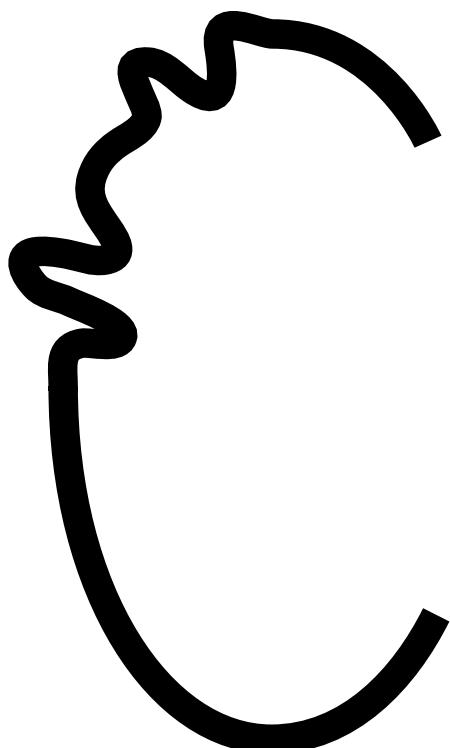


# Open Call Grounding the Cloud: Material Realities in Digital Culture

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.



**creative industries  
fund NL**

**design  
architecture  
digital culture**

**p.o. box 29066  
3001 gb rotterdam**

**groothandelsgebouw  
entrance c, 5th floor  
weena 793, rotterdam**

**+31 (0)10 436 16 00**

**Are you a designer, maker, researcher or collective and do you work on alternative ways of handling digital technology? With the new Open Call Grounding the Cloud, the Creative Industries Fund NL wants to support projects that reduce the ecological impact of digital technologies and data consumption, provide insights or offer sustainable alternatives.**

In doing so, we are encouraging making and thought processes that relate to topics like regenerative culture, 'de-growth', low-tech, the use and reuse of hardware, including obsolete hardware, and renewed ownership over the technologies we use. 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 **25 September 2025 at 16.00 hours CEST**.

### **in short**

- **For:** makers, designers, collectives and researchers who want to contribute to a sustainable digital culture
- **Contribution per project:** a maximum of € 30,000
- **Maximum project duration:** one year
- **Deadline for submission:** 25 September 2025, 16.00 hours CEST
- **Announcement of selection:** no more than eight weeks after the closing date
- **Consulting hours:** 20 August (NL) and 10 September (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. However, the ecological consequences, such as the consumption of energy in data centres, of raw materials for hardware and the ever-growing amount of e-waste, remain invisible most of the time. So, what is the impact, physical or otherwise, of our virtual data and what lies behind our interfaces? 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 and growth?

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 open up or hack the principles behind technology, to provide insight into them and to implement them to create new objectives for the field of design and other fields, by critically challenging digital developments and imagining new alternatives.

With this open call, the Fund is not only encouraging making and thought processes that relate to topics like regenerative culture, 'de-growth', low-tech, the use or reuse of hardware, including obsolete hardware, and renewed ownership over the technologies we use, within digital culture - the Fund wants to promote reflection on the ecological impact of digital technologies and data consumption in various forms.

### **who is this open call intended for?**

This open call is for makers, designers, collectives and observers within digital culture who are established in the Netherlands, Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius or Sint Maarten (Kingdom of the Netherlands). 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.

*Please note:* this open call is not open to institutions with a government grant under the cultural Basic Infrastructure (BIS) scheme or for institutions that have received a grant from the Fund under the Four-year Institutional Grant Scheme for the Creative Industry 2025–2028. You will also not be able to submit an application if you are currently being

supported or will be supported in 2026 with a grant under our Talent Development Grant Scheme, the Open Call: Self-taught Designer or the Open Call: Emerging Design Practices ABCSSS.

## **which projects are eligible for a grant?**

This open call is meant for projects that contribute to reducing or providing insight into 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. Designers, makers or researchers who are seeking to set up a collaboration around the sustainability theme are, in particular, 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.

Grant applications can be awarded a maximum of € 30,000. 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 budget. If you are supported, you will be expected to participate in events organised 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 [Digital Culture Grant Scheme](#).

*Please note: the terms of the [Open Call Grant Scheme](#) apply to this open call. For example, you may not apply for a grant for an item that still has a value after the project, nor for standard operating costs.*

## **what is assessed?**

Grant applications will be submitted for assessment to an external independent advisory committee. The advisors base their opinion on the following criteria:

### **a. the artistic quality of the proposal**

The committee looks at 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 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 new voices or perspectives that contribute to a more diverse and fair 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 any awareness of possible blind spots and a reflective stance regarding 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 looks at 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 25 September 16.00 hours 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 in PDF, 8 MB), 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 in PDF, 4 MB);
- a balanced budget and funding plan, (no more than 2 A4 pages in PDF, 4 MB);
- a portfolio with relevant recent work of the parties involved (no more than 10 A4 pages in PDF, 8 MB);
- CVs of the parties involved (bundled, 1 A4 page in PDF per party, 4 MB in total);
- a digitally certified extract from the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (issued no more than 1 year ago);
- letters of intent from the parties involved, if applicable (A4 in PDF, 4 MB);
- a representative image of the project, for communication purposes by the Fund, of which the necessary rights to the image lie with the applicant.

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.

**grant procedure**

A budget of € 200,000 is available for this open call. The submitted proposals will be assessed and ranked on the basis of the criteria set out above. A budget of € 200,000 is available for this open call. The advisers apply the assessment method described in the Advisory Committee Procedure of the Creative Industries Fund NL.

The selection process is similar to a tender. Projects that score the highest and with positively assessed applications will be supported until the budget runs out. Only positively assessed projects can be supported. Each criteria is of equal importance. When applications have the same average final score and would exceed the grant ceiling together, the proposal with the highest score on criterion b takes priority. If they score the same for b, then the score for criterion a will be applied, followed by c and

d. The submitted proposals will be processed and assessed on the basis of the Open Call Grant Scheme and the Open Call Grounding the Cloud. The committee issues its advice to the Fund's board for each application.

### **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: Odiel van de Nobelen via [digitalecultuur@stimuleringsfonds.nl](mailto:digitalecultuur@stimuleringsfonds.nl) or call +31(0)10-4361600.