



ARVO International Advocacy Toolkit: Netherlands

1. Which organization(s) are significant sources of research funding? (e.g., national/local governments; private funding/foundations/charity groups; large non-governmental organizations (NGOs); industry/pharmaceutical companies)

National Government:

The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (in Dutch: NWO).

Governmental funding for science-wide and cross-boundary programs is available. Scientists and research institutions can submit an application for funding for their research projects, large equipment and databases as soon as a call for proposals is published. The call for proposals describes the aim of the research, who may apply, the amount of money available and which criteria will be applied during the assessment and selection.

Industry/pharmaceutical companies

Depending on the research questions, companies may provide funding for research (e.g. funding of trials, providing equipment for research, providing analyses of samples, prizes and awards, direct financial support).

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Charities

Depending on the topic of your research, various patient organisations provide funding for research. In the Netherlands, eye-oriented foundations collaborate in the umbrella organization Uitzicht (www.uitzicht.nl), which organizes a yearly call for research proposals and handles the complete procedure involved in the calls.

European Funding Opportunities in the Netherlands

Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation program that aims to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.

www.ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/

2. What does the normal science funding/policy decision-making process look like?

For NWO, EU funding, and Charity funding, international and national reviewers judge the proposals and researchers can write a rebuttal. For NWO and EU funding, researchers must give an interview explaining their research to the committee that makes the final decision for funding. Renowned scientists within the Netherlands (NWO) or Europe (EU funding) are members of the committees. For Charity funding, the charities themselves make the decision



The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
1801 Rockville Pike, Suite 400 ■ Rockville, Maryland 20852-5622
arvo@arvo.org ■ +1.240.221.2900 (Tel) ■ +1.240.221.0370 (Fax)
www.arvo.org

which proposals they would like to support, guided by the scientific reviewers and their own interests. For Pharmaceutical companies/industry, the procedure differs for each company.

3. Which patient advocacy groups, if any, are active in the area?

Charity funding groups in the Netherlands are very active in communicating with patients and give feedback to researchers about the topics that patients would like to see addressed in future research projects.

4. Are there existing national/regional organizations that work towards improving research funding/policy (advocating for increased research funding/better policies)?

The Netherlands has a national bureau for stimulating public private partnership and supports small enterprises (Netherlands Enterprise Agency). They are in close contact with EU officers that decide on EU policy for research. Each university has policy makers that are in close contact with EU officers to communicate on the research topics that should be on the agenda for funding in the coming 10 years.

5. How do scientists currently contribute to the existing funding/policymaking/advocacy process, if at all?

See above. There is communication between patients groups, researchers and funding agencies.

6. When are science funding/policy decisions made?

NWO: by the government. Policies are made for longer timespans.

EU funding: by EU officers, but with input of various representatives of universities, governments and industry.

Charity funding: by the funding agencies themselves.

7. What kinds of opportunities exist for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers?

NWO and EU funding: This might be difficult, but there probably is a possibility for researchers to present their work during interviews.

Charity funding: During patient-oriented meetings, scientists provide insight into their research through presentations. These meetings provide good opportunities for interaction between scientists and patients.

Other notes: Following an initiative from the Dutch ARVO Chapter ARVO-NED, Dutch vision scientists started an advocacy group to lobby for private and government money. The group is known as *Scientists Against Blindness*.



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www.arvo.org

Contributors:

Dr. M. Meester – Department of Ophthalmology, Erasmus MC, Rotterdam

Dr Martine Jager – Leiden University