NWO Spinoza Prize
2020
Introduction and purpose

The NWO Spinoza Prize is a funding scheme directed at individuals at the very top of the research profession. The Prize is a lifetime achievement award but above all an encouragement for further research. The granting of a NWO Spinoza Prize represents an appreciation of what the winners have accomplished so far as well as confidence in what they will achieve in the next couple of years. As of 2020 the prize will be awarded to a researcher or a team of two or three persons. NWO invites a select group of individuals to nominate candidates for NWO Spinoza Prizes.

The NWO Spinoza Prize provides a way of identifying and funding top-flight research by focusing on individuals. The setting in which a candidate works is also important, of course, but the key factor is the individual.

Who can nominate

Candidates for the NWO Spinoza Prize can only be nominated by individuals who NWO has invited to submit nominations; researchers may not submit applications themselves. NWO invites each of the following individuals to nominate candidates:

- the principals of all Dutch universities (a maximum of two nominations each)
- the president of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) (a maximum of two nominations for each domain and the Young Academy)
- the chair of the Netherlands Academy of Technology and Innovation (a maximum of two nominations)
- the chair of the Dutch Network of Women Professors (a maximum of two nominations).

Who can be nominated

Candidates for the NWO Spinoza Prize should:

- have a permanent position at a Dutch research institute;
- should be able to spend the Prize fully before their retirement age;
- may not have already received a Spinoza Prize or a Stevin Prize.

In the context of the exclusive character of the Spinoza Prize and the Stevin Prize, NWO has to award such a Prize to a researcher only once. This means that the nominators should make a choice for which prize they want to nominate a candidate. If a candidate is nominated independently by different nominators for both Prizes, NWO will contact the nominators.

The nomination should state the scientific cluster to which the candidate belongs: humanities and social sciences (alpha/gamma), natural sciences (beta) or life sciences. If a candidate is doing multidisciplinary research then more than one cluster may be listed but the cluster in which the focus of the research lies should be stated.

Excellent, creative and innovative research requires a diverse scientific staff so that subjects can be tackled from different perspectives. NWO is committed to improving gender balance in Dutch academia so as to ensure all available talent is fully exploited. Therefore NWO wholeheartedly encourages the nomination of female researchers.
What can the candidates be nominated for

NWO reserves a budget of 10 million euro’s annually for the Spinoza Prize. Each NWO Spinoza Prize amounts to 2.5 million euros. This amount may be spent (up to a certain point) at the discretion of the recipient. In the scientific and financial plan which needs to be approved by the Executive Board of NWO the recipient may include costs of staff, materials, investments, travel expenses and accommodation costs, visits by foreign researchers, etc.

The prize should in principle be spent within a 5-year period.

When can nominations be submitted

The deadline for the submission of proposals is **November 1, 2019**, at 14.00 hrs CE(S)T.

Preparing a nomination

Instructions on how to draw up a nomination for a NWO Spinoza Prize are included in the Annex to this brochure.

Specific conditions

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

NWO expects strict confidentiality during the nomination procedures, also towards the nominated candidates. If NWO detects that confidentiality has not been guaranteed, NWO reserves the right to refuse the nomination.

Each year a maximum of four NWO Spinoza Prizes are awarded of which no more than two awards may be within any one of three scientific clusters - physical sciences, chemistry, mathematics and engineering; life sciences (including medicine); and humanities & social sciences. In addition, when three or four prizes are awarded, a substantial part of the research of at least one recipient should belong to the humanities & social sciences.

Submitting a nomination

Each nomination should be sent as a PDF-document to NWO by email, spinoza@nwo.nl. The deadline is on 1 November 2018, 14.00 CET.

Procedure

A committee appointed by NWO selects the best nominated candidates and advises the Executive Board of NWO on who should be awarded a Spinoza Prize. The Executive Board bases its decision on the advice of the committee.

Up to and including 30 June 2019, the NWO Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interest applies to all persons and NWO employees involved in the handling, assessment and/or decision-taking process. On 1 July 2019,
this Code of Conduct will be replaced by the new Code for Dealing with Personal Interests. From 1 July 2019, the assessment and/or decision-taking process for this funding round will therefore be carried out according to the Code for Dealing with Personal Interests. More information concerning the Code for Dealing with Personal Interests can be found on the NWO website.

Criteria

The assessment and selection of the candidates takes place on the basis of past performance taking into account the following quality criteria:

- Internationally acknowledged top quality (weight 70%)
  This should be evident from the scientific achievements of the candidate, the influence he or she has had on the development of his or her field of research, successes in research funding competitions, acknowledgement by way of achievement awards, invitations, editorials, etc.

- Power of attraction to early stage researchers (weight 20%)
  This should be clear from to what extent the candidate succeeds in attracting and inspiring PhD students and postdocs from the Netherlands or abroad. Moreover, the quality of the candidate in mentoring and coaching early stage researchers is an important part of this criterion. The more PhD students and postdocs supervised by the candidate have succeeded in advancing their career in academic research, this will sustain the quality of the supervision by the candidate.

- Knowledge exchange and impact (including outreach activities) (weight 10%)
  This should be clear from the relevance of the research results for and meeting the needs of third parties within and outside of the academic sector. This does not concern the use of knowledge by fellow researchers within the researcher’s own scientific discipline.

Additionally, it should be evident that the NWO Spinoza Prize is expected to enable the candidate to make substantial advances in his or her research.

Additional criterion a team nomination

In the case of a nomination of a team of two or three candidates, the added value of the team with respect to the three quality criteria should be demonstrably greater than the sum of the individual contributions of the team members. The team members should complement each other and should have achieved more by cooperating than they might have achieved on the basis of their individual qualities. This does not necessarily mean that all members of the team are of the same calibre.

Contact details

For specific questions about NWO Spinoza Prize please contact:

- H.R. (Helga) Varwijk MA
- e-mail: spinoza@nwo.nl
- phone: +31 (0)70 344 05 29
- www.nwo.nl/spinoza
Annex: Instructions for drawing up a nomination for the NWO Spinoza Prize 2020

The nominations should be written in English. Each nomination must clearly state the achievements that qualify the candidates to be regarded as top researchers in the national and international arena, the further advances that their research is expected to achieve, and the probable knock-on effect of the award on the candidate's research group.

To facilitate a comparative and smooth assessment of the nominated candidates, the nominations should be filled in the digital nomination form and submitted by e-mail to spinoza@nwo.nl.

- Download the application form from NWO’s website (on the grant webpage www.nwo.nl/spinoza).
- Complete the application form.
- Save the application form as a pdf file and send it by e-mail to spinoza@nwo.nl.

The maximum length of the nomination is 4 pages A4, excluding annexes and the general information on the nominator and the nominated candidate.

The nominations may not include recommendation letters. Any such documents included will be removed by NWO.

As a result of NWO signing the DORA (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment) any references to Journal Impact Factors or H-index are not allowed in the nominations.

In drafting nominations it should also be remembered that the broad-based membership of the selection committee means that for each candidate a part of the committee will have only a 'lay' understanding of the relevant research topic. In the first phase of the assessment, the nominations are the primary source of information for the committee. Well-written nominations are therefore essential.

Each nomination should include the following annexes:

A. An overview of 10 most important publications in relation to the field of research, including if applicable internationally renowned books, contributions to books and book chapters. The qualitative scientific and societal impact of each publication should be briefly described as well as the individual contribution of the candidate to these publications.

B. Overviews of:
   - PhD dissertations supervised as head supervisor since full professorship including their current employment if possible
   - periods abroad longer than 6 months

C. Numbers of output according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2015-2021, including at least: refereed articles, non-refereed articles, books, book chapters and conference papers

D. A recent curriculum vitae