Aspasia is linked to Vidi and Vici rounds 2019

Call for proposals
The Hague, January 2020

2020
Contents

1 Introduction 1
   1.1 Background 1
   1.2 Available budget 1
   1.3 Validity of the call for proposals 1

2 Aim 2

3 Guidelines for applicants 3
   3.1 Who can apply 3
   3.2 What can be applied for 3
   3.3 When can applications be submitted 3
   3.4 Preparing an application 3
   3.5 Conditions on granting 4
   3.6 Submitting an application 5

4 Assessment procedure 6
   4.1 Procedure 6
   4.2 Criteria 7

5 Contact details and other information 8
   5.1 Specific questions 8
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Aspasia is designed to alleviate the under-representation of women in the upper echelons of academia.

The number of women in the upper academic echelons still lags behind the number of men: at the end of 2019, 23.1% of Dutch professors was female. Although a slow rise in the number of female scientists in senior roles has been observed in recent years, a balanced male/female ratio is not expected before the year 2042. The Aspasia programme aims to accelerate the advancement of female scientists to associate professor/senior lecturer (UHD) or full professor.

Aspasia is linked to the Talent Scheme. From the Talent Scheme round 2005 onwards, NWO decided to award premiums to universities which promoted female applicants in the Vidi and Vici rounds who were assessed to be either ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ to associate professor/senior lecturer (UHD) in the case of Vidi, or full professor in the Vici, within one year of the decision date of the Vidi/Vici round.

Who was Aspasia?

Aspasia was a Greek philosopher who lived between 470 and 410 BC. She was born in the Greek city of Miletus (in modern Turkey). Her father was an enlightened man who gave his daughter a good education. Still a young woman, she moved to Athens where, as a non-citizen, she was classed as a ‘hetaera’. Hetaerae were generally educated and independent women. According to various sources (including Plato and Plutarch), Aspasia gave lessons in rhetoric which were attended by Socrates.

1.2 Available budget

NWO has made €4.2 available for the Aspasia round 2019, linked to the Vidi and Vici rounds 2019, with award decisions in 2020. If this budget is not sufficient to award the premium to all candidates that meet the grant conditions, an additional measure will apply. This measure entails that the responses by the Executive Boards, which state whether the Board intends to promote the candidate, will qualify for the premium in order of submission. See paragraph 4 for more information on the procedure.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

This call for proposals is linked to the Vidi and Vici rounds of Talent Scheme (Vernieuwingsimpuls) 2019 with award decisions in 2020.
The aim of Aspasia is to encourage an accelerated promotion of female academics to associate professor/senior lecturer or full professor.

With the Aspasia programme, NWO aims to advance the position of talented female scientists to senior roles. Universities that promote female applicants in the Vidi and Vici rounds who were assessed to be either ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ to associate professor/senior lecturer (UHD) in the case of Vidi or full professor in the Vici within one year of Vidi or Vici grant award decision may, subject to certain conditions (see paragraph 3.5 Specific conditions), qualify for the Aspasia premium.
3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

It is not possible to apply for Aspasia; eligible candidates will be contacted by NWO (see 4.1 for more information about the procedure).

Aspasia is linked to NWO’s Vidi and Vici Talent Schemes (Vernieuwingsimpuls).

To qualify as an Aspasia candidate, a female applicant for a Vidi or Vici grant must either have been awarded such a grant, or have had her application assessed to be very good or excellent following the interview procedure but been unsuccessful in obtaining one. The premium is only available for the promotion of candidates who did not yet fulfil positions as associate professor/senior lecturer (Vidi applicants) or full professor (Vici applicants) at the date of the Vidi/Vici award decision letter. Candidates who already held positions as associate professor/senior lecturer (Vidi applicants) or full professor (Vici applicants) at the date of the Vidi/Vici award decision letter will not be contacted. Candidates who are promoted to associate professor or professor in the period between submitting the Vidi/Vici-application and the date of the award decision letter, are not eligible for the premium. Universities that promote eligible applicants to associate professor/senior lecturer (UHD) or full professor within a year of the Vidi or Vici grant award decision may, subject to certain conditions and if the budget allows, qualify for a premium.

Please see paragraph 3.5 Specific conditions for more information.

3.2 What can be applied for

The premium available for the promotion of each Vidi/Vici grant recipient is € 40,000. The premium offered for the promotion of Vidi/Vici applicants that were assessed to be ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ but did not receive the grant is € 120,000. This means that the latter group does not receive a grant under the Talent Scheme, but is awarded a larger subsidy under Aspasia. The premium is allocated to the Executive Board of the university or institute where the candidate is promoted.

The Executive Board can use the premium to cover the extra salary costs resulting from the promotion or can add it to the research budget of the Aspasia laureate to reward her for her success and to supplement the Vidi/Vici grant (if applicable). The addition to her budget will give the candidate scope to expand her research (for example, by appointing an extra post-doc or research assistant, by temporarily suspending her teaching activities and/or by undertaking a period of research at a university outside the Netherlands). In this way the Aspasia programme may encourage other female academics to apply for Vidi or Vici grants.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

Following the Vidi and Vici award decisions, NWO contacts the eligible candidates. If the candidate agrees, NWO will nominate her to her Executive Board for the promotion under the Aspasia scheme. More details and a timetable for this procedure is provided below (see 4.1).

3.4 Preparing an application

It is not possible to apply for Aspasia.
3.5 Conditions on granting

Aspasia is linked to the Vidi- and Vici-rounds of the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme (Vernieuwingsimpuls) with award decisions in 2020 and is intended exclusively to encourage the promotion of female Vidi applicants who were not yet senior lecturers on the date of the Vidi award decision letter and female Vici applicants who were not yet professors on the date of the Vici award decision letter.

Vici round 2019

- To qualify for an Aspasia premium, Vici candidates must be promoted to professor with a permanent position or at least a five year contract within one year of the Vici award decision (i.e. by 1 March 2021). This is a strict deadline. Exceptions will only be made for candidates that are eligible for the exceptional provision described below and for candidates that take up maternity leave within the one year time frame (extension will be provided for the number of weeks that the candidate is entitled to maternity leave within the one year time frame). In exceptional cases, such as long-term illness, an extension with a maximum of six months may be provided after consultation with NWO. The promotion must not be on a temporary basis and must be for at least the same number of hours as the appointment held by the candidate on the date of the Vici award decision letter. A promotion to a professorial position other than full professor, such as professor by special appointment, is not eligible for the Aspasia premium. The Executive Board must submit to NWO a contract showing that the candidate has been promoted (see also 4.1, Procedure).

- For candidates who did not have a permanent position and/or were not yet not yet appointed at senior university lecturer/associate professor (UHD) level on the date of the Vici award decision letter, there is an exceptional provision (the two-step procedure): an Aspasia premium may be awarded if the candidate concerned is appointed at senior university lecturer level (permanent position or at least a five year contract, minimum 0.4 FTE) within 2.5 years of the Vici award decision (i.e. by 1 September 2022) and promoted to professor (permanent position or at least a five year contract, minimum 0.4 FTE) within three years of the Vici award decision (i.e. by 1 March 2023). In this case, the Aspasia premium will be awarded in tranches: a third (€ 13,000/€ 40,000, depending on the size of the premium) after appointment at senior university lecturer level and two thirds (€ 27,000/€ 80,000) after promotion to professor.

- For Vici grant recipients and unsuccessful applicants affiliated to KNAW or NWO institutes, there are separate arrangements: if the researcher wishes to remain affiliated to the institute, she can qualify for an Aspasia premium by assuming a part-time post as professor at a university. The appointment must be for at least 0.2 FTE and must not be on a temporary basis. A promotion to a professorial position other than full professor, such as professor by special appointment, is not eligible for the Aspasia premium. The premium is awarded to the university concerned. Depending on what is agreed between the university and the institute, the university's Executive Board can decide to cede all or part of the premium to the institute. The remaining conditions regarding the use of the funds are the same as for all other Aspasia premiums (see 3.2).
Vidi round 2019

- To qualify for an Aspasia premium, a candidate must be promoted to associate professor/senior lecturer (UHD) with a permanent position or at least a contract with a duration of five years. The promotion must be realised within one year of the Vidi award decision (so promotion must be realised by 1 June 2021). This is a strict deadline. Exceptions will only be made for candidates that are eligible for the exceptional provision described below and for candidates that take up maternity leave within the one year time frame (extension will be provided for the number of weeks that the candidate is entitled to maternity leave within the one year time frame). In exceptional cases, such as long-term illness, an extension with a maximum of six months may be provided after consultation with NWO. The promotion must not be on a temporary basis and must be for at least the same number of hours as the appointment held by the candidate on the date of the Vidi award decision letter. The Executive Board must submit to NWO a contract showing that the candidate has been promoted (see also 4.1, Procedure).

- For candidates who did not have a permanent position and/or were not yet appointed at university lecturer level on the date of the Vidi award decision letter, there is an exceptional provision (the two-step procedure): an Aspasia premium may be awarded if the candidate concerned is appointed at university lecturer level (permanent position or at least a five year contract, minimum 0.4 FTE) within 2.5 years of the Vidi award decision (i.e. by 1 December 2022) and promoted to senior lecturer/associate professor (permanent position or at least a five year contract, minimum 0.4 FTE) within three years of the Vidi award decision (i.e. by 1 June 2023). In this case, the Aspasia premium will be awarded in tranches: a third (€ 13.000/€ 40.000, depending on the size of the premium) after appointment at university lecturer level and two thirds (€ 27.000/€ 80.000) after promotion to senior lecturer.

- Vidi-applicants affiliated to KNAW or NWO institutes can also qualify for the Aspasia-premium. They need to be promoted to a position equivalent to the position of associate professor/senior lecturer in terms of salary and level of seniority. This will be assessed after consultation between NWO and the institute. The institute will need to contact NWO to discuss these matters after receiving the nomination (so before the actual promotion takes place) from NWO. Candidates that already fulfil a position equivalent to the position of associate professor/senior lecturer are not eligible for the premium. With regards to what may be covered by the premium, the regular conditions apply (see 3.2 of this brochure).

3.6 Submitting an application

It is not possible to submit an application for Aspasia. The programme is linked to NWO’s Vidi and Vici grant schemes; eligible candidates will be contacted by NWO (see 3.1. of this brochure).
4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

Following the Vidi and Vici award decisions, NWO contacts the candidates eligible for the Aspasia premium (see also 3.1 Who can apply). Candidates are requested to submit their contract as valid on the date of the VI award decision letter to verify whether the conditions of the premium are met. If no reaction from the candidate is received within three months after the letter by NWO has been sent, the file will be closed and the offer of the premium will be withdrawn.

If the candidate meets the conditions and wishes to take advantage of the Aspasia scheme to obtain promotion, NWO will contact the relevant Executive Board to nominate her. The Board is asked to respond before the deadline (see timetable below) with a letter and state whether or not it is intending to promote the candidate. If the required budget exceeds the available budget of €M 4.2, the responses by the Executive Boards will qualify for the premium in order of submission. Once the existing budget is exhausted, further responses will not be considered. In the case of responses that meet the requirements and fall within the available budget, the premium will be conditionally awarded and the relevant Board will be notified of this. The premium of €40.000 or €120.000 will be awarded once the promotion has been realised under the conditions stated in paragraph 3.5. If the Board response does not qualify for the premium due to the exhaustion of the budget and the premium cannot be conditionally awarded, the Board will be notified of this by NWO. If no reaction from the Executive Board to the letter of nomination by NWO is received within three months, the file will be closed and the offer of the premium will be withdrawn.

NWO awards the premium once it has received a contract showing that the candidate has been promoted and a cover letter from the Executive Board explaining how it intends to use the budget. The Board must submit an expenditure plan (budget plus brief written explanation) for NWO’s approval.

The documents from the Executive Board that prove that the promotion has been realised must be sent in to NWO within six months after the promotion deadline. If the documents have not been sent in within this time frame, the conditions for the premium have not been met and the conditionally awarded premium will be withdrawn.

Timetable Vici-applicants round 2019:

The timetable for the round with Vici award decisions in 2020 is as follows:
- End of 1 February 2020 - award decisions Vici round 2019;
- March 2020 - NWO sends letters to potentially eligible Vici candidates
- End of May 2020 - response deadline for Vici candidates contacted by NWO. NWO asks Executive Boards to promote Vici candidates. If the budget is not sufficient to award the premium to all eligible candidates, the responses by the Executive Boards will qualify for the premium in order of submission.
- Beginning of September 2020 - response deadline for Executive Boards
- 1 March 2021 (at latest) - Executive Boards report promotion of Vici candidates to NWO with expenditure plan
- 1 September 2022 (at latest) - Executive Boards report promotion of Vici candidates eligible for the two-step procedure to associate professor/senior lecturer to NWO with expenditure plan

---

1 This response is not binding and does not obligate the Institute to promote the candidate.
2 The required budget is the budget that is needed to award the premium to all eligible candidates who meet the conditions.
1. 1 March 2023 (at latest) - Executive Boards report promotion of Vici candidates eligible for the exceptional provision to full professor to NWO with expenditure plan

**Timetable Vidi-applicants round 2019:**
The timetable for the round with Vidi award decisions in 2020 is as follows:
- End of May 2020 - award decisions Vidi round 2019
- June 2020 - NWO sends letters to eligible Vidi candidates
- End of September 2020 - response deadline for Vidi candidates contacted by NWO and NWO asks Executive Boards to promote Vidi candidates. If the budget is not sufficient to award the premium to all eligible candidates, the responses by the Executive Boards will qualify for the premium in order of submission.
- End of December 2020 - response deadline for Executive Boards
- 1 June 2021 (at latest) - Executive Boards report promotion of Vidi candidates to NWO with expenditure plan
- 1 December 2022 (at latest) - Executive Boards report promotion of Vici candidates eligible for the two-step procedure to university lecturer to NWO with expenditure plan
- 1 June 2023 (at latest) - Executive Boards report promotion of Vici candidates eligible for the exceptional provision to associate professor/senior lecturer to NWO with expenditure plan

**Reporting arrangements**
*In the case of a premium awarded to a Vidi or Vici grant recipient*
If the Executive Board decides that part of the Aspasia premium should benefit the grant recipient herself (see 3.2), NWO will award that part of the premium directly to her (in addition to the earlier Vidi or Vici grant). An expenditure plan needs to be submitted to NWO. The grant recipient should then account at the end of the project for the use of the money via the usual financial reporting arrangements for the Talent Scheme.

*In the case of a premium awarded to an unsuccessful Vidi or Vici applicant*
If the Executive Board decides that part of the Aspasia premium should benefit the candidate herself (see 3.2), NWO will award that part of the premium directly to her. The candidate concerned must submit a budget with a brief written explanation showing how the resources will be used to fund her research. The financial expenditure arrangements for the Talent Scheme are applicable here. There is a five-year deadline for the use of the money. At the end of that period, the candidate must submit final accounts, showing that the resources have been used in accordance with the budget.

4.2 **Criteria**
There are no selection criteria for Aspasia. Please see section 3.5 for more information on conditions on granting and section 4 for more information on the procedure.
5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about this call for proposals please contact:

Charlotte Jalvingh or Hanneke Dekker
tel. +31(0)70 349 4011
E-mail: aspasia@nwo.nl

NWO Aspasia-programme
P.O. Box 93138
2509 AC The Hague

Website www.nwo.nl/aspasia

Disclaimer

The Dutch text of this call for proposals is the authentic text and it prevails over any translations of them.