



Open Technology Programme 2025

Call for proposals

Applied and Engineering Sciences

Content

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Available budget	2
1.3	Submission deadline(s)	3
2	Aim	4
2.1	Aim of the programme	4
2.2	Societal impact	4
3	Conditions for applicants	6
3.1	Who can apply	6
3.2	What can be applied for	7
3.3	Preparing an application	9
3.4	Conditions for submission	10
3.5	Conditions on granting	10
4	Assessment procedure	15
4.1	The San Francisco Declaration (DORA)	15
4.2	Procedure	15
5	Obligations for grant recipients	20
5.1	Additional terms and conditions	20
6	Contact and other information	23
6.1	Contact	23
6.2	Other information	23
7	Annexes:	24
7.1	Budget modules and rates	24
7.2	Indexing	27

1 Introduction

In this Call for proposals information is provided about the application procedure for the Open Technology Programme 2025 funding round. This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

In this Call for proposals you will find information about the aim of this programme (Chapter 2), the conditions for the grant application (Chapter 3) and how your proposal will be assessed (Chapter 4). This is the information you need to submit a grant application. Chapter 5 states the obligations for grant recipients in the event you are awarded funding. Chapter 6 contains the contact details and Chapter 7 the annexes.

1.1 Background

NWO promotes world-class scientific research. Scientific research – fundamental, applied and practice-oriented research – plays a key role in shaping our society. By conducting independent and reliable world-class research, researchers push the boundaries of what we know and can do with their creativity and tenacity.

NWO funds research within four domains: Science, Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES), Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and Medical Sciences (funded via the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development, ZonMw).

The NWO Domain Applied and Engineering Sciences (NWO Domain AES) promotes applied and technical-scientific research in close cooperation with public and private users of knowledge to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive society.

The Open Technology Programme (OTP) falls under the NWO funding line Open Competition. With the OTP, NWO funds free and unrestricted applied and technical-scientific research within the scope of NWO Domain AES. The scientific scope of the NWO Domain AES includes (all disciplines of) the engineering sciences and the application-oriented practice of mathematics, natural sciences, medical sciences and life sciences.

1.1.1 Changes since the previous Call for proposals

In comparison to the Call for Proposals of OTP 2024, a number of (administrative) changes have been implemented. These are listed below:

- The conditions in case of early closure of the Call have been clarified (see section 1.2);
- The maximum NWO contribution has been increased to €950,000 (€1,050,000 for projects with an investment character)(see Section 3.2). The ceiling above which co-funding is mandatory has been increased to €700,000 (see Section 3.5.6);
- The budget modules have been updated. The NWO domain AES cleanroom regulation has been discontinued and integrated into the Materials budget module (see Section 3.2);
- All applications are subject to the NWO Co-funding Scheme; this means, among other things, that cash co-funding is invoiced by the applicant rather than by NWO (see section 3.5.6);
- The deadline for making administration corrections to meet submission requirements has been shortened from four weeks to three weeks (see section 4.2.2);
- The deadline for submitting the rebuttal has been shortened from ten working days to five working days (see section 4.2.4);

- The definition and role of users has been clarified (see Section 5.1.5).

1.2 Available budget

The total grant ceiling for this Call for proposals is €25,900,000 for applications submitted and considered in the period between 13 January 2025 up to and including 12 December 2025.

Applications can be submitted on a continuous basis during this period. This budget is subject to the following allocation rules:

- Applications will be submitted to a jury. Each jury will consider 18 applications in order of receipt, provided they meet the conditions for submission.
- The grant application period for the first jury opens on 13 January 2025. This period will close once 18 applications eligible for the assessment procedure have been received. This cycle will be repeated until the last such period closes on 12 December 2025.
- The expectation is that there will be 7 juries. This number may change depending on the amount of funding to be allocated by each jury. Given the different amounts of funding requested in applications, it is not possible to set a sub-ceiling for each jury.
- If a jury is considering 18 applications, funding will be awarded to the six highest-ranked applications (33%) that have been qualified as at least “very good” (score of 3.4 or below, see also Section 4.2.5). The application must also receive a score of 4.0 or below for each of the separate assessment criteria.
- If procedural delays warrant this, the number of applications considered by each jury may be more than, or fewer than, 18. A procedural delay may arise, for example, when not all of the referees’ assessments accompanying an application have been received by the jury in good time. In this situation, NWO may decide to allow the relevant jury to go ahead with fewer than 18 applications. The application or applications affected by procedural delays will be carried forward to the next jury, which as a result will consider more than 18 applications. NWO can decide to subsequently increase the number of applications considered by this jury, up to a maximum of 21 applications, if the award rate of 33% results in a non-whole number of applications to be awarded funding.
- The grant ceiling of €25,900,000 is a fixed limit for applications submitted between 13 January 2025 and 12 December 2025. At the moment 90 applications have been submitted, NWO may decide to close the possibility to submit applications in this Call for proposals before the deadline. NWO will communicate this through a news release on the funding page of this Call for proposals. If the Call for proposals is closed early, applications submitted after the moment of closure of this Call for proposals will not be considered.
- If the grant ceiling has not been reached by 12 December 2025 and the final jury has accepted at least 6 applications for consideration, but fewer than 18, the final jury will consider these remaining applications. If there are fewer than 6 applications eligible for consideration by the last jury, then this jury will not proceed and the applications will be equally allocated across the last two standard juries, provided that the planning of the juries makes this possible.

In the above cases, where a jury considers more than or fewer than 18 applications, a 33% award rate may result in a non-whole number. In this case, the number of applications to be awarded funding will be rounded up to the nearest whole number in favor of the applicants.

If, after the ranking of the proposals, it transpires that there is an *ex aequo* situation, this may, in certain cases, entail a departure from the aforementioned funding award rate (see Section 4.2.6: *Ex aequo*).

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

The opening of this Call for Proposals is valid from 13 January 2025, until 12 December 2025, as long as the grant ceiling or the maximum number of applications submitted (see section 1.2) has not yet been reached. Applications can be submitted on a continuous basis subject to the conditions for grant applications set out in Section 3.

2 Aim

This chapter describes the aim of the programme and the societal impact.

2.1 Aim of the programme

The Open Technology Programme (OTP) aims to stimulate free and unrestricted applied and technical-scientific research within the scope of the NWO Domain AES. The programme is characterised by the absence of disciplinary boundaries and promotes research that leads to societal and/or scientific impact. Researchers can, depending on the nature and objectives of their research, decide for themselves whether the focus is on scientific impact, societal impact, or a combination of both. Collaboration with relevant knowledge users from the public and/or private sectors is a key feature of the OTP, allowing for increased application of research results and impact opportunities. The OTP is specifically intended for research activities and is not intended for applications predominantly focus on other activities, such as investments, contract research or clinical trials.

2.2 Societal impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to developing solutions for the various issues society faces, including, amongst other things, the energy transition, health and care, or climate change. By facilitating greater interaction and alignment between researchers and potential knowledge users, the chance of knowledge utilisation increases, as well as the likelihood of generating societal impact. Societal impact here stands for changes that (partly) result from research-generated knowledge and skills. These changes contribute to the well-being of people, planet and society for this and future generations. Through its policy on impact, NWO promotes the potential contribution that research can make to societal issues by encouraging productive interactions with societal stakeholders, both during the development stage and the subsequent implementation of research. It does so in a manner that is in accordance with the aim of the particular funding instrument. NWO encourages researchers to reflect on the potential desired and undesired impact of their research from a broad perspective.

2.2.1 Tailor-made impact

The primary aim of the funding instrument determines the method that NWO will deploy to facilitate knowledge utilisation in various phases of the project (proposal, realisation, project completion) as well as the effort required from the applicant(s) and partner(s).

In this programme, the Impact Outlook approach is applied. This means that applicants have the freedom to decide whether they want to focus on scientific impact, societal impact, or a combination of both. The applicant then looks at the expected contribution to the other form of impact in a balanced way, depending on the chosen focus. The following section discusses in more detail the expectations and approach that applicants should take within the OTP.

NWO offers an e-learning module that can help interested parties via [Online impact workshops | NWO](#). For more information on our policy on impact, please visit the website: [Knowledge utilisation | NWO](#).

2.2.2 Impact approach in the OTP

Applicants should clearly motivate in the application form which type of impact -scientific, societal, or a combination of both- will be leading in the proposed research. In addition, applicants are expected to draw up a strategy and phased plan describing how the intended impact will be integrated into the research design, and the role of the users involved to maximise foreseen and unforeseen opportunities for impact (see also section 5.1.5 User committee).

While applicants have the freedom of choice to place an emphasis on societal impact, scientific impact, or a combination of both, NWO also expects consideration to be given to opportunities for the type of impact that is not the primary focus. This may involve the applicant explaining in the proposal how opportunities for the non-primarily chosen type of impact will be taken up by other stakeholders, and/or describing what role the applicant itself plays in enabling these opportunities. If the applicant chooses to focus on both forms of impact (both scientific and societal impact), he/she should address both forms in the proposal. It is not necessary to place equal emphasis on both forms of impact, as long as it is clearly explained how both forms of impact are contributed to (see also section 4.3 Criteria).

3 Conditions for applicants

This chapter contains the conditions that are applicable to your grant application. Firstly it describes who can apply for funding (Section 3.1) and what you can request funding for (Section 3.2). Subsequently, you will find the conditions for preparing and submitting the application (Sections 3.3 and 3.4) and the specific funding conditions (Section 3.5).

3.1 Who can apply

Researchers may submit an application if they have a tenured position (and therefore a paid position for an indefinite period) or a tenure track agreement at one of the following research organisations:

- Universities as referred to in Article 1.8 paragraph 1 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act and universities listed in the [Policy Rules for Universities](#) located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- university medical centres by which is meant academic hospitals as referred to in Article 1.13 paragraph 1 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act;
- institutes affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) or NWO;
- Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- Princess Máxima Center.

Persons with a zero-hour employment agreement or with a contract for a limited period of time (other than a tenure track appointment) may not submit a proposal.

It could be the case that the applicant's tenure track agreement ends before the intended completion date of the project for which funding is applied for, or that before that date, the applicant's tenured contract ends due to the applicant reaching retirement age. In that case, the applicant needs to include a statement from their employer in which the research organisation concerned guarantees that the project and all project members for whom funding has been requested will receive adequate supervision for the full duration of the project.

Applicants with a part-time contract should guarantee adequate supervision of the project and all project members for whom funding is requested.

3.1.1 Main and co-applicants

The main applicant submits the proposal via the NWO web application ISAAC. During the assessment process, NWO will communicate with the main applicant.

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the main applicant will become the project leader and point of contact for NWO. The research organisation of the main applicant is the main beneficiary and will become the official secretary.

Co-applicants have an active role in realising the project. The (sub)project leaders and beneficiary/beneficiaries are jointly responsible for realising the entire project.

3.2 What can be applied for

Per project, a grant amount of at most €950,000 can be applied for. For projects with an investment character, where more than €150,000 in investments are requested, a maximum of €1,050,000 can be applied for. For both projects with and without an investment character co-funding is required if the total project costs exceed €700,000 (see also Section 3.5.6. Co-funding). The maximum duration of the proposed project is 6 year. The applicant and co-applicants can include costs for personnel, equipment, investments and knowledge utilisation. The available budget modules (including the maximum amounts) are listed below. Apply only for funding that is vital to realise the project. The rates and an explanation of these budget modules are given in annex 7.1.

Budget module	Maximum amount
PhD student	No limit on the number of positions, according to the latest UNL rates or NFU rates
Engineering Doctorate (EngD)	No limit on the number of positions, in combination with PhD student(s) and/or postdoc(s), according to the latest UNL rates or NFU rates
Postdoc	No limit on the number of positions, according to the latest UNL rates or NFU rates
Physician-researcher	No limit on the number of positions, according to the latest NFU rates
Students	No limit on the number of positions, according to the university's usual internship fee of the university (as part of the curriculum) or HOT table 2 scale 1 (as student assistant)
Non-scientific personnel (NWP)	No limit on the number of positions, according to the latest UNL rates or NFU rates
Scientific personnel at a research organisation abroad	Maximum 50% of the grant amount, according to the latest UNL rates adjusted for the country correction coefficients
Material	Maximum 60% of the grant amount allocated for personnel costs; Maximum 50% of the grant amount for materials for research organisations abroad
Investments	Maximum €500,000
Knowledge utilisation	Maximum 5% of the grant amount; Maximum 50% of the grant amount for knowledge utilisation for research organisations abroad

3.2.1 Personnel

Funding may be requested for salary costs of personnel contributing to the project. The amount depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the personnel is employed.

3.2.1.1 Personnel at a university in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, umc or a research organisation

For personnel working at a university in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, university medical centre (umc) or another research organisation, as referred to in Article 1.1, first paragraph, subparagraphs c to h of the NWO Grant Rules salary costs can be claimed for the following positions: PhD student, Engineering Doctorate, postdoc, physician-researcher and non-scientific personnel (NWP).

Funding for the Engineering Doctorate (EngD) position can only be applied for if funding for a PhD student or postdoc is also applied for.

3.2.1.2 Students

It is possible to engage students in the project if they are studying at a research organisation as referred to in Section 3.1. You can enter the costs of this as material costs within the project. There is no maximum on the number of students who can participate in the project.

3.2.1.3 Scientific personnel at a research organisation abroad

It is possible to claim salary costs for scientific personnel from foreign research organisations. A maximum of 50% of the grant amount can be requested for personnel at research organisations abroad.

3.2.2 Material

Funding may be requested for all project-specific material costs. These costs are subject to a maximum of 60% of the grant amount allocated for personnel costs. A maximum of 50% of the grant amount for material costs can be requested for research organisations abroad.

3.2.3 Investments

Funding may be requested for investments in equipment, infrastructure and other research resources that have economic value or can be reused after the project ends. Salary costs of personnel who put the equipment, infrastructure and other research resources in a state of readiness can be claimed as part of the investments. The rates and conditions of Personnel apply here and the costs should be claimed as Investments. Investments can only be made at research organisations listed in Section 3.1.

A maximum of €500,000 can be applied for investments.

3.2.4 Knowledge utilisation

Funding can be requested for activities that promote the use of knowledge from the research,¹ in order to increase the societal impact of the research.

A maximum of 5% of the grant amount can be used for this module. A maximum of 50% of the grant amount for knowledge utilisation can be applied for research organisations abroad. It is not mandatory to make use of this module.

¹ 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).

3.3 Preparing an application

The steps involved in writing your application are:

- download the application form from the NWO web application ISAAC or from the NWO web page (on the grant page of the funding instrument concerned);
- complete the application form;
- save the application form in ISAAC as a PDF file and upload it with any compulsory annexes;
- fill in the requested information online in ISAAC.

Compulsory annexes:

- budget: always compulsory;
- statement and signature main applicant: always compulsory;
- declaration co-funding: compulsory if co-funding is involved;
- statement appointment and project supervision: compulsory if the applicant's appointment does not cover the entire duration of the project (e.g., in the case of a tenure-track agreement);
- motivation for resubmission: compulsory if the application is a resubmission of an application that was rejected in a previous OTP assessment procedure (see Section 3.5.7).

The appendix must be drawn up in accordance with the template provided by NWO. Annexes must be uploaded in ISAAC separately from the application. The budget must be submitted in ISAAC as an Excel file. All of the other annexes, except for the budget, must be submitted as PDF files (without encryption). Any annexes other than those stated above are not permitted.

You must write your application in English.

An application can only be submitted via the web application ISAAC. Applications that are not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

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

It is important to start with your application in ISAAC on time:

- if you do not yet have an ISAAC account, then you should create this on time to prevent any possible registration problems;
- any new research organisations must also be added to ISAAC by NWO;
- you also need to submit other details online.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration by NWO.

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

Applicants are expected to have informed the research organisation where they work about submitting the application and that the research organisation accepts the grant conditions of this Call for proposals.

3.3.1 Advice about substantive suitability

For this Call for proposals, your application must fit in the scientific scope of the NWO Domain AES. Therefore, please consider well ahead of time whether your application meets the substantive criteria. In the event of any doubt, for instance because your application (partly) encompasses various domains and/or has a ZonMw character, then please get in touch with the contact person for this programme well in advance of the deadline. This person can advise you about the substantive connection between your application and this Call for proposals. Please note that the final choice is yours. For contact details please see Section 6.1.1.

3.4 Conditions for submission

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 listed below. Your application will only be admitted to the assessment procedure if it meets these conditions. After submitting your application, NWO requests you to be available to implement any possible administrative corrections so that you can (still) meet the conditions for submission.

These conditions are:

- the main applicant and co-applicant meet the conditions stated in Section 3.1;
- the application complies with the DORA guidelines as described in Section 4.1;
- the application is submitted via the main applicant's ISAAC account;
- the application is received before the deadline;
- the application is written in English;
- the application form must include at least four users, at least two of whom are non-academic users, who will participate in the user committee (see also Section 5.1.5 User committee);
- the application budget is drawn according to the terms of this Call for proposals (using the format made available which includes the most recent rates);
- the proposed project has a duration of maximum 6 years;

All required annexes, after a possible request for additions or changes, have been completed and submitted completely and according to the instructions and in accordance with the terms of this Call for proposals.

3.5 Conditions on granting

The [NWO Grant Rules](#) and the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research are applicable to all applications.

3.5.1 Compliance with the National Knowledge Security Guidelines

World-class science can benefit from international cooperation. The National Knowledge Security Guidelines (hereafter: the Guidelines) helps knowledge institutions to ensure that international cooperation can take place securely. 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, which jeopardises academic freedom and social safety; and ethical issues that may arise in cooperation with countries that do not respect fundamental rights.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their project complies and will continue to comply with the Guidelines. By submitting an application, the applicant commits to the recommendations

stipulated in these Guidelines. In the event of a suspected breach of the Guidelines in an application submitted to NWO for project funding, or in a project funded by NWO, NWO may ask the applicant to provide a risk assessment demonstrating that the recommendations in the Guidelines have been taken into consideration. If the applicant fails to comply with NWO's request, or if the risk assessment is in apparent breach of the Guidelines, this may affect NWO's grant award or decision-making process. NWO may also include further conditions in the award letter if appropriate.

The National Knowledge Security Guidelines can be found on the central government website at: [Home | National Contact Point for Knowledge Security \(loketkennisveiligheid.nl\)](#).

3.5.2 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 publicly accessible insofar as this is possible. NWO expects that research data resulting from NWO-funded projects will be made publicly available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers. "As open as possible, as closed as necessary" is the applicable principle in this respect. Researchers, at very least, are expected to make the data and/or non-numerical results that underlie the conclusions of the published work resulting from the project publicly available at the same time as the work's publication. Any costs incurred for this can be included in the project budget. Researchers should explain how data emerging from the project will be dealt with based on the data management section in the proposal and the data management plan that is drawn up after funding is awarded.

Data management section

The data management section is part of the proposal. Researchers are asked before the start of the research to consider how the data collected will be ordered and categorised so that this can be made publicly available. Measures will often already need to be taken, both during data generation and as part of analysing the data, to make its subsequent storage and dissemination possible. If it is not possible to make all data from the project publicly available, for example due to reasons of privacy, ethics or valorisation, then the applicant is obliged to list the reasons for this in the data management section.

The data management section in the proposal is not evaluated and will therefore not be weighed in the decision whether to award funding. However, both the referees and the jury can issue advice with respect to the data management section.

3.5.3 Scientific integrity

In accordance with the NWO Grant Rules, the project that NWO funds must be carried out in accordance with the nationally and internationally accepted standards for scientific conduct as stated in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018). By submitting the proposal, the applicant commits to this code. In the case of a (possible) violation of these standards during a project funded by NWO, the applicant should immediately inform NWO of this and should submit all relevant documents to NWO. More information about the code of conduct and the policy regarding research integrity can be found on the website: [Scientific integrity | NWO](#).

3.5.4 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 on time. The absence or presence of an ethical statement or licence at the time of the application process has no effect on the assessment of the application. If the project is awarded funding, then the grant is issued under the condition that the necessary ethical statement or licence is obtained before the latest start date for the project. The project cannot start until NWO has received a copy of the ethical statement or licence.

3.5.5 Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol ensures an honest and reasonable distribution of benefits emerging from the use of genetic resources (Access and Benefit Sharing; ABS). Researchers who make use of genetic sources from the Netherlands or abroad for their research should familiarise themselves with the Nagoya Protocol ([Home - ABS Focal Point](#)). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.6 Co-funding

All applications are subject to the [Co-funding Scheme](#).

Additional definitions:

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

Co-funding is mandatory in this Call for proposals if the total project costs exceed €700,000. A distinction is made between co-funding in cash (to be invoiced by the applicant), which serves to cover the budget of the project activities described in the proposal, and co-funding in kind, which may consist of personnel and/or material contributions from the organisations involved.

Co-funding requirement

The co-funding requirement stated in this Call for proposals is a minimum required contribution. The minimum required co-funding is 25% of the project costs above €700,000, with no distinction between co-funding in cash or in kind.

The following principles apply to co-funding:

- NWO is the main funder of an application. Applications of which the co-funding from co-funders exceeds 49% of the total project costs will not be taken into consideration;
- Co-funding in cash, is the net amount paid by a co-funder to the applicant. The applicant invoices co-funding in cash and, if applicable, VAT to the co-funder.

Not eligible as co-funding in cash are:

- Grant provided by NWO;
- Co-funding may not come from parties that according to this Call for proposals can apply for funding to NWO.

Not eligible as co-funding in kind are:

- Ineligible co-funding in kind is described in the [Co-funding Scheme](#);

- In addition, co-funding may not come from parties that according to this Call for proposals can apply for funding to NWO.

Co-funding declaration of participating co-funders

In a co-funding declaration the co-funder expresses financial support for the project and confirms the co-funding promised. Co-funding declarations from co-funders, which are mentioned in the application, are compulsory as attachments when submitting the proposal. The co-funding declaration must be signed by an authorised signatory of the co-funder. NWO provides a compulsory format for the co-funding declaration 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 agreements between the co-funder(s) and the applicant(s) (see Section 5.1.3).

Justification co-funding in cash and in kind

The ratio of co-funding (both in cash and in kind) to the grant provided by NWO in this Call for proposals, applies from submission of an application until the grant is determined. Co-funding in cash affects the grant amount provided by NWO because both NWO's contribution and co-funding in cash 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 co-financing requirement for the NWO contribution. For this, NWO assumes the ratio in the application budgets accepted by NWO.

After determination of a project the final grant amount is settled on the basis of the final report, the financial conditions and the co-funding ratio as present in the application budget.

In case of partly provided co-funding in cash (due to unforeseen circumstances, such as bankruptcy) NWO's contribution is based on the original grant award, taking into account the co-funding in cash that was provided and the applicable minimum co-funding requirement, if applicable.

Co-funding in cash in excess of the co-funding requirement affects the applied ratio of co-funding to grant provided by NWO. If a project has co-funding in cash in excess of the co-funding requirement and partial in 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-funding requirement.

At all times NWO must be notified of problems in expected co-funding (in 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 so that research can be continued to the best of its ability.

3.5.7 Resubmission of previously rejected applications

Applications rejected in a previous OTP assessment procedure cannot be resubmitted until six months after the date of the rejection decision.

In case of resubmission after this period, the requirement is that parts of criterion 1) 'Scientific quality' and/or criterion 2) 'Impact' have been adjusted. The previous referee comments may serve as a guideline for the adaptation. When submitting the application, the applicant should include a motivation (in Dutch or in English) in which the adjustments made are explained. The form 'Statement and signature main applicant' should indicate that it is a resubmission.

4 Assessment procedure

This chapter first describes the assessment according to the DORA principles (Section 4.1) and the course of the assessment procedure (Section 4.2). Second, it states the criteria that the jury will use to assess your application (Section 4.3).

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO employees involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process ([Code for Dealing with Personal Interests | NWO](#)).

NWO strives to achieve an inclusive culture where there is no place for conscious or unconscious barriers due to cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender, sexual orientation, health or age ([Diversity and inclusion | NWO](#)). NWO encourages referees and members of the jury to be actively aware of implicit associations and to try to minimise these. NWO will provide them with information about concrete ways of improving 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 worldwide 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 obviate unconscious bias in the assessment of research and researchers. DORA's overarching philosophy is that research should be evaluated on its own merits rather than on the basis of surrogate measures, such as the journal in which the research is published.

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

NWO requests jury members and referees not to rely on indicators such as the Journal Impact Factor or the h-index when assessing applications. Applicants are not allowed to mention these in their applications. You are, however, allowed to list other scientific products besides publications, such as datasets, patents, software and code, et cetera.

For more information on how NWO is implementing the principles of DORA, see [DORA | NWO](#).

4.2 Procedure

The application procedure consists of the following steps:

- submission of the proposal;
- admissibility of the proposal;
- peer review by referees;
- rebuttal;
- jury and decision-making;
- decision-making.

An external, independent jury will be assigned for this Call for proposals, consisting of representatives from science and practice with knowledge of the field.

The task of the jury is to assess the applications and the relevant documents that are submitted, in conjunction with each other and with regard to both the respective merits of each application and the assessment criteria outlined in this Call for proposals.

4.2.1 Submission of a proposal

For the submission of the proposal, a standard form is available on the funding page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website. When you write your proposal, you must adhere to the questions stated on this form and the procedure given in the explanatory notes. You must also adhere to the conditions for the maximum number of words and pages.

Your complete application form must have been received before the deadline via ISAAC (see Section 1.3). After this deadline, you can no longer submit a proposal. After submitting the proposal, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt.

4.2.2 Admissibility of the proposal

As soon as possible after you have submitted your proposal, you will hear from NWO whether or not your proposal will be taken into consideration. NWO will determine this based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, Section 3.4). NWO can only take your proposal into consideration if it meets these conditions.

Please bear in mind that within three weeks after the submission deadline, NWO may approach you with any possible administrative corrections that need to be made so that your proposal can (still) meet the conditions for submission. You will be given one opportunity to make the corrections, and you will be given maximum three weeks to do this.

You will be given one opportunity to make the corrections, and you will be given four weeks to do this. If the required information is incomplete or is not provided by the deadline, the research application will not be taken into consideration by NWO Domain AES.

If the period of three weeks is insufficient, the main applicant may choose to withdraw the application via ISAAC before the end of this period. If the application is withdrawn in time, the main applicant can submit a new application at any time once the requested revisions to the documents are complete and have been implemented.

Applications that were submitted in this Call for proposals but were not considered cannot be resubmitted until at least three months have passed since the date of the decision.

4.2.3 Peer review by referees

Prior to the jury considering your proposal, NWO will request input from at least three external referees. These are independent advisers who are experts in the subjects of the proposal. They will assess the proposals based on the assessment criteria outlined in the Call for proposals (Section 4.3).

If it is not possible to have an application assessed by the minimum number of referees, this minimum number may be deviated from in accordance with Article 2.2.4 of the NWO Grant Rules.

A maximum of three non-referees can be registered. Applicants can register these non-referees in ISAAC when submitting the proposal. NWO will not approach these non-referees to assess the proposal as external referees.

4.2.4 Rebuttal

The main applicant subsequently receives the anonymised referee reports. You then have the opportunity to formulate a rebuttal. You will be given five working days to submit your rebuttal via ISAAC. If you decide to withdraw the proposal, then you should do this as quickly as possible by sending an email stating this to the office and withdrawing the proposal in ISAAC. If NWO receives your rebuttal after the deadline, then it will not be included in the rest of the procedure.

4.2.5 Jury

After this, your proposal the referees' reports and your rebuttal will be submitted to the jury members. Jury members come from different sectors of society: universities, large research organisations, industry and other societal sectors. The jury members will then give the proposal a numerical score with respect to each assessment criterion (see Section 4.3.1). For this, the NWO score table will be used (on a scale of 1 to 9, where "1" is excellent and "9" unsatisfactory). The procedure is done entirely in writing. NWO ranks the proposals based on the scores given.

The jury will make its own assessment based on the available material. Although the referees' reports will 'guide' the final assessment to a large extent, it will not be blindly accepted without question by the jury. The jury will consider and compare the arguments of the referees (also amongst each other) and examine whether the rebuttal contains a well-formulated response to the critical comments from the referees' reports.

For each jury, funding will be awarded to the highest-ranked proposals that were qualified as at least 'very good' (score 3.4 or lower) up to an award rate of 33% of the number of proposals (see also Section 1.2). The proposal must also receive a score of 4.0 or lower for each of the individual assessment criteria.

For more information about the qualifications, see [Applying for funding, how does it work? | NWO](#).

Score	Qualification
1.0 to 1.4	Excellent
1.5 to 3.4	Very good
3.5 to 5.4	Good
5.5 to 9.0	Unsatisfactory

If, after the discussion of the full proposals, two or more of the full proposals cannot be distinguished from each other based on their weighted total score, then this will result in an ex aequo situation (see Section 4.2.6).

4.2.6 Ex aequo

NWO understands ex aequo to be a situation in which two or more proposals based on their weighted score cannot be distinguished from each other. An ex aequo situation is relevant with respect to the borders of the available budget or the selection borders. The existence of an ex aequo situation is determined as follows. The starting point in this process is the ranking drawn up by the jury, with the final scores rounded down to two decimal points. The reference score here is the score of the lowest-ranked proposal within the borders of the available budget or the selection borders. All proposals with a score that is within 0.05 or less of the reference score will be considered. In this way, the proposals that are equal within a score of 0.10 will be selected. If an ex aequo situation occurs at the borders of the available budget or the selection borders, then the proposal with a higher score pertaining to the criterion Impact will end as the highest. If the proposals subsequently still remain tied, then the ex aequo situation will be sent onto the decision-making body. Where appropriate, this may entail a departure from the funding award rates stated in Section 1.2.

4.2.7 Decision-making

Finally, the board of NWO Domain AES will assess the procedure followed as well as the advice from the jury. They will subsequently determine the final qualifications and make a decision over awarding or rejecting the proposals.

4.2.8 Timetable

You can submit applications on an ongoing basis, subject to the conditions for your grant application listed in Chapter 3, as long as the grant ceiling has not yet been reached (see also section 1.2 Available budget). NWO processes applications in the order they are received. The original submission date and submission time of an application that meets the submission conditions determine the order of processing. As soon as the timeline for processing your application is known, you will be informed.

4.2.9 Substantive assessment criteria

The applications submitted within this Call for proposals will be substantially assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Scientific quality (50%)

This criterion consists of the following aspects:

- Originality and scientifically innovative elements;
- Design of the project (clarity, objectives, hypotheses, research methods and scientific feasibility);
- Coherence and planning of the research lines;
- Competence of the research group (position in science, available infrastructure);
- The research capacity that can be deployed for the project (requested personnel positions, budget, and resources);
- The fit within the Open Technology Programme: the proposal is focused on applied and technical-scientific research.

2. Impact (50%)

The applicant decides which type of impact will be leading in the research: scientific impact, societal impact, or a combination of both. The score for this criterion is independent of the type of impact chosen; one type of impact is not rated better or less than the other.

This criterion consists of the following aspects:

- The motivation for the primarily chosen type of impact (scientific and/or societal impact);
- A strategy and phased plan for how the proposed research can contribute to impact.
- The competence and reputation of the research group(s) in terms of knowledge transfer and application of their own research results;
- The composition of the user committee and level of involvement of participating users to maximise both foreseen and unforeseen opportunities for the (not) primarily chosen type of impact.

For more information, see also section 2.2.2 Impact approach in the OTP.

5 Obligations for grant recipients

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 Additional terms and conditions

5.1.1 Substantive monitoring

Project start

The project commences after NWO has received the required signed documents and all grant allocation conditions have been met. The project must start no later than twelve months from the date of the grant decision.

Accountability during the project

Throughout the project, the main applicant will be responsible for providing biannual substantive and financial reports, which will be shared with the user committee (see Section 5.1.5). Subsequently, the user committee will meet to discuss the progress of the project. In exceptional cases, as decided by NWO, the frequency of user committee meetings may be reduced.

Project completion

Upon project completion, substantive and financial final reports will be requested. This will be followed by the final determination of the grant amount (see Article 3.5.2 of the NWO Grant Rules).

5.1.2 Data management

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. For this, applicants can make use of the advice from the referees and jury. The applicant must describe in the plan whether existing data will be used, or whether new data will be collected or generated, and how this data will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. Before submission, the data management plan should be checked by a data steward or similar officer of the research organisation where the project will be realised.. NWO will check the plan as quickly as possible. Approval of the data management plan by NWO is a condition for disbursement of the funding. The plan can be adjusted during the research.

More information about the data management protocol of NWO can be found at: [Research data management | NWO](#).

5.1.3 Intellectual property and consortium agreement

With respect to intellectual property (IP), the NWO IP policy applies. This can be found in Chapter 4 of the NWO Grant Rules.

Applicants must carry out a project funded by NWO during the time that they work for the research organisation. If an applicant or a researcher funded by NWO is appointed by more than one employer, then the other employer should relinquish any possible IP rights that emerge from the project of the applicant.

NWO's ambition is that research results can be applied by partners involved in the project. NWO aims that all research results from projects it funds are made publicly accessible while at the same time encouraging parties to further develop the research results by giving them the possibility to exploit these. For the exploitation of results, it can be desirable to transfer intellectual property rights or to license the use of these to (one of) the private parties involved in the project. The basic premise is that all research results can be published with due consideration for agreements made about publication procedures.

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the conclusion of a consortium agreement is one of the conditions for starting the project. In this agreement, arrangements are made about intellectual property and publication, knowledge transfer, confidentiality, co-financing payments, progress reports, and final reports. Uploading in ISAAC is required before the project can start.

The model agreement that NWO makes available must be used and can be found on the funding page of this Call for proposals. This model agreement has been drawn up in accordance with the NWO Grant Rules.

5.1.4 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 factsheet "[Ten principles for Socially Responsible Licensing | NFU](#)".

5.1.5 User committee

After the project has been awarded funding, a committee will be appointed in accordance with Article 3.3.2.a of the NWO Grant Rules to supervise and monitor the project. The committee will follow the execution of the project and advise on its progress. More information about this committee will be provided in the award letter.

Additional definitions:

- **User committee:** a committee as referred to in article 3.3.2 of the NWO Grant Rules, consisting of **at least four users**, of which **at least two are non-academic users**.
- **User:** member of the user committee. Users are natural or legal persons, not being applicants, who can advise the project leader on the direction of the project with the aim of maximising the application of results and foreseen and unforeseen opportunities for impact. Moreover, users can play an important role in connecting relevant parties and strengthening networks and ecosystems. They do this, among other things, by making facilities available and promoting new collaborations. A distinction is made within the OTP between academic and non-academic users:
 - i. **Academic users:** Users who can contribute to increasing opportunities for impact within their own, related or wider scientific field. Examples of academic users include, but are not limited to, individuals from national or international universities, umc's or research organisations as mentioned in section 3.1.
 - ii. **Non-academic users:** Users that can contribute to increasing the chances of application of the results in practice or opportunities for societal impact, such as cultural, economic, industrial, environmental or social change. Examples of non-academic users include, but are not limited to, individuals from companies; TO2 institutions; clinics; (patient) associations; civil society organisations; public organisations; and government agencies.

The following principles apply to the user committee:

- A user cannot be an applicant;
- Users may come from both the Netherlands and abroad;
- It is intended that users are actively involved in the project;
- Knowledge utilisation of the research results is a fixed agenda item of the user committee meetings. This includes collaboration with users, protecting knowledge and commercialisation of research results.

5.1.6 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 on the basis of 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 in Open Access form immediately at the time of publication (without embargo) via one of the following routes:

- publication in a fully Open Access journal or platform registered 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 Open DOAR;
- publication in a journal for which a transformative Open Access agreement exists between UNL and a publisher. For further information, see [Home | Open access](#).

Books

Different requirements apply to scholarly books, book chapters and edited collections. See the Open Access Policy Framework at [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. Alternatively – in case of substantial interest – the author may request to publish under a CC BY-ND licence. For books, book chapters and collected volumes, all CC BY licence options are allowed.

Costs

Costs for publication in fully Open Access journals can be budgeted in the application 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 Books Fund is available.

For more detailed information about NWO’s Open Access policy, see [Open Science | NWO](#).

6 Contact and other information

6.1 Contact

6.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about this Call for proposals, please contact:

Dr Remco Fijneman

Dr Marije Behet

Dr Steef de Valk

Dr Elvin 't Hart

e-mail: ttw-otp@nwo.nl

6.1.2 Technical questions about the web application ISAAC

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual first before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours on +31 (0)70 34 40 600. However, you can also submit your question by email to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.

6.2 Other information

The whole text of 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.

NWO processes data from applicants received in the context of this Call in accordance with the NWO Privacy Statement, [Privacy Statement | NWO](#).

NWO might approach applicants for an evaluation of the procedure and/or research programme.

7 Annexes:

7.1 Budget modules and rates

7.1.1 Personnel

PhD student

A PhD student is appointed for 48 months for 1.0 FTE at a university in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, umc or research organisation as referred to in Article 1.1 of the NWO Grant Rules. The equivalent of 48 full-time months, e.g. a 60-month appointment for 0.8 FTE, is also possible. It is not possible to apply for funding for a PhD student who started the project to be funded before the grant is awarded.

Please use the rates of a PhD student in the salary tables of UNL and NFU. A one-off personal bench fee of €5,000 is available for each PhD student to stimulate the scientific career.

Engineering Doctorate degree (EngD)

An Engineering Doctorate (EngD) is appointed for a maximum of 24 months for 1.0 FTE. The EngD is employed by the applying research organisation and may, during the research, perform work at an industrial partner for a fixed period of time.

Funding for the appointment of an EngD may only be requested for if funding for a PhD student or postdoc is also applied for. It is not possible to apply for funding for an EngD who started the project to be funded before grant is awarded.

Use the rates of a PhD student in the salary tables of UNL and NFU. A one-off personal benchfee of €5,000 is available for each EngD to stimulate the scientific career.

Postdoc

A postdoc is appointed to a university in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, umc or research organisation as listed in Section 3.1.

Use the rates of a senior academic employee in the salary tables of UNL, and the rates of a postdoc at an umc in the salary tables of NFU.

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 benchfee of €5,000 is available to boost the scientific career.

Physician-researcher

Funding may be requested for the appointment of a basic physician or physician-assistant as a physician-researcher to conduct scientific medical research at an umc. A physician-researcher is appointed for 1.0 FTE for a minimum of 36 and a maximum of 48 months. The equivalent of 36 or 48 full-time months, e.g. a 48 or 60-month appointment for 0.8 FTE, is also possible

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

Use the (medical) researcher rates in the NFU salary tables. For each physician-researcher, a one-off personal bench fee of €5,000 is available to stimulate the scientific career.

Non-scientific personnel

Funding may be requested for non-scientific personnel (NWP) needed to execute the project. These may include, for example, programmers, technical assistants, analysts or project leaders. The use of NWP must be described in the proposal.

The duration of the appointment cannot be longer than the duration of the project funded by NWO. Depending on the job level, a choice is made from the UNL or NFU salary tables for NWP-mbo, NWP-hbo and NWP-academic. No one-off personal benchfee is available for NWP.

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 universities of applied sciences applies. If students contribute as a secondary job alongside their studies as student assistants, the rate according to HOT table 2 scale 1 applies.

Scientific personnel at a research organisation abroad

Funding may be requested for personnel costs of a foreign research organisation contributing to the project. The foreign research organisation must meet the definition of research organisation in Article 5.1(p) of the NWO Grant Rules.

Substantiate convincingly how the researcher of the foreign research organisation contributes specific expertise to the project which is not available in the Netherlands at the level required for the project. The jury assesses this substantiation as part of the criterion Scientific Quality. This substantiation is not necessary when NWO has concluded a bilateral agreement on *Money Follows Cooperation* with the national research financier of the country where the foreign research organisation is located. The [NWO website](#) lists the research funders with which NWO has such an agreement. NWO does not award grants to co-applicants abroad who are subject to applicable sanction legislation.

The main applicant receives the grant and is responsible for transferring grant funds to the co-applicant's foreign research organisation and for accounting for the use of the foreign part of the grant. The exchange rate risk lies with the applicant. Benefits or expenses due to exchange rates are not eligible.

Use UNL rates adjusted for [country correction coefficients](#). These rates are maximums. No one-off personal benchfee is available.

If more than €125,000 per organisation is requested within this budget module, an audit certificate is required with the final financial statement.

7.1.2 Material

Funding may be requested for all project-specific costs relating to, among others, consumables, purchase of services, materials, small instruments, access to (inter)national facilities, software and research resources that have no economic value after use. Travel and accommodation costs (national and international) for all people working on the project incl. 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 also fall under this module.

Travel expenses (national and international) will only be reimbursed on the basis of second class/economy class fares. For publications, the provisions in Section 5.1.6 Open Access apply. Costs for an audit statement can only be claimed for organisation that are not subject to OCW's education audit protocol for a maximum of €5,000 per audit statement.

It is not permitted to include costs for:

- organisational infrastructure and overhead, including a fully functioning workplace, accommodation, office automation, personnel administration, commuting expenses, training, facilities, HR advice and business care, documentary information provision and home office allowance;
- the use and maintenance of in-house developed scientific infrastructure;
- regular teaching activities;
- members of the user committee

7.1.3 Investments

Funding may be requested for any project-specific resources for research or costs related to construction or further development of scientific infrastructure that retain economic value or can be reused after project completion. The beneficiary acquires ownership of these research resources on completion of the project. In case the beneficiary achieves profits from the beneficial ownership of the research funds, these profits must be invested in primary activities of the beneficiary as referred to in Article 3.1.4, second paragraph of the NWO Grant Rules. This includes the purchase of equipment with residual value for the performance of research and investments in the construction or (further) development of scientific infrastructure. Personnel costs as part of the investment can be recorded as personnel costs.

Investment costs should be adequately specified and justified in the proposal.

Eligible costs are:

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

Ineligible are:

- costs for infrastructural facilities that can be considered part of the usual infrastructure full functioning workplace, accommodation, office automation, personnel administration, travel expenses commuting, training, facilities management, HR advice and business care, documentary information provision, home working allowance);
- data collections and any related software and bibliographies already available in other ways;
- other personnel costs, including personnel costs for operating and conducting research with the facility;

- costs for maintenance and use of equipment on a project. Costs for the use of equipment on a project can be requested through the material budget.

7.1.4 Knowledge utilisation

The budget requested should be adequately specified in the proposal. To determine the rates, use the provisions of Personnel and Material.

It is possible to use up to 5% of the grant amount for this module. There is no obligation to use this module. Examples of possible costs, but not limited to, are the creation of a teaching curriculum, a feasibility study on application possibilities, costs for filing a patent application or engaging a business developer.

7.2 Indexing

The rate at the time of the decision date applies. NWO will, if necessary, apply a one-off indexation of personnel costs when awarding the grant. The date on which the rates take effect is used for this purpose. If the date of publication of the fees is later than the effective date, the date of publication is used. The tariffs of the Universities of the Netherlands (UNL) usually take effect on 1 July, of the Dutch Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU) on 1 August and of the Government Tariffs Manual (HOT) on 1 January.

The on-off indexation does not affect the grant ceiling and the maximum grant amount to be applied for. The grant ceiling and maximum requestable grant amount remain unchanged during the assessment procedure. If awarded, one-off indexation will be applied to the grant amount.

If co-funding is required or permitted, the one-off indexation does not affect the requirements for own contributions and co-funding, nor the IP rights that may result from the co-funding.

Publication: November 2024

Dutch Research Council

Visiting address:

Location The Hague

Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië

2593 CE The Hague

Netherlands

Location Utrecht

Winthontlaan 2

3526 KV Utrecht

Cover image: photographer Ivar Pel

Dutch Research Council | [NWO](#)

