



Call for proposals

Quantum Delta NL
SME programme

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Quantum Delta NL SME programme

Version 1

Date 21 January 2022

For Small and Medium Sized enterprises

Round: 1

Website: www.quantumdelta.nl

Email: SME@quantumdelta.nl

Date of Publication: 21 January 2022

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1 Background

Quantum technology can have a major disruptive effect on companies in sectors such as chemistry, logistics, IoT, life sciences, health and cybersecurity. High-tech SMEs in the Netherlands could play a significant role in related value chains, for example in software development, consultancy and the supply of- materials, equipment and electronics.

The Quantum Delta NL programme, which was fully endorsed by the Netherlands' National Growth Fund and enabled by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, comprises an SME programme with the aim of connecting 125 high-tech SMEs in the Netherlands to quantum technology in the next seven years. The programme is inspired by best practices from NanoNextNL (now Nano4Society) and MinacNed, who will perform a coordinating role.

A total of € 52 million in financing has been budgeted for the programme, intended to stimulate and support R&D projects geared towards developing products and services that serve the quantum technology roadmaps directly, or enable derivative products in the value chain. This will allow SMEs to play a role in the quantum technology roadmaps at the national level but also at the European level.

Proposals can range between €500,000 and €2,000,000 per project, and can be submitted by an individual company or on behalf of a consortium; a private or public-private partnership (PPP). The subsidy comprises a maximum of 2/3 of the total project amount. The remainder is contributed by applicant(s), either in cash and/or in-kind.

Please note that this Call for proposal takes its guidance from the: [Kaderregeling betreffende staatssteun voor onderzoek, ontwikkeling en innovatie \(2014/C 198/01\) en algemene groepsvrijstellingsverordening \(Verordening \(EU\) nr. 651/2014.](#)



2 Available budget and timetable

Each Call for Proposals comprises a maximum contribution of € 4,750,000 made available through Quantum Delta NL. A total of 7 Calls for Proposals is foreseen for the period 2021-2028.

Date	Time	Deadline	Phase
SME proposal 1			Proposal preparation
28 Feb 2022	23:59	Pre application- intention to submit	Proposal evaluation
4 Apr 2022	23:59	Submission application	Project execution and monitoring
8 Apr 2022		Admissibility check	
15 Apr 2022	23:59	Submission application improvements	
		Interview days	
1 Jun 2022		Notice of proposal evaluation	
2 Jun 2022		If awarded, start project	
5 Jun 2023	23:59	Midterm report	
3 Jun 2024	23:59	End term report	

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3 Scope

Projects can comprise industrial research and/or experimental development. This may include efforts by supporting fields such as nanotechnology, but also the development of software to support projects, provided certain criteria are met.

Intellectual property

To strengthen the European quantum ecosystem, filing intellectual property is encouraged, if this improves the potential for future commercial applications. If relevant, parties are responsible for making their own arrangements and negotiating the necessary agreements. Quantum Delta NL can be an advisor in this process, but is formally no party to such arrangements and/or agreements.



3.1 Industrial research

Industrial research is critical research aimed at acquiring new knowledge and skills necessary for developing new products, processes, or services, or to significantly improve existing products, processes or services. It includes the creation of parts for complex systems and may also include the construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment and/or in an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems, as well as pilot lines- when necessary for industrial research- and in particular for the validation of generic technology.

Industrial research spans Technology Readiness Levels¹ (TRL) 2-4.

3.2 Experimental development

Experimental development comprises the acquisition, design and use of all existing knowledge and skills aimed at developing new products, processes or services. This includes activities aimed at the conceptual formulation, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services.

Experimental development may include prototyping, demonstration, pilot development, testing and validation of new products, processes or services in environments representative of functioning under real-world conditions, aimed at making further technical improvements. This may include the development of a commercially viable prototype or pilot considering that this would otherwise be too expensive to manufacture.

Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other current activities, even if such changes lead to improvements.

Experimental development spans Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 5-8.

3.3 Software development

Software development particularly for either industrial or experimental purposes must adhere to the following conditions:

- it should be part of the development of an innovative physical process (control software) or;
- the development of the software carries a technical risk and the intended functionality cannot be achieved with existing techniques.

Software-related activities that are not eligible include:

- the development of business application software and information systems using known methods and existing software tools;
- adding user functionality to existing application programmes;
- creating websites or software using existing tools;
- filling databases.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology_readiness_level



4 Duration

Projects have a maximum duration of 4 years, yet are ultimately limited by the programme deadline- December 31, 2028. As such, projects awarded in calls for proposals that start later than December 31, 2024 have less time until completion.

A grace period of 1 year is allowed in case of project delays related to calamities, sickness and/or maternity leaves. Project extensions must be applied for in writing prior to the initial project deadline, motivating the reason for extension. This can be sent to sme@quantumdelta.nl.

In any event, all projects need to be completed by the programme deadline- December 31, 2028. This includes those that have been granted a grace period.

5 Who can apply

Representatives of **Small and Medium sized enterprises** that adhere to the following definition.

Company category	Staff headcount	Turnover	Or	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_nl

Companies must be registered as a *Besloten Vennootschap* (BV) or a *Naamloze vennootschap* (NV) in the Netherlands. Their activities in the Netherlands must be substantial.

SMEs can apply on their own or as part of a consortium with other SMEs and/or a knowledge institution/research organisation² as listed below.

- Universities based in The Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- Polytechnics based in The Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- University Medical Centres based in The Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- TNO;
- Prinses Máxima Centre;
- KNAW- and NWO-institutes;
- Dutch Cancer Institute (NKI);
- Max Planck Instituut for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- 'Dubble-bundellijn' by ESRF in Grenoble;

² an entity, such as a university or research organisation, regardless of its legal form (public or private law organisation) or financing method, which is principally engaged in carrying out basic research, industrial research or experimental development and disseminating the results thereof through education, publications or technology transfer; all profits are reinvested in those activities, in the dissemination of their results, or in education. Companies that can exert influence over such entity through, for example, shareholders or members, do not enjoy preferential access to such entity's research capacity or to the results of its research.



- NCB Naturalis;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL).

Representatives from **research organisations** can also submit as lead applicant, provided that at least one co-applicant is an SME.

Large companies can be part of a consortium but cannot receive a financial contribution. The same holds for SMEs based outside of the Netherlands.

6 Cost eligibility

Project sizes can vary between € 500,000 and a maximum of € 2,000,000. The Quantum Delta NL contribution can amount to a maximum of € 1,340,000 per project. This contribution as a percentage of the total project, can effectively end up lower due to the contribution caps associated with the scope and consortium make-up. The reimbursement percentages are displayed in the following table.

Contribution percentages (Article 25 AGVV)	Basic contribution %	Additional contribution Small sized company %	Additional contribution Medium sized company %	Max %
Industrial research	50	20	10	67
Experimental development	25	20	10	60*

* max.15 % extra if one of the following conditions is met.

(i) the project involves a collaboration:

- between consortium partners of which at least one is an SME, or the project is carried out in at least two EU Member States, or a Member State and a partner registered in a country with an EEA status- provided that a single partner does not exceed 70 % of the eligible project costs;

or

- between an enterprise and one or more knowledge institutions, whereby the knowledge institute(s) bears at least 10 % of the eligible project costs and has the right to publish their own research results;

(ii) the project results are widely disseminated through conferences, publications, open access repositories, or free or open source software.

The following cost types are eligible for (partial) reimbursement.

6.1 Labour costs

- For SME'e- project related labour costs to be accounted for by applying either:



- The salary costs plus surcharge method, whereby the direct wage costs per hour are increased by a fixed surcharge of 50% for indirect costs.
- The fixed hourly rate method, using an hourly rate of max. €60.
- For TNO- the integral cost system (IKS-rates).
- For other research institutions- labour costs are capped by the VSNU salary guidance per respective position i.e. for technicians, postdocs. See <https://www.nwo.nl/salaristabels> for an overview of current rates.

6.2 Other costs

- Third party costs directly related to project activities, are capped at a rate of € 125 per hour. Third party costs entail costs related to external services such as consulting- provided by companies or freelancers.
- Costs for consumables, small instruments and aids.
- Investments in equipment, for SMEs only.
- Cost for travel and lodging.
- Costs for buying the rights to patents necessary for the project, for the duration of the project.
- Miscellaneous costs directly related to the project.

All costs stated must include VAT unless the beneficiary is VAT exempt. Only actual costs incurred post to the start and prior to the end of the project are eligible for (partial) reimbursement.

The maximum allowance for budget deviations between cost types is 15%. An excess of this percentage, prior written permission is required. Requests for permission must be motivated and can be sent to sme@quantumdelta.nl.

7 Applications

Applying for the SME Quantum Delta NL programme is a 2 step process:

1. Pre-application submission, 'expression of interest'.
2. Full- application submission.

7.1 Pre-application

The pre-application submission is an expression of interest indicating your intention to submit a full proposal. It will allow the programme office to gauge the level of interest and provide feedback on eligibility if deemed necessary. The pre-application submission should include the following information:

- name of the applicant(s);
- contact information main applicant;
- brief project description (max. 1 a4);
- project budget indication.



The pre-application submission is a prerequisite for the full application and can be submitted to sme@quantumdelta.nl. Note the deadline mentioned in the timetable.

7.2 Full application

The full application comprises the following:

- a signed application form;
- a completed project plan and project budget, including appendices;
- relevant support letters.

Templates for the application form, project plan and project budget can be downloaded from www.quantumdelta.nl/sme.

The full application can be sent to sme@quantumdelta.nl.

8 Proposal evaluation

The Quantum Delta NL SME programme is coordinated by Nano4Society in cooperation with MinacNed. The final decision on awarding subsidies lies with the board of Quantum Delta NL. An advisory committee evaluates and recommends the proposals submitted to the programme.

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8.1 Advisory committee

When assessing the applications, the Advisory Committee provides advice to the Quantum Delta NL board. The Advisory Committee consists of research and innovation experts from science and business.

To avoid a conflict of interest, the committee members adhere to a code of conduct which can be found on www.quantumdelta.nl/sme

8.2 Admissibility check

Upon receipt of an application, a check will be performed taking note of the following criteria:

- the application was submitted before the deadline;
- the application has been drawn up correctly and completely;
- the application has been submitted by authorized bodies or persons (section 5);
- the project costs are between € 500,000 and € 2,000,000.

If the application is deemed inadmissible, the applicant will be notified and provided with one opportunity to make the necessary alterations to the proposal and resubmit within 2 working days. Upon receipt the admissibility check will be performed again.



Applicants will receive conformation of admissibility.

8.3 Written evaluation

After the application has been declared admissible, it will first be assessed in writing by the Advisory Committee on the basis of the set ranking criteria. A concise report will be shared with the applicant, and can be used to prepare for the interviews.

8.4 Interviews and ranking

Applicants will be invited to present their proposal to the Advisory Committee. The committee members individually score the applications based on the ranking criteria. The ranking criteria center on:

1. alignment with the Netherlands National Agenda Quantum Technology;
2. technological potential;
3. business potential;
4. quality of the project plan;
5. potential economic and societal impact.

Each criterion carries equal weight. The average marks of the various criteria form the basis for ranking at the end of the interviews. This is discussed by the Advisory Committee, after which the Advisory Committee draws up a final ranking.

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8.5 Final decision

The Advisory Committee advises the Quantum Delta NL board on the final rankings. The projects will be awarded in order, until the total budget has been allocated. Applicants will be duly informed about the final board decision.

8.5.1 Decision challenge

In case of a decision challenge certain guidelines apply which can be found on www.quantumdelta.nl/sme.

9 Programme terms

9.1 Payment

If awarded the contribution is paid out in two instalments to the main applicant. The first instalment amounts to 80% at the start of the project, and will be transferred after all the stipulated funding conditions have been met.



This includes a signed acceptance of the contribution and the associated terms. A second tranche of 10% will be paid upon completion of the project. The last 10% will be paid at the end of the Quantum Delta NL programme. A final report and a financial justification must be sent to sme@quantumdelta.nl for approval.

Reporting guidance and templates will be provided in due course.

9.2 Reporting

Reporting is required at 2 stages, halfway through the project and at the end of the project. Reporting should cover the status of the goals and milestones pursued by the project as well as the financial status.

In case the project is discontinued prematurely, applicants will be required to justify such decision and report on the final status. This can inherently lead to a reduction in the eligible contribution.

Reporting guidance and templates will be provided in due course.

9.3 Ethical aspects

An applicant is responsible for determining whether an ethics statement or authorization is required to conduct the proposed study and for obtaining it in a timely manner from the relevant ethics committee. If deemed a requirement, the necessary ethics statement or permit will need to be in place before the starting date of the project, and after it has been awarded.



Disclaimer

This document takes its guidance from the Kaderregeling betreffende staatssteun voor onderzoek, ontwikkeling en innovatie (2014/C 198/01) en algemene groepsvrijstellingsverordening (Verordening (EU) nr. 651/2014). Any conflicting statements or misinterpretations arising from this document are superseded by this source reference.

Quantum Delta NL, Nano4Society and MinacNed cannot be held accountable for possible errors residing in this publication.

Applicants cannot derive any rights whatsoever from this document. Quantum Delta NL reserves the right to make alterations during the programme, bearing in mind that this is done in an equitable fashion.



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