



Principal Investigator support

PIPP - Partnerships for Space Instruments & Applications Preparatory Programme

Call for proposals

Science

2025



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1 Introduction

In this Call for proposals information is provided about the application procedure for the 'Principal Investigator (PI) support - 2025' funding round. This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Dutch Research Council (NWO). The Netherlands Space Office (NSO) is responsible for the realisation of the programme. All organisational and administrative aspects will be dealt with by NSO.

In this Call for proposals you will find information about the aim of this programme (Chapter 2), the conditions for the grant application (Chapter 3) and how your proposal will be assessed (Chapter 4). This is the information you need to submit a grant application. Chapter 5 states the obligations for grant recipients in the event you are awarded funding. Chapter 6 contains the contact details and Chapter 7 the annexes.

1.1 Background

'PI support' falls under the 'Partnerships for Space Instruments & Applications Preparatory Programme' (PIPP). The PIPP is part of Dutch space policy. Strengthening the Netherlands' international position in the development and use of space instruments, which is the focus of this Call for proposals, is a priority of this policy.

[Relationship of this funding round to previous PIPP funding rounds](#)

Previous funding rounds of the PIPP focused on supporting Dutch researchers to *become* Principal Investigator (PI) of a space instrument or mission (period 2010-2013) and on *the formation of* Expertise Networks (KNW) around the development and use of space instruments (period 2017-2022; the Expertise Networks Scheme). From 2022, the PIPP was further developed to remain effective in the future. The PIPP, together with the 'Use of Space Infrastructure for Earth Observation and Planetary Research' (GO) programme, has since fallen under the umbrella 'Strengthening Space and Science Synergy' funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) as part of the national space research policy. Under the PIPP, two variants of funding rounds will be offered in 2025: 'Strengthening Knowledge Cooperation in Space' aimed at *already existing* Expertise Networks and 'PI Support', to strengthen PI roles *already fulfilled* by Dutch researchers and their exploitation.

1.2 Available budget

The grant ceiling for this Call for proposals totals €711,000.

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

Statements of intent and applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

The deadline for submitting statements of intent is **Tuesday 20 May 2025**, by 14:00:00 CEST.
The deadline for submitting proposals is **Thursday, July 3, 2025**, by 14:00:00 CEST.

2 Aim

This chapter describes the aim of the programme and the societal impact.

2.1 Aim of the programme

Dutch researchers regularly play a leading role in a space mission in an international programme, for example as PI, co-I or lead scientist (see Section 2.1.1 for an explanation of the terminology). This role can be linked to the delivery of an instrument, experiment or key (sub-)system of a mission/instrument, but can also be based on a leading scientific position. Such a role for Dutch researchers contributes to the PIPP's goal of advancing the Netherlands' international position in the development and use of space instruments: these leading roles offer opportunities to better position the Netherlands in the broader science field and in space research. Research or development activities and networking and outreach activities associated with a PI role are not always (fully) funded by the space organisation or institute where the PI is appointed. The 'PI Support' programme aims to contribute to these activities and thereby also promote the benefits of the space mission in the Netherlands and abroad.

The objective of 'PI support' is, on the one hand, to support researchers in the Netherlands with a PI role for a space mission, experiment or instrument to better fulfil that role and, on the other hand, to make the Dutch scientific field benefit more from existing Dutch PI positions.

This Call for proposals is open for PI roles for space instruments, experiments and/or missions in the prevailing themes of OCW space policy, namely Earth observation, planetary research and astronomy.

Due to the budget available, for this Call for proposals, only PI roles are allowed for missions in the following ESA programmes:

- the ESA Earth observation programme ([Observing the Earth | ESA](#) , all missions in FutureEO and Copernicus);
- the ESA Science Programme ([Mission navigator | ESA](#), all missions except Missions of Opportunity and Collaborative Missions),

with the proviso that this Call for proposals is open to support activities in the context of the *development, construction and/or testing* of a space instrument, experiment or mission and that activities in the context of space instruments, experiments or missions that are already launched and operational *are not* covered by this Call for proposals. Section 3.2 explains the type of activities for which funding can be requested.

2.1.1 Explanation of terminology of the aim of the programme

Principal Investigator

The abbreviation 'PI' stands for Principal Investigator. A PI role for a space mission, experiment or instrument is fulfilled by a scientific researcher affiliated with a research organisation. This research organisation supports the PI. The PI is the lead of the project consortium. The PI role can extend from the preparatory phase to the operational phase. At ESA (especially the Science Programme), the designation 'PI' is used in the case of an instrument/payload contribution to the mission paid for by the institute/country itself.

Where the term 'PI' is used in this Call for proposals, it can also be understood to mean 'Co-I' or 'Lead Investigator'. A Co-I (Co-Investigator, sometimes called Co-PI) is a co-lead of the project consortium, who may be affiliated to an institute other than the PI. The term 'Lead Investigator' is used in situations where the term 'PI' is not common, such as ESA's Earth Observation programme.

Note: *Mission scientist* is a term ESA uses for the ESA employee responsible for - the scientific aspects of - a mission. This means that the term and role of Mission Scientist does not fall under the PI definition in this Call for proposals.

Space instrument, experiment and mission

The PI role is linked to the development of a space instrument, space experiment or space mission. The space instrument or experiment or space mission must be approved and under development in a programme of an agency or other space organisation (see Section 2.1). For this Call for proposals, the mission, or experiment, must be in phase O, A, B, C or D (the development, construction and test of the mission) at the time of the submission deadline. Missions that have already been launched are in phases E and F, which are not covered by this Call for proposals. An exception is the situation where the mission has already been launched but the PI's subproject or (sub-)system is not yet in the operational phase.

2.2 Societal impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to solutions for societal issues of today and tomorrow. Think of the energy transition, health and care, or climate change. Through interaction and coordination between researchers and potential knowledge users, the chance of applying knowledge increases and with it the likelihood of societal impact. Societal impact here stands for changes that (partly) result from research-generated knowledge and skills. These changes contribute to the well-being of people, planet and society for this and future generations. Through its policy on impact, NWO promotes the potential contribution from research to societal issues by encouraging productive interactions with societal stakeholders. Both during the development and in the execution of research. It does so in a manner that is in accordance with the aim of the particular funding instrument. NWO encourages researchers to reflect on the potential desired and undesired impact of their research from a broad perspective.

2.2.1 Tailor-made impact

Depending on the purpose of the funding instrument, NWO chooses a corresponding approach that best supports the opportunity for societal impact. The primary purpose of the funding instrument determines the choice of approach NWO deploys to promote knowledge utilisation in different phases of the project (proposal, implementation, after completion) and the effort required from applicant(s) and partners.

Space policy, under which this Call for proposals falls, also aims to promote societal and scientific impact. This 'PI support' is not about the impact of the space mission or instrument itself, but about the impact that can be generated by the activities of a researcher in a PI role.

3 Conditions for applicants

This chapter contains the conditions that are applicable to your grant application. Firstly it describes who can apply for funding (Section 3.1) and what you can request funding for (Section 3.2). Subsequently, you will find the conditions for preparing and submitting the application (Sections 3.3 and 3.4) and the specific funding conditions (Section 3.5).

3.1 Who can apply

Researchers may submit an application if they have a tenured position (and therefore a paid position for an indefinite period) or a tenure track agreement at one of the following research organisations:

- universities as referred to in Article 1.8 paragraph 1 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act and universities listed in the [Policy Rules for Universities located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands](#);
- university medical centres by which is meant academic hospitals as referred to in Article 1.13 paragraph 1 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act;
- institutes affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) or NWO;
- Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- Princess Máxima Centre;
- the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI);
- Joint Institute for Very Long Baseline Interferometry European Research Infrastructure Consortium (JIVE);
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education.

Persons with a zero-hour employment agreement or with a contract for a limited period of time (other than a tenure track appointment) may not submit a proposal.

It could be the case that the applicant's tenure track agreement ends before the intended completion date of the project for which funding is applied for, or that before that date, the applicant's tenured contract ends due to the applicant reaching retirement age. In that case, the applicant needs to include a statement from their employer in which the research organisation concerned guarantees that the project and all project members for whom funding has been requested will receive adequate supervision for the full duration of the project.

Applicants with a part-time contract should guarantee adequate supervision of the project and all project members for whom funding is requested.

Additional conditions:

- The applicant shall demonstrate that he or she fulfils the PI role on a space instrument, experiment or mission eligible in this Call for proposals (see Section 2.1 for the list), preferably by means of a declaration signed by ESA. If the provision of such a declaration is not possible, the applicant should demonstrate through the submission of other supporting documents that he or she is performing a PI role on a space instrument, experiment or mission that is permitted. For a list of permitted supporting documents, see Section 3.3.

3.2 What can be applied for

Budget applications can be made for two types of activities 'a' and 'b', with each applicant required to apply for funding for activities under 'b'. If funding is requested for activities under 'a', at least one position for a postdoc or non-scientific staff must be included. The types of activities are as follows:

- a. Research and development: carrying out research and development activities by scientific and non-scientific personnel, including, for example, algorithm validation, concept development, end-to-end simulations, feasibility studies, support during the construction of the instrument, software development or research activities that may enhance the future use of the instrument.
- b. Strengthening the PI role and impact: performing or coordinating networking and outreach activities, possibly by non-scientific personnel (project manager), for the purpose of positioning (scientifically and/or societally) the new mission or instrument/experiment and promoting cooperation between researchers, technology developers, data specialists, and users. These activities may be separate from the research and development activities under 'a' if a grant is also requested for them.

No budget can be requested for:

- building hardware for instruments or missions;
- the funding of the mandatory mission co-payment resulting from accepting the PI role;
- covering deficits for activities already funded by the mission programme or funds received from it.

For each project, applicants can request a minimum grant of €30,000 and a maximum grant of €70,000 activities under 'b'. If activities under 'a' are also included, the maximum grant increases to € 237,000 per project.

The maximum duration of the proposed project is 6 years. The applicant can include costs for personnel, material, investments and knowledge utilisation. The available budget modules (including maximum amounts) are listed below. Apply only for funding that is vital to realise the project. The rates and an explanation of these budget modules are given in Section 7.1.

3.2.1 Personnel

Funding may be requested for salary costs of personnel contributing to the project. The amount depends on the type of appointment.

At least one position for a postdoc or non-scientific staff should be applied for if funding is requested for type 'a' activities.

3.2.1.1 Personnel at a research organisation listed in Section 3.1

For personnel working at a research organisation listed in Section 3.1, salary costs can be claimed for the following positions: postdoc and non-scientific personnel (NWP).

3.2.1.2 Students

It is possible to engage students in the project if they are studying at a research organisation as referred to in Section 3.1. You can enter the costs of this as material costs within the project. There is no maximum on the number of students who can participate in the project.

3.2.2 Material

Funding can be applied for all project-specific material costs.

3.2.3 Investments

Funding may be requested for investments in equipment, infrastructure and other research resources that have economic value or can be reused after the project ends. Salary costs of personnel who put the equipment, infrastructure and other research resources in a state of readiness can be claimed as part of the investments. The rates and conditions of Personnel apply here and the costs should be claimed as Investments. Investments can only be made at research organisations listed in Section 3.1.

A maximum of €167,000 can be requested for investments.

3.2.4 Knowledge utilisation

Funding can be requested for activities that promote the use of knowledge from the research¹, in order to increase the societal impact of the research.

It is not mandatory to use this module.

3.3 Preparing and submitting an application

3.3.1 Mandatory statement of intent

It is mandatory to submit a statement of intent to NSO prior to submitting a full proposal. In the statement of intent you demonstrate that you fulfill a PI role in accordance with the requirements in Section 3.1 and give an indication of the activities to be proposed (and the budget to be applied for). Based on the information provided in the statement of intent, interested applicants will receive a reasoned (non-binding) advice on whether the application meets the criteria of this Call for proposals. This process helps prevent applicants who do not meet the PI qualifications from putting energy into writing an application. Additionally, based on the information in the statement of intent, NSO can begin assembling an assessment committee.

To prepare your statement of intent, please use the form made available on the NSO [Expertise Networks | NSO](#) website. The completed form should be submitted by e-mail (addressed to knw@spaceoffice.nl) to NSO.

3.3.2 Preparing a full application

The steps involved in writing your application are:

- download the application form from the NSO website, [Expertise Networks | NSO](#);
- fill in the application form;
- save the form as a pdf and submit it with any mandatory attachment(s) to knw@spaceoffice.nl.

Compulsory annex:

- PI declaration from ESA, or, if not possible, evidence demonstrating a PI role that meets the conditions in Section 3.1. A template for the PI declaration is available via the [Expertise Networks | NSO](#) website. Permitted supporting documents are written documents originating from, or signed

¹ All activities applied for under this budget module must fit within the definition of "Knowledge Transfer Activities" used by the European Commission in the Framework for State Aid for Research, Development and Innovation (OJEU 2022, C 414).

or approved by, ESA or the research organisation where the applicant is appointed in which the applicant is literally identified as PI on the relevant space mission or space instrument or experiment. Examples of such documents include: letters, reports, public brochures.

Optional annex only:

- declaration of appointment and project supervision

The proposal and appendix(es) must be drawn up in accordance with the templates provided by NSO. All annexes should be submitted as a pdf file (without encryption). Any annexes other than those stated above are not permitted.

You must write your application in English.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration by NSO.

If you have any questions about submitting the completed application form, please contact the NSO contacts mentioned in Section 6.1.1.

NSO and NWO assume that the applicant has informed the research organisation where they work about submitting the application and that the research organisation accepts the grant conditions of this Call for proposals.

3.3.3 Advice on substantive suitability

For this Call for proposals, your application must fit within the thematic description of the programme. Therefore, consider in good time whether your proposal fits the content. If you are in doubt, contact one of the programme's contact persons well before the deadline. These persons can advise you about the substantive fit of your application to this Call for proposals. However, you will make the final choice yourself. For contact details see Section 6.1.1.

3.4 Conditions for submission

3.4.1 Formal conditions for submission

NSO will assess your application against all the conditions set out in this Call for proposals, including the conditions listed below. Your application will only be admitted to the assessment procedure if it meets these conditions. After submitting your application, you are requested to be available to implement any possible administrative corrections so that you can (still) meet the conditions for submission.

These conditions are:

- the main applicant meets the conditions stated in Section 3.1;
- the main applicant has submitted a statement of intent;
- the application complies with the DORA guidelines as described in Section 4.1;
- the application is submitted via e-mail to knw@spaceoffice.nl;
- the application is received before the deadline;
- the application is written in English;
- the application budget is drawn up according to the terms of this Call for proposals;
- the proposed project has a duration of maximum 6 years.

All required annexes, after a possible request for additions or changes, have been completed and submitted completely and according to the instructions and in accordance with the terms of this Call for proposals.

3.5 Conditions on granting

The [NWO Grant Rules 2024](#) and the [Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research](#) are applicable to all applications.

3.5.1 Compliance with the National Knowledge Security Guidelines

World-class science can benefit from international cooperation. The National Knowledge Security Guidelines (hereafter: the Guidelines) helps knowledge institutions to ensure that international cooperation can take place securely. Knowledge security concerns the undesirable transfer of sensitive knowledge and technology that compromises national security; the covert influence of state actors on education and research, which jeopardises academic freedom and social safety; and ethical issues that may arise in cooperation with countries that do not respect fundamental rights.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their project complies and will continue to comply with the Guidelines. By submitting an application, the applicant commits to the recommendations stipulated in these Guidelines. In the event of a suspected breach of the Guidelines in an application submitted to NWO for project funding, or in a project funded by NWO, NWO may ask the applicant to provide a risk assessment demonstrating that the recommendations in the Guidelines have been taken into consideration. If the applicant fails to comply with NWO's request, or if the risk assessment is in apparent breach of the Guidelines, this may affect NWO's grant award or decision-making process. NWO may also include further conditions in the award letter if appropriate.

The National Knowledge Security Guidelines can be found on the central government website at: [Home | National Contact Point for Knowledge Security \(loketkennisveiligheid.nl\)](#).

3.5.2 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 publicly accessible insofar as this is possible. NWO expects that research data resulting from NWO-funded projects will be made publicly available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers. "As open as possible, as closed as necessary" is the applicable principle in this respect. Researchers, at very least, are expected to make the data and/or non-numerical results that underlie the conclusions of the published work resulting from the project publicly available at the same time as the work's publication. Any costs incurred for this can be included in the project budget. Researchers should explain how data emerging from the project will be dealt with based on the data management section in the proposal and the data management plan that is drawn up after funding is awarded.

[Data management section](#)

The data management section is part of the proposal. Researchers are asked before the start of the research to consider how the data collected will be ordered and categorised so that this can be made publicly available. Measures will often already need to be taken, both during data generation and as part of analysing the data, to make its subsequent storage and dissemination possible. If it is not possible to make all data from the project publicly available, for example due to reasons of privacy, ethics or valorisation, then the applicant is obliged to list the reasons for this in the data management section.

The data management section in the proposal is not evaluated and will therefore not be weighed in the decision whether to award funding. However, the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section.

3.5.3 Scientific integrity

In accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2024, the project that NWO funds must be carried out in accordance with the nationally and internationally accepted standards for scientific conduct as stated in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018). By submitting the proposal, the applicant commits to this code. In the case of a (possible) violation of these standards during a project funded by NWO, the applicant should immediately inform NWO of this and should submit all relevant documents to NWO. More information about the code of conduct and the policy regarding research integrity can be found on the website: [Scientific integrity | NWO](#).

3.5.4 Ethical statement or licence

The applicant is responsible for determining whether an ethical statement or licence is needed for the realisation of the proposed project. The applicant should ensure that this is obtained from the relevant institution or ethics committee on time. The absence or presence of an ethical statement or licence at the time of the application process has no effect on the assessment of the application. If an ethics statement or licence is required for (part of) the research, the project leader must provide a copy of this statement or licence to NWO after the project has been awarded, and in any case no later than before implementation of the part of the project for which the statement is required starts. The part of the project requiring the statement and/or licence can obviously not (yet) be carried out as long as no statement or licence has been provided.

3.5.5 Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol 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 sources from the Netherlands or abroad for their research should familiarise themselves with the Nagoya Protocol ([Home - ABS Focal Point](#)). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.6 Co-funding

Co-funding is not allowed in this Call for proposals.

4 Assessment procedure

This chapter first describes the assessment according to the DORA principles (Section 4.1) and the course of the assessment procedure (Section 4.2). Second, it states the criteria that the assessment committee will use to assess your application (Section 4.3).

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO and NSO employees involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process ([Code for Dealing with Personal Interests | NWO](#)).

NWO strives to achieve an inclusive culture where there is no place for conscious or unconscious barriers due to cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender, sexual orientation, health or age ([Diversity and inclusion | NWO](#)). NWO encourages members of an assessment committee to be actively aware of implicit associations and to try to minimise these. NWO will provide them with information about concrete ways of improving the assessment of an application.

4.1 The San Francisco Declaration (DORA)

NWO is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). DORA is a worldwide initiative that aims to improve the way research and researchers are assessed. DORA contains recommendations for research funders, research institutions, scientific journals and other parties.

DORA aims to reduce the uncritical use of bibliometric indicators and obviate unconscious bias in the assessment of research and researchers. DORA's overarching philosophy is that research should be evaluated on its own merits rather than on the basis of surrogate measures, such as the journal in which the research is published.

When assessing the scientific track record of applicants, NWO makes use of a broad definition of scientific output.

NWO requests committee members and referees not to rely on indicators such as the Journal Impact Factor or the h-index when assessing applications. Applicants are not allowed to mention these in their applications. You are, however, allowed to list other scientific products besides publications, such as datasets, patents, software and code, et cetera.

For more information on how NWO is implementing the principles of DORA, see [DORA | NWO](#).

4.2 Procedure

The application procedure consists of the following steps:

- submission of the statement of intent;
- advice on submitted statement of intent by NSO;
- submission of the proposal;
- admissibility of the proposal;
- initial advice from the assessment committee;
- interview, proposal assessment and advice;
- decision-making.

An external, independent assessment committee will be assigned for this Call for proposals, consisting of representatives from science with knowledge of the field and Dutch space policy.

The task of the assessment committee is to assess the applications and the relevant documents that are submitted, in conjunction with each other and with regard to both the respective merits of each application and the assessment criteria outlined in this Call for proposals.

Due to both the expertise present in the assessment committee and the small size of the grant, NWO has decided with regard to the assessment of these applications to exercise the option outlined in Article 2.2.4, paragraph 2, of the NWO Grant Rules 2024, to assess all applications without involving referees

4.2.1 Submission of the statement of intent

With a statement of intent, you indicate that you intend to submit an application for this Call for proposals. Submitting a statement of intent is compulsory if you want to submit an application in a later phase. In the statement of intent you demonstrate that you fulfill a PI role in accordance with the requirements in Section 3.1 and give an indication of the activities to be proposed (and the budget to be applied for).

The purpose of this statement of intent is to advise interested applicants early on whether they meet the conditions for submission. This prevents non-compliant applicants from investing time in writing a full proposal.

A standard form for the statement of intent is available on the NSO website ([Expertise Networks | NSO](#)). You must submit your statement of intent to NSO before the deadline (see Section 1.3) via the e-mail address knw@spaceoffice.nl. As the main applicant, you will receive a confirmation of receipt of the statement of intent.

You may withdraw a statement of intent. You do this by sending an e-mail to the same e-mail address.

4.2.2 Advice on submitted statement of intent by NSO

Based on the statement of intent, you will receive non-binding advice from NSO on whether or not to submit a full proposal. The advice concerns both the fulfillment of the PI role and the activities to be proposed and to what extent they meet the conditions in Sections 3.1 and 3.2.

4.2.3 Submission of the proposal

For the submission of the proposal, a standard form is available on the NSO website ([Expertise Networks | NSO](#)). When you write your proposal, you must adhere to the questions stated on this form and the procedure given in the explanatory notes. You must also adhere to the conditions for the maximum number of words and pages.

Your complete application form must have been received by NSO before the deadline (see Section 1.3) via the email address knw@spaceoffice.nl. After this deadline, you can no longer submit a proposal. After submitting the proposal, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt.

4.2.4 Admissibility of the proposal

As soon as possible after you have submitted your proposal, you will hear whether NSO will consider your application. NSO will determine this based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, Section 3.4). NSO can only take your proposal into consideration if it meets these conditions.

Please bear in mind that within two weeks after the submission deadline, NSO may approach you with any possible administrative corrections that need to be made so that your proposal can (still) meet the conditions for submission. You will be given one opportunity to make the corrections, and you will be given five working days to do this.

4.2.5 Initial advice from the assessment committee

After this, your proposal will be submitted for comments to several members of the assessment committee (the pre-advisers). The pre-advisers will provide a written substantive and reasoned response to the proposal. They will formulate these comments based on the substantive assessment criteria (see Section 4.3.1) and will give the proposal a numerical score per assessment criterion. For this, the NWO score table will be used (on a scale of 1 to 9, where “1” is excellent and “9” unsatisfactory).

4.2.6 Interview, proposal assessment and advice

All applicants are invited for an interview where they can present their proposal to the assessment committee. During the interview, the assessment committee will have the opportunity to pose questions. During the interview, the applicant will be able to respond to these in the discussion with the committee. In this manner, the principle of having a hearing and an opportunity for rebuttal is applied. The interview is an important part of the assessment.

After the interview, the committee formulates its assessment based on the proposal and the interview. The committee discusses, considers and compares arguments and checks whether the answers given during the interview address the committee's critical comments.

Following the discussion, the committee draws up a written recommendation addressed to the NWO Science Domain Board about the quality and ranking of the proposals. This recommendation is based on the assessment criteria. The proposal as a whole must receive an overall qualification of at least 'very good' to be eligible for funding.

For more information about the qualifications, see [Applying for funding, how does it work? | NWO](#).

If, after the discussion of the proposals, two or more of the proposals cannot be distinguished from each other based on their weighted total score, then this will result in an ex aequo situation (see Section 4.2.7).

4.2.7 Ex aequo

NWO understands ex aequo to be a situation in which two or more proposals based on their weighted score cannot be distinguished from each other. An ex aequo situation is relevant with respect to the borders of the available budget or the selection borders. The existence of an ex aequo situation is determined as follows. The starting point in this process is the ranking drawn up by the assessment committee, with the final scores rounded down to two decimal points. The reference score here is the score of the lowest-ranked proposal within the borders of the available budget or the selection borders. All proposals with a score that is within 0.05 or less of the reference score will be considered. In this way, the proposals that are equal within a score of 0.10 will be selected. If an ex aequo situation occurs at the borders of the available budget or the selection borders, then the proposal with a higher score pertaining to the criterion 'Timeliness and programmatic status' will end highest. If the ex aequo situation is not resolved via this procedure, then the proposal with the highest score for the criterion 'Necessity for fulfilling the PI role and/or expanding Dutch involvement in mission' will be ranked highest. If the proposals subsequently still remain tied, then the assessment committee, with the help of an (anonymous) majority vote, will determine the ranking (in accordance with Article 2.2.6, paragraph 5 of the NWO Grant Rules 2024). If this vote also fails to provide a resolution, or if it is deemed to be undesirable to vote, then the ex aequo situation will be sent onto the decision-making body.

4.2.8 Decision-making

Finally, the NWO Science Domain Board will assess the procedure followed and the committee's advice. They will subsequently determine the final qualifications and make a decision over awarding or rejecting the proposals.

4.2.9 Timetable

Below, you will find the timetable for this Call for proposals. During the current procedure, NWO might find it necessary to make further changes to the timetable for this Call for proposals. You will be informed about this in time.

Statements of intent

20 May 2025, at 14:00:00 CEST	Deadline for statements of intent
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Applications

3 July 2025, at 14:00:00 CEST	Application deadline
September/October 2025	Interview with assessment committee
October/November 2025	Decision by the board

4.3 Criteria

4.3.1 Substantive assessment criteria

The applications submitted within this Call for proposals will be substantively assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

All proposals will be assessed against criteria 1 to 4-i. Proposals that also apply for funding for activities under 'a' in Section 3.2 will also be assessed against criteria 4-ii and 5.

1. Timeliness and programmatic status

- Timeliness means the extent to which the proposed work is relevant and necessary in the current phase of the space mission. It shows how the proposed work fits within the overall mission timeline and the extent to which the proposed work is timely and consistent with ongoing and future developments within the mission.
- Affiliation to a programmatic framework is related to embedding the work in a formally established international programme. The work carried out by the PI is done in an established programme and contributes to the overall scientific goals of the mission.

2. Dedication of own institute

The extent to which the PI's institution supports mission engagement is assessed. This includes the resources, infrastructure and institutional support to facilitate the PI.

3. Strengthening the Dutch position in space and alignment with policy

This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposed work has an impact on the Dutch position in space and connects to strategic agendas. It is related to:

- alignment with national space policy (the Long-Term Space Agenda²) and priorities of national scientific agendas and strategies relevant to the topic;
- cooperation with other parties: the proposal should indicate how the proposed work can benefit other Dutch parties and promote the use of space mission data in the Netherlands;
- consolidate expertise in the Netherlands to increase the likelihood of participating in or leading future projects.

4. Necessity for fulfilling PI role and/or expanding Dutch involvement in mission

This criterion assesses:

- i. The value of the proposed work to deploy the knowledge and position of the PI in the Netherlands for the benefit of the wider scientific community. Through the PI role, a PI often has knowledge (about the experiment or instrument) and contacts within the international programme that can lead to additional use in the Dutch scientific community. The proposal should substantiate how this position will be used to increase Dutch involvement in the mission;
- ii. The necessity of the proposed work to successfully fulfil the PI role. The applicant should justify why the proposed work is necessary for successful fulfilment of the PI role and why other funding instruments are insufficient. (Only for proposals for research and development activities)

5. Quality of the proposal (only for proposals for research and development activities)

This criterion includes the quality of the proposed work and the technological approach. It includes:

- the quality of objectives;
- the approach and methodology;
- the clarity of the proposal;
- the feasibility of the proposed work, including the feasibility of the work packages, the proposed budget and schedule of the proposal, and the expertise available within the team.

All criteria carry equal weight in the assessment.

² [Long-term space agenda | Rijksoverheid](#)

5 Obligations for grant recipients

This chapter details the various obligations that - in addition to the conditions stated in Section 3.5 - apply after funds have been awarded

5.1 Data management

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. For this, applicants can make use of the advice from the referees and committee. The applicant must describe in the plan whether existing data will be used, or whether new data will be collected or generated, and how this data will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. Before submission, the data management plan should be checked by a data steward or similar officer of the research organisation where the project will be realised. NWO will check the plan as quickly as possible. Approval of the data management plan by NWO is a condition for disbursement of the funding. The plan can be adjusted during the research.

More information about the data management protocol of NWO can be found at: [Research data management | NWO](#).

5.2 Intellectual property

With respect to intellectual property (IP), the NWO IP policy applies. This can be found in Chapter 4 of the NWO Grant Rules 2024.

Applicants must carry out a project funded by NWO during the time that they work for the research organisation. If an applicant or a researcher funded by NWO is appointed by more than one employer, then the other employer should relinquish any possible IP rights that emerge from the project of the applicant.

5.3 Socially responsible licensing

The knowledge that emerges from the project could be suitable for use in society. When agreements about licensing and/or the transfer of research results developed under this Call for proposals are made, due consideration should be given to the ten principles for socially responsible licensing, as stated in the NFU factsheet "[Ten principles for Socially Responsible Licensing | NFU](#)".

5.4 Open Access

As a signatory to the Berlin Declaration (2003) and a member of cOAlition S (2018), NWO is committed to making the results of the research it funds openly accessible via the internet (Open Access). By doing this, NWO gives substance to the ambitions of the Dutch government to make all publicly funded research available in Open Access form. Scientific publications arising from projects awarded on the basis of this Call for proposals must therefore be made available in Open Access form in accordance with the Open Access Policy.

Scientific articles

Scientific articles must be made available in Open Access form immediately at the time of publication (without embargo) via one of the following routes:

- publication in a fully Open Access journal or platform registered in the DOAJ;
- publication in a subscription journal and the immediate deposition of at least the author accepted manuscript of the article in an Open Access repository registered in Open DOAR;

- publication in a journal for which a transformative Open Access agreement exists between UNL and a publisher. For further information, see [Home | Open access](#).

Books

Different requirements apply to scholarly books, book chapters and edited collections. See the Open Access Policy Framework at [Open Science | NWO](#).

CC BY licence

To ensure the widest possible dissemination of publications, at least a Creative Commons (CC BY) licence must be applied. Alternatively – in case of substantial interest – the author may request to publish under a CC BY-ND licence. For books, book chapters and collected volumes, all CC BY licence options are allowed.

Cost

Costs for publication in fully Open Access journals can be budgeted in the application using the budget module for “material costs”. Costs for publications in hybrid journals are not eligible for reimbursement by NWO. For Open Access books, a separate NWO Open Access Books Fund is available.

For more detailed information about NWO’s Open Access policy, see [Open Science | NWO](#).

6 Contact and other information

6.1 Contact

6.1.1 Content questions

For substantive questions about this Call for proposals, please contact:

J. Diekema (Netherlands Space Office), tel: +31 (0)6 2706 2992, e-mail: j.diekema@spaceoffice.nl

Dr R. Koop (Netherlands Space Office), tel: +31 (0)88 042 4528, e-mail: r.koop@spaceoffice.nl

For questions about the budget modules, please contact:

Dr M. van den Berg (NWO), tel: +31 (0)70 349 4046, e-mail: m.vandenberg@nwo.nl

6.1.2 Technical questions on submission

In case of technical questions regarding the submission of the completed application form, please contact the NSO contacts mentioned in Section 6.1.1.

6.2 Other information

The whole text of this Call for proposals has been published in both Dutch and English. The Dutch version is deemed authentic. For legal interpretation the text of the Dutch version will be decisive.

The NSO [Expertise Networks](#) | [NSO website](#) has information on the programme 'PI support'.

NSO and NWO process data from applicants received in the context of this Call for proposals in accordance with the NSO and NWO privacy statements, [Privacy Statement | NSO](#) and [Privacy Statement | NWO](#).

NSO and NWO might approach applicants for an evaluation of the procedure and/or research programme.

Within the framework of the joint implementation of this funding round, it is necessary for NSO and NWO to provide data back and forth. This exchange is done carefully and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other Applicable Laws and Regulations concerning the processing of Personal Data.

7 Annexes

7.1 Budget modules and rates

7.1.1 Personnel

For salary tables and rates: see [Salary tables | NWO](#).

Postdoc

A postdoc is appointed to a university in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, umc or research organisation as listed in Section 3.1.

Use the rates of a senior academic employee in the salary tables of UNL, and the rates of a postdoc at an umc in the salary tables of NFU.

It is not possible to apply for funding for a postdoc who started the project to be funded before the grant is awarded.

Only a postdoc position with an appointment of at least 12 months for 0.5 fte qualifies as an appointment for which a one-off personal benchfee of €5,000 is available to boost the scientific career.

Non-scientific personnel

Funding may be requested for non-scientific personnel (NWP) needed to execute the project. These may include, for example, programmers, technical assistants, analysts or project leaders. The use of NWP must be described in the proposal.

The duration of the appointment cannot be longer than the duration of the project funded by NWO. Depending on the job level, a choice is made from the UNL or NFU salary tables for NWP-mbo, NWP-hbo and NWP-academic. No one-off personal benchfee is available for NWP.

Students

Students may be engaged in research. If the students contribute as part of their curriculum, the rate according to the usual internship fee of the university or universities of applied sciences applies.

If students contribute as a secondary job alongside their studies as student assistants, the rate according to HOT table 2, under 2.2 'average total salary cost per salary scale', column 'Hourly rate productive hours, excluding VAT', scale 1 applies.

You can claim the cost of this within the project as material costs.

7.1.2 Material

Funding may be requested for all project-specific costs relating to, among others, consumables, purchase of services, materials, small instruments, access to (inter)national facilities, software and research resources that have no economic value after use. Travel and accommodation costs (national and international) for all people working on the project incl. foreign guest researchers, costs for the organisation of (international) workshops and symposia, costs for data management, publications, and costs in the context of [Citizen science](#) also fall under this module.

Travel expenses (national and international) will only be reimbursed on the basis of second class/economy class fares. For publications, the provisions in Section 5.4 Open access apply. Costs for an audit statement can only be claimed for organisations that are not subject to OCW's education audit protocol for a maximum of €5,000 per audit statement.

It is not permitted to include costs for:

- organisational infrastructure and overhead, including a fully functioning workplace, accommodation, office automation, personnel administration, commuting expenses, training, facilities, HR advice and business care, documentary information provision and home office allowance;
- the use and maintenance of in-house developed scientific infrastructure;
- regular teaching activities.

7.1.3 Investments

Funding may be requested for any project-specific resources for research or costs related to construction or further development of scientific infrastructure that retain economic value or can be reused after project completion. The beneficiary acquires ownership of these research resources on completion of the project. In case the beneficiary achieves profits from the beneficial ownership of the research funds, these profits must be invested in primary activities of the beneficiary as referred to in Article 3.1.4, paragraph 2 of the NWO Grant Rules 2024. This includes the purchase of equipment with residual value for the performance of research and investments in the construction or (further) development of scientific infrastructure. Personnel costs as part of the investment can be recorded as personnel costs.

Investment costs should be adequately specified and justified in the proposal.

Eligible costs are:

- costs for investment in scientific equipment;
- costs for investments in datasets;
- salary costs for personnel with essential technical expertise necessary for the development or construction of an investment.

Ineligible are:

- costs for infrastructural facilities that can be considered part of the usual infrastructure, including a fully functioning workplace, accommodation, office automation, personnel administration, commuting expenses, training, facilities, HR advice and business care, documentary information provision, home working allowance;
- data collections and any related software and bibliographies already available in other ways;
- other personnel costs, including personnel costs for operating and conducting research with the facility;
- costs for maintenance and use of equipment on a project. Costs for the use of equipment on a project can be requested through the material budget.

7.1.4 Knowledge utilisation

The budget requested should be adequately specified in the proposal. To determine the rates, use the provisions of the budget modules Personnel (7.1.1) and Material (7.1.2).

There is no obligation to use this module. Examples of possible costs, but not limited to, are the creation of a teaching curriculum, a feasibility study on application possibilities, costs for filing a patent application or engaging a business developer.

7.2 Indexing

The rate at the time of the decision date applies. NWO will, if necessary, apply a one-off indexation of personnel costs when awarding the grant. The date on which the rates take effect is used for this purpose. If the date of publication of the fees is later than the effective date, the date of publication is used. The tariffs of the Universities of the Netherlands (UNL) usually take effect on 1 July, of the Dutch Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU) on 1 August and of the Government Tariffs Manual (HOT) on 1 January.

The one-off indexation does not affect the grant ceiling and the maximum grant amount to be applied for. The grant ceiling and maximum requestable grant amount remain unchanged during the assessment procedure. If awarded, one-off indexation will be applied to the grant amount.

If co-funding is required or permitted, the one-off indexation does not affect the requirements for own contributions and co-funding, nor the IP rights that may result from the co-funding.

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