NWO Talent Programme

Vici

Call for proposals

Applied and Engineering Sciences
Health Research And Development
Science
Social Sciences And Humanities

2021
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

From 2020, NWO will convert the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme to the NWO Talent Programme. The programme covers three grant categories (Veni, Vidi and Vici).

Each category has one submission round per year. Procedures may change from year to year, depending in part on the results of interim evaluations.

Each grant category has a separate call for proposals.

NWO is structured into four domains:

- Science;
- Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH);
- Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES); and
- Health Research and Development (ZonMw).

The 2021 Vici round will therefore be conducted in four procedures corresponding to the NWO domains. Also cross-domain Vici applications will be assessed within one of the domains.

1.2 Available budget

The overall budget for the NWO Talent Programme funding in 2021 is 150 million euros.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

The deadline for submitting preproposals is March 25, 2021, 14.00 hrs (CET). The deadline for submitting the letter of intent is July 15, 2021, 14.00 hrs (CE(S)T). The deadline for the submission of proposals is August 26, 2021, 14.00 hrs CE(S)T.
2 Aim

The aim of the NWO Talent Programme is to provide individual encouragement for talented postdoctoral researchers at various stages of their careers. Providing creative opportunities for adventurous, talented, pioneering researchers to do research of their own choice and to encourage them to make a permanent career of academic research are therefore key aims of the NWO Talent Programme. With a personal grant, researchers have the opportunity to develop their own innovative line of research which could be structurally embedded in a research institution.

2.1 Vici target group

The Vici target group consists of excellent researchers with a striking and original talent as well as a considerable fascination for doing challenging and pioneering research. The focus in this respect is on innovative and curiosity-driven research.

In view of the purpose of the Vici programme, it is obviously essential that researchers should have the ability to formulate and conduct a line of scientific research independently. This implies that they will already have proved their abilities in their field of research.

The Vici scheme is aimed at the excellent senior researcher who has successfully demonstrated the ability to develop his/her own innovative line of research and the ability to act as a coach for young researchers.

Researchers working at a foreign institution are also eligible to submit an application. If awarded, the project must be carried out at a Dutch institution recognised by NWO (see paragraph 3.1 and 5.2 for more information).

The Vici funding focuses on researchers who will be among the best of their peer group, irrespective of their nationality or research topic. It is expected that they can also convince others of the originality and potential of their ideas.

2.2 Promoting female researchers

We explicitly invite female researchers to apply. The representation and advancement of women in academia are unfortunately far less than those of men. NWO and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) are working together with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) and Dutch universities to rectify this situation; the aim is that the percentage of female applicants will ultimately be at least equal to the percentage of female researchers in the target group.

NWO strives to ensure that the success rates for female applicants will be at least equal to those for male researchers on average and in the medium term. In the event that two or more applications are rated equally, preference will be given to the proposal submitted by a female applicant.

2.3 Knowledge utilisation

By knowledge utilisation, NWO means the transfer of knowledge generated with the help of NWO funding. This transfer can take place both to other scientific disciplines and to users outside of science (industry/society). NWO asks all researchers applying for funding to provide an explanation regarding the possible knowledge utilisation of their project by answering several questions (e.g. how will

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1 In this Call for proposals, the term “researcher” refers to all academics.
knowledge utilisation be implemented and how does the researcher intend to facilitate knowledge utilisation?). This explanation is one of the assessment criteria.

During the assessment, attention is paid to the following inter alia:

- a realistic representation of the knowledge utilisation possibilities (or lack thereof);
- the effectiveness of the action plan and the extent to which it is made tangible in relation to knowledge utilisation.

NWO acknowledges that the possibilities for knowledge utilisation differ per discipline and that some research projects have few, if any, opportunities for (direct) knowledge utilisation. In such cases, an applicant should explain why there is little to no potential for knowledge utilisation. The selection committee members will be asked to assess this explanation: if they are convinced that the research project indeed has little to no knowledge utilisation possibilities and that the applicant has satisfactorily explained this, then this should not negatively influence the overall assessment score.

More information on the NWO policy on knowledge utilisation can be found at [www.nwo.nl/knowledge-utilisation](http://www.nwo.nl/knowledge-utilisation).

The Dutch National Research Agenda can serve as a source of inspiration when you are thinking through the potential for knowledge utilisation. The routes within the Agenda can inspire Talent Scheme researchers and help them to pinpoint the potential importance of their research for other scientific disciplines as well as for society and to make this tangible.

A browseable online Dutch National Research Agenda book as well as the Portfolio for research and innovation with further information about the current routes in the Agenda (both in Dutch and English) are available at [http://www.wetenschapsagenda.nl/publicaties](http://www.wetenschapsagenda.nl/publicaties). The digital version of the Agenda that contains all of the questions can be consulted, in Dutch, at [vragen.wetenschapsagenda.nl](http://vragen.wetenschapsagenda.nl).
3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Research proposals can be submitted by applicants who have recently received their doctorates, irrespective of whether they hold tenured positions or whether they come from the Netherlands or abroad. The research will be carried out at one of the host research institutions listed in Section 5.2 of this Call for proposals.

3.1.1 Career deadline

Vici applicants must have obtained their doctorate within the last fifteen years at our reference date on March 1st, 2021.

3.1.2 Extension clause

In the case of care responsibilities, pregnancy, illness or training to become a clinical specialist, it is possible to receive an extension to the number of years after the PhD graduation. An applicant who wishes to request an extension must always contact the Talent Programme coordinator (talent@nwo.nl) before the application is submitted. A request for an extension will only be considered if it is accompanied by the required formal documents.

Parents can obtain an extension if they are caring for a child. An extension on the grounds of childcare should be supported by the signed parent-declaration form (parent-declaration), in which the applicant declares that the child or children are part of his or her household.

The maximum extension that may be granted to any particular applicant is five years. Further information about extensions is provided in the Frequently Asked Questions section, see FAQ. If you wish to apply for an extension, please contact NWO before submitting your application (see Section 5.1).

3.1.3 Compensation scheme Parental leave

Applicants in this funding round can make use of the NWO Compensation scheme Parental leave. Information on this subject is available on the Compensation scheme for parental leave | NWO. If you would like to make use of the scheme, please submit an e-mail request to the relevant programme secretary for your round and/or panel (see paragraph 5.1).

3.1.4 Additional conditions

The following additional conditions apply to the assessment of applications:

a. Applications must be submitted by individual researchers (not by pairs or groups of researchers or by research teams).

b. A applicant may:

• submit a maximum of one application in the Vici 2021 round;
• submit a Vici application no more than three times;
• enter the application process for the NWO Talent Programme for no more than one type of grant at a time;
• If an application that has been admitted to the selection process is withdrawn by the applicant, this submission still counts towards the maximum number of submissions per applicant.
c. Researchers who have previously been awarded grants under the Talent Programme (or Innovational Research Incentives Scheme) may apply again for a grant of the same kind;
d. Researcher in receipt of a current award under the NWO Talent Programme (previously: Innovational Research Incentives Scheme) may apply for another form of grant under the scheme earlier than 24 months before the planned expiry date of the current grant.

3.15 Institutions

Approved host institutions are those universities within the Kingdom of the Netherlands whose terms of reference include the conducting of research, the KNAW and NWO institutes, and a number of other institutions. The full list of institutions is contained in section 5.2.

3.2 What can be applied for

The maximum amount for a Vici project offered by NWO is 1.5 million euros for a period of five years. If the proposed research is of shorter duration, the maximum amount will be reduced accordingly. The budget estimate submitted with the application must be based on eligible direct staff costs and direct non-staff costs. The calculation of the staff costs must be based on actual gross salaries and associated costs as specified in the current Dutch agreement on the funding of academic research (Akkoord bekostiging wetenschappelijk onderzoek; www.nwo.nl/salary-tables), with the exception of indexation and end-of-project payments. The amount of these payments for the 2021 will be based on the standard percentages in the agreement.

Remunerations for PhD students/PhD scholarship students at a Dutch university are not eligible for funding from NWO.

Within the grant, applicants can spend a maximum of 25% of their contracted working time on general scientific activities, such as teaching, administration or management. At least 75 percent of the Vici contracted working time must be spent on their Vici project.

The term ‘direct non-staff costs’ means general non-staff costs plus the costs of knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation and internationalisation. Infrastructure costs (accommodation and office automation) and other overhead are not eligible for funding.

The proposed budget will be assessed by NWO. If it exceeds the maximum amount of the Vici grant, the application (preproposal and full proposal) must be accompanied by a letter from the prospective host institution or a third party (co-finance) guaranteeing to cover the excess costs. This guarantee must be signed by the dean/manager of the institution or by a person with authority to sign on behalf of the body issuing the guarantee.

For further information and explanation of grant-eligible costs, see the document “guidelines for design of expenditures financial accounting reports” at the different Vici-domain sites.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

The deadline for the submission of preproposals is March 25, 2021, 14:00:00 CE(S)T.
The deadline for the submission of preproposals is July 15, 2021, 14:00:00 CE(S)T.
The deadline for the submission of proposals is August 26, 2021, 14:00:00 CE(S)T.

When you submit your application to ISAAC you will also need to enter additional details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.
3.4 Preparing an application

Vici grant application forms (pre- and full proposal) will be available on the programme website (https://www.nwo.nl/en/researchprogrammes/nwo-talent-programme) two months before the submission deadline.

- Download the application form from the electronic application system ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw or from NWO’s web page (on the grant page for this programme).
- Complete the application form.
- Save the application form as a pdf file and upload it in ISAAC or in Mijn ZonMw (https://www.zonmw.nl/) for applications to the Health Research and Development domain (ZonMw).

Pre- and full proposals must be written in English and must include:

- an outline of the research proposal (max. 1,200 words for a Vici preproposal and max. 8,000 words for a Vici detailed proposal, not including references);
- a knowledge utilisation section (max. 500 words for a Vici preproposal and max. 1,000 words for a Vici detailed proposal);
- a narrative CV*, consisting of a description of the applicant’s academic profile (max. 1200 words) and a description of the key output (max. 10 items with an explanation in max. 700 words);
- a budget estimate;
- a Data Management section (full proposals).

* The narrative CV has two parts:

1. Narrative academic profile: a narrative description of the candidate’s academic profile. In this the candidates are free to decide what they consider relevant to state in their CV.

This part is a narrative in which applicants explain what type of researcher they are: what is the research focus, agenda and vision of the researcher? What have they done to realise that vision? In principle, applicants can use this section to state all information they consider to be useful/important and which demonstrates their qualities, for example in relation to the discipline and to the specific proposal. In the case of a Vici proposal, for instance, stating previous experience with supervision, training and leadership qualities would be more important than in a Veni proposal. Grants or prizes obtained may be stated, but a complete list of these should not be given. If such a statement is made, then candidates are requested to indicate what they did with the opportunities that the grant obtained afforded them. Important keynotes, academic “service”, contributions to teams, outreach, etc. can also be included in this document. For transdisciplinary research, the candidate could place extra emphasis on collaborations in other projects. However, the experience relevant for setting up an important database is entirely different. In brief, it is up to applicants to demonstrate what makes them good and suitable. In all cases, the context should be described. Finally, this part contains a motivation for the proposed research and room to explain the researcher’s suitability for the specific research.

2. Key Output: a list of at most ten key outputs with an explanation as to why the applicant considers these to be the most important output. This part, in which applicants demonstrate their research output, also has a narrative character. Candidates are no longer required to provide a full list of publications but can instead selectively choose the output they showcase. The term output is broadly
defined: peer-reviewed articles, preprints, Open Access data, software, presentations, contributions to popular media, etc. All types of output that are relevant for the candidate’s profile, the discipline, society or the proposal can be stated. By limiting the number of outputs, the focus shifts from quantity to quality and the impact of the contributions. A maximum of ten outputs may be stated; candidates may also choose to state fewer than ten outputs. They can demonstrate what they consider to be important and by doing that make a link with part 1, the academic profile. For each output, the candidate is required to state the role/contribution they played (in the team), the output’s impact, its relationship with the proposal and/or why it uniquely shows the quality of the candidate.

Guidelines for the use of quality indicators

In the motivation for the choice of output, reference can be made to certain quality indicators, but not to additional output. The guideline for these indicators is as follows: all types of quality indicators may be stated, as long as they only relate to a single output item.

Both quantitative and qualitative indicators that satisfy this guideline are permitted. For instance, the number of times a dataset is downloaded may be stated, or the impact of a certain article on policy. NWO encourages stating several quality indicators per output, so for example the use of the results presented in professional practice as well as a sentiment analysis of the citations or the number of citations for that one output. It is therefore possible to state the article was cited exceptionally often or has led to changes in textbooks, but also, for example, that this collaboration resulted in a successful H2020 application. Applicants are requested to explain why the chosen indicators are relevant; how do the indicators chosen in this specific case provide insight into the quality of the work and/or the applicant?

All indicators that do not satisfy the guidelines above are excluded. For instance, this means that journal impact factors (JIF) or any other indicator that refers to a journal, publisher or publication platform may not be stated. This rule applies not only to quantitative indicators but also to qualitative descriptions of reputation. Therefore, terms such as “top journal” and “high-quality university press” may not be used either. H-indexes and sums and averages of citations may also not be stated as these indicators do not just refer to the specific output concerned.

3.5 Conditions on granting

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

3.5.1 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.

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.

3.5.2 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.

3.5.3 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.

3.5.4 Allocation of IP rights

The following applies with respect to making agreements about intellectual property rights and publication (IP&P): for projects awarded funding by NWO SSH, ZonMw and NWO Science, the project leader is responsible for the allocation of IP rights to the project results. For Vici applications funded by the domain AES, both NWO and the institution share the property and the IP rights on the project results which are generated by the institution. More information: https://www.nwo.nl/en/about-nwo/organisation/nwo-domains/ttw/applicant.
After the proposal has been awarded, the NWO domain AES will contact the user/users to make agreements about the allocation of IP rights and about publication, with due consideration for the “Guidelines TTW User Committee.” The NWO conditions with respect to IP rights and the publication procedure are stated in Chapter 4 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017.

3.5.5 User committees for applications in the AES domain

After funding has been awarded, for projects for which project management is handled by the NWO domain AES, NWO will appoint a user committee (as described in Article 3.3.2a of the NWO Grant Rules 2017) in consultation with the project leader, to facilitate the actual and effective transfer of knowledge from the research to the users. The user committee’s main task is to advise the project leader about the direction the research should take to maximise the application of the research results. How the user committee works and its tasks are stated in the “Guidelines TTW/AES User Committee”. Membership of the user committee is at the invitation of NWO domain AES. By agreeing to participate, the members commit themselves to the rules stated in the “Guidelines TTW User Committee”. Costs related to participation in user committees cannot be part of the budget.

3.5.6 Choice of institution

Researchers are free to choose one of the host institutions listed in Section 5.2, at which they wish to conduct their research. In consultation with the host institution, part of the research may be conducted outside of the Netherlands. The applicant’s plans for achieving institutional integration may be a subject of discussion during selection interviews.

The appointment at the host institution and arrangements for integration within it must always be completed before any grant payment is made by NWO. The successful applicant must sign a written agreement with the board of the institution concerned. This may state, for example, what prospects and guarantees the institution can offer for the future of the line of research and the applicant following the period of grant.

3.5.7 Ethical aspects

Any research proposal that raises ethical issues must be carefully considered in advance. Certain research projects require a statement of approval from a recognised ethical review committee, medical ethics review committee (MREC) or the central animal experiments committee (CCD). Such committees may advise researchers on matters such as the use and handling of patients, subjects and laboratory animals, possible risks of disclosure of data, use of human tissue, risks to the environment or cultural heritage, and possible conflicts of interest. Their recommendations may or may not be binding. In addition to ethical review by an ethics committee, some research proposals require a licence under the Population Screening Act (WBO). More information on medical ethics review committees is available from the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO), while the Dutch Association of Animal Experiment Committees (NVDEC) can provide information on animal experiments committees, and the Health Council of the Netherlands can advise on the WBO.

Vici applicants are responsible for determining whether their research proposals raise possible ethical issues. If so, they are also responsible for obtaining any necessary statement of approval from the appropriate ethics review committee and/or licence under the Population Screening Act. NWO subscribes to the Dutch Freedom of Information on Animal Experiments Code (Code Openheid Dierproeven) and the Biosecurity Code. Vici applicants must subscribe to and comply with the prevailing codes.

Vici projects must commence within six months of the grant award. Research projects requiring a statement of approval and/or licence under the Population Screening Act may not start until NWO has received a copy of the relevant statement and/or licence. NWO expects applicants to pay attention to the timetable for the Vici selection procedure and take account of the time required by ethics review committees to conduct project assessments or for the Population Screening Act licence application.
procedure to run its course. Where an application raises complex ethical issues, NWO reserves the right to seek external advice.

If at any point, after discussing the matter with the applicant, NWO feels that an ethical review is required, the applicant must take the necessary measures to obtain it. If the applicant fails to obtain the required statement of approval from an ethics review committee, any grant awarded will be cancelled. Applicants with questions in this respect should contact the central coordinator of the NWO Talent Programme (see 5.1.1 for contact details).

3.5.8 Research Integrity

It is of essential importance that scientific research which is carried out with finance of NWO is in accordance with the leading national and international principles of scientific integrity – honesty, care, transparency, independence and responsibility. The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018) forms the guiding principle for NWO’s integrity policy. Everybody who submits an application to NWO must state that they are familiar with the code and that they are complying with it. Also after an application has been awarded funding, NWO requires researchers to state in the progress reports that they are adhering to the Code. More information: https://www.nwo.nl/en/policies/scientific-integrity-policy/netherlands-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity

3.6 Submitting an application

Applications can only be submitted via the online application system ISAAC. Applications not submitted via ISAAC will not be considered. Applications to the Medical Sciences Division can only be submitted via the MijnZonMw application system, which can be accessed via the website of the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research & Development, ZonMw (https://mijn.zonmw.nl).

After the advice of the committee for the pre-roposals, applicants must indicate by means of a letter of intent that they intend to submit a detailed application, so that NWO can carry out preparatory work.

Applicants must submit their application via their personal ISAAC/MijnZonMw account. If the applicant does not yet have an ISAAC/MijnZonMw account, it should be created well in advance of the application deadline, to ensure that any registration problems can be resolved in time. If the applicant already has an NWO account, then he/she does not need to create a new account to submit an application.

When submitting your application to ISAAC/MijnZonMw you will need to enter additional details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least a few days before the deadline of this call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

For technical questions, please contact the ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw helpdesk (see Section 5.1.2).

Choice of NWO domain

NWO has four domains: Science, Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH), Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES), and Health Research and Medical Sciences (ZonMw).

Vici applicants should submit their preproposal and their full proposal to only one domain. If the application is for cross-domain research, the applicant must choose the domain that is best suited to the application.
Please note: NWO recommends that applicants consider in good time which domain is best suited to their application. If you are not sure which domain is best suited to your application, we urge you to contact NWO. NWO may be able to offer advice on this matter; the ultimate decision is up to the applicant.

Annexes
The requested annexes differ between the AES domain and the other domains.

Domains Science, SSH and ZonMw
If your host institution or a third party co-funds your project, your application must be accompanied by an authorized letter guaranteeing that this funding will be provided. The guarantee must explicitly state the amount of the co-funding. Letters of guarantee are unconditional and do not contain termination clauses.

Letters of guarantee should be sent to NWO via the ISAAC or Mijn ZonMw system as a separate PDF document. For applications to Science, SSH and ZonMw these annexes will not be sent to referees and assessment committees and will not be taken into consideration when assessing the applications.

Domain AES
AES makes a distinction between co-funding from the applicant’s institution to support salary costs and letters of support from third parties. Both forms can be found on the TTW-Vici page.

AES does send letters of guarantee to referees and committee members. For these letters of guarantee it is required to use the AES Domain specific format.

Please do not include any publications or letters of recommendation without in cash or in kind contributions when submitting your application.
4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

Vici applications are assessed in a national competition. The assessment of Vici applications takes place within the four NWO domains. This means that applications from different disciplines will be compared within each domain in a competitive procedure. The domains use broad-based committees of academics to advise on the merits and prioritisation of the applications. This should be taken into account when writing the application. The application must also be accessible to committee members from other scientific disciplines within the domain. Where domains use multiple assessment panels, the (disciplinary) composition of these panels is explained in more detail on the domain page in question.

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.

NWO processes the personal data of applicants in accordance with the NWO Privacy Statement, see https://nwo.nl/en/privacyverklaring.

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 datamanagement plan.

NWO will award a qualification to all full proposals and will make this known to the researcher with the decision about whether or not the application has been awarded funding.

Only applications that receive the qualification "excellent" or "very good" will be eligible for funding. For more information about the qualifications please see https://www.nwo.nl/en/apply-funding-how-does-it-work.

4.1.1 Eligibility

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.

4.1.2 Preproposal

Vici applications must be submitted first as preproposals, which are abridged versions of the detailed proposals. Four assessment committees (Social Sciences and Humanities committee, Science committee, Applied Sciences and Engineering Sciences committee and Health Research and Development committee) assess the preproposals comparatively, using the criteria and subsequently prioritise these according to likelihood of funding, without making use of external referees. The most likely candidates receive an invitation, before the end of June 2021, to submit a detailed proposal before the second deadline. Other applicants will receive message that they are not invited to submit a detailed proposal. Since this is an advice and not a formal decision, these applicants can still submit a full proposal despite the negative advice.

4.1.3 Letter of intent

All applicants who wish to submit a full proposal must make this known to NWO by means of a letter of intent. This applies to all applications, both applications that have received a positive advice and
those that have received a negative advice. Without this ‘declaration of intent to submit a full proposal’, we cannot accept a full application. The letter of intent should be submitted before 15 July 2021. The format of the letter of intent and the method for submission will be announced with the result of the preproposal.

NWO can carry out preparatory activities on the basis of this declaration of intent.

4.1.4 Hearing and rebuttal

All full proposals that are handled by NWO in accordance with section 4.1.1 are submitted to external referees for their consideration. These are specialist in the research topic of your application. Applicants will then be given the opportunity to respond to the anonymised referee reports with a rebuttal. The response time to the reports is 5 working days.

It is possible to indicate up to three non-referees. Applicants can submit the names of non-referees via ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw when they submit their preproposal. Even if ISAAC offers room for more non-referees, applicants may not indicate more than three names. NWO will not approach these non-referees to assess the application as external referees.

4.1.5 Interview (selection)

The full proposals, referees’ reports and rebuttals are presented to the relevant assessment committee. The selection committee makes its own consideration based on the referees’ reports received and the applicant’s responses to them. The highest-ranked applicants are then invited for an interview.

During the interview, the assessment committee has an opportunity to ask questions, including new ones not yet raised by the referees. The applicant can respond to these during the interview discussion with the committee. This again provides an opportunity for a hearing and rebuttal. The interview is an important part of the assessment and can result in a review of the assessment and the proposal’s score to date.

4.1.6 Decision-making

After the interviews each application is reassessed and prioritized. Based on this final prioritization the assessment committee formulates its funding recommendation and submits it to the relevant domain board, which then takes its decision. The final number of grants to be awarded to applications with a minimum qualification of “very good” depends on the funds available in the round. Once the relevant domain board has taken its decision, the result is announced.

4.1.7 Arrangements and reporting

Once the relevant domain board has announced its decisions, arrangements are made for each award. Successful candidates are awarded contracts of employment with the host institutions of their choice and arrangements are made for final reporting and for any necessary supervision by the domain concerned (see also Section 3.5.1). Vici projects must always start within six months of the grant being awarded. The projects awarded funding will be managed by one of the NWO domains. During the Vici project you are responsible for the progress and final reports and you bear final financial responsibility. With the subsidy decision you will be informed who your contact person will be during the term and which obligations you must meet.

4.1.8 Indicative timetable

Including the Vici preproposal phase, NWO aims to complete the procedure within eleven months.

The indicative timetable for the 2021 Vici round is:

**Preproposals**

25 March 2021, 14.00 hours CET Deadline for the submission of Vici preproposals via the ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw system
June 2021 Announcement result preproposal round to applicants

**Letter of Intent**
15 July 2021, 14.00 hours CEST Deadline for the submission of the letter of intent to submit a full proposal

**Full proposals**
26 August 2021, 14.00 hours CEST Deadline for the submission of Vici detailed proposals via the ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw system
September/ October 2021 Consultations with referees and applicant’s rebuttals in response to the referee reports
December 2021 Interviews
February 2022 Decision by the NWO accredited Board
February 2022 Information applicants about the decision

4.1.9 Adjustments to the procedure
It is possible that NWO may deem it necessary to make adjustments to the procedure during the current round. Any adjustments to the 2021 Vici procedure will be published on the NWO website. Please check the website regularly for accurate information.

4.2 Criteria
Applications are assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. quality, innovative character and academic impact of the proposed research (see 4.2.1);
2. knowledge utilisation (see 4.2.2);
3. quality of the researcher (see 4.2.3);

The weighting given to these criteria in the overall rating of the application is 40%, 20% and 40% respectively.

4.2.1 Quality, innovative character and academic impact of the proposed research
- challenging content;
- originality of the research question;
- innovative scientific elements;
- aimed at building up a new line of research;
- potential to make important contributions to science;
- effectiveness of proposed methodology;
- international importance of the proposed research area.

4.2.2 Knowledge utilisation
Potentially
- contribution to society and/or other academic areas;
- disciplines and organisations that might benefit from the results.

Implementation
- action plan to allow the outcomes of the research project to benefit the potential knowledge users;
- if and how the potential knowledge users will be involved;
- (concrete) outcomes for society and/or other academic disciplines;
- the period over which knowledge utilisation is expected to occur.
The assessment committee assesses:

- whether the applicant has given a realistic description of the potential for knowledge utilisation
- in case there is indeed potential for knowledge utilization: to what extent the applicant has presented a concrete and convincing plan for the implementation of the available potential.

If a researcher is of the opinion that the proposed research is not appropriate for knowledge utilisation then (s)he should explain why (s)he thinks that knowledge utilisation is not applicable. The assessment committee will assess the arguments given for this.

### 4.2.3 Quality of the researcher

- in terms of profile fit in the target group;
- among the best of his/her international peer group;
- academic excellence as demonstrated among other by the quality and the impact of the selected key outputs, but also by the quality and the impact of other academic achievements, such as contributions to Open Science, ‘academic citizenship’, education and the linking of these to science;
- inspiring enthusiasm for research and/or technology;
- persuasiveness;
- demonstrably capable of successfully developing own new innovative line of research;
- has both a national and international prominent position;
- demonstrable leadership and coaching skills.
5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

The latest information about the NWO Talent Programme can be found on [www.nwo.nl/talent](http://www.nwo.nl/talent). A document with answers to frequently asked questions can also be found under the division specific funding instrument. Candidates are advised to check the website before contacting NWO. Questions about the NWO Talent Programme can be directed towards the central coordinator of this grant programme at NWO or to the coordinator of the relevant NWO domain. Contact details can be found at [www.nwo.nl/talent/contact](http://www.nwo.nl/talent/contact).

Questions about current Talent Programme projects should be posed to the coordinator of the NWO domain or the unit for project management handling the project concerned. The contact details for the project management unit are mentioned in the letter received on the grant decision (for further contact details of the NWO domains please see: [www.nwo.nl/talent/contact](http://www.nwo.nl/talent/contact)).

Central coordinator NWO Talent Programme

Website: [www.nwo.nl/talent](http://www.nwo.nl/talent) (information on Talent Programme funding) or: [www.nwo.nl/talentprogramma](http://www.nwo.nl/talentprogramma) (general information on the Talent Programme)

E-mail: talent@nwo.nl

Coordinator telephone number: +31 70 344 0707

Domain addresses

NWO Talent Programme/Vici

Science

PO Box 93460

2509 AC The Hague, The Netherlands

E-mail: enw-vici@nwo.nl

Website: Talent Programme Vici - NWO-Science domain (ENW) | NWO

NWO Talent Programme/Vici

Social Sciences and Humanities

PO Box 93461

2509 AC The Hague, The Netherlands

E-mail: sgw-vici@nwo.nl

Website: NWO Talent Programme | Vici - Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) | NWO

NWO Talent Programme/Vici

Applied and Engineering Sciences

PO Box 3021

3502 GA Utrecht, The Netherlands

E-mail: ttw-vici@nwo.nl

Website: NWO Talent Programme | Vici - Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES) | NWO

NWO Talent Programme/Vici

Health Research and Development

PO Box 93245

2509 AE The Hague, The Netherlands

E-mail: vici@zonmw.nl

Website: NWO Talent Programme | Vici - Health Research and Medical Sciences | NWO
5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual first (see https://www.isaac.nwo.nl/nl/help) 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 20 346 7179. You can also submit your question by email to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will receive an answer within two working days.

Technical questions about the use of the Mijn ZonMw application system can be addressed to the helpdesk during normal office hours (+31 70 349 5178) or by email: servicedesk@zonmw.nl.

5.2 List of institutions

5.2.1 Universities
Delft University of Technology
Eindhoven University of Technology
Erasmus University Rotterdam
Leiden University
Maastricht University
Open University of the Netherlands
Protestant Theological University
Radboud University Nijmegen
Theological University of Apeldoorn
Theological University of Kampen
Tilburg University
University of Humanistic Studies
University of Amsterdam
University of Aruba
University of Curacao
University of Groningen
University of Twente
Utrecht University
VU Amsterdam
Wageningen University and Research Centre

5.2.2 KNAW institutes
Hubrecht Instituut voor Ontwikkelingsbiologie en Stamcelonderzoek
Huygens ING
Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IISG)
Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV)
Meertens Instituut
Nederlands Herseninstituut
Nederlands Instituut voor Ecologie (NIOO)
NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies
Nederlands Interdisciplinair Demografisch Instituut (NIDI)
Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute

5.2.3 NWO-institutes (NWO-I)
AMOLF - Physics of functional complex matter
ARCNL - Advanced Research Center for Nanolithography
ASTRON - Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy
CWI - National research institute for mathematics and computer science
DIFFER - Dutch Institute for Fundamental Energy Research
Nikhef - Institute for Subatomic Physics Nikhef
NIOZ - Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research
NSCR - Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement
SRON - Netherlands Institute for Space Research

5.2.4 Other

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics
NCB Naturalis
Netherlands Cancer Institute
Princess Máxima Center for Paediatric Oncology