



NWA Idea Generator

Round 2 2019

Dutch Research Agenda

Call for proposals

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Dutch National Research Agenda (NWA) describes broad, societal challenges which require a national approach whereby the Dutch (and global) knowledge economy as well as society at large can benefit from research performed in The Netherlands. The NWA was created by an innovative process with input from citizens and scientists: every Dutch resident was given the opportunity to submit questions online. The national knowledge community, under the guidance of the Knowledge Coalition, compiled the resulting questions into 140 scientific challenges, which have been translated into 25 pathways, i.e. routes.

The NWA programme above all aims to build bridges: between different scientific fields, between different forms of research (fundamental, applied, practice-oriented) and between diverse national and international knowledge agendas. Multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in the broadest sense, an approach spanning the entire knowledge chain and cooperation with societal partners including Ministries, corporates, start-ups and NGOs are therefore crucial features of the consortia involved in NWA projects and programmes.

The overarching ambition of the NWA programme is to make a positive, structural contribution to the global knowledge society of tomorrow, in which new knowledge flows easily from researcher to user and new questions arising from practice and society lead quickly and naturally to new research. This can only be achieved by building bridges today in order to address the scientific and societal challenges together, both locally and globally.

This call for proposals, the NWA Idea Generator, is one part of the NWA programme, which NWO is executing on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. In 2019, the first round had a deadline in May. This is the second round with a deadline on the 27th of February 2020.

1.2 Available budget

The available budget for the Idea Generator 2019 is €3.800.000, divided between two rounds. The budget for the second round is €2.000.000.

The available budget will be divided amongst different clusters (see section 4.1 for this division).

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

This call for proposals is valid for the second round of the Idea Generator in 2019. The deadline for submitting proposals is **February 27, 2020, 14:00:00 hours CE(S)T**. This call for proposals is valid up to and including the date on which the NWO executive board will have taken a decision about the submitted proposals.

This call for proposals is valid until the closing date 27 februari 2020, 14:00 hours CE(S)T.

2 Aim

Ideas are the foundation for all research: ideas that can lead to promising new directions and definitely also ideas that show another direction needs to be taken. The Idea Generator call encourages out-of-the-box thinkers to submit creative, exciting and innovative research ideas which are relevant to the NWA programme.

The NWA aims to achieve a closer connection between society and research. Therefore the NWA Idea Generator funds projects that address a societal question and/or potentially will have an impact on society and projects in which researchers and a societal stakeholder obviously work together from the stage of formulating the relevant research questions to project execution.

Because the Idea Generator stimulates innovative research, communication about all outcomes of the projects is mandatory. Not only projects that demonstrate new potential are important to communicate about, but certainly also projects that show unexpected or negative results.

The Idea Generator can fund small projects to enable further development of a new idea through research. Applicants of all disciplines (with a practical, applied or fundamental research focus) are welcome to apply. Researchers in all career stages are welcome. Researchers have to submit their proposals individually. However, in their proposal they have to point out the societal stakeholder with whom they will collaborate. NWO strives to ensure that future success rates for female applicants will be at least equal to those for male researchers on average and in the medium term. We explicitly invite female researchers to apply.

Applicants are also assessors in the NWA Idea Generator assessment process: applicants will assess one another's proposals. NWO wants to keep the assessment procedure of the Idea Generator short and efficient to allow projects to start as soon as possible. Because the grants concern modest amounts, the usual NWO assessment procedure would demand too much work and time. Assessment by the applicants also generates involvement in and understanding of the assessment procedure. The applicants will bundle their useful expertise within clusters of NWA routes. In this way NWO can optimally use their expertise for the assessment procedure. NWO is seeking innovative assessment methods and already has experience with this method: the procedure has been piloted in the call for proposals 'NWO Open Competition Domain Science – XS'. The first experiences were positive.

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Proposals must be submitted by a main applicant with at least one societal stakeholder. No co-applicants are allowed in this round.

3.1.1 Main applicant

Researchers can act as main applicant and submit a proposal if they:

- are employed at one of the following organisations:
 - o Universities based in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
 - o University medical centres;
 - o NWO and KNAW institutes;
 - o Universities of applied sciences, as meant in article 1.8 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act;
 - o TO2 institutes ;
 - o the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
 - o the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
 - o the DUBBLE Beamline at the ESRF in Grenoble;
 - o NCB Naturalis;
 - o Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
 - o Prinses Máxima Center for pediatric oncology.
- and have an appointment for at least the duration of the application process and the proposed project. Main applicants do not need to have a permanent position.
- A researcher may submit one proposal at maximum in this round.
- A researcher who already has submitted a proposal that was assessed during the first round of 2019 may not submit a proposal in this round

3.1.2 Societal stakeholder(s)

In the NWA programme it is important that the research idea that is being submitted is backed by (a) societal stakeholder(s). The societal stakeholder(s) do(es) not receive subsidy. Person(s) can be appointed as societal stakeholder(s) if they are:

- a representative of a public or private organisation (e.g. NGO's, governmental bodies, societal organisations, companies, associations), that are not listed under 3.1.1. (main applicant).

Societal stakeholder(s) must be listed on the application form. The proposal must meet the following cumulative criteria:

- At least one societal stakeholder is listed on the application form
- The societal stakeholder(s) which is/are listed, has/have signed the application form (in the section Signature)

It is not allowed to send further proof of support from (a) stakeholder(s) (i.e. by providing support letters along with the application form).

3.2 What can be applied for

The subsidy has a maximum amount of €50.000 per project. The maximum runtime of a project is one year. For the NWA Idea Generator, there are no specific requirements or obligations regarding the type of research. This means there is room for different types of research such as (societal) internships, living labs/field labs/knowledge labs.

Project costs

Only project-specific costs can be funded. These can be divided in the following categories:

- i. personnel costs;
- ii. material costs.

There are no restrictions on these categories, i.e. any division of the total requested budget amongst these two categories is allowed. The proposed spending of the requested subsidy should be described in the budget table and clarified. The proposed spending of the budget should support the submitted idea and execution. The applicants/assessors will assess this as one of the assessment aspects (section 4.1)

If personnel costs are made, the following tariffs must be used for different organisations:

- For academic institutes other than university medical centres funding is granted according to the most recent [VSNU salary tables](#).
- For university medical centres funding is granted according to the most recent [NFU salary tables](#).
- For TO2 institutes and universities of applied sciences, funding is granted according to the '[Handleiding Overheidstarieven 2017](#)', table 2.2 (Integrale loonkostentabel), column 'kostendekkend tarief per uur'.

3.3 When can proposals be submitted

The deadline for the submission of proposals is **February 27, 2020 14:00:00 CE(S)T**.

When you submit your application to ISAAC you will also have to enter additional details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

3.4 Preparing a proposal

- Download the application from the electronic application system ISAAC or from NWO's website (at the bottom of the granting webpage for this programme).
- Complete the application form, following the instructions. It should be filled out in English.
- Save the application form as a pdf file and upload it to ISAAC.

Please consider the following points when submitting your proposal

- Applicants will assess one another in this round. You should be aware of the fact that proposals will be distributed and assessed amongst clusters. In chapter 4 you will find the division of NWA-routes amongst clusters. Therefore, your proposal should be written with a broad audience in mind. The proposal should thus be readable and understandable for persons outside your own area of expertise.
- The proposal will be assessed anonymously. You will only insert your name in the online submission system ISAAC, but not on the application form. In this way NWO will know to whom a proposal belongs. This information however will not be provided to the assessors. Take notice not to include your name or an obvious reference to your research group on the application form.

3.5 Conditions on granting

Applicants assess one another

In this round, applicants will assess the proposals of other applicants in this round. By submitting a proposal, you agree to assess other proposals. At different moments in the assessment process, applicants will have to fulfil tasks.

If the given deadlines for these tasks will not be met by an applicant, the proposal of that applicant will be removed from the assessment procedure. The tasks are:

- Reacting to the eligibility check. This only applies if the proposal is not directly declared eligible.
- Submitting conflicts of interest regarding other proposals.
- Assessing other proposals and sending in the assessment report.

For the full procedure, see section 4.1.

NWA routes and NWA questions

The proposed project should connect to one of the [25 NWA routes](#) and should address at least one of the [140 NWA questions](#). The full description of the 25 NWA routes can be found in the [Portfolio for research and innovation](#) and the full description of the 140 NWA questions in the [Dutch Research Agenda](#).

On the application form you select to which route the project connects and which NWA question(s) you address. The connection with the NWA routes and NWA questions is assessed during the eligibility check. See section 4.1 for further details.

Integrity

In the NWO Grant Rules 2017 it is stated that all research funded NWO 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 Scientific Practice 2012 (VSNU). Further information about the NWO policy on scientific integrity can be found on the website <https://www.nwo.nl/en/policies/scientific+integrity+policy>.

Ethical aspects

Research proposals that may raise ethical issues need to be considered carefully before the research to be carried out. Certain research projects may require approval from a recognised Medical Research Ethics Committee (MREC) or an Animal Experiments Committee (DEC). In addition, certain research proposals require a licence under the Population Screening Act (WBO). More information on the MRECs is available from the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CUCO). Information on the DEC is available from the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Dierexperimenten commissies (Dutch Association of Animal Experiments Committees) and information on the WBO is available from the Health Council of the Netherlands.

An applicant is responsible for checking whether his/her research proposal may raise ethical issues and, if necessary, for obtaining approval in good time from the appropriate ethics committee and/or obtaining a licence in good time under the WBO.

NWO endorses the Code on Openness in Animal Testing and the Biosecurity code. Applicants should endorse and comply with the existing codes.

If the proposal is accepted, funding will be awarded subject to the condition of obtaining approval from the relevant ethics committee or a licence under the WBO. A research project cannot start until NWO has received a copy of any necessary ethics approval and/or WBO licence. NWO expects candidates to take into account the time schedule of the assessment procedure and the time required for an ethics committee review or to obtain a WBO licence. In the event of complex ethical issues, NWO reserves the right to consult an external advisor.

Open Access

All scientific publications resulting from research funded by grants from this call for proposals must (at the time of publication) be immediately freely accessible worldwide (Open Access). There are several ways for researchers to publish Open Access. A detailed explanation regarding Open Access can be found on www.nwo.nl/openscience-en

Data management

Good research requires responsible data management. NWO wants research data that emerge from publicly funded research to become freely and sustainably available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers. Researchers whose proposals have been granted must submit a data management plan. It elaborates on the data management paragraph of the proposal. In the plan the researcher describes whether use will be made of existing

data or a new collection of data and how the data collection will be disclosed FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. Further information about the data management protocol of NWO can be found at www.nwo.nl/datamanagement

Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol became effective on 12 October 2014 and ensures a 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 abroad for their research should familiarise themselves with the Nagoya Protocol (www.absfocalpoint.nl). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

Start of the project

Funded projects can start as soon as the granting decision has been communicated and should start no later than three months after the granting decision.

Accountability and completion of the project

Accountability

The main applicant will be responsible for project reports. For these short projects, NWO will not request interim scientific and financial reports, but only a short final report upon project completion.

Online project page

For every running project, a public summary will be published online. Within two months after project completion, the main applicant will be asked to write a short summary of the actions taken in the project and what the (positive and/or negative) results are.

3.6 Submitting an application

A proposal can only be submitted to NWO via the online application system ISAAC. Proposals not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

A main applicant must submit his/her application via his/her own ISAAC account. If the main applicant does not have an ISAAC account yet, this should be created at least one week before the proposal is submitted to ensure that any registration problems can be resolved on time. If the main applicant already has an NWO-account, then he/she does not need to create a new account to submit a proposal.

When submitting your proposal in ISAAC, you also need to enter information online. Therefore start submitting your proposal at least one day before the deadline of the call. Proposals not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

If you work for an organisation that is not part of the ISAAC database, please send an e-mail to relatiebeheer@nwo.nl. We will add your organisation to the database. As this can take a few days, report the organisation missing at least one week before the submission deadline. For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. See Section [5.1.2](#).

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process and involved NWO staff.

Timetable

27 February 2020	Deadline submission
March 2020	Eligibility check
	Inquiry regarding personal interests
	NWO sends applications to applicants/assessors
April 2020	Assessment by applicants/assessors
	NWO receives assessment reports
May 2020	NWO executive board takes granting decision after receiving advice from the NWA Programme Committee
May 2020	NWO informs the applicants about the decision
Three months after granting decision	Starting date projects

Eligibility of the proposals

The first step in the assessment procedure of the proposals is assessing whether the proposal is eligible. This is done by applying the conditions stated in Chapter 3 of this call for proposals. In this step the participation of the societal stakeholder(s) as described in section 3.2.1 will be checked. Only applications that meet these conditions will be taken into consideration. The eligibility check consists of two parts: a) a check whether the application form has been filled out completely and correctly and b) a check whether there is a fit between the proposal and an NWA route and NWA questions.

a) Check by NWO

When a proposal has been submitted, NWO checks if all information in the application form and in ISAAC is complete and filled out correctly. If information is missing and if proposal correction is possible (NWO will decide on this), the applicant will get the opportunity to modify his/her proposal within a reasonable time period. If the corrected proposal is not received within the time set, NWO will not take the proposal into consideration. Corrected proposals, if received on time, will be taken into consideration after approval.

b) Fit with NWA routes and NWA questions

The management of the 25 NWA routes will be asked to delegate independent persons who will assess the fit between the proposals and the NWA routes and the NWA questions. For these persons the NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests will apply and they will form an assessment committee. To assess the fit between the proposals and the NWA routes and NWA questions, the assessment committee will refer to the description of the NWA routes in the Portfolio for research and innovation and to the description of the NWA questions in the Dutch National Research Agenda. The proposed project should fit with one of the NWA routes in terms of theme, problem definition and execution and should address at least one of the 140 NWA questions.

If the committee concludes that there is no fit, this will be motivated. If the conclusion is that the application does not fit with the NWA routes and NWA questions, the application will no longer be considered and will be declared inadmissible.

Beoordeling van de aanvragen

For the proposals that have passed the eligibility check, the following assessment procedure will be used:

- The proposals will be divided into five clusters on the basis of the NWA route which the applicants have indicated on the application forms. Within every of the five clusters, two groups will be made that assess each other (for example, within cluster A, group A1 and group A2). The budget will also be divided amongst the groups. For the division of routes into clusters and the budget division, see table 1.
- For each cluster the personal interests will be requested in the following manner: each applicant/assessor will receive the list of names and organisations of all proposals in that cluster, without project titles or file numbers. The proposals will never be assigned to someone that has a personal interest with that application.
- The proposals in group 1 are assessed by the applicants in group 2 and vice versa. To this end, the proposals in group 1 will randomly be assigned to the applicants in group 2 and vice versa. This means that every assessing applicant (hereinafter ‘assessor’) will receive a number of applications from that part of the set that does not include his/her own application. The applications are distributed over the assessors randomly, i.e. the subject matter of the applications and expertise of the assessors are not taken into account. For the distribution, the NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests will be applied and if possible, all proposals applications will be assessed by the same number of assessors (6 – 10).
- If a cluster has less than 20 proposals, NWO can decide to divide the proposals and the budget amongst the other clusters.
- Proposals are prepared anonymously. Thus, the applicant’s name and gender are not mentioned in the proposal to ensure the assessor can make an unbiased assessment of the proposal based on the quality of the research idea.

Table 1 Division NWA routes into clusters and budget division into groups

Clusters	A	B	C	D	E
Routes	Building blocks of matter and fundamentals of space and time	Health care research, illness prevention and treatment	Child and adolescent development, rearing and education	Creating value through responsible access to and use of big data	The blue route: water as a pathway to innovation and sustainable growth
	Materials – Made in Holland	NeuroLabNL: the ultimate living lab for brain, cognition and behavioural research	Art: research and innovation in the 21st century	Smart industry	Circular economy and resource efficiency: sustainable circular impact
	Measuring and detecting: anything, anytime, anywhere	Personalised medicine: the individual focus	Living history	Smart, liveable cities	Energy transition
	The origin of life – on earth and in the universe	Regenerative medicine: game changer moving to broad areas of application	Towards resilient societies	Logistics and transport in an energetic, innovative, and sustainable society	Quality of the living environment
	The quantum / nano-revolution	Sports and exercise	Between conflict and cooperation		Sustainable production of safe and healthy food
					Sustainable development goals for inclusive global development
Budget	€ 400.000	€ 400.000	€ 400.000	€ 300.000	€ 500.000
Budget Group 1	Group A1: € 200.000	Group B1: € 200.000	Group C1: € 200.000	Group D1: € 150.000	Group E1: € 250.000
Budget Group 2	Group A2: € 200.000	Group B2: € 200.000	Group C2: € 200.000	Group D2: € 150.000	Group E2: € 250.000

The assessment report

- Each assessor will rank the applications he/she needs to assess based on the assessment aspects described in paragraph 4.2, whereby the applications must all be allocated a different rank. The assessor writes a motivation for each application, ranking the application set with short written explanations.
- Assessors will get at least three weeks to submit their report. NWO will inform them about the deadline. If an assessor fails to submit before the deadline, the assessor's own application will be withdrawn from the procedure and will not be processed further.

Female researchers

The representation and advancement of women in academia unfortunately strongly lag behind those of men. NWO and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) are working together with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) and Dutch universities to rectify this situation; striving for a percentage of female applicants that is at least equal to the percentage of female researchers in the target group.

NWO strives to ensure that the success rates for female applicants will be at least equal to those for male researchers on average and spanning several years. If two or more applications are rated equally, preference will be given to the proposal submitted by a female applicant.

Decision making

The assessors/applicants within a particular set will not meet. The NWO/NWA office will decide on the overall ranking per group based on the rankings submitted by the assessors. Two rankings will be established per cluster; one for group 1 and one for group 2. There will be no opportunity for a rebuttal.

The NWA Programme committee will advise the executive board of NWO on the proposed rankings. The executive board of NWO will decide whether to grant or refuse applications based on this advice and the available financial means. Applicants will be informed of the results once the executive board of NWO has completed the decision-making process. In addition to the final ranking, applicants will also receive the assessment reports regarding their proposal, including the ranks and the explanations provided by each assessor.

The data management section in the application will not be evaluated and therefore not weighed in the decision about whether to award funding. After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher must elaborate the data management section in a data management plan.

Tied rankings

In case of a tied ranking of two or more applications, the following principles will be applied in this order:

- an application by a female applicant will be preferred
- the application with most of the highest rankings will be preferred

4.2 Assessment aspects

The NWA Idea Generator (NWA-IDG) encourages researchers to submit creative, exciting and innovative research ideas that fit within the NWA programme. Within the Idea Generator small projects can be funded to further develop an innovative idea by performing research. Applicants of all disciplines and backgrounds, with a fundamental, applied or practice-oriented focus, are welcome. Researchers must collaborate with a societal stakeholder.

To make the ranking, the assessor looks at all assessment aspects as listed below. The assessor looks at the assessment aspects to judge the proposal and makes the ranking based on them. Proposals are anonymous to ensure that the judgement is solely based on quality of the research idea.

Societal question, impact and stakeholders

- The problem definition is formulated together with societal stakeholder(s)
- Societal stakeholder(s) are involved within the proposed project throughout the different phases of the project
- The proposed project has potential for societal impact

A creative and innovative idea

- The proposed project is creative and innovative
- Insights/disciplines/methods are combined in novel ways
- The proposed project is not merely a continuation of earlier research

Project plan

- The proposed project is designed in such a way that the proposed idea can be executed (NB. This does not mean that the project has to lead to the expected results, since negative results are also acceptable. Important is that the proposed project is executable)
- The proposed project budget is realistic and supports the design of the project

5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about NWA Idea Generator and this call for proposals please contact:

Annemarie van den Bos

NWA-IDG@nwo.nl

070-3494218

We recommend that you first read the list with frequently asked questions (FAQ) on the funding page.

5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system 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 CE(S)T on +31 (0)20 346 71 79. However, you can also submit your question by e-mail to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. Then you will receive an answer within two working days.

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