Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Nota van Inlichtingen / Memorandum of Information

Innovation Impact Challenge QDNL Quantum Solutions for Infrastructure, Water and Energy

Version 9 November 2026

This memorandum contains the questions asked during the information meeting and submitted via email, along with the answers provided at the meeting or formulated subsequently.

	QUESTION	ANSWER
	Frequently asked questions IIC	
1.	Must the applicant and partner(s) be SMEs?	No. Non-SMEs can also participate in IIC, either as a main contractor or as a subcontractor. IIC is tailored to small businesses but open to large enterprises (or other organizations).
2.	Can a knowledge institution submit a tender?	That would be possible; in any case, there is no formal restriction preventing it. However, please note that when evaluating the economic perspective, especially in phase 2, we assess whether the applicant/consortium is capable of developing the innovation and bringing it to market. Additionally, we evaluate whether the idea makes commercial sense. A knowledge institution does not appear to be the designated party to develop a product and launch it on the market. We therefore advise having an entrepreneur take the lead. In this way, we want to prevent funding projects that cease once the assignment ends. An enterprise will still have the 'drive' afterwards to fully develop the product and commercialize it. That being said, this does not alter the fact that a knowledge institution could perform much of the research. Also if you can demonstrate that you are indeed the right party to ensure the product reaches the market (and what that 'route to market' looks like), you could be awarded a contract. For instance, proposals from foundations have been granted in the past.
3.	Must the applicant be a Dutch entity?	No, a foreign party may also submit a proposal, but it must be established within the EU, and the project must contribute to the Dutch economy (see manual section

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		13.1 Requirements for parties). The level of contribution is one of the aspects for the evaluation committee for scoring the proposals.
4.	Can a partner be a foreign entity?	Yes, there are no restrictions on this, provided the project contributes to the Dutch economy and there are not security concerns (see paragraph 9.3 of call document).
5.	We noticed that every tax inspector handles VAT liability differently. How does this affect the tendered amount and the evaluation?	We evaluate tenders excluding VAT, so all parties are equal in that respect. In the event of an actual contract award, the handling of payment and VAT can be examined on a case-by-case basis.
6.	Who serves on the evaluation committee?	The committee consists of experts in various fields. The names of the members are made public, via the website or via the Information Notice (Nota van inlichtingen). Once the members of the evaluation committee have been announced, they may no longer be contacted. Doing so may lead to exclusion from the competition.
7.	What does the transition from phase 1 to phase 2 look like?	- RVO reviews the feasibility reports - Upon approval, the final portion of the costs is paid out - In case of a positive result ('report conclusion: feasible') and confidence in continuation, a request for tender for phase 2 follows - Only parties receiving a request for tender can submit a tender for phase 2 - These parties will have the opportunity to present and explain their tender to the committee - The committee evaluates and ranks the tenders - The minister decides which proposals are awarded a contract for phase 2
8.	Is it possible to submit a proposal for a project that has already started phase 1?	Yes, this is possible. However, we do want to have the opportunity during the execution of phase 1 to assess how you execute the project. The reason for this is that it plays a role in the decision to issue a request for tender for phase 2.
9.	Does filing a patent application fall under the costs of phase 1?	Yes, that is possible. Please keep the following points in mind: 1. Further keep in mind that the tender provides a total price for a final result, which accounts for IP rights remaining with the contractor 2. The patent application must be relevant to the commercialization of the innovation; provide an explanation for this in the project plan under 'route to market'
10.	A party previously received an IIC contract. Does this exclude them from a new contract?	In principle, companies can execute multiple IIC contracts, although this naturally depends on the available capacity (workforce) and expertise of the company concerned.
11.	Does IIC funding also fall under the 'de minimis' regulations?	IIC is a commercial procurement contract and does not constitute state aid (subsidy). De minimis regulations therefore do not apply. A company submits a tender, not a subsidy application.

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12.	Does conducting exploratory research fit within an IIC?	A project must focus on a concrete application that contributes to the challenge in the call. Following the phase 2 R&D trajectory, a demonstration of the developed proof of concept, product, service, or process must take place.
13.	Can a consortium submit a proposal?	We expect one party to take the lead and submit a proposal. This party can collaborate with other entities as subcontractors. This is often sensible as it ensures the right expertise is on board. Collaboration between proposals is not permitted; separate proposals cannot depend on one another. Each proposal must stand on its own.
14.	Does an own financial contribution to the project play a role?	We do not set requirements or conditions regarding a financial contribution from your side. However, we expect that you do not charge your standard commercial rates. You are developing a product from which you can generate revenue in the future, and you retain (under conditions) the intellectual property. A fitting price reflects that.
15.	What if in phase 2 it turns out the intended system does not work or cannot be delivered? How are payment and delivery obligations handled?	That depends on the situation. If activities cannot be properly accounted for, we will reclaim the funds, including amounts paid in phase 2. However, if we see unexpected setbacks of the kind that can occur in innovation projects, we will not reclaim all paid funds, but we will cease further payments from that point on. This is one of the reasons we maintain contact during research phases and track project progress. The phased structure is designed specifically to prevent this. For the feasibility study in phase 1, 'it is not feasible' is also an acceptable outcome upon which payment can be made (provided the project is otherwise in order, of course).
16.	May I submit a phase 1 tender for € 0 for research already conducted in order to stand a chance of securing a phase 2 contract?	Yes, that is possible. You may submit a tender for €0 when the work has already been completed. Note, however, that this offers no guarantee of a phase 1 contract or a phase 2 tender request. Your proposal and project will be evaluated in the exact same manner as other proposals and projects. Additionally, we expect the exact same reporting from you. Furthermore, given the opportunities IIC offers, it seems more logical to explore how you can further develop your idea. Additional research may offer even more possibilities.
17.	RVO usually sets conditions regarding hourly rates. I cannot find anything about this. How does that work?	IIC contracts are awarded at a fixed price for the proposed research and development activities and deliverables. No standard hourly rates are prescribed. Applicants should propose a fair and proportionate price, taking into account the required expertise, activities, resources, and the fact that intellectual property rights remain with the contractor. A lower price is not in itself preferred. Proposals are assessed against the criteria set out in Section 5.2, while the requested price must be justified and remain within the available budget.

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18.	May I submit multiple proposals?	Yes, you may submit multiple proposals. The number must be proportionate to the offering party's capacity, and the proposals must be distinct from one another. Collaboration between proposals is not permitted; different proposals must not be interdependent. Each proposal must stand on its own as a complete entity.
19.	What rights does the government acquire regarding the innovation?	See 9.2. in the call: The contractor retains intellectual property. The contracting authority acquires the following rights: • The right to use the results for publicity purposes. • The right to use the knowledge without paying license fees. • The right to make the knowledge public if deemed necessary in the public interest. • The ability to require the company to grant third-party licenses under Fair, Reasonable and Non-Discriminatory ('FRAND') terms. If the government requires the product or service, it will initiate a procurement procedure.
20.	When can the government mandate the granting of licenses?	The government wants to prevent developed knowledge from remaining unused or a company from exploiting a monopoly position. The minister/contracting authority can therefore require a company to grant licenses to third parties under Fair, Reasonable and Non-Discriminatory ('FRAND') terms. Additionally, the minister/contracting authority may publish knowledge developed in phase 2 if it is in the public interest. Both obligations will only come into play in extreme situations. To date, it has never been necessary to impose these obligations on a contractor.
21.	Licensing: who determines whether you are allowed to grant licenses?	Companies determine for themselves whether they issue licenses, unless there are reasons such as those mentioned in the previous question and the government mandates it.
22.	Is it possible to extend the submission deadline?	Not for individual cases, we are bound by a formal process, so it is not possible to adjust the submission deadline. RVO reserves the right to adjust the general timeline if necessary. This will be communicated to (potential) contractors in a timely manner, see section 3.3 of the call description.
23.	Can I join at a later stage in phase 2?	No, for this topic there is only one round of phase 1 and phase 2 for a main contractor.
24.	What happens if a company does not want to give up its intellectual property?	If a company cannot or does not want to accept the terms and conditions of IIC, it is not worthwhile submitting a tender for an IIC assignment.

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25.	Can I start the project before the contract is finalized?	Yes, this is possible. You can start from the date the tender is submitted to RVO. Keep in mind, however, that costs incurred will be at your own expense if the contract is not awarded to you.
26.	How can I make the best decisions in my situation regarding IP?	Refer to the Octrooicentrum Nederland for more information on available means for protecting your IP. You can set-up an appointment with one of the consultants of the Octrooicentrum -free of charge- on their website: https://www.octrooicentrum.nl/voorlichting/gesprek-octrooiadviseur-aanvragen
27.	a) Can a company established outside the EU participate in the programme? b) Could such company participate as a technology partner or subcontractor, with an EU-established company acting as the lead contractor? c) Can a non-EU company undertake substantive R&D activities within the project? d) Are there any specific restrictions concerning IP ownership and the location of technology development?	Unfortunately, companies based outside the EU are not eligible to participate in this tender. However, eligible EU companies are permitted to hire subcontractors from outside the EU. Please note that one of our evaluation criteria is the added value to the Dutch economy; if the R&D is done or the IP primarily resides outside the EU, the application is unlikely to receive a high score in this category. Furthermore, please note the requirements concerning economic security (9.3 in the call document).
28.	Is it possible to combine the IIC assignment with a grant?	It is possible to apply for funding or grants for research supplementary to or alongside an IIC project. However, the IIC only covers costs that have not been and are not currently covered by a grant. The IIC assignment can, however, be combined with WBSO.
29.	How can I submit my proposal?	You can submit your proposal through the RVO website (https://english.rvo.nl/subsidies-financing/innovation-impact-challenge/qdnl#submitting-your-proposal). You require a login for eHerkenning, for more information refer to https://www.eherkenning.nl/en. It can take several days for eHerkenning to be activated.
	Information webinar (9 November 2026)	
30.	What are the geographic eligibility criteria for this call? In particular, is an EU-registered subsidiary of a non-EU company eligible to participate?	Please refer to page 18 of the call document on our website (www.rvo.nl/iic). Paragraph 13.1 details all eligibility requirements for tenderers. An EU-registered subsidiary that meets all conditions outlined in this paragraph is eligible to participate.

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31.	Is a PhD position mandatory in the project?	No, it is not. The needed experts can have many different backgrounds. Important is to show the right expertise is committed to the project.
32.	When will the members of the selection committee be announced?	We are currently assembling the committee and expect to announce the members in week 47 (16–22 November 2026).
33.	Who should be main contractor? The end user or a technology company?	Both options are possible; however, the proposal must focus on R&D activities, as laid out in paragraph 13.2 of the call document on our website (www.rvo.nl/iic). Regardless of who acts as the main contractor, the team must meet the end-user commitment requirements in Section 2.1 and possess the expertise required to investigate both the application opportunity and the technological development. In Phase 2, the project must be led by a company.
34.	When the call mentions that only companies can apply to the tender, are member-cooperatives and research institutions eligible?	Yes, this is possible. However, please refer to question 3 for potential limitations.
35.	Is end user mandatory? or a "proxy" to it acceptable?	It is permissible for a third-party supplier of the end user to confirm market needs. See section 2.1 of the call description: '*A proposal must include commitment from at least one representative of a relevant end-user organisation and/or an organisation with direct knowledge of - and access to that end-user market, such as an existing technology or solution provider. The participating end user does not need to be the eventual customer of the solution, nor does the investigated use case need to apply exclusively to that organisation. Their involvement is intended to ensure that the problem, requirements and expected value are grounded in real operational needs and can represent a broader or adjacent market.*'
36.	What form must the end-user commitment take (letter of intent, commitment letter, or formal consortium partner), and what must it contain?	There is no prescribed format for demonstrating end-user commitment. However, the proposal must include commitment from at least one relevant end-user organization or an organization with direct knowledge of and access to the end-user market, as specified in Section 2.1. The proposal should explain the nature of this commitment and how the organization will contribute to investigating and validating the proposed solution. Stronger and more concrete engagement may strengthen the assessment.
37.	Can you share the presentations of the information webinar (9 November 2026)?	You can download the presentations (PDF) and recording of the webinar from https://qdnl.nl/quantum-solutions-forward-challenges (scroll down to *Recap of the Innovation Impact Call Webinar | 9 November 2026*).