



## Call for proposals Partnership NWO Domain AES – KWF Kankerbestrijding – Top Sector LSH ‘Technology for Oncology II’, Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek

Guidelines for funding proposals for research under the Partnership NWO – KWF Kankerbestrijding – Top Sector LSH ‘Technology for Oncology II’.

A guideline for applicants is published separately

**Deadline for submission of applications:**

**9 May 2019; 14:00h CE(S)T (Central European (Summer)Time)**

Utrecht, February 2019

Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research  
NWO Domain Applied and Engineering Sciences

### Contents

#### Partnership programme NWO Domain AES – KWF Kankerbestrijding – Top Sector LSH ‘Technology for Oncology II’

Contents	1
Introduction	1
About the partners	1
Background	2
Scope of the programme	2
Specific requirements to the programme	3
Deadlines and Time frame	8
Assessment procedure	9
After award	10
Contact information	13
Technical questions about the online application system ISAAC	13
Links	13

### Introduction

This brochure explains the objectives and working methods of NWO Domain Applied and Engineering Sciences (NL: NWO-domein Toegepaste en Technische Wetenschappen (AES); further referred to as NWO Domain AES or AES. It details the conditions governing proposals submitted to NWO Domain AES for the funding of scientific research under the Partnership programme NWO Domain AES – KWF Kankerbestrijding – Top Sector LSH ‘Technology for Oncology II’.

Before submitting your application electronically via ISAAC, NWO Domain AES recommends that you visit its website to verify that you have the latest version of this brochure, and that you read the guidelines carefully. Moreover, please familiarize yourself with ISAAC ([www.isaac.nwo.nl](http://www.isaac.nwo.nl)) before you start the submission of your proposal.

### About the partners

NWO Domain AES initiated the Partnership programmes to stimulate effective cooperation between academic and industrial researchers. This Partnership programme is financed by NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding, including PPP allowance of Top Sector Life Sciences & Health made available to the latter.

### NWO Domain AES

NWO Domain AES is part of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO; see also [www.nwo.nl](http://www.nwo.nl)) which supports a strong system of sciences in the Netherlands by encouraging quality and innovation in science. Responsibility for the national science and innovation policy lies with the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (EZK). As such, NWO Domain AES provides government funding.



NWO Domain AES adheres to the NWO strategy and presented her Vision document 2019-2022 “Technology for people and society”. NWO Domain AES carries out its activities in an increasingly dynamic and complex arena. Politics, industry and society are asking science to help solve societal issues. Research in the applied and engineering sciences and the application of its outcomes play a crucial role in that. Yet at the same time, the vitality of the applied and engineering sciences field is under pressure.

The **mission** of NWO Domain AES is to facilitate research in applied and engineering sciences that yields applications and impact for people and society. To this end, NWO Domain AES will focus on the following three **objectives**:

- a strengthened applied engineering sciences foundation;
- efficient innovation chains;
- visible societal impact.

Research funded by NWO Domain AES generates valuable knowledge. In addition to excellent science, NWO Domain AES aims to promote transfer and application of knowledge. The term used by NWO Domain AES to refer to the set of activities aimed at maximising the possibility of research results being applied by third parties is ‘utilisation’. In order to promote utilisation next to scientific quality, NWO Domain AES establishes a user committee involving third parties for every project. NWO Domain AES expects applicants and users to actively collaborate during the project towards promoting utilisation and towards NWO Domain AES’s objective of transferring knowledge to users. Users, user committees and intellectual property play a crucial role in utilisation.

### ***KWF Kankerbestrijding***

KWF Kankerbestrijding (Dutch Cancer Society) is a nationwide organisation for combating cancer. That’s why KWF Kankerbestrijding funds and guides scientific research: a better understanding of the disease is the key to prevent cancer, improve survival and achieve a better quality of life for patients during and after the disease. One of the main priorities of KWF Kankerbestrijding is to fast-track the translation of scientific results to daily clinical practice.

KWF Kankerbestrijding receives support from over 1 million donors. Together with patients, researchers and caregivers KWF Kankerbestrijding is determined to make an impact and beat cancer as soon as possible.

### ***Topsector Life Sciences & Health (Health~Holland)***

The Dutch Life Sciences & Health (LSH) sector is one of nine “top sectors” in the Netherlands. The top sectors are designated by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and are selected on their ability to contribute substantially to global societal challenges.

The Top Sector LSH covers a broad range of disciplines, from pharmaceuticals to medical technology and from healthcare infrastructure to vaccination. To realise its mission – vital functioning citizens in a healthy economy – the Top Sector builds on the strengths of the Dutch Life Sciences & Health sector to address the biggest societal challenges in prevention, cure and care: improving health while restraining the costs of healthcare.

The Top Sector LSH initiates and stimulates interdisciplinary research and development in public-private partnerships (PPP) to valorise innovation. By attracting funding, sharing best practices, connecting organisations and communicating as one voice through Health~Holland, the Top Sector is boosting a productive infrastructure.

### **Background**

NWO Domain AES (previously Technology Foundation STW) and KWF Kankerbestrijding initiated the Partnership programme ‘Technology for Oncology’ in 2015 with the objective to connect technological researchers with the oncological researchers. STW, KWF Kankerbestrijding and Top Sector LSH funded 11 research projects in the first Partnership programme. The overwhelming interest in the collaborative programme led to the mutual decision of NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding to publish the Partnership call for proposals at hand.

### **Scope of the programme**

Oncology research in the Netherlands is among the top of the world in terms of scientific output and ratings. In addition, the Netherlands are famous for innovative, technological developments. The purpose of this call is to initiate (new) collaborations in the oncology domain between leading (medical) scientists and excellent technical researchers, thereby utilizing the excellent science with the innovative power of the Dutch Technical Universities and research groups with proven technical experience. We believe there is high potential to achieve significant breakthroughs by forming new



collaborations between technical and oncological research groups.

The programme invites academic researchers to submit a proposal for a research project that aims at developing technology with a significant and identifiable impact on one or more of the mission goals of KWF Kankerbestrijding: less cancer, more cure and a better quality of life.

The focus of this 'Technology for Oncology II' call, is not only on the pure technical developments in the sense of devices and software, but also on technology in the widest interpretation of the word. This means that chemical and biological technologies, such as cell culture techniques, are within the scope of this Partnership programme. However, an important criterium is that the technological development is patientfocussed and targets a specific problem (future) cancer patients are facing. Project activities should therefore consist of fundamental and/or industrial research as defined below.

The potential to utilize the obtained knowledge and results in oncology prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care should be the primary focus of the research proposals. Relevance for patients and patient participation/involvement in the design of the proposal and execution of the research project should be substantiated in the proposal.

### **Objectives**

The **main objectives** of this Partnership programme are:

- (New) collaborations and technology transfer between Dutch Technical Universities or research groups with proven technical experience and other research institutes;
- Participation of, and collaboration with, industry in cancer-related technology development;
- Technology that can be used to improve prevention, diagnosis and/or treatment of cancer, including quality of life.

### **Topics not eligible for funding within this Partnership programme**

- Technology development not directly targeting application in oncology;
- Technology development with research purposes/use only;
- Solely product development and/or testing (no clear technical scientific challenge);
- Clinical trials, as defined by cohort studies or phase I/II studies and beyond;
- Experimental research as defined by the PPP definition (see here);
- Research must be executed without any involvement of the tobacco industry in any manner whatsoever. In addition, the Project Team must not become involved in the execution of any other projects involving a relationship with the tobacco industry or tobacco lobby.

### **Specific requirements to the programme**

#### **Who can apply**

Scientists employed by Dutch (Technical) Universities and institutes eligible for funding by NWO Domain AES (see 'Guide for applicants' separately published with this call) can submit a proposal to this Partnership call.

#### **Criteria for submission**

The proposals must meet all of the following criteria:

- The obtained knowledge and results of the project should have a high **utilisation potential** and contribute to the mission statements of KWF Kankerbestrijding, NWO Domain AES and the PPP definitions (see below)
- Project proposals demonstrate clear **relevance for the patient**, and target a specific problem (future) cancer patients are facing; prevention, diagnosis, treatment and/or care in oncology;
- Project activities should consist of fundamental and/or industrial research as defined below;
- Projects should be a collaborative effort of at least two (2) distinct research institutes;
- At least one applicant should be from a Dutch Technical University or research groups with proven technical expertise and at least one applicant from a Dutch non-technical research institute with specific expertise in oncology;
- A minimum of four (4) users will be part of the project's user committee and at least two (2) users should be an industrial partner;
- All industrial partners (for-profit; companies) in the consortium contribute **cash AND in-kind** to the project;
- At least 15% co-funding, including the mandatory cash entry fee, by industrial partners is required on project level;
- The research has to fit in the research roadmaps of the Top Sector LSH and societal challenge

'Health Care' as outlined in the Knowledge and Innovation Agenda 2018-2021.

### **Criteria related to the use of PPP Allowance of Top Sector LSH**

Within this Partnership programme Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Allowance has been made available to KWF Kankerbestrijding by Top Sector LSH. For this reason, specific conditions with respect to co-funding, financial accountability and duration and set up of the project are in place (see corresponding paragraph in this call for proposals). In particular, every project in this programme must consist of research work packages which are either fundamental (Technology Readiness level (TRL) ~1-4) and/or industrial (TRL ~4- 5) in nature (see figure below). The PPP-definition of the type of research, as described below, are leading for this classification. The type of research, fundamental research and/or industrial research, has to be addressed and substantiated for all work packages described in the application. It is possible that a project fully consists of either fundamental research or industrial research.

#### **PPP definitions**

The following definitions of types of research are adhered for this Partnership programme:

*Fundamental research:* experimental or theoretical research activities that are predominantly performed to gain new knowledge on the fundamental aspects of phenomena and observable facts, without the intent of achieving a direct commercial application or direct commercial use;

*Industrial research:* methodical research which is explicitly aimed at gaining new knowledge and skills with the intention of developing new products, processes or services, or to substantially improve existing products, processes or services. It encompasses the creation of parts for complex systems as well as the building of prototypes in a laboratory environment and/or an environment of simulated interfaces for existing systems, as well as pilot systems, when needed for the industrial research and in particular for validating generic technology.

*Experimental research* as defined by the PPP definition is not eligible for funding in this Partnership programme.

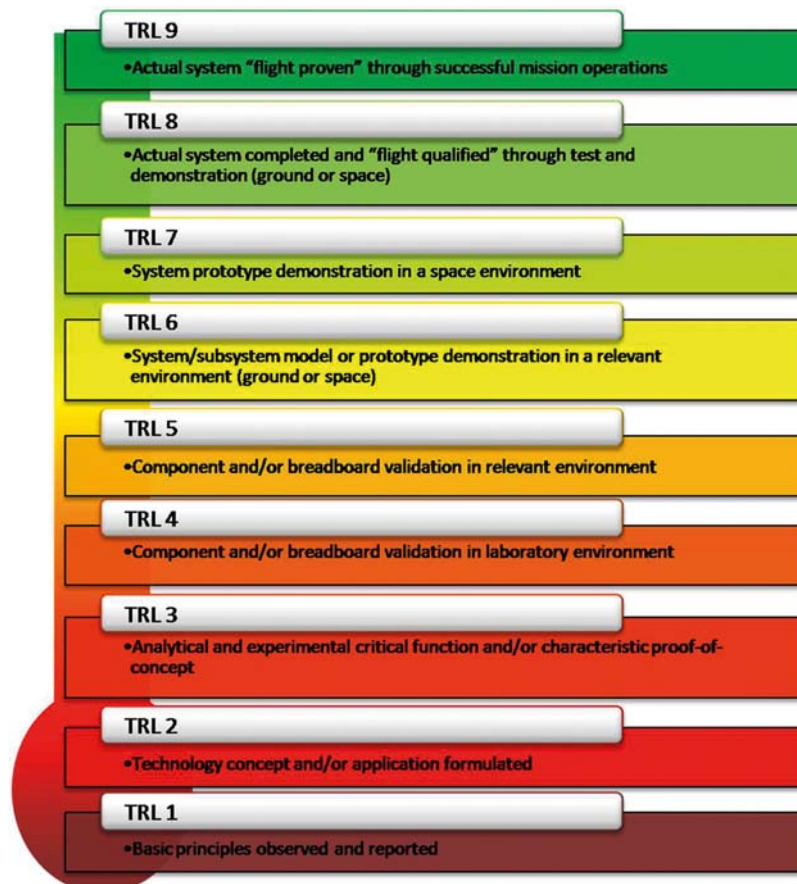


Figure 1: Technology readiness levels



### Criteria for consortium composition and collaboration

Projects should be a collaborative effort of researchers from at least two (2) research institutes eligible for funding and industrial partners.

To ensure broad involvement of the technical sciences community and stimulate multi-disciplinary collaboration, at least one (1) researcher (applicant of the project proposal) originates from a Dutch Technical University or a research group with proven technical expertise and at least one (1) researcher from a non-technical research institute with specific expertise in oncology.

Next to researchers, the consortium consists of industrial partners and other users. At least four (4) users (see below) of which at least 50% are industrial partners (for-profit; companies) which provide co-funding to the project (see below). The other 50% of the users can consist of a wide variety of persons or organizations that fit the criteria below.

Of note, **at least two (2) industrial partners should be committed to the project before submission** of the application. We refer to the co-funding criteria for this Partnership programme and partnership specific IP&P conditions (see below).

### Criteria for users and user committee composition

Users of research are defined as natural persons or legal persons (at national or international level) who are able to apply the results of the research. A distinction is sometimes drawn between direct users, usually companies, and end users. It is NWO Domain AES' explicit intention that potential technology users and end users outside the inner circle and outside the research field of the researchers submitting the proposal should be involved in the project from beginning to the end. Users should be able to apply the knowledge generated by the research in the medium to long term.

A user committee is established for all the awarded projects of this Partnership programme. A minimum of four (4) users will be part of the user committee and at least two (2) of the users should be from industry (for-profit; company). Research proposals from a medical faculty or university medical centre should have potential users, just like other proposals. It is not sufficient in this case to state merely 'expert', 'the patient' or 'a clinic'.

The final composition of the user committee is subject to conditions of all NWO Domain AES projects. To enable monitoring of the progress of the project KWF Kankerbestrijding and Top Sector LSH will participate in the user committee meetings and will receive all reporting that is shared among the user committee. We refer to the 'Guideline for applicants', published separately with this call for proposals and the brochure 'Guidelines Users Committee NWO domain AES 2017' on the NWO website for more information.

### Criteria for co-funding

For each project, at least **15%** of the total project costs (see definitions below) required to conduct the research must be in the form of co-funding (**cash and in-kind**) from the industrial partners (company; for-profit). Contributions from other parties (e.g. non-industrial or not-for-profit organizations; other users) are allowed, however such contributions do *not* count towards the minimum requirement of 15% co-funding of the total project costs.

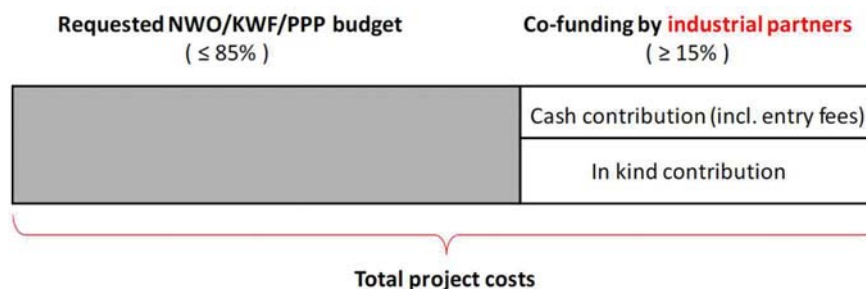


Figure 2: Graphic representation of co-funding criteria for the Partnership programme 'Technology for Oncology II'.

### Requirements for industrial partners in the consortium

All industrial partners (company; for-profit) in a project are required to make an in-kind contribution. In addition, in each project a minimal cash contribution from each industrial partner is required. This minimal required cash co-funding per industrial partner, so called **entry fee**, depends on the size of the company. For Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) an entry fee of at least 5,000 euros in cash



is the minimum requirement. For large companies, which cannot be classified as SME, the entry fee is at least 10,000 euros in cash.

### **Definitions**

Related to budgets and co-funding criteria the following definitions are adhered:

*Financial resources:* Financial contributions used to cover part of the project costs (in-cash co-funding) together with the funding from NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding, including PPP allowance of Top Sector Life Sciences & Health made available to the latter.

*Total project costs:* necessary financial resources required to carry out the project plus in-kind contributions from industrial partners (company; for-profit).

*In-kind contributions:* In-kind contributions means capitalised personnel and/or material contributions from users (see "Notes on Users, co-funding and letters of support" in the guideline for applicants that is published together with this call).

*SME:* Small and Medium-sized Enterprises as defined by the European Commission, see for a test: <http://flt.uwe.be/>

### **Partnership programme duration and budget**

Together NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding have made available a budget of 2,800,000 euros (inclusive of Dutch VAT) for this Partnership programme. In addition, the Top Sector LSH has made available a maximum of 3,000,000 euros of PPP Allowance to KWF Kankerbestrijding to further fund research in this Partnership programme. A maximum budget of 5,800,000 euros (inclusive of Dutch VAT) will be available for the programme.

The duration of the Partnership programme will be determined by the conditions of the PPP Allowance awarded to KWF Kankerbestrijding by Top Sector LSH. Information on the duration of the Partnership programme Technology for Oncology II will be included in the award letter.

### **Partnership project duration and budget**

The maximum funding that can be requested for a project within this Partnership programme is 750,000 euros (inclusive of Dutch VAT). The typical Partnership project has a minimum duration of two (2) years and a **maximum duration of four (4) years**, starting from initial expenditure on the project's budget. The **final start date** of a project is **six (6) months** after award of the project. The final start and end date of the project will be stated in the award letter.

### **Partnership and project agreement**

The Partnership programme is a cooperation between NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding and a Partnership agreement has been signed between these partners. In addition, PPP allowance for this Partnership programme was made available to KWF Kankerbestrijding by Top Sector LSH and corresponding adjustments have been made to the programme. For any issues that might arise during the course of the project, the project leader can consult NWO Domain AES for advice.

After award, a Partnership **project agreement** will be required for each project in which the legal and financial conditions, including IP&P arrangements (see below), are stated. The research institutes, industrial partners and other users that contribute co-funding to the project (consortium partners), NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding are parties on this agreement. The grant is available only after this project agreement has been signed by all parties and returned to the AES office before the date mentioned in the award letter.

The template project agreement which consortia are required to use has been made available to the applicants together with this call for proposals on the NWO website.

### **Funding conditions, Intellectual Property policy & Publication arrangements**

This Partnership call is published by NWO Domain AES. This call for proposals and the NWO grant rules 2017 are applicable to this Partnership programme. Management, administration and accountability of project (proposals) will take place according to procedures of NWO Domain AES and in accordance with the requirements of the PPP Allowance awarded to KWF Kankerbestrijding by Top Sector LSH with respect to substantive and financial reporting.

The Partnership project agreement includes intellectual property and publication (IP&P) arrangements,



which are mandatory for this Partnership programme and which are in line with the 'NWO grant rules 2017' and Guidelines Users Committee NWO domain AES 2017. The **template project agreement** which consortia are required to use and provide to NWO Domain AES **within 3 months after award**, has been made available to the applicants together with this call for proposals on the NWO website. In brief, depending on the level of co-funding committed to the project the consortium partners obtain access rights to foreground intellectual property. Arrangements with respect to confidentiality, data management, (fields of) use and commercialisation of the results (i.e. all inventions, know-how, materials, methods, processes, products, programmes, software, findings and discoveries and any IP rights pertaining thereto) must be in line with the Guidelines Users Committee NWO domain AES 2017.

NWO Domain AES, KWF Kankerbestrijding and Top Sector LSH aim to exploit and publish the results of research as widely as possible, whilst retaining the possibility for inventors to claim IP rights, subsequently commercialize these rights and to stimulate collaboration between researchers and various external companies.

### ***Involvement in multiple projects***

Within this Partnership programme, a researcher may associate his/her name to more than one (1) research proposal as an applicant or co-applicant. However, a researcher is allowed to submit only one (1) research proposal as main applicant.

### ***Resubmitting research proposals***

Research proposals that were rejected in a previous KWF Kankerbestrijding, STW or NWO evaluation procedure, including the NWA-ORC, cannot be resubmitted to this Partnership programme automatically. When a research proposal is resubmitted, the scientific description (Section 4 of the application form) and/or the utilisation plan (Section 5 of the application form) must have been significantly revised. NWO Domain AES, in consult with KWF Kankerbestrijding, will assess this. The earlier referees' comments and/or advice of the assessment committee may be used as a guideline in revising the proposal. If the research proposal is a resubmission, the applicant is obligated to inform NWO Domain AES and attach a statement (in English) to the submission explaining the conducted revisions. If according to NWO Domain AES or KWF Kankerbestrijding, the research proposal has not been revised sufficiently, it will not be eligible for funding.

### ***Submission of project proposal for funding elsewhere***

If identical or very similar research proposals have or will be submitted to NWO, KWF Kankerbestrijding, Top Sector LSH or other funding bodies, this must be stated in the proposal. For the duration of the assessment procedure of this Partnership programme call, the submission of identical or very similar proposals (to be assessed by NWO Domain AES or KWF Kankerbestrijding) to more than one of the following calls is not permitted: NWA-ORC, Open Technology Programme (OTP), Perspectief Programme, KWF Kankerbestrijding Programme Research & Implementation, Top Sector LSH Match Call.

### ***Open Access***

All scientific publications resulting from research that is funded by grants derived from this call for proposals and approved by the user committee are to be immediately (at the time of publication) freely accessible worldwide (Open Access) taking into account the terms and conditions of the Partnership agreement and the respective Partnership project agreement. There are several ways for researchers to publish Open Access. A detailed explanation regarding Open Access can be found on <http://www.nwo.nl/openscience-en>.

### ***Data management***

Responsible data management is part of good research. NWO wants research data that emerge from publicly funded research to become freely and sustainably available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers taking into account the terms and conditions of the Partnership agreement and the respective Partnership project agreement. Furthermore NWO wants to raise awareness among researchers about the importance of responsible data management. Proposals should therefore satisfy the data management protocol of NWO. This protocol consists of two steps:

#### ***1. Data management section***

The data management section is part of the research proposal. Researchers should answer four questions about data management within their intended research project. Therefore before the research starts the researcher will be asked to think about how the data collected must be ordered



and categorised so that it can be made freely available. Measures will often need to be taken during the production and analysis of the data to make their later storage and dissemination possible. Researchers can state which research data they consider to be relevant for storage and reuse.

## 2. *Data management plan*

After a proposal has been awarded funding the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within a maximum of 4 months after the proposal has been awarded funding. NWO Domain AES will approve the plan as quickly as possible. Approval of the data management plan by NWO Domain AES is a condition for disbursement of the funding. The plan can be adjusted during the research. Data management is requested on project level. The Partnership programme committee will decide on a later date if and how to organize data management on the programme level. Further information about the data management protocol of NWO can be found <http://www.nwo.nl/datamanagement-en>.

## ***Nagoya Protocol***

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

## **Deadlines and Time frame**

### ***Deadlines for the submission of full proposal***

The submission deadline for complete research proposals to the Partnership NWO Domain AES – KWF Kankerbestrijding – Top Sector LSH ‘Technology for Oncology II’ programme is **Thursday 9 May, 2019** at 14:00 hours CE(S)T (Central European (Summer) Time).

Before submitting your application electronically via ISAAC, NWO Domain AES recommends that you visit its website to verify that you have the latest version of this brochure, and that you read the guidelines for funding and the guideline for applicants (2 separate documents) carefully.

NWO Domain AES adheres the NWO policy for deadlines (NL: ‘Handhaving deadlines’). Your submission receives time and date of registration. **Please be aware that submissions received after 14.00 CE(S)T on the day of the deadline will not be considered.** For this reason we recommend to familiarize oneself with ISAAC (<http://www.isaac.nwo.nl>) in advance of the deadline and before you start the submission of your proposal. Of note, proposals which are not submitted electronically through ISAAC will not be considered.

### ***Time frame***

The overall envisioned timeframe of this Partnership programme NWO Domain AES – KWF Kankerbestrijding – Top Sector LSH ‘Technology for Oncology II’ call is:

<b>CALL OPEN</b>	February 2019
<b>DEADLINE PROPOSALS</b>	<b>9 May, 2019; 14:00 hr CE(S)T</b>
Assessment formal requirements by AES, KWF and LSH	Beginning of May 2019
<b>Applicants:</b> Revision of proposal to fit formal requirements	<b>2nd half of May 2019 (1 week)</b>
Assessment by international referees	May – August 2019
<b>Applicants:</b> Rebuttal	<b>1st half of September 2019 (1 week)</b>
Advice Assessment committee to NWO Domain AES Board	October 2019
Decision by the NWO Domain AES Board	November 2019
Notification to applicants on Board decision	End of November 2019
<b>Final start date of awarded projects</b>	<b>6 months after award</b>





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## Assessment procedure

### *Formal requirements*

NWO Domain AES confirms receipt of the full research proposal submitted to ISAAC. It then verifies the formal requirements to determine whether the research proposal is eligible for consideration. If the relevant conditions (see '**Specific requirements of the programme**' and '**Guidelines for applicants**' published together with call for proposals on the NWO website) are not fulfilled or the information requested is incomplete, the research proposal will not be considered.

Together with the check for formal requirements, NWO Domain AES will consult KWF Kankerbestrijding and Top Sector LSH for the evaluation of information provided for assessment of patient relevance and type of research (fundamental or industrial, see above) per project/work package, respectively.

In case adjustments are required, NWO Domain AES returns the research proposal to the main applicant within five to ten working days with a request for adjustments or additional information to comply with the requirements. The main applicant is given **5 workdays (1 week)** - calculated from the date of NWO Domain AES's notification - to submit a revised version (via ISAAC). If the information required is not provided, or is incomplete by the deadline, the research proposal is considered as withdrawn.

### *Preselection*

If at least four (4) times more proposals are submitted than can be funded, NWO Domain AES retains the right to perform a preselection based on one (1) or a combination of the evaluation criteria (see below) or specific requirements of the Partnership programme (see above). The implications for the timeline of the assessment procedures will be communicated to the main applicants of the proposals.

### *Assessment by referees*

NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding submit the research proposal to (inter)national experts in the relevant specialist area (peer review). For the purposes of this Partnership programme, NWO Domain AES aims to have the research proposal assessed by three to five referees. These referees are drawn from the scientific world, large research institutes, and industry. Referees remain anonymous. They assess the proposal on the basis of specific questions about scientific quality and potential for utilisation. The questions submitted to referees (evaluation items) will become available on the website of the Partnership programme at least 4 weeks before the deadline. NWO Domain AES recommends that applicants anticipate these questions in the research proposal. In general, the number of referees consulted by NWO Domain AES depends on the nature of the research proposal and the size of the budget requested in the research proposal.

NWO Domain AES gives applicants the opportunity to provide suggestions for referees. For this, when submitting via ISAAC, please add a list of the names and contact information for a maximum of five **independent** (according to NWO code of conduct on conflicts of interest, see below) **international** referees **with relevant expertise**.

NWO Domain AES does not use a non-referee list, which allows certain referees to be excluded in advance. However, the applicant(s) may ask NWO Domain AES to exclude up to two people or organisations from acting as referees. NWO Domain AES will grant this request **only if** the provision of information from the research proposal to that referee might obstruct the utilisation.

### *Applicants' rebuttal*

In ISAAC the individual referees' comments are anonymised, if necessary paraphrased, and grouped together per question. NWO Domain AES then requests the main applicant by e-mail to respond in English to the referees' comments provided in ISAAC. The available text fields in ISAAC for the response to the comments are not restricted by word limits. The main applicant should respond to each question or each comment raised by the referees individually.

The combined referees' comments including the responses from the applicant(s) will be used by the assessment committee for their final assessment of the proposal.

### *Assessment committee*

To guarantee objectivity of the assessment as much as possible NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding put together a multidisciplinary Assessment Committee consisting of approximately 10 independent national and/or international experts from the field drawn for example from universities, large research institutes or industry and other societal sectors to guarantee the assessment of



quality of the proposal. By using this approach, every assessment can take into account the societal needs that science and technology can address.

During the meeting of the Assessment Committee, all the project proposals submitted to the reviewers are discussed by the assessment committee members, taking into account the proposal, the review reports and the rebuttal, to evaluate each project proposal. After this discussion, each committee member assigns two ratings (between 1 (excellent) and 9 (moderate / poor) to each proposal, one for **scientific quality** and one for **utilisation (prospects)**. The two criteria are equal in weight and a ranking based on the sum of the calculated averages for both criteria is determined upon individual assessment by the Assessment Committee members. A final ranking for the research proposals is established and the advice of the assessment committee to NWO Domain AES Board is formulated.

### *Minimal quality criteria*

Full proposals can only be considered for funding if both the scientific quality criterion and the utilisation quality criterion together score no more than 7.0 and the individual criterions score no more than 4.0. The explanation of the meaning of the quality scores can be found in the Guideline for applicants.

The available programme budget may not be sufficient to award funding to all proposals that meet the eligibility criteria for funding. In case of ex aequo, the proposal most relevant to the patient, as assessed by the assessment committee, will be prioritized. If this will not result in a distinction between the proposals on ex aequo position, the proposal with the best score for utilisation (prospects) will be prioritized.

The data management section in the application is not evaluated and hence not included in the decision about whether or not to award funding. However, both the referees and the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section.

### *Decision by the NWO Domain AES Board*

The advice of the assessment committee will be presented to the Board of KWF Kankerbestrijding (for consent) prior to the decision by the NWO Domain AES Board. The NWO Domain AES Board bases its decision on the prioritisation of the research proposals. The priority ranking established by the assessment committee is the primary starting point, however the available budget for the Partnership programme and any additional policy considerations may result in deviation from the advice of the Assessment committee. The NWO Domain AES Board does not assess the scientific content of the research proposals. In practice, unfortunately, the available budget will not be sufficient to fund every proposal of good quality.

The NWO Domain AES Board may attach additional conditions to the award of funding. These conditions may relate to matters imposed by this call for proposals, the NWO Grant Rules 2017 and conditions of the PPP Allowance to KWF Kankerbestrijding by Top Sector LSH, such as intellectual property, co-funding by (potential) users, major investments and/or special infrastructure facilities, accountability and financial reporting.

### *NWO Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interest*

NWO Domain AES asks active researchers from research institutes and specialists from other knowledge-intensive organisations to participate in assessment procedures. These people are themselves involved in ongoing or new research and often belong to large organisational associations and research networks.

Therefore, any conflict of interest, or anything that remotely resembles this, must be avoided in the assessment of research proposals.

To ensure a fair assessment and transparency for applicants, NWO Domain AES uses the NWO Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interest. This Code identifies possible forms of conflicts of interest and indicates the steps to be taken to avoid (potential) conflicts of interest. Parties subject to the Code of conduct are: referees, jury members, committee members, members of decision-making bodies and AES Programme officers.

The full text of the code of conduct on conflicts of interest used by NWO Domain AES is available on the website of NWO.

### *After award*

(see also the 'NWO Grant rules 2017' or information for project leaders on NWO Domain AES website.)



### ***After awarding***

The main applicant becomes the project leader and penholder of the project consortium. In case of large projects with multiple work packages, it may be necessary to appoint separate sub-project leaders. If the proposal is successful, the research institute of the project leader involved receives an award letter with appendices. If applicable, a copy of this award letter is sent to all other research institutes involved. This sets out the **legal and financial conditions** of funding and should be signed individually for approval by each research institute. The execution of the project should comply with procedures of NWO Domain AES and the administrative and financial conditions related to the PPP Allowance awarded to KWF Kankerbestrijding by Top Sector LSH.

After a proposal has been awarded funding the applicant should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants can make use of the advice from the referees and committee when they write the data management plan. The data management plan must be submitted to and approved by NWO Domain AES before a project may start.

Scientific quality is safeguarded and guided by university project applicants. Management, administration and accountability of projects will take place according to NWO Domain AES procedures and in accordance with the requirements of the PPP Allowance awarded to KWF Kankerbestrijding by Top Sector LSH with respect to substantive and financial reporting. Accountability by the 'Controle protocol' of Top Sector LSH- TKI is required. Any costs related to financial accountability (NL: Accountants verklaring) must be covered by the consortium partners and may not be part of the project budget.

### ***Start and starting date of the project***

The project starts no later than **six (6) months** after awarding. Project budgets do not become available until after the necessary documents have been signed and received by NWO Domain AES and all relevant award conditions stated in the award letter have been fulfilled. If the latter is not yet the case, written permission to start the project can be requested from NWO Domain AES. However, potential financial risks are borne by the applicant(s). The starting date of the project is the date on which an initial expenditure of allocated funds is undertaken. This is generally not the date of award. It usually relates to the appointment of the first staff member at the project's expense.

### ***User committees***

NWO Domain AES ensures that the knowledge generated by the research is practically and effectively transferred to users by consulting with the project leader of each research project to set up a user committee on the basis of the industrial partners and users proposed in the project plan.

### ***Users***

Users of research are defined as natural persons or legal persons (at national or international level) who are able to apply the results of the research. A distinction is sometimes drawn between direct users, usually companies, and end users. In that case, it is not sufficient to designate end users only. It is NWO Domain AES's explicit intention that potential technology users and end users outside the immediate circle and outside the research field of the researchers submitting the proposal should be involved in the project from beginning to end. Users should be able to apply the knowledge generated by the research in the medium to long term.

User committee meetings are attended by the applicants/co-applicants, project/subproject leaders, the researchers temporarily appointed to the project, the user(s) including the industrial partners (for-profit; companies), programme coordinators of KWF Kankerbestrijding, and the programme officer of NWO Domain AES. Representatives of Top Sector LSH will participate in the user committee meetings and will receive all reporting that is shared among the user committee. NWO Domain AES runs the secretariat.

During the course of a research project, NWO Domain AES and KWF Kankerbestrijding may change the composition of the user committee if there are grounds for doing so; such changes will always be made with the approval of the project leader and the users already on the user committee.

In doing so, NWO Domain AES will make due allowance for the advice of the users that are already involved in the project and the level of their pledged co-funding, if applicable. The guiding principle will be to ensure that the composition of the user committee maximises the likelihood of the results being applied and that the interchange of ideas, including confidential information, remains possible.

Within this Partnership programme, user committees may be extended with industrial partner(s). In this case, the industrial partner(s) (company; for-profit) are required to comply with the co-funding



criteria for industrial partner(s), e.g. an in-kind contribution *and* contribution of an entry fee as described in paragraph criteria for co-funding (see above).

The user committee can advise the project leader on the direction the research should take in order to promote the application of the results. The project leader always holds ultimate responsibility for the realisation of the research in accordance with the approved project plan.

The instructions for participants in a user committee are included in the 'Guidelines Users Committee NWO domain AES 2017' on the NWO website. The members of the user committee are formally invited by NWO Domain AES to join the user committee. Those participating in the user committee commit themselves to the conditions included in the 'NWO Grant Rules 2017' as published with this Partnership call and the conditions laid down in the Partnership project agreement.

### **Reporting**

The project leader reports to the user committee on the progress of the project twice a year, in writing (progress report and/or results overview), and the user committee meets to discuss the progress made. As an exception – to be decided by NWO Domain AES – the user committee may meet in a different frequency. Utilisation of the research results is always on the meeting agenda. It covers collaboration with (potential) users and the protection and commercialisation of the knowledge generated. The results of the project are confidential until the user committee agrees to publication and NWO Domain AES has given permission for publication. Arrangements made between the project partners in terms of IP and publication (for further information, see Guideline for applicants and template Partnership project agreement) will be upheld provided that they have been approved by NWO Domain AES.

A publication is the disclosure of results by any means, such as a text (including publications, abstracts, announcements on a website), illustration or an image or sound carrier, with the exception of disclosure resulting from a patent or patent application.

With respect to substantive and financial reports, projects awarded in this Partnership programme have to comply with the conditions of the PPP Allowance awarded to KWF Kankerbestrijding by Top Sector LSH related to financial reporting (NL: Kosten realisatie). The project leader is responsible for this. On behalf of KWF Kankerbestrijding, NWO domain AES will timely coordinate substantive and financial reporting requirements with the project leaders and financial departments of the affiliated institutes. Further information on requirements will be communicated with the award letter or shortly thereafter.

### **Extension**

Only in *very limited cases* it is possible to request an extension of the project. A written request, including a motivation for the extension, is submitted by e-mail to the NWO Programme Officer and NWO Domain AES will decide on this. The prospects in terms of utilisation are crucial for possible project extension.

Of note, an extension within this Partnership programme may not exceed the duration of the programme as determined by the conditions of the PPP Allowance. Information related to the final end date of the programme will be included in the award letter.

Extensions of projects outside of the Partnership programme duration and/or with an increase in budget will be decided on by NWO Domain AES. In this case, 50% co-funding by (one of the) users is a prerequisite.

### **Termination and termination date**

The termination date of a project is the date on which the last appointment of temporary personnel is terminated or the termination date of the Partnership programme, whichever comes first. After termination of the project, the final report on project results and outcome, as well as the financial reporting – according to the 'Controle protocol' of Top Sector LSH-TKI and in concert with the conditions of the PPP Allowance – has to be provided to NWO Domain AES. Within 6 weeks after the termination date an unqualified audit report must be provided to NWO Domain AES according to the 'Controle protocol' of Top Sector LSH-TKI. Any costs related to financial accountability (NL: Accountants verklaring) must be covered by the consortium partners.

The project leader receives the final forms from NWO Domain AES to finalize the project in terms of both content and funding. Unallocated budgets cease to be valid after the end of the project. The summaries requested in the final form are used for the purpose of publication in NWO Domain AES' website and utilisation report. NWO Domain AES publishes an annual utilisation report giving progress updates 5 and 10 years after the start of a project.



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## **Discontinuation**

After consultation with users, NWO Domain AES may discontinue a project before the official termination date if the obligations based on the Partnership Project agreement and/or NWO Grant Rules 2017 and/or conditions of the PPP Allowance made available by Top Sector LSH are not or are no longer fulfilled, or if the scientific quality of the research and/or utilisation of the results of the research are inadequate.

This means that NWO Domain AES, in amending or withdrawing the awarded funding, may change the amount or scope of the funding or terminate it and will be authorised to reclaim all or part of any funds not spent in a legitimate manner as undue payments.

## **Contact information**

### ***For questions regarding partnership guidelines contact NWO Domain Applied Engineering Sciences***

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### **For questions regarding *PPP definitions for types of research*, please contact Top Sector LSH**

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The Netherlands

## **Postal address**

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3502 GA Utrecht  
The Netherlands

[www.nwo.nl/ttw](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw)

## ***Technical questions about the online application system ISAAC***

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual (tab 'Help') first before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours CE(S)T via +31 (0)20-3467179. You can also submit your question by e-mail to [isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl](mailto:isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl). You will then receive an answer within two working days.

## **Links**

- Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)  
<http://www.nwo.nl>
- NWO Domain AES  
[www.nwo.nl/ttw/www.nwo.nl/aes](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw/www.nwo.nl/aes)
- Partnerships  
[www.nwo.nl/partnership](http://www.nwo.nl/partnership)



- ISAAC:  
<https://www.isaac.nwo.nl>; An ISAAC manual can be found in ISAAC (tab 'Help')
- ISAAC helpdesk:  
[isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl](mailto:isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl)
- Open calls NWO Domain AES:  
<https://www.nwo.nl/en/funding/our-funding-instruments/Open+for+application/true/NWO+division/scienceareaTTW?initialized=true>
- Partnership programme NWO Domain AES – KWF 'Technology for Oncology'  
[www.nwo.nl/ttw-kwf/www.nwo.nl/aes-kwf](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw-kwf/www.nwo.nl/aes-kwf)
- General Funding Conditions / NWO Grant Rules 2017  
[www.nwo.nl/ttw-projectleader](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw-projectleader) / [www.nwo.nl/aes-projectleader](http://www.nwo.nl/aes-projectleader)
- Guidelines Users Committee NWO domain AES 2017  
<http://www.nwo.nl/documents/ttw/projectbeheer/brochure-richtlijnen-gebruikerscommissie-nwo-domein-ttw>
- Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interest:  
<http://www.nwo.nl/en/documents/nwo/legal/nwo-code-of-conduct-on-conflicts-of-interest>
- Cleanroom regulation  
[www.nwo.nl/ttw-aanvrager/www.nwo.nl/aes-applicant](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw-aanvrager/www.nwo.nl/aes-applicant)
- Fixed rates in salary tables personnel  
[www.nwo.nl/ttw-aanvrager/www.nwo.nl/aes-applicant](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw-aanvrager/www.nwo.nl/aes-applicant)
- Hourly rates in-kind personnel  
[www.nwo.nl/ttw-aanvrager/www.nwo.nl/aes-applicant](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw-aanvrager/www.nwo.nl/aes-applicant)
- Standard amounts for foreign accommodation expenses:  
[www.nwo.nl/ttw-projectbeheer](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw-projectbeheer) / [www.nwo.nl/aes-projectmanagement](http://www.nwo.nl/aes-projectmanagement)
- Payment of thesis printing costs:  
[www.nwo.nl/ttw-projectleider](http://www.nwo.nl/ttw-projectleider) / [www.nwo.nl/aes-projectleader](http://www.nwo.nl/aes-projectleader)
- Nagoya Protocol:  
<https://www.absfocalpoint.nl/en/absfocalpoint.htm>
- KWF Kankerbestrijding  
[www.kwf.nl](http://www.kwf.nl)
- Knowledge and Innovation Agenda Top Sector Life Sciences & Health 2018-2022  
<https://www.health-holland.com/public/downloads/kia-kic/knowledge-and-innovation-agenda-2018-2021.pdf>
- RvO  
[www.rvo.nl](http://www.rvo.nl)
- Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Allowance (NL: PPS-toeslag), in Dutch only:  
<https://www.rvo.nl/subsidies-regelingen/pps-toeslag-onderzoek-en-innovatie>  
PPP definitions regarding type of research (fundamental, industrial and experimental in nature)  
<https://www.rvo.nl/subsidies-regelingen/pps-toeslag-onderzoek-en-innovatie/mogelijkheden/pps-projecttoeslag-voor-een-samenwerkingsverband-%E2%80%93-de-penvoerder>