



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

Exploratory research into effective and responsible IX

Call for proposals

2025 1st round

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1 Introduction

This Call for proposals provides information about the application procedure for the NGF-Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition: Start (NGF-CIIC Start) grant round, Exploratory research into effective and responsible IX (NGF-CIIC Start), which is part of the National Growth Fund project Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition.

The Creative Industries Immersive Impact Coalition proposal has been approved by the Dutch government within the framework of the National Growth Fund. This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), with Regieorgaan SIA acting as a coordinator. Because this Call for proposals is part of the National Growth Fund, different conditions may apply than in standard NWO and Regieorgaan SIA Calls for proposals.

This Call for proposals contains information about the aim of this programme (Chapter 2), the conditions for applying for a grant (Chapter 3) and how your proposal will be assessed (Chapter 4). You will need this information to submit a grant application. Chapter 5 contains the grant obligations that apply in the event you are awarded funding; 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 subsidy cap for this Call for proposals is €1,000,000 in total. A maximum of 20 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 **20 January 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 CIIC

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 (NGF-CIIC), which will run until 2029. The project is funded by the National Growth Fund and 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). The content of the programme has been developed in close collaboration with this sector and the application domains. The [Innovation Agenda](#) serves as 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 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 power in the medium to long term. Developments in this innovative field offer economic opportunities 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 adopters of high-quality IX content.

As a driver of the third digital transition, IX is also expected to have a major societal impact in the coming decades. In order to mitigate any negative societal effects of this digital transition, safeguarding public values is an important part of this incentive programme. To this end, [a guideline and a self-assessment](#) have been drawn up.

To create the desired economic and societal impact with IX, we invite researchers, (semi)governmental bodies, civil society organisations and companies to collaborate in co-creation with IX creators and IX adopters.

More information is available at www.ciic.nl.

2.2 Objective of NGF-CIIC Start: Exploratory research into effective and responsible IX

The CIIC incentive programme consists of five action lines. NWO is involved in Action Line 1 (Knowledge and Methods), Action Line 2 (Human Capital) and Action Line 3 (Ecosystem and Facilities).

NGF-CIIC Start contributes to the objective of Action Line 1 of the CIIC incentive programme: gathering knowledge and making it applicable and focuses on short-cycle and exploratory research. This Call for proposals funds research into when and how IX works effectively and responsibly. The aim is to convert relevant and effective working methods, experiences, and insights into validated and generically applicable knowledge.

This knowledge will give a broader group of IX creators, adopters and users short-term access to up-to-date and relevant knowledge gathered in the NGF-CIIC Start projects. In addition, innovation in IX will be given a rapid boost, to capitalise on opportunities. And finally, the results of this first Call for proposals will also provide valuable knowledge for the development of new subsidy schemes and innovation projects in this and other programme lines of the CIIC incentive programme.

This Call for proposals focuses on generating knowledge and insights from one or more of the following perspectives:

1. the effective elements of IX and the design assumptions made during the development process. This can be done, for example, by analysing an experiment, a prototype in an ongoing study or existing IX (as an end-user product);
2. the experience process or user journey: the phase before the IX experience (such as onboarding or instructions), the experience itself and the phase after the experience (such as user evaluations and feedback activities);
3. the desired or undesired effects of IX that is under development or has already been developed. By this we mean the observable consequences or changes that occur as a result or consequence of choices, actions, activities or interventions during the development and/or experience process;
4. effective methodological approaches to measuring and understanding the efficacy and effectiveness of IX. From mapping quantitative effects to gauging qualitative or affective effects (emotions, awareness, etc.);
5. how public values, such as privacy, self-determination, accessibility and digital inclusion, can be deployed and embedded in the development, adoption, application and use of IX.

Given the limited scope and duration of the projects, it is not necessary to examine the chosen perspective(s) in full detail and in relation to each other. However, you are requested to justify your choices in the application. The development of new IX software or technologies is also outside the scope of NGF-CIIC Start.

2.3 Social impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to solutions for social issues now *and* in the future. 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, with it, 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 that is 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.

2.3.1 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 distinct phases 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 NGF-CIIC project. 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:

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

The application describes the intended impact of the NGF-CIIC Start project in research, education, and practice, and how this intended impact contributes to achieving which of the above impact goals.

3 Conditions for applicants

This chapter contains the conditions that apply to your grant application. Firstly, it specifies who is eligible for a grant (Section 3.1) and the purposes for which funding can be sought (Section 3.2). Next, it addresses the conditions for preparing and submitting the application (Sections 3.3 and 3.4) and the specific grant conditions (Section 3.5).

3.1 Who can apply

Complete proposals must be submitted by the main applicant and at least two co-applicants. A proposal must be prepared by a consortium, which may include participants other than the applicants.

There are four distinct categories of participants in a consortium:

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

The conditions for each participant are further explained 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:

- Colleges and universities, 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;
- institutes affiliated with Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and NWO;
- the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- Princess Máxima Centre.

* Lecturers appointed at universities of applied sciences and researchers employed by a TO2 institution may also apply as the main applicant if they have a fixed term paid employment contract.

Persons with a zero-hour employment contract or with a fixed-term contract time (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.

It may happen that the applicant's tenure track employment 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 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.

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. companies and other public and private organisations (hereinafter: companies and civil society organisations) other than the research organisations mentioned under 'main applicant' in section 3.1.1.

Ad 1

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

Ad 2

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

- they are employed on a permanent basis, with at least a 0.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) contract;
- their organisation 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.

SMEs (including self-employed persons) participating in an application must meet the following criteria:

- it is a company, 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 an annual turnover of less than €50 million or a balance sheet total of less than €43 million. In order to determine whether these maximums are met, an enterprise that is part of a group of companies or a concern must include the personnel, turnover and balance sheet total of this concern.

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.

Once a proposal is approved, the principal applicant assumes the role of project manager and point of contact for NWO. The principal applicant's research organisation is designated as the main beneficiary and administers the grant.

Co-applicants play an active role in the implementation of the project. The project manager, sub-project manager(s), and recipient(s) are jointly responsible for executing the entire project.

Main and co-applicants with a paid or unpaid position at a research organisation listed under 'principal applicant' in section 3.1.1 or an unpaid or paid researcher at the research organisation involved in the execution may not have a paid or unpaid position at an organisation listed under 2 in section 3.1.1.

3.1.4 Collaborative partners

A collaboration partner is a party that does not receive any funding and does not contribute any co-funding to the application but is nonetheless actively involved in the execution of the research and/or the utilisation of knowledge. A collaboration partner is therefore not a principal 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: as a collaborative partner, no subsidy for salary or research costs can be requested for staff of organisations participating in the consortium. However, it is possible to reimburse costs by hiring these organisations as third parties via the 'material costs', 'knowledge utilisation' or 'project management' modules (see section 3.2 and Appendix 7.1).

3.1.5 Co-funder

A co-funder is an organisation that participates in the consortium and contributes in-cash and/or in-kind to the project. For further conditions governing co-funding that apply to this Call for proposals, see Section 3.5.7. The role these organisations play in preparing, implementing, and translating the research results to society must be defined in the proposal.

3.2 What can be applied for

A maximum of €50,000 in funding may be requested per project. The maximum duration of the proposed project is 12 months.

At least 50% of the requested subsidy funds must be allocated to research organisations listed under 'main applicant' in 3.1.1. Furthermore, NWO does not finance the total project scope. An application requires at least 50% of the total requested subsidy in the form of **Funding by parties other than NWO**.

Funding by parties other than NWO consists of:

- i. The contribution of companies and civil society organisations for the non-subsidised share of the costs eligible for funding;
- ii. Any cash (excluding VAT) or in-kind co-funding (see section 3.5.7).

The research organisations listed as 'main applicant' in Section 3.1 or as 'co-applicant' under point 1 are not permitted to declare their own institutional contribution as **Funding by parties other than NWO** or to act as co-funders.

The main and co-applicants may claim costs in accordance with the available budget modules (including the maximum amounts) as listed below. Only claim what is essential for the execution of 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 'companies and civil society organisations' (as referred to in section 3.1.2 under 'co-applicant' under 2).

Table 1 Grant percentages per type of applicant.

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

3.2.1 Staff funding

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

The following rate systems can be used in this Call for proposals:

- UNL salary scales + 50% surcharge (see Appendix 7.1);
- NFU salary scales + 50% surcharge (see Appendix 7.1);
- rates from table 2.1 'Average direct labour costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excl. VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% surcharge (see Appendix 7.1);
- Integral cost system (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 in 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 for 'main applicants' and 'co-applicants', 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 different rate systems that can be used, see section 3.2.1 and section 7.1.

¹ NWO adheres to RVO terminology: registered 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 at the time a joint budget is drawn up.

Please note: it is not possible to apply for funding for the deployment of the principal or co-applicants themselves other than via the budget module Replacement of applicants and Staff at universities of applied sciences and TO2 institutes.

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

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

Please note: grant applications for the deployment of the principal or co-applicants themselves can only be made through the replacement grant, up to a maximum of 10% of the budget requested from NWO.

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

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

- the rates applicable at the time of granting the subsidy from Table 2.1 'Average direct salary costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% surcharge, or
- Rate in accordance with the Integral cost system (IKS) as filed with RVO for the relevant main or co-applicants.

3.2.3.3 Students

It is possible to assign project tasks to students if they are studying at a research organisation mentioned in section 3.1. These costs can be included in the project as material costs. There is no maximum number of students who can participate in the project.

3.2.4 Material

Funding can 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

Funding can 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 in this case and the costs must be claimed as Investment.

Only associated depreciation charges are eligible for subsidy.

A maximum of 25% of the subsidy amount may be requested for investments.

3.2.6 Knowledge utilisation

Funding may be requested for activities that promote the utilisation of knowledge from the research³, 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 subsidy amount.

3.2.7 Project management

It is possible to allocate up to 5% of the total subsidy amount to project management. It is not mandatory to make use of this.

3.2.8 Eligible costs for companies and civil society organisations

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

Table 2 lists the maximum eligible costs for companies and civil society organisations. For these organisations, a maximum of 75% of the eligible costs will be reimbursed.

Further details on these eligible costs can also be found in the appendix to this Call for proposals (see Appendix 7.2).

Table 2 Eligible costs for companies and civil society organisations.

Eligible costs	Maximum amount
Personnel costs for researchers, technicians, and other support staff as far as they are involved in the research	Unlimited number of positions according to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 Integral cost system (IKS) as filed with RVO for the main or co-applicants concerned.
Equipment	Maximum 25% of the subsidy amount, of which a maximum of 50% may be used for hiring third parties.

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 for State Aid for Research, Development and Innovation (OJEU 2022, C 414).

Investments	Maximum of 25% of the subsidy amount, depreciation charges only.
Knowledge utilisation	Maximum 10% of the subsidy amount.

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 attachments:

- budget;
- 'Statements and signature' form;
- project participants form;
- de minimis aid declaration (per co-applicant from the category of companies and civil society organisations);
- declaration of own contribution and co-financing (if applicable: per co-applicant from the category of enterprises and civil society organisations and per co-funder);
- support statement (if applicable: per cooperation partner);
- IKS rates statement (if applicable: for all organisations that use this, collected in 1 form);
- statement of appointment and project supervision (if applicable).

The application and appendix(es) must be drawn up in accordance with the templates provided by NWO. Appendices must be uploaded separately from the application in ISAAC. All appendices, except for the budget, must be submitted as PDF files (without security or access code). The budget must be submitted as an Excel file in ISAAC. Appendices other than those mentioned above are not permitted.

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

Applications can only be submitted via the ISAAC online application system. Applications 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 must also enter your details online.

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

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

Does a principal applicant and/or co-applicant work for an organisation that is not included in the ISAAC database? If so, please email relatiebeheer@nwo.nl, so that the organisation can be added. This will take a few days. Therefore, it is important to report this at least one week before the deadline.

NWO assumes that the applicant has informed the organisation where he/she works about the submission of the application and that the organisation accepts the grant conditions of 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 applying, you will be asked to be available to make any administrative corrections and thus (still) meet the conditions for submission.

These conditions are:

- the principal applicant and co-applicant(s) meet the conditions set out in section 3.1;
- the application meets 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;
- 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 maximum duration of 12 months;
- the application meets the required percentage of funding other than from NWO;
- Applicants who use the IKS tariff system have given NWO permission to request their IKS tariffs from RVO.

All required attachments have been completed in full, filled out in accordance with the instructions, and prepared 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 Subsidy Scheme 2024](#) and the [Agreement on the Funding of Scientific Research](#), with the exception of:

- Article 1.4(1), (5) and (6) of the NWO Subsidy Scheme 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) an Integral cost system (IKS), provided that their IKS accounting method has been approved by RVO, or 2) the regular NWO rates (UNL, NFU, HOT) + a surcharge for 50% of the overheads, or 3) a fixed hourly rate (€60);
- Article 1.1 of the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024, in the sense that companies 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 Subsidy Scheme 2024; in the sense that these qualification requirements do not apply to researchers and/or representatives of companies and civil society organisations applying for subsidies;

- The phrase 'without being the main applicant or co-applicant' in Article 5.1, preamble and sub f of the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024, if an applicant company or civil society organisation provides co-financing in kind.

NWO shall 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

In accordance with the de minimis Regulation, NWO will fund the applications submitted in response to this Call for Proposals. NWO will not award a grant if it is not clear that the application meets the definitions and conditions set out in the de minimis Regulation.

Under the de minimis Regulation, a company or 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, companies and civil society organisations declare that the grant awarded by NWO will not cause them to exceed the de minimis threshold. If a company or civil society organisation finds that the NWO grant exceeds the de minimis threshold, the company or civil society organisation cannot apply for a grant from NWO.

When drawing up the project budget, the main and co-applicants must take the above into account and therefore check for each company or civil society organisation whether the requested grant amount exceeds the de minimis threshold. The de minimis aid declaration completed separately by these companies or civil society organisations forms part of the application.

3.5.2 Compliance with National Knowledge Security Guidelines

World-class science can benefit from international collaboration. The National Knowledge Security Guidelines (hereinafter: the Guidelines) help research organisations ensure that international collaboration can take place safely. Knowledge security concerns the undesirable transfer of sensitive knowledge and technology that compromises national security; the covert influence of state actors on education and research, thereby jeopardising academic freedom and social security; and ethical issues that may arise in cooperation with countries that do not respect fundamental rights.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that the project is and remains in line with the Guidelines. By submitting the application, the applicant commits to the considerations set out in these Guidelines. In the event of a suspected violation of the Guidelines in an application for project funding submitted to NWO or in a project funded by NWO, NWO may request the applicant to submit a risk assessment demonstrating that the considerations set out in the Guidelines have been followed. If the applicant does not comply with NWO's request or if the risk assessment clearly constitutes a violation of the Guidelines, this may have consequences for the granting of the grant or the decision by NWO. NWO may also include further conditions in the award letter in such cases.

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

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 if necessary'. Researchers are expected to make public at least those data, including non-numerical results, which form the basis for the conclusions of works published within the project, simultaneously with the publication itself. Any costs incurred in doing so can be included in the project budget. Researchers must indicate how data resulting from the project will be handled in the data management section of the application.

Data management section

The data management section is part of the proposal. 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 publicly available. Often, measures will need 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 considered in the decision to approve or reject an application. However, the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section.

3.5.4 Scientific integrity

In accordance with the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024, the project funded by NWO must be carried out in accordance with nationally and internationally accepted standards of scientific conduct as stated in the Dutch Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity (2018). By submitting the application, the applicant commits to this code. In the event of a (possible) violation of these standards in an NWO-funded project, the NWO must be notified immediately, and all relevant documents must be submitted to the 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 licence

The applicant is responsible for determining whether an ethical statement or licence is needed for the realisation of the proposed project. The applicant should ensure that this is obtained from the relevant institution or ethics committee in good time. Whether or not an ethical statement or permit is available at the time of the application process has no influence on the assessment of the application. If an ethical statement or permit is required for (part of) the research, the project leader must provide the NWO with a copy of this statement or permit after the project has been awarded, and in any case 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 licence is required cannot, of course, be conducted (yet) if no statement or licence has been provided.

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 regarding the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.7 Co-financing

The [Co-financing Scheme | NWO](#) applies to all applications.

Additional definitions:

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

Co-funding requirement

It is possible to add co-funders to the application 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.

Companies and civil society organisations (as referred to in section 3.1.2 under 2) that apply for funding as co-applicants under this Call for proposals must make their own contributions for the portion of the eligible costs that is not funded by NWO (see Table 1, section 3.2). They may also make contributions more than the minimum percentage of 25% of their costs. Contributions may only be made in kind, as far as these costs are necessary for the implementation of the project.

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 co-funders exceeds 49% of the total project costs will not be considered.
- Contributions in kind will only be accepted if the portion 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 knowledge 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 (person-hours) to a project. For the rates, see the [Government Rates Manual \(HOT\)](#), table 2 under 2.2 'average total salary costs per salary scale', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT'. The rate that most closely approximates the actual salary costs should be used.
- Cash co-financing is the net amount that a co-funder pays to the applicant. The applicant invoices cash co-financing and any VAT to the co-funder.

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

- Grants provided 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-financing statement by participating co-funders

In a co-financing statement, the co-funder expresses its financial support for the project and confirms the promised co-financing. Co-funding statements from co-funders mentioned in the application are mandatory as attachments when submitting the application. The co-financing statement in which co-financing is committed is unconditional, may not contain any resolutive clauses and must be signed by an authorised signatory of the co-funder. NWO provides a mandatory format for the co-financing 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 applicant(s). (see section 5.1.3).

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

The ratio between co-funding (both cash and in kind) and the grant provided by NWO in this Call for proposals applies from the submission of an application until the grant is determined. Cash co-funding affects the amount of the grant 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).

One-off indexing due to other applicable rates after submission does not affect the ratio and cofinancing requirement for the NWO contribution. For this, NWO assumes the ratio in the application budgets accepted by NWO.

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

Cash co-funding more than the co-funding requirement affects the applied ratio of co-funding to grant provided by NWO. If a project has cash co-funding more than the co-funding requirement and partial cash co-funding has been provided at determination, the NWO contribution is never more than the original contribution from the grant award. The ratio of the NWO contribution is then at most the contribution that follows from the co-financing requirement.

At all times, NWO must be notified of problems in expected co-funding (cash and/or in-kind). In addition to financial implications for a project, NWO may also require adequate changes to a project as a change request in ISAAC so that research can be continued to the best of its ability.

⁴ Ineligible co-financing in kind is described in the Co-financing Regulation.

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

NWO strives to achieve an inclusive 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 an assessment committee 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 an application.

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 institutions, scientific journals, and other parties.

DORA aims to reduce 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 based on 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:

- submission of the application;
- admissibility of the application;
- preliminary advice from the assessment committee;
- meeting of the assessment committee;
- decision-making.

An external, independent assessment committee will be set up for this Call for proposals, consisting of representatives from academia and 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 Subsidy Scheme 2024 to conduct the assessment procedure without involving referees.

4.2.1 Submission of an application

A standard form is available for submitting your application on the funding 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 apply. 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 based on several 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 bear in mind that NWO may contact you within ten working days of the submission deadline to request any possible administrative corrections to (still) meet 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 advisers) for comment. The preliminary advisers will provide written, substantive, and reasoned comments on the application. They will formulate these comments based on the substantive assessment criteria (see section 4.3.1) and will give the application a pass or fail mark for each assessment criterion.

4.2.4 Meeting of the assessment committee

The committee arrives at a final assessment during a meeting. The application and the preliminary advice form the starting point for the plenary discussion of the applications by the assessment committee. The members of the assessment committee make their own assessment based on the available material. The preliminary advice serves as a guideline for the final assessment, but the assessment committee does not necessarily adopt it in its entirety. The assessment committee gives a pass or fail for each criterion, which leads to a positive or negative final assessment for each application. To receive a positive assessment and thus be eligible for a grant, an application must be assessed as satisfactory for all criteria.

Applications that are accepted for consideration are assessed by the assessment committee in order of receipt: *first come, first served*. If the application has already been accepted for consideration, the time of submission in ISAAC determines the order of receipt.

If you have amended the application to meet the formal requirements and ensure completeness, the time at which you submitted the complete and correct application in ISAAC will be considered the time of receipt.

Following the discussion, the committee will draw up a written recommendation to the board of Regieorgaan SIA. This recommendation will be based on the assessment criteria (as mentioned in section 4.3), the order of receipt and the maximum available budget (subsidy cap) for this call.

4.2.5 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 whether to approve or reject the applications. If the available budget is insufficient to approve all applications with a positive assessment, the order of receipt will be decisive. The principle of *first come, first served* will be applied.

4.2.6 Timeline

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

Applications

20 January 2026	Application deadline
Mid-February 2026	Consultation with preliminary advisers
March 2026	Assessment committee meeting
April 2026	Board decision

4.3 Criteria

4.3.1 Content assessment criteria

Applications submitted within this Call for proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Criterion 1: Suitability within the thematic scope of this grant round

The application will be assessed on the extent to which it fits within the thematic scope of the Call for proposals as formulated in section 2.2.

Criterion 2: Identification and formulation of the research question

The application will be assessed on the extent to which:

- the practice-based question originates from professional practice or professionals working at SMEs, or is verified by consulting knowledgeable professionals in the field;
- the practice-based question is converted into a clear, purposeful, and well-defined research question for exploratory practice-oriented research;
- the research question builds on existing knowledge and expertise or addresses existing knowledge gaps.

Criterion 3: Network suitability

The application will be assessed on the extent to which:

- the necessary expertise from the enterprises or societal organisations relevant to the professional field is available from the start of the project to execute the envisioned practice-oriented research activities;
- take-up of the results of this exploratory research project in education, research and professional practice is secured within the consortium.

Dual roles within the consortium are not permitted (see explanation in 3.1.3). If the assessment committee finds that there is a dual role, this will result in a failure to meet this criterion.

Criterion 4: Quality of the project plan

The application will be assessed on the extent to which:

- there is a feasible and effective plan of activities that contributes logically to answering the research question;
- the requested resources are proportionate to the nature of the project;
- the inclusion of the professional field in the execution of the project;

5 Subsidy obligations

This chapter details the various obligations that - in addition to the conditions stated in section 3.5 - apply after funds have been awarded.

5.1 Start date

The start date of the project must be no later than three months after the proposal has been awarded funding. The project has a maximum duration of one year.

5.2 Content monitoring

Content monitoring can take place in several ways.

Programme meetings

Each year, the programme team of the CIIC incentive programme organises an event to which the (sub)project leaders of the proposals awarded funding, are invited.

Reporting requirements

In view of the reporting requirements under the National Growth Fund, NWO may request reports from the project leader and share (parts of) these reports with OCW and the CIIC incentive programme/CLICKNL Foundation. The reporting format shall be made available via ISAAC.

Completion of a project

Upon completion of a project, NWO may request substantive and financial final reports from the project leader.

If the organisation of the main applicant, as the beneficiary of the NWO grant, is not subject to the OCW audit protocol, it is obliged, as the lead partner, to provide an auditor's report on the entire project.

5.3 Consortium agreement

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

Subsidised activities must be conducted during the period that the project participant is employed by the applicant's organisation. If multiple employers employ a project participant, 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.

Applicants must conduct an NWO-funded project during the period that they are working for the organisation. If an applicant or an NWO-funded researcher is employed by multiple employers, parties need to ensure that any copyrights and IP rights of these individuals do not prevent 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 exploit 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 consortium agreement contains agreements on intellectual property and publication, knowledge transfer, confidentiality, co-funding payments, progress reports and final reports.

The (model) consortium agreement made available by NWO on the funding page for this Call for proposals may be used for this purpose. This model agreement has been drawn up in accordance with the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024.

5.4 Socially responsible licensing

The knowledge that emerges from the project could be suitable for use in society. When agreements about licensing and/or the transfer of research results developed under this Call for proposals are made, due consideration should be given to the ten principles for socially responsible licensing, as stated in the NFU report “19.4511_Ten_principles_for_Socially_Responsible_Licensing_v19-12-2019.pdf (nfu.nl)”.

5.5 Open Access

As a signatory to the Berlin Declaration (2003) and a member of cOAlition S (2018), NWO is committed to making the results of the research it funds openly accessible via the internet (Open Access). By doing this, NWO gives substance to the ambitions of the Dutch government to make all publicly funded research available in Open Access form. Scientific publications arising from projects awarded based on this Call for proposals must therefore be made available in Open Access form in accordance with the Open Access Policy.

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;
- publication in a subscription journal and the immediate deposition of at least the author accepted manuscript of the article in an Open Access repository registered in OpenDOAR;
- publication in a journal for which a transformative Open Access agreement is available between the UNL and a publisher. See: [Open Access](#).

Books

Different conditions apply to scholarly books, book chapters and collected volumes. For more information, see the Open Access Policy Rule on [Open Science | NWO](#).

CC BY licence

To ensure the widest possible 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, book chapters and collected volumes, the choice of a CC BY licence is optional.

Cost

Costs for publication in fully Open Access journals can be budgeted in the project budget using the budget module for 'material costs'. Costs for publications in hybrid journals are not eligible for reimbursement by NWO. For Open Access books, a 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 Technical questions about the web 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 to isaac.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 approach applicants for an evaluation of the procedure and 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.

7 Appendix

7.1 Budget modules and rates for research organisations

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

- For university institutions, salary costs are financed in accordance with:
 - the UNL salary tables applicable at the time the subsidy is granted + 50% surcharge ([Salary tables | NWO](#)) or;
 - the rates in accordance with the Integral cost system (IKS) as filed with RVO for the relevant main or co-applicants. See also section 7.2.2.
- For university medical centres, salary costs are financed in accordance with:
 - the NFU salary tables applicable at the time the grant is awarded + 50% surcharge ([Salary tables | NWO](#)) or;
 - the rates in accordance with the Integral cost system (IKS) as filed with RVO for the relevant main or co-applicants. See also section 7.2.2.
- For staff of universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and other research organisations, salary costs are financed on the basis of:
 - the CAO scale for the employee concerned in accordance with the rates applicable at the time of the grant award from Table 2.1 'Average direct labour costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excl. VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% surcharge ([Salary tables | NWO](#)) or;
 - the rates in accordance with the Integral cost system (IKS) as filed with RVO for the relevant main or co-applicants. See also section 7.2.2.
- For the Dutch Caribbean, the Dutch 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, companies, civil society organisations) MUST make a reservation. See also section 7.3.

The rates for all budget modules, except for the IKS rates (see section 7.5), 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 salary 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. Remuneration for PhD students/scholarship holders at a Dutch university is not eligible for NWO funding.

Below is an explanation of the available budget modules.

7.1.1 Staff

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

Postdoctoral researcher

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.

Use the rates for a senior research assistant in the UNL salary tables plus a 50% premium and the rates for a postdoc at a university medical centre in the NFU salary tables plus a 50% premium or the IKS rates as filed with RVO.

It is not possible to apply for funding for a postdoc who started the project to be funded before the grant is awarded.

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) needed to the project. This could include programmers, technical assistants, analysts, or project leaders. The deployment of NWP must be described in the application.

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

Depending on the job level, a choice is made from the UNL or NFU salary scales for NWP-MBO, NWP-HBO and NWP-academic, or the IKS rates as filed with RVO are used. No one-off personal bench fee is available for NWP.

Research leave

This budget module allows funding to be applied for the costs of research leave for the main and/or co-applicant(s). This allows the relevant applicant's employer to cover the costs to release them from teaching, supervisory, administrative or management duties (not research duties). The applicant(s) may only use the time released by this research leave for work related to the project. The proposal must describe what project-related activities the applicant(s) will perform during exempted time.

Research leave can be requested for a maximum of the equivalent of five full-time months. NWO will fund the research leave based on the salary scales applicable on the date of the decision plus 50% premium for a senior academic employee (UNL) or postdoc (NFU) or based on the IKS rate as filed at RVO for up to the maximum rate used in the application budget. ([Salary scales | NWO](#))

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

Funding may be requested for staff at universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and other research organisations. The rates are determined based on the Government Rates Manual (HOT), table 2 under 2.1, 'average total salary costs per salary scale', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' plus a 50% premium. 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 Government of the Netherlands 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 salary costs should be used.

Students

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

If 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 total salary 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

Funding 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 based on second class/economy class fares. For publications, the provisions in section 5.1.5 Open access apply. Costs for an audit statement can only be claimed for institutions that are not subject to the OCW's educational accountants' protocol, up to a maximum of €5,000 per audit statement.

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 teaching activities.

7.1.3 Investments

Funding may be requested for all project-specific resources for research or costs related to the construction or further development of scientific infrastructure that will retain economic value after completion of the project or can be reused. The beneficiary will acquire 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. Salary costs as part of the investment can be entered 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 accepted accounting principles, are eligible for subsidy.

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

The following are eligible for subsidy:

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

The following are not eligible for subsidy:

- 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 company care, 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 requested budget must be adequately specified in the application. Use the provisions of Personnel (7.1.1) and Equipment (7.1.2) to determine the rates.

This Call for proposals calls for practice-oriented research in which knowledge utilisation is already partially integrated into the project activities through identification and articulation of the research question 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 you to apply for a project management item up to a maximum of 5% of the total budget requested from NWO. This item may only relate to activities that are purely supportive of the project for which funding is being requested. The applicant must adequately justify this item.

Project management includes optimising the organisational structure of the consortium, supporting the consortium and the principal 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 and/or co-applicant(s). When selecting a third party in the tendering procedure, research organisations must consider 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 based on the organisation's standard number of productive hours. The cost-covering rate includes:

- (average) gross salary 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 (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 subsidy and therefore cannot be included in the budget.

7.2 Eligible costs for companies and civil society organisations

7.2.1 Eligible costs for personnel

Costs for funding personnel employed by a company or civil society organisation can be claimed in accordance with:

1. the HOT rates applicable at the time of granting the subsidy from Table 2.1 'Average direct labour costs', column 'Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT' of the Government Rates Manual + 50% premium ([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 specified in the current edition of the Government Rates Manual. For organisations that do not use the CAO of the Government of the Netherlands or a similar agreement (such as the collective labour agreements for higher professional education, secondary vocational education, secondary education and local authorities) and/or companies and other civil society organisations that are not covered by a collective labour agreement, the HOT rate that most closely approximates the actual salary costs should be used, or
2. a fixed hourly rate of €60, or
3. a rate in accordance with the Integral cost system as filed with RVO for the co-applicant in question. See also section 7.5.

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)

As far 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 material budget requested from NWO may be used for work conducted 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 grant amount (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. These costs are subject to a maximum of 10% of the subsidy amount.

The Integral cost system (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 Integral cost system as applied by RVO to finance personnel costs.

Only research organisations, companies, 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. The main applicant is responsible for bringing the application (including the budget) in line with the conditions within the specified period. (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.

Fixed hourly rate

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

The fixed hourly rate is a reimbursement for the salary 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 make use of 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 salary costs of the staff working on the project.

7.3 Reservation of UNL, NFU and HOT salary costs

If, after submission of the proposal and before the proposal is awarded, the UNL and/or NFU 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(s) can derive rights from the prescribed percentage regarding the actual rate increase.

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

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

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

The most recent information about the governance of the NGF-CIIC project and the relationship between this Call for proposals and the other components of the CIIC incentive programme, can be found at www.ciic.nl.

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