

Knowledge in Action

Towards Collective Water Management in East Brabant

Call for proposals

2025

KIN Klimaatonderzoek Initiatief Nederland
Samen transities versnellen

Table of Contents

1 Introduction 2
1.1 Background 2
1.2 Available budget 4
1.3 Submission deadline(s) 4
2 Aim 5
2.1 Objective of the programme 5
2.2 From Analysis to Action: Knowledge-in-Action Agenda 5
3 Requirements for applicants 12
3.1 What can be applied for? 12
3.2 Who can apply? 13
3.3 Preparing and submitting the proposal 15
3.4 Requirements for submissions 16
3.5 Grant conditions 16
4 Assessment procedure 18
4.1 Procedure 18
4.2 Criteria 20
5 Obligations for grant recipients 22
5.1 Additional requirements 22
6 Contact details and other information 23
6.1 Contact 23
6.2 Other information 23

1 Introduction

This document explains the application procedure for the funding programme 'Knowledge in Action – Towards Collective Water Management in East Brabant'. This call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Dutch Climate Research Initiative (KIN) – a taskforce of the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

Below you will find information about the aim of this call (section 2), the requirements of thegrant applications (section 3), and how your proposal will be assessed (section 4).
You will need this information to submit a grant proposal. Section 5 contains the grant obligations that apply if you are awarded funding. Section 6 contains the contact information.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 KIN – Accelerating transitions together

KIN connects, broadens, deepens and unlocks knowledge for transitions toward a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society.

If we want to make the Netherlands climate neutral and climate resilient, system changes are necessary. Government bodies, companies, societal organisations and knowledge institutions feel the urgency to change but often lack the right kind of knowledge and practical knowhow to bring about a real transformation. KIN was set up to change this situation. By sharing, developing and applying our collective knowledge, we ensure everyone in society can get their hands on the missing pieces that will accelerate climate transitions.

KIN's ambition is to accelerate the transition to a climate neutral and climate resilient world by finding the best way of applying existing knowledge while also developing new knowledge. Our goals are to slow down climate change as soon as possible (mitigation), help society make the necessary changes (adaptation), and help bring about a just and sustainable society in countries across the globe.

Read more about KIN's mission and ambition in the KIN foundation document and on the KIN website.

1.1.2 Transition requires more than just a solution

Climate transitions require changes in our way of life that are needed to address climate change and make society resilient to its consequences. These transitions are complex and require a systemic perspective.

Systemic perspective on climate transitions
A system consists of various interconnected elements. It is precisely these interconnections that determine how the system functions as a whole. In society, specific functions give rise to fixed structures, cultures and working methods that together form a system. These systems usually have a long history. The structures, cultures and working methods often emerged from historical needs, urgencies or ambitions, without considering the negative consequences for the climate, biodiversity or global justice. If we are to truly address climate change, fundamental changes are needed in how we think, work and organise ourselves.

By a systemic perspective, we mean a way of observing, researching and reasoning that takes into account a (social sub)system as a whole, with all the different processes, conditions and actors involved. Different elements within a system must change in order for the system as a whole to change.

The necessary climate transitions therefore go far beyond technological improvements such as more efficient energy generation. They also require changes to ingrained structures, cultures and working methods in areas such as legislation, behaviour and finance. Individual measures, such as solely technological optimalisations, often yield insufficient impact, making it unlikely that long-term climate targets will be achieved. In fact, they may even unintentionally create new problems.

Systems consist of many elements with interconnections and feedback loops. This makes their dynamics uncertain and not fully controllable. As a result, it is often not immediately clear how to realise or accelerate systemic change. Moreover, people and organisations tend to hold on to existing structures, routines and habits, and necessary system change may conflict with the interests of established institutions.

Knowledge-in-Action approach
Transitions toward just and sustainable futures require a fundamentally different way of conducting research. Aligned with its mission and core values, KIN therefore supports transdisciplinary research that explores alternatives to unjust and unsustainable systems, in close collaboration with societal partners. Justice and sustainability have no single definition or universal solution. They are context dependent, shaped by the people involved, and evolve over time as insights develop. This means there are no ready-made recipes for achieving the desired transitions.

The route towards systemic climate transitions is not predetermined, it is a process of exploration, learning and experimentation. Transdisciplinary collaboration[1] aimed at enabling transitions is therefore primarily about the quality of the process itself. It demands a high level of commitment, transparency, reflexivity and humility from all participants.

This calls for a new approach that provides space to collectively identify the desired direction of transitions. Collaboration between different actors is essential — including researchers from various disciplines and professionals from societal organisations or companies who are actively working on transitions in practice. By engaging in joint exploration and acceleration of desirable transitions, new, relevant and usable knowledge can emerge.

This approach requires the formulation of related exploratory research questions and the transparent funding and support of transition focused research projects. It also involves valuing different forms of knowledge, redefining the roles of researchers, and enabling and funding both researchers and societal actors. The goal is to bring together diverse perspectives and areas of expertise in order to develop new insights, knowledge and actions through collaborative work on transitions.

1.1.3 Just climate transistion

KIN works to accelerate transitions toward a climate-neutral and climate-resilient world in a just and inclusive way. This requires a process that equally takes into account the interests, needs, risks, opportunities and limitations of all — human and non-human — while acknowledging the past, present and future.

For KIN, climate justice is a key condition. By climate justice, KIN means ensuring fairness in the prevention, response to and recovery from the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss and ecological disruption. This is important not only because it aims to do justice to all people, animals and nature, but also because climate transitions will not succeed without public support if they are not

[1] By transdisciplinary collaboration, KIN means collaboration between at least different actors from science, policy, practice, and/or business, etc. Often, the collaboration also spans different substantive disciplines. See also: https://www.transdisciplinairwerken.nl/

addressed in a fair way. The goal is not to achieve perfect justice, but to reduce unwanted inequalities and to prevent climate transitions from widening existing gaps.

1.1.4 The question behind the question

KIN continuously identifies urgent challenges and transition tasks from practice. Often, there is much more behind these questions than initially expected. To better understand these complex transition issues, KIN facilitated analyses of the theme "Collective Water Management in East Brabant" using a systemic and justice-based perspective. This involved transition dialogues and sessions in which experts from science, practice and policy jointly analysed the field and existing knowledge.

Together, they unraveled the initial question in order to identify the underlying questions and define clear transition challenges. This type of analysis is based on asking questions such as:

- What are the alternatives when improvement and innovation are no longer sufficient?
- Which unsustainable and unjust elements in the current system make transition necessary or inevitable?
- What is preventing transition and sustaining the current situation?
- Which desirable alternatives and research questions should be explored to move closer to the desired change?

During this process, frontrunners, initiatives and ideas were identified that already point toward the desired situation, as well as barriers and levers that influence the transition. This led to focused solution directions, exploratory questions and learning goals for transitions, which have been compiled in a Knowledge-in-Action agenda (see subsection 2.2). This agenda defines the thematic scope of this call for proposals. Project proposals can be submitted for each subtheme of this agenda.

1.2 Available budget

The total budget available for this call for proposals is €725,000. The budget available per subtopic is outlined in the Knowledge-in-Action Agenda (see subsection 2.2). A maximum of €50,000 can be requested per proposal.

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

When submitting your proposal in ‘ISAAC’, the NWO-KIN online application system, you will also need to enter additional information online. We therefore advise you to start the submission process at least one day before the deadline. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

The submission deadline for this call is **Tuesday 14 October 2025**, at 14:00:00 CEST.

2 Aim

KIN wants to mobilise knowledge and science for transitions that make the Netherlands climate-neutral and climate-resilient through its programmes. This requires fundamental and sustainable societal changes that are fair for everyone. To achieve this, close collaboration between science and practice is essential, focused on concrete knowledge and transition tasks.

Entrepreneurs, enterprising citizens, creative professionals, action researchers and enterprising civil servants play a crucial role. These pioneers often already experiment with desired alternatives on a small scale and bring a lot of experiential knowledge. By connecting them with researchers, powerful combinations of practical knowledge and scientific methods emerge. Science can also help to legitimise and support transition practices.

To be able to start transformative projects faster, KIN has developed the Knowledge-in-Action grant. This grant facilitates and finances both researchers and societal actors who work together on just climate transitions. Because with these types of complex issues it is not clear in advance whether interventions work or not and why, the Knowledge-in-Action grant provides space for experimenting with a focus on action: a cyclical and learning process of testing, researching and adjusting.

This section describes the further objective of the call for proposals.

2.1 Objective of the programme

The Knowledge-in-Action grant aims to stimulate collaboration between science and practice and to take joint and investigative steps that can accelerate fair climate transitions.

The thematic framework for this grant is outlined in the accompanying Knowledge-in-Action agenda (see subsection 2.2). This agenda was developed in an earlier process by a diverse group of experts and contains a number of targeted solutions, exploratory questions and transition learning objectives that can accelerate the desired transition(s) within the theme of “Collective Water Management in East Brabant”. In projects within this grant, knowledge is developed in co-creation, made accessible and usable for concrete knowledge and transition tasks. This process is dynamic and learning-oriented, with room for testing solution directions and adjusting original plans. In this way, project partners learn together and create a perspective for action for the parties involved and beyond.

2.2 From Analysis to Action: Knowledge-in-Action Agenda

This call for proposals is thematically organised. This means that proposals must fit within the Knowledge-in-Action agenda: Collective Water Management in East Brabant.

Transition interventions as a research method

KIN focuses on supporting research in and for (transition) practice. We therefore emphasise action: by doing things purposefully, impact and insight emerge. 'Transition interventions' are transdisciplinary or transformative research projects in which exploratory questions are asked by people who together try to find a route to a fundamentally better, more just or sustainable future.

So it's not about 'just doing' but about doing-by-learning and learning-by-doing. This requires an integral analysis of persistent problems and stuck systems, a set of guiding principles and values, substantiated hypotheses and learning objectives regarding desired transition, as well as a transparent and solid methodological approach and a plan for facilitating co-creation and learning.

A transition intervention can be anything: (trans)disciplinary, visual, design-oriented, entrepreneurial or highly process-oriented, reflective or activist. As long as it involves a bundling of forces from practice and research, aimed at advancing desired transition.

The Knowledge-in-Action agenda includes various subthemes with challenges and transition learning objectives and associated exploratory questions to which proposals can be submitted. The agenda indicates how much budget is available per subtheme. The proposals to be submitted address the exploratory questions by, for example, testing solution directions, experimenting, analysing system barriers and levers, and/or working out transformative interventions.
Proposals can take the exploratory questions formulated in the agenda as a starting point or formulate entirely own exploratory questions and related hypotheses and learning objectives that fit within the subthemes. The most important thing is that they further facilitate the desired transition in East Brabant and develop and share knowledge and insights in the process.

2.2.1 Introduction Collectieve Water Management East Brabant

The consequences of climate change are becoming increasingly visible, especially on the sandy soils in the Netherlands. Prolonged drought and extreme precipitation create increasing pressure on the regional water system, with consequences for agriculture, nature, drinking water supply, housing and industry.

The East Brabant region is particularly vulnerable to water problems. The region, with Den Bosch as its metropolitan center, emerged from a marshland and is still characterised by subsiding soil, stream valleys and marshy grounds with puddle formation. With climate change, risks increase: during extreme rainfall Den Bosch can flood, while in dry periods water availability becomes a problem.

Dutch water management developed after 1953 into a system of technical control and expertise, where water managers were fully mandated by society. Within water management, thinking in terms of primarily technical solutions has become dominant: calculating risks and technically managing infrastructures to enable society and economic activities.

This is unsustainable in the long term: our current land use in combination with climate change leads to unpredictable and uncontrollable risks. In some cases, current water management can actually strengthen vulnerabilities itself. While water management mainly focusses on new spatial and technical measures and interventions based on control (for example, upstream collection, greater discharge capacity, and buffers), there is little societal urgency to change course. The question is whether a more fundamental shift is needed, in which not only awareness of water problems grows, but also in which anticipating these issues becomes a collective responsibility. Furthermore, the way we frame water should change - not as a threat or problem, but as part of our existential security.

With this call and agenda, we therefore want to investigate what “collective water management” can mean in East Brabant, with water and soil as guiding principles. This concerns both what can be done in and by society to reduce water vulnerability and what that means for the role of the water sector.

Desired transition

The transition to collective water management offers perspective for a more ecological, regenerative and natural approach to water in East Brabant. Instead of controlling water for economic purposes, all parties take their responsibility for an approach of the water system that strengthens, restores and utilises natural resilience. Water becomes an integral part of a healthy and safe living environment in which the variability of weather and water can also be accommodated without social or economic disruption.

The realisation is that current water management is unsustainable and not viable. In various places, people who experience this urgency are already in motion. In agriculture, infrastructure, neighborhoods and governments, people are working on different approaches to water based on ecological principles and based on collaboration and shared responsibility. In East Brabant, various parties are already working on collective water management, often because urgency forces them to take more responsibility and collaboration. For example, there are experiments with mini-water boards and farmers are working on different water level management. The region needs a boost to move from good initiatives to a larger transition movement.

2.2.2 Knowledge-in-Action Agenda Collective Water Management East Brabant

In order to move from individual initiatives to a broader transition movement, concrete interventions are needed in which we experiment in and with the practice with how the transition to collective water management can be accelerated. Based on a transition analysis and Crutzen workshop of July 2, 2025, the following themes and questions have emerged. In this agenda we define water management including both water safety (protection against flooding) and water availability (dealing with drought and water retention). It concerns all aspects of water management in the region.

From barriers to preconditions

The analysis and Crutzen workshop show that there are fundamental barriers in the desired transition to collective water management. If these can be overcome, they can actually function as preconditions for desired transition. In East Brabant, the transition analysis identified the following barriers:

- The complexity and inertia of governance structures;
- A lack of awareness in society;
- Not valuing the ecological and social value of water;
- Lack of support, recognition and scaling of local initiatives;
- Absence of incentives for companies to operate water-consciously.

These barriers have been translated into six subthemes with challenges, solution directions, learning objectives and exploratory questions aimed at the desired transition.

Applicants can submit proposals of maximum €50,000 for one of the six subthemes. For the three thematic subthemes, the maximum budget is €200,000 per subtheme. For the three integrative subthemes, €125,000 is available jointly. These integrative proposals must be developed in consultation with each other.

A. Thematic questions and learning objectives (Available sub-budget €600,000)

Subtheme 1. Culture: valuing water differently (Available budget subtheme €200,000)

The water system is currently managed primarily for economic benefit, while the negative impact on the social and natural system is barely considered. Drinking water is extremely cheap and water safety is taken for granted. This instrumental approach has led to alienation from water as a natural system. Our relationship with water, the recognition of natural value and fair economic dealing with costs and benefits of water use therefore forms a central barrier in the transition.

The challenge is to develop a different way of valuing water that leads to restoration of ecological and social resilience through social awareness and involvement. This requires a fundamental cultural change in which water is no longer seen only as a raw material, but also as a living system that deserves care and respect.

The learning objective is to understand how cultural change can contribute to the transition towards collective water management and which interventions can accelerate this shift.

Explorative questions:
- What is 'the value' of water and what worldview is underlying?
- How can the value of water become visible, so that it is more recognised and acknowledged socially?
- How can people (in the region) be stimulated to different behaviour by restoring the relationship with nature and water?
- What is the role of schools and education in restoring the relationship with nature and water?
- How do we value water so that it becomes leading in decision-making?
- How do we align decision-making in local businesses, governments and societal partners with the shared values of water that live in society?
- What are the dominant stories that people tell about water, and what alternative stories are needed to make collective water management common practice?
- How can we use regenerative and collective frames to develop an economic future perspective for agriculture, housing construction and water management?

Subtheme 2. Structure: organising water differently (Available budget subtheme €200,000)
The responsibility for water management, particularly in the area of water safety, currently lies with governments, with water boards playing a central role. This has led to an environment where policymaking in small steps, consensus and technical measures are leading. Society does have a say and can exert influence through elections, but in practice has little direct influence on and involvement in water management. This distance between residents and water managers can hinder the development of collective responsibility.

The challenge is to develop other forms of governance and collaboration, where collective ownership, self-organisation and other forms of decision-making provide space for a different kind of solution and social innovation. This requires a redefinition of the role of governments and water boards, in which they are more facilitators than decision makers.

The learning objective is to gain better insight into the governance structure of collective water management and the changing role of the water board in this, including the way in which residents and other actors can gain more ownership.

Explorative questions:
- Which governance structures are needed to make collective water management mainstream?
- How can public authorities (province of Brabant, Aa en Maas and Dommel water boards, municipalities) take a responsive role and provide space for social entrepreneurship?
- Which power relations and conflicts of interest play a role in the transition to collective water management?
- Which under-explored possibilities do current policy regulations already offer that facilitate or accelerate a transition to collective water management?
- How can local initiatives develop into sustainable institutional forms and become less dependent on volunteers?
- How can we escape from a context in which perpetual permits and high land prices frustrate change?
- How can the region already proactively focus on transformation while awaiting future shifts in policy or climate?
- How can the role and involvement of citizens in decision-making and water management be adjusted?
- How can legal and institutional rules and procedures provide more space for collective water management?

Subtheme 3. Working methods: dealing with water differently (Available budget subtheme €200,000)

In the daily practice of organisations, businesses and citizens, water is not a top priority, partly because the responsibility for water lies elsewhere. This often leads to a lack of involvement and care in everyday dealing with water. Farmers, builders, insurances and citizens make decisions without water playing a guiding role in their considerations. This fragmentation of responsibility forms an important barrier for collective water management.

The challenge is to realise behavioural change on a large scale in which different actors place water at the centre of their working methods and policies. This means that farmers adapt their business operations, citizens organise their water use differently, and banks, insurances and builders give water a more guiding role in their projects and decision-making. It involves a fundamental shift in which water is no longer an external factor, but an integral part of all activities.

The learning objective is to gain a better understanding of how behavioural change around collective water management takes place and how this can be stimulated, both at individual and organisational level.

Explorative questions:

- How can we organise (existing) societal and economic activities in the region in such a way that the natural water system is supported and can recover?
- How can we use the power of design to make the transition (practices) to collective and regenerative water management attractive in the short term and for different groups?
- How can we bring the vision of collective and natural water management to life in a creative way, in daily practice, and living environment?
- How can a different narrative and language about water use be created, and can this stimulate different behaviour and vice versa?
- What can citizens do to shape collective water management and increase societal resilience?

B. Integration and diffusion (Available sub-budget €125,000)

The context of East Brabant is unique and special, but at the same time also symbolises what is happening in many places in the Netherlands. The exploratory questions are formulated in such a way that by working locally, they also provide insight into more generic challenges, barriers and preconditions in the transition to collective water management that are relevant everywhere.

From individual initiatives to a coherent and action-oriented programme

A successful Knowledge-in-Action programme requires more than just the thematic interventions and the knowledge generated within them. In order to achieve real impact from individual projects, the three thematic subthemes must be connected to each other. Therefore, we are looking for three complementary 'integrative' interventions that ensure coherence between all projects within this agenda and lead to broader action orientation. These integrative subthemes form the backbone of this programme. They ensure that knowledge is shared, linked to (ongoing) initiatives, that practices become visible, and collaboration emerges between projects from all thematic subthemes. In this way, all projects form one coherent programme in which they can strengthen each other and jointly facilitate the transition to collective water management in East Brabant (and beyond).

We are therefore looking for three complementary proposals in which integration interventions are developed and applied to all projects that are awarded funding within this Knowledge-in-Action grant. They should focus on the integration, implementation and diffusion of the knowledge and interventions developed within this call. As the proposals to be awarded for the thematic subthemes are not yet known during the writing and submission of a proposal on these integrative subthemes, we expect a flexible approach that can anticipate and adapt to the final proposals.

A total of 125k€ is available for these three integrative proposals (with a maximum of 50k€ per proposal). Please note that these interventions must be developed through close collaboration and coordination, to realise optimal coherence, although each proposal will be assessed separately.

Subtheme 4: Scientific integration and diffusion
An important barrier in transitions is the ineffective knowledge exchange between science and practice. Scientific knowledge is often not translated into concrete actions, while practical knowledge rarely reaches science. This gap slows down societal changes, preventing sustainable solutions and joint goals from being optimally achieved.

The learning objective is to develop an approach that formalises practical knowledge, records it and diffuses it through scientific channels, creating bridges between research and practice and enabling both worlds to reinforce each other. The assumption is that this accelerates the transition to collective water management.

Explorative question: How do we safeguard and support knowledge integration between science and practice on the one hand and the creation and diffusion of value from the knowledge generated by the interventions on the other?

Subtheme 5. Societal integration and diffusion
An important problem in the transition to collective water management is the invisibility of many local transition practices, which therefore often seem to have little tangible impact. This is aggravated by a lack of connection with the theme of water among societal actors, which stems from insufficient knowledge, low visibility and a missing sense of urgency.

The learning objective is to promote exchange, connection and co-creation through design, art and creativity, in order to support behavioural change and cultural transformation. In doing so, knowledge and experiences are made tangible and experiential for different audiences.

Explorative question: How can we make the knowledge, insights and experiences that arise in this programme tangible, visible, experiential or otherwise accessible to different audiences in a creative and inspiring way?

Subtheme 6. Organisational integration and connection
Many practices are hampered by bureaucratic barriers and outdated regulations. Frontrunners are often overburdened, while researchers are not always able to respond quickly and in a practice-supportive manner. Moreover, meetings often lead to an exchange of positions rather than action-oriented solutions, which slows down the progress of effective water management.

The learning objective is to develop an efficient and inspiring organisational structure for the applicants involved that supports the thematic ambitions of the agenda and provides clear added value for the practice. In addition, smart connections must be created with relevant ongoing regional and national programmes and important actors.

Explorative question: How do we organise and support collaboration, exchange and organisation of a portfolio of transition interventions within this agenda and beyond, so that mutual exchange, reinforcements and connection are ensured in an efficient and transparent way?

3 Requirements for applicants

This section contains the requirements that apply to grant applications. First, it describes what you can apply for (subsection 3.1) and who can apply for funding (subsection 3.2). Next, you will find the requirements for preparing and submitting a proposal (subsections 3.3 and 3.4) and the specific grant conditions (subsection 3.5).

3.1 What can be applied for?

A maximum grant amount of €50,000 can be requested per project. This amount will be disbursed as a one-off lump sum. The preferred duration of the proposed project is nine months. Exceptions to this must be sufficiently substantiated. The project must start within three months after grant allocation.

The funding is intended for researchers and practice partners who want to explore a possible solution direction in co-creation based on the subthemes defined in the Knowledge-in-Action agenda (see subsection 2.2). KIN welcomes creative and non-traditional activities that contribute to the objective of the call for proposals and encourages involvement of professionals from the creative sector. KIN can support applicants in making contact with professionals from the creative sector. When submitting a proposal, the persons who play an active role in the implementation of the project must submit a letter of commitment in which they pledge their time investment and, if applicable, the support of their direct supervisor (see subsection 3.3, available on the funding page of this grant call). The appointment of new scientific personnel is not possible for the execution of the project, with the exception of student assistants. The project partners can request costs for their own salary (see the explanation below), materials, temporary hiring of experts and other project-related activities.

Examples of activities that the grant can be spent on:
- Testing solution directions and developing new knowledge;
- Making existing knowledge accessible and usable;
- Scientifically substantiating existing and desired working methods;
- Testing a specific intervention, regulation, or legal measure on the contribution to transition/behavioural change in a pilot setting;
- Setting up a new initiative;
- Developing interventions aimed at action perspective;
- Developing communication materials and knowledge utilisation activities such as platforms, best practices, exhibitions, a public dialogue, etc.;
- Organising interviews, focus groups and expert sessions;
- Developing and/or following workshops/courses/training;
- Experimenting with different forms of conducting research;
- Working on mutual connection and transition skills with the transdisciplinary group of stakeholders;
- Visualising or building an artistic intervention.

Personnel cost
For personnel who contribute to developing the project, funding for salary costs can be requested. The rates are determined based on the Manual tariffs government (HOT), table 2 average total salary costs per salary scale, column 'Hourly rate productive hours, excl. VAT'. The salary scale of the requested position determines the rate from the HOT table. In addition, the calculation of the hourly rate is based on a standard productive number of hours of 1,355 per year.

Students can be assigned to the project. If the students contribute as part of their curriculum, the rate according to the usual internship compensation of the university or university of applied sciences applies. If the students contribute as student assistants in addition to their studies, the rate according to HOT table 2 scale 1 applies.

What can NOT be funded?
- The appointment of new scientific personnel (except student assistants);
- Basic facilities within the institution (for example laptop, office furniture etc.);
- Maintenance and insurance costs.

3.2 Who can apply?

3.2.1 Project partners

In this call for proposals, the collaboration between science and practice is central. The applicants must consist of at least one knowledge institution (Ad 1) and at least one societal organisation (Ad 2). They jointly submit a proposal. Employees of knowledge institutions and societal organisations established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands can submit a proposal. All project partners have an active role in the execution of the project and commit to the promised time commitment as described in the proposal and in the commitment letter.

Ad 1 - Knowledge institutions
Knowledge institutions include:
- research universities, universities of applied sciences, as referred to in Article 1.8(1) of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act, and the universities referred to in the Policy Rules for Universities in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- university medical centres, as referred to in Article 1.13(1) of the Higher Education and Research Act.
- institutes affiliated with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and NWO;
- Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics;
- Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- Princess Máxima Centre;
- 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 (TO2);
- TNO (TO2);
- Trimbos Institute;
- Waag Futurelab.

To qualify as additional knowledge institution, there are two options:

Option 1: Additional knowledge institution with assessment and without de-minimis declaration:
Additional knowledge institutions that cumulatively meet the following requirements (assessment) can join as project partner knowledge institution without submitting a de-minimis declaration:

- is established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- is a foundation, association, pr legal entity under the public or private law;
- is primarily engaged in independently conducting fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development or in broadly disseminating the results of those activities through education, publications or knowledge transfer;
- can declare that the organisation keeps separate accounts regarding economic/non-economic activities and that companies with decisive influence on the organisation do not get preferential access to the organization's research results.

Note: Prior to submitting a proposal, NWO-KIN will assess, based on the conditions above, whether an organisation meets article 1.1, paragraph 4, of the NWO Grant Regulation 2024 and may therefore participate as project partner knowledge institution in this call for proposals. NWO-KIN conducts this assessment primarily to verify that no prohibited state aid is granted.

The organisation of the intended project partner knowledge institution delivers the following documents by email to programmas@hetkin.nl for the purpose of this assessment no later than 15 working days before the submission deadline (no later than **September 23, 2025 before 14:00:00 CEST**):

- a recent extract from the chamber of commerce;
- the articles of incorporation and/or current statutes;
- the latest available annual report with an auditor's report[2];
- the completed 'Declaration Research Organisation', available on the funding page of this call for proposals.

It is permitted to add other relevant documentation. NWO-KIN can also ask for additional information if the documents above do not provide sufficient clarity to determine whether the organisation may act as project partner knowledge institution.

If the organisation of the intended project partner knowledge institution has been assessed against these conditions within another NWO programme and is not in the list above, please contact NWO-KIN in time before the deadline via the above-mentioned email address to coordinate whether this organisation needs to be assessed again.

If the organisation of the intended project partner does not deliver the documents required for the assessment of the conditions on time, NWO-KIN cannot accept the relevant organisation as project partner knowledge institution. This organisation can participate as project partner 'societal organisation' or via option 2 provided a de-minimis declaration (see subsection 3.5) is completed and submitted.

Option 2: Additional knowledge institution without assessment and with de-minimis declaration
Additional knowledge institutions can choose to fill in the 'Declaration additional knowledge institution without assessment' and a de-minimis declaration instead of undergoing the assessment as described in option 1 in order to join as project partner, more information about de-minimis is in subsection 3.5.

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

Ad 2 Societal organisations
By societal organisations, KIN refers to companies and other public and private organisations (hereinafter: societal organisations) other than the knowledge institutions and criteria mentioned under Ad. 1 Knowledge institutions.

Note: Societal organisations that participate as project partners must fill in a de-minimis declaration, more information about this is in subsection 3.5.

3.2.2 Main applicant

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

Note: In the role of main applicant, a maximum of two proposals may be submitted. If a project partner submits two proposals as main applicant, a clear distinction must be made between the two proposals in terms of the allocation of hours and time commitment via the letter of commitment. The two proposals are submitted separately and assessed independently of each other.

3.2.3 Collaboration partner

Other organisations that contribute (partially) to the project may act as collaboration partners. Please note: no part of the grant for salary costs can be requested for personnel of organisations participating as collaboration partners. However, it is possible to reimburse costs by hiring these organisations as third parties via material costs.

3.3 Preparing and submitting the proposal

KIN is part of NWO and uses the NWO infrastructure.
Preparing your proposal consists of the following steps:
- download the application form from the online application system ISAAC or from the NWO website (on the website of the relevant funding instrument);
- fill in the application form;
- save the form as pdf and submit it with the mandatory attachment(s) in ISAAC;
- fill in the data requested online in ISAAC.

Mandatory attachment(s) available on the funding page of this call for proposals:
- budget;
- letter of commitment per project partner;
- de-minimis declarations for societal organisations and additional knowledge institutions that participate as project partner knowledge institution without the assessment (mandatory if applicable);
- declaration additional knowledge institution without assessment (mandatory if applicable);

The attachments must be prepared according to the template offered by KIN. Attachments must be uploaded separately from the proposal in ISAAC. All attachments, with the exception of the budget, must be submitted as a pdf file (without security). The budget must be submitted as an Excel file in ISAAC. Other attachments than the above-mentioned attachments are not allowed.

It is mandatory to prepare your proposal in Dutch or English.

Submitting via ISAAC
Submitting a proposal can only be done via the online application system ISAAC. Proposals not submitted via ISAAC will not be processed.

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

It is important to start submitting the proposal in ISAAC in time:
- if you do not yet have an ISAAC account, this must be created in time to prevent possible registration problems;
- new organisations may still need to be added to ISAAC;
- you also need to enter data online.

Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be processed by KIN.
For questions of a technical nature, we ask you to contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see contact (section 6).

Is a project partner employed by an organisation that is not included in the ISAAC database? If so, you can report this to relationbeheers@nwo.nl so that the organisation can be added to the database. This process takes a few days. Therefore, it is important to report this at least 15 working days before the deadline (no later than **September 23 before 14:00:00 CEST**).

KIN assumes that the applicant has informed the organisation where they work about the submission of the proposal and that the organisation accepts the granting conditions of this call for proposals.

3.4 Requirements for submissions

3.4.1 Formal requirements for submissions

KIN assesses the proposal against all the requirements set out in this call for proposals, including the requirements below. Only if the proposal meets these conditions will it be admitted to the assessment procedure. After submitting a proposal, you will be asked to be available to make any administrative corrections in order to (still) meet the requirements for submission.
These requirements are as follows:
- the project partners meet the conditions set out in subsection 3.2;
- the proposal has been submitted via the main applicant's ISAAC account;
- the proposal has been received before the deadline;
- the proposal has been written in Dutch or English;
- the budget for the proposal has been drawn up according to the requirements of this call (using the format provided);
- all required attachments have been completed in full, following any requests for additions or changes, and have been completed and submitted in accordance with the instructions and the conditions of this call for proposals.

3.5 Grant conditions

Paragraphs 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), and 4 (Publication and knowledge utilization), and article 3.3.1, paragraph 1, preamble a, (Reporting) of the NWO Grant Rules 2024 apply to all proposals, unless explicitly deviated from in this call for proposals.

De-minimis regulation

Under this call for proposals, grants are based on the de-minimis regulation (Regulation (EU) No. 2023/2831 of the Commission of December 13, 2023, on the application of articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de-minimis aid). Based on the de-minimis regulation, a societal organisation or additional knowledge institution without assessment (see subsection 3.2.1) can receive a maximum of €300,000 in government support during three tax years without this constituting unauthorised state aid.

All societal organisations and additional knowledge institutions without assessment that act as project partners must demonstrate with a de-minimis aid declaration that the de-minimis threshold from the de-minimis regulation is not exceeded. If a societal organisation or additional knowledge institution without assessment finds that the de-minimis limit will be exceeded with KIN's grant, this societal organisation or additional knowledge institution without assessment cannot submit a proposal to KIN as project partner. The De-minimis Aid Declaration forms part of the call for proposals.

Additional conditions

Furthermore, proposals must - if applicable - take into account:

- Compliance with National Knowledge Security Guidelines: It is the applicant's responsibility to check whether the project is and remains in line with the Guidelines. By submitting the proposal, the applicant commits to the considerations in these Guidelines. More information: Home | Knowledge Security Counter.
- Scientific integrity: The project that NWO-KIN finances 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 the proposal, the applicant commits to this code. More information: Scientific integrity | NWO
- Data management: Results of scientific research must be able to be replicated, verified and falsified. In the digital age, this means that besides publications, research data should also be as freely accessible as possible. KIN expects that research data resulting from projects financed by KIN become as freely available as possible for reuse by other researchers. KIN applies the principle: "as open as possible, protected when necessary".
- Open Science: All forms of output as a result of this grant must be openly accessible and are preferably also published on the KIN website or other publicly accessible knowledge portals. For a further explanation of NWO-KIN's Open Access policy see: Open Science | NWO.
- Ethical declaration or Permit: It is the applicant's responsibility to check whether an ethical declaration or permit is necessary for the execution of the proposed project.

4 Assessment procedure

This section describes how the assessment procedure proceeds (subsection 4.1) and on which criteria the proposal is tested (subsection 4.2).

For all persons involved in the assessment and/or decision-making and involved KIN employees, the NWO Code Personal Interests applies (Code personal interests | NWO).

NWO and KIN strive for an inclusive culture, in which 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). KIN actively encourages members of an assessment committee/jury to become aware of implicit associations and try to minimize them. KIN provides them with information about concrete ways to improve the assessment of a proposal.

4.1 Procedure

The application procedure consists of the following steps:
- submission of the proposal;
- processing the proposal;
- pre-advice assessment committee;
- meeting of the assessment committee;
- selection (if applicable);
- decision-making.

For this call for proposals, an external, independent assessment committee is established, consisting of representatives from science and practice with broad expertise on the subject and associated transitions. The task of the assessment committee is to assess the submitted proposals and related documents on their own merits based on the assessment criteria described in this call for proposals.

Due to the expertise present in the assessment committee and the small size of the grant, KIN has decided to use the possibility given in article 2.2.4, paragraph 2, of the NWO grant rules 2024, to carry out the assessment procedure without engaging referees.

4.1.1 Submission of a proposal

A standard form for submitting a proposal is available on the funding page for this call on the NWO website. Your proposal must adhere to the questions in this form and the procedure described in the explanatory notes. This also applies to the maximum number of words and page requirements.

The fully completed application form must be submitted via ISAAC before the deadline (see subsection 1.3). Proposals submitted after this date will not be considered. After submitting the proposal, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt.

4.1.2 Processing the proposal

As soon as possible after you have submitted your proposal, you will hear whether KIN will process your proposal. KIN determines this based on a number of administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, subsection 3.4). Only if the proposal meets these requirements, KIN is able to process it.
Keep in mind that KIN can approach you within two weeks after the submission deadline to make any administrative corrections to (still) meet the conditions for submission. You get one chance to make the corrections. You get five working days for this.

4.1.3 Pre-advice assessment committee

After this, your proposal is submitted to (members of) the assessment committee (the pre-advisors) for commentry. The pre-advisors give written substantively reasoned comments on the proposal. They formulate these comments based on the substantive assessment criteria (see subsection 4.2) and assess each sub-criterion with a sufficient (=+1) or insufficient (=-1). To receive a positive advice, each main criteria must be assessed with a sufficient (Sum of all sub-criteria is >0).

4.1.4 Meeting of the assessment committee

The assessment committee assesses each proposal individually on the basis of the substantive assessment criteria specified in subsection 4.2. The pre-advices are largely indicative of the final assessment but are not necessarily adopted unchanged by the assessment committee.

Following the discussion, the committee will prepare a written recommendation to the KIN steering group on the quality of the proposals.

4.1.5 Selection

Step 1: Selection procedure per subtheme
If more proposals receive a positive advice than the available budget per subtheme allows, the assessment committee compiles a ranking per subtheme of all proposals that meet the minimum qualifications (subsection 4.1.3). This ranking is based on the total scores (sum of all sub-criteria). Grant allocation takes place in order of this ranking until the available budget per subtheme is reached.

Step 2: Distribution of remaining budget
If after step 1 the total grant amount of the call for proposals has not yet been reached, all remaining proposals that meet the minimum qualifications are reassessed and prioritised on the basis of complementarity, specifically on the extent to which the proposal is supplementary to the proposals selected in step 1, avoiding overlap and creating added value by filling gaps or strengthening the proposals selected in step 1 and the Knowledge-in-Action agenda as a whole. In this prioritisation, proposals may not end up in the same position.

Ex aequo
By ex aequo, NWO-KIN understands the situation in which two or more proposals cannot be distinguished from each other based on their total score. An ex aequo situation is relevant around the border of the selection limit (step 1). If an ex aequo situation occurs on the border of the selection limit per subtheme (step 1), the score of main criterion 3 is used as the deciding criterion. If no consensus on prioritisation is reached, the ex aequo situation is submitted to the decision-making body.

4.1.6 Decision-making

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

4.1.7 Timeline

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

Proposals

14 October 2025, 14:00:00 hours CEST	**Deadline proposals**
14 – 24 October 2025	Processing the proposals
10 – 21 November 2025	Meeting assessment committee
10 – 21 November 2025	Selection (if applicable)
November 2025	**Decision KIN steering group**
Start date project	No later than three months after award date
End date project	No later than nine months after start date

4.2 Criteria

4.2.1 Substantive assessment criteria

Proposals submitted within this call for proposals are substantively assessed based on the following criteria. There is no weighting for the criteria, but all main criteria must be assessed with a sufficient (see also subsection 4.1.3).

1. Relevance for the Knowledge-in-Action agenda
   a. The project demonstrably aligns with the established Knowledge-in-Action agenda of this call for proposals and therefore contributes to the transition tasks identified therein.

2. Quality of the proposal
   a. The (learning) objective, the leading (research) questions, and/or solution directions of the project are clearly described and well substantiated.
   b. The proposed approach is appropriate for pursuing the intended (learning) objective, answering the leading (research) questions, and/or experimenting with solution directions of the project.
   c. The proposal describes how learning, reflecting and adjusting is part of the approach.
   d. It is described how the knowledge would be safeguarded and diffused.
   e. It is reflected how justice[3] and sustainability[4] is ensured in the approach and the intended results/interventions.

3. Co-creation[5] and knowledge development
   a. The project integrates different types of knowledge (scientific, practical, experiential, local and/or cultural knowledge,...) that are relevant for the intended goal. If applicable: the proposal clearly describes how the actors and/or knowledge recommended in the Knowledge-in-Action agenda are involved or taken into account or substantiates why specifically not.

[3] A broad conception of justice begins with the recognition that different groups, such as future generations and people elsewhere, as well as animal and plant species, may suffer injustice as a result of climate change or efforts to combat it. Justice has different aspects: distributive justice, procedural justice, restorative justice. For more information, see: https://hetkin.nl/klimaatrechtvaardigheid/

[4] Sustainability is context specific. In general, it can be seen as the pursuit of a harmonious balance that protects both the planet and future generations. The Brundtland Report (1987) defines sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

[5] Co-creation is a special form of collaboration that focuses on equality and process-oriented action. It requires equal and committed collaboration aimed at jointly creating something new.

b. The proposal makes clear that all project partners are actively involved (have been) in preparing the proposal and its execution.
c. It is clearly described how the developed knowledge and interventions lead to action perspective for all involved actors (and beyond).

4. Appropriateness and feasibility of activities and budget
   a. The proposed approach and activities are appropriate and suitable given the intended objectives. If applicable: a duration longer than 9 months is well substantiated.
   b. The proposed activities are feasible within the given context and timeline.
   c. The requested resources are substantiated and proportional to the activity plan.

5 Obligations for grant recipients

This section explains the different grant requirements that apply after funding has been awarded, in addition to the grant conditions specified in subsection 3.5.

5.1 Additional requirements

5.1.1 Intellectual property

With regard to intellectual property (IP), the NWO IP policy applies. The NWO IP policy can be found in chapter 4 of the NWO grant rules 2024.

Applicants must carry out a project financed by NWO-KIN during the time they work for the knowledge institution. If an applicant or a researcher financed by NWO-KIN 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

Knowledge suitable for application in society can emerge from the project. When entering into agreements about 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 Output

All forms of output (for example reports, training, tools or presentations) generated as a result of this grant must be openly accessible, and are preferably also published on the KIN platform VEDA and/or other publicly accessible knowledge portals.

5.1.4 Changes and accountability

The Knowledge-in-Action grant supports experimental and learning proposals. It may well be that the situation during the project requires a different approach and that plans change. The grant allows for flexibility in this regard, but the project partners are obliged to discuss these changes with the project leaders of the integration projects and to inform KIN.

After completion of the activities for which funding is requested under this call, the project partners are required to submit a concise report briefly describing the activities organised and their impact, any necessary follow-up steps and the lessons learned from the activities and the collaboration. KIN will provide a template for this purpose.

6 Contact details and other information

6.1 Contact

6.1.1 Questions regarding content

For specific questions about the procedure under this call for proposals, please contact: programmas@hetkin.nl.

6.1.2 Technical questions concerning the ISAAC online application system

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please consult the manual before asking the helpdesk for advice. The ISAAC helpdesk can be reached Monday to Friday between 10.00 and 17.00 at +31 (0) 70 34 40 600. You can also ask your question by sending an email to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will receive a reply within two working days.

6.2 Other information

KIN processes personal data received in the context of this funding round according to the NWO Privacy Statement.

KIN may approach applicants to evaluate the procedure and/or research programme.

Publication: August 2025

Dutch Research Council (NWO)
Dutch Climate Research Initiative (KIN)

Visiting address:

Location Utrecht
Winthontlaan 2
3526 KV Utrecht

Cover image: Ninarosa Juffermans

KIN Klimaatonderzoek Initiatief Nederland
Samen transities versnellen