



NIERSTICHTING

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Dutch Kidney Foundation

Kolff+ Program 2025

Information sheet 25 July 2024

The Dutch Kidney Foundation (DKF) Grant Requirements ('Subsidievoorwaarden Nierstichting Nederland') apply to all awarded DKF subsidies as well as all proposals for DKF subsidies. Applicability of general and other conditions of the applicant, the applicant's institute and of third parties is explicitly excluded.

Disclaimer

The execution of a DKF Call for proposals, selection of pre-proposals for full application and positive DKF grant award decisions are conditional on DKF revenues and budgetary means. The DKF explicitly reserves the right to cancel an initiated Call for proposals, to suspend a running procedure or to lower a grant amount in relation to earlier statements.

Overview of the Program

The aim of the Kolff+ Program is an innovative renal field with a strong knowledge base that leads to optimal impact for the patient.

The Program promotes talent, creativity and following up on successful research within a strategic framework that is directed at impact for the patient.

Scope

This call is open to all topics relevant to kidney patients and/or prevention of (progression of) chronic kidney disease (except renal cancer) and to all types of research ranging from basic to implementation and from behavioural to social to medical research, within the conditions of this program.

Behavioural science and social science are broadly conceived, examples of relevant disciplines are psychology, health care science, nursing science, sociology, sexuality studies, gerontology, social work, cognitive science and public health research.

Aims

- Beating Kidney Disease: optimal impact for kidney health from research & innovation.
- A highly talented, creative and innovative renal research field that is able to achieve optimal impact for the patient from successful research and innovation.
- Building and sustaining talent, stimulating creativity and advancing successful results toward impact.

Kolff+ Program Overview

The grants are detailed further below. The Student Researcher Grant has a separate information sheet.

Student Researcher Grant / Student Onderzoeker Beurs € 1.000 – 7.500

This grant aims at talented students who are motivated to do renal research outside the curriculum.

Creativity Grant / Creativiteit Beurs € 55.000 – 125.000

This grant aims at creative and original ideas with a high risk / high gain profile.

Elements of creativity are independent thinking and using the imagination, novelty, unusual and outside-the-box concepts, resourcefulness and inventiveness.

Junior Talent Grant / Junior Talent Beurs € 170.000 – 280.000

Senior Talent Grant / Senior Talent Beurs € 255.000 – 450.000

Talent grants aim at starting/early career (Junior) and mid-career (Senior) postdoc renal researchers with the ambition of setting up and pursuing a research line and becoming a leader in the renal field.

Success Accelerator Grant / Succes Aanjager Beurs € 265.000 – 585.000

This grant aims at following up successful research and accelerating in the direction of patient impact and application of results. The grant is open for all research phases and types.

Kolff+ General Conditions

Relevance

- The proposal is relevant within the framework of missions and roadmaps of Beating Kidney Disease, the strategic agenda of the Dutch renal field.

Applicant

- The applicant's working base is a research institute in the Netherlands.
- The applicant is the project leader of the grant project. The project is executed in the Netherlands, parts of the research may be performed abroad.

Grant

- The grant application budget is calculated with the DKF Project Funding Model (PFM), which awards standard personnel years in different categories. For more information, see the PFM information sheet on our website for professionals.
- A proposal may include a budget for extra expenses (outside the PFM lump sums for personnel years) for fees for patient representatives, equipment and consumables, and for outsourcing technical parts of the project.
 - This budget for extra expenses must not exceed 30 percent of the total requested budget.
 - The extra budget for outsourcing (as part of the budget for extra expenses) must not exceed 15 percent of the total requested budget.
 - This budget for extra expenses and its motivation have to be specified on the application form. The total maximum budget for the grant remains the same. The DKF will assess the proportionality of the extra budget proposed.
 - For the Creativity Grant, the aforementioned limiting percentages are 60 and 30 respectively.

Collaboration

- The DKF encourages collaboration with foreign research institutes.
- The DKF encourages a Grant to be co-funded by other organisations and companies. In that case:
 - There are no (potential) conflicts between the conditions and requirements of this Grant and the conditions and requirements of the co-funder(s);
 - Co-funding is unconditional with respect to intellectual property rights and publication of results;
 - A contract for co-funding must be approved by the DKF.

Publications

- The DKF encourages research groups to implement and follow the ARRIVE (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments) guidelines in the design and reporting of animal research to increase its reproducibility and quality.
- The DKF supports and encourages Open Access publishing, preferably via the Gold Route which makes the final version of an article freely and permanently accessible for everyone immediately after publication. More information can be found on openaccess.nl.

Data Sharing and Intellectual Property Rights

- Project participants shall comply with the DKF Data Sharing Policy and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Participants must strive for rapid and wide availability without restrictions of research data resulting from research funded by the grant. Data availability may be delayed as a consequence of procedures for protection of intellectual property rights (IPR).
- IPR protection is handled according to the ownership follows inventorship principle.
- IPR management must be conducted in collaboration with the DKF and the IPR departments of the participating research institutes. Participants timely inform the DKF of any plans and activities regarding IPR protection and licensing or IPR transfer to third parties.
- The DKF will not develop an IPR portfolio.
- The DKF may challenge planned IPR protection or patent usage that it considers to be inhibiting or restraining scientific endeavour, renal research or advances in renal patient care/prevention of CKD.
- Project participants must timely report to the DKF any results that are of value for the communication of results of DKF projects: e.g. forthcoming publication in a prominent scientific journal, forthcoming publication of research results that have a high impact on patient care, etc.

Kolff+ Application and Assessment

1. Application

- The Kolff+ call for pre-proposals specifies two to four deadlines for submission of pre-proposals in a calendar year.
- Pre-proposals for all grant types can be submitted for all deadlines.
- A Kolff+ pre-proposal (proposal) that is not granted cannot be submitted in a next Kolff+ call for a period of 10 months (calculated on pre-proposal deadlines).
- It is allowed to apply for a new grant as a follow-on of a not fully completed project (on deadline). Preliminary data corroborating the proposal should be shown in the proposal.
- Grant (pre-)proposals are assessed by the DKF on complying with the conditions.
- Pre-applications, full applications and rebuttals are written in English, except for the section 'Patient Perspective' in the full application and rebuttal that are completed in Dutch. The most recent version of the relevant DKF form is used for submission.

2. Assessment

- For each deadline there is an assessment of the submitted pre-proposals by the Scientific Advisory Board (Wetenschappelijke Raad, WR). The WR advises the DKF for the selection of pre-proposals for full proposal. The DKF decides the selection and invites the selected pre-proposals for full application. Full application is on invitation only. We encourage the applicants whose pre-proposal is accepted for full application to get feedback from the patient's perspective when writing the full proposal. For this purpose, we strongly advise the applicants to timely contact relevant patient organisations, e.g. the Dutch kidney patients association (NVN, Nierpatiënten Vereniging Nederland) for support and advice.
- Full proposals are assessed by international scientific reviewers, the NVN advisory board of patient reviewers and the WR. The assessment by the NVN advisory board is strictly independent of NVN advice to the applicant during the preparation of the proposal.
- Assessment of (pre-)proposals is based on general criteria (for all grant types) and specific criteria (specific for each grant type). Patient reviewers assess full proposals using patient review criteria.
- Applicants are invited to write a rebuttal. After the external review and rebuttal, all proposals have WR summary reviews for the WR assessment. For each deadline there is a WR assessment meeting for full proposals. The patient reviewers are represented at the meeting.
- The WR scores the full proposals on two dimensions: 1) general criteria, 2) specific criteria.
- Individual scores of the WR members are used to calculate mean scores for each grant proposal on the two dimensions. The final score of a grant proposal equals the average of: its general dimension score once plus its specific dimension score twice. The final scores of all applications are ranked in descending order for Creativity grants, Talent grants and Success grants. The WR advises the DKF with this final score. The DKF Program Committee decides on the basis of the advice of the WR.

3. Selection of Pre-proposals

WR members advise the DKF individually on selecting pre-proposals for submission of full proposals using the criteria mentioned in this information sheet. Sufficient project quality is conditional on selection for full application. In case of six pre-proposals or less, all are selected for full application. Otherwise, the selection model described below is followed.

Points system for selection of pre-proposals

The DKF nor individual WR members prioritise one grant type over another. The a priori expectation of the quality of pre-proposals is assumed to be equal for the different grant types.

The model is based on each WR member distributing an individually allotted number of points over all pre-proposals (0, 1, or 2 points per pre-proposal).

- The number of points for each WR member equals the number of pre-proposals in which there is no (potential) conflict of interest. For a description of situations considered as (potential) conflict of interest, see 'Code of Conduct for the Granting Process' (version 8 September 2021).
- If more than 27 pre-proposals are submitted within a call, two panels of WR members will be formed and each panel will assess half of the pre-proposals.

- WR members assign 0, 1 or 2 points to each pre-proposal (0 = do not select; 1 = neutral; 2 = select: invitation for full proposal). For a fair and balanced scheme, each WR member must assign exactly all their points.
- The DKF calculates for each pre-proposal its score as the sum of points, corrects this score for the possible maximum score of the pre-proposal and ranks the corrected scores.

The DKF aims to select for full application the first six up to twelve pre-proposals from the resulting overall ranking, aiming at a granting percentage of 50 % for the full proposals, in consultation with the (vice-)chairs of the WR. Pre-proposals with a score of 0 are not selected, so a smaller selection than six is possible. The invitation for submitting a full proposal is not binding. However, applicants invited to submit a full proposal should contact us as soon as possible in case they decide not to submit or to withdraw a full proposal.

4. Assessment of Full Proposals

Each full proposal is reviewed by at least two scientific reviewers and by a patient panel coordinated by the Dutch Kidney Patient Association.

Candidate reviewers are checked for possible conflict of interest. Reviewers assess the proposal on the grant type's criteria as specified further below. Applicants are invited to write a rebuttal of the reviews. For each proposal, two members of the WR write a 'summary review' after rebuttal.

The WR assessment meeting has a time slot for each full proposal and is ordered on grant type. Applicants are invited to give a presentation at the meeting, after which they are interviewed by members of the WR and by patient representatives. The proposal time slot includes a plenary discussion, after departure of the applicant. WR members and patient reviewer representatives who have a conflict of interest with a proposal are excluded from the proposal's time slot.

Score system for ranking full proposals

After the discussion at the end of its time slot at the meeting, each proposal is scored by all WR members present at the time slot. Each WR member scores individually and anonymously (1 up to 10) on two score dimensions: 1) the general criteria and 2) the criteria specific for the grant type of the proposal.

The DKF nor individual WR members prioritise one grant type over another. Proposals are scored on their criteria only.

The individual scores of the WR members are used to calculate a mean score for both score dimensions of the grant proposal. The final score of a grant proposal equals the average of: its general dimension score once plus its specific dimension score twice.

Scores are calibrated as follows:

- In general, individual scores depend on the quality of the collective proposals that are assessed in the WR meeting in question.
- Grant proposals with a final score ≥ 8 are excellent and strongly advised for funding.
- Grant proposals with a final score ≥ 7 and < 8 are very good and are eligible for funding without further discussion.
- Grant proposals with a final score ≥ 6 and < 7 are fair to good and may be taken into account for funding by the DKF.
- Grant proposals with a final score < 6 or a score < 6 on either of the score dimensions are not eligible for funding.

The DKF takes the grant award decisions within the score framework above. Final rankings are leading. Motivated exceptions are possible. Grant award decisions are either positive or negative.

The DKF will inform applicants on the decision on their grant proposals within 6 weeks after the WR meeting.

Kolff+ Specific Grant Conditions

Creativity Grant

Aim

This grant is aimed at creative and original ideas with a high risk / high gain profile. The grant is open for all research phases and types.

Who can apply?

Biomedical, behavioural and social researchers who are interested in advancing the renal field.

Criteria (pre-proposals and proposals)

General criteria

- Quality of the proposal
 - Rationale
 - Methodology

Specific criteria

- Creativity & originality.
Elements of creativity are independent thinking and using the imagination, novelty, unusual and outside-the-box concepts, resourcefulness and inventiveness.
- Innovative profile: high risk hypothesis, high gain in potential impact.
- The applicant shows how the proposal, if successful, will be followed up towards impact for the patient.

Patient review criteria

The patient reviewers assess full proposals with a set of criteria from the patient's perspective. Criteria are applied depending on the grant type and the type of research.

- Strategy and relevance
 - Strategy: description of the bigger picture, collaborations
 - Relevance (eg. direct or indirect contribution to solving patient needs)
 - Innovativeness and creativity
- Quality
 - Feasibility (eg. proportionality of the project burden to study participants)
 - Information to and support of study participants
 - Patient participation in developing the proposal
 - Communication of results

Grant

- The grant provides support for 6 months up to 2 years.
- The grant budget minimum is € 55.000, the grant budget maximum is € 125.000.

In case of budget for extra expenses this must not exceed 60 percent of the total requested budget. The extra budget for outsourcing (as part of the budget for extra expenses) must not exceed 30 percent of the total requested budget. (See the Kolff+ General Conditions.)

Junior and Senior Talent Grants

Aim

Talent grants are aimed at starting/early career (Junior) and mid-career (Senior) postdoc renal researchers with the ambition of setting up and pursuing a research line and becoming a leader in the renal field.

Who can apply?

(Bio)medical, behavioural or social postdoc researchers with the ambition to pursue renal research.

Criteria (pre-proposals and proposals)

Eligibility criteria

- The applicant has completed a PhD and the applicant's thesis has a topic in the field of (bio)medical, behavioural or social sciences (date of graduation on or before the deadline of full proposals).
- Junior Talent Grant: first career step and early career.
- Senior Talent Grant: mid-career.
- Candidates can apply no more than 2 times for a Junior Talent Grant and no more than 2 times for a Senior Talent Grant. After a candidate has won a talent grant, he/she cannot submit again for the same talent grant type.

General criteria

- Quality of the proposal
 - Rationale
 - Methodology

Specific criteria

- Applicant
 - Leadership qualities
 - Personal motivation and strategy
 - Embedding and network
- Junior Talent Grant
 - First career step and early career
 - The proposed project sets off the applicant's research line
 - The applicant's research line fits within a strategy directed at impact for the patient
- Senior Talent Grant
 - Mid-career
 - The proposal and the applicant's research line are embedded in a strategy directed at impact for the patient

Patient review criteria

The patient reviewers assess full proposals with a set of criteria from the patient's perspective. Criteria are applied depending on the grant type and the type of research.

- Strategy and relevance
 - Strategy: description of the bigger picture, collaborations
 - Relevance (eg. direct or indirect contribution to solving patient needs)
 - Innovativeness and creativity
- Quality
 - Feasibility (eg. proportionality of the project burden to study participants)
 - Information to and support of study participants
 - Patient participation in developing the proposal
 - Communication of results

Junior Talent Grant

- The grant provides support for 2 years up to 4 years.
- The grant budget minimum is € 170.000, the grant budget maximum is € 280.000.

Senior Talent Grant

- The grant provides support for 3 years up to 6 years.

- The grant budget minimum is € 255.000, the grant budget maximum is € 450.000.

In case of budget for extra expenses this must not exceed 30 percent of the total requested budget. The extra budget for outsourcing (as part of the budget for extra expenses) must not exceed 15 percent of the total requested budget. (See the Kolff+ General Conditions.)

Success Accelerator Grant

Aim

This grant is aimed at following up successful research and accelerating in the direction of patient impact and application of results. The grant is open for all research phases and types.

Who can apply?

Biomedical, behavioural and social researchers who are interested in advancing the renal field towards impact for patients.

Criteria (pre-proposals and proposals)

General criteria

- Quality of the proposal
 - Rationale
 - Methodology

Specific criteria

- The research group (line) has a well-developed strategy/master plan* in which the group describes how it will reach impact for the patient.
- The proposal follows up on research that has successfully advanced the research line in the direction of impact for the patient and is well embedded in the research group (line) strategy.
- Full proposals have a proper plan for further development of project results and stakeholder collaboration towards impact.

* A strategy or master plan takes a broad view (not just research) and is explicit where possible.

Examples of questions to address are:

- How does the group endeavour to reach impact for the patient?
- What does the (national and international) multidisciplinary network look like?
- What fields of impact for the patient are aimed at (eg. guidelines, new medicines, devices, other interventions)?
- What partners/sectors are involved and when?
- How are end users involved?
- What is the necessary funding and what are possible funding parties?
- How will the project leader/group and/or network follow up on positive results of the proposal?

Patient review criteria

The patient reviewers assess full proposals with a set of criteria from the patient's perspective. Criteria are applied depending on the grant type and the type of research.

- Strategy and relevance
 - Strategy: description of the bigger picture, collaborations
 - Relevance (eg. direct or indirect contribution to solving patient needs)
 - Innovativeness and creativity
- Quality
 - Feasibility (eg. proportionality of the project burden to study participants)
 - Information to and support of study participants
 - Patient participation in developing the proposal
 - Communication of results

Grant

- The grant provides support for 3 years up to 6 years.
- The grant budget minimum is € 265.000, the grant budget maximum is € 585.000.

In case of budget for extra expenses this must not exceed 30 percent of the total requested budget. The extra budget for outsourcing (as part of the budget for extra expenses) must not exceed 15 percent of the total requested budget. (See the Kolff+ General Conditions.)