



Knowledge and Innovation Covenant 2020-2023: opportunities for research into societal challenges

Energy transition, dementia and water management: these are just a few of the major challenges our society faces, which require more knowledge and groundbreaking innovations. NWO responds by making more than 100 million euros available each year to invest in research in the context of the new Knowledge and Innovation Covenant (KIC). This offers opportunities for scientists, companies and public parties. Contributions from social sciences and humanities researchers are vitally important for the chances of these innovations succeeding. As the first calls will be published shortly, NWO would like to draw this to your attention and that of your relations.

Via the Knowledge and Innovation Covenant (KIC) 2020-2023, NWO contributes to the Mission-Driven Innovation Policy of the Dutch government. Four major societal themes, Key methodologies and Social earning capacity play a key role in this. The four major themes are: Energy transition & sustainability, Agriculture, water & food, Health & care, and Security. For each of these six subjects, a knowledge and innovation agenda (KIA) has been written. The KIAs from the substantive basis for the NWO programming.

First mission calls

For the programming, NWO will deploy a set of funding instruments that consists of four main lines. Within main line 1 (MISSION) the first seven calls have been opened in July 2020. This leaflet provides a brief overview of the calls.

Interdisciplinary collaboration

An integral approach is needed to make an optimal contribution to integral knowledge of complex societal issues, in which researchers from the humanities, natural sciences and technology, social sciences collaborate and approach an issue from the perspective of their different disciplines.

Successful innovations will only arise if technological and social innovation go hand in hand. Contributions from researchers from the social sciences and humanities – varying from business experts and behavioural scientists to philosophers and historians – are vitally important in this regard. NWO therefore invites researchers to submit interdisciplinary project proposals in which researchers from the humanities, natural sciences and technology, social sciences collaborate and tackle an issue coherently and from the perspective of their different disciplines.



Other developments within the KIC 2020-2023

Within main line 2 (DEMAND) NWO opened the Partnership desk at the end of June for public and/or private parties who wish to initiate demand-driven research with impact and with support from NWO. Within main line 4 (PRACTICE) KIEM is open, a low-threshold scheme that encourages collaboration between knowledge institutions and SME partners. University researchers can also submit proposals. Other funding instruments will start in the autumn.

Main lines NWO funding instruments

The NWO funding instruments including the contribution from the Taskforce for Applied Research (NPRO-SIA) for the KIC consists of four main lines. For 2020, the allocation of the NWO budget of 100 million euros + the SIA budget of 18 million euros across these four main lines is as follows:



1. MISSION: mission-driven calls
€ 55 million



2. DEMAND: partnerships
€ 15 million



3. STRATEGY: large, multiannual, strategic collaborations
€ 30 million



4. PRACTICE: practice-oriented instruments with a focus on SMEs and the regions
€ 18 million



Main line 1: MISSION

Mission-driven calls

Within this main line, a limited number of large mission-driven calls will be developed, each with a size of between 5 and 11 million euros. In main line 1, NWO annually reserves a budget per KIA. This means that for each KIA there is a guaranteed annual financial commitment.

In 2020, the budget per KIA is as follows:

KIA	Calls
Energy transition & sustainability € 11 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circularity – The transition to a circular carbon system• Innovations for wind and solar energy
Health & care € 11 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People living with dementia• Lifestyle and living environment
Agriculture, water & food € 6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aquatic food production• Climate-robust production systems and water management
Key technologies € 11 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key technologies
Social earning capacity € 5 million	
Security € 6 million	

After the summer, more calls will follow, including a call in the area of Human Capital.

What you can do

1. Thoroughly inform yourself about the new KIC, its focus areas and the calls for proposals that NWO announces. For this, you can consult the NWO website, read the KIC brochure and the pre-announcement. Not yet subscribed to the NWO newsletter? Then you can do that via this [link](#). In addition, please keep an eye on the news provided via [nwo.nl/kic](#), [@NWOnieuws](#) and [LinkedIn](#). NWO will communicate via the above-mentioned channels in good time about new or published calls for proposals, information about matchmaking meetings, and other developments within the KIC.
2. Researchers from each of the research domains (humanities, natural sciences and technology, social sciences) can initiate a collaboration within the KIC, and so also researchers in the social sciences and humanities. Therefore explore and strengthen your interdisciplinary network with a view to the subjects stated.
3. Inform your fellow researchers or relations about the mission-driven calls. You can do that by forwarding this flyer or sharing the following message via your communication channels:

“In July NWO published the first seven mission-driven calls within the Knowledge and Innovation Covenant 2020-2023. Interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers from the humanities, natural sciences and technology, social sciences is vitally important for this. All seven calls for proposals focus on complex societal issues. Please keep an eye on the NWO communication channels and make sure you read the [pre-announcement](#).”

More information

For more information about the contribution of NWO to the KIC 2020-2023, see the [NWO website](#). More information about interdisciplinary collaboration within the KIC can be found here. Please keep an eye on the NWO communication channels [nwo.nl/kic](#), [@NWOnieuws](#) and [LinkedIn](#). If you have questions about a specific call, please contact the project leader of that call. Contact details will be published when the call is opened.

Within the domain Social Sciences and Humanities you can contact **Marlies van de Meent** (m.vandemeent@nwo.nl; +31 (0)70 349 45 60) with any questions.

