



Annual Report 2019

Central Works Council | COR NWO





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The COR NWO in 2019

In May 2019, the sitting period of the first Central Works Council (COR) of NWO ended*. Partly as a result of an extensive transfer training course and a white paper, the transition to the new COR occurred without problems. In this annual report, you can read which subjects the COR worked on in 2019.

Do you have a question that is not answered in this annual overview of 2019? Then mail your question to cor@nwo.nl and you will receive an answer.

*By NWO we mean the entire NWO organisation: NWO-D and NWO-I.

Who does the COR represent?

The COR has a total of fourteen seats. Nearly all members are delegated by local works councils. From these fourteen colleagues, two come from NWO-D, one from the office organisation of NWO-I, one from each of the nine different NWO institutes and two NWO-I employees from the University workgroups or BUW (Administrative Unit for Research Groups at Universities). Read more about the [Elections vacant BUW seats](#). Until May 2019, the COR had sixteen seats, because up until that time NWO-D was represented by four members.

See [here](#) which colleagues are in the COR.

How often does the COR meet?

In 2019, the COR met on twelve occasions, and it had six consultative meetings with the Executive Board representative (Vice President/portfolio holder Operations and Finances). At two of these consultative meetings, the President of NWO and the chair of the Supervisory Board also attended to discuss the general state of affairs.

In addition to this, the COR held three extra meetings: one in February 2019, to discuss the COR's priorities, and two meetings concerning the negotiations about the new Implementing Regulations (IR).



Requests for advice

In 2019, the COR dealt with four requests for advice.

Fleet renewal NIOZ

An important subject was the intention of the Executive Board to fund two new research vessels for the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ). This concerns a very large investment of several tens of millions of euros. NIOZ has three research vessels, for research along the coast, for the Wadden Sea/delta and for the North Sea/oceans. All of these vessels need to be replaced from a scientific, technical and financial-economic point of view. The vessel for research close to the shore is funded by NIOZ. The other two vessels require an investment that cannot be borne by NIOZ. NWO has proposed that the vessels should be initially financed from existing investment budgets from the government. Should these funds prove to be insufficient, then the money required will need to come from the NWO-I budget. This means that the costs will then be charged to the basic grant to the institutes.

The COR recognises the importance of renewing the fleet for the continued existence of not just NIOZ, but also marine research in the Netherlands. The COR therefore issued a positive recommendation concerning the procurement of new vessels but has expressed its concerns about the proposed emergency scenario of funding from the NWO-I-budget. The COR has recommended a further investigation of the use of additional funding sources.

Recommendation appointment domain chair SSH and domain chair AES

The appointment periods of the domain chairs of SSH, Prof. H.W. van den Doel, and of AES, Prof. J.C. Schouten, came to an end in 2019. For both positions, an appointment procedure was started so that successors could be put forward to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science who makes the appointments for these positions. The COR was involved in the procedure and held interviews with the intended candidates. During these interviews, the scientific background, the organisation of NWO and the role of researchers and the works council were discussed. The COR issued a positive recommendation for both candidates.

Change of governance NWO-I

In August 2019, the COR received a request for advice for a change in the governance of NWO-I. The Executive Board and the institute directors observed that the existing governance model had various shortcomings. The essence of the proposed change is to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the NWO-I organisation by appointing one director for NWO-I who bears final responsibility for the organisation. In this proposal, this director will be integrally responsible for the NWO-I foundation, formally manage the institute directors and chair the directors meeting. In addition to this, a director Operations Bureau NWO-I will be appointed. This director will be responsible for managing Bureau NWO-I, with the exception of the Strategic Support Department that falls directly under the new director NWO-I.



The COR established an internal committee Governance NWO-I and posed additional questions to the Executive Board representative, for example about the mandate of the new director NWO-I. On 25 October, the COR issued its recommendation in which several reservations were expressed about the proposed change. For example, the COR wanted to receive a more specific description of the positions director NWO-I and director Operations Bureau NWO-I before the recruitment and selection process started.

The COR also wanted a clear statement about which lines of reporting would be used to pass on information. These lines need to be efficient so that excessive demands are not placed on the institutes due to a lack of agreement. With respect to the evaluation of the change, the COR requested special attention for how the institutes experience the representation of their interests within the Executive Board. In response to the recommendation, the Executive Board representative pledged that one year after the implementation, the effects of the governance change would be evaluated. The COR was also satisfied with the response of the Executive Board representative to its other points. The COR therefore supported the proposed change of governance.

[New financial system \(NFS\)](#)

In December 2019, the COR received a request for advice for the intended decision of the board of Stichting NWO-I to implement a new financial system at NWO-I. In January 2020, an information meeting will be held for both COR and the local works council members. After that, the COR will issue its recommendation about the intended decision.

Requests for approval

In 2019, the COR considered five requests for approval.

Revision job classification system

On 21 November 2017, the former COR received the project plan Review job classification system. In 2019, this project was picked up on again with the aim of implementing it on 1 January 2020.

For some time, there was a lack of clarity about the plan's status: was approval required or not? In consultation with the Executive Board representative and after consulting an external expert, the following agreement was made:

'Approval of the principal to adopt level-determining criteria to clarify the difference between levels within a job description profile and to apply for this purpose the criteria scope, complexity, freedom of action, contacts and levels of working and thinking.'

Hans Dusseldorp from Berenschot explained this principle in a separate meeting held on 19 November 2019. Eventually, on 28 November 2019, the COR approved the request for the review of the job classification system.

Implementing Regulations (IR)

As the existing Implementing Regulations (IR) came to an end on 31 December 2019, the COR appointed an Implementing Regulations Committee. This committee held several negotiation meetings with the representative of the employer. After each meeting, the committee gave its feedback to the COR. The COR subsequently gave its mandate to the committee so that further negotiations could take place. During the consultative meeting on 10 December 2019, an agreement was reached about the IR with the exception of regulation 1 (Commuting allowance) and 4 (Study facilities). For these two regulations, further consultation was needed to reach an agreement. At the time this annual report was written, an agreement had been reached about regulation 1 with effect from 1 January 2020 and regulation 4 with effect from 1 July 2020.

Working conditions policy NWO-I

The working conditions policy of NWO-I presented gave the impression of a well-considered policy, but a check of the correct implementation and evaluation was missing. Discussions were held about this, but unfortunately, this could no longer lead to a change in the brochure that had already been published. The COR subsequently decided to approve this request although it did make comments about the gaps in the brochure.

Policy family planning, pregnancy and breastfeeding time

The committee had nothing to note about the content of the family planning, pregnancy and breastfeeding time policy. It was positive about the fact that the situation of male employees was also considered in the context of family planning. The COR decided to approve this request.



Health and Safety Year Plan NWO-I 2019-2020

The realisation of the Health and Safety year plan has the right substantive points, but as there is not a Central Health and Safety Coordinator at present, a considerable backlog has arisen. As realising the plan was not feasible, the COR decided not to approve the proposal.



Committees

All COR members are a member of one or more committees that study in greater depth a subject relevant for NWO. In 2019, there were eight permanent committees and four ad-hoc committees.

Daily Management (DB) Committee

According to the statutes, the DB of the COR is made up of an elected chair, an elected secretary, an elected deputy chair and the official secretary.

The DB takes the lead in answering two important questions: *'Are we doing the right things?'* and *'Are we doing them right?'*. The DB is also responsible for drawing up the agendas and the reporting of the meetings. This applies to both the internal COR meetings and the consultative meetings with the Executive Board representative.

Personnel & Organisation (P&O) Committee

The P&O committee meets on average ten times per year with the heads of P&O of NWO-D and NWO-I. The aim of this is to informally talk about current and future plans. The committee has no formal decision-making powers because such decisions are taken by the entire COR.

Subjects discussed by the P&O Committee in 2019 include:

- Review of the job classification system
- Work pressure and preventing burnout
- The appointment of a new health and safety coordinator
- The evaluation of the generation pact
- The social annual report 2018
- The further development of the Institutes Organisation

Health and Safety Committee

Safe working is one of the COR's priorities. That is why it has a permanent Health and Safety Committee. This committee normally meets three to four times per year with the central health and safety Coordinator of NWO about various aspects of the working conditions. In the intervening period, important news is exchanged and, if necessary, an extra meeting is planned. Unfortunately, since 1 April 2019, NWO has not had a central health and safety coordinator, and the recruitment process is proceeding slowly. The committee currently meets with a representative of the Functional Consultation Health and Safety and Environment (FOAM) which is made up of health and safety coordinators from the institutes.

The following subjects were discussed in 2019:

- The content and implementation of the Health and Safety year plan
- The working conditions policy of NWO
- New brochures and revised parts of the Health and Safety catalogue, sometimes in the run-up to a recommendation about this



- Current issues within health and safety, activities, calamities and follow-up, new developments and legislation

Unhealthy work pressure is strongly related to health and safety issues. The COR has asked the local works councils to provide concrete examples of this, but that has not yielded a clear and usable picture. Measures have been taken, but these do not appear to have provided satisfactory results so far. Signals of unhealthy work pressure are still being noticed (for example via information on absence due to illness, work pressure and climate management and an employee satisfaction survey) and although this is not yet leading to excessive absence, company doctors are reporting an increase in work pressure-related absence. Unhealthy work pressure is frequently the consequence of undesirable behaviour. A leaflet about undesirable behaviour is available at NWO-I and NWO-D, and provides tips for dealing with unhealthy work pressure. The subject can also be part of the result and development interviews. Unhealthy work pressure continues to remain a point of attention for both the COR and the board.

Communication Committee

The aim of the Communication Committee is to bring the work and importance of the COR to the attention of all NWO colleagues. We want to realise this in a clear and accessible manner and in doing that, the COR would like to lose its somewhat stuffy image. Besides its own – somewhat hidden – location on www.nwo-i.nl where current information about the COR can be found, and a regular COR update in the monthly [Newsletter NWO-I](#), the committee would like to actively involve and inform colleagues. The committee has started to itemise the possibilities of making a video after each COR meeting. With a vlog of about 90 seconds, we will discuss the highlights of that day. These videos will then be posted each month on the intranet of the institutes (or disseminated by mail as NSCR does) and on the NWO-I-site. Not all communication departments of the institutes are positive about this yet, especially in view of the abundance of information that is often already received from NWO. Improvements can still be made in this area. When this annual report was written, the COR pilot video from the start of 2020 had been well received. The committee is looking for a fixed and fast-working party to structurally realise the production of these videos. The committee met once live and twice online during 2019.

GDPR/Privacy Committee

In September 2019, the COR established a GDPR/Privacy Committee. The reason for this was the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018. Personal details are processed across NWO. Therefore, NWO must possess a GDPR-proof privacy policy. One of the tasks of a works council is to ensure that organisations protect the privacy of employees. They also advise the board about this.

The GDPR/Privacy committee was given the following task:

- Managing processes that are drawn up by NWO with respect to GDPR legislation



- Playing a proactive role in assessing GDPR policy within NWO and signalling bottlenecks in the realisation of a good GDPR policy
- Monitoring whether possible changes must be submitted to the COR

The committee started with an initial familiarisation with the subject matter and describing the current state of affairs within NWO. The committee also examined how the GDPR and privacy positions within NWO are organised. The committee talked with Aad van der Klaauw, GDPR coordinator of NSCR. Amongst other things, he explained how the privacy policy within NSCR has been set up. The committee has decided to follow a GDPR/Privacy training course for work council members in the spring of 2020. It has also continued the introductory meetings and, amongst other things, held meetings with the data protection officers of NWO and NWO-I.

Finances Committee

The Finances Committee has – as usual – received and studied the NWO annual budget as well as the long-term budget 2019-2023. The 2019 budget was discussed in the COR following comments from the committee. Subsequently, the committee, on behalf of the COR, consulted with the head of financial planning, Peter van den Brakel, to gain more clarity about the budget. The most important points for attention were with the financial situation of several institutes in general (especially NSCR), investment in buildings and large research equipment, and the financial situation at Bureau NWO-I. Clear answers were given to all questions. However, this does not mean that the COR found all answers to be reassuring with respect to the financial situation of the NWO unit concerned. Meanwhile, good news has been received about the (financial) future of NSCR.

Board Documents Committee

NWO is a complex organisation which meets at different levels. To be properly prepared and to see issues in the right perspective, the COR reads the meeting documents of the Executive Board, the NWO board and the directors meetings. The Board Documents Committee reduces these documents that are sometimes several hundred pages long to a summary of several pages for each COR meeting.

KNAW Committee

The KNAW Committee has spoken with council members of the KNAW on several occasions. During these consultations, subjects have been considered that affect both KNAW and NWO, such as the outcome of the portfolio analysis and the impact of this on both organisations.

Ad-hoc Committee Transfer

An ad-hoc Committee Transfer was appointed to ensure a supple transition from the old to the new COR. This committee organised a two-day transfer training and was responsible for drawing up the white paper. The transfer proceeded without any problems, and the new COR has now found its feet.



[Ad-hoc Committee Real Estate Strategy](#)

The Ad-hoc Committee Real Estate Strategy discusses – if necessary – the real estate strategy, the long-term investment plan and the development vision of the Amsterdam Science Park with the real estate manager of NWO, Maarten Kruizinga.

[Ad-hoc Committee Implementing Regulations](#)

As the current Implementing Regulations (IR) came to an end on 31 December 2019, the COR appointed a Committee Implementing Regulations. This committee held several negotiation meetings with the representative of the employer. After each meeting, the committee gave its feedback to the COR. The COR subsequently gave its mandate to the committee so that further negotiations could take place. See also the request for approval [Implementing Regulations \(IR\)](#).

[Ad-hoc Committee Change of Governance NWO-I](#)

See the request for advice [Change of governance NWO-I](#).



What else happened in 2019?

Elections vacant BUW seats

In 2019, the COR held elections on two occasions to fill the COR seats for the BUW (Administrative Unit University Research Groups). Unfortunately, no candidates registered for either election. Now (2020) a COR member has been appointed as a contact person for BUW employees.

Do you have a question about the vacant BUW seats in the COR? Then mail to cor@nwo.nl.

Guideline recruitment and profile NWO-I directors

Within NWO-I, a guideline for the recruitment and profile of the new directors of the NWO institutes has been produced. The COR has critically examined this, drawn up a vision document and sent this to the local works councils. They responded positively to the document. In 2020, the COR will discuss this guideline with the Executive Board representative.

Inclusion and diversity

The COR monitors developments in this area and has been brought up to date by the NWO Diversity Coordinator in October 2019.

Newsletter NWO-I

Throughout the year, colleagues can read about what the COR is doing in the Newsletter of NWO-I: Inside NWO-I'. The newsletter only highlights those subjects that are of interest to the employees for whom the newsletter is intended. In 2020, we will continue to provide a regular monthly item in the newsletter.

Training courses

In 2019, the COR organised two training courses. During the transfer training course in May, the new COR came together to get to know each other and make a good start together. In December, there was a training course for all members of NWO works councils about the Works Councils Act.

Looking ahead to 2020

The session of the current COR runs until May 2021. Several interim elections will take place in 2020 for the local councils, but it is expected that the composition of the COR will remain unchanged with the exception of one or two positions.

In 2020 the COR will consider the following subjects:

**Evaluation/review
co-determination
structure within
NWO**

**Further development
of NWO-I**
→ Amendment statutes
and rules of procedure
→ Recruitment
directors NWO-I

**Update IR 13 (Code of
Conduct on sexual
intimidation,
aggression, violence,
bullying and
discrimination)**

**Harmonisation IR 9
(Staff interviews)**

**Health and Safety
year plan NWO-I
2020-2021**

**Nederlandse Organisatie
voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek**

NWO Den Haag

Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië 300
2593 CE Den Haag
Postbus 93138
2509 AC Den Haag

+31 (0)70 344 06 40
www.nwo.nl

NWO Utrecht
Winthontlaan 2
3526 KV Utrecht

+31 (0)30 600 12 11
NWO-I: info-nwoi@nwo.nl

