



Dutch Research Agenda

Theme: Health Inequalities – Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status

Call for proposals

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

What does the Netherlands want to know? This was the idea behind the creation of the Dutch Research Agenda (Dutch acronym NWA). The NWA has been created by an innovative process with input from scientists and citizens: the Dutch general public was invited to submit questions about science online. The national knowledge community, united in the Knowledge Coalition¹, grouped the questions collected into 140 cluster questions that were used to formulate 25 routes².

The NWA includes questions where coordination and cooperation have added value in order to achieve scientific and societal breakthroughs. The NWA therefore encourages cooperation between the various partners to ensure that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. The aim of the NWA is to make a positive, structural contribution to the global knowledge society of tomorrow, in which new knowledge flows easily from researcher to user and new questions arising from practice and society lead quickly and automatically to new research.

The core elements of the NWA are:

- The substantive agenda constituted by the 25 routes and 140 cluster questions;
- The knowledge-chain-wide approach³, which means that NWA projects encompass fundamental, applied and practice-oriented research. This means that knowledge institutes, universities and applied and practice-oriented research institutions all work together in the NWA.
- Bringing disciplines together: the research is interdisciplinary;
- Close cooperation between science and society: between researchers, civil society organisations (both public and private) and the general public, and actively giving back the results to society and dialogue/interaction with society.

In 2018, the Ministry of OCW entrusted NWO with implementing the Dutch Research Agenda. The NWA comprises four programme lines⁴:

1. Research along Routes by Consortia (ORC);
2. Thematic Programming in consultation with government ministries;
3. Innovations and Networks;
4. Science Communication and Outreach.

The call for proposals on the theme of *Health Inequalities – Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status* is being issued as part of programme line 2 of the NWA programme. The call is being initiated by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is also involved. It ties in with other ongoing and recently completed programmes administered by ZonMw and NWO on the subject of reducing socioeconomic health inequalities⁵.

¹ The Knowledge Coalition consists of Dutch research universities (VSNU), universities of applied sciences (VH), university medical centres (NFU), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), employers (VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland) and the institutes for applied research (TNO/TO2).

² The 25 routes and associated cluster questions can be found at <https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/overzicht-routes/>, the 140 cluster questions can also be downloaded as a PDF from <https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/publicatie/nationale-wetenschapsagenda-nederlands/> (in Dutch).

³ The broad knowledge chain in NWA call encompasses the public knowledge institutions: universities of applied sciences, universities, NWO and KNAW institutes, university medical centres and TO2 institutes, as well as other public knowledge organisations such as National Knowledge Institutes (see Annex 6.1 for a full list of public knowledge organisations).

⁴ More information about the different programme lines is available at <https://www.nwo.nl/en/research-and-results/programmes/dutch-national-research-agenda>

⁵ Quality of life and health; socioeconomic health inequalities prevention programme; see also the Healthy Communities project catalogue

In this call it is important that consideration be given to knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation and the application of the results throughout the duration of the projects. This approach will guarantee optimum societal embedding of the call and generate support for use of the outcomes in policy and implementation.

The decision-making body for this NWA call is the NWO executive board. This means that the NWO Grant Rules 2017 apply to this call. The call procedure is being administered by ZonMw

1.2 Available budget

A maximum of €1 million is available for research projects in phase II. A maximum of €835,000 is available for the joint synthesis project in phase III.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

This call for proposals comprises three phases:

- phase I: submission of pre-proposals;
- phase II: submission of full proposals;
- phase III: submission of proposals for a joint project by researchers from successful applicant consortia.

This call for proposals, *Health Inequalities – Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status*, will remain valid until the date on which the synthesis project is confirmed or, if no phase III takes place, until the confirmation of the final project to be awarded funding in phase II.

The deadlines for submission of proposals in the different phases are listed in section 3.3; the dates on which decisions are expected are listed in the schedule in section 4.1.

2 Aim

2.1 Aim of the programme

The WRR Policy Brief 7 ‘[From Disparity to Potential](#)’ published in 2018 reveals that disease prevention and health promotion policy in the healthcare system has helped make residents of the Netherlands more healthy. Life expectancy has risen and people remain in good health for longer. The Policy Brief also concludes, however, that this does not apply to all groups in Dutch society, and that relatively large health gaps also exist, particularly affecting people with lower socioeconomic status. This means that a great deal of additional health potential is there to be exploited. The present programme is concerned mainly with research into how this health potential can be utilised, and aims to yield results that constitute a breakthrough for policymakers, practitioners and society at large.

The size of the group affected is difficult to ascertain, given the fact that socioeconomic status can be defined and measured in various ways – on the basis of income, for example, or of professional status or level of education. Providing a simple definition is a complex matter, because the impact of these factors changes over time. Level of education completed is the indicator most commonly used in the Netherlands, generally based on the Statistics Netherlands categorisation into low, intermediate and high.⁶ According to this definition, in 2018 29% of adults over the age of 25 had a low level of education. Using level of income or the poverty line gives a different picture: in 2018 8% of households in the Netherlands met the criterion for ‘low income’,⁷ and in 2017 6% of the population lived in poverty.

We ask that each project provide a clear definition of lower socioeconomic status (see 2.1.3).

This call for proposals invites knowledge institutions, societal stakeholders and parties from healthcare practice to form a broad consortium to collaborate on a large-scale research programme on **achieving health gains and avoiding health losses among people with lower socioeconomic status**. Health inequalities could be reduced if the health potential of this group were exploited more effectively. The consortia will work on an interdisciplinary basis, with members representing the entire knowledge chain, from fundamental to applied research. Implementation of the expected results should be explicitly considered and should form part of the research programme. Parties from healthcare practice and target groups should be involved in the research in a meaningful way.

2.1.1 Dutch Research Agenda

This call for proposals is part of the ‘NWA Healthcare Research, Disease Prevention and Treatment Route’.⁸ Research on this route should contribute to health in the broad sense: not only the absence of disease, but also living in good perceived health, and in terms of people’s capacity to adapt and manage their own health in the face of the social, physical and emotional challenges of life, as well as investing in prevention from a systems perspective (inter- and transdisciplinary). There are also connections with the ‘Route to Resilient Societies’,⁹ particularly the described breakthroughs in terms

⁶ Statistics Netherlands takes people with a low level of education to be those who have completed only primary school, pre-vocational education, the first three years of senior general secondary education (HAVO) / pre-university education (VWO) or secondary vocational education assistant training (MBO-1). An intermediate level of education refers to people who have completed HAVO/VWO, basic vocational training (MBO-2), professional training (MBO-3) or middle-management and specialist training (MBO-4). Those who have a degree from a university of applied sciences or a research university are regarded as having a high level of education (CBS).

⁷ To determine whether a household has a low income, its disposable income (excluding earmarked payments such as housing benefit/rent allowance) is converted to a standardised income. This standardised income is then converted to 2000 prices (using the price index for family consumption). The resulting standardised and deflated income is regarded as low if it falls below 9250 euros. This is roughly equivalent to the purchasing power of income support for a single person living alone in 1979, when it was at its highest (CBS).

⁸ See https://www.wetenschapsagenda.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Route6_NWA-DEEL-II-PORTFOLIO-DEFINITIEF-05092016.pdf

⁹ <https://www.routevzs.nl/>

of new forms of work and value creation, and new forms of inclusiveness and cohesion. Finally, the 'NWA Youth Development, Upbringing and Education Route' ¹⁰ refers to breakthroughs in terms of diversity and inequality as key focal areas, particularly the fact that a high level of diversity of backgrounds and characteristics among young people is too often associated with inequality in terms of their start in life, their opportunities and the effectiveness of disease prevention efforts and interventions. The need identified for research into factors that have a bearing on intergenerational transfer of disadvantage and risk, ranging from low levels of literacy to child abuse, touch upon the topic of the thematic programme exploring better ways of exploiting the health potential of people with a lower socioeconomic status.

2.1.2 The spirit of the NWA

Projects performed in the framework of the NWA are designed to achieve breakthroughs for society. The broad, innovative character of the NWA is reflected in the interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity of projects. To make breakthroughs possible, the focus is on making connections. In other words, on collaboration in broad-based consortia that encompass the entire knowledge chain (fundamental, applied and practice-oriented research). It is vital for the achievement of the programme's objectives to ensure practitioners are actively connected with and involved in research. Societal partners from public and/or semi-public sectors and/or industry are therefore brought into consortia. The involvement of the target group is vital to ensure good implementation of the research. Target groups (and their representatives) must have a role in the consortia to enable them to have proper input into the research and the drafting of the grant application. It is important that consortia include the necessary expertise, demonstrable knowledge, innovative capacity and a variety of stakeholders in order to achieve breakthroughs in knowledge development and in practice. The research, and later also the synthesis project, ¹¹ must have added benefits for all parties, leading to specific, well-founded potential courses of action spanning several scientific domains that allow health potential to be more effectively exploited from a systems perspective (see 2.2).

As mentioned above, the research should be interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. ¹² Interdisciplinary means that the various research disciplines should integrate their efforts and arrive at integrated results in response to the integrated research question (or questions). Transdisciplinary means that scientists and other societal actors should work in interaction on ways of tackling societal problems (co-creation). With this in mind, each consortium will have to include a broad range of disciplines, combining insights from fields like psychology and behavioural science, health sciences, public administration, sociology, philosophy and ethics, linguistics and communication with knowledge of systems and of the social and physical context. The consortia will thus be encouraged to approach their research from unusual perspectives.

2.1.3 Promoting the health potential of people with lower socioeconomic status

The goal of *Health Inequalities – Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status* is to perform **empirical** research in several settings, based on a **systems approach** that reflects the complexity of health inequalities between groups, examining cross-domain **approaches** designed to sustainably improve the health of people with lower socioeconomic status, with the involvement of a range of relevant stakeholders (citizens, public authorities, industry, education, healthcare and welfare organisations etc.). Each project should clearly define its target group of people with lower socioeconomic status. The goal of the joint project will be to identify potential courses of action that are workable for all or some of the target groups of the individual projects.

¹⁰ <https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/route/jeugd-in-ontwikkeling-opvoeding-en-onderwijs/>

¹¹ In phase III the successful applicant consortia will implement a joint project to collate and synthesise general characteristics and knowledge from a comparison of the different cases with a view to obtaining a generic understanding of the complex system and the scalability of the potential courses of action; see section 2.3.

¹² <https://www.scienceguide.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/20151116-advies-interdisciplinariteit-dia-web.pdf> en https://nl.wikibooks.org/wiki/Onderwijs_in_relatie_tot_P2P/Transdisciplinair

2.2 Scientific framework for phases I and II

Reducing inequalities in health between different socioeconomic groups has been a longstanding challenge for society. None of the many initiatives and measures introduced so far has managed to reverse the trend. Indeed, despite all the research, policy measures and interventions designed to reduce health inequality, they have not decreased in recent years, and some studies show that they have in fact increased.

Over the past few decades, many scientific disciplines have worked on methods for improving the health of people with lower socioeconomic status. Epidemiological studies have shown that health gaps are often associated with behaviours like smoking, bad diet and lack of exercise. Medical and psychological research has clearly shown that smoking and obesity are by no means merely a matter of choosing a particular form of behaviour. They involve complex physical processes in which hormones and neurotransmitters also play a key role, for example. Geneticists have tried to identify the influence of genes on educational opportunity and on health. Epidemiologists, sociologists and economists have also highlighted the relationship between health and social context. Health gaps are, for example, strongly correlated with poverty, inadequate social networks and a person's living and working environment. Economic studies suggest that the impact of income on health can vary during a person's life, and often has the strongest impact in childhood. Sociological research has revealed that access to healthcare and other services is problematic for many people, particularly people with low levels of literacy and people from a migrant background. It has also been shown that living with scarcity (of income, time, or social support) is a leading source of chronic stress, which has a major impact on health and mental wellbeing. Anthropologists have pointed out that many measures taken to close health gaps are not appropriate to people's lived experience and the meanings they associate with their life. In short, many studies of health gaps have shown that this is a complex and intractable problem.

Although health gaps are a complex phenomenon, most studies have tended to be reductionist, dividing the causes of health gaps into individual components, such as biological processes, specific behaviours or economic factors. Slowly but surely, we are coming to realise that we need other knowledge in order to understand and improve the health of people with lower socioeconomic status. This has been prompted by disappointing results from interventions in single institutional domains, often focused on the behaviour of individuals and requiring a large degree of self-discipline, and by growing awareness that people with lower socioeconomic status must be much more closely involved in interventions that affect them. Three things are therefore needed if we are to more effectively exploit the health potential of people with lower socioeconomic status.

Firstly, the health of different population groups must be understood as the outcome of complex, interconnected and interacting dynamics on several scales and in different periods. In other words, changes to parts of the system are not enough. We need to think and act on the basis of a systems approach in order to actually improve the health of people with lower socioeconomic status. In doing so, we must also bear in mind that policy measures and interventions often have unforeseen and unintended effects, partly because they are dependent on broader developments in society and on policy measures in many institutional domains. Developments in work, education and housing, international macroeconomic circumstances and developments in science and politics often have an unexpected impact on public health. The COVID-19 pandemic is for example impacting on all areas of policy, which in turn influence the health of certain groups in society.

Secondly, it is important when studying the effectiveness of an approach and when developing potential courses of action to consider the actor's perspective. In this study, we are concerned with institutional actors that play a role in the approaches proposed (civil servants, GPs, social workers, educators, other professionals). They are the ones who will have to put the approaches into practice. But we are also concerned with the people who are the target of the approaches – people with lower socioeconomic status – because the proposed changes will impact on their lives. It is important to consider diversity, too, as there are major differences within the large group of people defined as having lower socioeconomic status. Wherever initiatives are developed, they will have to be appropriate and beneficial to the group in question. The group will also have to be involved in defining the success of the initiatives.

Thirdly, one important prerequisite for achieving health gains is that the target group should participate in the development of measures. This implies, among other things, that collaboration with people from the target group will be required at certain points in the research process, that the research must be conducted with respect for the target group, and also that the target group must regard the approach developed as legitimate because, for example, it is consistent with the way they experience health and the circumstances that affect health. The proposal should state clearly what form this participation will take, which might differ from project to project.

What is new about the research that is the focus of this call? There are already examples of interventions or approaches designed to improve the health of people with lower socioeconomic status, promoting healthy behaviour like regular exercise, or improved working conditions, for example. These approaches often involve several domains, and are referred to as 'integrated'. The goal of this programme is to go one step further than an integrated approach, and develop interventions and measures based on a systems approach. Such approaches typically take better account of the complex dynamics underlying health inequalities, which interact at several levels (the individual, community, society etc.) and on different time scales (e.g. the life course perspective). They also consider the broader social developments that affect these dynamics, and take into account unintended effects. The systems approach applies to the measures and interventions themselves, and also to their large-scale implementation.

The proposed measures and interventions must fit into the framework of a systems approach as outlined here. Note however that several different theoretical and conceptual system approaches exist: social systems theory, sociotechnical systems theory, complex adaptive systems, organisational learning theories, ecological approaches. The proposal should present arguments to support the choice of a particular systems approach.

The programme thus aims to create a challenging link between systems theories approaches to achieving health gains among people with lower socioeconomic status and empirical research into specific, cross-domain approaches. A systems approach will be used to identify and define promising breakthroughs that might potentially enhance health potential among people with lower socioeconomic status, and empirical research will examine how certain approaches can achieve these breakthroughs. Empirical studies might focus on existing approaches or on new approaches still under development. To do justice to the complexity of a systems approach, qualitative and/or observational research based on detailed surveys or administrative data sources may be performed, or simulation models used to complement intervention studies.

In view of the systems approach, multiple sectors will have to be involved in the measures and interventions to be studied (e.g. work & income, education, youth services, spatial planning etc.), and various policy areas will have to be brought together. The measures and interventions will need to be introduced in a setting that is defined either geographically (e.g. a certain municipality), or in terms of certain characteristics of the population (e.g. people with debt problems), on the basis of a practical context (e.g. primary schools), or of the policy areas concerned (e.g. collaboration between ministries). Health can be defined in many different ways for this purpose, from objectively (e.g. chronic conditions) to subjectively (e.g. quality of life, mental wellbeing), and from prerequisites for health (e.g. resilience, or healthy habits) to outcomes (e.g. mortality). Implementation and impact must be the guiding factors from the outset. Specific steps to ensure this is the case must be set out in a knowledge utilisation plan (see section 4.2). Applicants should involve the appropriate stakeholders in order to achieve impact.

The expectation is that the programme will have scope to fund four projects. Each project should focus on two or more settings. By comparing settings, each project will provide an idea of how successful the chosen systems approach is likely to be, the effect of the underlying change mechanisms and the efficacy of relevant potential courses of action for various actors in those settings. These insights will help the knowledge obtained from the projects be generalised to other contexts. For the purposes of broader generalisation, a joint project will collate and synthesise the knowledge from the settings of the selected projects (see Phase III below).

2.3 Scientific framework for phase III

A joint project by the successful applicant consortia will collate and synthesise the general characteristics and knowledge derived from the different cases for the purposes of comparability, generic insights into the complex system and the scalability of potential courses of action. This project will prepare for the joint launch of the programme, define the target group (people with lower socioeconomic status) and monitor what knowledge needs to be shared (between projects and with the supervisory committee, see section 3.5.6), parallel to the activities in the individual projects. The joint project will also compare the separate projects, and by synthesising them will provide insight into the complex dynamics underlying failure to make full use of health potential, and into the scalability of potential courses of action.

This project will also set out recommendations for sustainable policy and generate insight into what support actors can be given to improve their expertise and their actions. Finally, additional research will be performed as part of this joint project into the cross-domain probability of achieving breakthroughs and the potential obstacles to major health gains in the target group (or certain sections of it). This might for example take the form of a validation in an independent setting. The joint project will also take a step towards larger-scale implementation, considering what connections are needed to ensure more impact, how the various actors perceive it, and the possible side-effects of scaling up or shifting to another setting. This aspect of the project will be defined in consultation with the supervisory committee. In addition, a focus group (see section 3.5.6) will be established, with members from the target group. They will be asked to reflect on the outcomes of the different projects and of the joint project. The validity of the explanatory conclusions and the legitimacy of the proposed measures and interventions will be important in this respect. In the joint project application the participants should describe what form this synthesis will take.

€ 835,000 is available for the synthesis project, with a maximum duration of 30 months.

Joint project (phase III)

- Collate general characteristics and knowledge from the comparison of the different cases
- Synthesise for generic insight into the complex system and the scalability of potential courses of action
- Make recommendations for sustainable policy
- Provide insights to support stakeholders in the complex adaptive system (enhance their expertise and their actions)

- Additional research on cross-domain probability of breakthroughs and possible obstacles to achieving major health gains in the target group (or certain sections of it)

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Proposals should be submitted by a consortium in which the various types of research in the knowledge chain (fundamental, applied and practice-oriented) must be represented.

The consortia for the projects awarded grants in phase II will form a single new consortium in phase III to submit a new joint application, provided at least two applications have been successful in phase II. Co-financiers (section 3.1.3) and cooperation partners (3.1.4) may be added to the joint consortium or working group for phases II and III. Arguments should be presented in support of the additional benefit of any new co-financiers/cooperation partners, which will be assessed by the assessment committee. However, no main applicant or applicants as described in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 may be added to the consortium, unless the assessment committee has concluded that specific necessary expertise is lacking for the joint project to be performed in phase III. In that case, the assessment committee may advise the selected participants to invite a party with specific expertise to join the consortium.

Additional conditions:

There are four categories of participant within a consortium:

1. Main applicant¹³
2. Applicant(s)
3. Co-financier(s)
4. Cooperation partners

The application should describe the following for each participant:

- the participant's role in the consortium;
- the participant's contribution to the proposed project.

3.1.1 Main applicant

In phases I and II the main applicant will submit the application on behalf of the consortium, and will liaise with ZonMw and NWO. In phase III a single main applicant will be agreed on and appointed by the consortium participants. This main applicant will submit the application on behalf of the joint consortium, and will liaise with ZonMw and NWO.

The main applicant receives the funding and is responsible, on behalf of the consortium, for scientific coherence, results and financial accountability.

Researchers¹⁴ from the following knowledge institutions may act as main applicants:

- Universities established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- University medical centres
- NWO and KNAW institutes
- Universities of applied sciences, as referred to in section 1.8 of the Higher Education and Research Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*, WHW)
- TO2 institutes¹⁵
- the Netherlands Cancer Institute
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen
- the DUBBLE Beamline at the ESRF in Grenoble
- NCB Naturalis

¹³ See paragraph 1.1 and 1.2 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017. Main applicants are referred to as principal applicants in the terms and conditions; applicants are referred to as co-applicants. In this round, ZonMw stipulates that the principal applicant and the main applicant should be the same person.

¹⁴ In this call for proposals 'researchers' refers to both women and men.

¹⁵ The members of the TO2 federation are Deltares, Marin, NLR, TNO and WUR/DLO. See also <http://www.to2-federatie.nl> (in Dutch)

- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL)
- Princess Máxima Centre

The main applicant should:

- have obtained a PhD degree, or be a lector or senior researcher;
- and have an appointment period for at least the entire duration of the research for which the grant is being applied for. Personnel with a zero-hour appointment is excluded from applying.

A lector or senior researcher employed by a university of applied sciences or TO2 institute must be able to demonstrate three or more years of research experience in order to act as main applicant.

An exception to the required duration of appointment may be made for:

- lectors employed by a university of applied sciences and senior researchers employed by a university of applied sciences or TO2 institute under a temporary appointment that does not cover the entire duration of the project;
- applicants with a ‘tenure track’ appointment that does not cover the entire duration of the project

If main applicants take up any of the above exceptions, they must demonstrate by letter that adequate supervision for all researchers for whom funding is requested will be guaranteed for the full duration of the research.

The main applicant may submit only one application in each phase in the capacity of main applicant. A main applicant may furthermore take part in no more than one other consortium as an applicant.

3.1.2 Applicant(s)

An applicant is a participant in the consortium and receives funding via the main applicant.

An applicant may participate in no more than two consortia.

A consortium may include more than one applicant.

Applicants may be affiliated to the institutions listed in section 3.1.1 or to the public knowledge organisations listed in annex 6.1, but also to other organisations.

If an applicant is affiliated to an organisation that is not listed in section 3.1.1 or annex 6.1, then that organisation must meet the cumulative criteria indicated below:

- be located in the Netherlands and
- have a public task and
- carry out research independently and
- have no profit motive other than for the purposes of conducting further research.

NB: Before an application is submitted, NWO should assess whether the organisation meets all these criteria and may therefore participate as an applicant. An assessment form is available for this purpose on the NWO funding page. The organisation of the intended applicant should submit the completed form by email at least 10 working days before the deadline, accompanied by at least the following documents:

- a recent official copy of the organisation’s registration with the chamber of commerce;
- the deed of establishment or current articles of association or another current official document providing evidence of the organisation’s public task and its non-profit status;
- the most recent annual accounts available, certified by an accountant.

Other relevant documentation may also be attached. NWO may request additional information if the above documents do not provide conclusive evidence that the organisation is eligible to act as an applicant.

If the applicants have not been assessed by NWO in advance, NWO will be unable to take the application into consideration.

If new applicants added to the consortium in the full proposal and these new applicants are not affiliated to an institution listed in section 3.1.1 or annex 6.1, they must be assessed to ensure they comply with the conditions. Again, the completed assessment form and documents listed above must be submitted by email at least 10 working days before the deadline for submission of applications specified in section 3.3.

NWO will not award funding if, in its view, the provision of funding would constitute State aid within the meaning of Article 107 of the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#).

3.1.3 Co-financier(s)

Co-financing is not mandatory in this call. Co-financiers are organisations that participate in the consortium and make an in-cash and/or in-kind contribution to the project. Co-financiers never receive a grant from NWO. The conditions relating to co-financing are specified in section 3.5.2.

Knowledge institutions that participate in applications in accordance with the description given in section 3.1.1 may not participate in this call for proposals as co-financiers, with the exception of TO2 institutes. They may participate in a consortium as a co-financier, provided they do not also participate in the same consortium as the main applicant or as an applicant.

3.1.4 Cooperation partners

A cooperation partner is a party that does not receive funding and does not contribute co-funding to the proposal but is closely involved in conducting the research and/or in knowledge utilization. This may include parties that are involved via a participation in an advisory, guidance or user committee, or parties that are unable to capitalize their contribution in advance. It is not mandatory to have cooperation partners.

NB: No funding may be requested for salary or research costs for staff of organisations participating as cooperation partners in the consortium unless they are contracted in as third parties under the 'Material costs' module, or the 'Knowledge utilisation' module (see section 3.2).

3.2 What can be applied for

Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary consortia may submit applications. Using the budget available (1.2), grants of up to 1 million euros will be awarded to research projects with a maximum duration of 48 months. Up to 835,000 euros will be awarded to a joint synthesis project.

The budget modules (including the maximum amounts) that are available within this call for proposals are stated in the table below. You should only request that which is essential for realising the research.

Budget module	Maximum amount
PhD	In accordance with VSNU or NFU rates ¹⁶
Professional Doctorate in Engineering (PDEng)	in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s), in accordance with VSNU or NFU rates ¹⁶
Postdoc	In accordance with VSNU or NFU rates ¹⁶
Non-scientific staff at (NSS) universities	€ 100,000, according to VSNU or NFU rates ¹⁶ in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s)
Other scientific staff (OSS) at universities	€100,000, in combination with PhDs and/or postdoc(s)
Research leave	5 months, 1 fte, according to VSNU or NFU rates ¹⁶

¹⁶ For personnel outside the Netherlands, the local rates are reimbursed up to a maximum of the VSNU rates.

Personnel of universities of applied sciences and other institutions (such as applied research organisations (TO2), National Knowledge Institutes and other public knowledge organisations)	In accordance with cost-recovery rate based on Public Sector Rates Guide 2017 (HOT), no maximum applies
Material costs	€ 15,000 per year per scientific position (incl. posts at universities of applied sciences and other institutions/applicants)
Knowledge utilisation	Phase II: at least 5% and no more than 10% of the total budget requested Phase III: at least 10% and no more than 20% of the total budget requested
Internationalisation	€ 25,000
Money follows Cooperation	less than 50% of the total budget requested
Project management	Phase II: up to 5% of the total budget requested Phase III: up to 5% of the total budget requested Maximum depends on budget requested

Further information on the budget modules can be found in annex 6.2.

Only a brief budget projection is required for the pre-proposal (phase I).

When compiling the budget projection for the full proposal and the synthesis project (phases II and III), arguments should be presented demonstrating how the proposed itemised expenditure will contribute to the proposed project. A budget projection form will be made available. This must be completed and submitted with the full proposal.

Involvement of civilians, so-called ‘citizen science’, might have an added value to the quality of science. They could offer data and insights that would not be available for science in other set-ups. NWO wants to finance citizen science as well and offers the possibility from 2020 onwards to apply for reimbursement of citizen involvement in research projects via the budget module ‘material, project-related goods or services, work by third parties’. This module offers researchers a possibility; this is by no means an obligation. Researchers can decide whether the involvement of citizens is desirable and how the budget is used for this (e.g. reimbursement of expenses for civilians, offering skill training or technical aids for participating citizens).

3.3 When can applications be submitted

The *Health Inequalities – Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status* call consists of three phases (see 3.4), with the following deadlines.

- The deadline for submission of pre-proposals (phase I) is 23 March 2021 14:00:00 CE(S)T.
- The deadline for submission of full proposals (phase II) is 28 September 2021 14:00:00 CE(S)T.
- The deadline for submission of proposals for the joint project (phase III) is 26 September 2023 14:00:00 CE(S)T.

Before submitting a pre-proposal, main applicants are requested to give prior notice of the consortium partners’ intention to do so **by 25 February 2021**. See 3.4.1 for more information. Prior notice is mandatory.

When you submit your application in ProjectNet you will also need to enter additional details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

3.4 Preparing an application

3.4.1 Pre-proposal

If you intend to submit a pre-proposal, you are requested, for organisational reasons, to ZonMw give prior notice of this fact no later than **25 February 2021**. Send an email to PreventieNWA@zonmw.nl giving a brief summary on one side of A4 describing the planned research and the system approach(es) on which it will be based, the policy areas on which the research will focus (see section 2.2 for examples) and the setting in which this will take place. Giving prior notice does not oblige you to submit a pre-proposal.

3.4.2 Phase I: drafting the pre-proposal

A pre-proposal gives a brief description of your project so that the programme committee can assess its relevance and overall quality. Use ProjectNet to submit your pre-proposal. Describe the goal of your project, its relevance, feasibility, the current situation regarding the subject of your research, the membership of the consortium and the general design. Pre-proposals must be submitted in English. You may only submit a pre-proposal if you have given prior notice of your intention to do so (see 3.4.1).

Tips: Make sure that your application complies with the [NWO grant terms and conditions 2017](#). You should also read this call for proposals carefully, taking particular note of the assessment criteria, which are important for the assessment of your pre-proposal. Give prior notice in good time; do not wait until the last day. If you have any questions, please contact the programme secretary or programme manager (contact details are given in section 5.1.1).

Use the pre-proposal form format to submit your pre-proposal. The form includes instructions for drafting your pre-proposal, which is a less detailed version of the full proposal. You should describe the main elements of your application. Details should be given in the full proposal. The procedure is as follows:

- Download the pre-proposal form from the ZonMw or NWO website (at the bottom of the page on the funding instrument in question).
- Complete the pre-proposal form in English.
- Save the form in PDF format and upload it to ProjectNet.
- Provide a brief budget projection on the application form. You are requested to specify the amount being requested for each item in the budget projection. If a contract is being awarded to an organisation that is not a co-applicant, please specify the cost of this contract. These amounts can be adjusted in the full proposal. The total amount of funding requested in the full proposal may not be any more than 15% higher than the amount requested in the pre-proposal.
- Reserve part of your budget (at least 5%) for communication and implementation (C&I). Include this in your budget projection.
- When submitting your pre-proposal, you will be asked in ProjectNet to suggest four reviewers. You may also indicate that you do not wish a specific expert to be approached to review your application.
- Complete the rest of the procedure in ProjectNet.

Attachments:

No attachments may be submitted with the pre-proposal.

3.4.3 Phase II: drafting the full proposal

Full proposals for phase II may be submitted once a letter approving the pre-proposal has been received. Submission of a joint phase III application by successful applicant consortia is mandatory and a prerequisite for the award of a grant in phase II.

The full proposal should contain details of your research proposal. The procedure is as follows:

- Download the application form from the ZonMw or NWO website (at the bottom of the page on the funding instrument in question).
- Complete the application form in English.
- Reserve part of your budget (at least 5%) for communication and implementation (C&I). Include this in your budget projection.
- Save the form in PDF format and upload it to ProjectNet.
- Complete the rest of the procedure in ProjectNet.
- Add mandatory attachments and any optional attachments.

Attachments:

The following attachments must be submitted with the full proposal:

- the budget form;
- letters of support from co-financiers, if applicable.

You may also submit expressions of commitment from cooperation partners (see section 3.1.4) as attachments. No other attachments may be submitted, and will not be considered in the assessment process. With the exception of the budget projection form, all other attachments must be uploaded to ProjectNet as PDFs. The budget projection form may be uploaded as an Excel file.

Immediately after submitting your proposal online you will be redirected to the '*Verklaring akkoord indienen subsidieaanvraag*' (Consent for submission of grant application). This form should be signed by the person with administrative responsibility and the main applicant, and emailed to ZonMw within a week of online submission of the proposal, addressed to the NWA Health Inequalities – Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status programme secretariat, PreventieNWA@zonmw.nl. The signed form must be received no later than five working days after the application is submitted in ProjectNet.

If a main applicant is considering submitting a full proposal despite having been advised not to do so in response to the pre-proposal, he or she should contact the programme secretariat (see section 5.1.1 for contact details) within four weeks of communication of the recommendation in response to the pre-proposal. The main applicant will then be invited to submit a full proposal.

3.4.4 Phase III: drafting the application for the synthesis project

The successful applicant consortia will organise a programme meeting in summer 2022, and meet at least twice a year during the course of the programme. They will work as a single consortium when drafting an application for the joint synthesis project, on the basis of this call for proposals.

The application for the synthesis project must be submitted in ProjectNet by **26 September 2023, 14.00:00 CE(S)T**. One main applicant must be appointed, who will submit the application on behalf of the consortium. The application will be for a joint synthesis project as described in part 2.

NB: The scientific frameworks and conditions and the assessment criteria for the joint synthesis project may be amended depending on the consortia awarded grants and the research proposals.

An application form and budget projection format can be downloaded for the application. The procedure is as follows:

- Download the application form from the ZonMw or NWO website (at the bottom of the page on the funding instrument in question).
- NB: complete the form in Dutch; no international reviewers will be consulted in the assessment process for phase III.
- Reserve part of your budget (at least 10%) for communication and implementation (C&I). Include this in your budget projection.
- Save the form in PDF format and upload it to ProjectNet.
- Complete the rest of the procedure in ProjectNet.
- Add the mandatory attachments.

Immediately after submitting your application online you will be redirected to the '*Verklaring akkoord indienen subsidieaanvraag*' (Consent for submission of grant application). This form should be signed by the person with administrative responsibility and the main applicant, and emailed to ZonMw within a week of online submission of the application, addressed to the NWA Health Inequalities - Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status programme secretariat, PreventieNWA@zonmw.nl. The signed form must be received no later than five working days after the application is submitted in ProjectNet.

3.5 Conditions on granting

The NWO Grant Rules 2017 and the [Agreement on the Payment of Costs](#) for Scientific Research apply to all applications.

In accepting the grant, the main applicants of projects awarded funding undertake responsibility for the organisation of the process of forming a joint consortium and submitting a grant application in phase III.

The research may not be funded in any other way. Should this prove to be the case, the application will be rejected or the grant withdrawn.

3.5.1 Duration

The research (phases I and II) will have a maximum duration of 48 months. If a longer period is specified in the pre-proposal, NWO will not take the application into consideration.

An additional period of 30 months is envisaged for the joint synthesis project. The synthesis project will commence approximately 18 months into the phase II projects, and end at the same time.

3.5.2 Co-financiers

Co-financing is possible but not mandatory in this call. A distinction will be drawn between in-cash co-financing, which provides financial cover for the projected budget for project activities described in the application, and in-kind co-financing, which may take the form of the provision of resources (other than cash) by the organisations concerned.

The pre-proposal need only state the total amount of expected co-financing.

Conditions applying to in-cash co-financing

Pledged in-cash co-financing is deemed to be exclusive of BTW (value-added tax). After the grant is awarded, NWO will invoice the private or public party that has committed to making a cash contribution. If applicable, BTW will be charged on the amount pledged. The money will be allocated to the project once it has been received.

Conditions applying to in-kind co-financing

In-kind co-financing must be capitalised (in the form of number of units at cost price or hours x rate) and forms part of the budget projection. The co-financing organisation must specify the rates used in the letter of support.

The following are **admissible** as in-kind co-financing:

- *Supply of staff and material contributions* on condition that these contributions are capitalised and are a fully-fledged part of the project. This should be made clear in the description and in the scheduling/phasing of the research. The current value of any equipment pledged will be used. Evidence must be provided that any in-kind contribution in the form of staff or equipment has actually been delivered. Voluntary organisations and citizen initiatives must have the official status of non-profit organisation or association in order to provide co-financing.

- Part of the research may be performed by third parties. If staff are supplied it is important that the expertise provided in the form of person-hours is not already available at the research institution(s), and that it is thus supplied specifically for the project. The capitalisation of staff supplied by third parties is subject to the procedure for determining the value of in-kind co-financing set out below.
- Material contributions in the form of supply of services are subject to the condition that they can be identified as new input. The service may not already be available at the research institution(s) performing the research. The consortium may wish to designate services already supplied (e.g. a database or software) as in-kind co-financing. This will not be acceptable in all cases. The main applicant should contact NWO in advance to confirm (see section 5.1.1 for contact details). NWO will ascertain whether it is possible to determine a specific value for the services supplied.

Determining the value of in-kind co-financing

Hourly rates can be determined on the basis of the maximum cost-recovery rate, including any allowances that apply. The hourly rate is calculated on the basis of the organisation's standard number of productive hours. The following elements must be included in the calculation of the cost-recovery rate:

- (average) gross salary payable for the staff member's proposed role in the project;
- holiday allowance and 13th month's salary (if applicable under the collective labour agreement), pro rata in terms of FTEs;
- social security contributions;
- pension contributions.

A maximum hourly rate of € 119 has been set for in-kind contributions in the form of staff deployment by co-financiers, irrespective of the tax laws and regulations applying to the co-financier. A maximum hourly rate of € 25 applies for the deployment of students. The maximum rates for reimbursement of volunteer expenses apply to the use of volunteers

(https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontentnl/belastingdienst/privewerk_en_inkomen/werken/werken-als-vrijwilliger/vrijwilligersvergoedingen/vrijwilligersvergoedingen).

NWO may request additional evidence and documentation in support of the rates used, or an adjustment of the rates.

Accountability for in-kind co-financing

Public and private parties must account to NWO for their in-kind contribution by providing a statement of costs to the main applicant within three months of the end of the research project to which they have contributed. The main applicant must forward the financial accounting of the co-financier(s) to NWO together with the financial accounting for the project to allow the grant to be finalised. If a single co-financier has made an in-kind contribution with a value higher than € 125,000, that co-financier must supply an auditor's report. In other cases, a written statement from the main applicant confirming that the in-kind contributions were actually allocated to the project will suffice.

In the event of failure to account for the pledged co-financing NWO reserves the right to withdraw the entire grant.

Inadmissible as co-financing

The following are not admissible as co-financing (either in-cash or in-kind):

- funding previously awarded by NWO, particularly to research projects of the main applicant and/or applicant(s);
- co-financing from the organisations for which the main applicant or applicant(s) work;
- any PPP allowance previously awarded, particularly to research projects of the main applicant and/or applicant(s);
- discounts on commercial rates, incl. on materials, equipment and services;
- overheads of the co-financing organisation;

- costs (including travel costs) associated with supervision (of PhD students, for example), consultancy and/or participation in the advisory committee or consortium meetings (see annexe 6.3.5) or similar activities;
- provisional costs of services. Co-financing may not be subject to any terms and conditions. Provision of co-financing may not be contingent on whether a certain stage of the project plan has been reached (e.g. go/no-go decision);
- costs of equipment if one of the main goals of the application is to enhance the efficacy or value of that equipment;
- costs that are not eligible for reimbursement under the NWO Grant Terms and Conditions 2017 (version of 30 January 2019) and this call for proposals (see annexe 6.2).

Letter of support from participating co-financiers

In a letter of support the co-financier undertakes to provide the project with both scientific/technical and financial support and confirms the pledged co-financing. Letters of support from all co-financiers must be submitted with the full proposal. The letter of support, which must mention the monetary value of the pledged co-financing, must be signed by an authorised person on behalf of the co-financier and printed on the co-financier's letterheaded paper. NWO will make a standard letter available and all letters of support must be drafted using this template. In the event that a grant is awarded, NWO will ask the co-financier to confirm the amount(s) (for the purposes of invoicing, for example).

3.5.3 Letters of commitment from cooperation partners

Cooperation partners (see section 3.1.4) need not provide a letter of commitment, as they do not contribute co-financing. Cooperation partners may however be asked to provide an expression of commitment, setting out their reasons for acting as a cooperation partner in the project, and what their role will be. Letters of commitment may be submitted only at the full proposal stage, and are not mandatory.

3.5.4 Consortium meeting

Consortium partners must sign a consortium agreement before the start of the project awarded funding. As a minimum, this agreement should govern rights (e.g. copyrights, intellectual property & publication rights, etc. on products or matters developed within the project), knowledge transfer and other matters such as payments, progress reports, final reports and confidentiality. In addition, the consortium agreement should contain agreements on the structure, management and governance of the consortium (which should provide an adequate guarantee of effective cooperation), finances, basic knowledge to be contributed where appropriate, liability, disputes and mutual sharing of information. The initiative for making these agreements, including agreements on IP rights (see the following section) lies with the main applicant. NWO will check the agreements against the NWO Grant Rules 2017. NWO provides a standard consortium agreement. The use of this template is mandatory for projects awarded funding.

3.5.5 Intellectual Property & Publications (IP&P)

To increase the chances of new inventions and innovations, NWO encourages the acquisition, retention and use of intellectual property rights (patents and copyrights) by the knowledge institutions. Consortia in NWA programmes are therefore asked to consider intellectual property rights. It is important that research results are handled responsibly with a view to contributing to science and the application of knowledge. The aim is, on the one hand, to exploit and publish the research results as broadly as possible and, on the other hand, to stimulate cooperation between the knowledge chain and (semi-)public partners and industry. The NWO Grant Rules 2017 provide options for applicants to establish Intellectual Property (IP) rights and also for any transfer or licensing of rights to co-funders.

IP rights are subject to the provisions set out in Chapter 4 of the Grant Rules, under which the IP rights to research results accrue to the beneficiary knowledge institute whose employee generated the results in question (ownership follows inventorship). Co-funders' IP rights to research results are subject to the percentages shown, unless there is a justified reason for deviating from these.

3.5.6 Monitoring of the research by supervisory committee and focus group

ZonMw will monitor the research conducted by the projects awarded funding. A supervisory committee will be set up to strengthen this process and generate support for the implementation of the projects. The committee will include researchers, stakeholders in society and representatives of the ministry or ministries involved. It will monitor the connections between the different themes, the progress of all projects and the results achieved, with a focus on the transfer and utilisation of the knowledge and application of the results. Annual meetings and working visits will be organised.

Representatives of all consortia will be invited to meetings of the supervisory committee, in order to provide input and participate. Where desirable, experts will be invited to attend.

A focus group of people from the target group will also be set up. They will be asked to reflect on the outcomes of the individual projects and the joint project. The validity of the new insights acquired and the legitimacy of the proposed approaches will be important points for the focus group to consider.

3.5.7 Accountability and completion of project

During the project the main applicant will be responsible for reporting. With a view to monitoring the progress of the project NWO will request interim reports on the research itself and the project finances, as well as accountability for any co-financing supplied.

Final reports on the research and finances will be requested once a project is complete. After they are approved, the amount of grant (and co-financing) will be finalised.

3.5.8 Open Access

As a signatory to the [Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities \(2003\)](#), NWO is committed to making the results of scientific research funded by NWO freely available in open access on the internet. In doing so, NWO is implementing the ambitions of the Dutch government to make all publicly funded research openly available. All scientific publications of research funded on the basis of this call for proposals should therefore be available in open access immediately (at the time of publication). NWO accepts various routes:

- publication in an full open access journal,
- deposit a version of the article in a repository or
- publication in a hybrid journal covered by one of the agreements between the VSNU and publishers. See www.openaccess.nl.

Any costs for publication in full open access journals can be incurred in the project budget. NWO does not reimburse costs for publications in hybrid journals. These conditions apply to all forms of scholarly publications arising from grants awarded on the basis of this call for proposals. Also academic monographs, edited volumes, proceedings and book chapters. For more information on the NWO's open access policy, see: www.nwo.nl/openscience.

3.5.9 Data management

The results of scientific research must be replicable, verifiable and falsifiable. In the digital age this means that, in addition to publications, research data must also be freely accessible. As much as possible, NWO expects that research data resulting from NWO-funded projects will be made publicly available for reuse by other researchers. "As open as possible, as closed as necessary" is the guiding principle in this respect. As a minimum, NWO requires that the data underpinning research papers should be made available at the time of the article's publication. The costs for doing so are eligible for funding and can be included in the project budget. In the data management section, and in the data management template if the project is awarded funding, researchers explain how they plan to manage the data expected to be generated by the project.

1. Data management section

The data management section is part of the research proposal. Researchers are asked to prospectively consider how they will manage the data the project will generate and plan for which data will be preserved and be made publicly available. Measures will often need to be taken during the production and analysis of the data to make their later storage and dissemination possible. If not all data from the project can be made publicly available, the reasons for not doing so must be explained in the data management section. Due consideration is given to aspects such as privacy, public security, ethical limitations, property rights and commercial interests.

2. Data management plan

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. In this plan, the researcher describes whether use will be made of existing data, whether new data will be collected or generated, and how the data will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. The data management plan must be completed in consultation with a data steward or equivalent research data management support staff at the home institution of the project leader. The plan should be submitted to ZonMw, via PreventieNWA@zonmw.nl, within four months after the proposal has been awarded funding. ZonMw will approve the plan as quickly as possible. Approval of the data management plan by ZonMw is a condition for disbursement of the funding. The plan can be adjusted during the research.

Further information on the NWO data management protocol can be found at www.nwo.nl/datamanagement-en.

3.5.10 Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol became effective on 12 October 2014 and ensures an honest and reasonable distribution of benefits emerging from the use of genetic resources (Access and Benefit Sharing; ABS). Researchers who make use of genetic resources from the Netherlands or abroad for their research should familiarise themselves with the Nagoya Protocol (www.absfocalpoint.nl). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.11 Ethical considerations

In scientific research, it is important that research proposals that might raise ethical questions are handled with due care. Certain research projects will require approval by a recognised medical ethics assessment committee (METC) or the Central Animal Research Authority (CCD). Some research proposals will require a licence issued under the Population Screening Act (*Wet Bevolkingsonderzoek*, WBO). More information on the METC and WBO is available from the Central Committee on Research involving Human Subjects (CCMO).

A consortium has responsibility for ascertaining whether its research proposals might raise ethical questions and for obtaining the official approval of the appropriate ethics committee(s) and/or a licence issued under the Population Screening Act or a similar organisation.

NWO subscribes to the Animal Experiments Disclosure Code (*code Openheid Dierproeven*) and the Biosecurity Code. The main applicant/applicants must subscribe to and comply with these codes in order to apply.

A project awarded funding must commence within six months of the notification of award. A research project may not commence until ZonMw has received a copy of the approval of the ethics committee and/or WBO licence, if applicable. ZonMw expects applicants to consider the timetable for the application procedure and the time required for assessment by an ethics committee or issuing of a WBO licence. In the event of complex ethical issues, NWO reserves the right to consult an external advisor. If, after consultation with the advisor, ZonMw is of the opinion that an application requires ethical assessment, the applicant will be obliged to arrange for assessment by an ethics committee. No funding will be disbursed if the approval of an ethics committee is not obtained. Applicants may contact ZonMw with any questions they may have on this matter (see section 5.1.1 for contact details).

3.6 Submitting an application

All applications must be submitted online, and in accordance with the guidelines, via ZonMw's online applications system (ProjectNet); see also section 3.4.2. For the deadlines in the different phases, see section 3.3. Any applications not submitted via ProjectNet will not be taken into consideration.

Immediately after submitting your application online you will be redirected to the '*Verklaring akkoord indienen subsidieaanvraag*' (Consent for submission of grant application). This form should be signed by the person with administrative responsibility and the main applicant, and emailed to ZonMw within a week of online submission of the application, addressed to the NWA Health Inequalities - Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status programme secretariat, PreventieNWA@zonmw.nl. The signed form must be received no later than five working days after the application is submitted in ProjectNet.

Technical issues – working with ProjectNet

- If you have never worked with ProjectNet before, you will first need to register as a new user. Click on the [guide](#) to make an account. See also the additional information in ProjectNet.
- You are advised, before submitting your application online, to print out a PDF of your application and check it for any irregularities. If you have first produced your application as a Word document and then copied it to ProjectNet, you may find that some symbols (such as quotation marks) have not been converted properly. This can be corrected in ProjectNet.
- NB: the helpdesk is not available at the weekend to help with any problems you may experience with ProjectNet. You should therefore start on the submission of your pre-proposal in good time.

If you experience any problems with the online application system (ProjectNet), you may contact the helpdesk from Monday to Friday, 08.00-17.00, on +31 (0)70 349 5178 or projectnet@zonmw.nl. Please include your telephone number in your email so that our support staff can call you if necessary..

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and ZonMw or NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process.

Assessment committee

The NWO executive board will establish an independent assessment committee for this NWA call for proposals. The assessment committee will have a broad-based membership, encompassing not only scientific expertise, but expertise from the entire knowledge chain, including stakeholders from society with a good grounding in the subject, and representatives of the target group.

Admissibility check for pre-proposal and full proposals

The first step in the assessment procedure for both pre-proposals and full proposals is to test whether the application is admissible. The criteria set out in part 3 of this call for proposals are used for this purpose.

Applications¹⁷ that do not meet these criteria will not be taken into consideration by ZonMw.

If ZonMw finds that the application does not meet the administrative requirements, the main applicant will be given one opportunity to amend the application within five working days.¹⁸ ZonMw will send an email within five working days of the deadline detailing what may be amended and how. Only the points indicated may be amended. **Please therefore check your email regularly after the deadline.**

If the corrected application is not received within the period specified, ZonMw will not take the application into consideration. If the corrected application is received within the period specified, but still fails to meet the requirements, ZonMw will not take the application into consideration. Corrected applications that are received on time and meet the requirements will be taken into consideration once they have been approved.

The applicant will not be given the opportunity to correct the application and the application will not be taken into consideration if:

- the application was received by ZonMw after the deadline stipulated in section 3.3;
- the application was not submitted in ProjectNet.

Assessment of pre-proposals

The pre-proposal is a concise version of your research proposal. It should include all elements of your research plan. The pre-proposal will be assessed for relevance and, more generally, for its quality, on the basis of the assessment criteria (see section 4.2).

Pre-proposals that are taken into consideration will be assessed by the assessment committee, and a recommendation made as to whether it should be developed into a full proposal. The recommendation will depend on whether the research is in line with this call for proposals, the general quality of the pre-proposal, the membership of the consortium and the potential of the pre-proposal to lead to a breakthrough for science and/or society.

¹⁷ In this section the term 'application' refers to both the pre-proposal and the full proposal.

¹⁸ Working days are defined as working days as stipulated in legislation. In determining the deadline for the submission of corrected applications, NWO will not take into account personal working days.

Assessment of full proposals

All full proposals that are taken into consideration will be assessed by international reviewers. The reviewers' reports will be sent to applicants for rebuttal. All the documentation pertaining to the application will then be presented to the assessment committee, which will assess the applications on the basis of the criteria set out in section 4.2.

It is important for the *Health Inequalities – Promoting the Health Potential of People with Lower Socioeconomic Status* programme that each of the full proposals selected has a different focus in terms of the domains being investigated and the settings involved, to ensure that the projects are complementary and that there is minimum overlap. The assessment committee may therefore consider the complementarity of the selected proposals in its recommendation as to whether a grant should be awarded. In doing so, the assessment committee will use the following procedure:

5. The provisional ranking will be determined on the basis of criteria I to III in section 4.2.
6. The assessment committee will consider the following two aspects of complementarity in its recommendation only if more than four applications are deemed to be 'good':
 - a. the domains to be investigated
 - b. the setting in which the research will take place

This might mean that an application that scores higher is not awarded a grant in order to prevent overlap in terms of domains and/or setting, in favour of an application in a domain and/or setting that scores lower. The purpose is to ensure a good spread of projects across different domains and/or settings.

The assessment committee will however place the number 1 in the provisional ranking in first place when it comes to the recommendation to award a grant. The committee will then compare the other applications with number 1, in terms of the three aspects of complementarity. If number 2 is the same as number 1 in terms of one or more aspects of complementarity, the committee may decide not to include number 2 in the list of projects recommended for grants, and number three will be compared with number one, and soon.

The broad-based assessment committee will draft a recommendation for a award of a grant or rejection of the application and present it to the NWO executive board, which will take the final decision. The executive board will perform a minimal assessment of the procedure and officially adopt a final assessment of the applications, based on the recommendations of the assessment committee. All applicants will be informed of the decision on their application in January 2022.

NWO will categorise all full proposals in terms of their quality. The applicant will be told how their application was categorised when they are informed of the decision on whether to award funding. To qualify for funding, an application must be categorised as at least good. For more information on the quality categories, see: <http://www.nwo.nl/kwalificaties>.

The data management section in the application is not evaluated and therefore not included in the decision about whether to award funding. However, both the referees and the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section. After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants can use the advice from the referees and the committee when writing the data management plan. A project awarded funding can only start after NWO has approved the consortium agreement.

After the decision on phase II (full proposals) the selected consortia will be invited to apply for phase III funding, provided at least two applications have been categorised as 'good'. If only one application has been categorised as 'good', no phase III will take place.

Phase III

Drafting your full application

After grants have been awarded in phase II the main applicants of the successful consortia will hold a programme meeting every six months. They will involve the supervisory committee (see section 3.5.6) in the preparations for and organisation of the programme meetings. The first meeting should be scheduled for the summer of 2022. The phase III application will be discussed and drafted at this first meeting; see also section 3.4.4.

Programme meetings will focus on the following:

- Putting in place control and management structures for the project, and drafting an overall schedule.
- Establishing a common framework to ensure studies are comparable and scalable, and to facilitate synthesis. Explicit consideration should be given to consistency in the research performed and any overlap between the consortia.
- Defining cross-cutting work packages (e.g. communication).
- A joint plan for knowledge utilisation.

NB: The scientific frameworks and conditions and the assessment criteria for the joint synthesis project may be amended depending on the consortia awarded grants and the research proposals.

Phase III admissibility check

In this phase, too, ZonMw will assess whether the grant application can be considered. The application must meet the following requirements to qualify for consideration:

- It must be submitted in ProjectNet before the deadline.
- It must be written in **Dutch**, as there will be no assessment by international reviewers.
- It should include all the elements listed in section 3.4.4.
- It should include a budget projection in the correct format, with justification of the amounts requested, up to a maximum of €835,000 for no longer than 12 months.
- At least 10% of the total budget requested should be reserved for communication and implementation.

If ZonMw finds that the application does not meet the administrative requirements, the main applicant will be given one opportunity to amend the application within five working days.¹⁹ ZonMw will send an email within five working days of the deadline detailing what may be amended and how. Only the points indicated may be amended. **Please therefore check your email regularly after the deadline.**

If the corrected application is not received within the periods specified, ZonMw will not take the application into consideration. If the corrected application is received within the period specified, but still fails to meet the requirements, ZonMw will not take the application into consideration. Corrected applications that are received on time and meet the requirements will be taken into consideration once they have been approved.

Assessment of and decision-making on applications in phase III

Representatives of the joint consortium will present their proposal to the assessment committee in January 2023. This will be followed by an interview with the assessment committee for the purposes of its quality assessment. The assessment committee will assess the quality of the application on the basis of the criteria listed in section 4.3, and will advise the NWO executive board as to whether the applications should be accepted or rejected.

¹⁹ Working days are defined as working days as stipulated in legislation. In determining the deadline for the submission of corrected applications, NWO will not take into account personal working days.

The application must be deemed to be at least ‘good’. If this is not the case, the assessment committee will indicate which elements fall short and the consortium will be given one opportunity to revise those elements of the application. The consortium will have one month from the time of notification to revise the application. The assessment committee will give written notice of its recommendations and instructions. A meeting with the assessment committee will also be planned. If the revised application is still not deemed to be ‘good’, the assessment committee will advise the NWO executive board to reject the application.

The NWO executive board will decide in February 2023 whether the phase III application is to be accepted or rejected. If a revised application is required, the decision will be taken in April 2023.

NWO will assign a quality category to the application. The applicant will be told how their application was categorised when they are informed of the decision on whether to award funding.

For more information on the quality categories see: <http://www.nwo.nl/kwalificaties>.

Data management

The data management section in the application is not evaluated and is not therefore included in the decision as to whether to award funding. However, the committee may issue advice with respect to the data management section. After a project has been awarded funding, the researcher will be required to develop the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants may use the advice of the reviewers and the committee for this purpose. The project may start as soon as NWO approves the data management plan.

The application form for phase III is available in ProjectNet. See section 4.2 for the exact assessment criteria for phase III.

Indicative timetable

25 February 2021	Prior notice of the intention to submit a pre-proposal
Phase I – Pre-proposals	
13 April 2021	Deadline for submission in phase I – pre-proposals
May 2021	Committee assesses pre-proposals
8 June 2021	Applicants receive advice as to whether to draw up a full application
Phase II – Full proposals	
28 September 2021	Deadline for submission in phase II – full proposals
September/October 2021	Reviewers consulted
Early November 2021	Rebuttal requested
December 2021	Assessment committee meets
January 2022	NWO executive board takes decisions on phase II
January 2022	ZonMw informs main applicant of decision
Spring / summer 2022	Phase II projects start (lasting until summer 2026)
Phase III – joint synthesis project	

Summer 2022	First programme meeting
January 2023	Second programme meeting, start of preparations for phase III application
26 September 2023	Deadline for submission in phase III – single joint application
September 2023	Presentation to assessment committee
October 2023	Assessment committee assesses application and issues advice
October 2023	NWO executive board takes decision on phase III
November 2023, if applicable	NWO executive board decides on revised application
January 2024	Phase III joint project commences

4.2 Criteria

This call for proposals has different assessment criteria for pre-proposals and full proposals in phases I and II, and the application for the joint project in phase III.

4.2.1 Criteria Phase I

In the pre-proposal the assessment committee will roughly examine the quality of the research proposed, the consortium and the likelihood of potential breakthroughs for science and/or society and, thus, the relevance of the proposal. In doing so, it will apply the criteria listed below. The assessment committee will make a positive recommendation for the pre-proposal to be developed into a full proposal if it is judged to be relevant and of sufficient quality.

- I. Quality of the research in the pre-proposal
 - Clear definition of the lower socioeconomic-status group to be studied in the proposal, and the size of the group.
 - Arguments presented in support of the choice of theoretical systems approach.
 - Brief description and arguments in support of consistency with the goal of this call for proposals.
 - Problem definition and research questions clearly worded, and consistent with programme goal.
 - Rough budget projection appropriate for proposed research.
- II. Quality of the consortium in the pre-proposal
 - Inter- and transdisciplinarity: presence of the various disciplines/expertises necessary for the systems approach proposed. The role of the different consortium members should be described in brief.
 - Brief description of how the entire knowledge chain is represented in the consortium.
 - Necessary cooperation partners represented in the consortium; clear description of roles of different consortium members.
 - Description of any existing collaboration.
 - The proposal should build on existing collaboration.
- III. Potential breakthroughs for science and/or society in the pre-proposal
 - Degree to which pre-proposal is focused on breakthroughs for science and society, and whether it is regarded as promising in this respect.
 - Involvement of the public in the proposal and the implementation of research.
 - Clear plan for knowledge utilisation and potential suitable and feasible activities.

4.2.2 Criteria Phase II

The full proposal must comply with all the criteria set out in this call. Applications may be rejected on the grounds of insufficient quality (see section NWO categorisation below); the minimum score must be 'good'.

NB: *The pre-proposal is a concise version of your full proposal. It should describe all main elements of your research plan. Details should be given in the full proposal.*

All criteria carry the same weight, and each accounts for a third of the overall score. A number of aspects of the criteria are specified below:

I. Quality of the research proposal

- Clear definition of the lower socioeconomic-status group to be studied in the proposal, and the size of the group.
- Importance of the proposed project for science and society. Clear description of the outcome measures for policy, professionals, practitioners and the public.
- Clear description of how the research matches the goal of this call for proposals, supported by details of the latest scientific knowledge and facts on the subject of the research in the chosen policy domain and setting (a brief literature-based knowledge synthesis). Describe how the study will build on existing knowledge, and the innovative aspects of the research. *This is described in brief in the pre-proposal; you should provide more details in the full proposal.*
- Problem definition and research questions clearly worded, and consistent with the programme goal.
- The proposal should clearly indicate what is meant by promoting health potential and potential for quality of life, how this study is expected to help improve this, and to what extent.
- Arguments presented in support of the choice of theoretical systems approach.
- Arguments demonstrating the suitability of the research method and statistical analysis.
- Clear description of the different work packages, how they connect, and how they strengthen the different parts of the study.
- The feasibility of the planned activities should be demonstrated with a timetable and an analysis of strengths and weaknesses.
- Budget projection appropriate for proposed research. The full proposal should include arguments in support of the individual budget items for each participating organisation.
- Consideration of ethical aspects of the study, and any potential unintended side effects when the research results are implemented.

II. Quality of the consortium

- Inter- and transdisciplinarity: presence of all disciplines/expertises necessary for the systems approach proposed. The role of the different consortium members should be convincingly described, as well as how collaboration will occur in the consortium, and the individual work packages. Management of the work packages and the study as a whole should be defined, and supported by the consortium.
- Entire knowledge chain represented: for the problem to be adequately addressed, it must be clear that the necessary parties from the knowledge chain (fundamental, applied and practice-oriented) have been included in the proposal. The roles of the various parties should be convincingly described.
- Necessary partners represented in the consortium. NB: the target groups should have a fully-fledged role in the consortia, and in the drafting of the grant application.
- The cohesion, complementarity and diversity of the consortium partners should be clearly described in relation to the proposed research.
- Describe the extent to which collaboration already exists at the practical level, and with target group(s)/members of the public, and how these connections will be used in the proposed research.

III. Potential breakthroughs for science and/or society

- Degree to which proposal is focused on breakthroughs for science and society, and whether it is regarded as promising in this respect.

- The research should lead to specific, well-founded potential courses of action across several scientific domains which can actually be put into practice (after phase III), thus achieving a breakthrough for society. The extent to which workable principles can be derived and generalised is an important factor, as is the way that potential courses of action are put into operation.
- Describe how the public will be involved in the proposal and have a role in implementation, e.g. citizen science.
- Describe how the consortium will ensure the support, engagement and commitment of all participating parties (public and/or private), and also of society as a whole, as a prerequisite for knowledge utilisation and implementation.
- Knowledge utilisation: the knowledge utilisation plan should be ambitious, and should describe specific, appropriate and feasible activities (including knowledge transfer, utilisation of results and valorisation). Ideas for phase III, the synthesis project, may also be included in brief. You should describe how your results will tie in with existing policy and practice, and how this can be guaranteed.

4.2.3 Criteria for phase III

All criteria carry the same weight, and each accounts for a third of the overall score. A number of aspects of the criteria are specified below:

I. Quality of the application

- Clear definition of the lower socioeconomic-status group and other health groups in the Netherlands, the size of the lower socioeconomic-status group over time, and the section of the lower socioeconomic-status group that will be the focus of the study.
- Importance of the proposed project to science and society. Domains and settings included in the scope of the project. The likely extent of generic insight and possible upscaling of potential courses of action.
- Detailed description of the objective and the results expected for the entire knowledge chain.
- Describe in detail the additional research on the cross-domain probability of achieving breakthroughs and possible obstacles to achieving major health gains in the target group (or certain sections of it).
- The plan of action should be clearly worded, and specify the contribution of the different parties, what knowledge will be brought together (including from international sources), and how, with a clear, specific schedule.
- Describe how the different work packages connect, and how the different parts of the study will mutually reinforce each other.
- You should present arguments in support of the feasibility of the planned activities within the budget and timeframe.
- Budget projection appropriate for proposed research. The application should include arguments in support of the individual budget items for each participating organisation.
- Consideration of ethical aspects of the study, and any potential unintended side effects when the research results are implemented.

II. Quality of the consortium

- Governance: how the project management and direction will lead to the envisaged collaboration and achievement of the results expected.
- A description of the added value the consortium will bring to the synthesis project, the disciplines and expertise included, and how this will contribute to the synthesis and dissemination of knowledge and the consolidation of the results in the entire knowledge chain and beyond. The consortium should be described with an organisation chart, and task allocation in the form of work packages.
- Describe how the public, representatives of the target group(s) and stakeholders will be involved in the project. The necessary cooperation partners must be represented in the consortium.
- The cohesion, complementarity and diversity of the consortium partners should be clearly described in relation to the proposed research.

III. Potential breakthroughs for science and/or society

- The research should lead to specific, well-founded potential courses of action across several scientific domains which can actually be put into practice. The extent to which workable principles can be derived and generalised is an important factor, as is the way that potential courses of action are put into operation.
- Describe how the public will be involved in the proposal and have a role in implementation.
- Describe how the consortium will ensure the support, engagement and commitment of all participating parties (public and/or private), and also of society as a whole, as a prerequisite for knowledge utilisation and implementation.
- Knowledge utilisation: the knowledge utilisation plan should be ambitious, and should describe specific, appropriate and feasible activities (including knowledge transfer, utilisation of results and valorisation). You should describe how your results will tie in with existing policy and practice, and how this can be guaranteed.

5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about this call for proposals, please contact:

- Astrid vanden Broek (programme manager), +31 (0)70 349 5107, or
- Raschella Alvarez (programma secretary), +31 (0)70 349 5261.

Any emails should be sent to PreventieNWA@zonmw.nl.

5.1.2 Technical questions about the ProjectNet online application system

If you have any technical queries about using ZonMw's online application system (ProjectNet), you may contact the helpdesk from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 17:00 on +31 (0)70 349 5178, or mail projectnet@zonmw.nl. Please include your telephone number so that our support staff can call you if necessary.

6 Annexes

6.1 Public Knowledge Organisations

The public knowledge organisations listed below may act as co-applicants in a consortium, with the exception of the TO2 institutes, which may also act as main applicant or co-financier in a consortium. The check mentioned in Section 3.1.2 is not required for these organisations.

TO2 institutes (from: <https://www.to2-federatie.nl/nl/to2federatie/Organisaties.htm>):

1. Deltares – Independent institute for applied research in the field of water and subsurface
2. MARIN – Maritime Research Institute Netherlands
3. NLR – Nederlands Lucht- en Ruimtevaartcentrum (Netherlands Aerospace Centre)
4. TNO – Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research)
5. Wageningen Research / formerly DLO – Dienst Landbouwkundig Onderzoek

National knowledge institutes (from: <https://www.to2-federatie.nl/nl/to2federatie/Organisaties.htm> - Dutch only):

6. CBS – Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands)
7. CPB – Centraal Planbureau (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis)
8. KiM – Kennisinstituut voor Mobiliteitsbeleid (Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis)
9. KNMI – Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute)
10. NFI – Nederlands Forensisch Instituut (Netherlands Forensic Institute)
11. PBL – Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency)
12. RCE – Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands)
13. RIVM – Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment)
14. RKD – Nederlands Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis (Netherlands Institute for Art History)
15. RWS – Rijkswaterstaat (Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management)
16. SCP – Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (Netherlands Institute for Social Research)
17. WODC – Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (Research and Documentation Centre)

Other public knowledge institutions (from: <https://www.rathenau.nl/en/kennisgedreven-democratie/public-knowledge-organisations-netherlands>):

18. Boekman Foundation – Institute for arts, culture and related policy
19. Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations
20. Geonovum – Knowledge organisation for geographic information
21. Movisie – Centre for social issues
22. Mulier Institute – Centre for sports research
23. (N) IFV – (Netherlands) Institute for Safety
24. NIVEL – Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research
25. NJi – Nederlands Jeugdinstituut (Netherlands Youth Institute)
26. Police Academy – Training, knowledge and research for the Dutch National Police
27. SWOON-NLDA – Stichting Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs en Onderzoek Nederlandse Defensieacademie (foundation for scientific education and research of the Netherlands defence academy)
28. SWOV – Stichting Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Verkeersveiligheid (Institute for Road Safety Research)
29. Trimbos Institute – Institute for mental health, drug abuse and addiction
30. VeiligheidNL – Organisation to promote safe behaviour
31. Vilans – Research into long-term care

6.2 Explanation of budget modules

Explanation of budget modules for personnel

Funding for the salary costs of personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research can be applied for. Funding of these salary costs depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the personnel are or will be appointed. This call distinguishes between funding for staff employed by academic institutions as referred to in section 3.1.1, and staff of universities of applied sciences and other institutions.²⁰

- For university appointments, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the VSNU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded
- (www.nwo.nl/en/salary-tables).
- For university medical centres, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the NFU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded
- (www.nwo.nl/en/salary-tables).
- For personnel from universities of applied sciences and other institutions, the salary costs are funded on the basis of the collective labour agreement salary scale of the employee concerned, based on the Public Sector Rates Guide 2017 (*Handleiding Overheidstarieven 2017*, HOT).
- For the Caribbean Netherlands, the Dutch government employs civil servants on Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba under different conditions than in the European part of the Netherlands.

(<https://www.rijksdienstcn.com/werken-bij-rijksdienst-caribisch-nederland/arbeidsvoorwaarden>)

The rates for all budget modules are incorporated in the budget format that accompanies the application form. For the budget modules “PhD”, “PDEng” and “Postdoc”, a one-off individual bench fee of € 5,000 is added on top of the salary costs. This bench fee is intended to encourage the scientific career of the project employee funded by NWO. Remunerations for PhD students/PhD scholarship students at a Dutch university are not eligible for funding from NWO.

The available budget modules are explained below.

Staff of academic institutions

PhD (including MD-PhD)

A PhD is appointed for 1.0 fte for a duration of 48 months. The equivalent of 48 full-time months, for example an appointment of 60 months for 0.8 fte is also possible. If a different duration of appointment is considered necessary for the realisation of the proposed research, then as long as this is properly justified, the standard time can be deviated from. However, the duration of an appointment must always be at least 48 months.

Professional Doctorate in Engineering (PDEng)

Funding for the appointment of a PDEng can only be applied for if funding for a PhD or postdoc is also applied for.

The appointment for a PDEng position is a maximum of 1.0 fte for 24 months. The PDEng trainee is employed by the institution applying for funding and can realise activities within the research at an industrial partner for a specified time. If the research proposal is awarded funding, then an agreement must be concluded with the industrial partner(s) concerned. The underlying “Technological Designer Programme” should be described in the funding proposal.

²⁰ Universities of applied sciences, TO2 institutes and public knowledge organisations (see annexe 6) that participate as applications but do not qualify as academic institutions as referred to above.

Postdoc

The size of the appointment of a postdoc is at least 6 full-time months and at most 48 full-time months. The size and duration of the appointment is at the applicant's discretion, but the appointment is always for at least 0.5 fte or for a duration of at least 12 months. The product of fte x duration of an appointment should always be a minimum of 6 full-time months.

The material budget is available to cover the costs of a more limited appointment of a postdoc.

Non-scientific staff (NSS) at universities

Funding for the appointment of non-scientific personnel necessary for the realisation of the research project can only be applied for if funding for a PhD or postdoc is also applied for. A maximum of € 100,000 can be requested for NSS. This includes personnel such as student assistants, programmers, technical assistants or analysts. Depending on the level of the position, the appropriate salary table for non-scientific staff at MBO, HBO or university level applies.

The size of the appointment is at least 6 full-time months and at most 48 full-time months. The size and duration of the appointment is at the applicant's discretion, but the appointment is always for at least 0.5 fte or for a duration of at least 12 months. The product of fte x duration of an appointment should always be a minimum of 6 full-time months.

Other scientific personnel (OSS) at universities

Budget for other scientific personnel such as AIOS (doctor training to be a specialist), ANIOS (doctor not training to be a specialist), scientific programmers or employees with a master's degree can only be applied for if funding for a PhD or postdoc is also applied for. For this category, a maximum of € 100,000 can be applied for.

The size of the appointment is at least 6 full-time months and most 48 full-time months. The size and duration of the appointment is at the applicant's discretion, but the appointment is always for at least 0.5 fte or for a duration of at least 12 months. The product of fte x duration of an appointment should always be a minimum of 6 full-time months.

Research leave for applicants

With this budget module, funding can be requested for the research leave costs of the main and/or co-applicant(s). The employer of the applicant concerned can use this to cover the costs of relinquishing him or her from educational, supervisory, administrative or management tasks (not research tasks). The time that is released through the research leave grant can only be used by the applicant(s) for activities in the context of the project. The proposal must describe which activities in the context of the project the applicant(s) will carry out in the time relinquished.

The maximum amount of research leave that can be applied for is the equivalent of five full-time months. NWO funds the research leave in accordance with the salary tables for a senior scientific employee (scale 11) at the time the grant is awarded (www.nwo.nl/en/salary-tables).

Personnel universities of applied sciences and other institutions

For the funding of salary costs of personnel employed at a university of applied sciences or other type of institution (such as TO2 or SMEs), the following maximum rates (hours/day) are used in accordance with the Public Sector Rates Guide 2017 (*Handleiding Overheidstarieven 2017*, HOT). The cost recovery table in the HOT is used (table 2.2, hourly cost recovery rate) for this call.

Explanation of budget module Material

For each fte scientific position (PhD, postdoc, PDEng) applied for, a maximum of € 15,000 material budget can be applied for per year of the appointment. Material budget for smaller appointments can be applied for on a proportionate basis and will be made available by NWO accordingly.

The applicant is responsible for distributing the total amount of material budget across the NWO-funded personnel positions. The material budget that can be applied for is specified according to the three categories below:

Project-related goods/services

- consumables (glassware, chemicals, cryogenic fluids, etc.)
- measurement and calculation time (e.g. access to supercomputer, etc.)
- costs for acquiring or using data collections (e.g. from Statistics Netherlands), for which the total amount may not be more than € 25,000 per proposal
- access to large national and international facilities (e.g. cleanroom, synchrotron, etc.)
- work by third parties (e.g. laboratory analyses, data collection, citizen science, etc.)
- personnel costs for the appointment of a post-doc and/or non-scientific personnel for a smaller appointment size than those offered in the personnel budget modules

Travel and accommodation costs for the personal positions applied for

- travel and accommodation costs
- conference attendance (maximum of two per year per scientific position applied for)
- fieldwork
- work visit

Implementation costs

- national symposium/conference/workshop organised within the research project
- costs for Open Access publishing (solely in full gold Open Access journals, registered in the “Directory of Open Access Journals” <https://doaj.org/>)
- data management costs
- costs involved in applying for licences (e.g. for animal experiments)
- audit costs (only for institutions that are not subject to the education accountants protocol of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), maximum € 5,000 per proposal; for projects with a duration of three years or less, a maximum of € 2,500 per proposal applies.

Costs that cannot be applied for are:

- basic facilities within the institution (e.g. laptops, desks, etc.);
- maintenance and insurance costs.

If the maximum amount of € 15,000 per year per full-time scientific position is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if a clear justification is provided in the proposal.

Explanation of budget module Knowledge utilisation

The aim of this budget module is to facilitate the use of the knowledge that emerges from the research.²¹ In phase II at least 5% and no more than 10% of the total project budget should be spent on knowledge utilisation activities through this budget module. In phase III the minimum is 10% and the maximum 20% of the total.

Since knowledge utilisation takes many different forms in different scientific fields, it is up to the applicant to specify the costs required, e.g. costs of producing a teaching package, conducting a feasibility study into potential applications, or filing a patent application.

The budget applied for should be adequately specified in the proposal.

Explanation of budget module Internationalisation

The budget for internationalisation is intended to encourage international collaboration. The budget applied for may not exceed € 25,000. The amount requested must be specified. If the maximum amount is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if a clear justification is provided in the proposal.

Funding can be requested for:

- travel and accommodation costs in so far as these concern direct research costs emerging from the international collaboration and additional costs for internationalisation that cannot be covered in another manner, for example from the bench fee;
- travel and accommodation costs for foreign guest researchers;

²¹ In this budget module, the definition for “knowledge transfer” used by the European Commission in the Framework for State Aid for research and development and innovation applies (PbEU, 2014, C198).

- costs for organising international workshops/symposia/scientific meetings.

Explanation of the budget module Money follows Cooperation (MfC)

The module Money follows Cooperation provides the possibility of realising a part of the project at a publicly funded knowledge institution outside of the Netherlands.

The applicant must convincingly argue how the researcher from the foreign knowledge institution will contribute specific expertise to the research project that is not available in the Netherlands at the level necessary for the project.

This condition does not apply if NWO has concluded a bilateral agreement concerning Money follows Cooperation with the national research council of the country where the foreign knowledge institution is located. On [this NWO web page](#) you will find an overview of research councils that signed a bilateral MfC agreement with NWO.

The budget applied for within this module cannot be more than 50% of the total budget applied for. A co-applicant from the participating foreign knowledge institution should satisfy the conditions set for co-applicants in Section 3.1 of this call for proposals, with the exception of the condition that the co-applicant should be employed in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The rates for the personnel costs of researchers at the foreign knowledge institution are calculated on the basis of the correction coefficients table of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grants (EU, Horizon 2020), based on the Dutch VSNU rates. The table can be found on [this web page](#) of NWO.

The main applicant receives the grant and is responsible for transferring the amount to the foreign knowledge institution and for providing accountability for the MfC part of the grant. The MfC part will be part of the overall financial accountability of the project.

The exchange rate risk lies with the applicants. Therefore, gains or losses due to the exchange rate are not eligible for funding. The applicant is responsible for:

- The financial accountability for all costs in both euros and the local currency, for which the exchange rate used must be visible;
- a reasonable determination of the size of the exchange rate. If requested by NWO, the applicant must always be able to provide a description of this reasonable determination.

If more than 125,000 Euros is requested within this module, the final financial statement must be accompanied by an auditor's report.

NWO will not issue any funding to co-applicants in countries that fall under national or international sanction legislation and rules. The EU Sanctions Map (www.sanctionsmap.eu) is guiding in this respect.

Explanation of the budget module Project Management

The Project management module allows for a budget item to be included for project management. A maximum of 5% of the total budget requested may be requested for project management in phase II, and a maximum of 5% in phase III.

Project management includes the following: optimising the organisational structure of the consortium, supporting the consortium and the main applicant, safeguarding the coherence, progress and unity of the project, and coordinating between the sub-projects within the project. These tasks may also be carried out by external parties if they are not available within the main applicant's knowledge institution.

Knowledge institutions should take account of public procurement rules in the tender procedure for selecting a third party and, where appropriate, follow a European procurement procedure. The activities of main applicants and co-applicants themselves in relation to the project or project management may not be funded under this budget module.

The budget to be requested for project management can consist of material or implementation costs and personnel costs. For personnel costs, a maximum rate of € 119.00 per hour can be claimed. The hourly rate of personnel to be appointed must be based on a cost-covering rate and is calculated on the basis of the standard productive number of hours used by the organisation. The cost-covering rate includes:

- (average) gross salary corresponding to the position of the employee who will contribute to the project (based on the collective labour agreement grade of the employee concerned);
- holiday allowance and 13th month (if applicable in the relevant collective labour agreement) in proportion to the FTE deployed;
- social security charges;
- pension costs;
- overheads.

Project management tasks may be carried out by external parties, but the part of (commercial) hourly rates that exceeds the rates stated is not eligible for funding and therefore cannot be included in the budget

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