

Request for proposals (RFP) NWP Water for Food Programme



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Date: 21 September 2021

Version: 1.0

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Following extensive dialogues with Dutch Water and Agrifood parties and partners during the past six months related to the (geographic and thematic) focus of this programme and to better understand the needs and wishes of the sector, the Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP) is very pleased to announce its first call for proposals related to the Water for Food programme.

1. Background and context

Global population growth coupled with the impact of climate change, is placing severe pressure on already dwindling water resources, and is leading to more frequent incidents of drought, flooding, salinity intrusion and land subsidence. In addition, a significant portion of agricultural water is being re-allocated to higher value uses (industrial, urban). Innovative water technologies and practices are key to improving the efficiency and productivity of water in agriculture, resulting in more sustainable food systems, and improved food security.

The Netherlands is a global leader in both agriculture and water management. Yet, despite significant efforts, there are still too few concrete success stories that clearly demonstrate the business case in an integrated approach to water for food. The Water for Food Programme addresses this issue by stimulating and facilitating the Dutch water sector and agrifood partners to develop business cases within this nexus. By showcasing concrete and viable solutions in the water-agrifood nexus, the programme also aims to further boost the visibility of the Netherlands as the global market leader in the water, agrifood and ecosystems sectors.

The in-depth and valuable feedback we received from our interviews with sector organisations, agricultural counsellors as well as from the sector survey, led us to the following important conclusion. It is clear that there is a wide variance in both geographic and thematic preferences, and for this reason we are not placing any geographic or thematic restrictions on submitted proposals. Proposals will nevertheless be subject to specific conditions and criteria, listed in sections 6 and 7 of this RFP.

For further useful information on the background of the programme, take a look at the NWP website:

- [Water for Food Programme page](#)
- [NWP Water for Food Programme Management team explains the new programme](#)

2. About the programme

The new Water for Food programme is a 2-year programme initiated, developed, and implemented by NWP, and is financially supported by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). The current programme runs from December 2020 through November 2022 but it is the explicit intention to give the programme a long-term character to ensure replication and scale-up.

The Programme's primary objectives are to strengthen the connection between the Dutch Water and Agrifood sectors to improve food security and sustainable water use, as well as protect

ecosystems and biodiversity. To achieve this, **the programme will support the development of sustainable, scalable and bankable business cases at the interface of water and agrifood.**

The program aligns closely with the policy framework of **NIWA** and thus also contributes to its objectives, in particular the **commitment to the water-food nexus, the attention paid to water technology, and demand-driven nature.** It also contributes to the **objectives of over 40 million people with improved river basin management and more optimal water use in agriculture,** as well as further strengthening the Dutch position in the water sector and further optimizing the revenue model in this regard.

Based on the clear ambitions that came through in the sector survey (as well as individual discussions) from a large number of organizations looking to play a leading role in the water-agrifood nexus, NWP looks forward to receiving forthcoming proposals.

3. Submitting a proposal

NWP requests applicants to submit proposals (using the Programme's Application Form and Budget Template as provided with this Call for Proposals) for **high potential, sustainable, scalable and bankable business cases in the water-agrifood nexus.** Proposals should be sent to waterforfood@nwp.nl latest by 1700 hrs. (CET) on 20 October 2021.

4. What is the programme offering?

Does your organisation have an innovative Water for Food concept that will contribute to improving food security in a particular country/region? Is the concept technically feasible but do different aspects of the business case (bankability, scalability, sustainability...) require further working out, testing, and strengthening?

The Water for Food programme supports organisations (that meet the listed conditions and criteria) to further develop high potential Water for Food business cases. It is offering seed capital of a maximum amount of EUR40,000 each (including value-added tax) to applicant organisations that receive the highest scores for their submitted proposals (an indication of the importance of the weighting of selected criteria is provided in the Application Form). The proposals will be reviewed and scored by a team of reviewers, consisting of NWP staff and 3 external reviewers. The proposals with the highest scores will be rewarded with the above-mentioned seed capital amount.

5. About the proposed projects

For this RFP, NWP is looking for high potential, sustainable, scalable and bankable business cases in the water-agrifood nexus that contribute to improving food security.

'Business cases' can include for example pre-feasibility, feasibility or pilot studies covering the following aspects to strengthen and further develop the business cases: financial, partnership, investment, commercial, scalability, environmental, sustainability-related.

6. Criteria that must be met by candidate organisations

Candidates will be asked to meet and, where applicable, elaborate on the below-mentioned criteria in the Application Form:

- The proposal should be submitted by a minimum of 2 Netherlands based organisations both of which also play a clear role in the project execution.
- Proposed projects are not subject to any geographical or thematic restrictions. However, the candidate must indicate that the Covid situation within the target geography is such that the project can be effectively executed (if travel is required). Themes must be water-related and can include (but are not limited to) smart irrigation, drainage, dealing with salinity, (ground) water management, water and soil conservation, water storage etc.
- To highlight the essential role of water (management) in food production, the water contribution element, which must include an innovative water-related practise or technology from the Netherlands, must be clearly described.
- An integrated, inclusive and sustainable approach is essential. This means that the proposed business case must also have an impact at the local level and clearly demonstrate that the local (farmer) community benefits and how it contributes to the food security situation in the target community/country/region.
- The scalability and financial feasibility aspects of the business case should also be highlighted, including potential financing options identified and secured for scaling-up the project.
- The candidate is also asked to provide a summary of the proposed business case including background/context (what is the business case, theme, location, partners, beneficiaries etc), objectives, local impact and potential follow-up.

7. Conditions for participation

Successful candidates must commit to the following conditions when participating in the programme. These conditions will be part of the contract that the candidate signs with NWP:

- The proposed project must be executed between 3 December 2021 and 31 August 2022. This provides a 9-month period in which to carry out the proposed work.

- Successful applicants must commit to providing 50% match funding (this may include in-kind match funding). In other words, if the applicant receives seed capital of EUR40,000, the applicants must provide an additional (in-kind) financial contribution of EUR20,000, which results in a total project funding of EUR60,000.
- The disbursement schedule is 50% at contract signing (Nov 2021); 20% after 3 months (Feb 2022), 20% after 6 months (May 2022), and the remaining 10% at the end of the project (August 2022).
- Candidate organisations are required to fill in the application form and the budget template provided (the “proposal”). For the budget, the following conditions apply: i) travel and/or accommodation costs must not exceed 10% of the total proposed budget; ii) implementation costs (including staff costs) can represent up to a maximum 100% of the proposed budget; iii) project management (overhead) costs must not exceed 10% of the total proposed budget.
- For candidate organisations whose proposals include the delivery of equipment, buildings or land, kindly contact the Water for Food Programme Management team at waterforfood@nwp.nl. Additional conditions apply for project proposals with these aspects.
- The disbursements are closely linked to periodic reporting requirements (qualitative and quantitative), to provide NWP with an insight into the progress of the projects.
- Successful candidates should also be aware of and agree to disclosing project data for external/public communication and promotional purposes.
- There will be no objection period following the selection of successful applications. The decision related to the selection of successful applications will be at the sole discretion of the team of NWP and external reviewers.

Timeline

Action	Date
Launch application of project proposals	21 September 2021
Deadline application of project proposals	20 October 2021
Evaluation project proposals	20 October – 19 November 2021
Announcement successful applications	22 November 2021
Contracting successful applicants	22 November – 3 December 2021
Project implementation period	3 December 2021 – 31 August 2022

8. Water for Food Hub

In parallel with the request for proposals, we are working on a longer term structural and sustainable set up for this programme - we refer to this proposed network as the Water for Food Hub. The aim of such a Hub is to connect players in the water and agrifood sectors to co-create international projects and to serve as a central information point.



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