

## Call Small Projects 2022

### Background

The earth's biosphere still contains the essential habitats for both humans and the great variety of other plant and animal life with whom we share this planet. Biodiverse, healthy ecosystems can provide many benefits to humans as inspirational surroundings, clean air, water and opportunities for food production. But human-driven climate change and unsustainable land uses increasingly impair these benefits of biodiversity for the quality of the natural environment for both people and nature, calling for novel solutions.

Until now the Route Quality of the Natural Environment has been focused on the following gamechangers 1. Nature inclusive societies; 2. Landscape and sustainable use of space in a rapidly changing environment; 3. Living Environment and Health and 4. Resilience as a connecting concept for socio-ecological systems. See [here](#) for a more detailed description.

Recently there has been a change in management of the route Quality of the Natural Environment of the Dutch National Science Agenda (in Dutch: Route Kwaliteit van de Omgeving van de Nationale Wetenschapsagenda). Han Olf has been appointed as ambassador ('boegbeeld') of the route and Rosalie van Dam will act as day-to-day coordinator ('trekker'). Together with a new coordinating team for the route and in line with the current national revision of the NWA, they are now developing a new focus.

An important aspect of this new focus is to fill knowledge gaps with regard to **'joint solutions to multiple crises'** concerning the quality of the natural environment. At this moment, there is clear societal recognition of the need to address the current crisis of biodiversity loss. In the Netherlands, excessive nitrogen emissions from multiple economic sectors have been an important cause of biodiversity loss in especially nutrient-poor ecosystems. Combined with strong national and international legislation to protect biodiversity this has led to the current nitrogen crisis that requires urgent solutions. Meanwhile, insufficient progress with regard to the transition from fossil to renewable energy is increasingly viewed as a climate crisis.

It is increasingly recognized that these different crises should not be addressed in isolation. Instead, new approaches are leading to joint, synergistical solutions. For example, climate change is an important driver of biodiversity loss, and destruction of ecosystems undermines nature's ability to regulate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and protect against extreme weather, thus accelerating climate change and increasing vulnerability to it. Also, unsustainable agricultural systems associated with high nitrogen emissions impair biodiversity in neighboring natural ecosystems, with negative potential consequences for carbon sequestration and GHG emissions. In this, it is important to show how potential synergies can be scaled up to lead to national and international impact.

This NWA Small Projects 2022 Call seeks proposals for developing new ways to strengthen, challenge and spark various parties in finding joint and systemic solutions. As limited funding is available for the current call, the development of available, high risk – high gain, innovative projects are stimulated that can help to further focus the route Quality of the Natural Environment, for example by leading to a later NWA ORC proposal.

## Procedure and Theme application Call Small Projects 2022 for Route Quality of the Living Environment

### General information on the call small projects:

- €300,000 is available per NWA route
- Only 1 application per route may be submitted, the application can be divided in max 3 small sub-projects
- Main applicant: The application may only be submitted by the ambassador (Han Olff) or the coordinator (Rosalia van Dam).
- Co-applicants, which are those institutes that apply for subprojects: Universities located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Institutes affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) or NWO; Universities of applied sciences, as meant in Article 1.8 of the Higher Education and Research Act; TO2 institutions; the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics; Naturalis Biodiversity Center
- Language proposal: English
- Submission deadline by route management: May 10, 2022 14 CEST
- General information on the call small projects can be found [here](#)

### Specifics imposed by the Route Quality of the Natural Environment for this call:

- Subproject proposals
  - o Two proposals within the above described theme "Joint solutions to multiple crises" can be funded, each amounting maximally to 125 KEuro. The remaining part of 50 KEuro will be used to organize national activities within the Route to further develop its new focus, such as symposia, in coordination with the successful applicants and to stimulate integration between the two subprojects.
  - o The maximum duration of the project is 2 years.
  - o The two proposed subprojects can either aim at:
    - Innovation: explore a new, out-of-the-box idea or;
    - Synthesis: merging of existing knowledge to arrive at new insights which contribute to the knowledge agenda, ambitions and/or game changers of the route;
- Theme
  - o Main theme: **Joint solutions to multiple crises** – with focus on the biodiversity crisis, nitrogen crisis, climate crisis, where each subproject should address at least 2 of these crises.
- Organization
  - o We appreciate cooperation between institutes and organizations.
  - o We appreciate multi- or transdisciplinarity
- Format proposal
  - o Use separate format (see email) – filled out format should be max 3 pages long.

## Selection of subprojects and evaluation on the overall application

### Selection of the subproject proposals

- by Route management
- Criteria:
  1. Alignment with the new focus of the route as outlined above
  2. Connecting (new, unexpected, multiple fields of expertise)
  3. Relevance
  4. Quality of the subproject/proposal
  5. Urgency
  6. Promising

### Review application as a whole

- After the two subprojects have been selected by the management of the route Quality of the Natural Environment, the submitted integrated proposal will also be by an assessment committee installed by NWA to check alignment with the following criteria:
  1. Alignment with the route (25%) (whole proposal)
  2. Connection (25%) (per subproject)
  3. Relevance (25%) (per subproject)
  4. Project design (25%) (per subproject)

### Procedure and dates

3 May	Deadline submission of the proposals for the two 125.000 Euro subprojects, to be submitted to <a href="mailto:rosalie.vandam@wur.nl">rosalie.vandam@wur.nl</a> with subject text: 'proposal subproject'
5 May	Decision on proposal subproject(s) by the Route management, applicants are informed
6-9 May	Preparation of the full proposal by the route (info on subproject synergy, data management, additional activities to be funded in addition to the subprojects)
10 May	Deadline submitting application by route management - 14.00 CEST
Summer	NWA Assessment committee meeting
24 August	Decision by the NWO board

### Contact information

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