

Research into appropriate palliative care

Date of publication: 14 March 2024

Deadline: **14 March 2024 14.00 CEST**

To allow us to prepare for the assessment process, you are requested to inform us whether you plan to submit a grant application in response to this call. Please do so by completing the [expression of interest form](#) on our website by **11 April 2024**.

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1. Summary

Eligible candidates

Detailed grant applications may be submitted by Dutch research organisations or by partnerships consisting of at least one, or several, Dutch research organisations. These must be research organisations as defined in EU state aid legislation. Any organisation with expertise or knowledge gained from experience that can contribute to the aim of this call may submit an application in conjunction with a research organisation. This might include Dutch care providers,¹ such as nursing homes, hospitals and mental health institutions.

Eligible research

We wish to facilitate research in the field of palliative care that brings clear, demonstrable added value relative to existing knowledge and/or interventions. Studies should involve an innovative approach to tackling a problem identified in the daily practice of palliative care. Achieving impact with the project results will be an important goal. Impact occurs when knowledge is applied. Project results must actually be used in practice, policy, training and/or research.

Sums available

In this funding round you may apply for up to € 400.000,- for a project with a maximum duration of 36 months. The total grant budget available in this round is € 8 million. Co-financing of at least 5% is required.

When

Deadline for submitting detailed grant application	14 May 2024, 14.00
Referees' comments received	18 June 2024
Deadline for submitting a response	2 July 2024, 14.00
Decision	November 2024
Latest start date	May 2025

2. Aim of the call for grant applications

Aim

We wish to facilitate research in the field of palliative care that brings clear, demonstrable added value relative to existing knowledge and/or interventions. Studies should involve an innovative approach to tackling a problem identified in the daily practice of palliative care. Achieving impact with the project results will be an important goal. Impact occurs when knowledge is applied. Project results must actually be used in practice, policy, training and/or research.

Background

ZonMw's [Palliative Care II programme](#) aims to achieve good quality of life for people who are terminally ill and their loved ones. The focus is on research into physical, psychological, social and spiritual care and support that ties in with the needs and wishes of patients and their loved ones.

Palliative care is care and support for people who have no prospect of recovery, and their loved ones. The [Palliative Care Quality Framework](#) sets out what we mean by good palliative care. Timely provision of palliative care improves quality of life, reduces physical and psychological problems and acknowledges social and existential issues. As death approaches, palliative care focuses on life closure and quality of dying, in line with the values, wishes and needs of the patient and their loved ones. Palliative care is thus part of appropriate end-of-life care.

Good palliative care must be integrated into all aspects of generalist care in order to ensure that appropriate care and support is offered in the right place, by the right provider, in consultation with the patient and their loved ones.

This call invites proposals for practically-oriented research focused on substantiating a timely and wide-ranging approach to palliative care, and to linking palliative care with other fields in the care sector. Research should investigate innovative approaches that can improve daily care and support for patients and their loved ones.

This might include:

¹ Definition of a care provider: section 5, subsection 1, [Wet toelating zorginstellingen](#) (Care Providers (Accreditation) Act)

- Application of a 'two-track policy', whereby care providers focus maximum effort on treating the disease, as there are options and this is often in line with the patient's wishes, while at the same time discussions are held with the patient and their loved ones concerning quality of life, what is likely to happen as the disease progresses, and what the patient's wishes and needs would then be. This involves a combination of generalist competences, specialist knowledge and skills and knowledge from outside the care sector. Volunteers, experts by experience and professionals from outside the care sector have a valuable role to play in this.
- Care and support for informal carers and/or family. This involves a focus on the different roles that an informal carer and/or relative might have: as a partner in care, as a recipient of support when the burden becomes too much, as someone with a personal relationship with the patient, and the informal carer as an expert on the patient.
- Palliative care for the entire population, with a particular focus on groups that are vulnerable and difficult to reach. This might include people from other cultures, people with an LGBTIQ+ identity, people living in poverty, people with a disability or with functional illiteracy, and people with few health skills.

These are merely examples, and the list is not exhaustive. A wide range of subjects will be acceptable, provided the approach chosen is innovative. This should be specifically addressed in the grant application. We therefore invite you to think beyond your own (local) context, with the aim of achieving actual innovation that is more widely applicable.

3. Conditions and obligations

You must take account of certain rights, conditions and obligations when applying for a ZonMw grant. The rights, conditions and obligations of a grant applicant are based upon the [Dutch General Administrative Law Act \(Awb\)](#). Article 4.2 of the Awb contains specific provisions applying to ZonMw grants. [General Terms and Conditions Governing Grants of ZonMw](#) also apply.

3.1. Conditions

Your grant application should meet the conditions set out below in order to be considered.

3.1.1. Who is eligible for a grant?

Grant applications may be submitted by Dutch research organisations or by partnerships consisting of at least one, or several, Dutch research organisations.

The following organisations qualify for a grant:

1. Dutch research organisations as defined in EU state aid legislation.² For more information, see the section entitled 'Assessment of research organisation' below.
2. Those performing a statutory duty/interest groups representing interests associated with this project (publicly financed). Please indicate in your application which statutory duty or representative role you perform in this connection.
3. Any organisation not covered by points 1 or 2 which can contribute to achieving the aim of the call by virtue of its expertise or knowledge from experience, such as Dutch care providers³ (for example nursing homes, hospitals, mental health institutions).

Assessment of research organisation

ZonMw independently assesses whether a partner organisation complies with the relevant conditions to be regarded as a research organisation. ZonMw applies the definition in [European state aid legislation](#).

The main criteria for qualifying as a research organisation are that:

- The main activity of the organisation is acquiring/disseminating/teaching knowledge.
- Its activities consist of fundamental/industrial research or experimental development.
- Profits derived from subsidised activities are reinvested in new research/development, teaching and/or knowledge dissemination.
- Undertakings with a potentially decisive influence on the research organisation (in their capacity as shareholder or member of the organisation, for example) may not be given privileged access to the research capacity, research programme or results of the research organisation.

² Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01), article 15 para ee).

³ Definition of a care provider: section 5, subsection 1, [Wet toelating zorginstellingen](#). (Care Providers (Accreditation) Act)

All other organisations that do not qualify as research organisations will be deemed to be 'undertakings', as referred to in European state aid legislation. This is broader than the term generally used in economics, and can for instance be applied to hospitals, nursing homes, non-profit organisations and foundations.

If you are unsure as to whether your organisation qualifies as a research organisation, please contact the ZonMw-liaison on +31 (0)70 349 54 63 or palliatievezorg@zonmw.nl to discuss whether your organisation meets the definition and whether ZonMw will need to make an additional assessment. In this case, you will need to supply certain documentation, in consultation with ZonMw.

3.1.2. Avoiding State aid

No grants will be awarded by ZonMw if this would or could constitute unlawful state aid.⁴ Therefore, the following state aid measure applies to this funding round:

Actual collaboration

If undertakings and research organisations collaborate⁵ on the project, there is a risk that the grant will be regarded as unlawful state aid. According to Section 2.2.2⁶ 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 A. State aid: Actual collaboration](#).

To meet the conditions of actual collaboration, the project activities can only start after a collaboration agreement has been accepted by ZonMw and signed by all parties involved. Therefore, the project activities may not start earlier.

You can find more information about state aid on the ZonMw-web page [State aid exemption decrees](#).

3.1.3. Third-party collaboration and contributions

ZonMw encourages the participation of different partners in collaborative projects. Such projects will not, however, 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.

Collaboration is an option, but not a requirement, in this call for proposals.

The application and budget must make it 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.
- 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 to be 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 the [ZonMw-web page Grants and Collaborations/contributions from third parties](#).

Collaborations and sponsorship must be finalised before the detailed grant application is presented.

Letters of Commitment

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

⁴ Section 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

⁵ 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.

⁶ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TEXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=NL](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TEXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=NL)

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..

3.1.4. What is the amount of the grant I can apply for?

In this funding round, you may request up to € 400.000,- for a project with a maximum duration of 36 months. The total grant budget available in this round is € 8 million. Co-financing of at least 5% is required. Co-financing may take the form of a contribution from your organisation or from a third party, consisting of human or financial resources. For example, if you apply for the maximum of € 400.000,- (including BTW, value-added tax) you must specify at least € 20.000,- extra as co-financing, bringing the total budget to at least € 420.000,-.

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. Universities and university medical centres may not include auditing costs in the budget. Separate agreements have been made with these institutions regarding the required auditor's report. Please contact your financial department for more information. 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,-. Please include 'Open Access' as a separate line in your budget. For more information about Open Access, see Section 3 and the ZonMw-web page [Open Access](#).

3.1.5. Practical conditions

Please take the following points into account when writing your application:

- Compose your application in English.
- You must include a budget with your detailed grant application.
- Reserve part of your project budget for communications and implementation. Include this amount in the budget of the detailed grant application.
- You must attach the following to your application:
 - In the event of collaboration and/or sponsoring: [a Letter of Commitment](#).

You may also add:

- No more than 2 sides of A4 with figures and tables.

If an annex is not mandatory, it will not be included in the assessment of your application. The exception is the optional annex presenting figures and/or tables. This annex will also be included in the assessment.

3.2. Obligations

General Terms and Conditions Governing Grants of ZonMw

In addition to the [General Terms and Conditions Governing Grants of ZonMw](#), the following conditions also apply:

- **Open Access**

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, and also research data and knowledge products for practice-oriented research, such as models, protocols, prototypes, digital tools and demonstrations. For more information about the ZonMw Open Access policy, conditions and opportunities, please visit [our website](#).

- **Conditions for valorisation**

As ZonMw is committed to making the projects it funds widely accessible, the [10 principles of Socially Responsible Licensing](#) (SRL) should be applied to the licensing of results. Please describe, where applicable, how intellectual property rights will be arranged with partners and any third parties. You should also indicate how these parties will comply with the 10 principles.

4. Assessment criteria

4.1. Assessment procedure

This funding round requires submission of a detailed grant application. The assessment procedure for detailed grant applications consists of a written assessment of the quality of the application by reviewers, an opportunity to offer a written rebuttal, and a final assessment by the Palliative Care II programme committee. The programme committee will assess the relevance, quality and budget of all grant applications. The applicable relevance and quality criteria are set out below.

For information on the procedure for assessing grant applications, please refer to the infographic [‘applying for a grant in 10 steps’](#) and to the procedure brochure for applicants.

4.2. Relevance criteria

Innovation

Your detailed grant application should take an innovative approach to tackling a problem identified in daily practice. Your chosen approach should entail significant benefits relative to existing approaches. You must demonstrate that your study will make a substantial contribution to the national or international state of the art (additional knowledge). It should be distinct from current international studies and/or have the potential to influence international research activities (pioneer projects).

Added value

Your detailed grant application should offer clear added value relative to existing research and/or interventions, both national and international. You should present arguments demonstrating – for example/preferably on the basis of preliminary research or previously published research – that the knowledge that is lacking or intervention to be developed will be practicable and necessary for the improvement of daily practice, and that existing interventions or knowledge cannot adequately meet this need. You should also show that there is no overlap with similar national or international studies.

Impact

You should describe how you will achieve impact with your project results. Explain how you intend to ensure that your project results are applied in practice, policy, training and/or further research, and how you will create the conditions for this. On our website we explain what impact is, how we work to achieve and demonstrate it and what we expect from project managers. You can find more information on the ZonMw [Implementation](#) web page.

Budget and duration

Present arguments demonstrating that the budget requested and the duration of your project are realistic in terms of the proposed project.

Participation by users / stakeholders

Describe how you will involve stakeholders, your target group or end users with knowledge from experience in the project. In specific terms, ‘involve’ means consulting, obtaining advice from and collaborating with stakeholders and giving them an opportunity to participate in decisions when drawing up the grant application and implementing the project. You should also describe how you intend to involve the broader group of stakeholders in this way.

Access to data

ZonMw promotes the optimal use of data. 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](#). If you do not intend to collect any data, please mention this in your detailed grant application.

4.3. Quality criteria

Objective and research question/mission statement

The objective and research question should be set out clearly and succinctly, and should be realistically defined. The objective should correspond to the research questions your project will address.

Study design

Describe your selected study design, presenting sound supporting arguments demonstrating that the choice of design is appropriate for the research question. We recommend you engage a methodologist for this purpose. Your choice of study design should take account of feasibility and inclusion in practice.

Action plan

Present arguments in support of your chosen methods and analyses. Your proposed approach must be appropriate, have no significant gaps or shortcomings, and should demonstrate that you will adequately restrict significant sources of distortion (bias). You must show that the chosen outcome measures are appropriate to the research question.

Feasibility

You must convincingly argue that your project is feasible within the given duration and with the budget requested. The goal of your detailed grant application must be plausibly achievable within the time stated using the available expertise, human resources, facilities and other resources. This should also be apparent from any preliminary research or pilot study.

Previous research has shown that it can be difficult to include patients and their loved ones in palliative care. Consider beforehand what strategies you will use to ensure this proceeds as well as possible. For more information, see the report [Successful Inclusion in Palliative Care](#).

Project group

Describe how the composition of the project group will enhance the quality of your project. The membership of the group should make it clear that the necessary expertise, experience and infrastructure are all available. You should also describe which project members will have which roles and responsibilities. The project group should include experts on implementation, consolidation and communication, and also a lead or coordinator. The project group must also have additional expertise in line with the goal and nature of your project.

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

4.4. Prioritisation

Relative weighting of relevance and quality takes place according to the following prioritisation matrix:

quality	very good	good	adequate	poor	inadequate
relevance					
highly relevant	1	2	3	reject	reject
relevant	4	5	6	reject	reject
low relevance	reject	reject	reject	reject	reject

If, after application of the prioritisation matrix, the number of eligible applications exceeds the budget available, the Palliative Care programme committee will apply the following grounds for evaluation: innovative value, variation in subjects and impact.

5. Submitting your grant application

5.1. Submission through Mijn ZonMw

Detailed grant applications can only be submitted by the main applicant in ZonMw's online submission system ([Mijn ZonMw](#)). The closing date for submitting a detailed grant application is 14 May 2024 at 14.00 CEST.

5.2. Tips

- 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](#).

We advise you to print out a Word version of your grant application (via Mijn ZonMw) and carefully review it for errors before you submit it digitally. This is especially important if you have created your grant 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. Statement of agreement for submission of detailed grant application

The '[Statement of agreement for submission of detailed grant application](#)' must be signed by the individual with administrative responsibility and the main applicant. The signed declaration can be added to the grant application in Mijn ZonMw or sent to ZonMw by email to palliatievezorg@zonmw.nl. The declaration must have been received no later than 1 week after submission of the grant application.

5.4. Substantive questions

For questions regarding the contents of the grant application, please contact: Amanda Diemel (programme manager) or M. Al Hakim (programme secretary), on +31 (0)70 349 54 63 or palliatievezorg@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 (0)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

- [General Terms and Conditions Governing Grants of ZonMw](#)
- [Applying for funding in 10 steps](#)
- [What must I submit?](#)
- [Conditions and obligations](#)
- [The assessment](#)
- [Grants and collaborative third-party contributions](#)
- [State support exemption](#)
- [Datamanagement and FAIR data](#)
- [Open Access](#)
- [Implementation and impact](#)
- [Mijn ZonMw manuals](#)
- [Statement of approval for submission of a detailed grant application](#)
- [Our programme page: Palliantie II](#)

6. Annexes

- [Annex A. State Aid: Actual collaboration](#)

Annex A. 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 \(R&D&I Framework\)](#):

- This concerns collaboration between
 - at least 2 independent parties;
 - of which at least 1 party fulfils the definition of research organisation⁷ and 1 party qualifies as an undertaking, which
 - pursue a common objective on the basis of a division of tasks (project governance) described in the project proposal, and
 - jointly define the scope of the collaborative project and contribute to its implementation, and
 - share the associated financial, technological, research and other risks, and
 - 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
 - share the project results, and
 - where the activities fall within the primary activities of a research organisation, being:
 - a. educational programme
 - b. independent research or development.
- 1 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.
- The envisaged activities fall within the categories of fundamental, industrial research and/or experimental development⁸.
- The above components must be laid down in a collaboration agreement that meets the above conditions before the project starts.
- Excluded from this are definitive agreements on the market value of the resulting intellectual property rights and the value of contributions to the project.
- 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.

⁷ Section 1(3)(ee) [R&D&I Framework](#)

⁸ 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.

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.