Funding criteria to promote sustainable research practices

Final presentation MPA 2 – 23-07-2025

Margot Stone

ZonMw

"We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it."
— *Barack Obama*

Index:

- Introduction
- Methods
- Theoretical model
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- Questions

ZonMw

Introduction

ZonMw

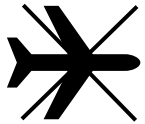
The paradox of health(care) and climate change

Healthcare contributes to climate change

the research sector is resource intensive

Climate change affects human health

Reduce, reuse, recycle



Sustainable travel policies

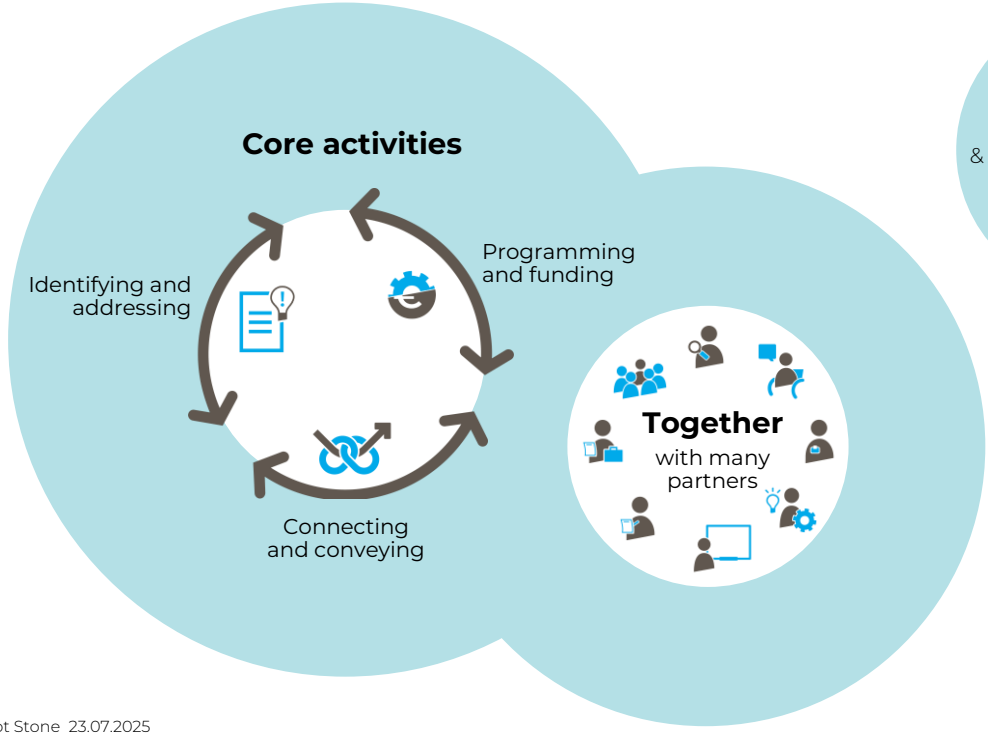
Efficient resource use

Current developments

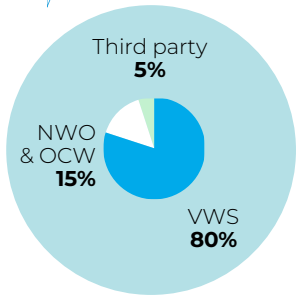
ZonMw

Working with knowledge to boost good health for all

- Full range of health, care and welfare
- Knowledge development, use and infrastructure
- Regional, national and international
- Harness full range of knowledge chain



Origin of subsidy sums



600+
employees

~125 operational programs

Vision document sustainable care, prevention and welfare

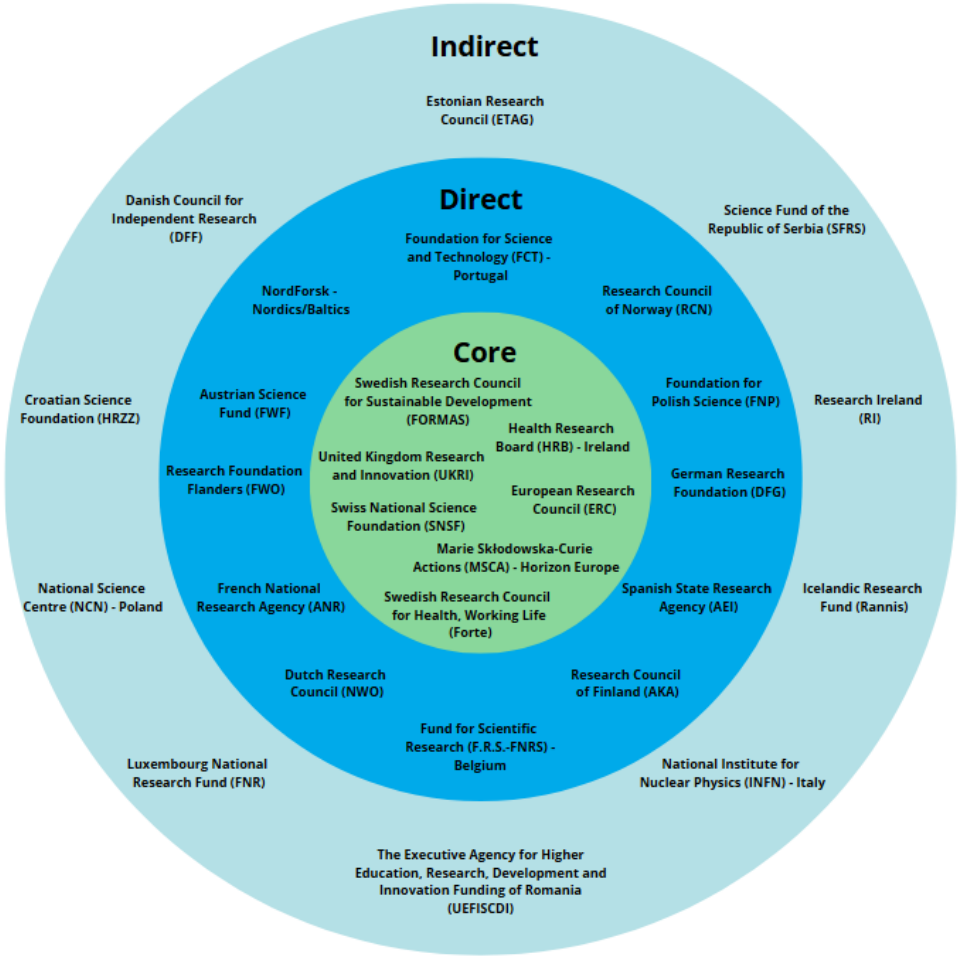
ZonMw

Main Research Question

“What can ZonMw learn from European RFOs to successfully develop and implement contextually appropriate funding conditions to encourage environmental sustainability of ZonMw-funded (research) projects?”

ZonMw

Stakeholders



ZonMw

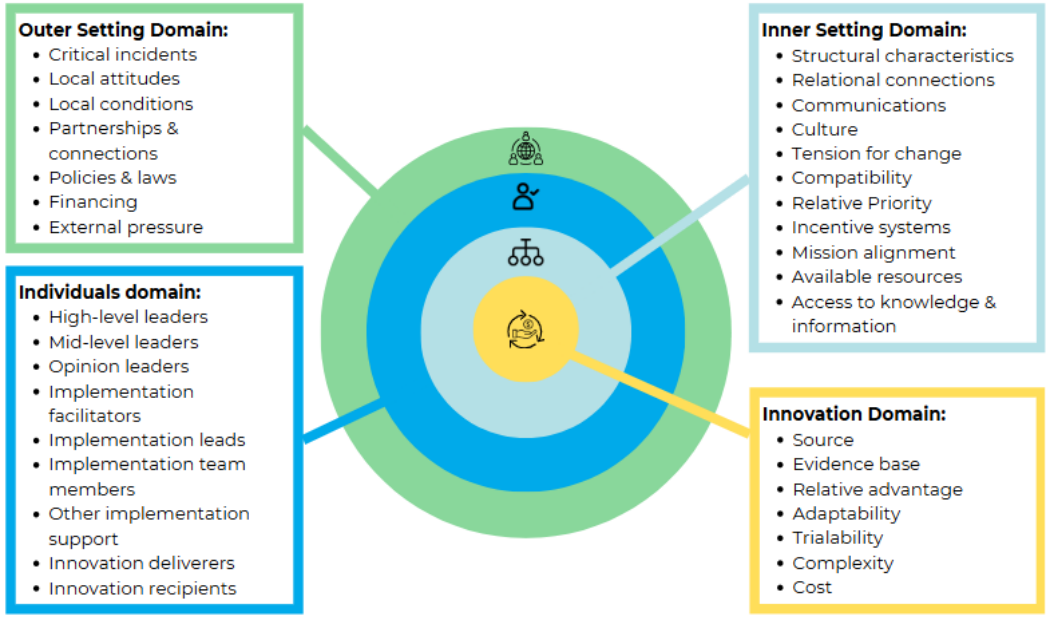
Methods

Comparative qualitative case study

14 semi-structured stakeholder interviews

Theoretical lens: CFIR 2.0 model

Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research 2.0



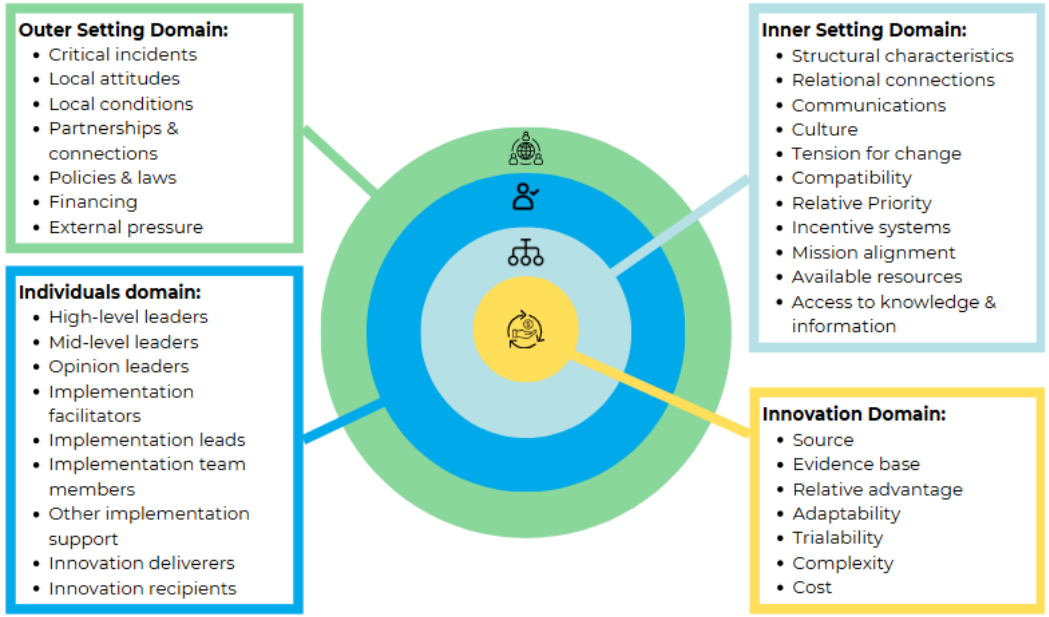
ZonMw

Results

Current practices

Funder	Sustainability in funding call
AKA (Finland)	An additional question asks applicants to elaborate on their project's contribution to sustainable development, which includes responsible research practice.
DFG (Germany)	Requires applicants to answer guiding questions regarding travel, experiments, computing, and procurement. Answers are assessed on plausibility.
FORMAS (Sweden)	Asks applicants to integrate climate and environmental considerations into the planning of their project.
RCN (Norway)	Several calls include a reference to the organization's responsible research and innovation approaches guidelines.
UKRI (United Kingdom)	Asks applicants to answer: "How is environmental sustainability considered in the delivery of this project?" (if this applies/ optional).
MSCA Green Charter (Horizon Europe)	Encourages sustainable research methods and other research related activities of funding recipients.

Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research 2.0



ZonMw

Outer Setting Domain

- **International attitudes and conditions**
- **Collaborations**

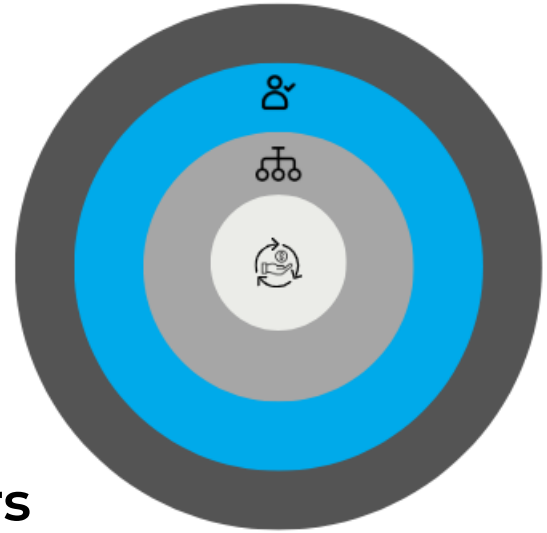
- **Policy ‘Grey Area’**
- **Socio-political developments**

ZonMw

“[…] antibiotic resistance, demographic changes, the lack of workforce, poor women’s health, digital tools, and AI. There are so many other topics that come before looking at sustainability.” – P2

Individuals Domain

- **Motivated implementation leads**
- **Embedded sustainability values**

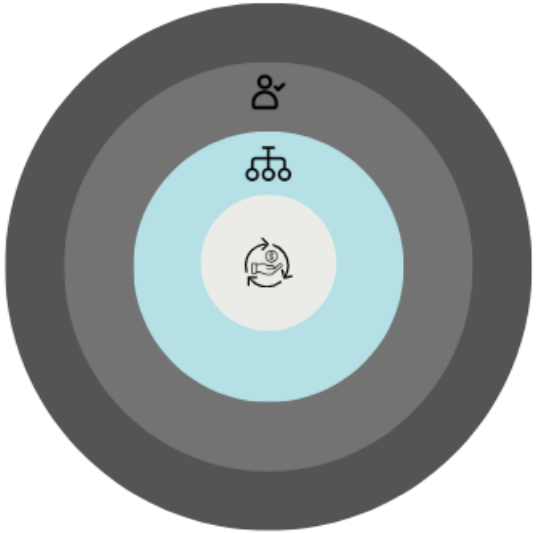


- **Lack of dedicated personnel**
- **Broad scope of innovation receivers**

ZonMw

Inner Setting Domain

- **Strong sustainability culture**
- **Scientific motivation**

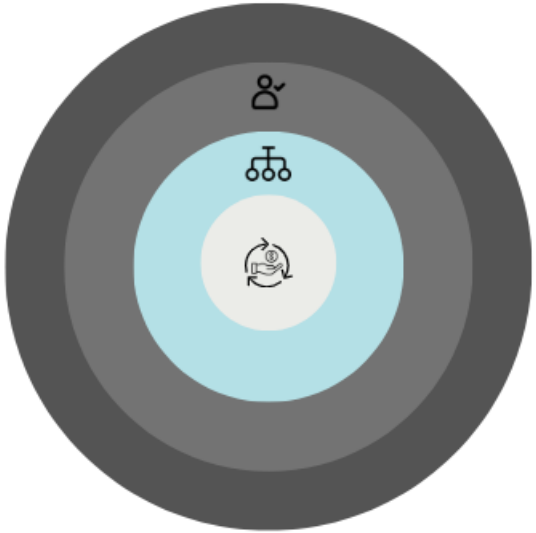


“I think we lose credibility if we’re doing the opposite of what our science says [...] we really believe in science, so we don’t want our own science to be ignored” – P9

Inner Setting Domain

- **Strong sustainability culture**
- **Intrinsic motivation**

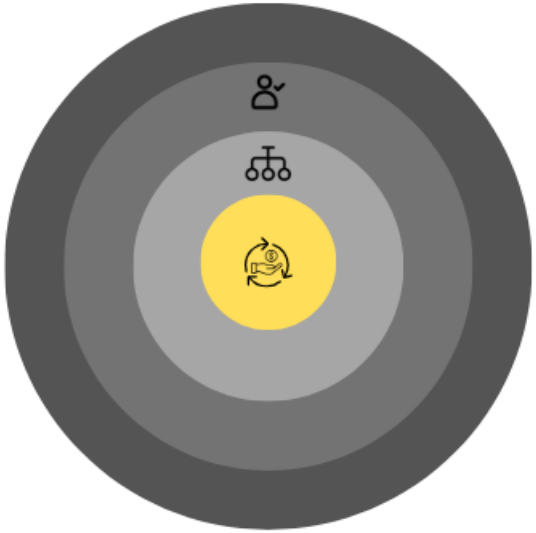
- **Culture misaligned with missions**



“The choice of methods is free and depends on the best way to achieve excellent scientific results. This is the first priority […], we now ask as a second priority to please also try to work more sustainably, if it is possible, but do not interfere with the outcome of scientific knowledge” – P3

Innovation Domain

Dimension	Dilemmas
Goal	Mainstreaming vs. formal criteria
Assessment	Qualitative vs. quantitative
Placement	Additional questions vs. integration



Discussion & Conclusions

ZonMw

“How do European RFOs perceive their role as public organization in promoting sustainable research practices?”

Scientific rational conflicts with scientific excellence

Tensions between funding condtions and epistemic freedom

ZonMw

"What is the opinion of European RFOs regarding funding conditions as an innovation to encourage sustainable research practices?"

Standardized assessment methods

Need for transdisciplinary collaboration

“What organizational factors are influential to the implementation of funding criteria?”

Intrinsic motivation and creativity

Integrative perspective on sustainability

Recommendations

ZonMw

ZonMw

ZonMw

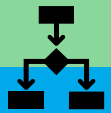
Programming sustains epistemic freedom

Repository of sustainable health(care) research methods

RFOs

Collaborative governance

Transdisciplinary approaches



Post-implementation studies using CFIR 2.0 model

Thank you for your attention

Any Questions?

MET KENNIS WERKEN AAN
EEN GOEDE GEZONDHEID VOOR IEDEREEN