Climate change is an acute challenge affecting the entire world and can only be tackled effectively through transnational joint efforts. These efforts should be dedicated to mitigating both cause and impact of climate change; for example, by transitioning to renewable energy sources as well as by increasing the resilience of the environment.

This Call for proposals focuses on enhancing the physical and social resilience in urban areas. Proposals can focus on urban renewal and the transformation of urban areas, such as Binckhorst (in The Hague) and Merwede kanaalzone (in Utrecht) in the Netherlands, and Guangzhou’s Haizhu district and Shenyang’s Tiexi district in China. Likewise, proposals can focus on historic cities. Many historic cities in the Netherlands and China are involved in the renovation, reconstruction or remodelling of old urban areas, especially how to mitigate the risks and impacts of climate change. These include cities such as Utrecht, Maastricht, Leiden and Delft in the Netherlands, and Xi’an, Nanjing, Tianjin and other old urban areas remodelling in China. Historic cities deal with challenges related to the preservation of the historic character of the city, whilst adapting to contemporary challenges, e.g., the effects of climate change.

Most of the population in the Netherlands and in China lives in cities and urbanisation will increase towards 2050 (World Urbanization Prospects 2018, United Nations). The importance of cities is also underlined in UN Sustainable Development Goal number 11 ‘Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’.

The growing populations in these cities deserve them to be safe, healthy and enjoyable places to live. Part of making that possible is incorporating measures to adapt the physical environment to the increasing effects of climate change, like heat stress, drought, (flash) floods and (local) storms. This will be essential for the long-term sustainability and resilience of the cities, as well as the safety and well-being of the communities in them.

This Call aims at creating real and sustainable solutions for both Dutch and Chinese societies. Finding these solutions will require an integral and interdisciplinary approach, due to the complex interactions between accelerating effects of climate change, the complex nature of the urban climate, and its interaction with the physical and social environment.

**Sustainable cities**

The creation of sustainable cities requires a systemic approach. Within the broad concept of climate adaptation in cities, a key innovation area for both the Netherlands and China is the renovation, regeneration, or transformation of existing urban areas, including old urban areas. In such areas a systemic approach is essential and climate adaptation measures should be complementary with other transition strategies, such as renewable energy, smart and sustainable mobility or restauration of ecosystem services. Developing such systemic approaches is a global societal challenge, with huge mutual knowledge benefits.

**Inclusive cities**

While urban renewal has the potential to create more inclusive cities by improving infrastructure, enhancing public spaces such as parks and recreational facilities, and preserving cultural heritage, it also poses challenges such as gentrification and affordability concerns for vulnerable groups. To ensure that urban renewal benefits all residents and promotes inclusivity, it is essential to prioritise equity and meaningful participation of diverse stakeholders in the planning and implementation process. The selected research projects should therefore result in original scientific insights and viable practical solutions, with direct involvement of the urban community. Research should, for example, envision nature-inspired designs, bio-based materials, and nature-inclusive strategies for enriching biodiversity in urban areas. Efficient recycling, refurbishment and reuse of secondary building components construction materials could be investigated to minimise the embodied carbon footprint in the renovated or transformed urban areas. Participatory approaches in refurbishment of residential, commercial and public building stocks and neighbourhood infrastructures, long-term commitment for a just climate transition, and safeguarding of ageing population and other vulnerable groups against the health and safety risks of climate change should be part of the innovative direction towards inclusive cities.

The selected research projects should collaborate and involve various stakeholders, including local government bodies, residents, businesses, non-profits and urban planners.

Proposals should demonstrate out-of-the-box thinking. Complementary knowledge and lasting positive impacts in cities will thus be achieved through thinking globally and acting locally. The body-of-knowledge should encompass the application of digitalisation in sustainable and inclusive cities to enable smart cities.