number of assignments, the assessment committee may decide to invite only a selection of consortia from that theme for an interview.

During the interview, the assessment committee has the opportunity to ask questions, including new questions that were not raised by the referees. The consortium can respond to these questions during the discussion with the committee. This process allows for further hearing and cross-examination. The interview is a crucial part of the assessment and may lead to adjustments in the evaluation and score of the application up to that point.

Both the interview selection and the interviews for NWA-ORC2024 will take place in May 2024. For more information about the interviews and assessment, refer to the Call for Proposals, Chapter 4.

113. **My research proposal has been approved. How soon after approval must I submit a consortium agreement?**
If your proposal is approved, you must submit the consortium agreement via ISAAC before the project starts. The project must start no later than six months after approval.