

Microplastics & Health – Expanding MOMENTUM (MOMENTUM 2.0)

Keywords: microplastics, nanoplastics, health, chronic disease, health impact assessment

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Deadline for submitting a detailed grant application: **May 9, 2023, 14.00 CEST**

This call specifically invites the MOMENTUM consortium to provide a proposal. Are you not part of the MOMENTUM consortium? Please have a look at the open grant call: [“Microplastics & Health – Breakthrough projects on human exposure, behaviour, interventions and standardised methods”](#).

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1 Aim of the call for grant applications

1.1 Microplastics & Health programme

The aim of the ZonMw Microplastics & Health (M&H) programme is to develop knowledge about the potential health consequences of micro- and nanoplastic particles (MNP) to inform policy and stimulate innovation¹.

Little is known of the effects of MNP on human health. At the same time, the levels of MNP in our living environment will increase in the next decades. Human exposure is evident by the detection of MNP in our environment, such as drinking water, food and air. MNP are also found in our body, for example in blood, placenta and human stool. To what extent the exposure to these plastic particles of varying shape, size and composition has immediate to long term health implications is unclear². Citizens, the Health Council of the Netherlands³ and the World Health Organisation⁴ are concerned. The latter two organisations have recommended the investigation of potential health consequences and the effect of actions to reduce these consequences. This knowledge is fundamental in the development of innovations and strategies to prevent and manage the potential health risks, and contributes to the mission of the Dutch government to reduce the health impact resulting from the living environment⁵.

Background information on the M&H programme

In 2018, ZonMw initiated the first call for proposals in the ZonMw M&H programme. In one year, 15 interdisciplinary breakthrough projects gained insight into the effect of small plastic particles in cells and tissues, and whether such particles could penetrate our body. The projects also investigated whether the particles cause particle or chemical toxicity and whether they can carry harmful microorganisms. In 2021, 14 of the 15 breakthrough projects found continuation of their research in the Microplastics and Human Health Consortium. The consortium, named '**MOMENTUM**', is funded by ZonMw and Health~Holland, and co-funded by the public and private consortium partners. In co-creation with private sector organisations and in consultation with key stakeholders from academia, government, industry and citizen organisations, the research conducted in MOMENTUM aims to unravel the human health effects of MNP ("problem analysis") and to propose solutions to minimize their potential health impact ("solutions analysis").

Additionally in 2020, ZonMw published a [Knowledge Agenda](#) on Microplastics and Health¹. The Knowledge Agenda offers an overview of the knowledge questions raised by policy, research and practice, and identifies promising research directions and innovations.

1.2 MOMENTUM 2.0 call aims

The aim of the current call is to put extra effort into specific goals of the Knowledge Agenda that are already under study by the MOMENTUM consortium, or are a logical expansion of MOMENTUM. Additional effort, time and collaboration between international initiatives are required to further address the needs described in the Knowledge Agenda. The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management have contributed to the Knowledge Agenda and commissioned the current call for a proposal. This call invites the MOMENTUM consortium to provide a proposal to strengthen and extend the MOMENTUM project on each of the following focus areas:

- 1) Risk assessment and risk management:
 - Framework development for risk assessment and risk management, linking human toxicokinetic models with environmental fate models (linking external exposure to internal uptake), allowing the assessment of the effectiveness of interventions from a systems perspective;
 - Provisional risk assessment based on research initiatives and data acquired from inside and outside⁶ MOMENTUM, identifying potential risks for chronic diseases and the most relevant contributing MNP characteristics, routes and sources. Risk assessment may be informed by read-across from analogues from e.g. nanoscience and particulate matter research, which may help in a balanced risk communication;

¹ Read more information about the ZonMw M&H programme on our [website](#).

² ZonMw [Knowledge Agenda](#) Microplastics & Health "Wat doen microplastics in ons lichaam?"

³ [Gezondheidsraad](#): gezondheidsrisico's van microplastics in het milieu

⁴ [WHO](#): Dietary and inhalation exposure to nano- and microplastic particles and potential implications for human health

⁵ [Landelijke Nota Gezondheidsbeleid](#) 2020-2024

⁶ See e.g. CUSP projects, BRIGID, and a recent [EU review](#).

- Identification of research gaps based on the risk assessment;
 - Policy options for risk management of MNP, including determination of the extent to which current regulations for (nano)particles and chemicals cover MNP risks.
- 2) Standardized materials development, including further development of reference materials (new polymers, weathered MNP, with/without bio-corona);
 - 3) Health effects: extension of current efforts, with additional focus on chronic disease risk (e.g. cancer, neurodegenerative disorders, immunomediated inflammatory disease, obesity), including:
 - Toxicity of various MNP and underlying toxicological mechanisms, including the influence and effect of MNP associated chemicals, with a focus on nanoplastic particles;
 - Effects of the bio-corona covering MNP, including (antibiotics resistant) pathogens and other emerging threats;
 - Epidemiological studies in e.g. cohorts or (nested) case-control studies, for example in the general population or in groups at higher risk of exposure or effect;
 - 4) Exposure assessment: quantification and characterisation of MNP in human matrices as part of risk assessment in MOMENTUM;
 - 5) Solution routes guided by the solutions roadmap under development in MOMENTUM: a continuation of the MOMENTUM work to explore potential solution routes to stimulate sustainable approaches and materials that reduce human exposure and health effects.

Purpose in short:

- To strengthen the MOMENTUM project on focus areas presented in the Knowledge Agenda;
- To extend current research and development towards risk assessment;
- To create societal and economic impact.

1.3 Overarching goals

In addition to the MOMENTUM call, [a parallel grant call](#) invites researchers to provide proposals on specific research gaps in the Knowledge Agenda that are not addressed in the ongoing MOMENTUM initiative. The overarching goal of both calls for proposals is to develop knowledge and solutions to reduce the potential health effects of MNP. Results of the parallel projects are to be combined in an overarching framework⁷ for health impact assessment that will be further developed in the MOMENTUM 2.0 project. This overarching framework will serve as a frame of reference and will be used for the following goals: to safeguard coherence in research; to serve as a basis for determining the short- and longer term health impacts; to prioritise knowledge gaps; and to form the basis for provisional risk assessment and identification of meaningful measures. The framework has to integrate the impact pathway (from source to impact), mechanisms (physical, microbiological, toxicological), behaviour and policy. ZonMw stimulates cooperation between projects originating from these both calls for proposals. It is, for example, essential that research methods and results are compatible with the overall risk assessment framework. Collaboration between the projects is mandatory, and the application has to contain a proposal for the process to reach this collaboration, including exchange of reference material knowledge, experience and data. Upon awarding of the proposals in both calls, when all awarded projects are known, a more elaborate collaboration plan will be required.

1.4 Online information session

An online information session will be organised on April 3rd 2023, 13:00-15:00 CEST to provide more information about the two calls and to facilitate the collaborative actions. MOMENTUM will present their initial project plans for MOMENTUM 2.0 to potential applicants. You can register for the information session via this [Registration form Online information session](#). Attendance of the MOMENTUM project leader is required.

1.5 Justification for invitational call

Microplastics & Health is a field of research wherein multidisciplinary collaboration and coordination are essential. This invitational call requests a proposal by the existing MOMENTUM consortium, which represents a large part of the research field in the Netherlands, by providing a joint continuation of fourteen earlier microplastics projects. By inviting this unique consortium in this call we aim to profit from current infrastructure and networks to have quicker research results that can be easier incorporated in future policies and innovation. New partners may be added to the application for this invitational call (see Section 2.1), and [a parallel grant call](#) is open for additional research questions.

⁷ See ZonMw [Knowledge Agenda](#) Microplastics & Health “Wat doen microplastics in ons lichaam?”

2 Preconditions

The proposal must meet the following requirements to be eligible for review:

- The proposal addresses all of the focus areas mentioned in the previous section (see Section 1.2);
- The proposal is written in English;
- The following annexes are mandatory:
 - Letters of Commitment of each project party or sponsor (see Section 2.3);
 - A project budget in [ZonMw DAEB format](#) (see Section 2.4);
 - Consortium budget specification (see Section 2.4);
- The following optional annexes may be added:
 - Maximum 10 sheets of A4 size with figures and tables;
- The planned start date is December 31, 2023, at the latest;
- The proposed end date is no later than August 1st, 2025;
- The [Grant conditions and Finances page](#) of the ZonMw website explains which conditions your proposal must meet.

Please read section 2.1 to 2.5 for the other requirements.

2.1 Who is eligible for a grant?

This call for proposals is on invitation. ZonMw invites the following applicants, who together lead the consortium, to submit an application on behalf of the consortium: Prof. J. (Juliette) Legler (Utrecht University), the project leader of the ongoing MOMENTUM project, in collaboration with Prof. A.D. (Dick) Vethaak (Utrecht University), co-project leader of MOMENTUM.

The following organisations qualify for receiving a part of the grant as well as being a collaborative partner:

1. Dutch research organisations as defined in EU state aid legislation⁸;
2. Dutch Health Care Institutions, like hospitals;
3. Organisations that perform a statutory duty;
4. Organisations performing activities representing an interest group for the proposed project; in the grant application, indicate which activity representing an interest group you will be carrying out.

Organisations that do not meet the category described in categories 1-4 are not eligible for a grant. However, participation through third party collaboration and contributions is described in section 2.3.

The MOMENTUM 2.0 consortium should at least consist of the public and private partners in the current MOMENTUM consortium, unless specifically substantiated in the proposal why a partner does not participate anymore. The existing consortium is encouraged to invite and collaborate with new relevant organisations and researchers to reinforce research on the proposed focus areas.

Parties who are interested in participating in this consortium can contact the above-mentioned consortium leaders by sending an email to e.kasteel@uu.nl, and are required to do so by April 6th, 2023 at the latest. Please mention “Microplastics & Health MOMENTUM 2.0” in the email subject. If MOMENTUM decides not to include a party that has expressed an interest by email, this will be motivated by the consortium leaders by email.

⁸ Framework for state aid for research and development and innovation (R&D&I Framework) (2014/C 198/01), Section 15(ee).

2.2 State aid

No grants will be awarded by ZonMw if this would or could constitute unlawful state aid⁹. Therefore, the following state aid measure applies to this funding round:

Actual collaboration

If undertakings and research organisations collaborate¹⁰ on the project, there is a risk that the grant will be regarded as unlawful state aid. According to Section 2.2.2¹¹ of the Framework for state aid for research and development and innovation (R&D&I Framework), there is no unlawful state aid if the collaborating parties fulfil certain conditions. If they fulfil these conditions, there is 'actual collaboration'. See for conditions and an explanation Annex 1.

To meet the conditions of actual collaboration, the project activities can only start after a concept collaboration agreement has been accepted by ZonMw.

You can find more information about state aid on the ZonMw web page [Vrijstellingverordeningen staatssteun](#) (in Dutch).

2.3 Third-party collaboration and contributions

ZonMw encourages the participation of different partners in collaborative projects. Such projects will, however, not receive a grant if the agreements would or could lead to the provision of unlawful state aid or if ZonMw's [General Terms and Conditions](#) or the conditions of the call for grant applications cannot be met.

The application and budget must make clear:

- Which parties are participating. Describe how each party will be actively contributing to the project; these should in any case be parties who appear in the budget as a party intending to claim a portion of the grant. Also include parties that will be making an active contribution as partners in the collaborative project for their own account and at their own risk. (For-profit private parties can only participate in the study for their own account and risk and may not claim part of the grant);
- With which party or parties a sponsorship agreement will be concluded and what their donation in kind or monetary contribution will be;
- Which parties will be hired, or, if this is not yet known, which activities are forecast as being performed by third parties, plus the related costs that will be incurred (including VAT). For more information and the conditions of hire/terms of contract, see ZonMw web page [Grants and collaborations/contributions from third parties](#).

Letters of Commitment

Collaborations and sponsorship must be described in Letters of Commitment before presenting the detailed grant application. Because ZonMw requires assurance that a project party or sponsor will be legally bound to provide the agreed amounts, each project party or sponsor must provide a Letter of Commitment, which is to be submitted together with the detailed grant application. Please use the template letter which you can find on the ZonMw web page [Grants and collaborations/contributions from third parties](#).

Collaboration and sponsorship agreement

A collaboration or sponsorship agreement is not yet required when presenting the grant application, but will be required when the grant application is awarded. You can find more information about the various types of collaboration and contributions (sponsoring/assignment) with sample agreements on the ZonMw web page [Grants and collaborations/contributions from third parties](#) as an aid to drafting the relevant agreement; the accompanying explanation contains the conditions the agreement must meet. The conditions specified on this web page and in the explanation form an integral part of this call for grant applications. Where ZonMw requests draft collaboration and/or sponsorship agreements, it awards the grant on the condition that the agreements are found to be acceptable.

⁹ Section 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

¹⁰ An undertaking as defined under EU state aid legislation means any entity that performs economic activities, regardless of its legal form or means of financing.

¹¹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=NL](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=NL)

2.4 What is the amount of the grant I can apply for?

The Consortium will be additionally funded by ZonMw to a maximum of €3,650,000 (including VAT). MOMENTUM 2.0 can start directly when the proposal is awarded. However, the starting date is no later than December 31, 2023. The end date of MOMENTUM 2.0 is August 1st, 2025. After the end date of the project, a maximum of thirteen weeks is allowed to submit the final end-of-grant report, which is a specific requirement that deviates from the General Terms and Conditions.

Budget requirements:

- The project budget, in the [ZonMw DAEB format](#), has to be submitted;
- A consortium budget specification. Please provide a specification of the budget per work package or deliverable;
- The parties are required to provide a contribution of 10% of the total budget, either in cash or in kind;
- For-profit private parties cannot receive part of the funding by ZonMw;
- Reserve at least 10% of the budget for communication and implementation, including costs for joint meetings with the other projects in the ZonMw M&H programme;
- Reserve budget for project management to a maximum of 10% of the total costs;
- For projects of €125,000 or more, auditing costs (max €3,500) may be included in the budget. The amendment to the General Terms and Conditions Governing Grants of ZonMw as of 1 April 2022 means that after completion of a project of €125,000 or more, an auditor's report must be provided in addition to the final report and financial accounts. In this specific call for proposals, where ZonMw needs to decide on the final payment before the end of 2025, the audit report needs to be part of the final reporting;
- If you publish according to the full golden Open Access route, you may include the cost of Open Access publications in the project budget. The maximum amount of this allowance is €5,000 for the project. Please include 'Open Access' as a separate line in your budget. For more information about Open Access, see Section 2.5 and the ZonMw web page [Open Access](#).

2.5 Conditions that apply to the grant allocation procedure

General Terms and Conditions Governing Grants of ZonMw

The General Terms and Conditions Governing Grants of ZonMw were amended on 1 April 2022. The amendments concern in particular Article 25, Grant determination and Article 26, Financial accounting. You can find these grant conditions and the amendment at [Grant conditions and Finances](#).

In addition to the [General Terms and Conditions](#), the Open Access condition also applies. All publications resulting from scientific research fully or partially funded by ZonMw must be made available in Open Access, in accordance with the ZonMw [Open Access](#) policy. ZonMw accepts various Open Access routes. In addition to articles, ZonMw encourages researchers to make their results available in other formats via Open Access, such as monographs, books, conference proceedings and grey literature, but also research data and knowledge products for practice-oriented research, such as models, protocols, prototypes, digital tools and demonstrations.

3 Assessment criteria

The programme committee and referees assess the relevance, quality and budget of the proposal. The applicable relevance and quality criteria are described below.

3.1 Relevance criteria

- **Contribution to the aims of the M&H programme and aims of the call**
Describe how the proposal is addressing the five focus areas of this call (see Section 1.2). Specifically substantiate if there is a deviation from these five focus areas. Explain how the proposal builds on the ongoing MOMENTUM project. Development of the framework for risk assessment and risk management is considered as a priority.

- **Collaboration and contribution to the framework for health impact assessment**
Describe how the project will address the overarching goals (see Section 1.3). How will current research contribute to the overall framework for the health impact assessment? Describe how cooperation and exchange of research methods and results with (future) national and international research projects¹² is anticipated.
- **Added value**
Explain why your project has added value compared to existing knowledge and ongoing national and international research projects. Describe how your research relates to it and how it contributes to it.
- **Application and impact**
Describe how you expect to achieve and demonstrate impact. Projects funded by ZonMw must have impact. New knowledge and expertise must be used in practice, policy, education and/or further research. Describe broadly how you will share the knowledge gained in your project, and how you will take the results and/or products further towards implementation, for example by applying them into practice, innovation, or when developing new policy. Consider the following elements:
 - Delivery of usable knowledge products such as (scientific) publications, presentations, guidelines, software, tools, decision aids, models, literature overviews and/or datasets. What knowledge products will your project deliver? How do these knowledge products connect with your stakeholders? The ZonMw web page [Strengthening impact](#) contains an overview with examples of knowledge products for use in practice, in policy, in business, in science or in education. Name the knowledge products concretely; for example, state in which specific guideline or standard of care the results will be included.
 - Targeted dissemination and implementation activities. Choose effective strategies and activities aimed at dissemination and implementation of the combined results of the projects in the ZonMw M&H programme. What targeted dissemination and implementation activities will you set up within the duration of the project? And what activities will be taken up after completion of the project, and by which parties? You will find an overview of implementation activities and strategies on the ZonMw web page [Strengthening impact](#)

ZonMw employs a number of [general relevance criteria](#):

- **Participation of stakeholders and/or end users**
Describe how you will involve stakeholders in the project. Stakeholders include the ultimate target group of end users, whose knowledge is based on practical, personal experience. By 'involve' we mean consulting, asking for advice, collaborating with and/or involving end users in project decisions.
- **Diversity**
Consider how attention is given to diversity and target group differentiation by characteristics such as sex and gender, age, socioeconomic situation, educational level, migratory and cultural backgrounds, and sexual inclination, inasmuch as these are relevant to the theme of the project.
- **Access to data**
ZonMw promotes the optimal use of data. In your proposal, describe the possibilities of making use of existing data files and substantiate any stated need for new data collection. Also indicate your plans regarding sharing and making your future results FAIR. When planning your project and its budget, take into account the opportunities and requirements set out at [FAIR data & data management](#).

You can find more information about the relevance criteria on the ZonMw web page [General relevance criteria](#).

¹² E.g. please take notice and build upon previous research efforts, such as model development (e.g. <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.0c07384>; https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4303562), existing data on MPH in the environment and internal exposure (e.g. RIVM), reference materials development (e.g. <http://bitly.ws/zjN2> and [NIST](#)) and ongoing [Brigid](#) and [CUSP](#) projects.

3.2 Quality criteria

- **Objective and research question/mission statement**
Describe the objective and research question. In your outline, pay attention to clarity, scope and originality;
- **Action plan**
Describe the chosen methods and analyses, including theoretical and/or empirical support. Provide a roadmap with division in work packages, tasks, milestones and deliverables;
- **Feasibility**
Make it plausible that the objective of the proposal can be achieved within the established timeframe and with the expertise, staffing, facilities and resources available;
- **Project group**
Describe how the composition of the project group will contribute to the quality of your research or project.

You can find more information about these criteria in the [procedure booklet](#) (in Dutch).

4 Assessment procedure and timeline

4.1 Assessment procedure

1. Precondition check by ZonMw

ZonMw will perform a precondition check between May 9 and May 12. The grant application must meet the preconditions mentioned in Section 2, to be eligible for review. The applicant must be available during the period of precondition check in order to respond to issues regarding the preconditions.

2. Assessment by referees

Application is sent to four independent referees who assess the quality of the proposal.

3. Rebuttal

The assessment of the referees are sent to the applicant on June 5, 2023. The applicant is given the opportunity to submit a response before June 12, 2023.

4. Interview meeting and assessment by the programme committee

In addition to the general procedure, you will be invited to an interview as part of the assessment of your proposal. An audio recording will be made of this interview. This recording will be destroyed after the assessment has been completed. After the interview, the committee evaluates the relevance and quality of the proposal. The proposal must at least be 'Relevant' and of 'Good quality' to be eligible for funding.

More information on how to assess proposals, please refer to [procedure booklet](#) and the infographic '[applying for a grant in 10 steps](#)' (in Dutch).

4.2 Timeline

Online information session	April 3, 2023, 13:00-15:00 CEST
Deadline for submitting a detailed grant application	May 9, 2023, 14.00 CEST
Precondition check by ZonMw (see section 2.0)	May 9 – May 12, 2023
Applicant receives the referees' comments	June 5, 2023
Deadline for submitting a response (rebuttal)*	June 12, 2023
Interview meeting	Week 25 or week 26 (<i>date not yet known</i>)
Decision	Beginning of July, 2023
Latest start date project*	December 31, 2023
Latest end date project*	August 1 st , 2025

*This call deviates from the General Terms and Conditions.

5 Submitting your application

5.1 Submission (through Mijn ZonMw)

Grant applications can only be submitted by the main applicant in ZonMw's online submission system ([Mijn ZonMw](#)). The closing date for submitting detailed grant application is **May 9, 2023, 14.00 CEST**.

Please keep in mind:

- The proposal is written in English;
- The following annexes are mandatory:
 - Letters of Commitment of each project party or sponsor (see Section 2.3);
 - A project budget in [ZonMw DAEB format](#) (see Section 2.4);
 - Consortium budget specification (see Section 2.4);
- The following optional annexes may be added:
 - Maximum 10 sheets of A4 size with figures and tables;

5.2 Tips

ZonMw now uses a different online application system. If you have not worked with Mijn ZonMw before, you must first register as a 'New user'. For further information, see the [Mijn ZonMw manual](#) (in Dutch).

We advise you to print out a Word version of your application (via Mijn ZonMw) and carefully review it for errors before you submit it digitally. This is especially important if you have created your application in Word and then copied it to Mijn ZonMw, as some characters (such as quotes) may not be converted correctly. You can correct this yourself in Mijn ZonMw.

5.3 Declaration of agreement for completed detailed grant application

The '[Declaration of agreement for completed detailed grant application](#)' must be signed by the individual with administrative responsibility and the main applicant. The signed declaration can be added to the application in Mijn ZonMw or sent to ZonMw by email to MicroplasticsHealth@zonmw.nl. The declaration must have been received no later than one week after submission of the application.

5.4 Substantive questions

For questions regarding the contents of the application, please contact: Marije van der Kamp (+31703495378), Frank Pierik (+31703495477), or MicroplasticsHealth@zonmw.nl.

5.5 Technical questions

If you have any technical questions about using ZonMw's online application system, please contact the Service Desk from Monday to Friday between 8.00 and 17.00 (+31 70 349 51 78), servicedesk@zonmw.nl). Please include your telephone number in your email so that we can call you back if necessary.

5.6 Downloads and links

- [Registration form Online information session](#)
- [ZonMw budget DAEB format](#)
- [Grant conditions and Finances](#)
- [Vrijstellingverordeningen staatssteun](#) (in Dutch)
- [General Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Grants and collaborations/contributions from third parties.](#)
- [Open access](#)
- [Strengthening impact](#)
- [FAIR data & data management.](#)
- [General relevance criteria](#)
- [Procedure booklet](#) (in Dutch).
- Infographic '[applying for a grant in 10 steps](#)' (in Dutch).
- [Mijn ZonMw](#)
- [Mijn ZonMw manual](#) (in Dutch).
- [Declaration of agreement for completed detailed grant application](#) (in Dutch)

Annex 1 – State aid – Actual collaboration

Actual collaboration must be reflected in a recorded substantive commitment to the collaboration. Participants should be actively involved in the collaboration by having an influence on the design and implementation of the collaboration, sharing the financial risks, being at arm's length (independence) and actively contributing to management of the collaboration. Contract research and the provision of research services – and outsourcing – by their very nature do not qualify as actual collaboration.

Conditions of actual collaboration [Section 2.2.2 Framework for state aid for research and development and innovation \(R&D&I Framework\)](#):

1. This concerns collaboration between
 - a. at least two independent parties;
 - b. of which at least one party fulfils the definition of research organisation¹³ and one party qualifies as an undertaking, which
 - c. pursue a common objective on the basis of a division of tasks (project governance) described in the project proposal, and
 - d. jointly define the scope of the collaborative project and contribute to its implementation, and
 - e. share the associated financial, technological, research and other risks, and
 - f. provide a clear description of the activities of each party involved in the project in work packages and a corresponding clear budget, which clearly indicates which part of the grant is related to which part of the activities and work packages; and
 - g. share the project results, and
 - h. where the activities fall within the primary activities of a research organisation, being:
 - i. educational programme
 - ii. independent research or development.
2. One or more parties may bear the full project costs (including through obtaining a grant) and thereby relieve the other parties of the financial risks associated with the project.
3. The envisaged activities fall within the categories of fundamental, industrial research and/or experimental development¹⁴.
4. The above components must be laid down in a collaboration agreement that meets the above conditions before the project starts.
5. Excluded from this are definitive agreements on the market value of the resulting intellectual property rights and the value of contributions to the project.
6. Contract research and the provision of research services are not considered to be forms of cooperation.

Conditions of the grant application

Your grant application must clearly describe the following aspects. Clearly indicate which parties are participating in the actual collaboration and which parties are applying for a grant for its activities.

Please describe for each party in the collaboration:

- whether it is a research organisation or an undertaking (non-research organisation)
- which roles and tasks the party has within the collaboration.
- which activities will be carried out by each party
- what part of the grant is intended for which party (budget)

AND

- how the activity or main activity meets the criteria of fundamental or industrial research or experimental development.
- in a declaration that the parties are financially and legally independent of each other

¹³ Section 1(3)(ee) [R&D&I Framework](#)

¹⁴ Section 1(3)(j) [R&D&I Framework](#)

Conditions of the collaboration agreement

To meet the conditions of actual collaboration, the project activities can only start after the collaboration agreement has been approved by ZonMw and signed by all parties involved in the collaboration.

You can find more information about the conditions and a sample agreement on the ZonMw website. We strongly advise that you use the sample agreement, which has been prepared in line with the requirements for actual collaboration. For more information and the conditions, see ZonMw page [Grants and collaborations/contributions from third parties](#).

The collaboration agreement must include, among other things, a provision on intellectual property rights. This provision regulates that:

- the results of the collaboration that do not give rise to intellectual property rights are widely disseminated;
- the intellectual property rights arising from the collaborative project will be allocated to the different parties in the collaboration in a manner that appropriately reflects the work undertaken, on the premise that ‘the inventor is the owner’;
- a research organisation will receive a remuneration for transferring or licensing its (fully-owned or shared) intellectual property rights to the undertaking(s) equivalent to the market price of those rights. A market-based price cannot be determined in advance and should be done at arm’s length conditions.

You must submit for assessment by ZonMw a final, but not yet signed version of the collaboration agreement that meets the conditions .

Project implementation

The entire project must be implemented in compliance with the requirements for actual collaboration. If those requirements are not or no longer met (in full or in part), there is a risk of unlawful state aid being granted to the undertakings concerned and that all or part of the grant may not be awarded or may be withdrawn.

Please note that it is not possible to add new undertakings after the signed collaboration agreement.