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**Ministerial Order of the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management dated 2 May 2022, no. IENW/BSK-2022/87024, laying down temporary rules on subsidising feasibility studies and pilot projects for innovations in water safety and water security in deltas, delta cities and river basins abroad (Temporary subsidy scheme for innovations in water safety and water security in deltas, delta cities and river basins abroad)**

The Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management,

Having regard to Articles 4(1) and (2) and 5 of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Act (*Kaderwet subsidies I en M*) and Articles 2(1), 4(1), 6(6), 7(3), 8(1)(c) and (d), 9, 10(2), 13 and 22(2) of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree (*Kaderbesluit subsidies I en M*);

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

**Article 1 Definitions**

In this Ministerial Order, the following terms will have the following meanings:

*application period*: period as referred to in Article 7(1), (2), (3) or (4);

*feasibility study*: project as referred to in Article 2(87) of the General Block Exemption Regulation which examines whether and under what technical, financial and legal conditions a proposed pilot project may be implemented;

*Minister*: Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management;

*non-governmental organisation*: a not-for-profit organisation, not linked to a public authority either de facto or under its constitution, which possesses legal personality under civil law in the country where it has its registered office and was not established by a public authority, or was established by a public authority and subsequently fully privatised and registered as such;

*research organisation*: research and knowledge-dissemination organisation as referred to in Article 2(83) of the General Block Exemption Regulation which meets one of the following conditions:

1. the organisation has been identified as a higher education institution under a, b, g or h of the annex to the Higher Education and Research Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*);
2. the organisation is a fully or partly state-funded research organisation other than an institution as referred to under a. which performs activities with the aim of enhancing general scientific and technical knowledge;
3. the organisation is a public higher education institution fully or partly funded by another state which is equivalent to an institution as referred to under a; or
4. the organisation is a research institution fully or partly funded by another state which performs activities with the aim of enhancing general scientific and technical knowledge;

*pilot project*: project concerning experimental development as referred to in Article 2(86) of the General Block Exemption Regulation, which involves acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of demonstrating a new or improved product or a new or improved technology, service or approach;

*river basin*: area which contributes to the drainage of a specific watercourse;

*water safety and water security*: sustainable protection from too much, too little or excessively dirty water for humans, plants and animals.

**Article 2 Objective**

The objective of this scheme is to encourage the water sector to make a contribution to water safety and water security in a delta, delta city or river basin abroad by using innovative Dutch knowledge and expertise in the country in which a pilot project or feasibility study is conducted, provided that the application of that knowledge and expertise still requires adjustment for use under the local circumstances.

**Article 3 Subsidy ceiling and manner of allocation**

1. The total subsidy ceiling for this scheme is €15,000,000.
2. The subsidy ceiling is allocated as follows:
3. for the year 2022: €3,500,000, in accordance with the funds made available referred to in Article 4(1);
4. for each of the years 2023 and 2024: €4,500,000, of which €2,250,000 is available in the first application period and €2,250,000 is available in the second application period, in accordance with the funds made available referred to in Article 4(2); and
5. for the year 2025: €2,500,000 in accordance with the funds made available referred to in Article 4(3).
6. The available funds will be allocated on the basis of a ranking of the applications in the manner referred to in Article 14.

**Article 4 Funds set aside per project type**

1. In the application period in 2022, €500,000 will be available for feasibility studies and €3,000,000 for pilot projects.
2. In each of the application periods in 2023 and in 2024, €350,000 will be available for feasibility studies and €1,900,000 for pilot projects.
3. In the application period in 2025, €400,000 will be available for feasibility studies and €2,100,000 for pilot projects.
4. If the amount available in an application period in respect of applications for either feasibility studies or pilot projects has not been exhausted, the remaining amount will be added to the amount available in that period in respect of applications for the other project type if the budget for that project type has been exhausted and the addition means that one or more additional applications can be granted.
5. In derogation from Paragraph 4, if a requested subsidy cannot be awarded in full but can be awarded for at least 70% because the subsidy ceiling has nearly been reached, consultations will be held with the relevant applicant about whether or not a decision will be issued that deviates from the subsidy amount requested.
6. If the amount available in an application period has not been exhausted after the application of Paragraphs 4 and 5, the remaining amount may be added to the amount available for the original project type in respect of the next application period.

**Article 5 Award of subsidy**

On application, the Minister can provide a subsidy for the performance of a feasibility study or project which:

1. helps achieve the objective specified in Article 2;
2. is conducted in a country classified in category A as referred to in Annex 1 to this Ministerial Order; and
3. concerns one or more of the following themes:

1° drinking water;

2° sanitation;

3. water quality and water availability;

4° climate adaptation, drought and flooding risks, river basin management, resilient cities;

5° biodiversity and water-related ecosystems;

6° food production and sustainable agriculture; or

7° climate-proof water infrastructure and sustainable waterways and ports, not being onshore activities.

**Article 6 Subsidy application**

1. A subsidy application as referred to in Article 5 may be submitted only by a business, a research organisation or a non-governmental organisation.
2. In the event of a collaborative venture of businesses, research organisations or non-governmental organisations, a subsidy application may be filed by an applicant as referred to in Paragraph 1 who acts as the lead party of the collaborative venture, with the exception of a water board operating as a business.
3. Before submitting the application, the applicant must have had an intake interview with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency.
4. An application is submitted using a form made available by the Minister which can be found on the website of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency.

**Article 7 Application periods**

1. In 2022, a subsidy application may be submitted to the Minister in the period from 12:00 hours on 1 July to 12:00 hours on 9 September.
2. In 2023, a subsidy application may be submitted to the Minister in the period from 12:00 hours on 20 January to 12:00 hours on 17 February and in the period from 12:00 hours on 30 June to12:00 hours on 8 September.
3. In 2024, a subsidy application may be submitted to the Minister in the period from 12:00 hours on 19 January to 12:00 hours on 16 February and in the period from 12:00 hours on 5 July to 12:00 hours on 13 September.
4. In 2025, a subsidy application may be submitted to the Minister in the period from 12:00 hours on 17 January to 12:00 hours on 14 February.

**Article 8 Eligible costs and standard method of calculating hourly rates**

1. The costs of a pilot project eligible for subsidy will comprise only the costs referred to in Article 25(3) of the General Block Exemption Regulation.
2. The costs of a feasibility study eligible for subsidy will comprise only the costs referred to in Article 25(4) of the General Block Exemption Regulation.
3. The hourly rates may be calculated in accordance with the standard calculation methods referred to in Article 7(2) of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree.

**Article 9 Calculation of eligible costs based on total cost system**

1. If hourly rates are applied which were determined in accordance with the standard calculation method referred to in Article 7(2)(a) of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree, the direct and indirect costs per cost centre are calculated as a rate per unit of this cost centre.
2. The eligible costs are calculated by multiplying the number of units of the cost centre by the rate calculated pursuant to Paragraph 1, increased by the costs paid to third parties insofar as these are not included in the rate determined pursuant to Paragraph 1.

**Article 10 Calculation of eligible costs based on costs per cost centre with mark-up**

1. If hourly rates are applied which were determined in accordance with the standard calculation method referred to in Article 7(2)(b) of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree, the direct wage costs per hour are multiplied by the number of hours spent by the persons directly involved in the eligible activities on performing these activities.
2. The eligible costs are calculated by increasing the amount calculated pursuant to Paragraph 1 by:
3. a fixed mark-up for indirect costs, equalling 50% of the wage costs;
4. costs of the use of equipment and the costs of materials used if these can be determined from the records; and
5. costs paid to third parties.
6. Insofar as no wage costs are incurred but labour is nevertheless performed, an amount of €65 per hour is used in calculating the labour costs.

**Article 11 Calculation based on fixed hourly rate for wage costs**

1. If hourly rates are applied which were determined in accordance with the standard calculation method referred to in Article 7(3)(c) of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree, a rate of €65 per hour is applied.
2. The eligible costs are calculated by multiplying the amount applied pursuant to Paragraph 1 by the number of hours spent by the persons directly involved in the eligible activities on performing these activities, and increasing this by:
3. costs of the use of equipment and the costs of materials used if these can be determined from the records; and
4. costs paid to third parties.

**Article 12 Minimum and maximum eligible costs**

1. The total eligible costs of a pilot project should be at least €25,000 and should not exceed €600,000.
2. The total eligible costs of a feasibility study should be at least €25,000 and should not exceed €250,000.

**Article 13 Level of the subsidy**

1. The subsidy for a pilot project is capped at the percentage of eligible costs referred to in Article 25(5)(c) and (6) of the General Block Exemption Regulation.
2. The subsidy for a feasibility study is capped at the percentage of eligible costs referred to in Article 25(5)(d) and (7) of the General Block Exemption Regulation.
3. With regard to a research organisation, the subsidy is capped at 60% of eligible costs for a pilot project and at 70% of eligible costs for a feasibility study.

**Article 14 Ranking of feasibility studies and pilot projects**

1. Subsidies are allocated in accordance with separate rankings of applications for feasibility studies and pilot projects which are eligible for subsidy, starting with the highest ranked feasibility study and the highest ranked pilot project respectively.
2. In ranking the subsidy applications for feasibility studies that are eligible for subsidy, the Minister uses the following ranking criteria:
3. the extent to which the feasibility study represents a convincing strategy for implementing the innovation in a follow-up phase, with a clear potential contribution to water safety and water security;
4. the extent to which the feasibility study will open up Dutch or foreign parties’ innovative knowledge and expertise in the area of water safety and water security;
5. the extent to which the feasibility study will be appropriate and possible within the local institutional, social, cultural and economic context, will dovetail convincingly with a local need, will tie in with or complement local legislation and policy and will enjoy the support of local parties;
6. the extent to which the innovation is of a high standard of quality, affordable and applicable using the locally available knowledge and possibilities;
7. the extent to which the climate-related and environmental risks of the feasibility study will be mitigated, and the extent to which the study will contribute to one of the following sub-criteria:

1° climate;

2° circularity; or

3° biodiversity and ecosystems;

1. the extent to which partnership between Dutch parties and between Dutch and local parties will add value to the implementation of the feasibility project in a technical, institutional or substantive sense; and
2. the extent to which the application contains a clear problem analysis, transparent budget, risk assessment including an ICSR risk assessment and a clearly defined activity and result plan.
3. In ranking the subsidy applications for pilot projects that are eligible for subsidy, the Minister uses the following ranking criteria:
4. the extent to which the pilot project represents a convincing strategy for achieving a greater degree of water safety and water security for humans, plants and animals; and
5. the ranking criteria listed in Paragraph 2(b) to (g) inclusive, in which respect ‘feasibility study’ must be read as ‘pilot project’.
6. The ranking criteria listed in Paragraphs 2 and 3 are assigned scores, to which the weighting factors are applied that are set out in the table included in Annex 2 to this Ministerial Order, resulting in a total score of at maximum of 100.
7. If two or more applications for feasibility studies or pilot projects respectively are tied in the ranking and this position coincides with the part of the subsidy ceiling available under Articles 4 and 5 for those feasibility studies and pilot projects respectively, the final ranking order will be determined by drawing lots.

**Article 15 Grounds for rejection**

Supplementary to Articles 11 and 12 of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidy (Framework) Decree, the Minister will reject the subsidy application if:

1. the feasibility study or pilot project will be conducted in a country classified in category B as referred to in Annex 1 to this Ministerial Order;
2. a subsidy was provided earlier under this scheme for the same feasibility study or the same pilot project;
3. the subsidy award is not in line with the General Block Exemption Regulation;
4. there is no clear user or beneficiary of the feasibility study or pilot project in the country to which the application relates;
5. the feasibility study or pilot project attained fewer than 65% of the score achievable on one or more of the criteria listed in Article 15;
6. the application fails to attain the minimum score required per weighting factor on one or more criteria; or
7. performing the feasibility study is expected to take longer than one year, or performing the pilot project is expected to take longer than two years.

**Article 16 Obligation**

An organisation that is the lead party of a collaborative venture and which does not have a permanent establishment or subsidiary in the Netherlands at the time of the subsidy award must have a permanent establishment or subsidiary in the Netherlands before the first advance payment is made and following this payment must retain this permanent establishment or subsidiary at least until the date when the subsidy decision has become irrevocable.

**Article 17 Entry into force and sunset clause**

This Ministerial Order will enter into force on 1 July 2022 and will expire on 1 July 2025, with the proviso that it will continue to apply to subsidies awarded before that date.

**Article 18 Short title**

This Ministerial Order may be cited as the “Temporary subsidy scheme for innovations in water safety and water security in deltas, delta cities and river basins abroad”.

This Ministerial Order and the associated explanatory notes will be published in the Government Gazette.

*The Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management,
M.G.J. Harbers*

**ANNEX 1 PERTAINING TO ARTICLE 5(B) OF THIS MINISTERIAL ORDER**

|  |  |  |
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| Category | Category A | Category B |
|  | All countries other than the countries falling into category B | Afghanistan |
|  |  | Bosnia and Herzegovina |
|  |  | Burundi |
|  |  | Central African Republic |
|  |  | Chad |
|  |  | Comoros |
|  |  | Democratic Republic of Congo |
|  |  | Eritrea |
|  |  | Guinea-Bissau |
|  |  | Iraq |
|  |  | Haiti |
|  |  | Côte d'Ivoire |
|  |  | Kiribati |
|  |  | Kosovo |
|  |  | Libya |
|  |  | Liberia |
|  |  | Madagascar |
|  |  | Micronesia |
|  |  | Myanmar |
|  |  | East Timor |
|  |  | Republic of Sudan |
|  |  | Russian Federation |
|  |  | Sierra Leone |
|  |  | Solomon Islands |
|  |  | Somalia |
|  |  | Syria |
|  |  | Togo |
|  |  | Tuvalu |
|  |  | Yemen |
|  |  | West Bank and Gaza |
|  |  | Zimbabwe |
|  |  | South Sudan |

**ANNEX 2 PERTAINING TO ARTICLE 14(4) OF THIS MINISTERIAL ORDER**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ranking criteria | Score awarded in assessment | Weighting factor | Outcome (maximum) |
| **Impact:** | a maximum of 5a minimum of 2 | 6 | 30 |
| A: Feasibility study:The extent to which the project represents a convincing strategy for implementing the innovation in a pilot follow-up phase, with a clear potential contribution to water safety and water security |  |  |  |
| B: Pilot project:the extent to which the project represents a convincing strategy for achieving a greater degree of water safety and water security for humans, plants and animals |  |  |  |
| **Innovation**The extent to which the feasibility study or pilot project will open up Dutch or foreign parties’ innovative knowledge and expertise in the area of water safety and water security | a maximum of 5a minimum of 2 | 4 | 20 |
| **Local integration**The extent to which the feasibility study, pilot project or study will be appropriate and possible within the local institutional, social, cultural and economic context, will dovetail convincingly with a local need, will tie in with or complement local legislation and policy and will enjoy the support of local parties | a maximum of 5a minimum of 2 | 2 | 10 |
| **Technical sustainability**The extent to which the innovation is of a high standard of quality, affordable and applicable using the locally available knowledge and possibilities | a maximum of 5a minimum of 2 | 2 | 10 |
| **Effects on climate and environment[[1]](#footnote-1)**The extent to which the climate-related and environmental risks of project activities will be mitigated, and the extent to which the feasibility study or pilot project will contribute to one of the following themes:* Climate;
* Circularity;
* Biodiversity and ecosystems.
 | a maximum of 5a minimum of 2 | 2 | 10 |
| **Partnership**The extent to which partnership between Dutch parties and between the Dutch and local parties will add value to the implementation of the feasibility study or the pilot project in a technical, institutional or substantive sense | a maximum of 5a minimum of 2 | 2 | 10 |
| **Quality of application**The extent to which the application contains a clear problem analysis, transparent budget, risk assessment including an ICSR risk assessment and a well-defined activity and result plan. | a maximum of 5a minimum of 2 | 2 | 10 |
| Total: (100)(Minimum score) |  |  | 100(65) |

**EXPLANATORY NOTES**

**In general**

***1. Introduction***

This temporary subsidy scheme (hereinafter “scheme”) implements the objectives set out in the Netherlands International Water Ambition (hereinafter “NIWA”).[[2]](#footnote-2) NIWA’s objective is to increase water safety and water security worldwide for humans, plants and animals and to optimise both the Dutch contribution and the Dutch earning capacity. To this end, the water knowledge and public resources of the central government are linked to the international effort, expertise, innovative power, experience and investment capacity of the overall water sector.

Within NIWA, the Partners for Water (*Partners voor Water*) 2022-2027 programme (hereinafter “PVW 2022-2027”) helps enhance water security and water safety for 15 million people in eight delta cities, improve river basin management and optimise water use in agriculture for 40 million people. In order to achieve this, PVW 2022-2027 makes use of high-quality Dutch knowledge and expertise in the area of integrated water management. As part of PVW 2022-2027, this scheme encourages the Dutch water sector to introduce, scale up and learn from innovations abroad. The primary objective of the scheme is to help improve water security and water safety, which are under severe pressure due to socio-economic growth, population growth and climate change. This scheme explicitly contributes to the water-related sustainability development goals of the United Nations (hereinafter “SDGs”).[[3]](#footnote-3) In particular, this concerns SDG 2 (food security), SDG 6 (water security and water safety), SDG 11 (climate-proof cities), SDG 13 (climate adaptation action), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 15 (ecology and biodiversity).

Other countries are looking to the Netherlands for innovative knowledge and expertise as a solution for these problems. And rightly so, because the Netherlands is a frontrunner when it comes to water technology, delta technology and maritime knowledge. The Dutch water sector can and should make a contribution. The subsidy that can be awarded under this scheme will lower the threshold in respect of various risks entailed by working abroad.

***2. Rationale and background***

Water is key to food, energy, health, industrial development, liveable cities, nature, biodiversity and ecosystems around us. Access to safe water and sanitation is one of the cornerstones of our socio-economic development. This means that water is literally a matter of life and death, as is also confirmed in the report of the High Level Panel on Water.[[4]](#footnote-4) The pressure on water is increasing relentlessly. Major global developments, such as population growth, intensive agriculture, urbanisation, industrial production, pollution and climate change, are gradually exceeding the carrying capacity of the natural ecosystem and jeopardise worldwide biodiversity. This was again confirmed in the IPBES7 report.[[5]](#footnote-5) Estimates indicate that if current trends in water security continue, 45% of worldwide income, 52% of the world population and 40% of worldwide grain production will be under threat by 2050. At 70%, agriculture – indispensable in ensuring food security – remains the largest user of fresh water. At the same time, large-scale water use and the degradation of water sources pose a threat to local communities, which depend on water and agriculture. At present, more than two billion people are already living in countries where water is under pressure, while by 2030 demand for water worldwide will outstrip availability by 40%. By 2050, two thirds of the world population is expected to live in cities, of whom 800 million in cities which are vulnerable to rising sea levels. These developments will disproportionately affect poor, vulnerable and marginalised population groups. This will further increase the already widening inequality gap.

It is clear that the challenges are considerable and that SDGs are under pressure. In our interconnected world, the consequences can be felt at all levels but are most manifest in arid regions, coastal areas and deltas, cities and cross-border river systems. Water is the factor which can turn the tide, but it can also be used as leverage in areas experiencing drought, or where billions of people are at risk due to urbanisation and climate change, and large investments are at stake.

Through NIWA, the Dutch government has committed itself to contributing to the global sustainability agenda. NIWA’s main objective is ‘to increase water safety and water security worldwide for humans, plants and animals and to optimise both the Dutch contribution and the Dutch earning capacity’, and thus foster the realisation of the sustainability agenda.

Innovation is one of the key factors in achieving this objective. At many places in the world, current practice is unable to attain a higher level of water safety and water security. On top of that, the problems will be further aggravated by climate change. New technologies and methods which are better, more efficient and cheaper are badly needed in order to protect regions and offer people a sustainable and safe future. Experimental development by sector parties is essential in that context.

In order to make an impact, the application of innovations is an important point of attention. As each context is different, every situation requires a specific technical and institutional approach. Before any scaling-up can take place, an innovation must be adjusted and assessed in the context of its application. Feasibility studies and pilots play a key role in this regard.

Other countries are looking to the Netherlands for innovative knowledge and expertise as a solution for the problems. In 2021, the Netherlands ranked sixth in the Global Innovation Index of the World Intellectual Property Organisation.[[6]](#footnote-6) The Netherlands is a frontrunner when it comes to water technology, delta technology and maritime knowledge. This means that the Dutch water sector can make a significant contribution to increasing water safety and water security in the world. Nevertheless, the Dutch water sector, and the SME sector in particular, experiences obstacles when independently introducing and marketing innovative water applications in other countries. A subsidy will enable parties to examine the feasibility of their innovative applications abroad and to test and modify them. They would be unable to do so otherwise. By funding feasibility studies and pilot projects in other countries, the Dutch government wants to increase the contribution of Dutch innovative power to water safety and water security abroad and take an essential step towards the realisation of the sustainability agenda.

***3. Main elements of the scheme***

The objective of the scheme is as follows: “to foster use of innovative Dutch knowledge and expertise for the purpose of water safety and water security technology for humans, plants and animals, in deltas, delta cities and river basins abroad.” This objective involves SDG 2, SDG 6, SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 14 and SDG 15. Activities subsidised under this scheme will contribute to one or more SDGs.

Businesses, research organisations and non-governmental organisations may apply for subsidy in respect of feasibility studies and pilot projects which help achieve this objective. The scheme places the emphasis on pilot projects. Feasibility studies are a prelude to subsequent pilot projects. The scheme does not focus specifically on particular countries or areas, although conflict countries and fragile states are excluded (these countries are listed in Annex 1 to this Ministerial Order). In the context of NIWA, water safety and water security encompass not only protection from water, access to water and protection of water from pollution, but also the preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. In the light of rising sea levels and climate adaptation, it also includes the sustainable development of ports and waterways insofar as this does not involve onshore activities. The feasibility studies and pilot projects must concern the themes referred to in Article 6.

A tender system (i.e., a ranking of all the applications) helps to identify the most suitable feasibility studies and pilot projects that are eligible for subsidy. In the ranking process, value is assigned to the potential impact on water safety and water security, the degree of innovation in the context of application, the degree of local integration, the technical sustainability, the effects on the climate and environment, the added value of the partnership and the quality of the application. In addition, consideration is given to the mitigation of risks to the environment and climate. These criteria and their descriptions are clarified in the explanatory notes to individual Articles of this Ministerial Order.

This scheme focuses specifically on experimental development. Based on the European state-aid rules on experimental development, a subsidy may be awarded for activities falling within Technological Readiness Levels one to eight inclusive.[[7]](#footnote-7) In the context of this scheme, the experimental development must be innovative for the local context abroad. The innovation must undergo a technical or methodological adjustment in order to be introduced successfully in the context of its application.

**4. Relationship to existing regulations**

*European law aspects*

This involves lawful state aid. Aid schemes are compatible with the internal market, within the meaning of Article 107(2) and (3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (hereinafter “TFEU”) and are exempt from an obligation to notify as referred to in Article 108(3) TFEU, provided that this aid meets all the requirements laid down in Chapter II of the General Block Exemption Regulation and the applicable provisions of Chapter III of that regulation. The scheme contains the requirements to be fulfilled in order to meet the provisions of Chapter I of the General Block Exemption Regulation. In addition, the scheme meets the provisions of Article 25 in Chapter III of the General Block Exemption Regulation, as also described in the explanatory notes to individual Articles of this Ministerial Order.

The European Commission is informed of this scheme via a notification based on Article 11 of the General Block Exemption Regulation.

*Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Act and Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree*

The legal basis for this scheme consists of Articles 2(1) and (2) and 5 of the Infrastructure and Environment (Framework) Act and Articles 2(1) (subsidy facility), 4(1) (further rules), 6(6) (eligible costs), 7(3) (application of standard calculation method), 8(1) (subsidy ceiling), 9 (ranking criteria and weighting), 10(2) (application and application period) and 13 (supplementary grounds for rejection) of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree (hereinafter “Framework Decree”).

The Framework Decree contains procedural rules that also apply to the implementation of this scheme. This concerns the following provisions: Articles 3 (applicant must be a legal entity or natural person), 5 (cumulation of subsidies and reduction of subsidy if the General Block Exemption Regulation applies), 6 (costs incurred), 11 and 12 (grounds for rejection), 14 to 16 inclusive (subsidy award), 17 to 20 inclusive (obligations), 23 (payment and advance funding), 24 (determination of the subsidy amount), 26 (collaborative ventures) and 27 (misuse and improper use).

By way of illustration: where the determination of the subsidy amount is concerned, Article 24 of the Framework Decree provides that the application for determination must be made within 13 weeks after the activities for which the subsidy was provided were performed. The application must be submitted using a means made available for that purpose (a form available in digital format from the website of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency). Article 24 specifies the requirements which such an application for determination should meet in any case. Article 24 also lists the documents which should in any case accompany the application for determination of the subsidy amount. The Framework Decree also makes it possible to lay down particular obligations or requirements in the subsidy decision. See, for example, Article 23 of the Framework Decree concerning the granting of advance funding for a subsidy not yet determined.

Therefore, the subsidy recipient must comply not only with this scheme but also with the provisions of the Framework Decree and the subsidy decision.

Furthermore, this scheme makes use of the General Block Exemption Regulation, which term is already defined in the Framework Decree. This is Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014, declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (‘‘the General Block Exemption Regulation”) (OJEU 2014, L 187/1), or European regulations replacing it at a later stage. The definitions contain a reference to the General Block Exemption Regulation.

***5. Implementation and enforcement***

This scheme is implemented on the mandate of the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (*Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland*, “RVO”), which is part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy. The relevant mandate and authorisation were granted in the Decree establishing the mandate, powers and authorisation of the managing Director General of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency in the domains of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment.

The practicability and enforceability of this scheme have been assessed by RVO. This did not result in an adjustment of the scheme, because these aspects had already been taken into account when the scheme was drawn up in consultation with RVO.

***6. Consequences***

The scheme has been designed in such a way as to entail the least possible administrative burden for applicants. This section will provide an estimate of the costs of the administrative burden relating to the subsidy.

The subsidy application is submitted in digital format via the e-Service Point of RVO. Applicants wishing make use of the subsidy scheme must perform administrative operations in order to be eligible for subsidy and, in the event that a subsidy is awarded, in order to fulfil the obligations attached to the subsidy.

The overview below concerns only the administrative burden directly arising from the subsidy application, the obligations during the term of the subsidy and the determination of the subsidy amount.

*Submission of subsidy application*

The average number of subsidy applications expected per round of applications is 45, with a higher number (probably 60) in the first tender.

In order to be eligible for subsidy, an applicant must:

* take note of the scheme (2 hours)
* have an intake interview with RVO (2 hours)
* prepare an activities plan (12 hours)
* prepare a partnership agreement (2 hours)
* prepare a budget (7 hours)
* submit other documents (2 hours)
* complete the application form (2 hours).

The submission of an application is estimated to take up 29 hours on average.

If an applicant lodges an objection and appeal, this will entail an additional administrative burden.

*Subsidy obligations*

In each round of applications, there is scope for awarding a maximum of approximately 15 subsidies. It is estimated that this will involve five feasibility studies and ten pilot projects. Pilot projects lasting longer than one year are subject to the obligation to submit a progress report halfway through the subsidy period (8 hours). All subsidy recipients are obliged to keep project records (3 hours) and to cooperate in monitoring and evaluation by the subsidy provider (8 hours). A small number of subsidy recipients will submit a request to amend the subsidy (3 hours). Altogether, the obligations are estimated to take up 11 hours during the term of a feasibility study and 19 hours during a pilot project.

*Determination of subsidy amount*

For the purpose of determining the subsidy amount, a final report including a financial accountability report must be prepared (12 hours). For subsidies in excess of €125,000, it is also mandatory to have an audit performed by an accountant. Applicants for subsidies below €125,000 on average need 4 hours to prepare the final accountability report.

The total administrative costs arising from this scheme, based on a maximum of 60 applications and 15 subsidy awards, are therefore estimated at €169,100. This means that the ratio between the administrative costs and the subsidy is 4.8%.
Applications ineligible for subsidy entail administrative costs of €1,950. It is expected that fewer applications will be submitted in the tenders of 2023 and beyond, which will reduce the administrative costs.

Table 1: Administrative costs associated with the submission of a subsidy application and the obligations after the subsidy award, per application and in total, based on an hourly rate of €65.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **P x Q** |
| Application phase | €113,100 |
| Operation phase | €16,900 |
| Determination | €39,100 |
| **Administrative costs of subsidy scheme** | **€169,100** |

***7. Consultation and preliminary scrutiny***

*Consultation*

The Collective Letter on Regulatory Pressure 2011-2015 of 19 September 2011 (Parliamentary Papers II, 2010-2011, 29 515, no. 333) states that ‘the basic principle is that proposals which entail significant changes to the rights and obligations of citizens, businesses and institutions or which have major consequences for the implementation procedure are subject to Internet consultation’.

The option to apply for subsidy in respect of the performance of a feasibility study or a pilot project in the context of this scheme does not entail any significant change to citizens’ rights and obligations. We therefore dispensed with such Internet consultation. However, businesses, research organisations or non-governmental organisations can submit a subsidy application. The requirements regarding eligibility for a subsidy award are based largely on the General Block Exemption Regulation and the Framework Decree. This Ministerial Order elaborates and gives substance to these requirements.

The target group was consulted in a variety of ways. First, this happened during the evaluation of the Partners for Water 2016-2021 programme. The resulting comments were taken on board when the new scheme was drawn up. Secondly, two market consultations were held in 2021, one with earlier subsidy recipients and the other with parties that had not taken part before. These produced specific points of attention, which were incorporated into the scheme. The overall conclusion, furthermore, was that the target group was satisfied with the scheme. Thirdly, consultations were held with the sector in the context of NIWA. These involved the Water & Maritime and Agri & Food top sectors. Fourthly, an event was organised for the water sector to mark the end of the Partners for Water 2016-2021 programme, at which extensive discussions were held with the various parties from the target group of the scheme. Both the evaluation and the consultations revealed that the business community still benefits from the subsidising of projects in other countries, because it reduces the financial risks associated with innovation abroad and facilitates a larger number of projects. The participating parties expressed their enthusiasm about the option to apply for subsidy and hope that the scheme will take effect as soon as possible.

*Preliminary scrutiny*

The scheme need not be submitted to Parliament for preliminary scrutiny because it is not a continuation of the Water Safety and Water Security of Urban Deltas subsidy scheme. That scheme was meant to contribute to the – by now replaced – International Water Ambition, which focused on delta cities and supply systems. Its successor, NIWA, of which PVW 2022-2027 is the principal implementation instrument and of which this subsidy scheme is part, has a wider objective and scope in respect of water security and water safety in other countries. In geographical terms, the scope was extended from delta cities and supply systems to deltas, delta cities and river basins. The objective was widened to realising the objectives of the water-related sustainability goals of the United Nations, with special attention for climate adaptation and biodiversity. In addition, the previous scheme was aimed primarily at achieving a scale-up after the subsidised activities, in the form of market share, spin-off and financing. The focus of the present scheme is on achieving impact, in the form of increased water safety and water security for humans, plants and animals. The assessment criteria have been adjusted to the new scope, the main essential difference being that applications are no longer assessed on their scale-up effect, but on their (potential) impact on water safety and water security, and on their contribution to circularity, climate adaptation and biodiversity.

***8. Evaluation***

The Partners for Water programme is evaluated in its entirety, which includes an evaluation of this scheme. It is expected that the programme will be evaluated both halfway through the term of the scheme and in 2027.

***9. Entry into force***

The date of entry into force has been set at 1 July 2022, which is one of the fixed dates for changes applicable to ministerial orders, although out of step with the fixed implementation dates. This is not considered to be a problem, because it is to the sector’s benefit if a subsidy for a feasibility study or a pilot project can be obtained before the end of the year. The scheme will expire on 1 July 2025, although it will remain applicable to the processing of subsidy applications received before that date.

**Explanatory notes to individual Articles**

***Article 1 Definitions***

This scheme, like the – former – Water Safety and Water Security of Urban Deltas subsidy scheme, makes use of the General Block Exemption Regulation (hereinafter “GBER”).[[8]](#footnote-8) The definitions of ‘feasibility study’ and ‘pilot project’ are therefore in line with the GBER.

For the definition of ‘feasibility study’, reference is made to the term ‘feasibility study’ in Article 2(87) GBER: ‘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’. This means that the applicant must be able to give a concrete picture of the envisaged pilot project already at the start of the feasibility study. This envisaged pilot project is assessed on its feasibility in a feasibility project. During a feasibility study, the applicant examines whether, and under what conditions, a proposed pilot project can be implemented. This involves determining aspects such as legal feasibility, financial feasibility and technical feasibility. A feasibility study is not a generic study into examining and establishing a problem, or identifying possible solutions for this problem. Such projects are not yet ripe for a feasibility study.

In view of Article 15, the maximum duration of a feasibility study is one year.

For a pilot project, reference is made to the term ‘experimental development’ referred to in Article 2(86) GBER. Experimental development may comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real life operating conditions where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set. This may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes. Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements. In view of the provisions of Article 15, the maximum project duration is two years.

In addition, a definition has been included of ‘non-governmental organisation’, so that it is clear which non-governmental organisation can submit a subsidy application under this scheme.

***Article 2 Objective***

For the objective of this scheme, reference is made to the general section of these explanatory notes.

***Article 3 Subsidy ceiling and manner of allocation***

A total amount of €15,000,000 is available for the implementation of this scheme. The available budget will be allocated in the order in which the applications have been ranked. The ranking criteria are set out in Article 14.

***Article 4 Funds set aside per project type***

This Article specifies the amounts available for feasibility studies and pilot projects. For the sake of readability, this Article uses the term ‘project type’, which therefore comprises both feasibility studies and pilot projects.

There will be one application period in 2022 and 2025 and two application periods in the other years. For each application period, the budget available for feasibility studies and for pilot projects has been determined.

If the budget available in respect of eligible applications for one of the project types has not been exhausted after application of Article 14, the remaining funds will be added to the other project type if this means that one or more additional applications relating to that other type can be granted. However, it is possible that an application cannot be granted, or not granted in full, because the resulting budget (subsidy ceiling) is not sufficient for that purpose. In that case, the application will have to be rejected in part. Before such a decision is taken, consultations will be held with the relevant applicant. This will happen if the application cannot be granted in full, but can be granted for at least 70%.

It may happen that the budget is still not exhausted even after the transfers to the other project type. In that case, the funds then remaining will be added to the budget for the original project type in respect of the next application period.

***Article 5 Award of subsidy***

This Article provides what feasibility studies and pilot projects are eligible for subsidy. This must be a feasibility study or pilot project which helps achieve the objective set out in Article 2 of the scheme. In addition, the feasibility study or pilot project must be conducted in one of the countries classified in category A, as specified in Annex 1 to this Ministerial Order. These are all countries other than the countries classified in category B of that annex. Furthermore, the feasibility study or pilot project must relate to one of the themes referred to in Article 5(c). This thematic focus provides both the subsidy applicant and the subsidy provider with a guideline for submitting and assessing an application respectively.

The themes are:

* drinking water;
* sanitation;
* water quality and water availability (which includes efficiency, preventing depletion of water sources, and reuse);
* climate adaptation, drought and flooding risks, river basin management, resilient cities;
* biodiversity and water-related ecosystems;
* food production and sustainable agriculture;
* climate-proof water infrastructure and sustainable waterways and ports, not being onshore activities (including nature-based solutions/’building with nature’).

***Article 6 Subsidy application***

Applications for a subsidy under this scheme may be submitted by a business, a research organisation or a non-governmental organisation. In the event of a collaborative venture between two or more of the aforesaid organisations, one of them will act as the lead party. The lead party will also submit the application. The terms ‘collaborative venture’ and ‘lead party’ have been defined in Article 1 of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree.

Pursuant to Article 6(2) of the Ministerial Order, a water board may take part in a collaborative venture as a business, but may not act as the lead party. A water board that carries out public-interest tasks in a feasibility study or pilot project will not be eligible for subsidy under the scheme. However, in that capacity the water board may be engaged as a third party by the participants in the collaborative venture. If a water board is to perform activities abroad which are not part of its Dutch public-interest task, these activities may be regarded as economic activities. The water board will then be regarded as a business in respect of those activities. In that case, the water board will have a supporting and strengthening role abroad in (institutionally) securing the feasibility study or pilot project, which is why it is desirable that the water board should only be a partner in a collaborative venture and not the lead partner.

An important requirement, laid down in Article 6(3), is that there should have been an intake interview with RVO (which implements the scheme on the Minister’s mandate) before a subsidy application can be submitted. This was prompted by the wish to advise an applicant prior to submission about the degree to which the applicant’s project idea fits in with the scheme. This provides applicants with a more realistic picture as to whether the actual submission of their application has a chance of succeeding. Experience has shown that such an intake interview results in better project applications. If no intake interview was held, the application will be rejected pursuant to Article 11 of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree because the provisions of the scheme were not met. The intake interview requires a potential applicant to download a project idea form from the RVO website. This form is then submitted to RVO by email or post. Based on this form, an interview is conducted with the applicant or applicants. No written advice is issued. The interview involves a check as to whether the application might fit in with the scheme. The idea is not to place any –unnecessary – administrative burden on the applicant. Applicants are not required to upload proof of the interview with the application. After all, the application form made available in digital format includes the question whether, and if so, when an intake interview took place. If the answer is ‘no’, a notification will appear on the screen that the application can only be submitted after an intake interview has been held. After all, this is a formal requirement. All requests for intake interviews and the resulting appointments are handled by RVO. This agency can therefore check whether the intake interview did indeed take place.

For the record, it is noted that an application must also meet the requirements referred to in Article 10(4) of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree.

***Article 7 Application periods***

Given the date on which this scheme enters into force, there is only one application period in 2022. There are two application periods in 2023 to 2024 inclusive. There is only one application period in 2025, because PVW 2022-2027 ends on 31 December 2027. This ensures that the feasibility studies and pilot projects for which subsidy was awarded in 2025 will be completed during the term of the programme.

***Articles 8 to 12 Eligible costs, standard method of calculating hourly rates and extent of eligible costs***

Briefly summarised, the eligible costs identified in Article 25(3) GBER concern the:

• personnel costs;

• costs of instruments and equipment;

• costs of buildings and land;

• costs of contractual research, knowledge and patents, as well as costs of consultancy and equivalent services; and

• additional overheads and other operating expenses, including costs of materials, supplies and similar products.

Obviously, these should be costs related to the implementation of the pilot project.

The eligible costs in respect of feasibility studies are the costs of the study (see Article 25(4) GBER).

In view of Article 7 of the Infrastructure and Energy Subsidies (Framework) Decree, it must be established what standard calculation method can be applied in calculating the hourly rates. As regards the standard method of calculating hourly rates, applicants can themselves choose one of the three options available under the Infrastructure and Energy Subsidies (Framework) Decree. In elaboration of this provision, Article 9 sets out how the standard calculation method for calculating hourly rates based on the total cost system must be applied, and how subsequently the eligible costs can be calculated. Article 10 sets out how the standard calculation method for calculating hourly rates based on the costs per cost centre with a fixed mark-up must be applied, and how the outcome can be used to calculate the eligible costs. Article 11 contains the standard calculation method insofar as a fixed hourly rate is used of €65 per hour in wage costs. This amount includes both the direct wage costs and the indirect costs allocated to these wage costs. This Article also sets out how the eligible costs can be calculated in this case.

The eligible costs are subject to a minimum amount and a maximum amount. The minimum amount is €25,000 both for a feasibility study and for a pilot project. The maximum amount is €250,000 for a feasibility study and €600,000 for a pilot project. If the eligible costs are below or above the aforesaid amounts, the entire application will be rejected. This ensues from Article 11 of the Framework Decree.

***Article 13 Level of the subsidy***

The level of the subsidy is determined in accordance with Article 25 GBER. For feasibility studies, the maximum aid intensity is 50% of the eligible costs for each beneficiary. With regard to a pilot project aimed at experimental development, the maximum aid intensity is 25% of the eligible costs for each beneficiary. Based on Article 25(7) GBER, the aid intensity may be increased by 10% for medium-sized enterprises and by 20% for small enterprises.

The aid intensity for a pilot project may be further increased by 15% if the project involves actual collaboration or if the results of the project are widely disseminated. The maximum aid intensity is 80% of the eligible costs (Article 25(6) GBER). Because full subsidisation would in principle be possible if the applicant is a research organisation, but this is not desirable in view of the availability of funds and the relationship to other parties in a feasibility study or pilot project, the subsidy amount is capped under Article 13(3) of this scheme.

***Article 14 Ranking of feasibility studies and pilot projects***

Feasibility studies and pilot projects each have their own subsidy ceiling. They are also assessed in different ways. Feasibility studies take place before the pilot project stage and are therefore assessed differently. In addition, the impact criterion for feasibility studies is different from that for pilot projects.

The ranking criteria are discussed in more detail below.

*Impact*

The aim of funding feasibility studies is to assess the feasibility of the application of an innovation in a particular context, and to make the necessary preparations for implementation at project scale. A feasibility study should answer the question of whether the innovation, when applied in a particular context, will make a potential contribution to water safety and water security, and how this contribution can be achieved in follow-up steps. The more concrete and convincing the insight that is provided into the envisaged follow-up steps towards the potential impact, the higher the score.

For pilot projects, impact is about the potential of the application to make a contribution to water safety and water security, as defined in Article 1, after the pilot project has ended. The application must describe how the implementer will scale up the innovation in the event of a successful pilot project, and to what extent this scale-up will contribute to solving the relevant problems. In this context, the applicant must explain to which of the SDGs the pilot project will primarily contribute, how this will be achieved, and to what extent this will be achieved. A larger potential contribution, for example in terms of the number of people helped, the number of hectares of restored area, or the extent of the improvement relative to the existing situation, will be awarded a higher score. An explanation of the contribution by means of measurable results will also be awarded a higher score.

*Innovation*

In assessing this criterion, consideration will be given to the extent to which, within the context of its application, the feasibility study or pilot project will make accessible the innovative knowledge and expertise in the area of water safety and water security of Dutch or foreign parties. The definition of innovation applied here is that a feasibility study or pilot project must be innovative for the context of its application, and must undergo significant adjustment within that context before it can actually be applied. The innovation may be of a technical, methodological or institutional nature.

*Local integration*

In assessing this criterion, it is examined whether the feasibility study or pilot project is appropriate and possible within the local institutional, social, cultural and economic context. This means that the proposed innovation must be usable with local knowledge and resources, affordable within the local economic possibilities, acceptable in the local social and cultural context, and not in breach of local legislation. Two other key factors are local ownership and involvement of local partners. Lack of local ownership undermines the sustainability of a project.

*Technical sustainability*

This criterion relates to the functionality, quality and affordability of the innovation and the extent to which it is appropriate for the local (physical) context. Affordability concerns investment and acquisition as well as long-term management and maintenance, within the local possibilities.

*Effects on climate and environment*

Climate:

This score reflects the extent to which the innovative application:

* takes into account climate change scenarios;
* offers solutions to lessen the effects of climate change (adaptation);
* helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions or storage (mitigation);

Circularity:

This score reflects the extent to which the innovative application:

* reduces the use of raw materials and resources, such as groundwater;
* uses sustainable resources or helps make resources more sustainable;
* stimulates reuse of water, other resources and residual streams.

Contribution to biodiversity and ecosystems:

This score reflects the extent to which the innovative application:

* helps prevent or reduce pollution of living environment and nature;
* helps preserve, restore or increase biodiversity, in particular habitats of category CR, EN, VU and NT species on the IUCN Red List.[[9]](#footnote-9)

In addition, consideration is given to the measures taken in the feasibility study or pilot project to mitigate environmental risks. A minimum score is attained with ‘net-zero emissions’ for climate mitigation, no intensification of resource use and no damage to biodiversity and ecosystems.

*Partnership*

This criterion relates to the knowledge and expertise of the party or parties in the consortium, as well as the extent of involvement of the local beneficiary and the selection of a strong local collaborative partner. Innovative knowledge or technology can only be applied abroad if supplemented by local knowledge and technology.

For the record, it is noted that businesses must obviously comply with the competition rules. This also applies to collaborative ventures. If these collaborative ventures make arrangements which affect competition, such as arrangements about price and quality, this may constitute a breach of the cartel ban.

*Quality of application*

In assessing this criterion, it is examined whether the application contains a clear problem analysis, a transparent budget and a clear risk assessment that includes an assessment of ICSR risks. . In addition, it is examined how the activities have been defined in terms of outcome, end result and potential effect.

The weighting of the ranking criteria is based on the weighting factors set out in Annex 2 to the Ministerial Order. The ranking criteria are assigned scores. These criteria are then linked to weighting factors, so that the studies and projects that meet the criteria to the greatest extent receive the highest score. Only in the event that two or more applications for a feasibility study or pilot project are tied in the ranking will the final position be determined by drawing lots.

The available budget includes the funds transferred pursuant to Article 4.

***Article 15 Grounds for rejection***

Supplementary to the grounds for rejection referred to in Articles 11 and 12 of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree, Article 15 of the Ministerial Order contains further grounds for rejection.

As set out in the ranking criteria, any negative effects of a feasibility study or pilot project must be mitigated. If such effects will or may occur and they have not been sufficiently mitigated, the subsidy application will be rejected. This follows from Article 12(k) of the Infrastructure and Environment Subsidies (Framework) Decree. Based on this provision, the application will be rejected if, in the Minister’s reasonable opinion, there is an unacceptable risk that the performance of a proposed activity will disproportionally affect the economic, ecological or social dimension of sustainability.

***Article 16 Obligation***

The obligation laid down in this Article fulfils the provisions of Article 1(5)(a) GBER. It is not allowed to impose an obligation on the beneficiary of the aid to have its headquarters in the relevant EU Member State or to be predominantly established in that Member State. However, it is allowed to require a business to have a permanent establishment or subsidiary in the aid-granting EU Member State at the time when the subsidy is provided. In elaboration of this clause, Article 16 of this Ministerial Order provides that an establishment in the Netherlands must exist before the first advance is paid and that this establishment must continue to exist until the subsidy award has been legally established. The latter requirement guarantees that, where applicable, all or part of the subsidy can be reclaimed.

***Article 17 Entry into force and sunset clause***

This Ministerial Order will enter into force on 1 July 2022, therefore on one of the fixed dates for changes. It will expire on 1 July 2025, but will continue to apply to subsidies awarded before that date.

*The Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management,
M.G.J. Harbers*

1. A minimum score is attained with ‘net-zero emissions’ for climate mitigation / no intensification of resource use or no damage to biodiversity and ecosystems. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Parliamentary Papers II 2018-2019, 32 605, No. 217. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17825HLPW\_Outcome.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)\_global\_assessment\_report\_summary-\_for\_policymakers.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.wipo.int/global\_innovation\_index/en/2021/. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014\_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl\_en.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014, declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (‘‘the General Block Exemption Regulation”) (OJEU 2014, L 187). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Critically endangered (CR) animal or plant species (a species with an extremely high risk becoming extinct in the wild in the near future); endangered (EN) animal or plant species (a species very likely to become extinct in the near future, but less at risk of extinction than the category CR species); and near threatened (NT) plant or animal species. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)