Open Science Infrastructure
Call for proposals

2024 1st round

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Content

1 Introduction

In this Call for proposals information is provided about the application procedure for the 'Open Science Infrastructure' funding round. This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of Open Science NL, part of the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

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

The Dutch government has made available substantial funding to support the transition to open science in the Netherlands. The aim of the investment is to make open science the norm. A budget of €20M a year is available until 2031. Open Science NL was set up to take responsibility for the allocation of these funds. Open Science NL is part of NWO.

This call falls within the first work programme of Open Science NL, which covers the years 2024-2025.[1] The instruments within this work programme cover the following priority areas:

1. Capacity building,
2. Infrastructure for Open Science,
3. Robust research processes,
4. Evidence base for Open Science,
5. Empowering communities.

This work programme addresses a comprehensive set of needs and range of areas relating to open science, and provides a strong basis from which the uptake of open science practices can continue to grow and flourish in the Netherlands.

The Call for proposals "Open Science Infrastructure" falls under the priority area "Infrastructure for Open Science". Open science requires open infrastructure. In this Call we consider as infrastructure: tools, software, workflows, platforms and digital services which are necessary for the implementation of open science.[2] Hence, the focus of this Call is infrastructure for management and sharing of research data, software, publications, hardware, and other research output, such as tools, protocols and methods. Open infrastructure is an essential prerequisite for researchers to put open science into practice by enabling practices such as open access publishing and the sharing of data and software. In addition, open infrastructures can also contribute to the accessibility, findability, and reuse of research outputs by citizens and other stakeholders outside of academia, for example by increasing the societal impact of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, open science infrastructure can promote transparency and reproducibility of scientific research, which improves the quality and strengthens trust in scientific research. Open infrastructure is therefore an essential prerequisite for the transition to open science.

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[1] https://www.openscience.nl/en/news/open-science-nl-presents-work-programme-for-2024-and-2025

[2] Although capacity building (investing in skills and expertise of personnel) is an essential aspect of infrastructure, explicit investments in capacity building are excluded in this call for proposals. Capacity building is addressed via other funding instruments, which are described under priority area 1 of the OSNL Work programme 2024-2025

1.2 Available budget

The overall available budget for this Call for proposals is €12,500,000. The available budget for type 1 applications is €2,000,000. The available budget for type 2 applications is €10,500,000.

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

The deadline for submitting pre-proposals is **5 November 2024**, before 14:00:00 CEST.
The deadline for submitting full proposals is **22 April 2025**, before 14:00:00 CEST.

When you submit your application in ISAAC, you will also need to enter some details online. Therefore please start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this Call for proposals. Applications that are submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

2 Aim

This chapter describes the aim of the programme.

2.1 Aim of the programme

Infrastructure for open science is defined here as tools, software, workflows, platforms and digital services enabling open science. The UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science states: "open science services should be viewed as essential research infrastructures, governed and owned by the community and funded collectively by governments, funders and institutions". The Recommendation calls on UNESCO member states to support non-commercial open infrastructures and ensure adequate investment[3].

The aim of this programme is to invest in the development and/or improvement of digital infrastructures that enable open science. The scope of the programme will cover the entire spectrum of open science and is intentionally broad to be inclusive of various digital infrastructure needs of the open science community. Applicants can focus on specific types of *infrastructure* (e.g. non-profit, community-led open access publication platforms/infrastructure), specific types of *research outputs* (e.g. research software, data, publications, hardware, creative outputs, replication studies, etc.) or specific open science *practices* (e.g. citizen science, societal engagement, reproducibility, preregistration, open peer review, etc.). Furthermore, applications can be generic (domain- and discipline-agnostic), as well as limited to specific domain(s) of research.

NWO also has other funding instruments with (digital) infrastructure elements, such as Research Infrastructure: national consortia and Large-Scale Research Infrastructures: national roadmap consortia. These two instruments partially overlap with the Call for proposals 'Open Science Infrastructure'. However, this Call for proposals is explicitly focused on open science practices. Applicants are advised to make a well-informed decision as to which suitable Call for proposals they submit their intended application.

Within this programme we particularly encourage applications which promote the interoperability and thus also integration and federation[4] of services, tools and platforms, enable the interconnection between discipline-specific tools, or strengthen the sustainability of existing platforms and services.

Funding can also be used for pilot projects to develop new infrastructures, on the condition that it is convincingly demonstrated that these tools and services are of great importance and that the needs they address are not already met by other infrastructures. Fragmentation and duplication of efforts needs to be prevented. Applicants will have to substantiate how the new open infrastructure addresses the needs of one or more user communities. For example, by referring to the NPOS 2030 Ambition Document and Rolling Agenda[6] or international roadmaps such as the European Open

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[3] Final report on the draft text of the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science, p. 12

[4] "Federation means that the services are integrated in (one or more) access, identity and resource management mechanisms such that users can flexibly leverage different services, even if they are offered by different organisations at geographically different locations.", Utz-Uwe Haus et al., Federated HPC, Cloud and Data infrastructures, ETP4HPC White Paper, 2022, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6451288.

[5]

[6] Ambition document Open Science in the Netherlands 2030 (2022) https://www.openscience.nl/sites/open_science/files/media-files/final_npos2030_ambition_document_and_rolling_agenda.pdf

Science Cloud Multi-Annual Roadmap[7], the National Roadmap Large-Scale Research Infrastructures 2021[8], or the roadmaps of the Thematic Digital Competence Centres (DCCs).[9]

Applicants are expected to outline adequate and realistic plans to sustain the funded infrastructure in the long-term.

2.2 Societal impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to developing solutions for various issues society faces, including, amongst other things, the energy transition, health and care, or climate change. By facilitating greater interaction and alignment between researchers and potential knowledge users, the chance of knowledge utilisation increases, as well as the possibility of generating societal impact. Through its policy on impact, NWO promotes the potential contribution that research can make to societal issues by encouraging productive interactions with societal stakeholders, both during the development stage and the subsequent implementation of research. It does so in a manner that is in accordance with the aim of the particular funding instrument.

2.2.1 Tailor-made impact

The primary aim of the funding instrument determines the method that NWO will deploy to facilitate knowledge utilisation in various phases of the project (proposal, realisation, project completion) as well as the effort required from the applicant(s) and partner(s).

In this programme, the Impact Outlook approach is applicable. Here, researchers can choose which type of impact they want to focus on specifically, while also considering other types of impact when relevant.

NWO offers an e-learning module that can help interested parties via NWO Impact - Online workshops. For more information on our policy on impact, please visit the website: Knowledge utilisation | NWO.

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[7] EOSC Multi-Annual Roadmap: https://eosc.eu/sites/default/files/2023-01/MAR_2025-27_draft.pdf

[8] National Roadmap Large-scale Research Infrastructure: https://www.nwo.nl/sites/nwo/files/media-files/National%20Roadmap%20for%20Large-scale%20Research%20Infrastructure%202021_0.pdf

[9] Roadmaps from the three thematic DCCs: https://www.nwo.nl/en/researchprogrammes/implementation-plan-investments-digital-research-infrastructure/roadmaps-three

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

There are three categories of participants (see also Sections 3.1.1-3.1.2):

1. Main applicant;
2. Co-applicant(s);
3. Cooperation partner(s) (not compulsory).

Conditions for participants:

- In small applications (**application type 1**, see 3.2) co-applicant(s) are optional;
- In large applications (**application type 2**, see 3.2) it is mandatory to have at least one co-applicant. Main and co-applicants have to be affiliated with at least two different institutions mentioned below;
- A main applicant can submit a maximum of one application of type 1, and in addition also a maximum of one application of type 2. A main applicant can thus submit a maximum of two applications, one of each type;
- If the application involves co-applicant(s) and/or cooperation partner(s), the main applicant submits the preproposal and full proposal on behalf of the consortium.

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

3.1.1 Main and co-applicants

Applicants (main and co-applicants) must have a permanent or temporary contract (that covers at least the project duration) at one of the following organisations:

- universities located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- university medical centres;
- 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 Center;
- SURF;
- Netherlands eScience Center (NLeSC);
- The National Library of the Netherlands;
- Universities of Applied Sciences, as stated in article 1.8 of the *Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek (WHW).*

Personnel with a zero-hour appointment cannot apply.

It could be the case that the applicant's temporary appointment ends before the intended completion date of the project for which funding is applied for, or that before that date, the applicant's 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 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 appointment should guarantee adequate supervision of the project and all project members for whom funding is requested.

3.1.2 Submission and project management

The main applicant submits the pre-proposal and full proposal in ISAAC, the electronic application system of NWO. During the assessment phase, all communication by Open Science NL is directed to the main applicant.

After the grant is awarded, the main applicant becomes the project leader and the contact person for Open Science NL. The institution of the main applicant becomes the main beneficiary and functions as the coordinator of the project.

Co-applicants should be actively involved during the project. All (co-)project leaders and/or beneficiaries are held responsible for the proper execution of the project.

3.2   What can be applied for

Within this programme there are two types of applications:

- **Application type 1**: small projects for improvements and/or extensions of existing infrastructure, or pilots for setting up new infrastructure. Maximum funding of € 250,000 and maximum project duration 2 years;
- **Application type 2**: large projects for improvements and/or extensions of existing infrastructure. Minimum funding of € 250,000 and maximum funding € 1,500,000 and maximum project duration of 4 years.

The application must provide a detailed substantiation of all the costs for which funding is being requested. An outline of the different types of costs and an overview of eligible and ineligible costs for funding are given in section 7.1.

3.3   Preparing an application

The steps involved in writing your pre-proposal and full proposal are:
- download the application form for pre-proposal or full proposal from the NWO web application ISAAC or from the Open Science NL web page (on the page of the funding instrument concerned);
- complete the application form;
- save the application form as a PDF file and upload it with any compulsory annexes to ISAAC;
- fill in the requested information online in ISAAC.

Compulsory annexes for a full application:
- budget (compulsory);
- statement appointment and project supervision (if applicable, see Section 3.1);
- software management plan (if applicable, see Section 3.5.3)

The appendix must be drawn up in accordance with the template provided by Open Science NL. Annexes must be uploaded in ISAAC separately from the application. The budget must be submitted in ISAAC as an Excel file. All of the other annexes, except for the budget, must be submitted as PDF files (without encryption). Any annexes other than those stated above are not permitted.

You must write your pre-proposal and full proposal in English.

A pre-proposal and full proposal can only be submitted via the web application ISAAC. Pre-proposals and full proposals that are not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

As the main applicant, you are required to submit the application via your own personal ISAAC account.

It is important to start with your pre-proposal and full proposal in ISAAC on time:
— if you do not yet have an ISAAC account, then you should create this on time to prevent any possible registration problems;
— any new organisations must also be added to ISAAC by NWO;
— you also need to submit other details online.

Pre-proposals and full proposals submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration by NWO. For technical questions, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see contact (Chapter 6).

Does a main and/or co-applicant work at an organisation that is not included in the ISAAC database? You can report this via relatiebeheer@nwo.nl so that the organisation can be added. This will take several days. It is therefore important that you report this at least one week before the deadline.

Applicants are expected to have informed the organisation where they work about submitting the application and ensure that the organisation accepts the grant conditions of this Call for proposals.

3.4   Conditions for submission

3.4.1   Formal conditions for submission

Open Science NL will assess your pre-proposal and full proposal in accordance with the conditions listed below. The (pre-)proposals will only be admitted to the assessment procedure if they meet these conditions. After submitting your pre-proposal and full proposal, Open Science NL requests the main applicant to be available to make any administrative corrections (if applicable) in order to meet the conditions for submission.

The conditions for pre-proposals and full applications are:
— the main applicant and co-applicant(s) meet the conditions stated in Section 3.1;
— the pre-proposal and full proposal comply with the DORA guidelines as described in Section 4.1;
— the application form pre-proposal and full proposal are, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions;
— the pre-proposal and full proposal are submitted via the main applicant's ISAAC account;
— the pre-proposal and full proposal are received before the deadline;
— the pre-proposal and full proposal are written in English;
— the budget of the pre-proposal and full proposal are drawn up in accordance with the conditions for this Call for proposals;
— the proposed project has a duration of at most 2 years (**application type 1**) or 4 years (**application type 2**);
— the proposed project concerns an improvement and/or extension of an existing infrastructure, or a pilot for the setup of a new infrastructure (**application type 1**);

- the proposed project concerns an improvement and/or extension of an existing infrastructure (**application type 2**);
- all of the required annexes are, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions.

3.5 Conditions on granting

The NWO Grant Rules 2017 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 others. "As open as possible, as closed as necessary" is the applicable principle in this respect. Applicants, 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. Applicants 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. The data management section and data management plan are not compulsory if no research data is generated during the project.

Data management Section
The data management section is part of the proposal (if applicable, see above). Applicants are asked before the start of the project 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, both the referees and the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section.

3.5.3 Software management

Any software developed as a result of this Call will be made openly available and distributed for reuse under an appropriate open source software licence, unless there are valid reasons not to do so. If software is developed as part of the application, a software management plan needs to be submitted together with the application. The software management plan needs to specify how the sustainability (long term storage, dissemination, use and reuse) of the software during and after the project will be guaranteed, and for which time period. The software management plan needs to be drawn up in accordance with the template supplied by Open Science NL.

3.5.4 Scientific integrity

In accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2017, 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.

3.5.5 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 the project is awarded funding, then the grant is issued under the condition that the necessary ethical statement or licence is obtained before the latest start date for the project. The project cannot start until NWO has received a copy of the ethical statement or licence.

3.5.6 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 (ABS Focal Point - ABS Focal Point). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.7 Transparent assessment procedure

Transparency is at the heart of Open Science. For this funding instrument, Open Science NL will make the details of the successful and unsuccessful applications, including the motivation of the assessment committee, openly available through the publicly accessible website, on the condition that the applicants give consent to share this information. The referee reports will not be published. Whether or not the applicant is willing to share these details is not taken into account in the decision to award funding. Consent for sharing will be requested from the applicants after the decision for funding has been made.

3.5.8   Sharing results

Open Science NL finds it important that the results of all projects are shared, including projects that do not produce the anticipated results. A public summary of all funded projects will be published online. At the end of each project, Open Science NL will request a short report that will also be published online.

3.5.9   Conditions regarding the operation of the infrastructure

Access policy

An access policy is necessary in case the infrastructure is accessible to users, and it is expected that the available capacity will be insufficient to cater to all users. The infrastructure must implement a transparent, non-discriminatory access policy in accordance with the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures. The proposal should therefore clearly outline the expected users and access policy, and a transparent assessment procedure for access requests and available capacity to users outside the consortium (see the assessment criteria in Section 4.3).

Relationship between economic and non-economic activities

The premise is that the LSRI will be used for non-economic activities, as referred to at point 20 of the Framework R&D&I. If both economic and non-economic activities will be performed with the infrastructure, NWO solely awards funding if the infrastructure meets the provisions at point 21 of the Framework R&D&I.

In making its assessment, NWO regards the rental of the infrastructure to research organisations and other research infrastructures – as defined at point 16(ff) and 16(gg) of the Framework R&D&I for independent research and development (R&D), including R&D when the research organisation or research infrastructure has actually been involved in a collaboration – as non-economic activity of the RI (see point 20(a)(ii) of the Framework R&D&I).

Rental of the infrastructure to companies or performing research under contract are examples of economic activities (see Section 2.1.2 of the Framework R&D&I).

These conditions apply throughout the entire life-cycle of the infrastructure.

You can find the relevant passages of the Framework R&D&I in annex 7.2 of 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 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 referees and 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 pre-proposal;
– admissibility of the pre-proposal;
– assessment of the pre-proposal and advice;
– submission of the proposal;
– admissibility of the proposal;
– initial advice from the assessment committee;
– assessment committee meeting;
– decision-making.

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

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 selection criteria outlined in this Call for proposals.

4.2.1 Submission of the pre-proposal

The submission of a pre-proposal is compulsory for this Call for proposals. The pre-proposal is a concise proposal. For the pre-proposal submission, a standard form is available on the funding page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website. The pre-proposal form that you complete must be received prior to the deadline via ISAAC (see Section 1.3). After submitting the pre-proposal, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt.

4.2.2 Admissibility of the pre-proposal

You will hear from NWO as quickly as possible after having submitted your pre-proposal whether or not it will be taken into consideration. NWO will make this assessment based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, Section 3.4). NWO can only take your pre-proposal into consideration if it meets these conditions.

Please bear in mind that within two weeks after the submission deadline, NWO may approach you with any possible administrative corrections that need to be made so that your pre-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 complete this.

4.2.3 Assessment of the pre-proposal

Application type 1 and **application type 2** are assessed independently from each other.

Pre-proposals are assessed by the assessment committee using the criteria described in Section 4.3.1. In this phase, no referees will be consulted. The assessment committee gives a non-binding positive or negative advice on whether or not to develop the pre-proposal into a full proposal. As the advice is non-binding, there is no opportunity for rebuttal at this stage of the application procedure. Applicants receiving a negative advice are discouraged, but not prevented from submitting a full proposal.

The assessment committee will base their advice on the premise that the total requested budget of the pre-proposals with a positive advice does not exceed twice the amount of the overall budget available in this Call for proposals.

4.2.4 Advice pre-proposal

The assessment will result in advice on whether or not to further elaborate on the pre-proposal.

In the motivation for its advice, the selection committee will state its observations with respect to the quality of the pre-proposals, and give its recommendations for the elaboration into a full proposal.

Applicants who receive a non-binding negative advice, but nonetheless wish to submit a full proposal are requested to inform Open Science NL via email (see 6.1.1 for contact details) from the main applicant.

4.2.5   Submission of a proposal

For the submission of the proposal, a standard form is available on the funding page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website. 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 before the deadline via ISAAC (see Section 1.3). After this deadline, you can no longer submit a proposal. After submitting the proposal, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt.

4.2.6   Admissibility of the proposal

As soon as possible after you have submitted your proposal, you will hear from NWO whether or not your proposal will be taken into consideration. NWO will determine this based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, Section 3.4). NWO can only take your proposal into consideration if it meets these conditions.
Please bear in mind that within two weeks after the submission deadline, NWO 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.

4.2.7   Peer review by referees

Prior to the assessment committee considering your proposal, NWO will request input from at least two external referees. These are independent advisers who are experts in the subjects of the proposal. They will assess the proposals based on the assessment criteria outlined in the Call for proposals (Section 4.3).

A maximum of three non-referees can be registered. Applicants can register these non-referees in ISAAC when submitting the proposal. NWO will not approach these non-referees to assess the proposal as external referees.

4.2.8   Rebuttal

The main applicant subsequently receives the anonymised referee reports. You then have the opportunity to formulate a rebuttal. You will be given five working days to submit your rebuttal via ISAAC. If you decide to withdraw the proposal, then you should do this as quickly as possible by sending an email stating this to the office and withdrawing the proposal in ISAAC. If NWO receives your rebuttal after the deadline, then it will not be included in the rest of the procedure.

4.2.9   Pre-advice assessment committee

After this, your full proposal, the referees' reports and your rebuttal 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).

4.2.10 Meeting of the assessment committee

Application type 1 and **application type 2** are assessed independently from each other. The applications are not compared to applications from the other type. The assessment committee drafts written advice per application type.

The committee will make its own assessment based on the available material. Although the referees' reports will 'guide' the final assessment to a large extent, it will not be blindly accepted without question by the committee. The committee will consider and compare the arguments of the referees (also amongst each other) and examine whether the rebuttal contains a well-formulated response to the critical comments from the referees' reports. Furthermore, the committee, unlike the referees, will assess the quality of all the proposals and rebuttals submitted. Therefore, the committee's assessment may differ from that of the referees.

Following the discussion, the committee draws up a written recommendation per application type addressed to the Steering Board of Open Science NL about the quality and ranking of the proposals. This recommendation is based on the assessment criteria. The proposal must receive an overall qualification of at least "very good" to be eligible for funding. The proposal must also receive at least the qualification "very good" for each of the individual assessment criteria.

For more information about the qualifications, see Applying for funding, how does it work? | NWO.

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

4.2.11 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 0.1 will be selected. If an ex aequo situation occurs at the borders of the available budget or the selection borders, then, in order to help increase the number of women working in the scientific field, the proposal from a female applicant will end as the highest. If the ex aequo situation is not resolved via this procedure, then the proposal with the highest score for the criterion "feasibility of the proposal" 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 2.2.7, third paragraph, sub a, part iv of the NWO Grant Rules 2017). 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.

4.2.12 Decision-making

Finally, the Steering Board of Open Science NL will assess if the procedure above was followed correctly as well as the advice from the assessment committee. They will subsequently determine the final rankings and make a decision over awarding or rejecting the proposals.

4.2.13 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.

Pre-proposals	
5 November 2024, before 14:00:00 CET	**Deadline pre-proposals**
January 2025	Committee assesses pre-proposals
Mid-February 2025	Applicants receive advice as to whether or not to elaborate on their pre-proposal and turn it into a full proposal
Proposals	
22 April 2025, before 14:00:00 CEST	**Deadline proposals**
May – August 2025	Referees consulted
End August – begin September 2025	Applicants can submit a rebuttal
October 2025	Assessment committee meeting
December 2025	Decision by the board

4.3 Criteria

4.3.1 Substantive assessment criteria pre-proposals

The content of the pre-proposals submitted within this Call for proposals will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

Application type 1 and 2: small and large projects

1. Alignment with the aim of the Call for proposals (50%)
   a) The vision for the project and the extent to which it adheres to the aim of this Call for proposals, including the extent to which the project aligns with the principles and practices of open science.
2. Feasibility of the proposal (50%)
   a) How realistic is the project plan?
   b) How adequate are the knowledge and skills of the team members regarding the execution of the project?
   c) Is it realistic to accomplish the stated goal with the estimated budget?

4.3.2   Substantive assessment criteria full proposals

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

Application type 1: small projects

1. Alignment with the aim of the Call for proposals (40%)
    a) The vision for the project and the extent to which it adheres to the aim of this Call for proposals, including the extent to which the project aligns with the principles and practices of open science.
    b) Which open science challenge(s) and/or need(s) are addressed in the proposal and to what extent does the proposal meet the needs of the user communities?[10]
    c) Does the applicant convincingly explain that these needs are not yet addressed by existing infrastructures?
    d) To what extent are open science principles applied in the execution of the project?[11]
2. Feasibility of the proposal (50%)
    a) How realistic is the project plan?
    b)   To what extent do the team members have adequate knowledge and skills to carry out the project?
    c) Does the proposal include a convincing risk management strategy? Is the identification of risks complete and are adequate mitigating measures proposed?
    d) Is the proposed budget adequate and well substantiated?
    e) What is the potential impact of the proposal on the various domains of science, society and/or commercial businesses, and is the quality of the plan to realise that impact realistic and well-argued?
3. How relevant and convincing are the plans to sustain the infrastructure after the project ends, incl. software sustainability (if applicable) (10%)?

Application type 2: large projects

1. Alignment with the Call for proposals (40%)
    a) The vision for the project and the extent to which it adheres to the aim of this Call for proposals.
    b) Which open science challenge(s) and/or need(s) are addressed in the proposal and to what extent does the proposal meet the needs of the user communities?[9]
    c) How is the proposed work aligned with open science principles?[10]
    d) Does the proposal contain a clearly described access policy for the infrastructure?
    e) Does the proposal contain a clear strategy for the integration of the infrastructure in the (inter)national ecosystem of open science[12]?
2. Feasibility of the proposal (40%)

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[10] User communities are not just the primary users with direct access to the infrastructure in this Call for proposals, but also secondary users who could (re)use metadata of the infrastructure, such as library personnel, policy officers, scientific information managers, etc.

[11] Open science principles are for example: the use of open protocols, of open community-based standards, the use of open source software or governance structure that guarantees transparent decision-making with input from the user community, the sharing of research datasets which are produced using the infrastructure, and so on.

[12] Examples of existing infrastructures and their activities are a.o. the international and national roadmpas for infrastructure, e.g. the EOSC Multi-Annual Roadmap (https://eosc.eu/sites/default/files/2023-01/MAR_2025-27_draft.pdf), the National Roadmap Large-Scale Research Infrastructures 2021 (https://www.nwo.nl/sites/nwo/files/media-files/National%20Roadmap%20for%20Large-scale%20Research%20Infrastructure%202021_0.pdf), and the roadmaps of the three thematic DCCs (https://www.nwo.nl/en/researchprogrammes/implementation-plan-investments-digital-research-infrastructure/roadmaps-three).

a) How realistic is the project plan?

b) To what extent do the team members have adequate knowledge and skills to carry out the project?

c) Does the proposal contain a convincing risk management strategy? Is the identification of risks complete and are adequate mitigating measures proposed?

d) Is the proposal's budget adequate and well substantiated?

e) What is the potential impact of the proposal on the various domains of science, society and/or commercial businesses, and is the quality of the plan to realise that impact realistic and well-argued?

3. How relevant and convincing are the plans to sustain the infrastructure after the project ends, including software sustainability (if applicable)? (20%)

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.

5.1.1 Data management

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the applicant should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan (if relevant). 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 organisation where the project will be realised. The plan has to be submitted to NWO via ISAAC before the start of the project. NWO will check the plan as quickly as possible. Approval of the data management plan by NWO is a condition for starting the project. 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.

5.1.2 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 2017.

Applicants must carry out a project funded by NWO during the time that they work for the knowledge institution. 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.

5.1.3 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 "19.4511 Ten principles for Socially Responsible Licensing v19-12-2019.pdf (nfu.nl)".

5.1.4 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.

Other outputs resulting from this Call for proposals should also be shared as openly as possible, under an open licence. Examples of such outputs include research software, data, presentations, reports, training materials, working papers and posters. It is advised that these outputs are shared via a *trusted repository*, as registered in OpenDOAR: https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/opendoar/.

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 Specific questions

For administrative and procedural questions about this Call for proposals, please contact:

Mark van Assem
Tel nr. +31(0)70 344 0915
Email: OSInfra@nwo.nl

For content-related questions of Call for proposals, please contact:
Maria Cruz (open research software)
Tel nr. +31(0)70 349 4208
Email: OSInfra@nwo.nl

Frederike Schmitz (citizen science & societal engagement)
Tel nr. +31(0)70 349 4229
Email: OSInfra@nwo.nl

Jeroen Sondervan (open scholarly communication)
Tel nr. +31(0)70 349 4303
Email: OSInfra@nwo.nl

Marta Teperek (FAIR data)
Tel nr. +31(0)70 349 4282
Email: OSInfra@nwo.nl

6.1.2 Technical questions about the web application ISAAC

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual first before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours on +31 (0)70 34 40 600. However, you can also submit your question by email to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.

6.2 Other information

NWO processes data from applicants received in the context of this Call in accordance with the NWO Privacy Statement, Privacy Statement | NWO.

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

7 Annexes

7.1 Definitions of cost types

7.1.1 Costs eligible for funding

The following costs are eligible for funding, provided they relate directly to the setup, expansion and/or improvement of the infrastructure:

- Personnel costs;
- Material costs;
- IT costs, incl. procurement of software and software components with an open source licence.

Per application a maximum of 25% of the total budget requested from Open Science NL can be spent on Material and IT costs.

7.1.1.1 Personnel costs

It is possible to apply for the funding of the salary costs of personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research. Funding of these salary costs depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the personnel are/ will be appointed.

- For appointments at universities and university medical centres, the salary costs will be funded based on the collective labour agreement pay scale of the employee concerned in accordance with the applicable rate at the time of awarding the grant as taken from Table 2.1, column 'Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT' from the *Handleiding Overheidstarieven* [HOT- Manual Dutch Government Rates] (Salary tables | NWO). Therefore, wage rate is determined by which salary scale is applicable to the staff or team member's appointment. When no salary scale system applies, a cost-covering HOT rate should be selected to cover personnel costs. Do not include overheads, margins or other increases in the calculation. The applicable hourly rate is maximised at scale 16, according to HOT.
- For personnel from universities of applied sciences, SURF, the Netherlands eScience Center, and the Royal Library, salary costs will be funded based on the collective labour agreement pay scale of the employee concerned in accordance with the applicable rate at the time of awarding the grant as taken from Table 2.2, column 'Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT' from the *Handleiding Overheidstarieven* [HOT- Manual Dutch Government Rates] (Salary tables | NWO). Therefore, wage rate is determined by which salary scale is applicable to the staff or team member's appointment. When no salary scale system applies, a cost-covering HOT rate should be selected to cover both personnel costs and overhead. Do not include margins or other increases in the calculation. The applicable hourly rate is maximised at scale 16, according to 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 Employment terms and conditions | Working at the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland | Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland (rijksdienstcn.com).

NWO will apply a mandatory one-off indexing of the salary[13] costs with respect to HOT rates: for proposals submitted before 1 January that are awarded funding after 1 January.

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[13]   1 January is the date on which the rate is generally adjusted, in the case of indexation the date of actual annual adjustment will be taken into account.

The mandatory one-off indexing does not affect the level of the grant ceiling or the maximum amount of the grant awarded for each proposal. Both the level of the grant ceiling and the maximum amount of the grant awarded will remain unchanged during the assessment procedure. The mandatory one-off indexing will be applied after the decision-making process about awarding or rejecting proposals is completed.

7.1.1.2 Material costs

Material costs are project-specific costs pertaining to consumables, materials, small instruments and other material resources that have no economic value after use. Also included in this category are (international) travel and accommodation expenses; the costs of knowledge dissemination, knowledge valorisation and internationalisation; the costs of using existing infrastructure, data collections and equipment; work performed by third parties; national symposium/conference/workshop organised by the project itself; costs for Open Access publishing (solely in full gold Open Access journals, registered in the "Directory of Open Access Journals"); costs of data management for this project.

7.1.1.3 IT costs

Information technology (IT) costs are understood to include the costs of realisation and use of the required IT infrastructure, to the extent that these are in addition to IT infrastructure that is already available at the institutions concerned, or that is already nationally available, such as SURF. Where applicable, the IT infrastructure can be harmonised and/or alignment can be sought with SURF.
Also included under IT costs are the procurement of specific software (components) with an open licence (note: procurement of software without an open source licence is not allowed), computing time, storage capacity, and the costs of repositories and data stewardship for long-term storage of data according to FAIR principles.
IT related personnel costs may be included in the budget under personnel costs/personnel expenses.

7.1.2 Costs not eligible for funding

Costs that are not eligible for funding are:

- costs for procurement, setup, improvement and/or extension of software and software components without an open source licence;
- costs for large instruments and other resources which have economic value after use;
- digitising primary sources and bibliographies that are already available in other ways;
- costs for memberships of (inter)national infrastructures;
- costs for maintenance and use of the requested equipment (including *consumables*) and software;
- costs incurred or which involve obligations entered into before the grant was awarded;
- costs that have previously been funded or financed in some other manner;
- costs for institutional facilities, such as the costs of buildings, modifications to those buildings or facilities that can be considered as belonging to the standard facilities;
- costs for ordinarily available IT infrastructure provided by the institutions concerned or already available nationwide, for example through the IT facility SURF[14]
- costs incurred or which involve obligations entered into for a period beyond the project duration (2 years for **application type 1** and 4 years for **application type 2**);
- personnel costs required for operational sustainability and conducting research. This includes:
  - o PhD candidates;

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[14] At SURF.nl/research you will find information about nationally available services for your research project, such as computing power, storage, data transport, data management, data analysis services and SURF's expertise. Access to computing power and storage is provided via the Call Compute Time National Computer Systems, while other services are offered via (the Digital Competence Centre of) your institution or directly via SURF.

- o personnel costs for management, maintenance, conducting experiments and taking measurements;
- o personnel costs associated with setting up RI that would be more costly than hiring external expertise;
- insurance costs;
- General costs relating to a start-up or business (such as legal costs for establishing a company, costs for the Chamber of commerce, administrative costs, printing costs, internet and/or mobile phone subscriptions, software for business activities and subscriptions such as MS Office, etc.)

7.2 Relevant passages of the Framework R&D&I

The Framework R&D&I may be found at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022XC1028(03).

Below we cite a number of relevant passages; however, the Framework R&D&I should be read as a unified whole.

Recitals:
1.3 Definitions
(…)
16. For the purposes of this framework, the following definitions apply:
(…)
(ff) 'research and knowledge dissemination organisation' or 'research organisation' means an entity (such as universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, innovation intermediaries, research-oriented physical or virtual collaborative entities), irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development or to widely disseminate the results of such activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer. Where such entity also pursues economic activities, the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic of those economic activities must be accounted for separately. Undertakings that can exert a decisive influence on such an entity, for example in the quality of shareholders or members, may not enjoy a preferential access to the results generated by it;

(gg) 'research infrastructure' means facilities, resources and related services that are used by the scientific community to conduct research in their respective fields and covers scientific equipment or set of instruments, knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives or structured scientific information, enabling information and communication technology-based infrastructures such as grid, computing, software and communication, or any other entity of a unique nature essential to conduct research. Such infrastructures may be 'single-sited' or 'distributed' (an organized network of resources) (30);

2.1.1 Public funding of non-economic activities
19. Where the same entity carries out activities of both economic and non-economic nature, the public funding of the non-economic activities will not fall under Article 107(1) of the Treaty if the two kinds of activities and their costs, funding and revenues can be clearly separated so that cross-subsidisation of the economic activity is effectively avoided. Evidence of due allocation of costs, funding and revenues can consist of annual financial statements of the relevant entity.

20. The Commission considers that the following activities are generally of a non-economic character:
(a) primary activities of research organisations and research infrastructures, in particular:

(i) education for more and better skilled human resources. In line with case law and decisional practice of the Commission, and as explained in the Notice on the notion of State aid and the Notice on the notion of State aid and the SGEI Communication, public education organised within the national education system, predominantly or entirely funded by the State and supervised by the State is considered a non-economic activity;
(ii) independent R&D for more knowledge and better understanding, including collaborative R&D where the research organisation or research infrastructure engages in effective collaboration (39);
(iii) wide dissemination of research results on a non-exclusive and non-discriminatory basis,
for example through teaching, open-access databases, open-access publications or open-source software;
(b) knowledge transfer activities, where they are conducted either by the research organisation or research infrastructure (including their departments or subsidiaries) or jointly with or on behalf of other such entities, and where all profits from those activities are reinvested in the primary activities of the research organisation or research infrastructure. The non-economic nature of those activities is not prejudiced by contracting the provision of corresponding services to third parties by way of open tenders.

21. Where a research organisation or research infrastructure is used for both economic and non-economic activities, public funding falls under State aid rules only insofar as it covers costs linked to the economic activities (40). Where the research organisation or research infrastructure is used almost exclusively for a non-economic activity, its funding may fall outside State aid rules in its entirety (41), provided that the economic use remains purely ancillary, that is to say corresponds to an activity which is directly related to and necessary for the operation of the research organisation or research infrastructure or intrinsically linked to its main non-economic use, and which is limited in scope. For the purposes of this framework, the Commission will consider this to be the case where the economic activities consume exactly the same inputs (such as material, equipment, labour and fixed capital) as the non-economic activities and the capacity allocated each year to such economic activities does not exceed 20% of the relevant entity's overall annual capacity.

2.1.2 Public funding of economic activities of research organisations and research infrastructure
22. Without prejudice to point 21, where research organisations or research infrastructures are used to perform economic activities, such as renting out equipment or laboratories to undertakings or performing contract research, public funding of those economic activities will generally be considered State aid.

23. However, the Commission will not consider the research organisation or research infrastructure to be a beneficiary of state aid if it acts as a mere intermediary for passing on to the final recipients the totality of the public funding and any advantage acquired through such funding. This is generally the case where:
(a) both the public funding and any advantage acquired through such funding are quantifiable and demonstrable, and there is an appropriate mechanism which ensures that they are fully passed on to the final recipients, for example through reduced prices; and
(b) no further advantage is awarded to the intermediary because it is either selected through an open tender procedure or the public funding is available to all entities which satisfy the necessary objective conditions, so that customers as final recipients are entitled to acquire equivalent services from any relevant intermediary.

24. Where the conditions in point 23 are fulfilled, State aid rules apply at the level of the final recipients.
(...)

Endnotes:
(...)
(39) Provision of R&D services and R&D carried out on behalf of undertakings are not considered as

independent R&D.

(40) Where a research organisation or research infrastructure is both publicly and privately funded, the Commission will consider this to be the case where the public funding allocated to the relevant entity for a specific accounting period exceeds the costs of non-economic activities incurred in that period.

(41) Since the research community, when conducting ancillary economic activities, derives improved and enhanced expertise and knowledge that can be used to perform the primary non-economic activities of the research organisation or the research infrastructure to the benefit of society at large.

(...)