Top Sector Logistics[1] 2025–2029 – Call for Proposals

Call 2 – 2026: Part A: Transition to Sustainable, Resilient and Robust Logistics Chains and Freight Transport

Introduction

TKI Dinalog is the leading independent institute for logistics knowledge development in the Netherlands. As the Top Consortium for Knowledge and Innovation for the Top Sector Logistics, TKI Dinalog guides and stimulates joint knowledge development for the logistics of the future in the Netherlands.

Top Sector Logistics

The Top Sector Logistics is one of the 10 top sectors in the Netherlands. Together with companies, governments and knowledge institutions, the Top Sector Logistics is working towards its ambition for 2050: competitive and emission-free logistics in the Netherlands. To ensure that logistics continues to add value to the economy and society in the long term, the Top Sector Logistics is focusing on a sustainable, resilient and robust logistics system in its 2024-2027 implementation programme. We use our knowledge and innovation power to help companies and governments not only keep up with developments, but also to innovate successfully, redesign chains, offer new services and thus make an important contribution to solving the social challenges of improving quality of life.

The Top Sector Logistics has translated its ambition into three main objectives for 2030:

1. Sustainable: The Top Sector Logistics focuses on increasing chain efficiency while reducing CO_2, particulate matter and NOx emissions, thereby contributing to social challenges and securing the Dutch earning capacity of the future.
2. Resilient: A resilient supply chain is defined by its adaptability, recovery capacity and infrastructure robustness. The Top Sector Logistics focuses on increasing the adaptability and recovery capacity of logistics in the Netherlands.
3. Future-proof: The Netherlands is reaching its limits. For example, in terms of physical space, environmental space and staff shortages. The Top Sector Logistics focuses on using existing knowledge and resources to optimise the multimodal freight transport system and to use the space for growth in a targeted manner for the energy transition and circularity.

Knowledge and Innovation Programme - Transition to Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Logistics Chains and Freight Transport

In the Top Sector Logistics, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management is making more than €9,000,000 available for research that contributes to the transition to sustainable, competitive and safe logistics chains and freight transport as part of the Joint Ambition, Logistics and Freight Transport in 2050: competitive, sustainable and safe. The research programme is being carried out by TKI Dinalog.

[1] Although the top sector policy has been discontinued, we are currently still using Top Sector Logistics for this call and the ongoing Implementation Programme, which is funded by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management's Temporary Subsidy Scheme for the Top Sector Logistics 2025-2029.

Call For Proposals - Transition to Sustainable, Resilient and Robust Logistics Chains and Freight Transport

In this document, we call on consortia consisting of knowledge institutions, companies and civil society organisations to submit proposals for research projects. The topics below provide guidance for this call and should contribute to the realisation of the objectives and priorities of the Cities and Space, Multimodal Freight Transport and Supply Chains steering groups. They are therefore in line with the three main objectives of the 2024-2027 Implementation Programme - Top Sector Logistics: (1) sustainability, (2) resilience and (3) robustness. This is the second call within this programme and consortia are invited to take note of the content of the projects awarded in the first call, see this announcement for more information.

Requested Topics

The research question in this call (Call 2 - 2026) focuses specifically on funding research that can contribute to the major challenges listed below. A research project may focus on one or more of these topics.

Theme 1: Scarcity of Space

The Netherlands is a small country where space is becoming increasingly scarce. Logistical activities require physical infrastructure space in cities, rural areas, industrial estates, and logistics hubs. At the same time, the social acceptance of logistics activities, or “license to operate,” is under pressure. The demand for logistics space will likely increase in the future. This demand is not limited to physical square meters but also relates to emissions, infrastructure, mobility, and climate resilience. There is a lack of insight into the space requirements associated with the energy transition, the circular economy, and climate adaptation. This insight is necessary to develop an action plan for the various relevant parties. Additionally, solutions are required from both the business community and the various authorities to more effectively and efficiently utilize the scarce available space for logistics purposes. All this must be done in a way that contributes to our country's future earning capacity, to area-specific choices in regions and cities, and to the transition to a sustainable and resilient society.

Theme 2: Increasing Labour Productivity and Earning Capacity, and Meaningful Work

Maintaining logistics activities that are essential to the Netherlands and our earning capacity will continue to require sufficient and suitably qualified personnel who can perform meaningful work in sustainable careers. The need for this is widely recognised, and companies are looking for ways to attract enough qualified people. The increasing demand for logistics services and the declining influx of new workers will put further pressure on the logistics labour market in the future. In addition, the well-being and labour productivity of employees in the sector are also influenced by labour regulations, leadership, development opportunities and the working environment. New technologies are also changing the meaningfulness of work in terms of employee competencies. There is still limited insight into the influence of automation, digitisation and artificial intelligence on future human capital in the logistics field. The labour market issues are complex and require integrated and system-oriented solutions in collaboration between businesses, government, education and knowledge institutions.

Theme 3: Security of Supply of Materials, Raw Materials and Products

The availability of critical raw materials and resources is under pressure worldwide. This is due to a combination of factors, including geopolitical tensions, increased demand resulting from technological advancements, the energy transition, and the limited extractability of certain raw materials. Ambitions have been set for certain critical raw materials, including at European level in the Critical Raw

Materials Act, but availability is also an issue for some other resources, raw materials and products. Europe wants to strengthen its strategic autonomy by extracting and processing more strategic raw materials within the EU, diversifying import flows and focusing more on circularity (narrowing, slowing (e.g. repair) and closing the loop), and alternative (bio-based) raw materials. These developments are causing changes in the flow of goods in, from and to the Netherlands, our cities and rural areas, and may require adjustments to logistics activities and infrastructure at various levels. Furthermore, companies often lack sufficient insight into which critical raw materials they use and to what extent this makes them vulnerable. In addition, it is sometimes unclear to companies to what extent they use critical raw materials and whether (and to what extent) they are vulnerable. To respond effectively to these developments, companies and governments in the Netherlands must develop knowledge within the European context.

Theme 4: Resilience of the Logistics and Mobility System

The logistics system — encompassing both infrastructure and the people integral to its operation — faces growing disruption, with serious consequences for supply security and the efficiency of goods flows. These disruptions can arise from a variety of factors, such as climate change or extreme weather conditions, but also the limited availability of transport modes, geopolitical tensions, pandemics, criminal undermining, cyber-attacks, labour shortages and unexpected fluctuations in demand. Both major and cumulative minor disruptions can seriously affect the effectiveness of logistics chains, as they disrupt the interaction between infrastructure and various chain partners in the system and place heavy demands on people. In addition, keeping the physical multimodal infrastructure operational poses a major challenge. Planned major maintenance on bridges and roads is necessary to keep the infrastructure safe and functional, but it also has a significant impact on mobility and transport flows. Closures, diversions and reduced capacity can lead to longer journey times, increased congestion and disruptions to logistics processes in (inter)national goods flows. Disruptions in road freight transport can also offer opportunities to improve capacity utilisation in the multimodal freight transport system. Governments and businesses should

Theme 5: Sustainability and Energy Transition

Logistics plays a crucial role in making the Netherlands, our business parks, and our residential areas more sustainable and livable. While logistics is associated with pollution and risky transportation, it also enables sustainability in other sectors. Nevertheless, current separate policy measures are insufficient to achieve sustainability and CO2 reduction objectives. This applies both to the sector as a whole and specifically to modes of transport such as rail and inland shipping at corridor level. More is therefore needed at the system level. At the same time, the business community, particularly SMEs, indicates that the feasibility and affordability of measures is having an increasing impact on short-term profitability. Internationally, however, numerous initiatives to promote sustainability have already been launched. Emissions must be measured and reported, emission rights in the transport sector are traded, and government subsidies are available for making all modes of transport more sustainable. However, these are changes that are only slowly permeating daily decisions, relationships and contracts within the chain, including those involving consumers. Technologies are developing rapidly, and there is a great deal of uncertainty about new standards and working methods. This leads to reluctance on the part of the business community to make investments. In the context of (international) logistics value chains, the question also arises as to which parties in the chain bear the costs of sustainability and how these costs can be distributed more fairly.

Theme 6: Digital Transition

Logistics is undergoing a digital transition that brings with it both significant opportunities and challenges. While digitisation offers opportunities for more efficient and effective organisation of logistics chains, it also presents challenges such as high investment costs, cybersecurity risks and the complexity of system integration. It is essential for companies to take steps in this area to secure their future earning capacity. The question is how the adoption of suitable technologies can be accelerated to exploit their potential value. Digitalisation offers opportunities for better decision support tools and AI applications, in addition to the automation and robotisation of logistics processes. However, integrating these technologies into existing processes and working environments poses significant challenges, such as connecting to legacy systems, retraining staff, ensuring data quality and interoperability, and maintaining human control and expertise.

Importance of a Systems Approach

We call for research proposals that contribute to a better understanding and management of the above-mentioned problems, or that develop effective interventions or mitigating measures. The current logistics system makes it difficult to achieve structural breakthroughs in these areas from the perspective of a single link in the chain or a single supply chain. Therefore, research should not only focus on incremental improvements within existing current systems, but also on the possibilities for fundamental system change across chains. For example, a change in governance structures in logistics chains may be necessary, or intelligence may need to be added to the system to improve cooperation within networks. System change may also require advanced forms of collective decision-making rather than isolated adjustments within individual organisations. This may necessitate the use of new definitions, approaches and system perspectives from different disciplines. The major societal challenges and the scope for action of relevant stakeholders, such as national, regional and local authorities, businesses and consumers, must be brought together where relevant. In assessing proposals, the potential, expected (direct and indirect) impact of projects on the complex challenges mentioned will be explicitly considered. To this end, proposals may describe the path to societal impact.

Available Budget

A total of €3,550,000 is available for the launch of collaborative projects under this first second call (Call 2 – 2026). Collaborative projects are research projects carried out by a partnership of companies and knowledge institutions. The minimum size of a consortium is one knowledge institution and two companies. These can be two private companies or at least one private company and one public institution. Consortia in which multiple knowledge disciplines and/or universities and practice-oriented researchers (universities of applied sciences and/or TO2 institutions) collaborate are strongly encouraged.

Within the TKI Dinalog and specifically for this call, the following guidelines have been chosen for the design of research projects:

- Industrial (R&D) research: up to 50% of eligible costs, with a maximum of €1,000,000 (the corresponding total co-financing is then at least €1,000,000 and the eligible project costs are then at least €2,000,000 for a maximum period of three years);
- Experimental development: up to 25% of eligible costs, with a maximum of €1,000,000 (the corresponding total co-financing is then at least €3,000,000 and the eligible project costs are then at least €4,000,000 for a maximum period of three years).

The research projects must contribute to the main objectives of the Top Sector Logistics. For projects that contribute to the main objective of sustainability in this call, the expected potential contributions to the reduction of CO_2 emissions must be convincingly substantiated in the proposals and quantified where possible.

Consortia can submit a draft budget and receive feedback on it **until Tuesday, 26 May 2026**, to speed up the process after final submission. The financial structure of the projects is subject to the conditions of the Temporary Subsidy Scheme for Research in the Top Sector Logistics 2025–2029 of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

Submission Deadline

Project proposals may be submitted from **Monday, 2 February 2026, 9:00 a.m. to Friday, 26 June 2026, 5:00 p.m.**, in accordance with the conditions and guidelines of the subsidy scheme. Proposals will only be included in the assessment process after this deadline has passed. TKI Dinalog aims to complete the assessment of project proposals and the decision-making process for projects within three months.

Other Calls

Simultaneously with this Call for Proposals, TKI Dinalog also offers consortia the opportunity to submit proposals relating to mobile tools and construction logistics. Topics specifically related to these areas are better suited to the relevant call. In addition, there is a separate programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence entitled “Innovation for Resilient Military Supply Chains and Society”. Topics that fit well with this programme are better submitted to that call.