Quantum
Delta NL

Call for Proposals Application Guidelines

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Funding Challenge – Feasibility study

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1 QDNL Challenge-based funding

Building on the success of QDNL's Catalyst Programs and Action Lines in Phases 1 and 2, this new challenge-based approach supports use-case and bottle neck-driven innovation through focused, competitive funding. It reflects QDNL's core belief: that quantum technologies—when aligned with real-world needs—can unlock transformative breakthroughs, not just incremental progress.

This programme aims to position the Netherlands in European forefront and as a magnet for international collaboration, talent, and investment. As quantum technology moves towards commercialization and real-world application in different sectors, this funding call accelerates projects for breakthrough developments in a bid to position The Netherlands as an attractive hub for Quantum Technology in Europe.

The programme supports innovative development projects with significate contributions from Dutch funding, for quantum companies & research organisations, with a leading role for breakthrough innovations, start-ups and innovative SMEs. Thus, stakeholders are encouraged to show realistic pathways towards commercialization and breakthroughs. Furthermore, participants are encouraged to identify and illustrate Cross-CAT relevance, when possible.

2 Aim and Scope of the Feasibility Study

This call involves the Feasibility Study

- **Feasibility Study: Exploration of Disruptive R&D and Strategic Positioning**

This call will support **up to 5 high-risk, high-impact stakeholders/consortia** addressing critical challenges through **quantum-first approaches**. The emphasis is on **radical innovation**, not incremental improvements to existing technologies or workflows.

Funding is granted under the requirements of a Feasibility Study for a future R&D project. In this case, a feasibility study means “the evaluation and analysis of the potential of a project, which aims at supporting the process of decision-making by objectively and rationally uncovering its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as identifying the resources required to carry it through and ultimately its prospects for success.”

Key elements include:

- A clearly articulated hypothesis for quantum advantage (e.g. NISQ, FTQC, PQC, QKD, or quantum sensing)
- Align with the priorities stated within the Quantum Delta NL program and its CAT and/or AL priorities
- Exploration of active involvement and bottle necks in the value chain with end-users and/or supply chain partners
- If needed: small scale lab testing exploring specific, high-value bottlenecks
- Clear roadmaps for IP strategy, valorisation and commercialisation, and transition to an R&D trajectory

During the feasibility study, consortia will undergo multiple **interim and final evaluation steps**. Based on these assessments, QDNL may choose to **reshape, consolidate, or discontinue** specific directions to ensure strategic alignment with the most promising and impactful opportunities.

3 Available budget and timeline

Duration: Up to 12 months

Call Budget: €2M

Maximum funding contribution per project: €0.5M

The maximum contribution is:

i) 50% of the eligible project costs for companies and not-for-profit institutes
   (1) +10% for medium sized entities
   (2) +20% for small entities
ii) 100% of the eligible (i.e. non-economic activities, independent research) project costs for universities and RTOs

A minimum requested funding contribution per proposal is €100.000 and a maximum funding contribution of €500.000. The remainder is contributed by applicant(s), either in cash and/or in-kind.

Timetable is as follows:

Date	Time	Date
13 October 2025		Submission application opening
24 November 2025	12:00 noon	Submission application deadline

4 Duration of the project

The maximum duration of the project is 1 year, and the ultimate end is limited to 31 December 2026. Projects are expected to start within 1 month after the decision date. A grace period of the Feasibility Study is not possible.

5 Eligibility

The call is open to applicants from universities and research institutes, RTOs and knowledge institutions, SMEs, large corporations. Natural persons are not eligible to apply.

The following representatives are eligible for funding:

1. Representatives of Small and Medium sized enterprises
2. Large companies that fall outside this SME definition.
3. Not-for-profit institutes
4. Universities and research institutes. In addition, the organisation SURF is also eligible to receive a contribution in partnership with consortium partners from NL. SURF is here labelled as SME (note table under heading 6 Cost Eligibility).

We use the EU definition of SMEs: (source: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_nl)

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

Funding is provided to legal entities or a partnership that, at its own risk and expense, carry out the project activities. There must be one lead applicant with a central steering role in the consortium. A contribution is provided to a legal entity or partnership that carries out activities at its own risk and expense, which benefit the Dutch economy or other Dutch interests. As part of the proposal submission, other partners must submit a signed letter of commitment for their own contribution in the consortium.

Applicants can be partners in more than one submission.

5.1 Rejection Grounds

An application will be rejected in case of:

- an exceedance of the maximum support intensity applicable to the specific support category, as intended in the relevant European support framework
- the accumulation of support as intended in the relevant European support framework
- insufficient confidence that the parties involved have the capabilities to properly execute the project
- insufficient confidence that the parties established in the Netherlands can finance the project
- insufficient positive impacts on the Dutch economy or Dutch interests are expected from the project
- project start or financial obligations relating to this project prior to application submission to QDNL.

6 Eligibility of costs

In this Feasibility Study the following costs are eligible for funding.

In this stage, a plausible estimate is sufficient. Bear in mind that when your proposal is selected to be funded, additional and more detailed information requests will be part of the contracting process. Funding will not be granted in case of financial difficulties of (one of) the participants.

6.1 Labour costs

- 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.
- The actual hours worked for the project must be reported in a timesheet.

6.2 Other costs

- Third party costs directly related to project activities are limited to a rate of max. € 125 per hour. Third party costs entail costs related to external services such as consulting- provided by companies or freelancers.
- The maximum budget that can be subcontracted is limited to 20% of the grant budget.
- Investments in equipment (only project-related costs and on depreciation basis).
- Cost for travel and lodging to relevant to the project (if not already part of IKS) are based on the actual costs. Travelling by train is strongly encouraged; flights have to be CO_2 compensated.
- Costs for buying the rights to patents necessary for the project, for the duration of the project.
- Costs directly related to the project, including materials budget, cleanroom use, etc.

6.3 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 programs;
- creating websites or software using existing tools;
- filling databases.

7 Submission of proposals

7.1 Required application documents

The application comprises the following:

- a signed application form, provided the signatory is authorised to sign;
- a digitally signed copy of registration with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, not older than 3 months;
- a completed project plan including time schedule and financial planning;
- if applicable: relevant support letters.

All relevant information, including a template for the application form can be found on the project's website https://quantumdelta.nl/quantum-forward-challenge.
Additional questions can be sent to funding@quantumdelta.nl and mention LSH Feasibility Study in the headline.

7.2 Deadline and submission

The deadline of submission is 24. November 2025, 12:00 CET.

Submission is only possible via the website.

8 Proposal evaluation

Proposals will be reviewed by:

1. Internal QDNL experts for a first review and eligibility of the proposal
2. Additional external experts in Quantum technology and Life Science and Health, with academic, technical and business backgrounds, and the QDNL Funding Program Manager.
3. The QDNL board will provide a final ranking and decision.

To avoid a conflict of interest, the external experts adhere to a code of conduct.

The final QDNL decision will be communicated to the consortium partners and will be instructed to submit detailed budget proposals and if applicable further information.

8.1 Admissibility check

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

- the application was submitted within the deadline.
- the application was submitted by an eligible organisation (see section 5) and authorised representatives.
- the project proposal has been drawn up correctly and completely.
- there is demonstrated alignment with the Quantum Delta NL Growth Fund proposal: https://quantumdelta.nl/about-quantum-delta-nl
- the budget meets the eligible costs requirements (see section 6).

If the application is deemed inadmissible, the applicant will be notified.

8.2 Ranking

Applications will be evaluated and ranked based on the below criteria:

- 25 %: Problem/solution/market fit and impact and degree of engagement with end-users in the LSH value chain (clinical, pharmaceutical, MedTech or related domains)
- 25 %: The value for money, scientific and technical credibility of the proposed approach
- 20 %: The strength, complementarity, and track record of the team
- 20 %: The potential for disruptive impact and a clearly articulated quantum advantage.
- 10 %: The clarity and feasibility of the intended deployment roadmap, including IP strategy and alignment with broader ecosystem priorities.

The highest ranked projects that also fit the minimum quality standard of the QDNL board will be funded until budget depletion.

8.3 Final Selection

Applicants will be duly notified about the final decision.

The experts may advise project leads to adjust the requested contribution for certain eligible proposals.

9 Contribution terms

9.1 Project kick-off

During the project kick-off, the final project conditions, planning, milestones and deliverables are discussed and agreed.

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9.2 Monitoring and Reporting

Reporting is required in the form of providing input for the Program Manager on the progress in the project as agreed in the agreement during the Project Kick-off. IP-related milestones must also be reported. Reporting should cover the status of the planning, milestones and deliverables pursued by the project as well as the financial status.

Reporting is requested:
1. If the project duration is >6 months: At 25%, 50% and 75% of the project duration.
2. If the project duration is <6 months: At 50% of the project duration.

Based on these assessments, QDNL may choose to reshape, consolidate, or discontinue specific directions to ensure strategic alignment with the most promising and impactful opportunities.

In case the project is discontinued prematurely, applicants will be required to justify such decision and report on the final status. This can lead to a reduction in the eligible contribution (to be decided by QDNL on a case-by-case basis).

All project partners will have to finalise contractual obligations for the project within 2 months after the official start of the project.

Upon project completion, you will be required to provide a Financial Statement Audit adjacent to the End Term Report. A maximum of €2.000 per NL consortium partner will be provided by Quantum Delta NL, additionally to help cover these external costs. This item must be included in the filled-in budget template.

Reporting guidance and templates will be provided in due course.

9.3 Payment

The contribution is paid out in 3 instalments to the lead applicant.
1. The first instalment amounts to 50% 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.
2. A second instalment of 40% will be paid after the mid-term review. Based on these assessments, QDNL may choose to reshape, consolidate, or discontinue specific directions to ensure strategic alignment with the most promising and impactful opportunities.

- The last 10% will be paid upon the End Term Report. The End Term Report comprising a financial justification, which is to be sent to the QuantumDeltaNL program office within 2 months of project completion and before 31 December 2028 at the latest.

9.4 Ethical aspects

The contribution recipient is responsible for determining whether an ethics statement or authorisation 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, after it has been awarded.

9.5 Manifesto

The contribution recipient should apprise him/herself of the Quantum Delta NL Manifesto: https://issuu.com/quantumdelta.nl/docs/quantum_delta_nl_manifest_artwork_19_for_issue. As part of the Quantum Delta NL community, the recipient will be expected to act in accordance with the values stated therein.

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 cannot be held accountable for possible errors residing in this publication.