

# Application Manual

## Class of 2027

Version S2027-1

Universiteiten  
van Nederland



techleap.nl



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en  
Wetenschap



Congratulations,

You have taken the first step in turning your research into a business with impact.

We're here to help. During our two year program, you'll get €185.000 in funding, a world-class entrepreneurship program and coaching.

**The application process is done through the Dutch Research Council (NWO).  
This manual guides you through the process.**

We wish you the best of luck with your application and can't wait to see the impact you'll make.



Frans Nauta  
Program Director Faculty of Impact

# About the program

Faculty of Impact is a national program for scientists who want to turn their research into a business with impact. It is created by the Dutch universities (Universities of the Netherlands), together with our Dutch Research Council (NWO) and Techleap.

**The Faculty of Impact offers a two-year fellowship for researchers from Dutch institutes to turn their research into impactful ventures — whether profit or non-profit.**

We offer fellowships within the following mission-driven innovation policy:

- Agriculture
- Circular Economy
- Energy
- Health
- Safety

**Researchers from all scientific disciplines (alpha, beta & gamma) can submit a proposal.**

# What our fellows say



**Sem Vijverberg**



*"The Faculty of Impact program is the best program there is. It gives you time. And time is money. And with time you can do so much if you have a business idea."*



**Rose Sharifian**



*"I 100% recommend the Faculty of Impact to other researchers. It was the exact right boost at the exact right time to go from the university to the startup world."*



**Rik van Gorp**



*"I recommend the program to every researcher who would like to create a business. It's a great opportunity for personal development and to create a business with impact."*



**Pieter Duisenberg, Chair at Vereniging Universiteiten van Nederland**

*"We give researchers 2 years in a trusted community where they can explore and develop their ideas to the next stage."*

# Process and dates

Applications for the Faculty of Impact are now open.

Every applicant is considered, if they submit their application before the deadline on 26-05-2026.

A selected few will be invited for an interview.

The class of the Faculty of Impact will be announced summer 2026.

**Opening call**  
02-02-2026

**Deadline call**  
26-05-2026

**First selection**  
To be announced

**Interview**  
Oktober 2026

**NWO Board Decision**  
To be announced

**Announcement**  
To be announced



**Constantijn van Oranje, Techleap**

*"Combine world-class academic institutions with a powerful entrepreneurial drive and you get a generation of tech companies that can impact our societal challenges. That's why we support Faculty of Impact."*

# Your deadline: **26<sup>th</sup> of May 2026 at 14:00 CEST**

Your application should be finalized in [www.isaac.nwo.nl](http://www.isaac.nwo.nl)



**Sandy Kalisingh, Senior Program Coordinator at NWO**

*"With Faculty of Impact we give researchers an unique opportunity to explore and develop their entrepreneurial drive in a trusted community within a world-class academic institution."*

# Selection criteria

The Dutch Research Council (NWO) selects the fellows for the Faculty of Impact.

The selection committee consists of industry experts, program mentors, entrepreneurs, representatives from universities, universities of applied sciences, and investors.

They will judge your application based on the following criteria:



Quality of the idea



Quality of the applicant



Impact

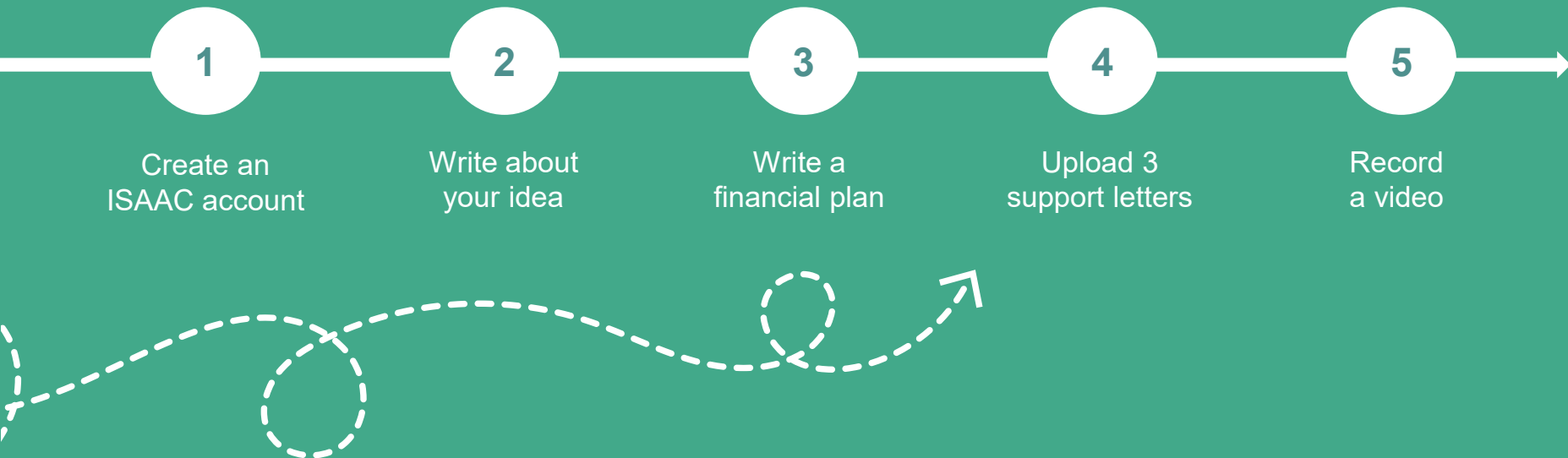


**Robbert Dijkgraaf, Minister of Education, Culture and Science**

*"Faculty of Impact stimulates valorisation networks and creates knowledge-intensive start-ups, which we desperately need in the Netherlands.."*

# 5 steps of your application

A 1.000 mile journey starts with a single step.



# Step 1: Create an ISAAC account

## Summary

Your application runs through ISAAC, NWO's system. You need to create an account in ISAAC and fill out the application form.

Technical questions?  
Reach out to the ISAAC helpdesk:

Monday to Friday from 10.00 to 17.00  
Telephone: +31 (0) 20 34 67 179  
[isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl](mailto:isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl)

You will get a response by e-mail within 2 working days.

## How to

ISAAC ([www.isaac.nwo.nl](http://www.isaac.nwo.nl)) is the NWO application and reporting system where you can apply for your research funding, and track the progress of your application.

In case you already have an account from the previous system Iris, you can use these details. Any new organizations must be added to ISAAC by NWO.

If you do not yet have an ISAAC account, then you should create this on time to prevent any possible registration problems. You also need to submit other details online. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration by NWO.

An application can only be submitted via the web application ISAAC. Applications that are not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration

As the main applicant, you are required to submit the application via your personal ISAAC account.



**Dr. Daphne Truiens, Talent Scout**

*"Start early. We can help you with every crease you might encounter."*

# Step 2: Write about your business

## Summary

Tell the selection committee through ISAAC more about who you are and why your business or non-profit can make scalable impact.

Need help writing? We organize webinars and office hours to help you.

Register at:  
[www.facultyofimpact.nl/application-kit](http://www.facultyofimpact.nl/application-kit)

## Checklist

- Contact details
- Summary of 100 words
- Description of the idea (max 4 pages): what is the problem and what is the solution? What is the scientific basis? Why is your idea innovative?
- Societal impact (max 3 pages): your vision of success, your intended change and why it is urgent, relevant and ethically responsible, the potential of your idea and the concrete ways your idea contributes to the intended change in the long term
- Your qualities (max 2 pages) : motivation and an example of when you had to improvise and be entrepreneurial in life



**Gitte Schober, Advisory Board**

*“Clearly articulate your business idea by focusing on what problem it solves, who it is for, and how it differs from existing solutions..”*

# Step 3: Write a financial plan

## Summary

Describe how you will spend the grant. There's a maximum of 15.000 for materials, travel and accommodation. The rest is for salary costs.

Need help writing? We organize webinars and office hours to help you.

Register at:  
[www.facultyofimpact.nl/application-kit](http://www.facultyofimpact.nl/application-kit)

## Checklist

- Think of the number of FTE you will need;
- The necessary trips you will make;
- The accommodations you will need to stay at;
- Conferences or events that you need to attend to develop your research and business idea;
- Please use the ISAAC budget form for this;
- 0.8 FTE of your time is a minimum commitment to Faculty of Impact.



**Maarten Steinbuch, Advisory Board**

*"Write a solid plan: account for all initial expenses, project your income realistically, and always prepare for surprises."*

# Step 4: Get yourself support letters

## Summary

You'll need 3 support letters from your university or knowledge institute.

If your organization does not have a KTO, a written support letter signed by a representative of the organization's executive board with similar statements is required.

Need help writing? We have template support letters for you.

Download them at:  
[www.facultyofimpact.nl/application-kit](http://www.facultyofimpact.nl/application-kit)



**Wouter Chömpff, Marketeer**

*"Don't underestimate the time it takes to get these letters signed. It will require diplomacy and hustle. Incidentally, two main qualities of a CEO!"*

## How to

### 1. Support letter from the supervisor

Ask your supervisor or the research lead for a support letter. The letter should confirm both the scientific quality of the idea and the fact that you'll be finalizing your PhD soon, if you are currently doing one. This person must be an (assistant/associate) professor, lector at a university of applied sciences or a similar position and should be employed for the duration of the program.

### 2. Support letter from the director of the department

Ask your department director for a letter which states that you are embedded in a research group and can use the research facilities during the Faculty of Impact program. It should also state that you are exempted from standard university duties (e.g. teaching and publishing) when admitted to the Faculty of Impact. It is mandatory to use the template of the ISAAC form for this.

### Support letter from the knowledge transfer office

Ask your KTO or similar organization for a letter that explains why your idea can have societal impact, and that they will coach you for the duration of the program. In addition, the KTO provides the necessary co-financing.

# Step 5: Record a video

## Summary

You'll need to record a video to support your application

Need help? We organize webinars and office hours to help you.

Register at:  
[www.facultyofimpact.nl/application-kit](http://www.facultyofimpact.nl/application-kit)

## Checklist

- 3 minutes
- Who you are
- What your dream and motivation is
- What the societal value is and which problem it helps to solve
- Which opportunity it creates
- The status of your idea and its feasibility to scale. Show proof if you can.

## How to

The video will be assessed by its content, not its quality. The HD equivalent quality of a cell phone is accepted. You will not be assessed based on the quality of your camera and video skills, make sure that your exposure (lighting) and sound recording is clear and stable. Make some test videos, and see what you can improve.

The language spoken in the short video should be plain English. Your well-educated neighbor should be able to understand your story. If you make use of audio and/or visuals: be sure they are royalty free.



**Arjan Goudsblom, Startup Expert**

*"Just put on your best face! This is no Hollywood production. Yet."*

# After the application

After submitting, NWO will inform you as soon as possible whether it meets all administrative and technical criteria.

You will be given a chance to make corrections within 5 working days. So, make sure you are available during the two weeks following the submission of your proposal.



# The interview

Out of all applicants, a selection will be invited for an interview.

If you have made it so far, congratulations!

Make sure to be on time and be prepared to answer any questions the committee may have.

- Dress the part.
- Know your 'why'.
- Don't start with 'sustainability is important'. We all know that, it's why we are here.
- Highlight your entrepreneurial skills.
- Give crisp answers. Get to the point and cut to the chase.



**Leon Gielgens, Senior Program Coordinator at NWO**

*"Feeling the entrepreneurship vibes in your veins seeing the innovations you are working on?"*

*At the Faculty of Impact we support you to develop your entrepreneurial skills and to start your own business.*

# Selection and decision

After the interview, the committee evaluates the applications again based on the assessment criteria, followed by a 'consensus discussion' on the final ranking.

Afterwards, it draws up a written recommendation about the quality and ranking of the proposals, addressed to the Board of NWO Domain Applied and Engineering Sciences.

Finally, the Board will assess the procedure and the advice from the assessment committee, and subsequently determine the final qualifications and decide about awarding or rejecting the proposals.

- The Board takes the funding decisions based primarily on the ranking of the project applications.
- The primary consideration is the ranking established by the assessment committee based on the scores.
- The Board does not judge the content of the applications.



**Mirjam van Praag, Entrepreneurship Professor**

*"Faculty of Impact gives researchers a unique opportunity. They'll get the time, resources and support to increase the societal impact of their work.."*

# We wish you the best of luck with your application!

The world needs researchers and entrepreneurs like you.

That's why we pour our energy into this project.

To help you get going.

And we can't wait to see what you'll do.

**Team Faculty of Impact**

