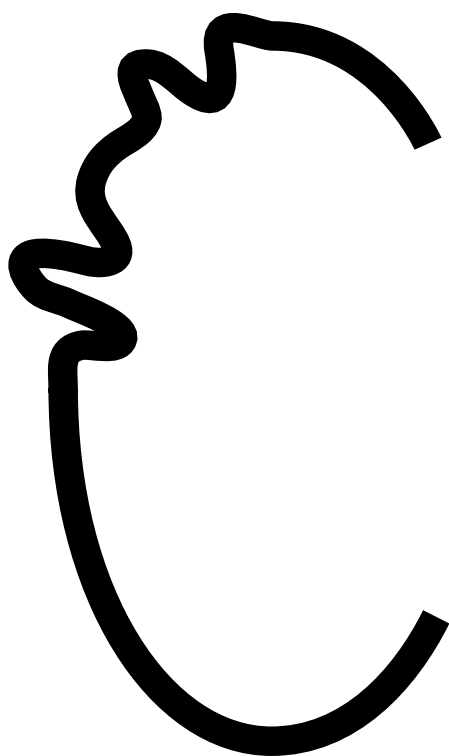


Open Call Grounding the Cloud: Material Realities in Digital Culture

This document is a descriptive translation of the original Dutch Open Oproep Grounding the Cloud. 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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Are you a designer, maker, researcher or collective and do you work on alternative ways of handling digital technology? Then this open call may be of interest to you.

With the Open Call Grounding the Cloud, the Creative Industries Fund NL wants to support projects that provide insight into the ecological impact of digital technologies and data consumption, reduce that impact, or offer (more) sustainable alternatives. We are looking for projects that not only address the theme of sustainability but embed it in their working methods and collaboration. The deadline for submitting an application is **14 September 2026 at 16:00 CEST**.

in short

- **For:** makers, designers, collectives and researchers within digital culture who want to contribute to a sustainable digital culture
- **Deadline for submission:** 14 September 2026, 16:00 CEST
- **Contribution per project:** a maximum of € 30,000
- **Grant ceiling (the total budget available):** € 350,000
- **Announcement of selection:** within eight weeks after the closing date
- **Consulting hours:** Thursday 6 August and Thursday 3 September at 15:00 CEST (ENG)

what is this call's objective?

Data storage in the cloud or the use of chatbots based on generative AI, all of these digital habits we find self-evident. Yet they have major ecological consequences. Just think of the energy consumption of data centres, the use of raw materials for hardware, and the ever-growing amount of e-waste. What opportunities are there to reduce the (physical) impact of our virtual data? How can we use and reuse digital technology within the limits of our planet, and how can we challenge our ideas about technological progress, innovation, ownership and growth in an intersectional way?

The artistic domain of digital culture questions, imagines or designs the ever-changing relationship between our society and technology. An important role that digital culture makers can play is to critically challenge digital developments, open up or hack the principles behind technology, and imagine more just and climate-conscious alternatives.

With this open call, the Fund wants to encourage creative making and thinking processes relating to topics such as regenerative culture, degrowth, low-tech, the reuse of obsolete hardware, and responsibility for the technologies we use within digital culture. We encourage projects that make the ecological (and therefore also social) impact of digital technologies and data consumption tangible, question it, and put alternative working methods into practice.

who is this open call intended for?

This open call is for applications from individual makers, designers, observers or collectives within the field of digital culture who are established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (the Netherlands, Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten). The call focusses on applicants who develop regenerative or mitigating ways of working and embed sustainability in their methods, collaboration and technological choices.

The applicant must be registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce or with one within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

conditions

The conditions and procedures described in the [Open Call Grant Scheme](#) apply to this open call. Please read these conditions carefully before submitting your application. A deviation applies to this open call with regard to the following provision in 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 a cultural institution for the Open Call Grounding the Cloud.

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

- Collaboration with institutions is possible. Please note, however, that certain institutions may not receive a fee from this open call, namely institutions that receive a grant under the cultural Basic Infrastructure (BIS) scheme or institutions that receive a grant under the Fund's Four-year Institutional Grant Scheme for the Creative Industry 2025–2028.
- You cannot submit an application if you are currently receiving, or will receive in 2026, a grant under our Talent Development Grant Scheme, the Open Call: Self-taught Designer, or the Open Call: Emerging Design Practices ABCSSS.
- You cannot submit an application if you received a grant in 2025 under the Open Call Grounding the Cloud and have not yet completed that project by the date of submission.

which projects are eligible for a grant?

This open call is for projects within digital culture that contribute to providing insight into and reducing the ecological impact of digital technology. You may apply for grants in relation to new projects, but also to reinterpret or further develop existing initiatives that clearly show scope for more depth or a changed approach. Collaborations in which designers, makers or researchers engage with the theme of sustainability from an intersectional perspective are explicitly encouraged.

The grant may be used for artistic and substantive development, research, collaboration, knowledge sharing, presentation and documentation. Projects may comprise:

- the development of tools, working methods or systems;
- artistic research or research by design;
- events aimed at sharing knowledge, developing infrastructure or community building around a more sustainable digital culture.

A budget of € 350,000 is available for this call in 2026. Grant applications can be awarded a maximum of € 30,000. This means that at least 11 positively assessed projects can be supported.

The maximum duration of the project is one year. In the plan you need to give insight into the working method, expertise involved and intended impact, including a realistic timetable and balanced budget. If you are supported, you will be expected to participate in events organised by the Fund within the context of this open call which are intended to stimulate knowledge sharing between the supported parties.

You cannot apply for a grant for projects that have no clear connection with this open call's theme, that are mainly aimed at promotion or marketing, that have already been completed or for which an application has already been submitted to the Digital Culture Grant Scheme. This includes projects that take place outside the digital culture field, as defined in the Open Call Grant Scheme.

Revised applications that were rejected in 2025 under the Open Call Grounding the Cloud may be resubmitted, provided the applicant identifies new facts or changed circumstances, as referred to in Article 7(1)(b) of the Open Call Grant Scheme. More information can be found on the [website of the Creative Industries Fund NL](#).

what is assessed?

Grant applications will be submitted for assessment to an external independent advisory committee. In doing so, the committee follows the [Advisory Committee Procedure](#), as published on the website of the Creative Industries Fund NL. The advisors base their opinion on the following criteria:

a. the artistic quality of the proposal

The committee assesses the relationship between the project's substance and form: how is the core idea designed or set out artistically? In light of this open call, an assessment is also made of how much applicants show awareness about the sustainability and materiality of digital technology when making substantive and artistic choices.

b. the significance of the research question for the digital culture field

The committee assesses how the project relates to existing developments, knowledge and practices within the digital culture field. For example, does the project contribute to further exploring or broadening the discourse around sustainability and digital technology? Does it question or enrich existing working methods and perspectives, especially in the field of regeneration, climate mitigation or ecological impact? The committee also looks at whether the project can give a platform to voices or perspectives that contribute to a more diverse and equitable digital culture.

c. the positioning and reflection of the applicant on the open call's theme

The committee assesses the position the applicant takes on the theme: what experience does the applicant have in sustainable digital practices? How is the project embedded in relevant communities or practices? Does the application show awareness of the applicant's own possible biases or as-yet undiscovered insights, and does it reflect on the ecological impact of the use of digital technology?

d. the degree to which the project is effective in its setup, methods and the expertise involved and collaboration

The committee assesses the project's feasibility: how clearly and convincingly has the plan of action been set out? Is the selected working method effective, realistic and suited to the objectives? Does the project team possess relevant substantive, technical and/or organisational expertise to implement the project successfully? The committee also assesses the quality of collaborations within the project and how knowledge is shared with the field or the audience.

how do you submit an application?

To be eligible for this grant, you have to write an application. The application consists of several documents. You can submit your proposal via the Creative Industries Fund NL's [application platform](#) up to 14 September 2026, 16:00 CEST. Select the 'Open Call' grant scheme and then the 'Open Call Grounding the Cloud'.

The application should consist of:

- a fully completed application form;
- a project plan (no more than 5 A4 pages including images, max. 8 MB, in PDF), in which you set out:
 - the substantive starting point and the artistic or research question;
 - how your project relates to the theme of this open call;
 - the selected way of working, methods and intended results;
 - the parties involved, collaboration forms and expertise;
 - how the project contributes to knowledge sharing, reflection and/or sustainable development within digital culture;
 - the timetable for and organisation of the project;
- a timetable (no more than 1 A4 page, max. 4 MB, in PDF). This timetable may not start before the decision date of this open call;

- a balanced budget and funding plan (no more than 2 A4 pages, max. 4 MB, in PDF);
- a portfolio with relevant recent work of the parties involved (no more than 10 A4 pages including images, max. 8 MB, in PDF);
- CVs of the parties involved (bundled, 1 A4 page in PDF per party, 4 MB in total);
- a digitally certified extract from the Trade Register of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, or from one of the trade registers within the Kingdom of the Netherlands (no more than 1 year old);
- letters of intent from, or collaboration agreements with, the parties involved, if applicable (max. 4 MB, in PDF);
- a representative image of the project, for communication purposes by the Fund, of which the necessary rights to the image lie with the applicant (max. 4 MB, in JPG).

If the application does not meet the above description, no substantive assessment can take place. *Please note:* make sure you create an account for the application platform in good time, as it takes one working day to activate a new account.

selection procedure

The submitted proposals are assessed on the basis of the criteria set out above, by an independent advisory committee, in accordance with the Open Call Grant Scheme. The advisory committee applies the assessment method described in the Advisory Committee Procedure of the Creative Industries Fund NL.

The selection process is similar to a tender. The applications are ranked on the basis of the assessment. Projects that score the highest will be supported until the grant ceiling is reached. Only positively assessed applications can be supported.

As described in the Advisory Committee Procedure, the committee uses a five-point scale for scoring (5. Excellent; 4. Good; 3. Satisfactory; 2. Unsatisfactory; 1. Poor). Each criteria is of equal importance. If applications end up tied in the ranking based on the average final score, and the grant ceiling is reached with these applications, then, in deviation from Article 11.3.d of the Open Call Grant Scheme, priority will be given among these proposals to the proposal with the highest score on criterion b. If they score the same for b, then the score for criterion a will be applied, followed by c and d.

acknowledgement of receipt and announcement of the selection

No later than two weeks after the closing date, you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt via the Creative Industries Fund NL's application platform. The selection will be announced no more than eight weeks after the closing date via the application platform.

contact

For questions about the open call and the procedure, please contact: Loes Bogers via digitalecultuur@stimuleringsfonds.nl or call +31(0)10-4361600.