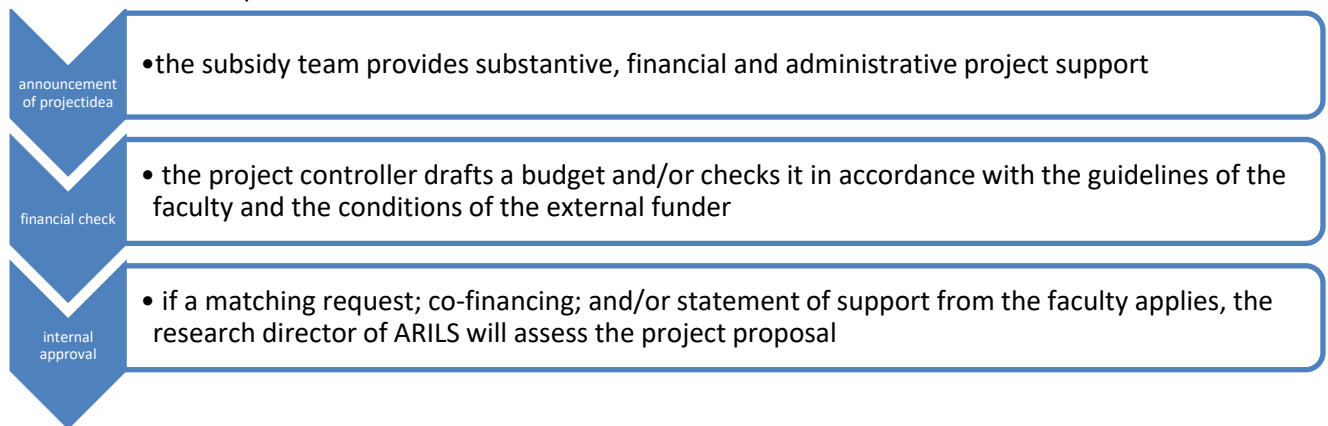# Workflow Faculty Procedures for Research Proposals

Preface

If a researcher wishes to submit a research proposal to an external funder, he/she is requested to contact the project coordinator. The Amsterdam Law School has a subsidy team, consisting of the Research Director of ARILS, a project coordinator, two project controllers, a project administrator, and two grant support officers, which provides support for various aspects of applications. For example, the subsidy advisor can advise and proofread a proposal; a proposal is generally checked to see whether it has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines of the funder; and the project controller checks whether financial conditions have been met. For this purpose The Amsterdam Law School has drawn up an internal application procedure. When completing this internal application procedure, the researcher can be sure that the proposal meets the subsidy conditions and is ready for submission to the external funder.

Internal application procedure

After the researcher has informed the project coordinator research, the internal application procedure consists of three steps:

announcement of projectidea	• the subsidy team provides substantive, financial and administrative project support
financial check	• the project controller drafts a budget and/or checks it in accordance with the guidelines of the faculty and the conditions of the external funder
internal approval	• if a matching request; co-financing; and/or statement of support from the faculty applies, the research director of ARILS will assess the project proposal

Project support

The three steps above are described in detail in Appendix 2. In the first step, the request is to announce a research proposal to the project coordinator as early as possible, so that the subsidy team can provide support in the field of substantive, financial and administrative advice at an early stage.

The second step is the financial check, which is of great importance for every project proposal. The project controller checks whether the project budget has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines of the funder and whether the correct UvA-personnel rates have been applied.

As a final step, the internal approval applies in specific cases. In this step, the Research Director of ARILS assesses the project proposal if a matching request[1]; a request for co-financing[2]; and / or an official statement of support[3] from the faculty applies.

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[1] See Appendix 1 for *Procedure for matching*, dated 8 June 2018
[2] Co-financing is a financial contribution from the faculty, in addition to the contribution of matching overhead costs
[3] For example, the embedding guarantee of NWO, or the letter of commitment / intent and declaration of honour of EU applications

Appendix 1: Procedure for matching

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Amsterdam Law School
Administrative Affairs

DECISION

Date:
08 June 2018

Reference:
fdrl8b0007

Subject:
Decision on adoption of Procedure for matching for projects with indirect government funding and projects with contract research funding

THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF LAW

<u>whereas:</u>
it is desirable to clarify the criteria and procedure for allocating matching contributions for research groups and departments.

<u>having heard:</u>
the Department Chair Consultation and the faculty Research Council

Has decided:
to adopt the accompanying matching procedure for projects with indirect government funding and projects with contract research funding with effect
from 8 June 2018.

Prof. P.A. Nollkaemper
Dean of the Faculty of Law

Procedure for matching for projects with indirect government funding and projects with contract research funding

1. Reason for formulating faculty matching policy
The reason for formulating the faculty matching policy is that income from indirect government funding and contract research funding (GS2 and GS3 respectively) does not always cover all costs associated with the projects concerned. Grant providers usually do not reimburse 100% of the material, staff and overhead costs at the Amsterdam Law School. As a rule, the faculty is required to 'match'.

The term 'matching' is defined within the UvA as 'the UvA's own contribution to contract research'. Matching is 'the difference between the full project costs and the grant offered by the grant provider'.

Two comments on this definition are in order:
- Most projects with 'broad indirect government funding' (NWO and EU) will only match overheads or part thereof. For some projects (such as the EU '*Social dialogue*' projects), the matching of overheads is insufficient, requiring a contribution by UvA to staff costs, because the grant provider will only reimburse part of the staff costs.
- Who finances the matching depends on the agreements made within the faculty. Within the UvA, it is customary for the faculty to make the required matching for overhead costs or other costs available for projects with broad indirect government funding. For projects within GS3, separate agreements are made for each faculty. Faculty agreements also form the basis for the extent to which faculty matching is used for NWO or EU projects with a different form of funding.

Faculties receive a matching budget from the UvA in proportion to the broad indirect government funding (EU & NWO) in year t-2. The university matching pot has an annual budget of €25 million, of which the Amsterdam Law School has received more than €1 million (4 to 5% of the UvA total) in the past few years. In addition, the faculty receives SEO funds from NWO on an annual basis, amounting to 9% of the contract sum in year t-1 for the recipient ERC or Horizon 2020 projects. This scheme is a compensation for the efforts made to acquire EU contracts, but this budget could possibly be added to the matching budget by the faculty.[1]

When the new allocation model is introduced in 2019, the UvA contribution to the matching budget of the faculties will increase from €25 million to €30 million. As before, the faculties will receive a matching contribution based on the actual revenues in year t-2. The budget will be calculated as follows for this purpose: 60% of NWO revenue + 35% of EU revenue + 15% of contract research (GS3) revenue. This means that the faculty will be granted a larger budget from the Executive Board, but it is also expected to expand its outlook beyond the broad indirect government funding (GS2). If the budget of €30 million is not sufficient, which will probably be the case in the coming years, the budget of €30 million will be allocated proportionately among the faculties.

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[1] https://www.nwo.nl/financiering/onze-financieringsinstrumenten/nwo/stimulering-europeesonderzoek/stimulering-europees-onderzoek.html

As long as the matching budget that the faculty receives from the university equals or exceeds its allocation to projects, there is, in principle, no need to make choices, and matching funds received can be passed on to projects.

However, this is not always the case in practice. Due to the delay in the allocation of matching funds, there will be a surplus in the matching budget in some years and a deficit in other years. More generally, the contribution of the UvA is likely to be slightly less than required within the Amsterdam Law School on average.

The question then is, how does the faculty decide which projects to match: *which* projects will receive a matching contribution and *to what extent* will these projects be matched? Clarity about these questions is important for research groups and departments, as they must determine which project proposals they want to focus on.

If the faculty is unable or unwilling to pay the full overhead, and to the extent that the faculty does not match the unfunded staff costs, a department can still carry out the project, but the department must make its 'own contribution' to the project. The department/research group obviously has an interest in obtaining clarity at the earliest possible stage about what it can expect from the faculty.

2. Principles:

The faculty matching policy is based on the following principles:
- The matching policy should support and facilitate the faculty ambition to acquire more external funds (see FSP and KPIs for the Faculty of Law 2017-2020).
- The matching policy must support the faculty research strategy as formulated in sections 48-50 of the FSP 2015-2020. In particular, this concerns the aim to promote innovative academic research in the field of law that widens the boundaries of our knowledge of the actual, potential and desirable content and effect of the law, and which has a significant impact on science and society and the international profile, with the Faculty endeavouring to conduct research that puts the law into a European and international context.
- Matching should not only be seen as a cost item, but above all as a means of generating more research resources. Matching is a method to increase the total amount of available funds for research with a relatively limited amount of matching resources. The question is always how we can achieve most with government funding (GS1): by paying for the research time of staff, financing doctoral students and postdocs or matching GS2 and GS3 projects? In certain cases, the latter option may be attractive. Since research can be performed relatively cheaply via matching, it may be worth using GS1 money as matching funds. This also means that it is not absolutely necessary for us to target breaking even, in the short or even long term, for which the matching funds paid by the faculty would need to be more or less equal to the faculty's matching income from the UvA.
- The faculty's matching offer should not be expanded to such an extent that negotiations about the amount of the grant are conducted less ambitiously.
- From a faculty perspective, the marginal overheads are more relevant than the average overheads in deciding whether or not to allocate a matching budget to a specific project in which the grant provider will not reimburse overheads. Whereas, in the case of full matching, a department needs to obtain matching funds of €40 thousand in average overheads for each FTE from the faculty, the marginal overheads at faculty level will often be less than half that amount.

- It is important to maintain consistency in matching allocation: the current policy, in which matching allocated at the start of a project is also guaranteed for the years t+1, t+2, etc., will be continued

3. Criteria for choices in matching policy

Based on the above-mentioned principles, decisions regarding the allocation of matching are guided by the following criteria:
- Proposals for matching are accepted, in principle, if they are in line with the faculty research strategy. For projects within the research priority areas, this alignment is assumed to exist, but projects outside the research priority areas can definitely also fit in well with the faculty research strategy.
- Proposals for matching are accepted, in principle, if the projects belong to the broad GS2; after all, the faculty receives funds from the university for this. However, the faculty may deviate from this if projects belong to the broad GS2, but clearly fall outside the scope of the faculty research strategy.
- Projects that belong to the broad GS2 that not only involve incomplete reimbursement of overheads, but also incomplete reimbursement of staff or material expenses, will also be matched for the time being. However, the research director will perform an additional review for this type of project (for example, EU Social Dialogue projects or EU Jean Monnet projects).
- Proposals outside the broad GS2 are accepted only if they fall within the scope of the faculty research strategy and the clients operate with grant conditions under which the compensation provided is always lower than the full costs. Examples are funding generated in the commercial exploitation phase, Stichting GAK, AUF, and sometimes ministries and other government institutions.

Process

During the budget meeting for the coming financial year in October, the Department Chairs will be asked to estimate how much matching they expect to request for the coming year: what projects are already under way, what new projects are in the pipeline and what matching requirements will be set for them? Department Chairs will also be asked to report any unexpected matching requests in the current financial year as soon as possible.

In this way, the primary question is put to the departments: what amount of matching will be requested for which projects?

Matching requests for projects that are already in progress will be accepted regardless.

Matching applications outside the budgetary cycle will be submitted to the research director no later than one week before the submission of the proposal. These applications should be accompanied by the research proposal or a draft version thereof and the budget approved by project control, which explicitly indicates the matching requested.

Appendix 1: Classification of projects with indirect government funding and projects with contract research funding

Projects with indirect government funding and projects with contract research funding currently in progress in the faculty can be classified as follows.

indirect government funding:
– NWO projects. This grant provider pays the staff and material expenses. The overhead has to be matched.

Extended indirect government funding:
– EU projects in KP7/Horizon2020/ERC grants. In these projects, the staff and material expenses are reimbursed, and 25% of the overhead on those expenses is also reimbursed. The difference has to be matched;
– EU projects in other programmes. At the Amsterdam Law School, a number of EU projects are funded by the 'social dialogue' programme. Ninety per cent of these projects' staff and material costs are reimbursed, plus a 7% reimbursement for the overhead on the 90% of those expenses. The difference less the 10% own contribution has to be matched.

contract research funding:
– Grants from ministries, local authorities and affiliated institutions that provide compensation in accordance with NWO conditions. This does not include any reimbursement for the overhead;
– Grants from AUF, foundations, ministries, local authorities and funding generated in the commercial exploitation phase that do not or do not completely reimburse overhead;
– Grants from AUF, foundations, ministries and local authorities that fully reimburse overhead.

In addition, there is also income from conferences, seminars and contract teaching. This is classified in the UvA accounts as contract research funding, but falls outside the scope of the matching issue in the field of research.

Appendix 2: Sample calculation of matching requirement

The table below shows the matching requirement for a one-year project with a postdoc that costs 100; the overhead of the faculty is 40.

	Costs	Costs	Reimbursement	Reimbursement	Amount to be	Own
	Staff	Overhead	Staff	Overhead	matched	contribution
NWO	100	40	100		40	0
EUH2020/ERC	100	40	100	25	15	0
EU soc dial	100	40	90	6.3	33.7	10
Providers in accordance with NWO	100	40	100		40	0
Providers not offering full cost coverage	100	40	100	X	40-X	0
Providers offering full cost coverage	100	40	100	40	0	0
Commercial rates	100	40	>=100	>=40	0	0

Appendix 2: Workflow research application

	Action	Who?	Remarks
Announcement of project idea	Announce your project idea/initiative at the Project Coordinator (Sanne)	Researcher	
	Project support consists of: - Substantive advice (grant advisors) - Financial support (project controllers) - Administrative support (project coordinator)	Project coordinator research (Sanne)	Sanne connects the researcher to the relevant subsidy team members
Financial check	Preparing the first draft of the budget, including matching	Project controller (Samira)	Samira prepares the first draft with input from the researcher. She sends the budget to the applicant, including the institute manager in cc for internal approval
	Check the project budget on: - Personnel commitment - Matching overhead costs - Co-financing / personal contribution - Statement of support	Operations manager	Assessment by the research director for faculty approval applies to: - Matching request according to the criteria in the matching policy - Official statement of support
Internal approval	Submit request of internal approval by the research director to Sanne, no later than <u>1 week before the call deadline</u>.	Operations manager	The request is accompanied by the following documentation: - Draft proposal - Budget, including matching / co-financing - Approval of department chair / business coordinator
	Assessment for internal approval	Research Director	The proposal is ready for submission by internal approval. Sanne takes care of the administrative processing (communication and signing of administrative forms)

Martina Chýlková, Grant Advisor (consortium grants)

Olga Gritsai, Grant Advisor (individual grants)

Samira Lafrinedi, Project Controller

Benjamin van Rooij, Research Director

Sanne Veenenbos, Project Coordinator Research