Dutch Cancer Society

Specific Guidelines
Scouting programme for CDD projects

Version 1, August 2026

Background
Treatment options remain inadequate for many types of cancer, highlighting the urgent need for new and innovative therapies that address unmet medical needs and improve patient outcomes.

Significant advances in biomedical research, originating from both academia and industry, have led to a growing pipeline of promising therapeutic concepts. However, the transition from early innovation to a clinically viable investigational medicinal product remains a major bottleneck. While industry traditionally drives this transition, not all promising assets are taken forward, particularly when they carry high development risk, require substantial upfront investment, or lack immediate commercial attractiveness.

As a result, both academic groups and emerging biotech companies are facing difficulties in advancing therapeutic candidates through the critical final preclinical and early clinical development stages. This pathway remains complex and resource-intensive, with key challenges including limited access to regulatory expertise, manufacturing capabilities, funding, and integrated development support.

Aim
To address these challenges, the Dutch Cancer Society (KWF), in collaboration with the Centre for Drug Development (CDD) at Cancer Research UK (CRUK), invites submissions through the scouting form to identify high-potential therapeutic candidates. This initiative aims to accelerate the progression of academic and industry-driven innovations towards clinical development by providing access to full supportive resources, including financial support, integrated development expertise, infrastructure, and strategic support.

Scope
KWF invites researchers to submit projects involving promising oncology drug candidates in late-stage preclinical development and/or approaching first-in-human studies. Through our strategic partnership with the CDD, we can co-fund selected projects and offer access to the CDD's expertise and infrastructure to execute preclinical and clinical development. Through this collaboration, we aim to accelerate the development of innovative oncology therapeutics by supporting projects that are either 1) in late stage preclinical development i.e. up to 6-9 months prior lead candidate selection 2) final stage preclinical development i.e. completion of IND in preparation for clinical testing or 3) drug candidates that are at the stage for early clinical testing (Phase I/IIa). We are seeking high-potential new drug candidates that address clear unmet medical needs in oncology backed by strong scientific rationale and robust preclinical data. All cancer drugs that are regulated as medicinal product are eligible. Eligible modalities include, but are not limited to, small molecules, cell and gene therapies, nuclear medicine or immunotherapies. Both academic research groups and (spin-off) companies based in the Netherlands are invited to fill in our scouting form.

Dutch Cancer Society

Why collaborate with CDD?
KWF collaborates with the CDD in the United Kingdom, a charity-funded pharmaceutical development facility that is part of Cancer Research UK (CRUK) affiliated with Cancer Research Horizons (CRH). The Cancer Research UK Centre for Drug Development has been pioneering the development of new cancer treatments for 25 years, bringing more than 170 potential new anti-cancer agents into clinical trials in patients out of which 6 agents reached marketing approval.

The CDD is a drug development facility equipped with expertise in preclinical and medical sciences, regulatory affairs, quality assurance, project management, legal support, drug safety, clinical operations, and data management. These capabilities are utilized to sponsor, coordinate and oversee phase I and I/IIa trials for promising new drug candidates with co-funding from KWF and CRUK.

The CDD offers extensive expertise to support researchers in overcoming barriers to clinical translation. Key benefits include:

- CMC and Drug Supply: Pharmaceutical development, drug product manufacturing, drug supply chain management
- Preclinical activities: CTA (IND)-enabling studies, PK & PD assay development, Trial design & protocol development, Supporting translational research
- Regulatory interactions: Scientific advice meetings, CTA preparation, CTA submission
- Early phase clinical trials: ICH GCP trial sponsorship, Site selection & feasibility, Clinical trial management, Data/base management

Approved projects will be (co-) funded by KWF and will be brought into the CDD portfolio for CDD's experienced team to plan, sponsor and run early phase clinical trials within the experimental cancer medicines centres (ECMC) network in the UK with the capabilities to also support preclinical/IND-enabling activities. In other words, projects are taken on by CDD for further development, always in close alignment with the submission initiator. Inclusion of Dutch centers [1]clinical trials is highly preferred by KWF but must be agreed upon with the CDD in the context of the project-specific agreement□. The project specific agreement grants license rights of the product to CRUK for the purpose of conducting the preclinical work and trial, arising intellectual property rights (IPR) resulting from the study are licensed to the partner for further development of the product. If the project team does not continue development independently, CRUK may facilitate further development through partnering opportunities following successful clinical testing.

Requirements and guidance

We are seeking projects that involve a novel drug candidate with strong preclinical evidence supporting a viable pathway to clinical trials. First-in-class candidates are preferred with best-in-class agents considered where there is clear differentiation. For projects that are still at the preclinical development stage in preparation for clinical testing, in scope activities include efficacy studies, mechanism of action activities, GLP-toxicity studies, target validation or supporting biomarker programmes.

Dutch Cancer Society

Project and applicants

Requirements		Guidance
Research type	Research project or consortia	• Projects with new investigational medicinal products
Research phase	Final stage pre-clinical research to phase I/IIa trials	• Phase I or I/IIa trials are eligible • Pre clinical projects at the final stage for clinical testing (IND enabling studies) • Pre-clinical projects 6-9 months prior clinical candidate selection
Trial /Project objectives	A clear overview of the intended trial or pre-clinical project	Clearly describe trial or project. Outline the specific objectives, clinical or translational milestones, and the unmet medical need the project aims to address. Ensure that your objectives are realistic and aligned with the current development stage of the candidate. For pre-clinical projects: consider how your project fits into the pathway toward First-in-Human trials and what key outcomes or data you aim to generate within the project. Since the CDD provides support in trial design and lead candidate optimization, evaluation is primarily based on the strength of the preclinical data package and the therapeutic potential of the drug candidate and lesser on proposed Trial or project. The project must demonstrate a clear need for the CDD's specialized resources and expertise to advance toward advanced drug development.
Submission initiator	Medical centre, or knowledge/ research institutes/private parties	Submission initiators should fall within the following categories: academic research groups (from Dutch universities, medical centres or other research institutions); or Dutch private parties. The submission initiator should have full ownership of the product or be able to obtain rights.
(External) inclusion centres	Medical centre or research institute that must be located in Europe.	• Centre (outside the institute of the submission initiator) that only includes patients for clinical studies and has no active research role in the project. This centre has no right to the project results. An exception to this can be that an external inclusion centre retains the right on its own generated data, information, samples, knowledge and inventions. As CRUK executes the role of sponsor for the further development and execution of the project or clinical trial, the selection of trial sites shall primarily be determined by the CDD,

		and is expected to occur within its established Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres (ECMC) network in the UK. However, within the framework of this collaboration, the inclusion of Dutch clinical sites is preferred. Where feasible, and subject to regulatory, logistical, and scientific considerations, Dutch sites will be incorporated into the trial design and execution. Therefore intended inclusion centres in the Netherlands should be listed here. To be eligible for (partial) funding by KWF, inclusion of Dutch clinical sites is mandatory but feasibility will rely on comparative standard of care between UK and NL for the targeted indication.
Private parties	For-profit partners.	• Dutch Private parties are allowed as submission initiator (i.e. Dutch spin-offs, biotech) • Co-funding for for-profit partners could be required and will be discussed with the CDD. • To ensure appropriate allocation of KWF funding, funding is only provided if there is a clear rationale why collaboration with the CDD is needed and why the for-profit private party requires (partial) funding by KWF.
Service providers	Department or organisation that provides a necessary service for the work plan.	• Internal service providers are departments of the lead institute or a participating organization that provides a necessary service for the work plan, such as data management or specific analyses. • External service providers are public or private organizations that provide a necessary service for the work plan, such as contract manufacturers, trial bureaus, and consultancy agencies. • Both internal and external service providers do not benefit from the project results and have no right to the project results. A quotation for their services is obligatory.

Product

Requirements		**Guidance**
Intervention	New investigational medicinal products (e.g. new	Investigational medicinal products intended to be used for treatment in humans (including but not limited to monotherapy, treatments in

	chemical/biological entity, originator products)	combination with standard treatment, (neo)adjuvant therapy, add-on therapy). These need to be new originator products, meaning they have never been registered in any market before.
Product type	All types of experimental pharmaceuticals that fall under the EU definition of medicinal product (small molecules, biologicals, advanced therapy medicinal products).	Products are required to fall under the definition of medicinal product in the EU pharmaceutical legislation[4]. If it is unclear whether the product is a medicinal product, it may not be eligible.
CMC strategy and manufacturing status	Description of current status	Please describe your strategy and current status regarding CMC for the product under development. Your response could include the following aspects: • What GMP production, upscaling or quality assurance activities are planned or already completed? • What is the current production status? (e.g. lab-scale, pilot-scale, GMP-ready) • Has a scalable process been developed or validated? • Is a CMC development plan available? • Has the product been fully characterized in terms of purity, identity, and stability?
Indication	All cancer types, including rare- and paediatric cancers	• All cancer types can be targeted, including paediatric, orphan, and non-orphan cancer types. • The target patient population (currently or in the future) needs to be specified, if known. • Patient stratification or inclusion for therapeutic intervention(s) based on defined biomarkers or targets, as part of an interventional trial with relevant endpoints is allowed.
Scientific rationale	(Pre)clinical research supports expected safety and/or efficacy outcomes.	• Please provide high level findings from most relevant preclinical data including, efficacy, target validation, pharmacology/pharmacokinetics/ toxicology and if applicable clinical data.
Unmet medical need	Product development addressing unmet medical needs, with added value to the patient with respect to clinical safety and/or efficacy compared to current standard treatment.	• Unmet medical need is defined as addressing a life threatening or severely debilitating disease, which is associated with a remaining high morbidity or mortality under current standard treatment. • This includes significant gaps in safety and/or efficacy in current standard of

		care, including rare, paediatric, and hard-to-treat cancers.
Ownership	IP and freedom-to-operate	• Applicants are required to have full ownership of, or the ability to secure, all relevant rights (including intellectual property rights and freedom to operate) to the investigational medicinal product. • Patent status and freedom-to-operate need to be provided.

Out of scope

- Repurposing of registered pharmaceuticals for new indications.
- Combination therapy of registered pharmaceuticals
- Non-Dutch private parties as initiator.
- Non-Dutch research institutions as initiator.
- (Early) diagnosis of (recurrent) disease and/or monitoring during therapeutic interventions and/or patient stratification for therapeutic interventions, without interventional and pharmaceutical development set-up (e.g., observational research).
- Investigational medicinal products with no or limited freedom to operate.

Submission and review process
Scouting forms (for download below) can be submitted throughout the year. Projects must be submitted in pdf via pharmaceuticals@kwf.nl. Scouting forms follow an initial internal assessment by KWFs pharmaceutical team and after positive evaluation, projects will be shared with the CDD for further evaluation. Projects will be assessed through the CDD's internal review process, consisting of different review stages (see Figure 1). The scouting form is not a replacement for the Stage 1 review but serves as a complementary document. It enables the CDD to perform an initial assessment and provides a streamlined and structured sourcing process between KWF and the CDD for potential projects. If the CDD expresses interest in the drug candidate, the project team will be invited for an introductory call with the CDD and potentially proceed through a full stage 1 review, and the subsequent other review stages outlined in Figure 1. Before Stage 2 review an NDA between CRUK and the project team will be put in place. A positive evaluation by the CDD in all stages is required for funding by KWF.

Note 1: KWF will treat all submitted information with due care and confidentiality, and will not share any project-related information with parties other than the Centre for Drug Development (CDD). Please note that the Stage 1 review process is based on non-confidential information. Should a project be selected to progress to Stage 2, a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) will be established between CRUK and the project team prior to the exchange of confidential data.

Note 2: KWF retains full discretion regarding its decision whether or not to co-fund a project, irrespective of the CDDs interest in or evaluation of that project. However, the application form also functions as a general scouting tool for the CDD portfolio. If KWF chooses not to co-fund a project, the CDD retains full discretion to make an independent funding decision after positive evaluation by NAC.

Note 3: Review reports provided by the CDD may be utilized as an external review input for projects submitted to KWF's regular calls and can thereby serve as supplementary material for our review committee.

Figure 1. CDD evaluation procedure.

Terms and conditions
Following successful evaluation of the project by the New Agents Committee (NAC) of CDD, and a subsequent affirmative decision by KWF to award funding, a project-specific agreement shall be entered between the Project Team and CRUK.

This agreement shall include, amongst others:

- Grant of rights to CRUK for the purpose of conducting the trial.
- Grant of rights to CRUK on IPR arising from / generated within the Project.
- A license to the partner for arising intellectual property rights (IPR) resulting from the study for further commercial development of the product.
- Financial requirements for each party.
- Separately, the Project will be subject to specific terms and conditions agreed separately between CDD and KWF in relation to KWF's funding contribution.

The Project specific Agreement between the applicants and CRUK will set out the terms and conditions applicable between those parties. Throughout this contract drafting process, the CRUK maintains open dialogue with the submission initiator. In this process, there is ample opportunity for discussion between applicants and the CDD, on both the execution of pre-clinical work or the trial and the future development trajectory. KWF will oversee adherence to KWF goals and standards in projects funded within the CDD-KWF programme. For each granted project, the Project will be subject to specific terms and conditions agreed separately between CDD and KWF in relation to KWF's funding contribution.

Please note: KWF is entitled to part of the revenues generated by CRUK in case of successful commercialisation of arising IPR within the project. Any such financial interest is managed independently and will not affect the objectivity or independence of the project evaluation and decision-making process.

Dutch Cancer Society

Timelines
The scouting programme for CDD projects runs year-round with applications via the scouting form. It is not subject to specific timelines for submission.

Indicative budget
KWF may contribute up to €2 million per project. This amount represents KWF's financial contribution only and does not necessarily reflect the total project budget, which may be supplemented by funding from the CDD/CRUK.