

## **Rationale Consortia Program Dutch Kidney Foundation / Nierstichting Nederland**

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In 2009, the Dutch Kidney Foundation (DKF) launched the DKF Consortia Program (CP), a new funding scheme of large grants aimed at supporting scientific programs developed by consortia of renal researchers. For an independent and sound evaluation of the program applications a new international scientific advisory board, the DKF ISAB, was installed.

### **Aim**

The aim of the CP is to increase the international impact and quality of Dutch renal research and to facilitate its translation to clinical application by stimulating internal cohesion and collaboration.

### **Renal Research in the Netherlands**

Nephrology in the Netherlands has a longstanding tradition of high quality with international recognition. The current emphasis varies between the eight university medical centers and includes top basic science and clinical nephrology, dialysis and transplantation:

- Clinical nephrology and epidemiology;
- Dialysis;
- Kidney transplantation;
- Pediatric nephrology;
- Renal genetics;
- Renal immunology and pathology;
- Renal physiology and cell biology;
- Vascular biology and inflammation.

Collaborative projects between departments within one medical center are infrequent and collaboration between different medical centers an exception, although experiences in the past have been quite successful, eg. between medical centers and research institutes (like the Netherlands Cancer Institute NKI). Pediatric nephrology in the Netherlands as a whole is threatened by a lack of manpower, in particular in the field of science, undermining opportunities for collaborative research with ao. genetics and cell biology.

### **DKF Consortia**

The DKF believes that collaborative efforts can enhance the quality and coherence of Dutch renal research and stimulate the utilization of the full potential of the Dutch research infrastructure. Therefore, the DKF has initiated the new Consortia Program to address the aforementioned issues.

The Program funds large projects (budget up to 1.5 million euros) for a limited number of years. The grant award procedure is based on open competition. A grant proposal will focus on an important renal theme and is composed of a limited number of tightly interconnected projects. It will be initiated by three or more research teams from at least two different research institutes that form a consortium. The outcome will have a demonstrable surplus value that would be lacking if the projects would be executed separately.

The program has an annual funding round with pre-application and full application. Grant applications for all subjects associated with clinical and laboratory renal research will be considered. Selection will be guided by the quality of the applications, based on the content of the scientific projects and the past performance of the participating groups. The applications should aim at a comprehensive translational approach ranging from basic mechanisms to clinical application. Full specification of the conditions of the program can be found on the DKF Consortia Program information sheet.