



Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend  
Nederland

# Information session SBIR in Developing Markets

## Innovations for Women's Health in Africa

31 March 2026



# Programme

15:30	SBIR call Innovations for women's health
	SBIR Expression of Interest
	- procedure
	- assessment
16.30	Questions
17:00	Closure





# RVO SBIR in DM team

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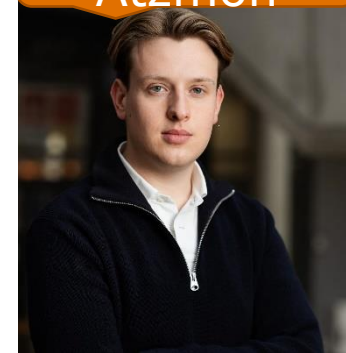
Martijn Moonen



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## Focus on health

This call falls under the 2025 policy letter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Trade and Economy:

Strengthening local economies, while also contributing to the Dutch earning capacity

Three key areas: health, water management and food security

Innovative capacity of entrepreneurs

## Focus on 7 countries

- > Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa (*to be confirmed*)

## Focus on 3 themes

- > innovative health solutions for women
- > innovative solutions for medical practitioners advancing women's health
- > innovative medical solutions with a women-centred design

## Focus on R&D and innovation



# Call: Innovations for Women's Health in Africa

## 1 Improved availability and quality of healthcare services for women

Innovations that develop and validate new medical technologies or clinically validated diagnostic or treatment approaches that enable women to detect, monitor, or manage health conditions at home, in pharmacies, or in community settings before hospital care becomes necessary. Appropriate healthcare offers diagnostics and treatments adapted to the woman's body and physiology.

## 2 Diagnostic solutions, medical assistive devices, and clinical practices that advance women's health outcomes

Innovative tools and approaches that enable healthcare professionals to detect, monitor, and treat women's health conditions more accurately, earlier, and more safely—particularly in low-resource African settings. These solutions improve clinical decision-making, reduce complications, and enhance the quality of care across reproductive, maternal, and non-communicable diseases affecting women. They also offer diagnostics and treatments adapted to the woman's body and physiology.

## 3 Self-care and home-based medical products designed for women's health

Innovations that strengthen self-care and home-based women's health by products that are specifically adapted to women's biological needs, cultural contexts, and the practical realities of African healthcare settings and the distance for women to make use of it. Products made from locally sourced materials - durable, low power, and repairable - support affordability, supply resilience, and trust among women users.



# 1 Improved availability and quality of healthcare services for women

Innovative medical supplies—such as portable diagnostic tools, self-testing kits, long-acting treatments, and wearable or point-of-care devices—that enables early detection and management of female conditions before they become severe. This prevents complications that would not be addressed at all or otherwise require hospital admission. Improved quality emphasizes better diagnostics, maternity care, continuity of care, and reliable medical supplies, leading to earlier detection, safer treatment, and better health outcomes across a woman’s life course

## **Examples:**

- Mobile health units that provide cervical cancer screening, breast exams, prenatal checkups, and HIV services in remote or informal settlements where permanent facilities are limited.
- Low-literacy self-testing kits for women’s health conditions.
- Digitally assisted interpretation of simple diagnostic tests.



## 2 Diagnostic solutions, medical assistive devices, and clinical practices that advance women's health outcomes

Innovations equipping medical staff with appropriate diagnostic and examination tools, purpose-designed medical assistive devices, and evidence-based clinical practices tailored to women's biological and social health needs. Improved clinical outcomes on topics such as better diagnostics, appropriate medical assistive devices, and targeted care pathways help medical practitioners diagnose earlier, treat more effectively, and reduce preventable complications. Preventive and early-care approaches lower emergency cases, maternal mortality, and long-term complications, easing pressure on overstretched health systems. Better tools and training, such as devices and workflows designed with women's health in mind, improve efficiency, accuracy, and confidence among healthcare workers.

### **Examples:**

- > Examination tools designed for privacy, comfort, and appropriate anatomy.
- > Digital innovations that expand cognitive access, triage capacity, and referral efficiency—such as AI-supported symptom assessment tools.
- > Specialised medical assistive devices designed for women





## 3 Self-care and home-based medical products designed for women's health

Innovations designed for privacy and ease of use to help overcome stigmas related to reproductive, maternal, or gynaecological health. Overall, innovative medical supplies for rural women transform healthcare from hospital-centred to prevention-focused, community-based care—saving time, reducing costs, improving outcomes, and making health systems more resilient. Innovations will bring new or significantly adapted home-use medical products or self-care health approaches enabling women to safely detect, monitor, or manage health conditions outside clinical facilities. Eligible innovations may include self-testing kits, home monitoring solutions, or validated self-care protocols designed for usability, privacy, and cultural appropriateness in low-resource settings.

### **Examples:**

- > Locally manufacturable orthopaedic aids and assistive technology products that support women to improve or maintain their daily quality of life by easing or compensating for an injury or disability.
- > Low-cost home tests for pregnancy complications
- > Home blood pressure monitoring systems adapted for pregnancy

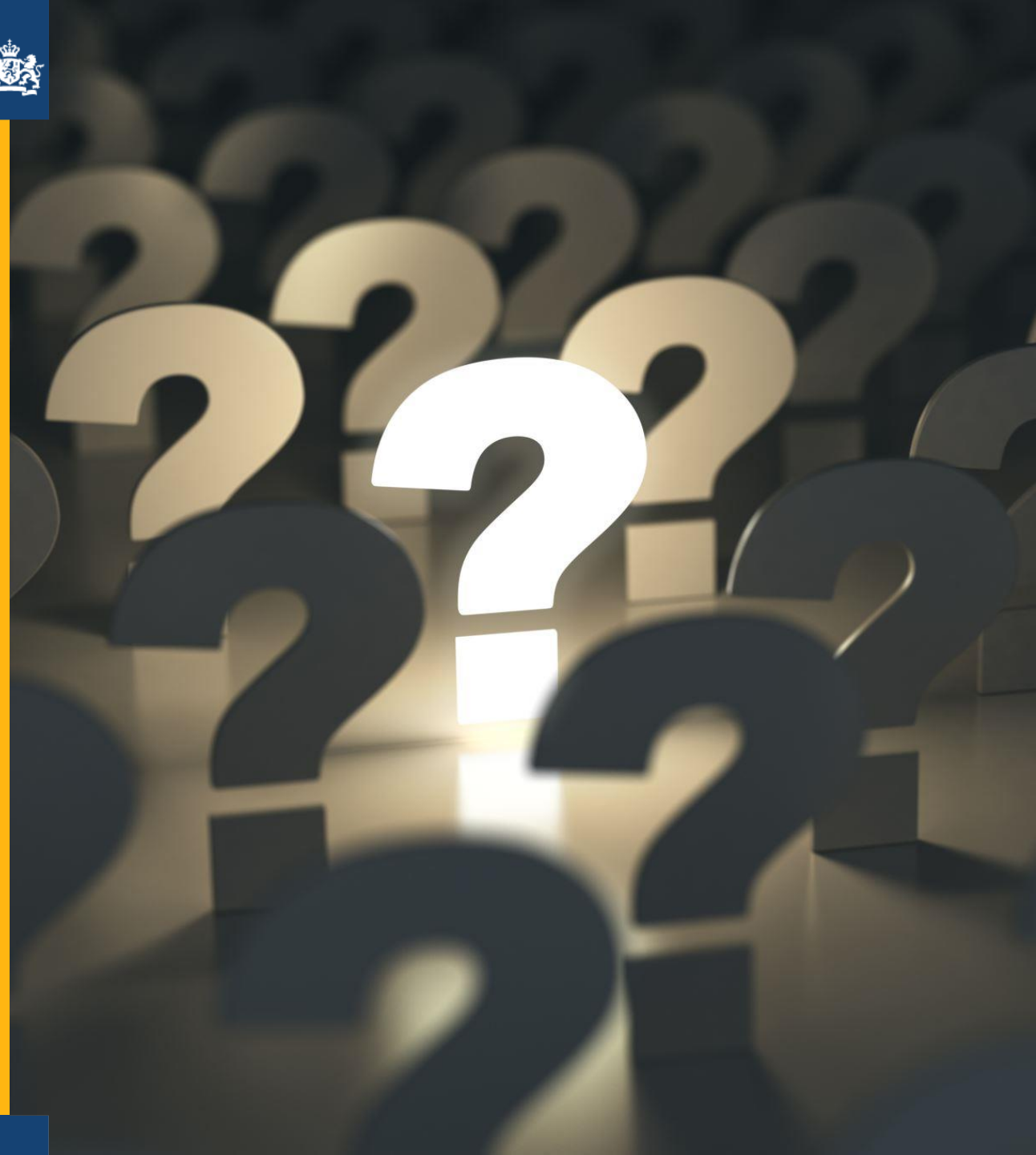


# Not included

- › Stand-alone applications, such as digital tools and data systems. These solutions are welcome under the conditions that they must fit in local settings where internet is not always reliable or be supportive instead of leading. The medical system should be capable to embed and follow-up on the results of the applications.
- › App-led AI tools. These solutions are welcome under the conditions that AI is supportive through or integrated features in decision support, risk stratification, or remote monitoring tools, and embedded in physical products. This implies providing support in safe self-care and timely escalation without increasing complexity or dependence on connectivity.
- › Pharmaceutical products and medicine.
- › Technologies that require high up-front investments.
- › Solutions that will not easily integrate in African settings.
- › Technologies that will exacerbate health inequalities (including digital exclusion or data inequalities)
- › Solutions that are or will not be co-designed with women.
- › Solutions that do not impact the primary health systems.



# Questions?





# Expression of Interest (EoI)

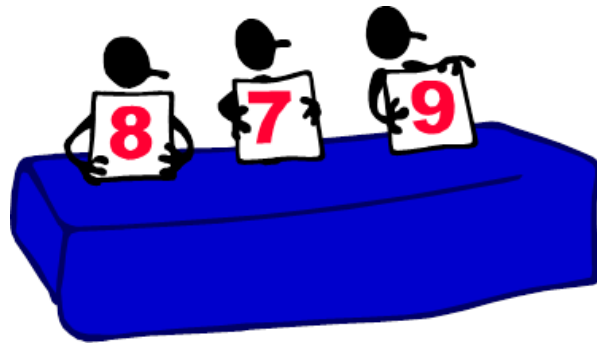
Provide the following information:

- > The country where you want to develop your innovation
- > The theme you focus on
- > Short description of the specific challenge that your innovation will tackle and the impact you aim to make
- > An explanation of why R&D is needed
- > Describe why you think that your company is capable of making the innovation a success

**Max. 2 EoI per applicant**  
**Please be concise and specific!**



# Assessment (EoI)



- > Does the idea fit within the objective of the challenge and one of the themes?
- > Is R&D needed?
- > Is the idea potentially promising?
  - Can the solution generate impact?
- > Max. 40 bid requests for phase 1



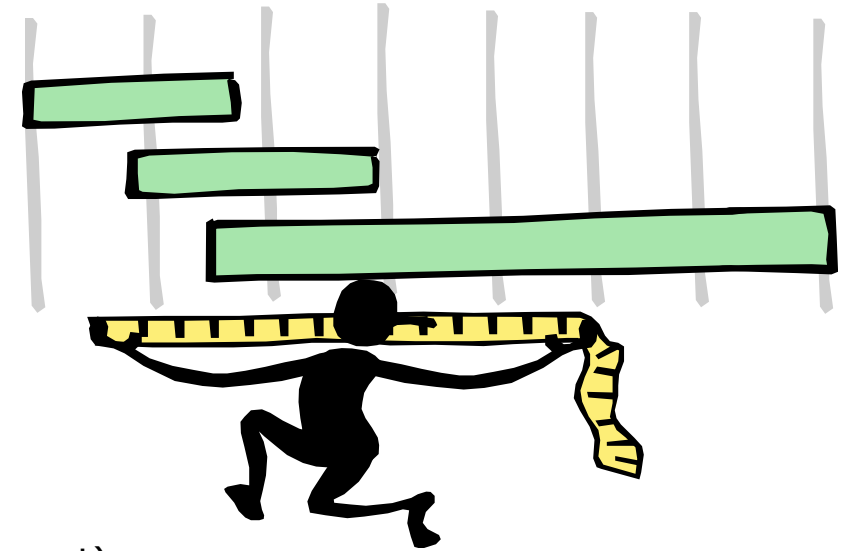
# SBIR innovation

- › is new in the new context/chosen country and needs sufficient R&D
- › it can be hardware, software, a service or a new way of organising things. This also includes making existing products and services in another country suitable for the target country in an innovative way. Obviously, this still requires R&D and there is a reasonable chance that it is technically or economically not feasible.



# Planning

- > **Deadline EoI: 20 April 2026 at 13.00 CEST**
  - Via [Expression of interest-formulier](#)
- > Result communicated: not later than 27 April 2026
- > Deadline phase 1 bids: **6 May 2026 at 12.00**
  - Via online form '**offerte indienen**' (link will directly be send to in bid request)
  - **Take time for the form. Be on time!**
- > Result communicated: not later than end June 2026
- > Phase 1 completed: 7 January 2027
- > Deadline Phase 2 bids: mid February 2027
- > Result communicated: not later than the end of March 2027
- > Phase 2 completed: 15 April 2029
  
- > *Please note we can adjust the time schedule*





# Where can I find information?

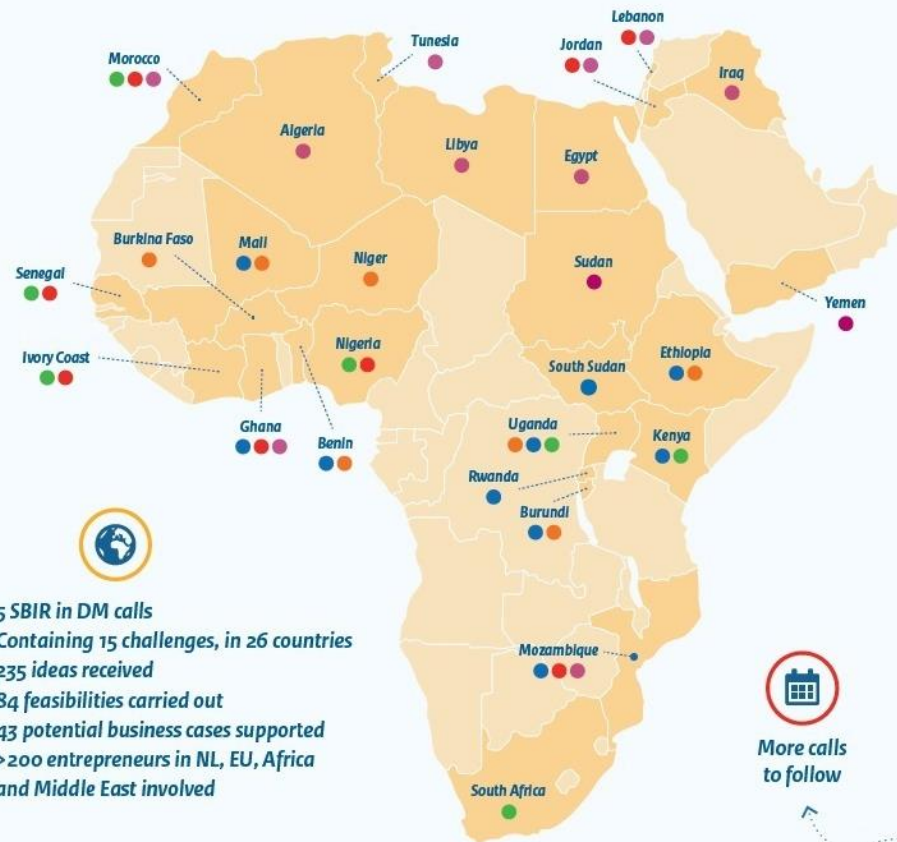
All information, Call for proposals (oproep), and Q&A (Nota van Inlichtingen) at:

- > <https://english.rvo.nl/subsidies-financing/sbir-dm/womens-health-innovations-africa>
- > <https://www.tenderned.nl/aankondigingen/overzicht/416848>
- > Questions via [sbir@rvo.nl](mailto:sbir@rvo.nl)



# Questions?





<p><b>Food security in Sub-Sahara Africa</b> 2018-2020 (pilot BZ-LNV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary production</li> <li>Efficient processing</li> <li>Value chains</li> </ul> <p>€ 2.592.870 (pre) seed finance</p>	<p><b>SBIR in DM Circular innovations for fast growing cities</b> 2019-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternatives for disposables</li> <li>Use of raw materials in construction</li> <li>Innovation around waste and litter</li> </ul> <p>€ 2.068.062 (pre) seed finance</p>	<p><b>SBIR in DM Solutions for health, data and financial support in times of COVID-19</b> 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to health</li> <li>Epidemiological intelligence for political decision makers</li> <li>Access to support programmes</li> </ul> <p>€ 1.001.575 (pre) seed finance</p>	<p><b>Digital solutions to improve access to healthcare and education services</b> 2021-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve health services of medical staff</li> <li>Access to healthcare services for patients</li> <li>Improve access to education and skills training</li> </ul> <p>€ 3.383.196 (pre) seed finance</p>	<p><b>Design and innovate with locally available materials for economic and environmental impact</b> 2022-2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built environment</li> <li>Public space and infrastructure</li> <li>Hospitals and health centres</li> </ul> <p>€ 3.227.215 (pre) seed finance</p>
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# SBIR in DM

## For entrepreneurs

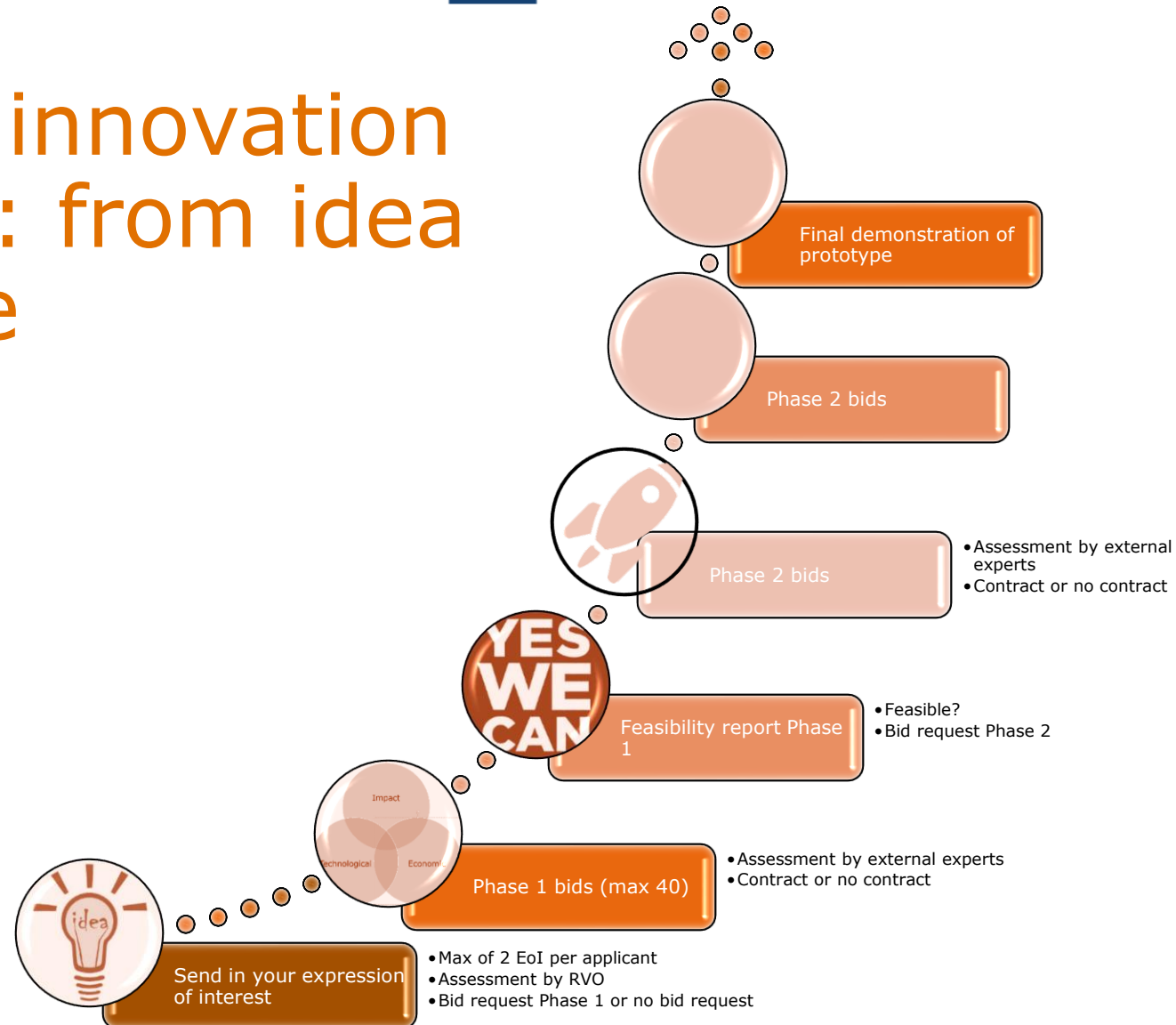
1. Financing an innovation/R&D trajectory from idea to prototype
2. Contracts for action based research, and research and development of innovations
3. Main contractor is responsible for the result
4. Innovation-competition: come up with fitting solutions

## For government

1. Means to solving societal issues by entrepreneurs with ideas for business models
2. Innovation-competition: find the best fitting solutions
3. Multi-phase procurement with bids and contracts: open, fair and transparent
4. Public themes where the public sector may be a potential buyer



# SBIR in DM innovation programme: from idea to prototype





# Phases and budget



## **Phase 1 (feasibility)**

- › Total budget: € 1.200.000
- › Per project: max € 50.000 (incl. VAT) (approx. 6 months)

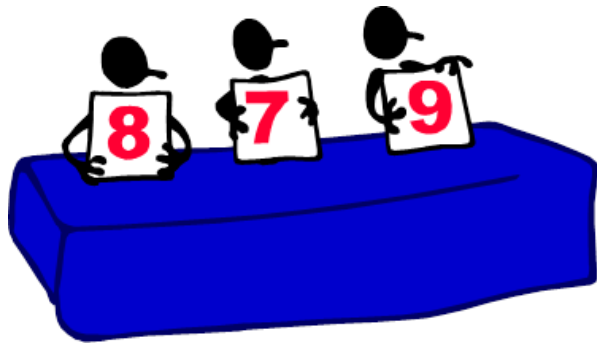
## **Phase 2 (development and testing)**

- › Total budget € 2.700.000
- › Per project: max € 200.000 (incl. VAT) (approx. 24 months)
- › VAT (BTW) should be 0%
  - Result is for developing countries (DAC-ODA)
  - For businesses located in NL
  - Check with your tax inspector

*Note: For Phase 1 possibly different regime*



# Assessment criteria bids Ph1 and Ph2 (100 points)



- › Impact: 40 points
- › Innovation and Expertise: 30 points
- › Economic perspective: 30 points

- Bids that are
  - Incomplete or
  - Don't meet the conditions or minimum requirements or
  - Received too late

will be excluded from the competition