

## Program description

### Background

Diabetes has a big impact on the lives of people with diabetes and their families. Even with optimal self-management, there is always fear of developing complications or comorbidities such as the loss of eyesight, heart problems and kidney failure. In addition, people with diabetes may face psychosocial challenges, which affect their psychological health and quality of life.

The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation (NL: Diabetes Fonds, DDRF) aims to achieve and develop scientific insights on how diabetes can be prevented, treated or cured. We are able to finance research on diabetes thanks to numerous donations from people with diabetes, their friends and families and the public at large. We believe that investing in research and innovative solutions will positively impact the lives of people with diabetes and ultimately lead to a dream of many: a world without diabetes. In the meantime, we aim to improve the quality of life of people with diabetes.

### Purpose

With the “Diabetes Fonds Fellowships” we aim to encourage promising scientists to accelerate their scientific career, or establish themselves, in the field of diabetes research. Funding will be awarded to skilful candidates who have the potential to make important contributions to the field of diabetes research, hence to positively impact the lives of people with diabetes. To achieve this, we strongly encourage that the outcomes of scientific research will be transferred to potential users and will benefit people with diabetes. Therefore, applicants will be assessed not only on their curriculum vitae (CV) and research proposal, but also on their ability to contribute in making impact on a societal, academic and/or economic level. This means that applicants need to elaborate in their application how the results from the proposed research will potentially become accessible for a wide audience and how they plan to seek opportunities to implement the outcomes of their study into practice.

### For whom?

Applicants for the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships need to be affiliated to a university, university of applied sciences (NL: *Hogeschool*), academic medical centre, STZ medical centre or non-profit research institute.

We want to stress that the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships are not only available for candidates who want to perform diabetes research in medical or biomedical disciplines. We also strongly encourage candidates from other disciplines to apply, e.g. candidates with a background in psychology, sociology, technology or with a multidisciplinary background.

## Scope

The call is open for both fundamental and applied scientific research on diabetes. The research can be done in any field, including, but not limited to, cell biology, immunology, psychology, sociology, biochemistry, patient-driven research, and technological innovations.

The scope and focus of your research project should be in line with the vision and strategy of the DDRF, making an impact on the lives of people with diabetes. The DDRF strategy for 2025-2028 is expected to be available online at the end of December 2024 on [our website](#).

Of note, some questions and topics fall beyond the scope of this Fellowships program. We will not consider:

- Projects solely focused on high-risk individuals/obesity. There needs to be a specific focus on diabetes .
  - o Research on preclinical type 1 diabetes or prediabetes (in case of type 2 diabetes) is allowed.
- Projects focused on diseases or conditions other than diabetes, in which diabetes will also be studied
  - o Projects focused on complications that are a result of having diabetes, are allowed
- Projects that are highly similar to those already being funded by the DDRF
  - o Follow-ups of already funded projects will be considered

## Available funding

Within the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships program, you can apply for two types of funding: a Junior Fellowship or a Senior Fellowship. Please read the document on "[Fellowships eligibility criteria](#)" to assess whether you are eligible to apply for a grant in the Fellowships program.

### Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowships

Junior Fellowships are available for junior scientists who have the ambition to accelerate their career in diabetes research. The junior scientist is the main applicant of the grant. The junior scientist has obtained a PhD in diabetes or another research field, and may have some experience as a postdoc scientist. A strong background in diabetes research is not a prerequisite for the junior scientist. The application must be submitted in close collaboration with an established scientist. The established scientist acts as a coach and supervisor during the research project and will (pro)actively assist the junior scientist in achieving their ambitions. The established scientist does not need to have a specific background in the field of diabetes, although this may be helpful depending on the proposed project.

Besides the CV and scientific achievements of the junior scientist, the scientific quality and (potential) impact of the proposed work for people with diabetes will be important criteria in the review process. More information on these criteria is mentioned below.

Based on the quality of the applications, we aim to support **two** Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowships in 2025 with a maximum of **€ 300.000** each for a maximum of **4 years**.

### Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowships

Senior Fellowships are available for senior scientists at postdoc level who have the ambition to further their career in diabetes research and are close to start, or have recently started, their own research group. Applicants have a proven track record in diabetes research. The Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowship should enable the recipient to start and develop their own line of research. This should not only include good or excellent scientific work but also the ability to collaborate with fellow scientists, companies and potential investors, to present and promote their own work to a wide audience, to encourage and facilitate young scientists and to place academic results in the context of people with diabetes.

Besides the CV and scientific achievements of the scientist, the scientific quality and (potential) impact of the proposed work for people with diabetes are important criteria in the review process. More information on these criteria is mentioned below.

Based on the quality of the applications, we aim to support **two** Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowships in 2025 with a maximum of **€ 350.000** each for a maximum of **4 years**.

### Procedure

To apply for a Diabetes Fonds Fellowship you first need to submit a Letter of Intent. The candidates with the most promising Letters of Intent will be selected and invited to submit a Full Application.

#### *Letter of Intent Diabetes Fonds Fellowships*

The deadline for the electronic version (in Word) of the Letter of Intent for a Diabetes Fonds Junior or Senior Fellowship is **Monday February 10, 2025 at 12:00 CET**. When the Letter of Intent meets the conditions of the program, the Scientific Advisory Board (NL:

*Wetenschappelijke Adviesraad; WAR*) of the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation will evaluate the Letter of Intent based on the review criteria (mentioned below). The Executive Board of the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation makes the final decision on who will be invited to write a Full Application. In the case a large number of Letters of Intent are received for either a Junior or Senior Fellowship, the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation has the right to select a maximum of in total 24 Junior and Senior applications to be reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Board. This selection will be based on 1) a preference for human (measurement) studies or models above studies on animals, 2) strategic considerations regarding the 'meerjarenvisie 2025-2028' of the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation (which is expected to be available online at the end of December 2024 on [our website](#)).

#### *Full Application Diabetes Fonds Fellowships*

The Full Application will consist of 1) a Scientific Application and 2) a 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen'. The deadline for the Full Application is **Monday May 28, 2025 at**

**12:00 CEST.** Applicants need to send in electronic versions (in Word) of the Scientific Application and a 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen'.

### *Scientific Application*

Several (inter)national scientists with expertise on the research topic are invited to review the Scientific Application. All reviewers will remain anonymous. The applicants are given the opportunity to write a rebuttal to the issues raised by the reviewers. In addition, a statistician will review the Scientific Application. Issues raised by the statistician can also be addressed by the applicants in the rebuttal. Members of the Scientific Advisory Board will discuss the Scientific Application, reviews and rebuttals based on the review criteria listed below.

### *'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen'*

The 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen' needs to be written in Dutch. The 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen' will be reviewed by the Societal Advisory Board (*Maatschappelijke Adviesraad; MAR*) of the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation. Similar to the Scientific Application, the applicants are given the opportunity to write a rebuttal on any issues raised by the Societal Advisory Board.

### *Meeting Advisory Boards + Interview*

In October, the members of the Scientific (WAR) and Societal (MAR) Advisory Boards will review and discuss the applications, the reviews and the rebuttals. Based on the reviews and discussion, a selection of applicants will receive an invitation for an interview with members of the Scientific Advisory Board and Societal Advisory Board. This interview will take place in November 2025.

### *Final Scoring*

A ranking list will be made with the best scoring application at the top. This ranking is based on the scores for the Scientific Application (CV 15%, research proposal 35% and knowledge utilisation 15%), the 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen' 20% and the interview 15%. An application can only be considered for approval when the 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen' and the research proposal in the Scientific Application are scored as 'Sufficient', 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

The ranking list will enable the Advisory Board members to give a final advice to the Executive Board. Based on this advice, as well as the current financial resources, the Executive Board decides which application(s) will be approved for granting a fellowship.

The DDRF reserves the right to not award (part of) the grant(s) when the Advisory Board deems the quality of the applications not adequate enough.

**Deadlines 2025**

<b>Time schedule Diabetes Fonds Fellowships 2025</b>	
<b>Monday February 10, 12:00 CET</b>	<b>Deadline Letter of Intent</b>
March/April	Evaluation of Letter of Intent by Scientific Advisory Board
April	Decision Executive Board on Letter of Intent
<b>Wednesday May 28, 12:00 CEST</b>	<b>Deadline Full Application, consisting of the Scientific Application and 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen'</b>
June	Review Scientific Application by (inter)national scientists + statistician
June	Review 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen' by Societal Advisory Board
July	Reviews to applicants for Rebuttal
<b>August/September</b>	<b>Deadline Rebuttal</b>
October	Meetings Societal and Scientific Advisory Boards
November	Interviews
December	Decision Executive Board

*The DDRF reserves the right to change timelines due to unforeseen circumstances.*

**Online information meeting in January**

It is highly recommended to join the online orientation meeting if you want to have more insight into the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships and the application procedure. During this meeting, the DDRF will explain the procedure in more detail, and provide attendants with tips and tricks for writing the proposal. Please confirm your presence by sending us an email at [research@diabetesfonds.nl](mailto:research@diabetesfonds.nl) with the same address which we can use to send the Teams invitation to.

Date: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2025

Time: 15.00-16.30 CET

Via: Microsoft Teams (you will receive a link)

## Review criteria

The members of the Scientific Advisory Board, the members of the Societal Advisory Board and the external reviewers will evaluate the Letters of Intent, Scientific Applications and/or 'Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen' of the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships based on the following criteria:

- I. Quality of the candidate
- II. Quality of the research proposal
- III. Knowledge utilisation

Below these criteria are specified.

### I. Quality of the candidate

#### Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowships

##### *Junior postdoc*

- ✓ A Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowship will propel or accelerate the career of the candidate in the scientific field of diabetes;
- ✓ Potential and ambition of the candidate for establishing a successful and independent career in the scientific field of diabetes. A strong background in diabetes research is not a prerequisite;
- ✓ A track record relevant for the plans outlined in the research proposal;
- ✓ Past performance (e.g. publication record, presentations, prizes, awards granted, international experience, etc.);
- ✓ Potential of the candidate for seeking opportunities to implement the outcomes of the proposed research;
- ✓ Ability of the candidate to be a passionate advocate of his/her research for a wide audience;
- ✓ The established scientist:
  - a. will adopt an active role in coaching the candidate to a successful conclusion of the proposed project,
  - b. will stimulate the personal and professional development of the candidate
  - c. will be an asset in a complete and sustainable embedding of the candidate's research activities within the research institute,
  - d. will exploit means to bring the candidate into contact with his/her network when seen fit,
  - e. does not need to have a specific background in the field of diabetes, although this may be helpful depending on the proposed project.

#### Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowships

##### *Senior postdoc*

- ✓ A Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowship will enable the candidate to (further) establish his/her own line of research in the field of diabetes
- ✓ Track record and standing in the field of diabetes is good or excellent;

- ✓ Potential and ambition of the candidate to be a promising contributor to the scientific field of diabetes;
- ✓ Past performance (e.g. publication record, presentations, prizes, awards granted, international experience, etc.);
- ✓ Ability of the candidate to lead and supervise other scientists and staff;
- ✓ Ability of the candidate to be a passionate advocate of his/her research for a wide audience;
- ✓ Potential of the candidate in seeking opportunities to implement the outcomes of the proposed research;

### II. Quality of the research proposal

- ✓ The project clearly contributes to the goal of the DDRF to achieve and develop scientific insights or solutions on how diabetes or its complications can be prevented, detected earlier, treated or cured.
- ✓ The project **must** have a direct focus on diabetes.
- ✓ Projects solely focused on high-risk individuals/obesity, projects focused on diseases or conditions other than diabetes (in which diabetes will also be studied), and projects that are highly similar to those already being funded by the DDRF, are **not** within the scope of this call for proposals, and will be excluded from participation.
  - a. Exceptions to the above are research on preclinical type 1 diabetes or prediabetes (in case of type 2 diabetes), projects focused on complications that are a result of having diabetes, and follow-ups of already funded projects.
- ✓ The study rationale is convincing: what is the problem and how will this be addressed/solved?
- ✓ The project clearly describes **for whom** the outcomes of the study will be of importance. E.g. specific subgroups of people with diabetes (male/female, child/adult, socioeconomic status (SES), ethnicity, etc.). When using a study population or a cohort in the research proposal, it therefore needs to be specified why the study population or cohort is the best fit to answer the research question(s), how people will be selected, which strategy will be used to include sufficient participants, etc.
- ✓ The research question is original;
- ✓ The proposed research is ambitious, but feasible within the time frame described in the proposal;
- ✓ The work plan is of high scientific quality and ethically acceptable;
- ✓ The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation highly prefers human (measurement) studies or models above studies on animals. If animal testing is necessary because there are no alternatives without animal studies that can address the research questions as effectively, the design of the study takes into account the recent developments in reducing, refining and replacing animal testing.

### III. Knowledge utilisation

- ✓ People with (pre)diabetes will (potentially) benefit from the proposed work in the short or long term;

- ✓ It is made clear for whom will the outcomes of the study be of importance. E.g. specific subgroups of people with diabetes (male/female, child/adult, socioeconomic status (SES), ethnicity, etc.);
- ✓ The proposed research is promising in terms of future implementation;
- ✓ An action plan to allow the outcomes of the project to benefit potential knowledge users, such as people with diabetes, healthcare professionals, companies and other academic disciplines, is included in the application;
- ✓ Elaborate if and how potential knowledge users will be involved and how the proposed research will contribute to other academic areas and society (e.g. what difference will the results from the research make to the society if applied). Also, include the estimated period over which knowledge utilisation is expected to occur.



### Conditions for writing a proposal

The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation evaluates the applications based on the following conditions. Applications **not** meeting these conditions will be **excluded** from the procedure.

### Application and eligibility

- Applications for the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships 2025 need to meet the conditions and requirements described in the 'Algemene Subsidievoorwaarden', which can be found at our website: <https://www.diabetesfonds.nl/subsidievoorwaarden>.
- The correct application form is used, available at our website: <https://www.diabetesfonds.nl/speciaal-voor/onderzoekers/diabetes-fonds-fellowships>;
- The form is filled out completely and correctly and the deadline is not exceeded;
- The applicant is eligible for a Junior or Senior Fellowship. See the document on "[Fellowships eligibility criteria](#)" for detailed information on eligibility;
- The main applicant is affiliated to a university, university of applied sciences, academic medical centre, STZ medical centre or non-profit research institute;
- The project takes place in The Netherlands for more than 50% of the duration and resources;
- The maximum amount requested should not exceed € 300.000 (Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowship) or € 350.000 (Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowship) for a period of maximum 48 months. The duration of the project can be extended to a maximum of eight years for clinical scientists.
- The budget meets the guidelines in the document '*Algemene Subsidievoorwaarden*'. Please be aware that:
  - personnel costs can cover the position of the applicant, but can also (exclusively) be used to hire other personnel (e.g. technician, PhD student, postdoc, data scientist, etc.) for execution of the project;
  - material costs need to be specified in the budget by showing the type of materials (e.g. clinical study, reagents, animals, etc.) and their costs;

### Research project

- The project has a direct relation with diabetes;
- If a clinical study is included, it needs to be performed under the surveillance and responsibility of an academic institute, STZ medical centre, university or non-profit research institute;
- The project concerns independent research activities. Applications for additional finances will be excluded from the procedure;
- The project does not concern a pilot study or research primary based on methodology;
- The research proposal describes one project with one or more objectives/milestones. Two or more distinct projects are not allowed.

**Extra information is needed in case of:**

- Research proposals resulting from ongoing projects. Please indicate how the application differs from the current activities and whether there is an overlap or connection between the ongoing and proposed projects;
- Research proposals that are simultaneously offered for funding elsewhere. Please inform us which organization the proposal is offered to, when the decision on granting is expected and what amount of funding is requested. If the research proposal is granted elsewhere, the proposal will be excluded from the procedure;
- Research proposals that have been previously denied by the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation. Motivate why the grant is applied for again and inform us precisely how the current proposal differs from the earlier proposal;

**Contact information**

Send your electronic application to:

[research@diabetesfonds.nl](mailto:research@diabetesfonds.nl)

For further questions or remarks please contact Jeanette Rothuizen.

Phone: 033 462 20 55 or e-mail: [research@diabetesfonds.nl](mailto:research@diabetesfonds.nl).

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