

My Vici experience

Jan Boone

CentER and Tilec, Tilburg University

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1 My NWO experience

2 Vici proposal

3 Interview

4 Summary

Three different experiences

- In chronological order:
- Vidi proposal and interview
- In Veni and Rubicon committees
- Vici proposal and interview
- Main lesson: you learn a lot from being at the other side of the table!
- Hence if NWO asks you to participate in a grant-committee, you may not only want to participate because you are a “good citizen” of the scientific community but also because you benefit from that yourself when applying for your next NWO grant

Three things to keep in mind I

- Because of the way the Vici is organized by NWO, you need to achieve three things at the same time (this is different in many other countries!)
- You need to keep the referees happy who are (hopefully) experts in your field; this requires that you show that “you know your stuff”
- You need to keep the committee happy: there needs to be a “story” that people who are not from your field can understand and find interesting
- If the committee prepares for your interview and no one can recall the punchline of your proposal: you are already behind
- These things need to be achieved within the space limits on your proposal!

Three things to keep in mind II

- Footnotes may be helpful here...
- Finally, the topic has to be such that you can have fun with the committee for an hour at the interview
- If a committee member gets bored during the interview, she/he will not remember your proposal (favourably) by the end of the day
- Take these things into account already when writing the proposal!

The interview should be fun!

- Do not prepare a presentation going over your detailed contributions to the literature: the referees have already pointed out what your contributions are
- If you disagree with the referees' assessment, you can point that out, but avoid a "negative atmosphere"
- Point out the broader implications of your proposal in a way that every committee member can contribute to the discussion
- If all committee members enjoy the discussion, they will remember your proposal at the end of the day when all interviews are evaluated
- If they do not remember your proposal, you are probably "out" even if everyone in your discipline believes that this is "cutting edge" research
- For better or worse, this is a feature of the NWO procedure and you better take it into account.

Main implications

- “Spin” your proposal in such a way that it appeals to both referees in your field and to people who have no idea what you are doing
- The referees need to agree that your proposal is innovative, path breaking etc.
- During the interview you have to make sure that all committee members understand the need for your research
- For MaGW policy relevance is an obvious candidate here
- Also make sure they understand that this is fun research that you will enjoy doing for the next 5 years!