

NWO Central Works Council
2017 Annual Review

NWO Central Works Council (COR)

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INTRODUCTION

New! That's definitely been a keyword for the NWO* Central Works Council (COR) in 2017. A new, merged organisation and a new COR with a new composition, a new way of working, a new executive board and many new developments. It almost sounds like an advertising slogan: *"NWO has been modernised and now functions even better!"* But is that really the case? The COR is certainly keen to contribute to the new and improved NWO from a critical perspective. It does so on behalf of all employees. We have produced a review of 2017 in the form of a Q&A, which also looks ahead briefly to the current year, 2018. So yes, it's a new form of review as befits a new COR in a new NWO. What if your question isn't answered in this 2017 Annual Review? Don't worry, just email your question to cor@nwo.nl and we'll get back to you.

** By NWO we mean the entire NWO organisation, i.e. the NWO Domain Organisation (NWO-D) and the NWO Institutes Organisation (NWO-I).*

A. GENERAL:

1. WHY DOES NWO HAVE A CENTRAL WORKS COUNCIL (COR)?

NWO has a Central Works Council (COR) because the involvement of employees from all parts of the organisation contributes to the smooth running of the NWO organisation as a whole. This is provided for in the Dutch Works Councils Act (WOR). The COR comprises employees from the NWO Domain Organisation (NWO-D) and the NWO Institutes Organisation (NWO-I). The COR discusses the organisational and personnel policy of the new NWO with the Executive Board on the employees' behalf.

2. WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE COR? AND WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT DO?

The COR discusses topics that are of common interest to all or most parts of NWO. The COR consults with the Executive Board concerning organisational policy, personnel schemes and employees' interests. It has a right of consent for certain decisions and sometimes the right to be consulted. The executive board cannot simply disregard the COR's advice, they must have a good reason for doing so. The COR also has a right to information. It can submit proposals and make recommendations on its own initiative at any time. The COR also has a number of statutory "promoting" duties: for example, it promotes good working conditions and equal treatment and remuneration for employees.

3. WHICH PARTS OF THE NWO ORGANISATION DOES THE COR REPRESENT, AND WHO ARE ITS MEMBERS?

The COR has a total of 17 seats. Almost all of its members are delegated by the local works councils. In 2017, the COR had 17 members: four from the NWO Domain Organisation, one from the office organisation NWO Institutes Foundation, seven from the various institutes, two NWO-I employees from the university workgroups and three guest members from CWI, NIOZ and ZonMw. NIOZ and CWI are full members of the COR as of 1 January 2018 due to their merger with NWO-I. Click [here](#) to see which of your colleagues are COR members! The following overview shows the COR's composition in 2017 and 2018:

COR NWO 2017					
NIOZ	CWI	NWO-I	NWO-D	ZonMw	
1X NIOZ - gast	1X CWI - gast	1x Bureau NWO-I		4x Bureau NWO-D	1X ZonMw - gast
		1x AMOLF	1x SRON		
		1x DIFFER	1x NSCR		
		1x Nikhef	1x ASTRON		
		1x ARCNL			
		2x BUW			

COR NWO 2018		
NWO-I	NWO-D	ZonMw
+/- 1988 werknemers	+/- 546 werknemers	1X ZonMw - gast
1x Bureau NWO-I	4x Bureau NWO-D	
1x AMOLF		
1x DIFFER		
1x Nikhef		
1x ARCNL		
1x NIOZ		
1x CWI		
1x ASTRON		
1x SRON		
1x NSCR		
2x BUW		

Bureau = office

Gast = guest

Werknemers = employees

4. IS THE COR THE WORKS COUNCIL FOR NWO-I EMPLOYEES IN THE UNIVERSITY WORKGROUPS?

Yes, it is. The 450 or so NWO-I employees in the university workgroups do not have a works council of their own. The COR is their works council. Two of the 17 COR seats are allocated to this group. These two COR members are chosen in a direct election.

5. I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW AND IMPROVED NWO - WHERE CAN I PUT MY NAME DOWN FOR THE COR?

Fifteen of the seventeen COR members are delegated by the local works councils. So to become a member of the COR you first need to join the local works council, unless you are an NWO-I employee in one of the university workgroups. In that case, you can be elected directly to one of the two COR seats allocated to the university workgroups. The current term of office runs until mid-2019. New COR elections will be held in spring 2019.

But you can contribute to the COR at any time! Have you got a good idea? Do you think that certain things in NWO could be organised better? Or do you want to express an opinion? Go and chat to your local works council or COR representative.

6. WHY IS DUTCH THE WORKING LANGUAGE OF THE COR?

The COR currently holds its meetings in Dutch. This is because all NWO policy documents are in Dutch, as is the executive board correspondence. You can be a member of the COR if you understand Dutch and can read it well enough to contribute to discussions. Contributions can also be in English. Some NWO institutes do use English as the working language of their works councils. The COR translates all of its newsletters and letters to employees into English.

B. THE YEAR 2017

7. WHAT ROLE DID THE COR PLAY IN THE NWO TRANSITION AND MERGER IN 2017?

In June 2017, the COR advised on the legal merger of ASTRON, SRON, NSCR, NIOZ and CWI with the NWO-I foundation. In July 2017, the COR also advised on the major changes in the organisation and the associated distribution of powers. During this process the COR focused strongly on the potential consequences for employees. Only once these had been properly mapped out by the directors did the COR recommend that the merger go ahead.

Harmonisation of the Implementation Regulations (secondary employment conditions) was another important step in the transition. Agreement was reached on this shortly before the actual merger on 1 January 2018. In 2017 the COR constantly monitored the progress of the various pathways towards achieving a single NWO. It also kept sight of the final part of the transition, the merger of NWO and ZonMw, which was the subject of formal and informal consultations.

8. IS THE HARMONISATION OF IMPLEMENTATION REGULATIONS THE COR'S MOST IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENT IN 2017?

Yes. Shortly before 1 January 2018, in consultation with the employers, the COR managed to combine the four different Implementation Regulations of NWO, FOM, CWI and NIOZ. We now have a single, new, harmonised set of Implementation Regulations. As a result, all NWO employees have the same secondary employment conditions with effect from 1 January 2018. The COR sees this as an important contribution to equal treatment for all NWO employees and to "the feeling of a single NWO".

Moving from four sets of Implementation Regulations to one was a complex puzzle, and the negotiations were tough. In the end, priority was given to minimising the consequences for individual employees and to the principle that benefits should be related to costs incurred. Given the wide differences between the existing Implementation Regulations, it was clear that not everyone could benefit. However, we are convinced that we have achieved the best possible outcome. The adverse consequences for individual employees have been minimised. For those who do experience a negative financial impact, the COR and NWO have agreed an eight-year transition scheme. The COR approved the new Implementation Regulations on 13 December 2017.

9. HOW DOES THE COR VIEW A SINGLE NWO?

The COR sees the opportunities of a single NWO. It will have a stronger, united face in public and political life. A simpler organisation and greater cooperation will bring increases in efficiency and effectiveness. On the other hand, NWO is a very broad organisation and part of it operates in its own environment. There is often no single solution that can be applied NWO-wide. The new NWO will still have to strike the right balance between centralised and decentralised policy. Consequently, the COR will always ask the directors to substantiate the decisions made.

10. WHAT DID THE COR DO IN 2017 TO PROMOTE EQUAL TREATMENT FOR ALL NWO EMPLOYEES?

The COR considers it important that all NWO employees should be treated equally. The new implementation regulations are a crucial step in this direction. However, the COR believes there are still undesirable differences in other areas. For example, the new intranet JOOST is meant in practice to be run for and by employees of the NWO offices. Unfortunately, JOOST is seen as *the* source of information for the entire of NWO. As a result, employees in the institutes (who can read JOOST but are clearly not the target audience) and NWO-I employees in the universities (university workgroup employees who have no access) have a significant information deficit. The COR repeatedly urged the executive board to make sure that all information is indeed accessible to all employees, whether via JOOST or by other means. The COR raised the point that university workgroup employees should be treated as fully fledged NWO employees and should automatically receive a year-end bonus.

11. WHY DID THE COR APPROVE THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME OF THE NEW NWO?

The COR believes that managers are crucially important for the success of the NWO transition. Managers serve as role models and should promote the new culture. And of course employees benefit from having well-trained managers. The COR therefore believes that a management development or leadership programme is a good idea. It focuses on talent development, leadership, culture and strengthening the links between these.

The COR advised on formulating the objectives of the SMART programme and also called for an interim and final evaluation of the programme. The programme is targeted initially at managers in the offices. The COR called for managers in the institutes to be included in the leadership programme as soon as possible.

12. IS THERE AN OVERVIEW OF FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSENTS IN 2017?

2017	Topic	Further information
Recommendations	Investment in SRON accommodation (recommendation of 30 March 2017)	
	Legal merger of NIOZ, CWI, ASTRON, SRON and NSCR with NWO-I (recommendation of 13 June 2017)	See Question 9.
	NWO-I organisational change (recommendation of 25 July 2017)	See Question 9.
Consents	NWO leadership programme (16 October 2017)	See Question 14.
	NWO harmonised Implementation Regulations (13 December 2017)	See Question 7.

13. WHICH TOPICS DID THE COR DISCUSS IN 2017?

The COR discussed a wide range of topics in 2017. Besides the recommendations and consents mentioned under Question 12, the COR also discussed:

- how NWO handles internal vacancies
- the Generation Pact and schemes for older employees
- safety in the workplace and health & safety policy at NWO-I
- the revision of the NWO job structure
- the institutes' portfolio analysis
- the NWO strategic plan
- an earmarked training budget and a centralised training policy for PhD students
- and much, much more...

14. WHAT WAS THE COR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NWO SUPERVISORY BOARD IN 2017?

The COR and the supervisory board are both entrusted with monitoring the course and continuity of the organisation. In November 2017, the COR discussed the organisation's general situation with the executive board in the presence of the chairman of the supervisory board and a member of that board.

In the event of vacancies on the supervisory board, the COR can suggest new members. In December 2017 a vacancy arose on the supervisory board and the COR proposed two candidates.

15. WHAT DID THE COR DO FOR PHD STUDENTS IN 2017?

The COR considers it important that NWO should promote a healthy research climate in the Netherlands and provide good training for PhD students (and postdocs) working in NWO-I. The executive board promised the COR

that the budget allocated to the institutes for PhD student training will be earmarked for this purpose. The COR insisted on a centralised training policy for PhD students, to ensure that all PhD students within NWO-I receive the same chances and opportunities. In December 2017, the COR also called for a year-end bonus for NWO-I PhD students and postdocs working in the university workgroups. The COR considers it important that NWO should treat and remunerate all employees in the same way.

16. DID THE COR HAVE THE SAME MEMBERS THROUGHOUT 2017?

No, there was a “changing of the guard” halfway through 2017. A provisional COR was set up on 1 January 2017. At that point, the “old NWO” was remodelled into the current domain organisation. This was also when FOM became the NWO-I Institutes Foundation. In the first half of 2017 the provisional COR consisted of members of the “old” existing works councils. The process of reallocating personnel within the new structure took until April 2017. In May 2017, local works council elections were held at various locations within NWO. In June 2017 a new COR was set up, with delegates from the new councils, for a term of two years.



The Central Works Council (COR) 2017-2019

C. LOOKING AHEAD TO 2018

17. WHAT DOES THE COR WANT TO ACHIEVE IN 2018? WHAT ARE ITS PRIORITIES?

In December 2017, the COR identified five priorities for 2018. These are topics that the COR wants to tackle actively in the coming year. The priorities are:

- Tackling work pressure - The COR wants to work actively with the directors to ensure a healthy work pressure for everyone. Work pressure that remains too high or too low for a long time can lead to absenteeism.

- Prospects for personnel - The COR wants to focus on the development and future prospects of employees at every stage of life: from young to old, permanent and flexible.
- Respect for privacy - The new privacy laws in 2018 are an excellent opportunity to introduce a rigorous NWO-wide privacy policy. This concerns issues such as the handling of personnel files, camera images and emails, and the monitoring and logging of internet use, but also includes the posting of photos of colleagues on the intranet.
- Safety first - A safe and healthy working environment is particularly important in a research environment. We can improve safety within NWO by sharing knowledge and experience.
- A single NWO: balance between unity and diversity - A single NWO offers many opportunities, including presenting a united face in public and political life. Through internal cooperation, NWO can increase its efficiency and effectiveness. However, a single NWO does not mean that everything needs to be centralised: diversity and individuality are also powerful features of the NWO organisation. The institutes will retain scope for excellent research and their own identity and policy.

In the spring of 2018, various committees will work out in more detail how the COR will tackle this. Visit www.nwo-i.nl/cor to find out more about the COR priorities. Or ask a member of the COR about the state of play!

18. HOW DOES THE COR PLAN TO TACKLE ITS PRIORITIES?

Now that the priorities have been identified, the COR will continue to work on them in small committees. Where do the main problems lie? Where can the COR achieve the most gains? What do the employees think of our solutions? The committees will discuss these issues with the staff (i.e. you) and with experts inside and outside the organisation.

In some cases, the topics will present themselves. For example, a single NWO is a common thread that runs through everything. Another current topic is the new privacy policy that NWO is developing in connection with new European legislation. In other cases, the COR itself will put items on the agenda.

19. DOES THE COR PLAN TO RE-EVALUATE THE CURRENT EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION STRUCTURE?

The current employee representation structure has been in place since 1 January 2017. The COR plans to evaluate the current structure in the summer of 2018. Is it really the best structure for organising formal employee representation and participation within NWO? What works well, and what could be improved? The COR wants to assess the resulting recommendations by the autumn of 2018, so they can be taken into account during the COR's next term of office. The next term of office is expected to run from May 2019 to May 2021 – unless, of course, the evaluation shows that the term or structure should be different.

20. HOW DOES THE COR KEEP ME INFORMED?

The COR provides information about its work in various ways:

- Via the intranet (JOOST) and via the website www.nwo-i.nl/cor.
- The COR has a dedicated section in the newsletter *Inside NWO-I*, which NWO-I sends to all employees ten times a year. The newsletter can be read on the [NWO-I website](http://www.nwo-i.nl/cor).
- All NWO employees can subscribe to the COR mailing list by emailing cor@nwo.nl. The COR will then send you its meeting agendas and finalised reports by email.

- The COR issues its own newsletter three times a year.
- If you have any questions, you can contact your own COR representative or email cor@nwo.nl

21. AS AN NWO EMPLOYEE, CAN I ATTEND A COR MEETING?

Yes, you can! COR meetings, including consultations with the executive board, are open to NWO employees. However, certain agenda items may have to be discussed in private. If you would like to come along to a meeting, you can register in advance with the official secretary of the COR by emailing cor@nwo.nl. Who knows, perhaps we'll see you soon!