

Sustainable Science Fund

Science in Transition: Towards More Environmentally Sustainable Research Practices

Call for Proposals

2025

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1 Introduction

This document describes the application procedure for the Call for proposals: Fund for more sustainable research. This Call falls under the responsibility of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and is being implemented in collaboration with the Dutch Climate Research Initiative (KIN).

This Call contains information about the purpose of this grant (Section 2), the conditions for applying for the grant (Section 3) and how an application is assessed (Section 4). This information is necessary in order to submit an application for a grant. Section 5 lists the grant obligations that apply in the event of an award. Section 6 contains the contact details and Section 7 contains the appendices.

1.1 Background

NWO promotes world-class scientific research with scientific and societal impact. KIN connects, broadens, deepens and unlocks knowledge for transitions to a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society. Sustainability and climate neutrality are important social and scientific issues. The knowledge sector is indispensable for addressing these complex challenges. NWO and KIN fund research and stimulate knowledge exchange and collaboration on these issues.

1.1.1 The environmental footprint of research

Conducting research also has an impact on sustainability, in social, environmental and economic terms. NWO emphasises the importance and interrelationship of these three aspects of sustainability. In this Call, NWO focuses specifically on the environmental impact of research on climate, the environment and the living environment. This includes CO_2 emissions from research activities, the use of raw materials and energy by large research and data infrastructures, the environmental impact of the use of chemicals and disposable materials in laboratories, and mobility related to research. In addition to reducing environmental impact, sustainability is important for the future-proofing of research itself; think of the long-term availability of raw materials and energy and their rising costs.

The footprint of conducting research depends on the choices made by researchers and the context in which they conduct their research. NWO wants to promote environmental sustainability and strives to ensure that researchers can conduct their research with as little undesirable environmental impact as possible.

1.1.2 Science in Transition

Transitions to sustainability require a fundamental change in the way science is conducted. Science itself must (partly) undergo a transition in order to contribute adequately to urgent social issues such as the climate crisis. Among other things, this means that researchers and research organisations must proactively seek alternative, more sustainable ways of organising their research practices.

Like governments, businesses and societal organisations, research organisations and researchers recognise the urgency of a systemic transition to more sustainable scientific practices. Society, partners in the knowledge chain and, above all, students and scientists are calling on the sector to take responsibility in the collective effort to achieve sustainability. A bottom-up movement is visible. By giving this movement visibility, sharing knowledge and working together, its effectiveness can be increased. In this way, fragmentation and reinventing the wheel can be prevented.
It is fitting for the scientific sector to set a good example and develop new knowledge and innovation that can be widely applied in society.

1.1.3 Cooperation as the key

Not every researcher has the same level of knowledge about sustainability. Often, the right knowledge and perspective for action are lacking to initiate real transformation. This requires (transdisciplinary) collaboration, such as the joint exchange, development and application of knowledge. NWO sees sustainability as a shared responsibility of funders, research institutions, researchers and other partners in the knowledge chain.

This Call will therefore encourage exchange and networking between the applicant researchers and other key actors. In doing so, NWO aims to increase insight into the roles and responsibilities in the transition to more sustainable research practices – from encouraging researchers' own initiatives to taking control and facilitating coordination and collaboration.

1.2 Available budget

The total subsidy ceiling for this Call for Proposals is €1,000,000. A maximum of €50,000 may be requested per application.

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

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

The deadline for submitting an application is **27 January 2026**, before 14:00:00 CET.

For this Call for Proposals, the main applicants are also the evaluators. The evaluators' task is to assess a portion of the submitted applications in relation to each other and on their own merits, based on the evaluation criteria specified in this Call for Proposals.

The deadline for submitting the assessment reports is **10 March 2026**, before 14:00:00 CET.

2 Aim

NWO wants to accelerate the transition to more sustainable research in the Netherlands by making impulse funding available. The Call for Proposals is specifically aimed at initiatives that focus on reducing the environmental impact of research activities. That is to say, the impact on the environment, climate and living environment that results from conducting research.

2.1 Objectives

Funding is available for projects that focus on developing and sharing the knowledge and methods researchers need to make more sustainable choices from the outset of a research project. Researchers are partly dependent on the sustainability efforts of their organisations. This Call for Proposals therefore also offers scope for sustainability issues that are widely relevant to research organisations and where a joint approach can accelerate progress. In addition, it is possible to allow existing knowledge and initiatives to grow, scale up or be validated and made widely available. NWO wants to recognise and reward frontrunners for their efforts and encourage everyone to start making research practices more sustainable.

To encourage the broad acquisition, sharing and application of insights, funding is available for various stakeholders. The project can play a connecting role between the various stakeholders needed for embedding and scaling up, such as researchers, research organisations, infrastructure providers, policymakers and other relevant parties in the research ecosystem.

2.1.1 What do we expect from projects?

Projects must contribute to at least one of the following objectives:

1. Adapting existing knowledge and/or methods
Adapting existing knowledge or a method that has been applied in a specific context for other institutions and/or domains.

2. Validating existing knowledge and/or methods
Testing the effectiveness of existing knowledge and validating methods.

3. Further developing existing knowledge and methods
Further developing, scaling up or refining existing knowledge and/or a method.

4. Developing new knowledge or methods
Meeting a need for a new method or knowledge. This also includes the experimental application of a new method or knowledge and sharing the lessons learned.

5. Capacity building
The experimental application of a new method or knowledge and building the capacity of target groups to utilise it (e.g. through workshops, courses and training).

2.1.2 Characteristics of the projects

Projects must focus on the following aspects:

- Optimising impact

The project must focus on maximising impact, preferably by preventing environmental damage rather than mitigating it. In addition, the project must be relevant to at least one of the following impact areas: highly innovative, focused on an important environmental bottleneck within science, or having a wide reach.

- Knowledge utilisation and dissemination
  Developing communication materials and activities related to the use of various types of knowledge (scientific, practice-oriented, experience-oriented). The project applies the principles of open science and ensures broad communication of findings.

- Knowledge transfer and anchoring
  In order to generate a lasting effect with a one-off impulse, it is important that responsibility is taken for safeguarding the knowledge gained by the research organisation and other stakeholders.

- Scalability and transferability
  The project has been designed with scalability and transferability in mind, so that it can be applied to larger or diverse groups (upscaling) and in other contexts or sectors (scaling out). This increases the impact and broadens the applicability.

2.1.3 Projects that do not fall within scope

Projects that **do not** fall within the scope of this Call are projects that:

- are only relevant to a single research organisation, its policy or capabilities;
- focus on the operational management, including real estate, of research organisations;
- focus on compensation for higher costs of existing research.

3 Conditions for applicants

This section contains the conditions that apply to your grant application. First, it describes who can apply for a grant (section 3.1) and what you can apply for a grant for (section 3.2). It then sets out the conditions for preparing and submitting the application (sections 3.3 and 3.4) and specific grant conditions (section 3.5).

3.1 Who can apply

3.1.1 Project partners

Applications may be submitted by individuals or consortia. Individuals may submit an application as a project partner if they have an appointment for at least the duration of the application process and the duration of the proposed project at a research organisation (Ad 1) or a social organisation (Ad 2).

Project partners play an active role in the implementation of the project and commit to the promised time commitment as described in the application. Project partners may participate in a maximum of two applications. Main applicants (see 3.1.2) may participate in a maximum of one application.

Ad 1 - Research organisations
Research organisations include:
- universities and colleges as referred to in Article 1.8(1) of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act and the universities referred to in the Policy Rule on Universities in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- university medical centres, which refers to the academic hospitals as referred to in Article 1.13(1) of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act;
- KNAW and NWO institutes;
- the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- NCB Naturalis;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- Princess Máxima Centre.

Additional research organisations:
Additional research organisations that cumulatively meet the following requirements (assessment) may submit an application without completing a de minimis declaration (Ad 2):
- is established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- is a legal entity;
- is primarily engaged in conducting fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development independently, or in disseminating the results of those activities widely through education, publications or knowledge transfer;
- can declare that the organisation keeps separate accounts for economic/non-economic activities and that companies with a decisive influence on the organisation do not receive preferential access to the organisation's research results.

Please note: Prior to the submission of an application, NWO will assess whether an organisation meets the conditions set out in Article 1.1, paragraph 4, of the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024 and is therefore eligible to participate as a project partner. NWO carries out this assessment to verify that no prohibited state aid is being granted.

For the purposes of this assessment, the organisation of the intended project partner must submit the following documents by email to programmas@hetkin.nl no later than 15 working days before the submission deadline **(**no later than **6 January 2026 before 14:00:00 CET):**
- a recent extract from the Chamber of Commerce;
- the deed of incorporation and/or current articles of association;
- the most recent available annual accounts with an auditor's report[1];
- the completed Research Organisation Declaration, available on the funding page of this Call for Proposals.
- the documents must be submitted in English or Dutch.

It is permitted to add other relevant documentation. NWO may also request additional information if the above documents do not provide sufficient clarity to determine whether the organisation may act as a project partner.

If the organisation of the intended project partner has been assessed against these conditions within another NWO programme, please contact NWO in good time via the above email address to agree whether this organisation needs to be reassessed. Section 7.1 of this Call contains a list of knowledge institutions that have already been assessed against these conditions.

If the organisation of the intended project partner does not submit the documents required for the assessment of the conditions on time, NWO cannot accept the organisation in question as a project partner, or can only do so if the organisation completes and submits a de minimis declaration (see section 3.5).

Re 2 Societal organisations with a de minimis declaration
By societal organisations, we mean companies and other public and private organisations (hereinafter: societal organisations), such as NGOs, non-profit foundations, companies, self-employed persons, municipalities, provinces, security regions, and other public and private organisations other than the research organisations and criteria mentioned under Ad. 1 research organisations.

Please note: Social organisations participating as project partners must complete a de minimis declaration. More information on this can be found in section 3.5.

3.1.2 Main applicant

One of the project partners acts as the main applicant and submits the application via ISAAC, NWO's electronic submission system. During the assessment process, NWO communicates with the main applicant. The main applicant's organisation is the main beneficiary and becomes the coordinator that distributes the budget to other project partners in accordance with the budget.

Please note: In the role of main applicant, a maximum of one application may be submitted. A main applicant cannot participate as a project partner in another project.

[1] Organisations that are not legally required to have their annual accounts audited do not need to submit such an audit statement. However, they must be able to demonstrate that this legal obligation does not apply to the organisation in question.

3.2 What can be applied for

A minimum of €40,000 and a maximum of €50,000 can be requested per project. This amount will be paid out as a one-off lump sum. The maximum duration of the proposed project is twelve months. The project must commence within three months of the grant being awarded.

Given the various roles of stakeholders in making research more sustainable, the funds can be used freely for employees at the applicant institutions as well as for external experts. It is not the intention to appoint new (scientific) staff for the implementation of the project, with the exception of student assistants. You can also apply for material costs.

The requested budget must be broken down into a realistic budget with an explanation tailored to the project. Only request what is essential to carry out the research.

What can't be requested for funding?
- The appointment of new scientific staff (with the exception of student assistants);
- Basic facilities within the institution (e.g. laptop, office furniture, etc.);
- Maintenance and insurance costs.

What can't you apply for funding for

- Hiring new research staff (except for student assistants);
- Basic facilities within the institution (like laptops, office furniture, etc.);
- Maintenance and insurance costs.

3.2.1 Deployment of personnel

For staff who contribute to the development of the project, a subsidy for wage costs can be applied for during the duration of the project. The rates are determined on the basis of the Government Rates Manual (HOT), table 2 average total wage costs per salary scale, column "Hourly rate for productive hours, excluding VAT". The salary scale of the requested position determines the rate from the HOT table. In addition, the hourly rate is calculated on the basis of a standard productive number of hours of 1355 per year.

Students may be deployed in the project. If the students contribute as part of their curriculum, the rate according to the usual internship allowance of the university or college applies. If the students contribute as student assistants in addition to their studies, the rate according to HOT table 2 scale 1 applies. You can enter these costs as material costs within the project. There is no maximum number of students who can participate in the project.

Indexation
The rate applicable at the time of the decision date applies. When awarding grants, NWO will, if necessary, apply a one-off indexation of the wage costs. The date on which the rates take effect will be used for this purpose. If the date of publication of the rates is later than the effective date, the date of publication will be used. The rates of the Universities of the Netherlands (UNL) generally take effect on 1 July, those of the Dutch Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU) on 1 August and those of the Government Rates Manual (HOT) on 1 January.

Automatic indexation does not affect the subsidy ceiling and the maximum subsidy amount that can be applied for. The subsidy ceiling and the maximum subsidy amount that can be applied for remain unchanged during the assessment procedure. Upon allocation, indexation is applied to the subsidy amount.

3.3 Preparing and submitting the application

To prepare your application, follow these steps:
- Download the application form from the ISAAC online application system or from the NWO website (on the website of the relevant funding instrument).
- Complete the application form.
- Save the form as a PDF and submit it with the required attachments in ISAAC.
- Fill in the information requested online in ISAAC.

Mandatory attachment(s):
- Budget.

Optional attachment(s):
- If applicable: de minimis declarations for societal organisations.

The attachments must be drawn up in accordance with the template provided by NWO. Attachments must be uploaded separately from the application in ISAAC. All attachments, with the exception of the budget, must be submitted as PDF files (without security). The budget must be submitted as an Excel file in ISAAC. Attachments other than those mentioned above are not permitted.

The proposal must be written in English.

Submit via ISAAC

Applications can only be submitted via the ISAAC online application system. Applications not submitted via ISAAC will not be considered.
As the main applicant, you are required to submit your application via your own personal ISAAC account.

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

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.
For technical questions, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see contact (section 6).

Does a project partner work for an organisation that is not included in the ISAAC database?
You can report this via relatiebeheer@nwo.nl so that the organisation can be added. This will take a few days. It is therefore important to report this at least 10 working days before the deadline (i.e. no later than **13 January 2026 before 14:00:00 CET**).

NWO assumes that the applicant has informed the organisation where he or she works about the submission of the application and that the organisation accepts the grant conditions of this Call.

3.4 Conditions for submission

All applications are subject to sections 1.2 (Beneficiaries), 2.1 (General principles and specific selection criteria), 2.3 (Decision and objection), 3.1 (General obligations), 3.2 (Start of the project), Article 3.3.1, paragraph 1, preamble a, (Reporting), and 4 (Publication and knowledge utilisation) of the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024 apply to all applications, unless explicitly deviated from in this Call.

These conditions are:
- the project partners meet the conditions set out in section 3.1;
- the application has been submitted via the main applicant's ISAAC account;
- the application has been received before the deadline;
- the application has been written in English;
- the proposed project has a maximum duration of 12 months.
- All required attachments are complete, following any requests for additional information or changes, and have been completed in accordance with the instructions and drawn up and submitted in accordance with the conditions of this Call.

3.5 Conditions on granting

All applications are subject to sections 1.2 (Beneficiaries), 2.1 (General principles and specific selection criteria), 2.3 (Decision and objection), 3.1 (General obligations), 3.2 (Start of the project), Article 3.3.1, paragraph 1, preamble a, (Reporting), and 4 (Publication and knowledge utilisation) of the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024 apply to all applications, unless explicitly deviated from in this Call.

De-minimis Regulation

Under this Call for Proposals, subsidies are granted on the basis of the De Minimis Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid). Under the De Minimis Regulation, a societal organisation may receive up to €300,000 in government aid over three tax years without this constituting unlawful state aid. All societal organisations acting as project partners must demonstrate with a de minimis aid declaration that the de minimis threshold set out in the de minimis Regulation is not exceeded. If a societal organisation finds that the NWO grant will cause it to exceed the de minimis threshold, it cannot submit an application to NWO. The de minimis aid declaration forms part of the application.

Additional terms and conditions

Furthermore, applications must – where applicable – take into account:
- Compliance with the National Knowledge Security Guidelines: It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that the project is and remains in line with the Guidelines. By submitting the application, the applicant commits to the considerations set out in these Guidelines. More information: Home | Knowledge Security Desk.
- Scientific integrity: Projects funded by NWO must be carried out in accordance with nationally and internationally accepted standards of scientific conduct as laid down in the Dutch Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity. By submitting an application, the applicant commits to this code. More information: Scientific integrity | NWO
- Data management: The results of scientific research must be replicable, verifiable and falsifiable. In the digital age, this means that, in addition to publications, research data must also be freely accessible as much as possible. NWO expects that the research data resulting from projects funded by NWO will be made freely available for reuse by other researchers as much as possible. NWO applies the principle: “as open as possible, protected when necessary”.
- Open Science: All forms of output resulting from this grant must be openly accessible and preferably also published on the NWO website or other publicly accessible knowledge portals. For further information on NWO's Open Access policy, see: Open Science | NWO.
- Ethical statement or permit: It is the applicant's responsibility to check whether an ethical statement or permit is required for the implementation of the proposed project.

4 Assessment procedure

This section describes how the assessment procedure works (section 4.1) and the criteria against which the application is assessed (section 4.2).

The NWO Code of Conduct on Personal Interests applies to all persons involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process and to all NWO and KIN employees involved (Code of Conduct on Personal Interests | NWO).

NWO strives for an inclusive culture in which there is no place for conscious or unconscious barriers based on cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender, sexual orientation, health or age (Diversity and inclusion | NWO).

4.1 Procedure

The application procedure consists of the following steps:

- submission of the application;
- processing of the application;
- division of applications into groups;
- assessment by main applicants;
- ex aequo;
- decision-making.

For this Call for Proposals, the main applicants are also the assessors. The task of the assessors is to assess a portion of the submitted applications in relation to each other and on their own merits, based on the assessment criteria provided in this Call for Proposals.

4.1.1 Submission of an application

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

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

4.1.2 Processing the application

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

Please note that NWO may contact you within two weeks of the submission deadline to request any administrative corrections in order to (still) meet the conditions for submission. You will be given one opportunity to make corrections, for which you will have five working days.

4.1.3 Division of applications into groups

The applications are divided into two groups, group A and group B. In principle, the division is random, taking into account the personal interests indicated by applicants and equal distribution across types of applicants. Before the applications are distributed for assessment, the assessors indicate their possible personal interests based on a list of applicants (initials, surname and affiliation). If a personal interest is identified, the assessor will not receive the application in question for assessment. Applications are switched between groups if this is necessary to comply with the NWO Code on personal interests. NWO also strives for an equal distribution of types of applicants in both groups (research organisations and societal organisations).

The grant ceiling is divided equally between groups A and B.

If there are too few applications or too many interests in relation to the number of applications, making it impossible to assess the applications via the peer review procedure described in the Call without a conflict of interest, a committee appointed by NWO will be used (see section 4.1.5).

4.1.4 Assessment by main applicants

The assessment will be carried out by the main applicants via peer review. More sustainable research is a shared task that needs to be accelerated. This Call has a stimulating function and focuses on the open sharing of knowledge and ideas to inspire each other. Given the nature of the Call, this faster assessment method has been chosen, allowing the knowledge and expertise of the various applicants to be actively utilised. It is expected that this will result in more diverse feedback on the applications.

Applications from group A will be assessed by the main applicants from group B, and applications from group B will be assessed by the main applicants from group A. To this end, the applications from group A will be randomly distributed among the main applicants from group B, and the applications from group B will be randomly distributed among the main applicants from group A. In this way, each assessing applicant (hereinafter referred to as “assessor”) receives a number of applications for assessment from the part of the set that does not include their own application. The basic principle is that each assessor receives an equal number of applications (maximum ten) for assessment and that each application is assessed by a comparable number of assessors.

The assessment by main applicants among themselves is based solely on the application. Applications must be sufficiently accessible so that the research plan and the assessment aspects below can be assessed by assessors with diverse backgrounds. An application that is not accessible may be given a lower priority by an assessor.

Each assessor ranks the applications they have received for assessment based on the assessment aspects (see section 4.2). Applications may not end up in the same position in this prioritisation. For each application, the assessor draws up a report stating the position of the application in the prioritisation (relative to the other applications the assessor has seen) and a brief written explanation supporting the prioritisation given on the basis of the assessment aspects.

The assessors have ten working days to submit their reports. If the assessor does not submit their assessments before the deadline, their own application will be removed from the procedure and will not be processed further.

NWO determines the final prioritisation of the applications on the basis of the prioritisation received. This results in two final prioritisation lists: one for group A and one for group B. There is no possibility of appeal.

The final prioritisation of the applications is determined by taking the average of all prioritisation received for each application, with the highest and lowest prioritisation not being included in this average.

4.1.5 Commission in the event of insufficient applications

If there are too few applications or too many interests in relation to the number of applications, making it impossible to assess the applications using the peer review procedure described in the Call, a committee assessment will be used instead.

The full procedure for a committee assessment is described in Section 7.2.

4.1.6 Ex aequo

NWO defines a ex aequo as a situation in which two or more applications cannot be distinguished from each other on the basis of their average score. A ex aequo situation is relevant around the subsidy ceiling or selection threshold. In the event of an ex aequo in the final prioritisation of two or more applications (rounded to one decimal place), the following principles apply, in the order listed below:
- the application with the most highest priorities is given preference, whereby only the priorities used to determine the average for the final priority are taken into account.
- the application with the most highest priorities is given preference, whereby the priorities not used to determine the average for the final priority are also taken into account.

4.1.7 Decision-making

Finally, the KIN steering group reviews the procedure followed and, based on the final priorities, the assessment reports and the available financial resources, decides whether to approve or reject the applications.

Once the KIN steering group has finalised its decision, the applicants will be notified. In addition to the final priority ranking, applicants also receive an assessment report relating to their application: the priority ranking given by each assessor and the corresponding justification are communicated to the applicant of the application in question. The applicant receives all priority rankings and justifications for their application, including those that were not taken into account in determining the average for the final priority ranking.

4.1.8 Timeframe

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

27 January 2026, 14:00:00 CET	**Deadline for submitting applications**
3 – 17 February 2026	Check conditions for submission
3 – 17 February 2026	Inventory of personal interests
24 Februari 2026	Receive applications for assessment
10 March 2026, 14:00:00 CET	**Deadline for submitting assessment reports**
March 2026	Decision of the KIN Steering Group
April 2026	Decision is communicated to applicants

Start date project	No later than three months after allocation date
End date project	No later than twelve months after start date

4.2 Assessment aspects

In order to prioritise the applications, the assessor will consider the aspects listed below. All aspects must be used, at the assessor's discretion, to arrive at a prioritisation. The content and feasibility aspects will be given equal weight. However, this prioritisation must be accompanied by a brief written explanation that substantiates the prioritisation given on the basis of the assessment aspects listed below.

Content

- The project demonstrably aligns with the objective and scope of this Call for Proposals.
- The project focuses on one or more of the objectives mentioned in section 2.1.1.
- The proposed methods are in line with the characteristics formulated in section 2.1.2.
- The application clearly describes the relationship with other existing sustainability initiatives.
- The application is accessible and clearly written.

Feasibility of the activity plan

- The questions and objectives are clearly defined, sufficiently delimited and adequately elaborated.
- The project team has the necessary expertise including (voluntary) experience with sustainability activities to carry out the project. The various roles and division of tasks are clear and appropriate.
- The activities are clearly described, achievable and suitable for realising the intended results.
- The budget is appropriate and realistic.

5 Grant obligations

This section explains the various subsidy obligations that apply after allocation, in addition to the subsidy conditions mentioned in section 3.5.

5.1 Additional terms and conditions

5.1.1 Intellectual property

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

Applicants must carry out an NWO-funded project while they are working for the research organisation. If an applicant or an NWO-funded researcher is employed by multiple employers, the other employer must waive any IP rights arising from the project for the benefit of the applicant.

5.1.2 Socially responsible licensing

The project may generate knowledge that is suitable for application in society. When entering into agreements on the licensing and/or transfer of research results developed under this Call for Proposals, the ten principles for socially responsible licensing, as included in the NFU report 'Socially Responsible Licensing', must be taken into account.

5.1.3 Sharing results widely

The applicant undertakes to actively share the results of the project with organisations and networks focused on making science more sustainable, including the national network of sustainability coordinators. At the end of the project, NWO will also request a short report, which will be widely shared through its channels.

5.1.4 Communication and joint meetings

NWO wants to communicate about the projects as effectively as possible in order to increase dialogue and visibility. In addition to the results, NWO will therefore also communicate about the applications. After the assessment procedure, NWO intends to share the application and the assessments on the NWO website, following approval by the main applicant on behalf of all project partners.

Events and meetings: Within the framework of this programme, joint meetings will also be organised with the projects from programmes related to Science in Transition. Participation in these meetings is mandatory for all projects.

6 Contact and other information

6.1 Contact

6.1.1 Questions regarding the content of this call

For questions regarding the content of this Call for Proposals, please contact: programmas@hetkin.nl

6.1.2 Technical questions about the ISAAC electronic application system

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

6.2 Other information

NWO processes personal data received in connection with this round in accordance with the NWO privacy statement, Privacy Statement | NWO.

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

7 Annexes

7.1 List of research organisations

The research organisations listed below may act as project partners in an application. The assessment referred to in section 3.1.1 is **not** required for these organisations.

- Biomedical Primate Research Centre (BPRC)
- CBS (Statistics Netherlands)
- Deltares (TO2)
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
- IMEC-NL
- Institute for Road Safety Research (SWOV)
- KNMI
- Marin (TO2)
- NIVEL
- NLDA - Netherlands Defence Academy
- NLR (TO2)
- RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment)
- Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS Institute)
- Wageningen Research Foundation (WUR TO2)
- Institute for Road Safety Research
- TNO (TO2)
- Trimbos Institute
- Waag Futurelab

7.2 Assessment by committee

If there are too few applications or too many interests in relation to the number of applications, making it impossible to assess the applications using the peer review procedure described in the Call for Proposals, a committee assessment will be used instead.

In that case, the assessment procedure will consist of the following steps:
- preliminary advice from the assessment committee;
- meeting of the assessment committee;
- decision-making.

Assessment committee

For this Call for Proposals, the KIN steering group will set up an external, independent, broadly composed assessment committee consisting of representatives from science and the entire knowledge chain, including social stakeholders and representatives from the target group, with knowledge of the field. The task of the assessment committee is to assess the applications and related documents in relation to each other and on their own merits, based on the assessment criteria in this Call.

Due to the special nature of the Call and the expertise available in the assessment committee, NWO has decided to make use of the option provided in Article 2.2.4, paragraph 2, of the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024 to carry out the assessment procedure without involving referees.

7.2.1 Preliminary advice from the assessment committee

Your application will be submitted to several members of the assessment committee (the preliminary advisers) for their comments. The preliminary advisers will provide written comments on the content and reasoning behind the application. They will formulate these comments on the basis of the substantive assessment criteria (see section 4.3.1) and assign a numerical score to the application for each assessment criterion. The NWO scoring table is used for this purpose (on a scale of 1 to 9, where "1" is excellent and "9" is inadequate). The preliminary advisers also identify which parts need to be clarified, explained or explored in more depth during the interview.

7.2.2 Meeting of the assessment committee

The assessment committee makes its own assessment based on the available material.

Following the discussion, the committee draws up a written recommendation to the KIN steering group on the quality and prioritisation of the applications. This recommendation is based on the assessment criteria. The application as a whole must receive at least a "very good" rating in order to be eligible for the grant. In addition, the application must also receive at least a "good" rating on each of the individual assessment criteria.
For more information about the qualifications, see Applying for funding, how does it work? | NWO.

If, after discussion of the applications, it appears that two or more applications cannot be distinguished from each other on the basis of their weighted total score, then there is an ex aequo (see section on ties).

7.2.3 Ex aequo

NWO defines a ex aequo as a situation in which two or more applications cannot be distinguished from each other on the basis of their weighted scores. A ex aequo situation is relevant around the subsidy ceiling or selection threshold. Whether a ex aequo situation exists is determined as follows. The starting point is the prioritisation drawn up by the assessment committee, with final scores rounded to two decimal places. The reference score is the score of the lowest-priority application within the subsidy ceiling or selection threshold. All applications with a score that is 0.05 or less from the reference score are taken into consideration. This means that applications that are within 0.10 of each other are selected. If an ex aequo occurs at the subsidy ceiling or selection threshold, the application with the highest score on the "Content" criterion will be ranked highest. If the ex aequo is not broken in this way, the application with the highest score on the "Feasibility and activity plan" criterion will be ranked highest. If the applications are still tied, the assessment committee will determine the prioritisation by means of an (anonymous) majority vote (in accordance with Article 2.2.6, paragraph 5, of the NWO Subsidy Scheme 2024). If the vote does not provide a decisive result, or is not desirable, the ex aequo will be forwarded to the decision-making body.

7.2.4 Decision-making

Finally, the KIN steering group of NWO reviews the procedure followed and the advice of the assessment committee. The steering group then determines the final qualifications and decides whether to approve or reject the applications.

If the budget is insufficient to award the next application in the prioritisation, NWO may deviate from that prioritisation and award the next application in the prioritisation that meets the criteria of this Call for Proposals, the minimum qualification and fits within the remaining budget.

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For example:
The prioritisation may jump from application 5 to application 8 in order to make optimal use of the budget. Applications 6 and 7 in the prioritisation are skipped because they do not fit within the remaining budget.

7.2.5 Timeline

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

27 January 2026, 14:00:00 CET	**Deadline for submitting applications**
3 – 17 February 2026	Check conditions for submission
3 – 17 February 2026	Inventory of personal interests
24 February 2026	Send applications for assessment
March 2026	Assessment committee meeting
April 2026	Decision of the KIN Steering Group
April 2026	Decision is communicated to applicants
Project start date	No later than three months after the allocation date
Project end date	No later than twelve months after the start date

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The Dutch Research Council (NWO)
Dutch Climate Research Initiative

Visiting Address:
Location The Hague
Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië
2593 CE Den Haag
The Netherlands

Location Utrecht
Winthontlaan 2
3526 KV Utrecht

Cover image: Ninarosa Juffermans

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