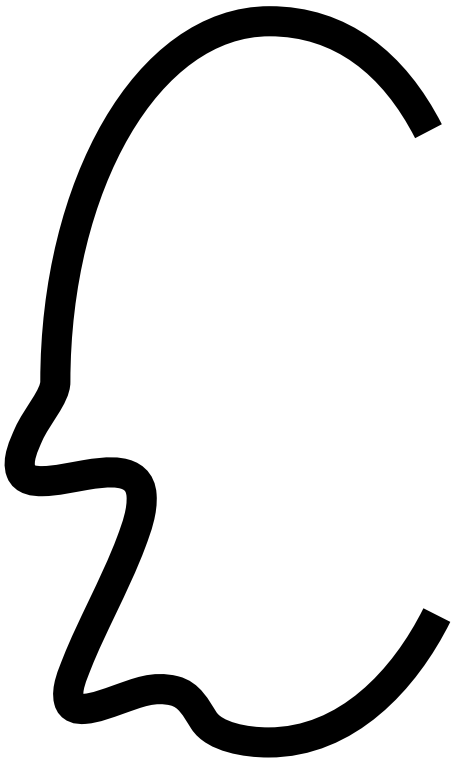
Open Call
Fresh Perspectives

This document is a descriptive translation of the original Dutch Open Oproep Fresh Perspectives. The English translation is provided for reference purposes only, and in all instances the original Dutch text takes precedence. If you would like to report a translation error or inaccuracy, we encourage you to contact the Creative Industries Fund NL.



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Do you, as a designer, want to develop a fresh perspective on a current social challenge related to nature preservation, climate, the circular economy, the energy transition, housing construction, geopolitics, democracy, polarisation, migration or social/opportunity inequality or another field? The Creative Industries Fund NL is inviting designers, architects, makers and observers to implement a project, in cooperation with a socially-committed partner, focussing on a closely-knit and resilient society. Submit your proposal by 26 August 2025, 16:00 CEST at the latest to become eligible for a grant for the cooperative project.

important information

The selection procedure is divided into two phases. The open call's total available budget is € 600,000, of which € 100,000 is reserved for the first phase for a maximum of ten selected proposals. In this phase, you will work on preparing and kicking off your project. In the second phase, you can apply for another grant of up to € 50,000 to implement the project.

what is this call's objective?

With the Open Call: Fresh Perspectives, the Fund is supporting designers, makers and architects in developing fresh perspectives on social, political and economic issues, whilst also stimulating cross-sector collaborations with other organisations to come to new and surprising products, services, knowledge, approaches or applications. This open call contributes to promoting one of the Fund's objectives, namely the use of the power of design in social challenges.

who is this open call intended for?

Designers, architects, makers and observers who have been running their own practice for at least three years within the design, digital culture and/or architecture disciplines may submit an application. Collectives and duos are also welcome.

You have to collaborate with at least one partner who works in another field or domain outside the creative industry, such as knowledge institutions, archives, labs, platforms and/or other types of social organisations, or with a partner from the public sector. At least one of the collaboration partners has to have proven experience in and knowledge of the social theme that is central to the proposal.

The proposal must be submitted by the designer, as the designer will be the main applicant and coordinator of the project and will be the one who receives the grant.

which projects are eligible for a grant?

The open call focuses on cross-sectoral collaborations, in which parties work together to approach a social issue in a new way. The project may deliver different end products, such as an activity, an intervention, an event, a publication, a service, a product or a process.

phase I

You can submit the application for phase 1 up to **26 August 2025, 16:00 CEST**. Ten projects at most will be awarded € 10,000 per project.

The initial phase runs for a maximum of five months, starting on 1 December 2025 up to 30 April 2026. The applicant and the partner are to use this period to prepare and kick off the project and to further explore the intended theme, end product and collaboration. This phase can be used to investigate what the possibilities for a project are, to work on a prototype or proof of concept and work out the objective and setup of the project. At the end of the first phase, you and your partner(s) will have drawn up a project plan, a budget and a collaboration agreement for the application procedure for the second phase.

You need to submit your application via the Fund's application platform in the 'Open Call: Fresh Perspectives 2025 Phase 1' round. You fill in the application form and add the following attachments (in PDF, A4 portrait layout):

Attachments phase 1:

1. A project plan (no more than 5 pages). You give insight into the intended objective and setup of the first phase in a brief project plan. Elaborate the following aspects:
    - Topic: which challenge is central to the proposal? Position the topic within current developments and explain the social relevance of the project, the research question and the vision on the urgency of the issue.
    - Plan of action: describe the activities that you are going to carry out in the first phase. How are you going to organise this phase? Are you going to carry out an investigation or experiment before you develop an end product, or do you want to work on a prototype or a proof of concept? What are the substantive and artistic principles? Provide information on the content, setup, organisation and financing of the project's first phase, by zooming in on the formulated problem, research questions, method or process and going into detail about the intended results.
    - Motivation: what could the project mean for your practice and what contributions could you make to tackle the challenge? Explain how your project could contribute to existing knowledge or resources and show how it could lead to a fresh perspective.
    - Collaboration: who are you going to work with and what position does your partner or do your partners have in relation to the social challenge? What added value do you expect the collaboration to have? What is the role of the partner(s) and what knowledge do they bring? Describe why the partner wants to work with a designer and how you complement each other. Also describe and motivate your intention to work together and what you want to do to consolidate the collaboration.
    - Intended target groups or audience: explain who this project is intended for and why and how you want to reach or involve these groups.
2. A brief budget for expenditure of a maximum of € 10,000 in the first phase, adhering to the Fair Practice Code (1 page at most). For this open call, co-financing is not compulsory, but if there is co-financing, including the use of time and other resources, then add a funding plan as well;
3. a brief timetable (no more than 1 page);
4. CVs of the applicant and collaboration partner(s) (no more than 2 pages per partner);
5. A portfolio of the applicant's most recent and relevant visual material (no more than 10 pages);
6. A letter of intent from the collaboration partner(s);
7. An extract from the register of the KVK (Chamber of Commerce) regarding the applicant issued no more than one year ago;
8. A representative image of the project to be used for communication purposes by the Fund.

Please note: make sure you create an account with login details for the application platform in good time, as it takes one working day to activate a new account.

Criteria fase 1

a. **The way the social challenge is approached:** This criterion assesses how the selected social challenge is described and approached, what effect this approach will have on existing knowledge and developments around this challenge and how this project could be of added value. Could the first phase be a starting point for questioning prevailing ways of thinking and doing? Is the research question clear?
b. **The artistic quality of the project:** This criterion assesses the artistic quality, the relationship between the project's form and substance. What is the substantive

objective or principle and how does this translate into an exploration, research, an experiment or a proof of concept? The committee also looks at how the project fits in with and adds value to the applicant's own practice or portfolio, which new steps the applicant can take with this project and what impact it may have on the applicant's own practice or area of expertise.

c. **The degree to which the first phase is effective in its setup, methods and the expertise involved:** With this criterion, the advisory committee assesses how consistent the objective and setup is. Could this project deliver new insights and perspectives on the social challenge with this setup? Do the setup and activities in the first phase link up with the objective set? The committee assesses whether the plan of action is clear, an effective method is used and whether the project is set up in such a way that the objectives are attainable. Are communication and knowledge-sharing activities optimal and is the project feasible within the proposed budget and timetable?
d. **The quality and form of the proposed collaboration:** This criterion looks at the motivation for the formation of this collaboration and how it will be explored further. Which knowledge and experience do the partners bring to the table and how do they complement each other? How are the partners going to give shape to the collaboration to ensure sufficient involvement and equality? Which substantive, technical or strategic ideas do the partners have on involving external parties, target groups, the public or communities in the project, to broaden the project's level of support?

The advisory committee members assess the applications by giving a score to each criterion, which together contribute equally to the final score. A five-point scale will be applied: 1 (unsatisfactory); 2 (weak); 3 (satisfactory); 4 (good); 5 (very good). The average end score will be ranked from high to low for each application. Applications that receive an average score of 3.00 or more, will be given a positive assessment. The assessment is similar to a tender - the first ten highest scoring and positively assessed proposals will be preferred over other ones.

phase II

If the project is selected in phase 1 and fully completed, a new application can be submitted for phase 2 that focusses on the implementation of the project. Ten projects at most will be awarded € 50,000 per project in this phase.

You can submit the application for phase 2 up to **7 May 2026, 16:00 CEST**. Besides a written application, you also need to give a presentation of the project to the advisory committee as part of the application procedure for this phase. You will be sent more information and an invitation nearer the time to the presentations that will take place in June 2026. The committee will take any information and insights it gains from the presentation into consideration in its assessment as well.

You have a maximum of twelve months to implement the project in the period running from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027. The project may deliver various end products, such as an activity, an intervention, an event, a publication, a service, a product or a process and should be wrapped up with a suitable knowledge-sharing event, such as a presentation, a symposium or a publication.

You submit your application via the Fund's application platform in the 'Open Call: Fresh Perspectives 2025 Phase 2' round. You fill in the application form and add the following attachments (in PDF, A4 portrait layout):

Attachments phase 2

1. A project plan (no more than 10 pages). You give insight into the intended objective and setup of the implementation of your project and elaborate the following aspects:

- Result from phase 1: what are the results from the first phase? How do you and your partner(s) look back at the preparation and start of the project and how do you want to build on this in the follow-up phase? How have the advisory committee's recommendations or conditions, if applicable, been processed in the proposal? Which new insights did you gain about the topic and your project and what is the research question?
- Plan of action: describe the activities that you are going to carry out in the second phase to implement the project. What research setup or method are you going to use and what are your substantive and artistic principles? Explain how your project could contribute to existing knowledge or resources and show how it could lead to a fresh perspective on the topic. Provide information about the content, setup, organisation and financing of the project's second phase and go into detail about the intended results.
- Motivation: what impact could the project have on your organisations and the way you work and which role do you see for yourself in the challenge? Explain how your project could contribute to existing knowledge or resources and show how it could lead to a fresh perspective.
- Collaboration: who are the collaboration partners and what is their position in relation to the social challenge? Do you have a shared vision that shows that the collaboration has added value? Who brings what knowledge or experience to the table and who will take up which role or tasks?
- Intended results: give an explanation of the intended end form(s) of the project and on the knowledge and insights you want to gain.
- Intended target groups or audience: explain who this project is intended for, why and how you want to reach or involve them.
- Communication: explain how you are going to communicate about the project.
- Knowledge sharing: which activity or activities, for example a symposium, presentation or publication, are you going to develop and implement to share the results of the project with stakeholders, target groups, communities and a relevant or an appropriate audience?

2. A balanced budget for expenditure of a maximum of € 50,000 in the second phase, adhering to the Fair Practice Code (1 page at most). For this open call, co-financing is not compulsory, but if there is co-financing, including the use of time and other resources, then add a funding plan as well;
3. A timetable (no more than 2 pages);
4. CVs of the applicant and collaboration partner(s) (no more than 2 pages per partner);
5. A portfolio of the applicant's most recent and relevant visual material (no more than 10 pages);
6. A collaboration agreement between the applicant and the collaboration partner(s), including arrangements on intellectual property, and an explanation of how the Fair Practice Code will be applied. For more information, have a look at: collaboration agreements;
7. An extract from the register of the KVK (Chamber of Commerce) regarding the applicant issued no more than one year ago;
8. A representative image of the project to be used for communication purposes by the Fund.

Criteria phase 2

a. **The way the social challenge is approached:** This criterion assesses the results from the first phase regarding the social challenge. Have new insights, knowledge and ideas been gained and how are they relevant to the way the social challenge is described and approached? How does this project stand out from existing knowledge and developments around this challenge, and does it offer added value? Does the project question prevailing ways of thinking and doing or does it build on them? Is the research question clear and well-defined?

b. **The artistic quality of the project:** This criterion assesses the artistic quality, the relationship between the project's form and substance. What is the substantive objective or principle and how does this translate into a design challenge, research, form or other medium? The committee also looks at how the project fits in with and adds value to the applicant's own practice or portfolio, which new steps the applicant can take with this project and what impact it may have on the applicant's own practice or area of expertise.
c. **The degree to which the project is effective in its setup, methods and the expertise involved:** With this criterion, the advisory committee assesses how consistent the objective and setup is. Do the setup and activities in this phase link up with the objective set? The committee assesses whether the plan of action is clear, an effective method is used and whether the project is set up in such a way that the intended objectives are attainable. Are communication and knowledge-sharing activities appropriate and is the project feasible within the proposed budget and timetable?
d. **The quality and form of the collaboration:** This criterion looks at how the collaboration is organised. Which knowledge and experience do the partners bring to the table and how do they complement each other? Have clear arrangements about the collaboration been made and is there insight into the division of tasks and responsibilities and is there involvement and equality? Have arrangements been made about intellectual property? This criterion also assesses whether and how, from a substantive, technical or strategic point of view, the partners are going to involve external parties, target groups, the public or communities in the project, to broaden the project's level of support. Has sufficient consideration been given to the Fair Practice Code and the Diversity and Inclusion Code, specifically when it comes to staff, partners and the audience?

Besides a written application, the applicant has to give a presentation to the advisory committee as part of the application procedure for phase 2. The presentation will give the applicant room to elaborate the proposal and the committee the opportunity to ask questions. The committee will take any information and insights it gains from the presentation into consideration in its assessment.

The advisory committee members assess the applications based on the application and the presentation, giving a score for each criterion, which together contribute equally to the final score. A five-point scale will be applied: 1 (unsatisfactory); 2 (weak); 3 (satisfactory); 4 (good); 5 (very good). Applications that receive an average score of 3.00 or more, will be given a positive assessment. If the end score is lower than 3.00, negative advice will be given and if so, no grant for the second phase will be awarded. The scores from the first selection round are not taken into consideration in the assessment of the second selection round.

receipt of the application

After the closing date, the Fund will review whether the application matches the call, is complete and meets the conditions and entry requirements. The applicant will be informed about the processing of the application no more than three weeks after the closing date.

selection procedure

In both phases, applications will be submitted to an independent advisory committee, who uses the Advisory Committee Procedure of the Creative Industries Fund NL.

announcement of the selection and assessment

The applicants will be informed of the decision on the proposals selected for the first phase via the application platform by 11 November 2025 at the latest, where a general selection report and individual scores can also be found. The selected projects will also be sent a written individual motivation, possibly accompanied by recommendations from the committee.

The decision on the proposals assessed in the second phase will be announced via the application platform by 22 July 2026 at the latest. All assessed proposals will also be sent a written individual motivation, possibly accompanied by recommendations from the committee.

payment, accountability and determination of the grant

For this open call, the full grant awarded for phase 1 will be paid and determined in one go.

For phase 2, the Fund will pay an advance of 80% of the amount awarded. Two weeks before the conclusion of your project, you will be asked by email to submit your accountability form via the application platform. If the activities have been implemented according to the application and all obligations have been met, the board will determine the grant. The remaining amount of the grant amount will be paid after the decision on the determination of the grant, provided that the grant is not determined at a lower amount. You can read more about accountability and determination in Chapter 6 of the Open Call Grant Scheme.

conditions

If an application is incomplete or does not meet the conditions and entry requirements, no substantive assessment can be made and an application may be refused.

A number of supplementary conditions for this call have been drawn up:

- The designer/maker must have been running their own practice for at least three years within the area of design, architecture and/or digital culture;
- You have to collaborate with at least one partner who works in another field or domain. The collaboration partner has proven experience in and knowledge of the social theme that is central to the proposal.
- The proposal must be submitted by the designer/maker, as the designer/maker will be the main applicant and coordinator of the project and is the one who will receive the grant .
- The partners commit to the collaboration, which is laid down in a cooperation agreement at the start of phase 2. The collaborative venture is an equal collaboration between the parties who have complementary knowledge and jointly see to the implementation of the project. For more information, have a look on: cooperation agreements;
- The project for phase 1 has not started yet;
- There is no working relationship between the parties involved.

See Article 7 of the Open Call Grant Scheme's general terms and conditions.

obligations

There are obligations attached to receiving a grant. These obligations are described in Chapter 5 of the Open Call Grant Scheme. In all cases, the grant may only be used for activities that are described in the application. The applicant must report any changes to the setup and implementation of the project.

open call grant scheme

This open call has a legal basis in the Fund's Open Call Grant Scheme. Applications are processed and assessed and grants awarded on the basis of this scheme, so please read the scheme carefully before submitting an application, as it describes the general conditions, grounds for rejection, manner of publication, submission procedure, assessment, award and grant obligations.

want to know more?

This open call has been put out nearly every year since 2017. The selected proposals will receive a grant from the Creative Industries Fund NL's Vrij Programmahuis. Have

a look on www.stimuleringsfonds.nl for examples of projects that were selected in previous calls.

contact

For questions about the call and the procedure, please contact Eva Roolker via e.roolker@stimuleringsfonds.nl or Kiki Lennaerts via k.lennaerts@stimuleringsfonds.nl or call +31(0)10-4361600.