

## TOP GO Grant FAQ 2009/2010

Earth & Life Sciences, Chemical Sciences,  
Physical Sciences and Health Research and Development

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### Frequently Asked Questions TOP GO (cross divisional) grants 2009/2010

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### Frequently Asked Question TOP/ECHO grants 2009/2010

1. *What is meant by "cross divisional"?*

An application is considered to be cross divisional if it stretches over more than one of the four following disciplines: Medical or Health Sciences, Earth or Life Sciences, Chemical Sciences, or Physical Sciences (i.e. Astronomy, Mathematics, Computer Science).

2. *Does the application need to be cross divisional or multidisciplinary?*

No. It is allowed to submit a proposal on a monodisciplinary topic. However, researchers who wish to submit a proposal at the boundaries between disciplines are especially encouraged to do so. All proposals will be assessed on the criteria aim and impact, scientific approach and methods, innovative character, and past performance of the research group. If assessment against these four criteria results in proposals ending *ex aequo*, proposals of a cross-disciplinary nature will be given priority in the ranking.

3. *Is an application also considered cross divisional if a collaboration is formed with a discipline other than Earth Sciences, (bio)Chemical Sciences, Astronomy, Mathematics, Computer Science, Medical or Health Science, Biological Science, Agricultural or Food Science?*

No.

4. *In what is the cross divisional TOP GO Grant different from the existing TOP Grants within NWO?*

For the time being, the joint TOP Grants subsidy round is a one-off event and is being organised as a pilot alongside the existing TOP Grants subsidy rounds of the participating organizations ALW, CW and ZonMw. They are listed below:

ALW

- an extra criterium is used in the TOP GO Grants, Aim and impact (on science or society)
- preliminary proposals are not a part of the assessment procedure

CW

- an extra criterium is used in the TOP GO Grants, Aim and impact (on science or society)

ZonMw

- an extra criterium is used in the TOP GO Grants, *past performance*. The TOP GO Grants are open for applications by full professors, senior group leaders, SPINOZA-laureates, etc. as well.
- proposals have to be submitted before a deadline, 15 February 2010

5. *Whom is the TOP GO Grant aimed at?*

For many full professors, senior group leaders, SPINOZA-laureates (i.e. post-Vici), the TOP GO Grant is the only option within NWO or ZonMw to applying for a substantial grant in a free competition, i.e. where the topic is not pre-defined. Therefore, TOP GO Grants offer top researchers the opportunity to renew their group's lines of research as far as content and collaboration are concerned. The intention is to create scope for groundbreaking, top-quality science. TOP GO Grants research has a, preferably wide-ranging, impact on science itself or on society. An excellent track record and excellent scientific results obtained by the applicants in the past form important criteria in the assessment of the TOP proposals.

6. *Is it possible to apply for different TOP Grants in the same period of time?*

It depends. In a couple of situations this is allowed. They are listed below.

- if you currently have a TOP Grant application under review with either ALW or CW, submitting a TOP GO proposal is allowed. In case your ALW or CW TOP proposal is similar to your TOP GO proposal and the ALW or CW TOP proposal is granted, the TOP GO proposal will be excluded from the rest of the procedure.
- if you have submitted a ZonMw TOP grant application after 8 December 2009, it is not allowed to submit a similar application with TOP GO. Only after a TOP GO application is rejected, resubmission of the same application to ZonMw is allowed.
- it is allowed to submit a TOP GO grant application and a ZonMw TOP proposal at the same time only if the applications are significantly different.
- funding decisions on the TOP GO proposals will be made known to the applicants before the upcoming deadline of the CW TOP Grants.

7. *Why are researchers who do not have a contract for the full duration of the application process and the research-project the grant is applied for, excluded from submitting a TOP GO grant?*

NWO and ZonMw wish to ensure that researchers working on NWO or ZonMw research grants are ensured of adequate supervision for the full duration of the research project. Therefore, a guarantee that the applicant

will be employed by the institution where the research will be performed for the full duration of the research project is required.

8. *Can a researcher who does not have a position for the full duration of the project for which the grant is applied, be a co-applicant on an application if the main applicant of this proposal does have a position for the full duration of the project?*

In principle (s)he can not. Sometimes an exception can be made for co-applicants, if the applicants can prove that adequate supervision of all researchers for whom funding is applied can be guaranteed for the full duration of the grant.

Example 1: the following situation is considered adequate supervision: Funding is requested for two PhD students. The main applicant has a permanent contract at the university where both PhD students will be employed and is the promoter of both students. A researcher has a contract at the same university for the majority of the grant period. Then supervision of both PhD students is considered sufficient and this researcher can be a co-applicant on the proposal.

Example 2: in the following situation supervision is not considered adequate: Funding is requested for two PhD students, one in Nijmegen, the other in Leiden. The main applicant has a permanent contract at Nijmegen. The co-applicant at Leiden does not have a contract for the full duration of the grant. In this case supervision for the PhD student at Leiden is not considered adequate and these two researchers can not submit the proposal.

Please note that the main applicant must always have a contract for the full duration of the project.

9. *Can a researcher who has a tenure-track position apply for a TOP GO grant?*

Yes, in principle (s)he can, as long as (s)he meets the requirement that the tenure-track position is guaranteed for the duration of the application-procedure plus the duration of the research project for which the grant is applied. See also question 2. However, applicants should realise that *past performance* is one of the assessment criteria. Contrary to the Vernieuwingsimpuls Vidi or Vici, the TOP GO Grants are open for applications by full professors, senior group leaders, SPINOZA-laureates, etc. as well.

10. *Can a researcher who is the main applicant for a TOP GO grant also be a co-applicant on another TOP GO application?*

No (s)he can not.

11. *How much money is available for the TOP GO grants in the 2009/2010 round?*

In this first, one-off 2009/2010 round a total of around € 14 million will be available for the TOP GO grants. This budget allows for approximately 18-19 TOP GO grants of maximum € 750.000 each. The Steering Committee will decide upon the number of grants and the budget over the TOP GO grants in July 2010. The Steering Group reserves the right to require an application to be shortened or amended on scientific, policy or budgetary grounds as a condition of a possible award.

12. *Who will be a member of the TOP GO evaluation committee?*

The boards of ZonMw and the NWO divisions ALW, CW and EW appoint a Steering Group which is mandated with decision-making in this TOP GO subsidy round. The Steering Group appoints the evaluation committee, taking account of independence, spread of expertise and distribution between institutions. The evaluation committee has two sections: one for applications of a life sciences nature and one for applications of a physical sciences nature.

13. *The committee has two sections; one for applications of a life sciences nature and one for applications of a physical sciences nature. How does that work?*

The sections rank the applications entrusted to them, and then combines these at a joint meeting of the (vice-)chairpersons to form a single recommendation. The life sciences sections deals with application from the areas of Biological sciences, Agricultural and Food sciences, Biochemical science and Medical sciences. The beta or physical sciences section assesses the application from the areas of Earth sciences, Chemical science,

Astronomy, Mathematics and Computer science. Applicants are asked to indicate the section (or domain) that fits best with their proposal.

*14. Is an interview part of the TOP GO selection procedure?*

No, the TOP GO procedure does not involve an interview with the applicant(s).

*15. What is the budget that can be applied for in a TOP GO grant?*

The maximum budget for a TOP GO grant is € 750.000,-

*16. Can consumables and equipment be included in a TOP GO application?*

Yes they can. TOP- and ECHO-grants can be used for personnel costs as well as consumables, small equipment, fieldwork and travel costs that is used for the project.

*17. How much should be budgeted for personnel costs?*

Personnel costs should be budgeted according to the most recent agreement between the VSNU and NWO. The specified maximum amounts will be published on this site as soon as they are available. The current maximum amounts (including a bench fee for among others travel and promotion costs) are: PhD student (4 yr) – k€ 205, post-doc 1 yr – k€ 66, post-doc 2 yr – k€ 134, post-doc 3 yr – k€ 202.

*18. Will the granted budget be adjusted if personnel costs will go up?*

No. The maximum budget for a TOP GO grant is € 750.000,-. If you apply for a budget that is less than € 750.000,-, you will be granted the lower budget. In any case, the granted budget will not be augmented during the course of the project.