Each year within the Knowledge and Innovation Covenant (KIC 2020-2023) several partnerships are elaborated in which the focus is a knowledge and/or development question from partners. The NWO contribution for such a partnership lies between 1.5 and 5 million euros. The partner, or consortium of partners, matches that amount exactly in cash.

**Demand for partners**
NWO offers two types of opportunity for potential partners. Does the partner want extra visibility in an existing market, is it seeking a radically different market, does it want to expand by utilising other disciplines or is it searching for new talent that can support its organisation in a development phase? That is what “Demand-driven partnerships” is about.

The partnership can be elaborated into a call for associated project proposals that are assessed by an independent selection committee. In some cases, this can be a sandpit procedure, but a lighter variant with less overheads is also being developed.

**Demand for consortia**
Has the consortium already established the innovation gap in the market, and does it seek like-minded people that it can work with? In that case, NWO offers the option “Demand-driven Partnerships for Consortia”, for which consortium partners jointly elaborate a grant proposal.

A proposal for such a partnership can be submitted in the form of a pre-existing stable consortium. An important aspect of the KIC partnership is that the problem to be investigated is freely chosen. There is no “pressure” due to disciplinary frameworks or pre-determined themes (for this, please see the mainline Mission), as long as there is a connection with one or more Knowledge and Innovation Agendas (KIAs).

**Call: Demand-driven Partnerships for Consortia**: in response to a Call for proposals, a public-private consortium formulates a research proposal (including co-funding) that is submitted to NWO by a main applicant on behalf of the consortium. This can concern an existing or a new consortium of knowledge institutes, public and private parties or industrial parties. A research proposal should seek to answer a self-chosen knowledge and development question that connects with (parts of) one or more KIAs. The proposal for a demand-driven partnership is typically larger in scope and the co-funding requirement is larger than in the case of proposals for the KIC main line Mission, but it is smaller than the scope required for long-term programmes (KIC main line Strategy).
Incubator for consortia

Demand-driven Partnerships for Consortia are the ideal incubator for consortia of knowledge institutions, public and private parties that want to jointly translate a knowledge and development question into a coherent project proposal with focus and mass, and aimed at societal impact. Namely: focus on the theme and mass in the form of a joint deployment of people and resources. At the same time, it is also a place where consortia that have the ambition to grow into strategic, long-term programmes can mature further.

Demand-driven Partnerships for Partners: such a partnership starts from an urgent question in a public or private organisation. This public or private partner* submits an intention to form a partnership to NWO and publicises the question and its willingness to co-fund a partnership. After selection by NWO, the partner works in co-creation with NWO to develop a thematic Call for proposals. The instrument is particularly suitable for public and/or private/industrial parties that want to initiate a thematic research programme of considerable size with regard to a knowledge and/or development question that is important for them. Such parties need new knowledge to be able to discover new directions, bring about innovation in existing R&D or increase their visibility. By putting the knowledge and/or development question on the agenda through helping to publish a Call for proposals, partners can fill the gap of knowledge that is still missing and connect with new knowledge of high quality. Via that Call for proposals, researchers are asked to make a contribution to answering the knowledge and development question of the partner(s).

Would you like to know more?
Please contact Gerdine Stout or Annemarie Penders
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www.nwo.nl/kic-demand

Breed4Food increases effectiveness

In the partnership programme Breed4Food, four Dutch animal breeders who are normally each other’s competitors have instead joined forces. That has boosted the effectiveness of their research. ‘In the past, you had a master breeder and that person determined everything. He or she sought the finest or best-presented animal and that was allowed to reproduce. Animal breeding has become far more knowledge intensive. We use and develop increasingly newer techniques, and the investments that you must make are growing in size. One such example is genetic research where we directly read off an animal’s performance from its DNA.’

Gerard Albers, head R&D at animal breeding company Hendrix Genetics

Combating cancer together

NWO and KWF Dutch Cancer Society have joined forces in the partnership programme Technology for Oncology. They challenged technical and medical researchers to join with other scientists and with companies to enter into new collaborations that are aimed at technical innovations for the prevention and treatment of cancer. In Technology for Oncology 19 projects were awarded funding in two rounds. KWF Dutch Cancer Society and NWO jointly contributed 2.59 million euros.

The Hague, March 2022

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