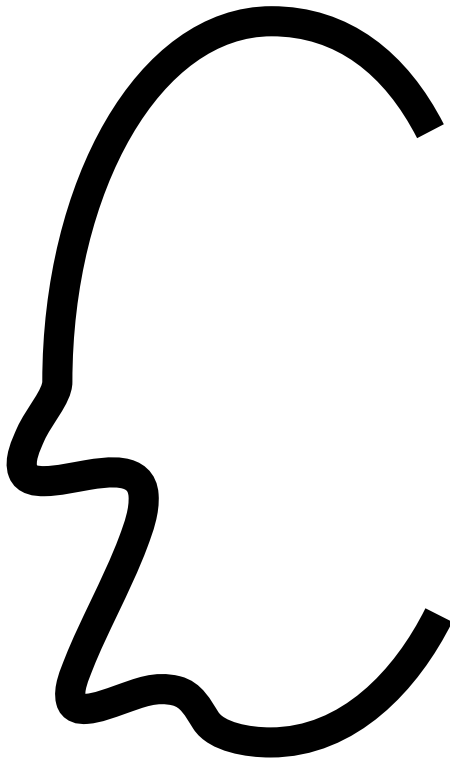


# Open Call Fresh Perspectives

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.



**creative industries  
fund NL**

**design  
architecture  
digital culture**

p.o. box 29066  
3001 gb rotterdam

groothandelsgebouw  
entrance c, 5th floor  
weena 723, rotterdam

+31 (0)10 436 16 00

**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 and makers to implement a project, in cooperation with a socially-committed partner, focussing on a closely-knit and resilient society. Submit your proposal by 25 August 2026, 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 contribution to a maximum of ten projects of €10,000. In this phase, you will work on preparing and kicking off your project. In the second phase, €500,000 is available and you can apply for a 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 and makers who have been running their own practice for at least four years within the design, digital culture and/or architecture disciplines may submit an application. Collectives and duos are also welcome.

A new collaboration with at least one partner working in another field or domain outside the creative industry is required, such as knowledge institutions, archives, labs, platforms, local or small-scale initiatives, 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 from **19 May 2026, 15:00 CEST up to 25 August 2026, 16:00 CEST** at the latest. 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 2026 up to 30 April 2027. 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 will also be able to give a presentation about the prototype or proof of concept.

You need to submit your application via the Fund's [application platform](#) in the 'Open Call: Fresh Perspectives 2026 Phase 1' round. Please pay close attention to the maximum file size and the maximum number of pages (including visual material) for each document type. Files that exceed the maximum file size (in MB) cannot be uploaded to the application platform. Documents that exceed the maximum number of pages can be uploaded, but this may still result in rejection of the application during the review of formal requirements. With the exception of images, all documents must be submitted as PDFs (portrait orientation). For all documents, use a minimum font size of 10 and line spacing of 1.

### Attachments phase 1:

1. A project plan (no more than 5 pages, including visual material, max 4 MB in PDF). 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 (and if applicable a funding plan) for expenditure of a maximum of € 10,000 in the first phase, using the template provided for this open call, adhering to the [Fair Practice Code](#). The Fund contributes a maximum of €82.50 excl. VAT to the hourly rate of the applicant and equivalent collaboration partner(s). For this open call, co-financing is not compulsory. If there is co-financing, including the use of time and other resources, then add a funding plan as well (budget and funding plan together max 2 pages, max 4 MB in PDF);
3. A brief timetable (no more than 1 page, max 4 MB in PDF);
4. CVs of the applicant and collaboration partner(s) (no more than 2 pages per partner, max 4 MB total in PDF);
5. A portfolio of the applicant's most recent and relevant visual material (no more than 10 pages, including visual material, max 8 MB in PDF);
6. A letter of intent from the collaboration partner(s). Please use the [Fund's Letter of Intent Format](#) or draft your own (one document, max 4 MB in PDF);
7. A certified extract from the Chamber of Commerce or Business Register within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in which the applicant is registered (max 1 year old and max 4 MB, in PDF);
8. A representative image of the project to be used for communication purposes by the Fund, for which the necessary rights are held by the applicant (max 4 MB in JPG).

*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.

## 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 from **30 April 2027, 15:00 CEST up to 7 May 2027, 16:00 CEST** at the latest. 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 2027. 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 2027 to 31 August 2028. The project may deliver various end products, such as an activity, an intervention, an event, a publication, a service, a product or a process. In addition to this end product, a suitable form of knowledge sharing about the project's results must take place, 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 2026 Phase 2' round. Please pay close attention to the maximum file size and the maximum number of pages (including visual material) for each document type. Files that exceed the maximum file size (in MB) cannot be uploaded to the application platform. Documents that exceed the maximum number of pages can be uploaded, but this may still result in rejection of the application during the review of formal requirements. With the exception of images, all documents must be submitted as PDFs (portrait orientation). For all documents, use a minimum font size of 10 and line spacing of 1.

### Attachments phase 2

1. A project plan (no more than 10 pages, including visual material, max 8 MB in PDF). You give insight into the intended objective and setup of the implementation of your project and elaborate the following aspects:
  - Results 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 existing organisations and the way you work and which role do you see for yourself in the challenge?
  - 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 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.
  - 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?
  - Communication: explain the communication activities with regard to the intended target groups, the public and knowledge sharing.
2. A balanced budget (and if applicable a funding plan) for expenditure of a maximum of € 50,000 in the second phase, using the budget and funding plan template for this open call, adhering to the [Fair Practice Code](#). The Fund contributes a maximum of €82.50 excl. VAT to the hourly rate of the applicant and equivalent collaboration partner(s). For this open call, co-financing is not compulsory. If there is co-financing, including the use of time and other resources, then add a funding plan as well (budget and funding plan together max 2 pages, max 4 MB in PDF);
  3. A timetable (no more than 2 pages, max 4 MB in PDF);
  4. CVs of the applicant and collaboration partner(s) (no more than 2 pages per partner, max 4 MB total in PDF);
  5. A portfolio of the applicant's most recent and relevant visual material (no more than 10 pages, including visual material, max 8 MB in PDF);
  6. A signed 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. See: collaboration agreements (one document, max 4 MB in PDF);
  7. A certified extract from the Chamber of Commerce or Business Register within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in which the applicant is registered (max 1 year old and max 4 MB, in PDF);
  8. A representative image of the project to be used for communication purposes by the Fund, for which the necessary rights are held by the applicant (max 4 MB in JPG).

## how are applications assessed?

### Criteria phase 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 and substantive quality:** This criterion assesses the artistic and substantive 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.

### 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 and substantive quality:** This criterion assesses the artistic and substantive 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?

For phase 2, besides a written application, the applicant has to give a presentation to the advisory committee as part of the application procedure, at the Fund's office in Rotterdam or online (for applicants residing in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom). 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 decision on the proposals selected for the first phase will be announced to applicants via the application platform by 10 November 2026 at the latest, together with a general selection report. Individual scores may be requested from the Fund. 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 23 July 2027 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 payment 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. For more information on accountability and determination, please refer to Chapter 6 of the [Open Call Grant Scheme](#).

## conditions

*Please note:* for this open call, the conditions of the Open Call Grant Scheme apply. For example, no grant can be applied for activities already underway, for assets that retain value after the project has concluded, or for regular operating costs.

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.

For this open call, there is one deviation from the Open Call Grant Scheme:

- Article 5.1: Unlike what is stated in the Open Call Grant Scheme, it is not possible to submit an application as an observer or cultural institution for the Open Call Fresh Perspectives.

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 four years within the area of design, architecture and/or digital culture, based on the portfolio and the registration date on the KVK extract;
- You have to collaborate with at least one partner who works in another field

- or domain outside the creative industry. 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 collaboration agreement at the start of phase 2. The cooperative 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 at: [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.

### **contact**

For questions about the open call and the procedure, please contact Robin Alberts via [r.alberts@stimuleringsfonds.nl](mailto:r.alberts@stimuleringsfonds.nl) or Arsalan Ishaqzai via [a.ishaqzai@stimuleringsfonds.nl](mailto:a.ishaqzai@stimuleringsfonds.nl) or call 010 436 16 00.

### **want to know more?**

This open call has been put out nearly every year since 2017. Have a look on the [Creative Industries Fund NL's website](#) for examples of projects that were selected in previous calls.