Incentive grants for Women in STEM

Call for proposals

Applied and Engineering Sciences
Science

2020
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Chapter 1: Introduction / Incentive grants

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Inclusion and diversity are important to science, both in terms of its quality and impact. In the Netherlands, women make up only a small percentage of the workforce in many science and engineering disciplines. The more senior the position, the smaller that percentage becomes: just sixteen percent of science professors and fifteen percent of engineering professors are women (source: The Dutch network of Women Professors’ (LNVH) 2019 Monitor). Two ways of correcting this imbalance would be:

1. To increase the inflow of women. To this end, the Dutch Research Council (NWO) has established an annual budget to fund additional Veni grants for women in science and technology.
2. To reduce the outflow of qualified women. That is the purpose of this grant-based funding scheme: Incentive Grants for Women in STEM.

The aim of this grant-based funding scheme is to provide a solution for women who temporarily lack the funding needed to pursue their scientific and/or technical-scientific careers. Funding gaps like this, which can occur in many ways and for all kinds of reasons, are sometimes difficult to bridge. They cause many highly qualified women to turn their back on science and choose a different career. This scheme is intended to prevent this outflow.

1.2 Available budget

NWO has made a budget of €3.6 million available to the domains of Science (ENW) and Applied and Engineering Sciences (TTW) for 2020. This budget will be used to fund Incentive Grants for Women in STEM. NWO will allocate this budget on an annual basis, until the end of 2022. A formula has not been established for distributing grants between the disciplines and subdisciplines. The same applies to the number of grants to be awarded. Applications will be assessed and accepted in accordance with the assessment procedure described in subsection 4.1. This scheme, which is temporary in nature, involves a new form of funding. This grant-based funding scheme will be evaluated annually, and after this three-year period has concluded.

This annual budget is allocated by means of the ‘get it before it’s gone’ principle. If the available resources are exhausted before the end of the calendar year, then no further applications will be processed until the following calendar year.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

Those wishing to submit a proposal in response to this call can do so at any time up to and including 31 December 2020. If the available resources for 2020 are exhausted before the end of this period, then the call will be closed.
Chapter 2: Aim / Incentive grants

2 Aim

The aim of this grant is to retain women who are qualified in science or the engineering sciences, and to provide them with a stable launchpad for an academic career. To this end, this grant will support women who are temporarily without funding but who, nevertheless, have good prospects of obtaining a permanent or more senior research position (from Tenure Track) in science or the engineering sciences. This will involve providing financial support to research institutions, which will enable them to appoint a woman for a transitional period before she takes up that position. One example is when universities offer candidates a permanent or more senior position, but the position in question is not immediately available. The grant can then be used to bridge this ‘gap’.
3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

All women in Science or Applied and Engineering Sciences with a doctorate from the Netherlands or elsewhere can apply, whether or not they have permanent employment. The candidate will be appointed by one of the host research institutions (see list below). NWO asks candidates to give an ‘embedding guarantee’ (see subsection 3.5.1).

The host institutions could be:
- Universities established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- University medical centres established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- NWO and KNAW institutes;
- the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- the DUBBLE Beamline at the ESRF in Grenoble;
- NCB Naturalis;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- Princess Máxima Center.

3.2 What can be applied for

With regard to funding proposals, in this call people can apply for total amounts ranging from €20,000 to €250,000. This will cover the cost of the principal investigator’s labour costs and their personal materials budget. The latter can only be awarded if a good case is made. The labour costs consist of the salary, the holiday allowance, the end-of-year bonus (if applicable) and the employer’s costs.

Principal investigator’s labour costs

The collective labour agreement (CAO) applicable to the researcher shall be leading in determining the researcher’s salary, holiday allowance and end-of-year bonus. The following CAO shall apply:
- For University appointments: CAO NU;
- For University Medical Centres: CAO for University Medical Centres;
- Colleges: CAO Higher Vocational Education;
- Educational institutions Dutch Caribbean: CAO Civil servants Dutch Caribbean.

The CAO that is used, salary scale (i.e. scale and step) must also be stated in the application.

The surcharge percentage for employers’ costs for 2020 in this call is set at 29% of the total wage costs (i.e. salary, including holiday allowance and end-of-year bonus). If the application starts in a subsequent year, you can always add the percentage growth in pension contributions and employee insurance to the 29%. You are requested to state the growth percentages per year in your application.

The grant will be paid for a period of no more than 18 months. Once this period has elapsed, the costs involved will be met by the research institution itself.

Personal materials budget

Applications can be submitted for a materials budget of up to €15,000 for each year of the principal investigator’s appointment, provided that a good case can be made. With regard to lower-level
appointments, applications for materials budgets must be on a pro rata basis. This will be reflected by the funding allocated by NWO\(^1\).

Requests for materials budgets must be broken down into the following three items:

**Project-related goods/services**
- consumables (glassware, chemicals, cryogenic fluids, etc.)
- measurement and calculation time (e.g. access to supercomputer, etc.)
- costs for acquiring or using data collections (e.g. from Statistics Netherlands), for which the total amount may not be more than € 25,000 per proposal
- access to large national and international facilities (e.g. cleanroom, synchrotron, etc.)
- work by third parties (e.g. laboratory analyses, data collection, etc.)

**Travel and accommodation costs for the personal positions applied for**
- travel and accommodation costs
- conference attendance (maximum of two per year per scientific position applied for)
- fieldwork
- work visit

**Implementation costs**
- national symposium/conference/workshop organised within the research project
- costs for Open Access publishing (solely in full gold Open Access journals, registered in the “Directory of Open Access Journals” https://doaj.org/)
- data management costs
- costs involved in applying for licences (e.g. for animal experiments)

Audit costs (only for institutions that are not subject to the education accountants protocol of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), maximum € 5,000 per proposal; for projects with a duration of three years or less, a maximum of € 2,500 per proposal applies.

Costs that cannot be applied for are:
- basic facilities within the institution (e.g. laptops, desks, etc.);
- maintenance and insurance costs.

If the maximum amount of € 15,000 per year per full-time scientific position is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if a clear justification is provided in the proposal.

### 3.3 When can applications be submitted

Applications made in response to this call can be submitted at any time. These grants are often ad-hoc solutions, so there is no deadline for submitting applications. This enables applications to be examined on a case-by-case basis, thus offering a degree of flexibility that is appropriate to each particular situation. You cannot modify your application once it has been submitted. However, you do have the right to withdraw your application.

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\(^1\) In the case of academic members of staff at universities of applied sciences (per 0.2 FTE; at junior, medior and senior level, with a minimum appointment of 0.2 FTE for 12 months), applications may be submitted for a maximum materials budget of €15,000 per year of their appointment.
### 3.4 Preparing an application


- Complete the proposal form, then submit it.

Applications for an Incentive Grant must be written in English, and must include a:

- **copy of the applicant’s curriculum vitae.**
  
  The CV must clearly indicate the grounds on which the applicant considers themselves to be suitable for a permanent or more senior research position in science or the engineering sciences. It should also describe the use to which this grant is to be put. This involves the following factors:
  - Does the applicant have sufficient scientific expertise in the field covered by the research proposal in question (based on evidence such as scientific publications, publications for a wider audience, contributions to books, presentations, performance in terms of knowledge utilization, and other scientific or non-scientific activities that may be relevant in the context of this research)?
    
    The Journal Impact Factor and H-index may not be used as indicators in this connection; indeed any use of these indices should be avoided.
  - Does the applicant have demonstrable experience in managing research projects / supervising PhDs etc.?

- **justification of necessity** (description of the situation or of the problem to be bridged) concerning the Incentive Grant for which an application is being submitted (maximum of 500 words). This should clearly specify the steps that have been taken to date, to obtain a permanent and/or more senior position (from Tenure Track) in science. Furthermore, the applicant should describe how she will contribute to science or society in the future;

- **research proposal for the bridging period** and completed justification regarding the choice of institution (maximum of 1000 words, including the list of references);

- **completed subsection on knowledge utilization** (maximum of 1000 words);

- **completed subsection on data management**;

- **provisional budget**.

- **completed and signed embedding guarantee form** (see subsection 3.5.1).

### 3.5 Conditions on granting

The NWO Grant Rules 2017 and the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research apply to all applications.

**Open Access**

As a signatory to the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (2003), NWO is committed to making the results of scientific research funded by NWO freely available in open access on the internet. In doing so, NWO is implementing the ambitions of the Dutch government to make all publicly funded research openly available. All scientific publications of research funded on the basis of this call for proposals should therefore be available in open access immediately (at the time of publication). NWO accepts various routes:

- publication in an full open access journal,
- deposit a version of the article in a repository or
- publication in a hybrid journal covered by one of the agreements between the VSNU and publishers. See [www.openaccess.nl](http://www.openaccess.nl).

Any costs for publication in full open access journals can be incurred in the project budget. NWO does not reimburse costs for publications in hybrid journals. These conditions apply to all
forms of scholarly publications arising from grants awarded on the basis of this call for proposals. Also academic monographs, edited volumes, proceedings and book chapters. For more information on the NWO’s open access policy, see: www.nwo.nl/openscience.

Data management
The results of scientific research must be replicable, verifiable and falsifiable. In the digital age this means that, in addition to publications, research data must also be freely accessible. As much as possible, NWO expects that research data resulting from NWO-funded projects will be made publicly available for reuse by other researchers. “As open as possible, as closed as necessary” is the guiding principle in this respect. As a minimum, NWO requires that the data underpinning research papers should be made available at the time of the article’s publication. The costs for doing so are eligible for funding and can be included in the project budget. In the data management section, and in the data management template if the project is awarded funding, researchers explain how they plan to manage the data expected to be generated by the project.

1. Data management section
The data management section is part of the research proposal. Researchers are asked to prospectively consider how they will manage the data the project will generate and plan for which data will be preserved and be made publicly available. Measures will often need to be taken during the production and analysis of the data to make their later storage and dissemination possible. If not all data from the project can be made publicly available, the reasons for not doing so must be explained in the data management section. Due consideration is given to aspects such as privacy, public security, ethical limitations, property rights and commercial interests.

2. Data management plan
After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. In this plan, the researcher describes whether use will be made of existing data, whether new data will collected or generated, and how the data will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. The data management plan must be completed in consultation with a data steward or equivalent research data management support staff at the home institution of the project leader. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within four months after the proposal has been awarded funding. NWO will approve the plan as quickly as possible. Approval of the data management plan by NWO is a condition for disbursement of the funding. The plan can be adjusted during the research.

Further information on the NWO data management protocol can be found at www.nwo.nl/datamanagement-en.

Nagoya Protocol
The Nagoya Protocol became effective on 12 October 2014 and ensures an honest and reasonable distribution of benefits emerging from the use of genetic resources (Access and Benefit Sharing; ABS). Researchers who make use of genetic sources from the Netherlands or abroad for their research should familiarise themselves with the Nagoya Protocol (www.absfocalpoint.nl). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

Research integrity
In compliance with the 2017 NWO Grant Regulations, the research funded by NWO must be carried out in accordance with nationally and internationally accepted standards of scientific practice as laid down in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018). By submitting the research proposal, the applicant undertakes to comply with this code of conduct. In the case of a possible or actual violation of the above-mentioned standards in the course of research funded by NWO, the applicant must inform NWO of this immediately and provide it with all the documents relevant to the case. Further information on the code of conduct and policy in the area of research integrity can be found on the website: www.nwo.nl/integriteit.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / Incentive grants

3.5.1 Embedding guarantee

Any principal investigators wishing to submit an application for an Incentive Grant must first obtain the support of their intended research institution. The submission of an embedding guarantee is an admissibility criterion. The embedding guarantee must be set out in a completed embedding guarantee form (which is supplied for this purpose), signed by the dean of the research institution in question.

The applicant is free to choose the institution at which she proposes to carry out the research in question. However, she is obliged to verify her embedded status within that institution by signing the embedding guarantee form.

By issuing an embedding guarantee, the institution at which the research is to be carried out guarantees that, when this is honoured, the applicant will be granted a permanent and/or more senior position (from Tenure Track). In consultation with the research institution in the Kingdom of the Netherlands where the applicant is to be employed, part of the research could be carried out in another country.

3.6 Submitting an application

An application can only be submitted to NWO via the online application system ISAAC. Applications not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

A principal applicant must submit her application via her own ISAAC account. If the principal applicant does not have an ISAAC account yet, then this should be created at least one day before the application is submitted to ensure that any registration problems can be resolved on time. If the principal applicant already has an NWO-account, then she does not need to create a new account to submit an application.

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see Section 5.1.2.
4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

The first step in the assessment procedure is to test whether an application is admissible. Only those proposals that satisfy the criteria stated in Chapter 3 are admissible and will be taken into consideration.

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process. See also: www.nwo.nl/en/code

The data management section in the application is not evaluated and therefore not included in the decision about whether to award funding. However, both the referees and the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section. After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants can use the advice from the referees and the committee when writing the data management plan. A project awarded funding can only start after NWO has approved the consortium agreement.

A broad-based committee of academics will assess the quality of each Incentive Grant application. This committee will assess applications from the various scientific and engineering disciplines. There will be no competition between applications. Applicants must take this into account when writing their application: the application must be comprehensible to committee members from all scientific and engineering disciplines.

A decision on whether or not to approve the application will be made as soon as possible. Any applications submitted before 1 August 2020 will be subject to a decision period of no more than five months. This period will commence on the date that NWO receives the full and correct application. Applications submitted after that date will be subject to a decision period of no more than three months.

4.1.1 Assessment

The applications processed by NWO are submitted to the assessment committee. The assessment committee will assess your application on the basis of the assessment criteria set out in subsection 4.2. The assessment committee will pass on its recommendation on this matter to the coordinating Executive Board of the NWO Domain Science.

4.1.2 Implementation of the decision

The coordinating Executive Board of the NWO Domain Science will reach a decision concerning the allocation of funds, based on the advice of the assessment committee. For applications to be eligible for funding, the assessment committee must feel that a) the candidate has a valid need to qualify for this grant, and b) assessment criterion 1 ‘The potential of the proposed research in the bridging period’ (see subsection 4.2) must be ranked as ‘good’ and assessment criterion 2 ‘The quality of the principal investigator (the CV)’ must be ranked as ‘very good’, at the very least. Funding will only be provided if sufficient funds are still available in the calendar year in question. Following the decision of the relevant Executive Board of the NWO Domain Science, the application will either be approved or rejected. If a grant is awarded, the successful candidate will be employed by the research institution of their choice (see also subsection 3.5.1). Incentive Grant projects must start within six months of the grant being awarded. Those projects for which grants have been awarded will be managed by NWO.
4.2 Criteria

All admissible applications are initially assessed – against the need described – by the assessment committee. If the assessment committee decides that the candidate has a valid need to qualify for this grant, then it will proceed with its assessment of the application, based on the following criteria:

1. The potential of the proposed research in the bridging period;
2. The quality of the principal investigator (the CV).
Chapter 5: Contact details and other information / Incentive grants

5  Contact details and other information

5.1  Contact

5.1.1  Specific questions
For specific questions about Incentive grants and this call for proposals please contact: Eveline Mezger (ENW), womeninstem@nwo.nl.

5.1.2  Technical questions about the electronic application system ISAAC
For technical questions about the use of ISAAC please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual first before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours CE(S)T on +31 (0)20 346 71 79. However, you can also submit your question by e-mail to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.
6 Annexe(s):

Embedding guarantee.
Proposal form.