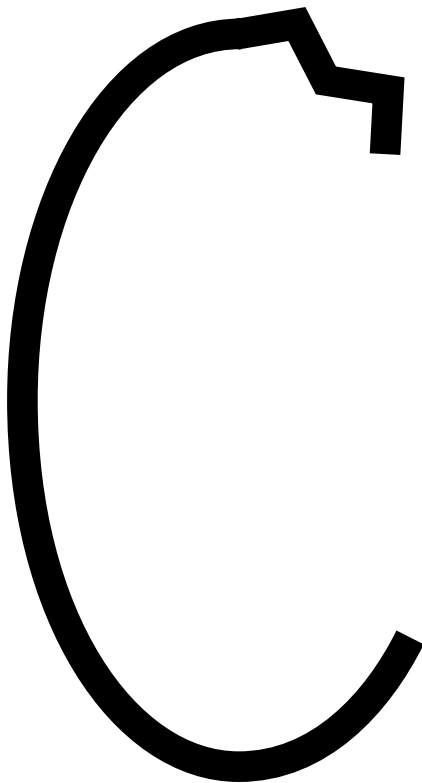


Open Call Building out of the Soil



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The Netherlands faces a big challenge in terms of urbanization. How can this challenge be tackled using the conditions created by the soil? The Creative Industries Fund NL invites designers, in collaboration with government bodies, organizations, experts and civilians and using research by design, to work on an integral approach to current and future urbanization issues, in which underground water and soil systems productively interact with aboveground urban systems. Proposals can be submitted via the [online application environment](#) by no later than 26 September 2022. A maximum of thirteen proposals will be selected for an amount not exceeding € 30,000 per proposal.

Open Call Building out of the Soil

- Submission deadline: 26 September 2022 at the latest
- Number of grants: 13 proposals at € 30,000 per proposal (phase 1)
- Project period: November 2022 - June 2023, after which it will be possible to submit applications for a follow-up phase for a maximum of € 40,000 per proposal (follow-up phase)
- Submit an application for a [start-up grant](#), at any time from 23 May up to and including 8 July 2022, to prepare the application for the first phase

building out of the soil

Thinking about the soil under our cities, we note that there is a continuous battle for underground space. This shortage of space is an urgent problem which will only intensify with further densification, the energy transition and climate adaptation. However, it is also a symptom of a bigger problem: our destructive handling of the subsurface based on our belief in social engineering.

How we currently handle the subsurface is no longer tenable. We have already far exceeded the limits of a healthy and vital soil and water system, for example in terms of biodiversity and the quality of the soil and water. This has also been caused by a decrease in knowledge about the significance and properties of the subsurface along with the sectoral compartmentalization of such knowledge. This has led to us losing sight of a productive relationship between the subsurface and what is aboveground.

Change is necessary, in order for underground water and soil systems to productively interact with aboveground urban systems. We have to move towards an approach that takes account of the specific functions the soil is suited to, that improves the soil's health and vitality, that makes sensible use of the ecosystem services the subsurface provides us with, that opts for spatial planning of the soil, and that values the subsurface's cultural and historical significance and identity.

What does that mean for urbanization? The relationship between the subsurface and what is aboveground should, at all relevant levels, be an integral part of tackling the urbanization challenge, and the challenges connected with that, such as the energy transition, climate adaptation and improving biodiversity, but also increasing inclusivity and the quality of life. This also means that the fragmented knowledge about subsurface (again) needs to be unearthed and shared, in order to formulate a wide-ranging, long-term, future-proof approach to urbanization based on underground conditions. This relates, for example, to knowledge about:

- the soil's suitability for specific types of urban use of land, at various levels;
- the underground soil and water systems as a coherent living system and the local and regional differences in those systems;
- the ecosystem services which can provide a healthy and vital soil and water system, for example in terms of biodiversity, a sustainable energy supply, the ability to clean

- and provide cooling and water storage;
- the possibilities (and impossibilities) of the subsurface as a space for the city's artificial and natural 'engine room' and as a user space;
- the subsurface, with its soil and water systems, as the city's memory and as a cultural and historical source of information which can teach us how to handle these systems in the future, but also teach us about an area's individuality and a territory's logic;
- the effects and rationale behind subsidence and drought.

who is this open call intended for?

Proposals can be submitted by spatial designers entering into a coalition with a wide range of stakeholders and experts. For example: provinces, water boards, municipalities, network managers, energy, water and telecom providers, landowners, area developers, social initiatives, market participants, heritage experts, water and soil experts and residents; from policymakers and implementers to managers and users. After all, linking the various interests and views, and combining the various perspectives on the challenge or challenges, may lead to new insights and opportunities. Designers can provide an important and innovative contribution to this process. They are capable of redefining complex problems and making the complexity of the challenge clear and open to discussion. Designers can also show where different aspects and some of the elements of the challenge can be linked. Moreover, they can explain the various interests and bring them together based on a shared interest.

which proposals are eligible for a grant?

The open call focuses on projects which, based on research by design, develop innovative perspectives, strategies and arrangements and/or solutions for the urbanization challenge which take genuine account of the condition of the subsurface and make productive use of it; projects on various scales and at different levels of action that help us to coexist with the underground soil and water systems, to understand the subsurface, to learn from it and to work with it to come to a sustainable and inclusive approach to the urbanization challenge.

Project proposals focus on one or more of the following design challenges:

other models

At a strategic level, the need for a productive relationship between the subsurface and what is aboveground raises the pressing demand for alternative urbanization models. When reflecting on the use of land in relation to the soil and water system, should we be spreading urbanization differently and instead looking at the choice of location? Or should we choose to layout the locations to be developed or transformed in a (radically) different way and more adaptively? Does this mean that we have to maintain the relatively hard divide between city and countryside? Or do we need to re-think this notion and move towards a transitional zone in which functional uses are combined? Does this mean that we need to move away from large-scale developments at locations that have specific limitations due to the subsurface being soft or prone to subsidence, and where the chance of excess water and the danger of flooding is considerable? And what does this mean for the (main) spatial structure and identity of the Netherlands and its various regions?

other tactics

The tactical level focuses, first and foremost, on defining the criteria and preconditions with which possible problem-solving approaches must comply. This is the level of action where the knowledge, developed at the operational level, needs to be mixed with the long-term perspective formulated at the strategic level, between specific interventions and the main plan. At the same time, the tactical level is where an integral

approach, beyond the sectoral ideas of social engineering, and the development of a common language is outlined. Where and in what way, when looking at said challenges, should transformation, densification and/or expansion of the urban area really take place? What does that choice mean for tackling those challenges? Does that mean that, when looking at urbanization from the maps, we have to add to or even replace them with ideas taken from the cross-section, or even from four dimensions? And what does this mean for the urban area's structure and identity?

other practices

The operational level covers the development of clear-cut spatial solutions that contribute to improving biodiversity and the ecosystem services provided by the subsurface, as well as those which contribute to the big transition challenges such as the energy transition, climate adaptation, social inclusion and the quality of life. Practices in which we not only create a productive relationship between what is underground and aboveground, but also between the spatial reality (the physical world), the organizational, financial and legal arrangements (the world of systems) and the citizen's daily reality (the social world). What do such practices mean for underground and aboveground spatial planning and layout, but also for the spatial structure and identity of our districts, neighbourhoods, streets and buildings? Does adaptivity need to be given a lot more thought, so that changing circumstances can be anticipated? What does it mean that buildings, including their underground components, have to meet the preconditions that the subsurface sets, and simultaneously the requirements, for example, in the field of precipitation collection, energy consumption and generation, biodiversity and nature inclusivity? And how can those requirements be combined with the increase in social inclusivity and the quality of life at building level?

research by design as a method

In the context of this open call, research by design is a method by which spatial design is used as a research tool to develop, from possible (spatial) futures and/or future (spatial) possibilities, new and specific spatial proposals, strategies, arrangements and/or concepts which help to redefine or re-organize existing systems. Research by design is uniquely aimed at connecting the past, the present and the future through design and bringing together the world of systems and the social and physical world. It also answers the question of how to achieve co-creation with the civilians, entrepreneurs, experts, organizations and government bodies concerned. This method results in relevant, qualitative knowledge development, which leads to integral future perspectives and possible problem-solving approaches, but also to new insights for policy-making by government bodies and market participants.

what phases does this open call have?

The Open Call Building out of the Soil up is divided into different phases:

start-up phase

The start-up grant is optional. This start-up phase gives applicants the opportunity to enter into collaborations and prepare an application. Please note: the awarding of a start-up grant does not guarantee the awarding of a grant for the first phase. There are sixteen start-up grants of a maximum of € 5,000 available. The assessment takes place in order of receipt, so do not wait too long to apply for a start-up grant. This is open from 23 May up to and including 8 July 2022. More information about the start-up phase can be found [here](#).

first phase after selection

After the selection in October 2022, the first phase (November 2022 up to and including June 2023) focuses on research by design, strengthening new cooperative ventures with sectors outside the creative industry and developing new working methods, insights and design proposals. During the first phase, a number of intervision and knowledge sharing meetings will be held.

follow-up phase

At the end of the first phase, the participants selected can apply for a maximum of € 40,000 for a follow-up phase (July 2023 up to and including May 2024). The objective of this is to engage the power of design to continue developing the results obtained from the research in the first phase. A number of intervision and knowledge sharing meetings will also be held during the follow-up phase.

impact phase

At the end of the follow-up phase, there is scope for six projects to enhance the impact of that project, with a maximum amount of € 7,500 per project available. The impact phase is from June up to and including October 2024. The impact grant is meant for activities that support the partners in systematically embedding results from the research by design in their regular working methods.

what is assessed?

Grant applications will be submitted to at least three external independent advisers for assessment. This committee will assess the plans based on the [Open Call Grant Scheme](#) and this Open Call: Building out of the Soil.

- *the relevance of the issue*
When assessing the relevance of the issue, the committee examines whether, how and the extent to which the issue is relevant to answering the challenge formulated in the open call. In addition, it looks at the added value of design approaching and understanding the issue.
- *the quality of the plan of action*
The more practical side of the project's execution is examined here. With this criterion, the committee assesses whether, and the extent to which the objective and setup accord with each other, whether the setup of the approach is comprehensive enough and it looks at which target groups the proposal focuses on. In doing so, it examines the clarity of the plan of action, the effectiveness of the selected method and whether the expertise engaged to carry out the project creates confidence that the project will lead to the intended results.
- *extent of innovation*
This criterion scrutinizes how the proposal is positioned with respect to existing knowledge within the area of expertise and the extent to which it adds value. Does it ask any unexpected and relevant questions or discuss new perspectives? Does it question prevailing ways of thinking and doing or does it build on them? How and which course is taken to look for new knowledge and what are the expected results and insights? And what role does design and research by design play in all this?
- *the relevance and expertise of the parties involved*
This criterion examines the aspect of collaboration and coalition formation. To what extent and how does the expertise of the parties involved link up with the substance and objective of the proposal as well as its implementation? How diverse and inclusive is the coalition? What roles do the partners involved play in the process? With regard to that last question, it is particularly important to the committee to know whether these partners have already promised to cooperate or whether they intend to do so and whether those partners will invest in the project financially or in kind.
- *the manner of knowledge sharing in terms of results and interim results*
This criterion examines the way in which the developed knowledge is recorded and shared. Which activities that increase the impact will be implemented to disseminate, embed and/or apply the knowledge gained? At which target groups are these activities aimed and which means will be used to reach those target groups? Which partners will be involved in this? What role does design play in

recording and sharing the developed knowledge, but also in embedding that knowledge at collaboration partners?

The committee will select a maximum of 13 proposals from the entries, provided that they are of sufficient quality.

submission of the application

You can submit your proposal **up to and including 26 September 2022** via the Fund's [online application environment](#). Select the 'Open Call: Building out of the Soil' round.

The proposal consists of:

- 1 A project plan (no more than 8 pages and not larger than 8 MB), containing:
 - a issue: a well-defined description of the issue, which comprehensibly relates to the open call and makes it clear which existing knowledge is built on, and the project's objective;
 - b plan of action: a clear explanation, based on the formulated research question, of the intended research by design method, including the way in which existing knowledge about the issue will be applied, and a clear description of the designer's role in the process;
 - c collaboration: a description of the expertise of all the parties involved and their role in the process that are relevant in terms of the open call, including accounting for the choice of those parties in light of the research question;
 - d intended result.
- 2 Budget and planning for the first phase (no more than 2 pages and not larger than 2 MB).
 - a The Fund organizes activities around the open call's theme to facilitate the mutual exchange of knowledge between the projects. Include a total of two half days in hours, for two team members, in the budget.
- 3 A communications plan for knowledge sharing (no more than 2 pages and not larger than 2 MB).
- 4 CVs of the designers involved (no more than 4 pages and not larger than 4 MB).
- 5 An extract from the register of the Chamber of Commerce relating to the implementing party.
 - a Designers act as the main applicant and are responsible for implementing the research by design project. Collaborative parties act as co-applicant(s).
- 6 Representative image of the project for purposes of communication by the Fund.

If the entry does not meet the description above, no substantive assessment can take place.

Please note:

- Make sure you create an account for the [online application environment](#) in good time and familiarize yourself with the application form. Validating a new user account can take up to 1 working day.
- Before submitting your application, please check the [Grant Application Guidelines](#). These guidelines can help you with the grant application and in drawing up a project plan.

grant procedure

The assessment of an open call's first phase is similar to a tender - this means that within the budget available, a number of proposals will be preferred over other ones. Only positively assessed projects will be supported. The submitted proposals will be processed and assessed on the basis of the Fund's [Open Call Grant Scheme](#)

and in particular the extent to which the application meets the open call's criteria. The committee issues its advice to the Fund's board for each application.

acknowledgement of receipt and announcement of selection

No later than one week after the closing date, you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt in the Fund's digital application environment. The selected proposals will be announced to applicants no later than on 17 November 2022 in the digital application environment.

contact

For questions about the open call and the procedure, please contact:

Chantal Verhoeven via c.verhoeven@stimuleringsfonds.nl or Martijn Kerkmeijer via m.kerkmeijer@stimuleringsfonds.nl or call +31(0)10 310 79 37.

newsletter

Are you interested in the results and insights from the Spatial Design Action Programme open calls? And would you like to be informed about the action programme's in-depth lectures, masterclasses and work meetings? Then [sign up](#) here for our newsletter.

We are building a learning network of decentralized governments, semi-public organizations, experts, designers and other professionals to enhance the impact of the process as a whole and the power of design in particular.

context

This open call is part of the implementation of the Spatial Design Action Programme 2021-2024, implemented by the Creative Industries Fund NL on the instructions of the Ministries of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Education, Culture and Science.