



NGF-Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition: Kern (NGF-CIIC Kern)

Demand-driven applied research into knowledge and methods for applying and deploying Immersive Technologies (IX) in SMEs or the public sector.

Call for proposals

1st round 2026



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1 Introduction

This Call for proposals provides information about the application procedure for the NGF-Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition: Kern (NGF-CIIC Kern) for demand-driven applied research into knowledge and methods for applying and deploying Immersive Technologies (IX) in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or in the public sector, which is part of the National Growth Fund project Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition (CIIC). The Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition proposal has been approved by the Dutch government as part of the National Growth Fund. This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), with Regieorgaan SIA as the lead organisation. Because this Call for proposals is part of the National Growth Fund, different conditions may apply than in regular Calls for proposals from NWO and Regieorgaan SIA.

This Call for proposals contains information about the purpose of this programme (Chapter 2), the conditions for applying for funding (Chapter 3) and how your application will be assessed (Chapter 4). You will need this information to submit a proposal. Chapter 5 contains the terms and conditions that apply in the event of allocation, Chapter 6 contains the contact details and Chapter 7 contains the appendices.

1.1 Background

NWO and the National Growth Fund

Through the National Growth Fund, the government will invest in projects that guarantee long-term economic growth in the period 2021-2025. The National Growth Fund invests in research, development and innovation projects, among other things. NWO is participating in some of these projects as one of the implementing organisations, for example in organising grant programmes for scientific research or scientific talent.

1.2 Available budget

The total grant scheme cap for this Call for proposals is €5.000,000. A maximum of 16 applications are expected to be awarded within this Call for proposals.

1.3 Submission deadline

When submitting your application in ISAAC, you will also need to enter information online. Therefore, please start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline for this Call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

The deadline for submitting applications is **21 April 2026**, before 14:00:00 CEST.

2 Objective

This section describes the programme's objective and societal impact.

2.1 Objective of the National Growth Fund project programme

2.1.1 Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition incentive programme

On 15 March 2024, the government gave a go-ahead for the first phase (2025-2027) of the National Growth Fund Project Creative Industry Immersive Impact Coalition (CIIC), which will run until 2029. The project is funded by the National Growth Fund, falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and, organisationally, under CLICKNL, the knowledge and innovation network for the Dutch creative industry. CIIC is the incentive programme for Immersive Experiences (IX). This project, hereinafter referred to as the CIIC incentive programme, has been developed in close collaboration with the creative industry and the application domains. The Innovation Agenda (see section 7.5.1) forms the compass for this incentive programme.

IX provide a compelling experience or user experience in which digital and physical elements come together. It is not just about the technology itself, but also about the experience and its impact. IX therefore go beyond hardware such as VR and AR glasses. It can be considered as an extra digital layer that is added to reality and enables deeper and richer experiences.

The aim of the CIIC incentive programme is to capitalise on the opportunities in the field of IX in the Netherlands. Investing in the development of knowledge, research, and innovation in the field of responsible and effective IX increases the Netherlands' sustainable earning capacity in the medium to long term. Developments in this innovative field offer economic opportunities in particular for:

- strengthening sectors such as the creative industry, ICT and the arts, where IX is a core discipline;
- other sectors and areas of application where IX can contribute to solving social issues;
- creators, providers, and users of high-quality IX applications and content.

IX is also expected to have a major social impact in the coming decades as a driver of the third digital transition.

To mitigate the possible negative social effects of this digital transition, safeguarding public values such as privacy, self-determination, health and safety is an important part of the CIIC incentive programme. To this end, a guideline and a self-assessment tool for Public Values have been drawn up.

To create the desired economic and societal impact with IX, we invite researchers, (semi-)governmental bodies, civil society organisations and the business community to collaborate with IX creators and users in co-creation on practice-oriented research into IX.

The CIIC incentive programme has five lines of action. NWO is involved in three of them:

- Action line 1: Knowledge and Methods
- Action line 2: Human Capital
- Action line 3: Ecosystem and Facilities

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Regieorgaan SIA acts as the lead organisation and is responsible for developing and implementing various calls for proposals for the lines of action. The emphasis is on practice-oriented research, carried out in collaboration with SMEs and/or the public sector. This call for proposals concerns the first round of the NGF-CIIC Kern funding scheme. More information about the other calls for proposals that SIA is developing and implementing within the CIIC incentive programme is available on the [grant page](#) of this call for proposals.

More information about the entire CIIC incentive programme is available at www.ciiic.nl.

2.1.2 Objective of NGF-CIIC Kern

Research into knowledge and methods

NGF-CIIC Kern contributes to the objective of Action line 1 of the CIIC incentive programme: gathering knowledge and methods and making them applicable.

NGF-CIIC Kern is the second Call for proposals within Action line 1 and focuses on demand-driven, practice-oriented research with a duration of at least 18 and at most 24 months. This research contributes to solving current issues relating to testing and validating methods for applying and deploying IX by and for SMEs, or investigating the essential pre-requisites, possibilities and prospects for applying and deploying IX in the public sector.

Applications within this Call for proposals primarily contribute to research into the application and deployment of IX within various application domains of SMEs and/or in the public sector. By validating and generating knowledge and (new) methods, the cornerstones of the IX field are strengthened and existing applications of IX can be scaled up. This contributes to increasing the social and economic impact of IX. In addition, a targeted and high-quality boost is given to IX innovation: the results can be used to solidly substantiate investments in the strategic goals of the CIIC incentive programme. The development of the IX sector itself also receives a boost, allowing opportunities in this area to be more effectively capitalised.

Within SMEs and the public sector

The rapid emergence of immersive technologies, together with fast-paced innovations and social shifts, raises new questions and needs. Research into IX therefore goes beyond the development of a set of tools, ready-made applications or trendy experiments. It integrates existing and new insights about IX, the impact of the experience on the public and society, the context of application areas, sectors and social domains, and the safeguarding of public values.

Thus, there is a need for research in which methods for the responsible and effective application or deployment of IX by and for SMEs are tested and validated. In addition, there is a growing demand for knowledge about how IX can be applied or deployed in a responsible and strategic manner within the public sector.

In this Call for proposals, application refers to the concrete use of a specific IX in a particular context: how, where, when and with whom. Deployment refers to the strategic and targeted use of IX to achieve social impact and/or strengthen economic earning capacity.

Within this Call for proposals, grants will be provided for demand-driven applied research that demonstrably contributes to at least one of the objectives listed below.

1. IX within SMEs

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Demand-driven applied research into solutions for challenges experienced by SMEs in applying and/or deploying IX by testing and validating methods and instruments. Examples include validating methods for integrating public values when deploying an IX or applying IX applications to address staff shortages or generating knowledge to deploy a proven IX tool from one SME sector to another.

This research aims to provide solidly substantiated and publicly available tested and validated knowledge on scalable methods for the concrete application and/or strategic deployment of responsible and effective IX in a variety of contexts in SMEs. This knowledge may relate to software, infrastructure, prototypes, user scenarios, guidelines, content, and preconditions, among other things, aimed at IX applications in SMEs.

2. IX within the public sector

Demand-driven applied research into knowledge about the essential pre-requisites and opportunities for applying and/or deploying existing IX within the public sector. Public organisations are invited to collaborate with researchers and SMEs to conduct research into pre-requisites, (existing) methods or (existing) instruments for the responsible and effective deployment or application of IX. For example, when a public organisation wants to deploy IX, but first needs to answer current research questions about the method.

The research will provide solidly substantiated and publicly available knowledge about pre-requisites, methods and instruments for the concrete application and/or strategic use of responsible and effective IX in a variety of contexts in the public sector.

Innovation through co-creation

To apply and deploy innovative IX solutions for social and practical issues, NWO is encouraging the formation of broad, interdisciplinary consortia. By collaborating based on co-creation from the outset, a variety of expertise and backgrounds are represented, including from outside existing networks. This approach fosters integration of the knowledge chain, which is pivotal for the advancement of the IX field in the Netherlands.

To conduct the research, the consortium must comprise at least one research organisation as the primary applicant and at least two co-applicants from the SME and/or public sector. Within the consortium, these applicants will collaborate with partners from the relevant application areas, sectors, and/or social domains.

Key considerations

NGF-CIIC Kern supports demand-driven, applied research only; fundamental research is not eligible for funding under this programme. Additional conditions apply to calls for proposals issued by NWO within the framework of the National Growth Fund. For organisations other than research institutions, funding is granted under the de minimis rule. For details on the de minimis rule and other requirements for applicants, co-funders, and collaboration partners, please refer to Section 3.1.1.

2.2 Social impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to solutions for social issues of today and tomorrow. Think of the energy transition, health and care, or climate change. Interaction and coordination between researchers and potential knowledge users increase the likelihood of knowledge being applied and thus also the likelihood of societal impact. Societal impact here refers to changes that are (partly) the result of knowledge and expertise generated by research. These changes contribute to the well-being of people, the planet and society for present and future generations. Through its impact policy, NWO promotes the potential contribution of research to societal issues by encouraging productive interactions with societal stakeholders, both during the development and implementation of the research. It does so in a manner consistent with the objective of the funding instrument. NWO encourages researchers to take a broad view of the potential desirable and undesirable impacts of their research.

2.2.1 Tailored impact

Depending on the objective of the funding instrument, NWO chooses an appropriate approach that optimally supports the likelihood of societal impact. The primary objective of the funding instrument determines the choice of approach that NWO uses to promote knowledge utilisation in each phase of the project (application, implementation, follow-up) and the effort required from applicants and partners.

In this programme, the societal impact is aligned with the CIIC incentive programme. In this way, NWO and the CIIC incentive programme contribute to the impact goals in line with the objectives of the National Growth Fund. The societal impact in this programme must be in line with the following objectives:

1. Knowledge and methodologies for the design and development of responsible IX;
2. Sufficient designers and developers who can create and apply IX;
3. A strong IX ecosystem that innovates, designs, develops, applies, markets and scales up together. Supported by high-quality facilities and training;
4. Policy that facilitates and stimulates the development and use of safe, ethical, sustainable and inclusive applications of IX.

The application describes the intended impact of the project on research, education and professional practice, and how this intended impact contributes to achieving the above impact goals.

3 Conditions for applicants

This chapter contains the conditions that apply to your grant application. It first describes who can apply for a grant (section 3.1) and what you can apply a grant for (section 3.2). This is followed by the conditions for preparing and submitting the application (sections 3.3 and 3.4) and specific grant conditions (section 3.5).

3.1 Who can apply?

The main applicant must submit complete proposals. An application is drawn up by a consortium, which may include other participants in addition to the main and co-applicants.

There are four distinct categories of participants in a consortium:

1. Main applicant
2. Co-applicant(s)
3. Collaborative partners
4. Co-funders

A consortium must consist of at least one main applicant and at least two co-applicants. For carrying out the research, the consortium must consist of at least one research organisation as the main applicant and at least two different SMEs, or at least one SME and one public organisation as co-applicants. The conditions for each participant are explained in more detail in the following sections. Only the main and co-applicants are eligible for funding under this Call for proposals.

3.1.1 Main applicant

Researchers may act as main applicants if they have a tenured appointment (and therefore have a paid employment contract for an indefinite period*) or have a tenure track agreement with one of the following research organisations:

- Universities and universities of applied sciences as referred to in Article 1.8(1) of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act and the universities listed in the [Policy Rule on Universities in the Kingdom of the Netherlands](#);
- University medical centres, which refers to the academic hospitals as referred to in Article 1.13(1) of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act;
- TO2 institutes;
- KNAW and NWO institutes;
- the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- NCB Naturalis;
- Princess Máxima Centre.

* Lecturers employed by a university of applied sciences and researchers employed by a TO2 institution may also submit applications as main applicants if they have a fixed term paid employment contract.

Persons with a zero-hours contract or a fixed-term contract (other than a tenure track and the above-mentioned exception for lecturers employed by a university of applied sciences and researchers employed by a TO2 institution) are excluded from submitting applications.

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It may happen that the applicant's tenure track contract ends before the intended completion date of the project for which the grant is being applied for, or that the applicant's permanent employment contract ends before that date due to reaching retirement age. In that case, the applicant must enclose a statement from their employer in which the organisation in question guarantees that the project and all persons working on the project for whom a grant is being requested will be adequately supervised for the entire duration of the project. Applicants employed by a university of applied sciences or TO2 institution whose employment ends before the intended completion date of the project for which the grant is being requested must also attach such a statement.

Applicants with part-time employment must guarantee adequate supervision of the project and of all persons working on the project for whom funding is requested.

[Additional conditions for main applicants](#)

A main applicant may only submit one application within this Call for proposals in the capacity of main applicant. In addition, a main applicant may participate in another consortium as a co-applicant no more than once within this Call for proposals.

3.1.2 Co-applicants

Employees of the following organisations may act as co-applicants:

1. the research organisations listed under 'main applicant' in section 3.1.1;
2. enterprises and other public and private organisations (hereinafter: enterprises and civil society organisations) other than the research organisations mentioned under 'main applicant' in section 3.1.1.

Re 1

The same conditions as those mentioned under 3.1.1 apply to employees of the research organisations under 1.

Re 2

Employees of organisations referred to under 2 may participate as co-applicants in the consortium provided that:

- they are permanently employed for at least 0.6 FTE or are self-employed (freelancer);
- their organisation has demonstrable Research & Development (R&D) activities in the Netherlands or is based in the Netherlands.

[Additional conditions for co-applicants](#)

At least two co-applicants must be employed by two different SMEs or be self-employed persons who meet the conditions in Ad 2.

An SME can only act as a co-applicant if it meets the following criteria:

- it is an enterprise, i.e. an entity, regardless of its legal form, that carries out an economic activity.
- the enterprise is registered with the Chamber of Commerce.
- it is an enterprise with fewer than 250 employees and either an annual turnover of less than €50 million or a balance sheet total of less than €43 million.

A public organisation may only act as a co-applicant if it meets the following criteria:

- organisations whose purpose is to perform a public and/or statutory task;
- have no profit motive or commercial interest;
- are (partly) funded and/or subsidised by public funds.

Also classified as public organisations are the following entities:

- local authorities (municipalities, provinces, water boards), (semi-)governmental organisations and independent administrative bodies. These parties come from the following sectors, among others: healthcare and welfare, art and culture, safety and living environment, public housing, education;
- non-profit organisations that perform public tasks, such as nature and environmental organisations;
- profit-oriented or commercially interested healthcare providers, such as physiotherapists or commercial hospitals, provided that the research focuses on practitioners working in these organisations;
- educational organisations, such as vocational education institutions, provided that the research focuses on practitioners working there;
- research organisations listed under 'main applicant' in section 3.1.1, provided that the research focuses on practitioners working there. These research organisations are exempt from adding a *de minimis* declaration (see section 3.5.1) to the application.

In addition to the co-applicants required to satisfy the consortium criteria, enterprises and civil society organisations may be included as co-applicants, provided they adhere to the *de minimis* obligations outlined in Section 3.5.1.

In addition to the co-applicants that meet the above criteria and are necessary to meet the consortium requirements, additional enterprises and civil society organisations may be included as co-applicants, provided they comply with the *de minimis* obligations (see section 3.5.1).

3.1.3 Main and co-applicants

The main applicant submits the application via ISAAC, NWO's electronic submission system. During the assessment procedure, NWO communicates with the main applicant via ISAAC.

Once an application has been awarded, the main applicant becomes the project leader and point of contact for NWO. The main applicant's research organisation is the main beneficiary and becomes the coordinator.

Co-applicants play an active role in the implementation of the project. The (sub)project leader(s) and beneficiary(ies) are jointly responsible for the implementation of the entire project.

Main and co-applicants with a paid or unpaid position at a research organisation may not also have a paid or unpaid position at a civil society organisation listed in section 3.1.2.

3.1.4 Collaborative partners

A collaborative partner is a party that does not receive a grant and does not contribute Funding other than by NWO to the application but is actively involved in the implementation of the research and/or the utilisation of knowledge. A collaborative partner is therefore not a main or co-applicant or co-funder. This could include parties involved through participation in an advisory, supervisory or user committee, or parties that are unable to capitalise on their contribution in advance.

Please note: no funding for wage or research costs can be requested for staff of organisations participating in the consortium as collaborative partners. However, it is possible to reimburse costs by hiring these organisations as third parties via the modules 'material costs', 'knowledge utilisation' or 'project management' (see section 3.2 and Appendix 7.1).

3.1.5 Co-funders

A co-funder is an organisation that participates in the consortium and contributes cash and/or in-kind to the project. For further specific co-funding conditions that apply in this Call for proposals, see section 3.5.7. The application must describe the role of these organisations in preparing and implementing the research, as well as in transferring the results to society.

A co-funder does not receive a grant from NWO based on this Call for proposals. Nor is it possible to reimburse costs by hiring these organisations as third parties via the Equipment budget module.

3.2 What can be applied for?

A maximum of €300,000 in funding can be requested per project. The duration of the proposed project is a minimum of 18 months and a maximum of 24 months.

At least 50% of the requested funding must go to research organisations listed under 'main applicant' in 3.1.1.

NWO does not fund the total project budget. An application requires at least 100% of the requested grant in the form of **funding other than from NWO**. Put simply, at least 50% of the total project costs must be covered by **funding other than from NWO**.

Funding other than from NWO consists of:

- i. The own contribution, i.e. the non-subsidised part of the eligible costs contributed by co-applicants (enterprises and civil society organisations, see further on in this section).
- ii. Any cash (excluding VAT) or in-kind co-funding by co-funders (see section 3.5.7).

Research organisations referred to in section 3.1.1 under 'main applicant' or in section 3.1.2 under 'co-applicant' under 1. may not claim their own contribution as **funding other than from NWO** or act as co-funders.

The main and co-applicants may declare costs in accordance with the available budget modules (including the maximum amounts) as specified below. Only apply for what is essential to carry out the project. The rates and a specification of these budget modules are provided in Appendix 7.

This Call for proposals distinguishes between the budget modules for research organisations (as referred to in section 3.1.1 under 'main applicant' and in 3.1.2 'co-applicant' under 1) and 'enterprises and civil society organisations' (as referred to in section 3.1.2 under 'co-applicant' under 2).

Table 1 Funding percentages per type of applicant.

Type of organisation	Funding percentage
Research organisation (see section 3.1.1)	100% of eligible costs
Enterprises and civil society organisations (see section 3.1.2 under 2)	Maximum of 75% of eligible costs

Enterprises and civil society organisations (as defined in Section 3.1.2 under 2) applying for funding from NWO as co-applicants under this Call for proposals must cover the portion of eligible costs not funded by NWO (see Table 1). They may contribute more than the minimum 25% of their costs. Contributions may only be made in kind, provided these costs are essential for project implementation. Each contribution must be confirmed to the main applicant through a formal statement of own contribution.

3.2.1 Funding for personnel

For personnel contributing to the project, funding for wage costs may be requested from NWO. The amount depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the personnel work.

The following tariff systems may be used in this Call for proposals:

- UNL salary scales + 50% surcharge (see Appendix 7.1);
- UMCNL salary scales + 50% surcharge (see Appendix 7.1);
- rates from table 2.1 'Average direct labour costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% surcharge (see Appendix 7.1);
- Integrale kostensystematiek (IKS) as filed¹ with RVO for the organisation in question (see Appendix 7.5)²;
- fixed hourly rate of €60 (see Appendix 7.5).

Appendix 7 indicates which tariff system is available for each type of applicant. The various tariff systems are incorporated into the budget format provided by NWO.

3.2.2 Budget modules for research organisations

For the research organisations referred to in section 3.1.1, both as a 'main applicant' and a 'co-applicant', the budget modules (including the maximum amounts) as listed below apply. Only request what is essential to carry out the project. A more detailed explanation of the budget modules can be found in the appendix to this Call for proposals (see Appendix 7.1).

3.2.3 Personnel

For the various tariff systems that can be used, see section 3.2.1 and section 7.1.

Please note: it is not possible to apply for funding for the deployment of the main or co-applicants themselves other than via the budget modules Replacement of applicants and Staff at universities of applied sciences and TO2 institutes, up to a maximum of 10% of the budget requested from NWO.

3.2.3.1 Staff at a university in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, UMC or a research organisation

For staff employed at a university in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, university medical centre (UMC) or other research organisation, as referred to in Article 1.1, first paragraph, under c to h of the NWO Grant Rules 2024, wage costs can be claimed for the following positions: postdoctoral researcher, non-scientific staff (NWP) and for the replacement of the applicant(s).

3.2.3.2 Staff of universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and other research organisations

It is possible to include wage costs for staff at universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and/or other research organisations. An unlimited number of positions can be applied for in accordance with

- the rates applicable at the time of granting the funding request from NWO from Table 2.1 'Average direct wage costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% surcharge, or

¹ NWO adheres to RVO terminology: filed also means that the rates have been approved by RVO.

² If an applicant wishes to make use of the IKS rates, this choice automatically implies that NWO is given permission to request the IKS rates from RVO and to share them with the consortium partners of the application when a joint budget is drawn up.

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- the rate in accordance with the *Integrale kostensystematiek* as filed with RVO for the relevant main or co-applicants.

3.2.3.3 Students

Students may be deployed for the project if they are studying at a research organisation mentioned in section 3.1. These costs can be entered within the project as material costs. There is no maximum number of students who can participate in the project.

3.2.4 Material costs

Budget may be requested for all project-specific material costs. These costs are subject to a maximum of 25% of the NWO grant amount.

A maximum of 50% of the material budget requested from NWO may be used for work by third parties.

3.2.5 Investments

Budget may be requested for investments in equipment, infrastructure and other research resources that have economic value or can be reused after the project has ended. Labour costs for personnel who prepare the equipment, infrastructure and other research resources can be included as part of the investment. The rates and conditions for Personnel apply here, and the costs must be claimed as Investment.

Only the associated depreciation costs are eligible for funding. A maximum of 25% of the funding may be requested from NWO for investments.

3.2.6 Knowledge utilisation

Budget can be requested for activities that promote the utilisation of knowledge from the research³ in order to increase the societal impact of the research.

It is possible to include an amount for knowledge utilisation. These costs may not exceed 10% of the funding requested from NWO.

3.2.7 Project management

It is possible to allocate a maximum of 5% of the total funding amount requested from NWO to project management. It is not mandatory to make use of this option.

3.2.8 Eligible costs for enterprises and civil society organisations

Under this Call for proposals, funding is granted to enterprises and civil society organisations on the basis of the de minimis Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 2023/2831 of the European Commission of 13 December 2023). Under the de minimis Regulation, an enterprise or civil society organisation may receive a maximum of €300,000 in de minimis aid over a period of three years.

³ All activities applied for under this budget module must fit within the definition of 'Knowledge transfer activities' used by the European Commission in the Framework Regulation on State aid for research, development and innovation (OJEU 2022, C 414).

Table 2 shows the maximum eligible costs for enterprises and civil society organisations. For these organisations, up to 75% of the eligible costs will be reimbursed. A detailed description of these costs is provided in Appendix 7.2 of this Call for proposals.

Table 2 Eligible costs for enterprises and civil society organisations.

Eligible costs	Maximum amount
Personnel costs for researchers, technicians and other support staff insofar as they are involved in the research	Unlimited number of positions according to: - the HOT rates applicable at the time of grant allocation from Table 2.1 'Average direct labour costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% surcharge, or - a fixed hourly rate of €60, or - a rate in accordance with the Integrale kostensystematiek (IKS) as filed with RVO for the main or co-applicants concerned.
Equipment	Maximum 25% of the funding requested from NWO, of which a maximum of 50% may be used for hiring third parties.
Investments	Maximum of 25% of the funding requested from NWO, depreciation costs only.
Knowledge utilisation	Maximum 10% of the funding requested from NWO.

3.3 Preparing and submitting the application

To prepare your application, follow these steps:

- download the application form from the ISAAC online application system or from the NWO website (on the website of the relevant funding instrument);
- complete the application form;
- save the form as a PDF and submit it with any required attachments in ISAAC;
- enter the requested information online in ISAAC.

Mandatory attachment(s):

- budget;
- 'Statements and signature' form;
- project participants form;
- de minimis aid declaration (per co-applicant from the category of enterprises and civil society organisations, combined in a single PDF);
- declaration of own contribution and co-funding (if applicable: per co-applicant from the category of enterprises and civil society organisations and per co-funder, combined in a single PDF file);
- support statement (if applicable: per collaborative partner, combined in a single PDF);
- IKS rates statement (if applicable: for all organisations that use this, combined in a single form);
- statement of appointment and project supervision (if applicable);
- knowledge security statement.

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The application and appendix(es) must be drawn up in accordance with the template provided by NWO. Appendices must be uploaded separately from the application in ISAAC. The budget and the project participants form must be submitted as Excel files in ISAAC. All other attachments must be submitted as PDF files (without security). Attachments other than those mentioned above are not permitted.

It is mandatory to write your application in Dutch or English.

The use of generative AI is not excluded when preparing your application, provided this is done in a responsible manner. The guidelines can be found on the website ([NWO policy on the use of generative artificial intelligence \(GAI\) | NWO](#)).

Applications can only be submitted via the online application system ISAAC. Applications that are not submitted via ISAAC will not be considered.

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

It is important to start your application in ISAAC in good time:

- if you do not yet have an ISAAC account, you must create one in good time to avoid any login problems;
- new organisations may need to be added to ISAAC by NWO;
- you will also need to enter information online.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered by NWO.

For technical questions, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. For contact details, see chapter 6.

If the main applicant or any co-applicant works for an organisation that is not yet listed in the ISAAC database, please notify NWO by emailing relatiebeheer@nwo.nl. This allows us to add the organisation to the system. Because this process takes a few days, make sure to report it at least one week before the submission deadline.

NWO assumes that the applicants have informed their organisations about the submission and that the organisations agree to the grant conditions outlined in this Call for proposals.

3.4 Submission conditions

3.4.1 Formal conditions for submission

NWO will assess your application against all the conditions set out in this Call for proposals, including the conditions below. Only if your application meets these conditions will it be admitted to the assessment procedure. After submitting an application, you will be asked to be available to make any administrative corrections and thus (still) meet the conditions for submission.

These conditions are:

- the main applicant and co-applicants meet the conditions set out in sections 3.1 and 7.1.1;
- the application complies with the DORA guidelines as described in section 4.1;
- the application has been submitted via the main applicant's ISAAC account;
- the application has been received before the deadline;
- the application is written in Dutch or English;

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- the budget in the application has been drawn up in accordance with the conditions of this Call for proposals (using the format provided, which contains the most recent rates);
- the proposed project has a duration of at least 18 and at most 24 months;
- The application meets the requirements regarding **funding other than from NWO**;
- Applicants who use the IKS rate system have given NWO permission to request their IKS rates from RVO;
- All required attachments are complete and have been completed in accordance with the instructions and drawn up and submitted in accordance with the conditions of this Call for proposals, including any requested additions or modifications.

3.5 Grant conditions

All applications are subject to the [NWO Grant rules 2024](#) and the [Agreement on the Funding of Scientific Research](#), with the exception of:

- Article 1.4(1), (5) and (6) of the NWO Grant Rules 2024 and Article 2.1 of the Agreement on the Funding of Scientific Research, in the sense that overhead costs are also reimbursed under project costs in this Call for proposals and that applicants must choose between the following for each (co-)applicant: 1) Integrale kostensystematiek (IKS), provided that their IKS accounting method has been approved by RVO, or 2) the regular NWO rates (UNL, UMCNL, HOT) + a surcharge for 50% of the overheads, or 3) a fixed hourly rate (€60);
- Article 1.1. of the NWO Grant Rules 2024; in the sense that enterprises and civil society organisations may apply for funding. In doing so, the state aid framework must be observed;
- Article 1.3, paragraph 1, of the NWO Grant Rules 2024; in the sense that these qualification requirements do not apply to researchers and/or representatives of enterprises and civil society organisations applying for funding from NWO;
- The phrase 'without being the main applicant or co-applicant' in Article 5.1, preamble and sub f of the NWO Grant Rules 2024, if co-funding is provided in kind by an applicant enterprise or civil society organisation.

NWO will not award funding or will withdraw funding if such funding is deemed to be unlawful state aid within the meaning of Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

3.5.1 Conditions of the de minimis Regulation

NWO will fund the applications in this Call for proposals in accordance with the [de minimis Regulation](#). NWO will not award a grant if it is not sufficiently plausible that the application meets the definitions and conditions of the de minimis Regulation.

Based on the de minimis Regulation, an enterprise or a civil society organisation may receive a maximum of €300,000 in de minimis aid over a period of three years. By completing the de minimis aid declaration, enterprises and civil society organisations declare that they will not exceed this de minimis threshold as a result of grant awarded by NWO. If receiving NWO funding would cause an enterprise or civil society organisation to exceed the de minimis threshold, the organisation is not eligible to apply.

When preparing the project budget, the main applicant and any co-applicants must ensure compliance with the de minimis threshold for each participating enterprise or civil society organisation. A separate de minimis aid declaration, duly completed by these organisations, is required as an integral part of the application.

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Main and co-applicants affiliated with research organisations listed under 'Main applicant' in Section 3.1.1 are not required to submit a de minimis declaration.

3.5.2 Knowledge security

In the National Knowledge Security Guidelines, the Dutch knowledge sector (including NWO) and various parts of the national government have laid down guidelines for those within research organisations who are involved in international cooperation and who have to weigh up opportunities and (security) risks. Self-regulation by the knowledge sector is central to the approach to knowledge security within the Netherlands.

NWO expects applicants to comply with the knowledge security policy of the research organisation. If NWO receives indications that an application or awarded project entails knowledge security risks, NWO may request the applicant or project leader to provide insight into the risk mitigation measures. In addition, NWO may decide to include further conditions in the award letter to protect knowledge security.

The National Knowledge Security Guidelines can be found on the website of the Dutch Government: [Home | Knowledge Security Desk](#).

The main applicant must provide a signed statement confirming that the application has been prepared in accordance with the research organisation's knowledge security policy and that the designated knowledge security officer within the organisation has been consulted. This statement must be submitted as an appendix to the complete application.

3.5.3 Data management

The results of scientific research must be replicable, verifiable and falsifiable. In the digital age, this means that, in addition to publications, research data must also be freely accessible as much as possible. NWO expects the research data resulting from projects funded by NWO to be made freely available for reuse by other researchers as much as possible. NWO applies the principle: 'as open as possible, protected when necessary'. Researchers are expected to make public at least those data, including non-numerical results, that form the basis for the conclusions of works published within the project, simultaneously with the publication itself. Any costs incurred for this purpose may be included in the project budget. Researchers must indicate how data arising from the project will be handled in the data management section of the application and in the data management plan after the grant has been awarded.

Data management section

The data management section is part of the application. Researchers are asked to consider, before the start of the research, how the collected data should be organised and categorised so that it can be made freely available. Often, measures will have to be taken before the data is created and analysed to enable storage and sharing at a later stage. If not all data resulting from the project can be made public, for example for reasons of privacy, ethics or valorisation, the applicant must explain this in the data management section.

The data management section is not assessed and is therefore not taken into account in the decision to approve or reject an application. However, the committee may provide advice regarding the data management section.

3.5.4 Scientific integrity

In accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2024, the project funded by NWO must be carried out in accordance with nationally and internationally accepted standards of scientific conduct as laid down in the Dutch Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity (2018). By submitting the application, the applicants commit to this code. In the event of a (possible) violation of these standards in an NWO-funded project, the main applicant must immediately notify NWO and submit all relevant documents to NWO. More information about the code of conduct and policy on scientific integrity can be found on the website: [Scientific integrity | NWO](#).

3.5.5 Ethical statement or permit

It is the main applicant's responsibility to check whether an ethical statement or permit is required for the implementation of the proposed project. The main applicant must ensure that this is obtained in good time from the relevant institution or ethics committee. Whether or not an ethical statement or permit is available at the time of the application process does not influence the assessment of the application. If an ethical statement or permit is required for (part of) the research, the project leader must provide a copy of this statement or permit to NWO after the grant has been awarded, and in any case no later than before the start of the part of the project for which the statement is required. The part of the project for which the statement and/or permit is required cannot, of course, be carried out (yet) as long as no statement or permit has been issued.

3.5.6 Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol ensures the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources (Access and Benefit Sharing; ABS). Researchers who use genetic resources from abroad for their research must familiarise themselves with the Nagoya Protocol [ABS Focal Point ABS Focal Point](#)). NWO assumes that they will take the necessary actions with regard to the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.7 Co-funding

The NWO Co-funding Rules applies to all applications.

Additional definitions:

- Co-funding in kind: capitalised personnel and/or material contributions from users.
- Cash co-funding is used to cover part of the total project costs and, together with the grant provided by NWO, constitutes the necessary financial resources.

It is possible to add co-funders to the application in order to meet the requirement for funding other than from NWO (see section 3.2). A distinction is made between cash co-funding (to be collected by the applicant), which serves to cover the budget for the project activities described in the application, and co-funding in kind, which may consist of personnel and/or material contributions from the organisations involved. Co-funding may be provided by parties that are not applying for a grant under this Call for proposals.

The co-funding must be committed to the main applicant by means of a co-funding statement. The committed co-funding is the net amount. If VAT applies to the committed co-funding, this will be added to the committed amount.

The following principles apply to co-funding:

- NWO is the main funder of an application. Applications in which the co-funding from the co-funders exceeds 49% of the total project costs will not be considered.

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- Contributions in kind will only be accepted if the part contributed by the co-funder is an integral part of the project activities and can be monitored or identified as an identifiable effort. If there are any questions, NWO may request further justification and supporting documents for the rates used, as well as adjustments. In addition, any contributions in kind in the form of services and know-how may not already be available at the research organisation(s) of the applicant(s).
- Fixed integral hourly rates are used to capitalise the personnel contribution (hours) to a project. For the rates, see the [Government Rates Manual \(HOT\)](#), table 2 under 2.2 'average total wage costs per salary scale', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT'. The rate used should be the one that most closely approximates the actual wage costs;
- Cash co-funding is the net amount that a co-funder pays to the main applicant. The applicant invoices cash co-funding and any VAT to the co-funder.

The following are not eligible as cash/in-kind co-funding⁴:

- Funding awarded by NWO;
- Co-funding may not come from research organisations as referred to in sections 3.1.1. and 3.1.2 under 1.

Co-funding statement by participating co-funders

In a co-funding statement, the co-funder expresses its financial support for the project and confirms the promised co-funding. Co-funding statements from co-funders mentioned in the application are required as attachments when submitting the application. The co-funding statement in which co-funding is pledged is unconditional, may not contain any resolute clauses and must be signed by an authorised signatory of the co-funder. NWO provides a mandatory format for the co-funding statement on the funding page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website and in ISAAC.

If the application is awarded, the co-funder must confirm its contribution(s) in the consortium agreement. This agreement also contains further arrangements between the co-funder(s) and the applicants (see section 5.4).

Accountability for cash co-funding and co-funding in kind

The ratio between co-funding (both cash and in kind) and the funded provided by NWO in this Call for proposals applies from the submission of an application up to and including the decision on the funding by NWO. Cash co-funding affects the amount of funding provided by NWO because both the NWO contribution and cash co-funding are used for the same project-specific costs (unlike co-funding in kind).

Automatic indexation as a result of other applicable rates after submission does not affect the ratio and co-funding requirement for the NWO contribution. NWO bases this on the ratio in the application budgets accepted by NWO.

Upon project completion, the final funding amount will be determined based on the final financial report, the applicable financial conditions, and the co-funding ratio specified in the approved project budget.

In the event of partial cash co-funding (due to unforeseen circumstances, such as bankruptcies), NWO will base its contribution on the original funding, taking into account the cash co-funding that has been provided and the applicable minimum co-funding requirement, if applicable.

⁴

Ineligible co-funding in kind is described in the NWO Co-funding Rules.

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Cash co-funding above the co-funding requirement affects the ratio between co-funding and the funding awarded by NWO. If a project has cash co-funding above the co-funding requirement and, upon determination, there is partial cash co-funding, the NWO contribution will never exceed the original contribution from the funding awarded. The ratio of the NWO funding will then be no more than the contribution resulting from the co-funding requirement.

NWO must be informed at all times of any problems with expected co-funding (cash and/or in kind). In addition to financial consequences for a project, NWO may also require appropriate changes to a project in the form of a change request in ISAAC by the main applicant, so that the research can be continued to the best of its ability.

4 Assessment procedure

This chapter first describes the assessment procedure according to the DORA principles (section 4.1) and how the assessment procedure works (section 4.2). It then lists the criteria against which the assessment committee will evaluate your application (section 4.3).

The NWO Code of Conduct on Personal Interests applies to all persons involved in the assessment and decision-making process and to all NWO staff members involved ([Code of Conduct on Personal Interests | NWO](#)).

The use of generative AI is completely excluded from the assessment of an application. More information about the policy on generative AI can be found on the website ([NWO policy on the use of generative artificial intelligence \(GAI\) | NWO](#)).

NWO strives for an inclusive assessment culture in which there is no place for conscious or unconscious barriers based on cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender, sexual orientation, health or age ([Diversity and inclusion | NWO](#)). NWO actively encourages members of assessment committees to become aware of implicit associations and to try to minimise them. NWO provides them with information on concrete ways to improve the assessment of applications.

4.1 The San Francisco Declaration (DORA)

NWO is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). DORA is a global initiative that aims to improve the way research and researchers are assessed. DORA contains recommendations for research funders, research organisations, scientific journals and other parties.

DORA focuses on reducing the uncritical use of bibliometric indicators and eliminating unconscious bias in the assessment of research and researchers. DORA's overarching philosophy is that research should be assessed on its own merits rather than on the basis of derived indicators, such as the journal in which the research is published.

When assessing the scientific track record of applicants, NWO uses a broad definition of scientific output.

NWO requests that committee members do not rely on indicators such as the Journal Impact Factor or the h-index when assessing applications. You may not mention these in your application. However, in addition to publications, you may also mention other scientific products, such as datasets, patents, software and code, etc.

For more information about what NWO is doing to implement the principles of DORA, see: [DORA | NWO](#).

4.2 Procedure

The application procedure consists of the following steps:

1. Submission of the application;
2. Processing of the application;
3. Preliminary advice by members of the assessment committee;
4. Right of reply;
5. Meeting of the assessment committee;

6. Decision-making.

An external, independent assessment committee will be set up for this Call for proposals, consisting of representatives from academia and professional practice with knowledge of the field. The task of the assessment committee is to assess the submitted applications and related documents in relation to each other and on their own merits, based on the assessment criteria specified in this Call for proposals.

Due to the expertise available in the assessment committee and the small size of the grant, NWO has decided to make use of the option provided in Article 2.2.4, paragraph 2, of the NWO Grant Rules 2024 to carry out the assessment procedure without involving referees.

4.2.1 Submission of an application

A standard form is available for submitting your application on the grant page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website and in ISAAC. In your application, you must adhere to the questions in this form and the procedure described in the explanatory notes. You must also adhere to the conditions regarding the maximum number of words and pages.

Your fully completed application form must be received via ISAAC before the deadline (see section 1.3). After this time, you will no longer be able to submit an application. The main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt after submitting the application.

4.2.2 Processing of the application

As soon as possible after you have submitted your application, you will be informed whether NWO will process your application. NWO determines this on the basis of a number of administrative and technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, section 3.4). Only if your application meets these criteria can NWO process it.

Please note that NWO may contact you within ten working days of the submission deadline to request any administrative corrections in order to ensure that your application meets the conditions for submission. You will be given one opportunity to make the corrections, for which you will have ten working days.

4.2.3 Preliminary advice from the assessment committee

Your application will then be submitted to several members of the assessment committee (the preliminary advisors) for comment. The preliminary advisors will provide written, substantiated comments on the application. They will formulate these comments on the basis of the substantive assessment criteria and assign a score to the application for each assessment criterion (see section 4.3).

4.2.4 Written Response

The main applicant will receive the preliminary advice by e-mail in anonymised form and without scores. You will then have the opportunity to formulate a response. You will have ten working days to submit your response by email. If you decide to withdraw the application, you must notify Regieorgaan SIA by email as soon as possible and withdraw the application in ISAAC. If NWO receives your response after the deadline, it will not be included in the further procedure.

4.2.5 Meeting of the assessment committee

The assessment committee will make its own assessment based on the available material. The preliminary advice will largely guide the final assessment but will not necessarily be adopted in full by the assessment committee. The committee weighs up the arguments of the pre-advisers (including among themselves) and considers whether the response provides an adequate response to the critical comments in the preliminary recommendations.

Following the discussion, the committee will draw up a written recommendation to the board of the SIA based on the quality and prioritisation of the applications. This recommendation will be based on the assessment criteria. The application must be assessed as satisfactory on criterion 1 and score at least 4.00 on each of the other three assessment criteria separately to be eligible for the grant (see section 4.3.2).

If, after discussion of the applications, two or more applications cannot be distinguished from each other on the basis of their weighted total score, this constitutes a tie (see section 4.2.6).

4.2.6 Tie

NWO defines a tie as a situation in which two or more applications cannot be distinguished from each other on the basis of their weighted score. A tie situation is relevant around the total grant cap or the selection threshold. Whether there is a tie situation is determined as follows. The starting point is the prioritisation drawn up by the assessment committee, with final scores rounded to two decimal places. The reference score is the score of the lowest-priority application within the total grant cap or selection threshold. All applications with a score that is 0.05 or less from the reference score will be considered. This means that applications that are within 0.1 of each other will be selected. If a tie occurs at the total grant scheme cap or selection threshold, the application with the highest score on the research plan quality criterion will be ranked highest. If the tie is still not broken, the application with the highest score on the network formation criterion will be ranked highest. If the applications are still tied, the assessment committee will determine the prioritisation by means of an (anonymous) majority vote (in accordance with Article 2.2.6, paragraph 5 of the NWO Grant Rules 2024). If the vote does not provide a decisive result, or is not desirable, the tie will be referred to the decision-making body.

4.2.7 Decision-making

Finally, the board of Regieorgaan SIA reviews the procedure followed and the advice of the assessment committee. It then determines the final qualifications and decides on the acceptance or rejection of the applications.

4.2.8 Timeline

Below you will find the timeline for this Call for proposals. NWO may deem it necessary to make adjustments to the timeline of this Call for proposals during the ongoing procedure. You will, of course, be notified of any such adjustments in good time.

Applications

21 April 2026	Application deadline
May 2026	Availability of applicants for any administrative corrections to the application

May/June 2026	Consultation with preliminary advisers
June 2026	Applicants may submit a response
September	Assessment committee meeting
October 2026	Board decision
November 2026	Announcement of decision

4.3 Criteria

4.3.1 Substantive assessment criteria

Applications submitted under this Call for proposals will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

Criterion 1: Alignment with the thematic scope

The committee assesses the application on the extent to which it fits within one of the two objectives of the Call for proposals. These objectives are formulated in section 2.1.2.

The committee assesses this criterion on a pass/fail basis

Criterion 2: Identification and formulation of the research question (25%)

In line with the chosen objective, the committee assesses the application on the extent to which:

- the practical question arises from professional practice in the SME or public sector;
- the practical question has been tested by relevant professionals working in the professional practice;
- the practical question is socially relevant, with a clear indication of the expected practical benefits and an explanation thereof. An urgent question that invites the development of innovative knowledge constitutes added value in this regard;
- the process by which the question was articulated is clearly described (workshops in the field, surveys, references to presentations, etc.);
- the answer, through its intended impact, meets a real need in professional practice.

Criterion 3: Network suitability (25%)

In line with the chosen objective, the committee assesses the application on the extent to which:

- the consortium partners involved play an active role in the research;
- the consortium has sufficient knowledge and quality at the outset to carry out the research;
- the consortium maintains relationships with national and international knowledge networks and relevant initiatives. It is an added value if the consortium forms an extension of an existing network;
- the utilisation of the knowledge gained from this research in education, research and professional practice is guaranteed within the consortium.

Dual roles within the consortium are not permitted (see explanation in 3.1.3).

Criterion 4: Quality of the project plan (50%)

In line with the chosen objective, the committee assesses the application on the extent to which:

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- the project plan contains a complete but concise representation of state-of-the-art knowledge in professional practice and science, both within and outside the Netherlands. This includes a literature review with current studies on the subject of the application;
- the project plan translates the practical question into a clear, functional and well-defined research question;
- the project plan contains a description and substantiation of the proposed methods and analysis techniques with which the researchers intend to answer the research question. The methods are optimally suited to the nature of the question. The methods and analysis techniques follow a predetermined, consistent working method and are therefore transparent, reproducible and transferable;
- the project plan contains an activity plan with measurable (interim) objectives and expected (interim) results. This shows who does what, when, why and what the results will be. The activity plan clearly describes the roles of the practice, research and education partners (e.g. participation in focus groups, learning circles, implementation of pilots), with the consortium partners jointly developing knowledge by contributing their own knowledge (knowledge circulation).
- the project plan contains a description of how the research results will be implemented in education and the research community;
- the project plan is feasible and practicable. This means:
 - i. the extent to which the requested financial resources are reasonably proportionate to the nature, scope and expected impact of the project proposal;
 - ii. the extent and quality of the staffing;
 - iii. the extent of available resources and time investment;
 - iv. the extent to which there is clearly defined and qualified project management;
 - v. the extent to which the professional field is prepared to make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the project (e.g. financially, by making equipment and workspace available, in terms of time spent on supervision, project participation, etc., by making patents available through licences, etc.).

The members of the assessment committee assess criterion 1 with a pass or fail, and criteria 2 to 4 with a score in whole numbers, ranging from 1 to 6, with 6 representing the highest score. The quality of the research plan accounts for 50% of the assessment. The criteria of question articulation and network formation each account for 25% of the assessment. All applications receive a weighted average total score for criteria 2 to 4, rounded to two decimal places. To be eligible for funding, an application must score sufficiently on criterion 1 and score 4.00 or higher on each of criteria 2 to 4.

5 Terms and conditions for funding

This chapter details the various funding obligations that apply after allocation, in addition to the funding conditions stated in section 3.5

5.1 Start date

The start date of the project must be no later than six months after the date of the formal allocation decision. The project has a minimum duration of 18 months and a maximum duration of 24 months.

5.2 Content monitoring

Content monitoring can take place in various ways.

Programme meetings

Each year, the programme team of the CIIC incentive programme organises an event to which the (sub)project leader(s) of successful applications are invited. In order to send these invitations, it may be necessary to share the project leader's email address with the CIIC programme team.

Knowledge sharing committee

The CIIC programme team at CLICKNL may interact with the projects resulting from this Call for proposals via a knowledge sharing committee. In this committee, the projects are represented by the project leaders. The project leaders provide the programme team with relevant information (including knowledge and project results) for the CIIC incentive programme. In addition, knowledge and insights from the various projects are exchanged. In order to send these invitations, it may be necessary to share the project leader's email address with the CIIC programme team.

Reporting obligations

In order to monitor the progress of the project, NWO will request substantive and financial interim reports from the project leader. In view of the reporting obligations under the National Growth Fund, NWO may request reports from the project leader and share (parts of) these reports with OCW and the CIIC programme team/CLICKNL.

Completion of a project

Upon completion of a project, final substantive and financial reports will be requested.

If the organisation of the main applicant, as the beneficiary of the NWO funding, is not subject to the OCW audit protocol, it is obliged to provide an auditor's report on the entire project. The amount of the funding will then be determined by NWO.

5.3 Data management plan

After an application has been awarded, the applicant must develop the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants can make use of the advice of the committee in this regard. In the plan, the applicant describes whether existing data will be used or whether new data will be collected, and how the data collection will be made FAIR: findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. Before submission, the data management plan must be coordinated with a data steward or similar official at the research organisation where the project is being carried out. Approval of the data management plan by NWO is a condition for a grant being awarded. The plan can be adjusted during the research.

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More information about NWO's data management protocol can be found at: [Research data management | NWO](#)

5.4 Consortium agreement

The NWO IP policy regarding intellectual property (IP) applies. The NWO IP policy can be found in Chapter 4 of the NWO Grant Rules 2024.

Subsidised activities must be carried out during the period that the project participant is employed by the applicant's organisation. If a project participant is employed by multiple employers, it must be ensured that any copyrights and IP rights of these persons do not constitute an obstacle to the publication of the project results.

NWO aims to ensure that research results can be applied by the partners involved in the project. On the one hand, NWO aims to make the research results of projects it funds publicly accessible and, on the other hand, to stimulate the further development of the research results by offering parties the opportunity to apply or deploy them. In doing so, it may be desirable to transfer intellectual property rights or grant a licence to (one of) the private parties involved in the project. The basic principle is that all research results can be published in accordance with agreements on publication procedures.

The conclusion of a consortium agreement after the application has been awarded is one of the conditions for the start of the project. This agreement sets out arrangements regarding intellectual property and publication, knowledge transfer, confidentiality, co-funding payments, and progress and final reports. Uploading to ISAAC is necessary before a project can start. The main applicant is responsible for arranging the consortium agreement.

The (model) consortium agreement made available by NWO on the grant page for this Call for proposals must be used for this purpose. This model agreement has been drawn up in accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2024.

5.5 Socially responsible licensing

The project may generate knowledge that is suitable for application in society. When entering into agreements on the licensing and/or transfer of research results developed under this Call for proposals, the ten principles for socially responsible licensing, as stated in the UMCNL report umcnl.nl/app/uploads/2025/09/Tien-Principes-Maatschappelijk-Verantwoord-Licentieren-2019.pdf, must be taken into account.

5.6 Open Access

NWO has signed the Berlin Declaration (2003), is a member of cOAlitie S (2018) and is committed to making the results of scientific research funded by NWO freely accessible via the internet (Open Access). In doing so, NWO is implementing the Dutch government's policy of making all publicly funded research available via Open Access. Scientific publications of research funded on the basis of allocations resulting from this Call for proposals must therefore be available in Open Access in accordance with the [Open Access Policy Rule](#).

Scientific articles

Scientific articles must be made available via Open Access immediately upon publication (without embargo) via one of the following routes:

- publication in a fully open access journal or platform that is deposited in the DOAJ;

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- publication in a subscription journal and depositing at least the author's version of the article in an Open Access repository deposited in OpenDOAR;
- publication in a journal for which a transformative Open Access agreement is available between the UNL and a publisher. See: [Open Access | NWO](#).

Books

Different conditions apply to books, book chapters and collections. See the Open Access Policy Rule on [Open Science | NWO](#).

CC BY licence

With a view to optimal dissemination of publications, at least a Creative Commons (CC BY) licence must be applied. In the presence of compelling interests, the author may request to publish under a CC BY-ND licence. For books, collections and book chapters, the choice of a CC BY licence is optional.

Cost

Any costs for publishing in fully Open Access journals can be included in the project budget using the 'Equipment' budget module. Costs for publications in hybrid journals are not eligible for reimbursement by NWO. For Open Access books, the separate NWO Open Access book fund is available.

For detailed information on NWO's Open Access policy, see: [Open Science | NWO](#).

6 Contact and other information

6.1 Contact

6.1.1 Content-related questions

For questions about the content of this Call for proposals, please contact ngf-ciic@nwo.nl.

6.1.2 For technical questions about the online application ISAAC

If you have technical questions about using ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please consult the manual first before asking the helpdesk for advice. The ISAAC helpdesk is available Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on +31 (0) 70 34 40 600. You can also send your question by e-mail toisaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will receive a response within two working days.

6.2 Other information

NWO processes personal data received in the context of this round in accordance with the NWO privacy statement, [Privacy Statement | NWO](#).

NWO may contact applicants for an evaluation of the procedure and/or the research programme.

This Call for proposals has been published in both Dutch and English. The Dutch version is deemed authentic. For legal interpretation, the text of the Dutch version will be decisive.

[View the round and all documents in ISAAC.](#)

7 Appendices

7.1 Budget modules and rates for research organisations

It is possible to apply for the funding of the wage costs of for personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research. Funding of these wage costs depends on the type of appointment and the research organisation where the personnel are/will be employed.

- For university institutions, wage costs are financed in accordance with:
- the UNL salary tables applicable at the time of the funding is awarded + 50% surcharge ([Salary tables | NWO](#)) or;
- the rates in accordance with the *Integrale kostensystematiek (IKS)* as filed with RVO for the relevant main or co-applicants. See also section 7.3.
- For university medical centres, wage costs are financed in accordance with:
- the UMCNL salary tables applicable at the time the grant is awarded + 50% surcharge ([Salary tables | NWO](#)) or;
- the rates in accordance with the *Integrale kostensystematiek (IKS)* as filed with RVO for the relevant main or co-applicants. See also section 7.3.
- For staff at universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and other research organisations, wage costs are financed on the basis of:
- the CAO salary scale for the employee concerned in accordance with the rates applicable at the time the funding was awarded, as set out in Table 2.1 'Average direct labour costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% surcharge ([Salary tables | NWO](#)) or;
- the rates in accordance with the *Integrale kostensystematiek (IKS)* as filed with RVO for the main or co-applicants concerned. See also section 7.3.
- For the Dutch Caribbean, the national government in the Caribbean Netherlands employs civil servants on the BES islands under different conditions than in the European Netherlands.

<https://www.rijksdienstcn.com/werken-bij-rijksdienst-caribisch-nederland/ arbeidsvoorwaarden>.

ALL applicants (research organisations, enterprises, civil society organisations) MUST make a reservation (see section 7.4).

The rates for all budget modules, with the exception of the IKS rates (see section 7.3), are included in the budget format accompanying the application form. For the 'Postdoc' budget module, a one-off personal bench fee of €5,000 is added to the wage costs to stimulate the scientific career of the NWO-funded project employee. Except when using IKS rates. The IKS rates are already inclusive, so the bench fee is included in them. Renumeration for PhD students/scholarship holders at a Dutch university are not eligible for NWO funding.

Below is an explanation of the available budget modules.

7.1.1 Staff

For the aforementioned salary tables and rates, see [Salary tables | NWO](#).

Postdoc

A postdoc is appointed at a university in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, a university medical centre (UMC) or a research organisation as referred to in section 3.1.

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Use the rates for a senior research assistant in the UNL salary tables plus a 50% surcharge, and the rates for a postdoc at a UMC in the UMCNL salary tables plus a 50% surcharge, or the IKS rates as filed with RVO.

It is not possible to apply for funding for a postdoc who started working on the project to be funded by the before the start of the grant period.

Only a postdoc position with an appointment of at least 12 months for 0.5 FTE qualifies as an appointment for which a one-off personal bench fee of €5,000 is available to stimulate the postdoc's scientific career.

Non-scientific personnel (NWP)

Funding may be requested for non-scientific personnel (NWP) required for the implementation of the project. This may include, for example, programmers, technical assistants, analysts or project managers. The deployment of NWP must be described in the application.

The duration of the appointment may not exceed the duration of the NWO-funded project.

Depending on the job level, a choice is made from the UNL or UMCNL salary tables for NWP-MBO, NWP-HBO and NWP-academic, or use the IKS rates as filed with RVO. No personal bench fee is available for NWP.

Replacement of the applicant

This budget module can be used to apply for funding for the costs of replacing the main applicant and/or co-applicant(s). This allows the employer of the applicant concerned to cover the costs of releasing him/her from teaching, supervisory, administrative or management tasks (not research tasks). The applicant(s) may only use the time freed up by the replacement for work related to the project. The application must describe the work that the applicant(s) will perform in the context of the project during the time they are exempted.

Replacement may be requested for a maximum of the equivalent of five full-time months.

NWO will fund the replacement on the basis of the salary scales applicable on the date of the decision + a 50% surcharge for a senior research assistant (scale 11.0) or on the basis of the IKS rate as filed with RVO for a maximum of the rate used in the application budget. (Salary scales | NWO)

Staff at universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and other research organisations

Funding can be requested for staff at universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes, and other research organisations. The rates are determined on the basis of the Government Rates Manual (HOT), table 2 under 2.1, 'average direct labour costs per salary scale', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' plus a 50% surcharge. The salary scale of the requested position determines the rate from the HOT table. Alternatively, use the IKS rates as filed with RVO.

For organisations that do not use the CAO of the Dutch Government or similar (such as the collective labour agreements for higher professional education, senior secondary vocational education, secondary education and local authorities), the rate that most closely approximates the actual wage costs should be used.

Students

Students may be employed in the research. If the students contribute as part of their curriculum, the rate according to the usual internship allowance of the university of applied science or university applies.

If the students contribute as student assistants in a part-time job alongside their studies, the rate according to the Government Rates Manual (HOT), table 2 under 2.1 'average direct wage costs per salary scale', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT', scale 1 plus 50% surcharge, applies. Or use the IKS rates as filed with RVO.

7.1.2 Equipment

Budget can be requested for all project-specific costs relating to, among other things, consumables, the purchase of services, materials, small instruments, access to national and international facilities, software and research resources that no longer have any economic value after use. Travel and accommodation costs (national and international) for all people working on the project, including foreign guest researchers, costs for the organisation of (international) workshops and symposia, costs for data management, publications, and costs in the context of Citizen Science are also covered by this module. A maximum of 50% of the material budget requested from NWO may be used for work carried out by third parties (e.g. laboratory analyses, data collection, etc.).

Travel expenses (national and international) will only be reimbursed on the basis of second class/economy class fares. For publications, the provisions in section 5.6 on Open Access apply. Costs for an audit report can only be claimed for institutions that are not subject to the OCW's education accountancy protocol, up to a maximum of €5,000 per audit report.

It is not permitted to claim costs for:

- organisational infrastructure and overheads, including a fully functional workplace, accommodation, office automation, personnel administration, commuting expenses, training, facilities, HR advice and occupational health and safety, documentary information provision and home working allowance;
- the use and maintenance of scientific infrastructure developed in-house;
- regular educational activities.

7.1.3 Investments

Budget may be requested for all project-specific resources for research or costs relating to the construction or further development of scientific infrastructure that retain economic value after completion of the project or can be reused. The beneficiary acquires ownership of these research resources at the end of the project. If the beneficiary realises a profit from the economic ownership of these research resources, these profits must be invested in research activities. This concerns the purchase of equipment with residual value for the performance of research and investments in the construction or (further) development of scientific infrastructure. Labour costs as part of the investment can be claimed as personnel costs.

If equipment is not used for the entire duration of the proposed project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the duration of the proposed project, calculated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, are eligible for funding.

The costs of investments must be adequately specified and justified in the application.

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The following are eligible for funding:

- costs for investments in scientific equipment;
- costs for investments in data sets;
- labour costs for employees with essential technical expertise necessary for the development or construction of an investment.

The following are not eligible for funding:

- costs for infrastructure facilities that can be considered part of the usual infrastructure (fully functional workplace, accommodation, office automation, personnel administration, commuting costs, training, facilities, HR advice and occupational health and safety, documentary information provision, home working allowance);
- data collections and any associated software and bibliographies that are already available in other ways;
- other personnel costs, including personnel costs for the operation and performance of research using the facility;
- costs for maintenance and use of equipment on a project. The costs for the use of equipment on a project can be requested via the equipment budget.

7.1.4 Knowledge utilisation

The purpose of this budget module is to promote the utilisation of knowledge generated by the research⁵ related to the intended impact goals for the Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition Growth Fund programme (see section 2.2.1).

It is possible to include an amount for knowledge utilisation. These costs may not exceed 10% of the total funding requested from NWO.

Examples of possible costs include, but are not limited to, a feasibility study into possible applications or testing a possible application in practice, skills development, costs for submitting a patent application, outreach & knowledge transfer, networking, and the use of a business developer.

This Call for proposals calls for practice-oriented research in which knowledge utilisation is already partially integrated into the project activities through demand articulation and collaboration in a consortium. The applicant must clearly indicate what this integration consists of and how the knowledge to be developed will be utilised and contribute to the impact goals.

The requested budget for knowledge utilisation must be adequately specified in the application.

7.1.5 Project management

The Project Management module allows the main applicant to request a project management budget of up to 5% of the total funding requested from NWO. This budget may only be used for activities that are purely supportive of the project for which funding is being requested. The main applicant must provide adequate justification for this budget.

⁵

This budget module is in line with the definition of 'knowledge transfer' used by the European Commission in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research, Development and Innovation (OJEU 2014, C 198).

Project management includes, among other things, optimising the organisational structure of the consortium, supporting the consortium and the main applicant, monitoring the coherence, progress and unity of the project, and coordinating the sub-projects within the project. These tasks may also be performed by external organisations if they are not available at the research organisation of the main applicant and/or co-applicants. When selecting a third party in the tendering procedure, research organisations must take into account the government's procurement rules and, where necessary, follow a European tendering procedure. The work of the main applicant and co-applicants themselves in the context of the project (management) may not be funded from this budget module.

The budget to be requested for project management may consist of material or implementation costs and personnel costs. For personnel costs, a maximum rate of €121 per hour may be claimed. The hourly rate for the personnel to be appointed must be based on a cost-covering rate and is calculated on the basis of the organisation's standard number of productive hours. The cost-covering rate includes:

- (average) gross wage associated with the position of the employee who will contribute to the project (based on the collective labour agreement scale for the employee in question);
- holiday pay and 13th month's wage (if applicable in the applicable collective labour agreement) in proportion to the FTE deployment;
- social security contributions;
- pension costs;
- overhead.

It is permitted to have tasks related to project management carried out by external organisations, but the portion of (commercial) hourly rates that exceeds the aforementioned rates is not eligible for funding and therefore cannot be included in the budget.

7.2 Eligible costs for enterprises and civil society organisations

7.2.1 Eligible costs for personnel

Costs for personnel working for an enterprise or civil society organisation can be claimed in accordance with:

1. the HOT rates applicable at the time of granting the funding requested from NWO from Table 2.1 'Average direct labour costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% surcharge ([Salary tables | NWO](#)). The actual hourly rate of the employee based on the collective labour agreement of their organisation serves as the starting point for the rate selection. The calculation must be based on the number of productive hours stated in the applicable edition of the Government Rates Manual. For organisations that do not use the CAO of the Central Government of the Netherlands or a similar (such as the collective labour agreements for higher professional education, secondary vocational education, secondary education and local authorities) and/or enterprises and other civil society organisations that are not covered by a collective labour agreement, the HOT rate that most closely approximates the actual wage costs should be used, or
2. a fixed hourly rate of €60, or
3. a rate in accordance with the *Integrale kostensystematiek* as filed with RVO for the co-applicant in question. See also section 7.3.

These may be personnel costs for researchers, technicians, and other support staff insofar as they are involved in the research project.

7.2.2 Eligible costs (other than personnel costs)

Insofar as the eligible costs of research and development projects concern costs other than personnel costs, the following costs are eligible for funding in this Call for proposals:

Equipment

Costs may be claimed for all project-specific equipment costs as described in section 7.1.2. These costs are subject to a maximum of 25% of the grant amount (for all (co-)applicants combined). A maximum of 50% of the equipment budget requested from NWO may be used for work carried out by third parties (e.g. laboratory analyses, data collection, etc.).

Investments

Investment costs can be claimed as described in section 7.1.3. These costs are subject to a maximum of 25% of the funding requested from NWO (for all (co-)applicants combined). Only the associated depreciation costs are eligible for funding.

Knowledge utilisation

Costs may be claimed for knowledge utilisation as described in section 7.1.4. For these costs a maximum of 10% of the funding requested from NWO amount applies.

7.3 The Integrale kostenssystematiek (IKS) and the fixed hourly rate

Specifically, and exclusively for calls for proposals conducted by NWO within the framework of the National Growth Fund, main and co-applicants may use the Integrale kostensystematiek as applied by RVO to finance personnel costs.

Only research organisations, enterprises and civil society organisations whose IKS rates have been filed and approved by RVO may apply these rates in the application budget.

If an applicant wishes to use the IKS rates, this choice automatically implies that they give NWO permission to request the IKS rates from RVO for the purpose of NWO's formal assessment of the submission conditions. This choice also implies that the IKS rates will be shared with the consortium partners of the proposal when a joint budget is drawn up.

As part of the assessment of formal submission conditions, NWO will compare the IKS rates in the application budget with the rates filed with and approved by RVO. If a discrepancy is found between the IKS rates in the application budget and the IKS rates at RVO, NWO will contact the main applicant (who is responsible for bringing the application, including the budget, into line with the conditions within the specified period) via ISAAC. (see also section 4.2, subsection 'Processing the application').

The positions listed in the application budget must correspond to the positions listed in the IKS table as filed with RVO. The corresponding hourly rates must also be listed in the application budget without indexation. There is no possibility of indexing rates. If IKS rates have been used, bench fees do not apply because these integral costs are already included in the IKS rate.

In the final financial statement, the applicant must include the personnel costs incurred for each year separately.

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Fixed hourly rate

(Source: [Fixed hourly rate system \(rvo.nl\)](#)) The fixed hourly rate system is a standard method for calculating the amount of funding for eligible costs.

The fixed hourly rate is a reimbursement for the wage costs/labour costs and the indirect or overhead costs of your organisation, such as accommodation costs, office equipment costs and domestic travel costs for work meetings. The fixed hourly rate in this Call for proposals is €60.

If you use this system, your records must clearly show the number of hours worked by your project staff and the costs of equipment, materials and third parties (invoices). It is not necessary to provide a statement of the actual labour costs of the staff working on the project.

7.4 Reservation of UNL, UMCNL and HOT wage costs

If, after submission of the proposal and before the funding is awarded, the UNL and/or UMCNL and/or HOT rates increase, the applicant must reserve funds in the proposal budget to finance a one-off increase in personnel rates. NWO will prescribe a percentage in the budget format based on an estimate of historical multi-year figures. The applicant cannot derive any rights from the prescribed percentage with regard to the actual rate increase.

If the reserved amount proves insufficient to finance the increase in personnel rates, the applicant will compensate for the increase from other budget categories. Substantive changes to the application are not permitted.

If it turns out that not all of the reserved funds are needed, NWO will adjust the application budget downwards and only reimburse the costs associated with the actual rate increase.

7.5 Relationship between this Call for proposals and other components of NGF-CIIC

More information about the governance of the CIIC incentive programme and the relationship between this Call for proposals and the other action lines and activities that form part of this NGF project is available at [www.ciic.nl](#).

7.5.1 CIIC Innovation Agenda

NWO advises applicants to take note of the CIIC Innovation Agenda and, where possible, to incorporate it into the implementation of the project. The Innovation Agenda is available on the [grant page](#) of this Call for proposals

7.5.2 Guideline and Self-assessment for Public Values for Immersive Experiences

NWO advises applicants to take note of the Public Values Guideline and Self-Assessment for Immersive Experiences (IX) and to incorporate it into the implementation of the project where possible. This Public Values Guideline and Self-Assessment is available at on the [grant page](#) for Call for proposals.

More detailed background information on Public Values can be found on the [CIIC website](#).

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Published: January 2026

Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

Visiting address:

The Hague location
Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië 300
2593 CE The Hague
The Netherlands

Utrecht location

Winhontlaan 2
3526 KV Utrecht

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