NWO Talent Programme
Vici 2023

Call for proposals

Applied and Engineering Sciences
Science
Social Sciences And Humanities
ZonMw

2023
1 Introduction

In this Call for proposals information is provided about the application procedure for the NWO Talent Programme Vici 2022 funding round. This Call for proposals falls under the responsibility of the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

In this Call for proposals you will find information about the aim of this programme (Chapter 2), the conditions for the grant application (Chapter 3) and how your proposal will be assessed (Chapter 4). This is the information you need to submit a grant application. Chapter 5 states the obligations for grant recipients in the event you are awarded funding, Chapter 6 contains the contact details and Chapter 7 the annexes.

1.1 Background

Since 2020, NWO has converted the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme to the NWO talent Programme. The programme covers three grant categories (Veni, Vidi and Vici).

Each grant category has one submission round per year and 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 2023 Vici round will therefore be conducted by four desks corresponding to the NWO domains.

1.2 Available budget

The available budget for this Call for proposals is €48,000,000. Within this Call for proposals it is expected that a maximum of 32 proposals will be awarded funding, Science 12, Social Science and Humanities 10, Applied and Engineering Sciences 4 and ZonMw 6.

1.3 Submission deadline(s)

The deadline for submitting statements of intent is March 14, 2023, before 14:00:00 hours CET.
The deadline for submitting full proposals is September 12, 2023, before 14:00:00 hours CEST.

When you submit your application in ISAAC, you will also need to enter some details online. Therefore please start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this Call for proposals. Applications that are submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.
2 Aim

This chapter describes the aim of the programme and the societal impact.

2.1 Aim of the programme

The aim of the NWO Talent Programme is to provide creative space for adventurous, talented, pioneering researchers to do research of their choice, develop their own line of research and further develop their talent.

2.1.1 Vici target group

The Vici target group consists of researchers at the stage of consolidation and further development of their leadership skills/research group. The goal of the Vici grant is to contribute to the researcher’s development in this area. Vici is aimed at senior researchers with academic qualities that clearly exceed what is customary within the international peer group, as well as established leadership- and mentorship skills.

The Vici grant is intended to finance academically innovative research and to give these researchers the opportunity to expand on their research group and further develop their research line.

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 for more information).

Promoting female researchers

We explicitly invite female researchers to apply. The representation and advancement of women in academia are unfortunately lagging behind 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. Please note: in order to qualify for this, it is necessary for female applicants to have filled in ‘Female’ under the header ‘Gender’ in their ISAAC details.

2.2 Societal impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to solutions for current and future societal issues. Examples are the energy transition, health and care, or climate change. Knowledge utilisation increases the chances of research having a societal impact and is therefore an important aspect of the NWO strategy for 2023-2026.

2.2.1 Knowledge utilisation

NWO defines knowledge utilisation as an iterative process aimed at achieving societal impact. Through interaction and alignment between researchers and possible users of knowledge, the chances of knowledge utilisation and, accordingly, societal impact increase. Via its knowledge utilisation policy, NWO facilitates the possible contribution of research to societal issues by encouraging productive
interactions with societal stakeholders during the development and realisation of the research. NWO does this in a manner appropriate to the aim of the funding instrument.

2.2.2 Customisation in approach knowledge utilisation

Depending on the aim of the funding instrument, NWO will select the approach that has the greatest chance of achieving societal impact. The primary aim of the funding instrument determines the method NWO deploys to facilitate knowledge utilisation in various phases of the project (proposal, realisation, project completion) and the effort required from the applicant(s) and partner(s).

In this programme, the Impact Outlook approach is used. With this approach, NWO encourages applicants to pay more attention to discovering and exploring opportunities for societal impact. NWO offers an e-learning module to help those interested on their way using the Impact Outlook approach. Please visit the NWO website impact.nwo.nl/en for more information.

For more information about the NWO knowledge utilisation policy, see the website: www.nwo.nl/en/knowledge-utilisation.
3 Conditions for applicants

This chapter contains the conditions that are applicable to your grant application. Firstly it describes who can apply for funding (Section 3.1) and what you can request funding for (Section 3.2). Subsequently, you will find the conditions for preparing and submitting the application (Sections 3.3 and 3.4) and the specific funding conditions (Section 3.5).

3.1 Who can apply

Applications can be submitted by candidates who have obtained their PhD, irrespective of whether they hold tenured positions and of whether they come from the Netherlands or abroad. Applicants with a part-time contract should guarantee adequate supervision of the project and all project members for whom funding is requested.

The research will be take place at one of the following institutions:

- universities located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- university medical centres;
- institutes affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) or NWO; Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- Naturalis Biodiversity Center;
- Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- Princess Máxima Center.

Extra conditions

The following additional conditions apply to the submitting of applications:

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

b. An applicant may:

- submit a maximum of one application in the Vici 2023 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 not apply again for a grant of the same kind;

d. Researchers 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 no earlier than 24 months before the planned expiry date of the current grant.

e. It could be the case that the applicant’s tenure track agreement ends before the intended completion date of the project for which funding is applied for, or that before that date, the applicant’s tenured contract ends due to the applicant reaching retirement age. In that case, the applicant needs to include a statement from their employer in which the organisation concerned guarantees that the project and all project members for whom funding has been requested will receive adequate supervision for the full duration of the project.

Applicants with a part-time contract should guarantee adequate supervision of the project and all project members for whom funding is requested.
3.2 What can be applied for

For an application in this Call for proposals, a maximum of €1.5 million can be applied for. The
maximum duration of the proposed project is five years. The budget estimate submitted with the
application must be based on eligible project-specific staff costs and project-specific material costs.
Apply only for funding that is vital to realise the project. A more detailed explanation of the budget
modules can be found in the annexe to this Call for proposals (7.1).

3.3 Preparing an application

3.3.1 Pre-proposal

The steps involved in writing your pre-proposal are:
− download the pre-proposal application form from the NWO web application ISAAC or from the
  NWO or ZonMW web page (on the grant page of the funding instrument concerned);
− complete the pre-proposal form;
− fill in the requested information online in ISAAC (phone numbers and email address, including
  your mobile number);
− if necessary, complete the ISAAC contact details by filling out the ‘gender’ box, see further 2.1.1
  ‘promoting female researchers’;
− save the application form in ISAAC as a PDF file and upload it to ISAAC or Mijn ZonMw;
− add optional annex: list of literature references. This list will be used as background for the bureau
to find reviewers and will not be included in the assessment of the proposal;
− a maximum of three non-referees can be registered. Applicants can register these non-referees in
  ISAAC when submitting the pre-proposal. NWO will not approach these non-referees to assess the
  proposal as external referees.

Annexes must be uploaded in ISAAC separately from the application. All of the annexes must be
submitted as PDF files (without encryption). Any annexes other than those mentioned above are not
permitted.

You must write your application in English.

An application can only be submitted via the web application ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw. Applications that are
not submitted via ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw will not be taken into consideration.

As the main applicant, you are required to submit the application via your own personal ISAAC/ Mijn
ZonMw account.

It is important to start with your application in ISAAC on time:
− if you do not yet have an ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw account, then you should create this on time to
  prevent any possible registration problems;
− any new organisations might need to be added to ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw by NWO;
− you also need to submit other details online.

Pre-proposals submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration by NWO.
For technical questions, please contact the ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw helpdesk, see contact (Chapter 6).

The pre-proposal contains an Evidence Based Curriculum Vitae of the applicant, consisting of:
− A description of the candidate’s academic profile (max. 1200 words);
− a description of the candidate’s key output (max. 700 words);
− the research idea (max. 150 words).
You may only use quality indicators that are measured at the level of the individual output item, for instance article level indicators. You may not mention lists or total numbers of publications, grants or prizes, nor the total acquired sum. You are allowed to mention amounts for individual grants. In case you mention specific prizes or grants, you must provide context, e.g. by describing how the opportunities offered by the grant or prize were used. Do not refer to reputation, but provide substantiation of relevant qualities and how you have benefitted and/or contributed, or will benefit and/or contribute.

### 3.3.2 Full proposal

The steps involved in writing your proposal are:

- download the application form from the NWO web application ISAAC or from the NWO or ZonMW web page (on the grant page of the funding instrument concerned);
- complete the application form;

The complete application consists of:

- description of the research proposal and motivation for the choice of institution (maximum 8000 words including references to the literature);
- paragraph on scientific and/or societal impact (maximum 1000 words);
- paragraph on data management;
- budget.

- complete the requested information online in ISAAC or Mijn ZonMw. (phone numbers and email address, including your mobile number);
- save the application form as a PDF file and upload it with any compulsory annexes to ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw.

Optional annexe(s) only:

- declaration co-funding (see 3.5.5);
- statement exceeding maximum funding (see 3.5.6)

Any annexes other than those mentioned above are not permitted.

Annexes must be uploaded in ISAAC separately from the application. All of the annexes must be submitted as PDF files (without encryption).

You must write your application in English.

An application can only be submitted via the web application ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw. Applications that are not submitted via ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw will not be taken into consideration.

As the main applicant, you are required to submit the application via your own personal ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw account.

It is important to start with your application in ISAAC on time:

- if you do not yet have an ISAAC account, then you should create this on time to prevent any possible registration problems;
- any new organisations must also be added to ISAAC by NWO;
- you also need to submit other details online.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration by NWO.

For technical questions, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see contact (Chapter 6).

The applicant must inform the organisation where she/he works about the submission of the application, and the organisation must accept the granting conditions of this Call for proposals.
3.3.2 Advice about field choice

For this Call, you have to choose which field you will submit your application to. You can choose from:
- Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES);
- Science (ENW);
- Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH);
- ZonMw (Health Research and Medical Sciences).

Please decide well in advance to which field it would be best to submit your application. After submission, your choice of field is final and it will no longer be possible to have the application assessed within another field. If you have doubts about which field would be most appropriate, for example, because your application has a (partly) field-overarching character, then you should get in touch with one of the contact persons from the programme well before the deadline. They can advise you about which field can best deal with your application. Please note that the final choice is yours.

For contact details please see Section 6.1.1.

3.4 Conditions for submission

3.4.1 Formal conditions for submission

NWO will assess your application against the conditions listed below. Your application will only be admitted to the assessment procedure if it meets these conditions. After submitting your application, NWO requests you to be available to implement any possible administrative corrections so that you can (still) meet the conditions for submission.

These conditions are:
- the main applicant meets the conditions stated in Section 3.1;
- the application form is, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions;
- the application is submitted via the main applicant’s ISAAC/Mijn ZonMw account;
- the application is received before the deadline;
- the application is written in English;
- the application budget is drawn up in accordance with the conditions for this Call for proposals;
- the proposed project has a duration of at most 5 years;
- all of the required annexes are, after a possible request to make additions or changes, complete and filled out according to the instructions.

3.4.2 Career-dependent submission period and extension scheme

This round is open to researchers who have obtained their PhD no more than 15 years before 1 March 2023.

The stated maximum career-dependent submission period can be extended by NWO if there was a long period of leave due to illness, parenting, pregnancy or care. The maximum extension to the submission period allocated by NWO is five years.

An extension is also possible for parents who care for one or more children. An extension is also possible in the case of a part-time appointment combined with care duties or in the case of training for a number of clinical specialisations. In the case of care leave combined with a training to be a clinical specialist, the extension allocated is also a maximum of five years.

For more information, see www.nwo.nl/en/extension-clause. If you would like to make use of the extension scheme, then you should always contact NWO (see 6.1) before you submit your proposal.
3.4.3 Parental leave

For instruments in which no co-applicants can be entered, NWO offers applicants who take parental leave during the assessment period due to the arrival of a child, the possibility to make use of the 'Compensation scheme for parental leave'. This scheme applies to this Call for proposals. For more information, please see www.nwo.nl/en/compensation-scheme-parental-leave.

If an applicant wants to make use of this compensation scheme, then a written request for this, supported by reasons, should be submitted to NWO via the contact person for this funding round. With this request, the applicant should provide all information that NWO needs to take a decision, including information from which it is clear that the applicant is hindered from providing input due to childcare leave.

3.5 Conditions on granting

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

3.5.1 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 publicly accessible insofar as this is possible. NWO expects that research data resulting from NWO-funded projects will be made publicly available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers. “As open as possible, as closed as necessary” is the applicable principle in this respect. Researchers are at least expected to make the data and/or non-numerical results that underlie the conclusions of work published within the project publicly available at the same time as the work’s publication. Any costs incurred for this can be included in the project budget. Researchers should explain how data emerging from the project will be dealt with based on the data management section in the proposal and the data management plan that is drawn up after funding is awarded.

Data management Section

The data management section is part of the proposal. Researchers are asked before the start of the research to consider how the data collected will be ordered and categorised so that this can be made publicly available. Measures will often already need to be taken, during the creation of data and analysis of the data, to make its later storage and dissemination possible. If it is not possible to make all data from the project publicly available, for example due to reasons of privacy, ethics or valorisation, then the applicant is obliged to list the reasons for this in the data management section.

The data management section in the proposal is not evaluated and will therefore not be weighed in the decision whether to award funding. However, both the referees and the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section.

3.5.2 Scientific integrity

In accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2017, the project that NWO funds must be carried out in accordance with the nationally and internationally accepted standards for scientific conduct as stated in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018). By submitting the proposal, the applicant commits to this code. In the case of a (possible) violation of these standards during a project funded by NWO, the applicant should immediately inform NWO of this and should submit all relevant documents to NWO. More information about the code of conduct and the policy regarding research integrity can be found on the website: Scientific integrity | NWO.
3.5.3 Ethical statement or licence

The applicant is responsible for determining whether an ethical statement or licence is needed for the realisation of the proposed project. The applicant should ensure that this is obtained from the relevant institution or ethics committee on time. If the project is awarded funding, then the grant is issued under the condition that the necessary ethical statement or licence is obtained before the latest start date for the project. The project cannot start until NWO has received a copy of the ethical statement or licence.

3.5.4 Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol 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 (ABS Focal Point - ABS Focal Point). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

3.5.5 Co-funding

In the event of a contribution by a third party, a ‘Declaration co-funding’, signed by the co-funding party (‘in cash’ or ‘in kind’), must be uploaded with the full proposal. NWO will provide a template Declaration co-funding on the funding page of the domains. It is important that this party is explicit about the amount of the contribution in the Declaration. The Declaration is unconditional and does not contain any resolutive conditions.

At AES, co-financing statements in which third parties commit to in cash and/or in-kind support are sent to referees and committee members.

**Co-financing for projects**

**Invoicing in-cash co-funding**

After the proposal has been awarded funding, NWO will invoice the private or public party that has pledged an in-cash contribution. After these funds have been received, NWO will allocate the funding to the project.

**The following are permitted as in-kind co-funding**

The use of personnel and material contributions is permitted on the condition that these are capitalised and are fully part of the project. Services and know how may not already exist or be available to the applicant. In-kind contributions are only accepted under the condition that the part contributed by the co-funder is an integral part of the work plan and can be made visible as an identifiable effort.

**Determining the value of in-kind co-funding**

The value of private co-funding in kind for use of personnel is valued on the basis of the rates that NWO has determined for researchers (Salary tables | NWO). In the case of in-kind contributions by companies, the actual salary expenses should be used.

For in-kind contributions in the form of services or know-how (knowledge, software, access to databases or cell lines) the economic value must be established and only the actual costs that can be directly attributed to the project may be counted as co-funding. This is always without a profit margin. Furthermore, the service or know how must not already be present at or available to the applicant.
The value for material in-kind contributions is determined on the basis of the cost price of consumables. The value of investments/equipment is determined based on standard depreciation costs bearing in mind the intensity of use and any existing deprecations according to applicable reporting principles. This cost price should be allocated in proportion to the use for the project.

See article 3.2.4 of NWO Grant Rules 2017 for the treatment of private co-funding (link).

- The following may not be contributed as co-funding (both in cash and in kind):
  - funding awarded by NWO;
  - PPP allowance;
  - co-funding may not come from parties that on the basis of this call for proposals can submit a funding proposal to NWO;
  - discounts on commercial rates, e.g. on materials, equipment and services;
  - costs related to overheads, supervision, consultancy and/or participation in the user committee (see Section 5.1.5);
  - costs of services that are conditional. The co-funding provided may not be subject to any conditions. The provision of the co-funding does not depend on whether a certain stage in the research plan is achieved (e.g. go/no-go moment);
  - costs that are not reimbursed according to the call for proposals;
  - costs of equipment if one of the (main) objectives of the proposal is the improvement or creation of added value for this equipment.

Accounting for in-kind co-funding

The main applicant reports to NWO about the in-kind co-funding that he or she has received from a co-funder. The main applicant provides accountability in accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2017 on an annual basis. If a co-funder fails to partly or entirely fulfil its obligations to the main applicant and/or NWO, then this can have consequences for the grant settlement (see Article 3.4.5 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017).

3.5.6 Declaration exceeding maximum funding

If the proposed budget exceeds the maximum amount of the Vici grant, € 1.5 million, the full proposal must be accompanied by a letter from the prospective host institution or a third party (co-finer) guaranteeing to cover the excess costs. NWO will make a template for this declaration available on the funding page.
4 Assessment procedure

This chapter first describes the assessment according to the DORA principles (Section 4.1) and the course of the assessment procedure (Section 4.2). Second, it states the criteria that the assessment committee will use to assess your application (Section 4.3).

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO employees involved in the assessment and/or decision-taking process ([Code for Dealing with Personal Interests](https://www.nwo.nl/code)).

NWO strives to achieve an inclusive culture in which there is no place for conscious or unconscious barriers due to cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender, sexual orientation, health or age ([Diversity and inclusion](https://www.nwo.nl/diversity)). NWO encourages referees and members of an assessment committee to be actively aware of implicit associations and to try to minimise these. NWO will provide them with information about concrete ways of improving the assessment of an application.

4.1 The San Francisco Declaration (DORA)

NWO is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). DORA is a worldwide initiative that aims to improve the way research and researchers are assessed. DORA contains recommendations for research funders, research institutions, scientific journals and other parties.

DORA aims to reduce the uncritical use of bibliometric indicators and obviate unconscious bias in the assessment of research and researchers. DORA’s overarching philosophy is that research should be evaluated on its own merits rather than on the basis of surrogate measures, such as the journal in which the research is published.

When assessing the scientific track record of applicants, NWO makes use of a broad definition of scientific output.

NWO requests committee members and referees not to rely on indicators such as the Journal Impact Factor or the h-index when assessing applications. Applicants are not allowed to mention these in their applications. You are, however, allowed to list other scientific products besides publications, such as datasets, patents, software and code, et cetera.

For more information on how NWO is implementing the principles of DORA, see [DORA](https://www.nwo.nl/dora) | NWO.

4.2 Procedure

The application procedure consists of the following steps:

- submission of the pre-proposal;
- admissibility of the pre-proposal;
- assessment of the pre-proposal;
- decision-making pre-proposal;
- submission of the proposal;
- admissibility of the proposal;
- peer review by referees;
- rebuttal;
- initial advice assessment committee;
- interview (for domains AES and ZonMw only);
- assessment committee meeting;
- decision-making.
4.2.1 Submission of the pre-proposal

The submission of a pre-proposal is compulsory for this Call for proposals. The pre-proposal is a concise proposal consisting of only the CV and a short research idea. For the pre-proposal submission, a standard form is available on the funding page of this Call for proposals on the NWO and ZonMw websites. When you write your pre-proposal, you must adhere to the questions stated on this form and the procedure given in the explanatory notes. You must also adhere to the conditions for the maximum number of words and pages. The pre-proposal form completed by you must have been received before the deadline via ISAAC (see paragraph 1.3). After submitting the pre-proposal, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt.

4.2.2 Admissibility of the pre-proposal

As soon as possible after you have submitted your pre-proposal, you will hear from NWO whether or not it will be taken into consideration. NWO will determine this based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, Section 3.4). NWO can only take your pre-proposal into consideration if it meets these conditions.

Please bear in mind that within two weeks after the submission deadline, NWO may approach you with any possible administrative corrections that need to be made so that your pre-proposal can (still) meet the conditions for submission. You will be given one opportunity to make the corrections, and you will be given a maximum of five working days to do this.

4.2.3 Assessment of the pre-proposal

While writing the pre-proposal, please keep in mind that the committee that will evaluate your pre-proposal consists of members from the whole domain. The pre-proposal should be accessible for committee members from other academic disciplines within your domain. In case domains work with different evaluation panels, the (disciplinary) composition of these panels will be detailed on the relevant page per domain (https://www.nwo.nl/en/calls/nwo-talent-programme).

Four committees (Social Science and Humanities, Science, Applied and Engineering Sciences and ZonMw) evaluate the pre-proposal based on the criteria and make a ranking based on which proposals have the most chance of being awarded funding, without using external reviewers. The will formulate these comments based on the substantive assessment criteria (see Section 4.3.1) and will give the proposal a numerical score per assessment criterion. For this, the NWO score table will be used (on a scale of 1 to 9, where “1” is excellent and “9” unsatisfactory).

Candidates will receive the provisional assessment of the assessment committee in a timely manner. Candidates with a negative advice will subsequently be given five working days to respond to the provisional assessment of the assessment committee. Taking this information into account, the assessment committee consider whether there is cause to revise the provisional assessment. After that, the final ranking will be determined. The advice of the assessment committee regarding the pre-proposals will be presented to the relevant domain boards which will take a final decision.

The most promising candidates will receive a timely invitation to submit a full proposal before the deadline, this will be about two months before the deadline of the full proposal. The other applicants will receive a decision stating that they are not allowed to submit a full proposal. These applicants do not have the opportunity to submit a full proposal. They are also not allowed to submit a full proposal in a different domain from the domain they used for the pre-proposal.

4.2.4 Submission of a proposal

For the submission of the proposal, a standard form is available on the funding page of this Call for proposals on the NWO website. When you write your proposal, you must adhere to the questions stated on this form and the procedure given in the explanatory notes. You must also adhere to the conditions for the maximum number of words and pages.
Your complete application form must have been received before the deadline via ISAAC (see paragraph 1.3). After this deadline, you can no longer submit a proposal. After submitting the proposal, the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt.

4.2.5 Admissibility of the proposal

As soon as possible after you have submitted your proposal, you will hear from NWO whether or not your proposal will be taken into consideration. NWO will determine this based on several administrative-technical criteria (see the formal conditions for submission, Section 3.4). NWO can only take your proposal into consideration if it meets these conditions. Please bear in mind that within two weeks after the submission deadline, NWO may approach you with any possible administrative corrections that need to be made so that your proposal can (still) meet the conditions for submission. You will be given one opportunity to make the corrections, and you will be given five working days to do this.

4.2.6 Peer review by referees

Before the assessment committee considers your proposal, NWO will request input from at least two external referees. These are independent advisers who are expert in the subject of the proposal. They will assess the proposal based on the assessment criteria stated in the Call for proposals (Section 4.3).

A maximum of three non-referees can be registered. Applicants can register these non-referees in ISAAC when submitting the pre-proposal. NWO will not approach these non-referees to assess the proposal as external referees.

4.2.7 Rebuttal

The main applicant subsequently receives the anonymised referee reports. You then have the opportunity to formulate a rebuttal. You will be given five working days to submit your rebuttal via ISAAC. If you decide to withdraw the proposal, then you should do this as quickly as possible by sending an email stating this to the office and withdrawing the proposal in ISAAC. If NWO receives your rebuttal after the deadline, then it will not be included in the rest of the procedure.

4.2.8 Pre-advice assessment committee

After this, your proposal, the referees’ reports and your rebuttal will be submitted for comments to several members of the assessment committee (the pre-advisers). The pre-advisers will provide a written substantive and reasoned response to the proposal. They will formulate these comments based on the substantive assessment criteria (see Section 4.3.1) and will give the proposal a numerical score per assessment criterion. For this, the NWO score table will be used (on a scale of 1 to 9, where “1” is excellent and “9” unsatisfactory). In case interviews are held, this pre-advice will be used to prepare the interview, in case no interviews are held, this pre-advice will be used as input for the meeting of the assessment committee.

4.2.9 Interview

Within the domains AES and ZonMw, the proposals will be ranked, and on the basis of this ranking applicants will be selected to be invited to for the interview. The domains Science and SSH will not conduct interviews.

During the interview, the assessment committee has the opportunity to pose questions, including new questions that the referees have not asked yet. During the interview, the applicant can respond to these in the discussion with the committee. In this manner, the principle of hearing and rebuttal is applied.
4.2.10 Meeting of the assessment committee

The committee will make its own assessment based on the application, the referee’s report, the rebuttal and –if applicable – the interview. The referees’ reports will to a large extent ‘guide’ the final assessment but will not be blindly accepted by the committee without question. The committee will consider and compare the arguments of the referees (also among each other) and examine whether the rebuttal contains a well-formulated response to the critical comments from the referees’ reports and, if applicable, whether the candidate responded well to the committee’s questions during the interview. Furthermore, the committee, unlike the referees, assesses the quality of all proposals and rebuttals submitted. Therefore, the committee may differ from the referees in their assessment.

Following the discussion, the committee draws up a written recommendation addressed to the relevant decision-making body about the quality and ranking of the proposals. This recommendation is based on the assessment criteria. The proposal must receive an overall qualification of at least “very good” to be eligible for funding.

For more information about the qualifications, see Applying for funding, how does it work? | NWO.

If, after the discussion of the full proposals, two or more of the full proposals cannot be distinguished from each other based on their weighted total score, then there is an ex aequo situation (see the paragraph about ex aequo).

4.2.11 Ex aequo

NWO understands ex aequo to be a situation in which two or more proposals based on their weighted score cannot be distinguished from each other. An ex aequo situation is relevant with respect to the borders of the available budget or the selection borders. The existence of an ex aequo situation is determined as follows. The starting point is the ranking drawn up by the assessment committee, with the final scores rounded down to two decimal points. The reference score is the score of the lowest-ranked proposal within the borders of the available budget or the selection borders. All proposals with a score that is within 0.05 or less of the reference score will be considered. In this way, the proposals that are equal within a score of 0.1 will be selected. If an ex aequo situation occurs at the borders of available budget or the selection borders, then, in order to stimulate the number of females in science, the proposal from a female applicant will end as the highest. If the ex aequo situation is not resolved with this, then the proposal with the highest score for the criterion ‘Quality and innovative character of the research proposal’ will end highest. If this provides no resolution either, the ex aequo situation will be sent on to the decision-making body.

4.2.12 Decision-making

Finally, the relevant decision-making body will assess the procedure followed and the advice from the assessment committee. It will subsequently determine the final qualifications and take a decision about awarding or rejecting the proposals.

4.2.13 Timetable

Below, you will find the timetable for this Call for proposals. During the current procedure, NWO might find it necessary to make further changes to the timetable for this Call for proposals. You will be informed about this in time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-proposals</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday March 14, 2023, before 14:00:00 hours CET</td>
<td>Deadline pre-proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-June 2023</td>
<td>Committee assesses pre-proposals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / NWO Talent Programme

May-June 2023 | Preliminary advice and possibility to submit their view

July 2023 | Applicants receive decision about whether or not to elaborate the pre-proposal into a proposal

**Proposals**

Tuesday September 12, 2023, before 14:00:00 hours CEST | Deadline proposals

October-November 2023 | Referees consulted

November-December 2023 | Applicants can submit a rebuttal

January 2024 | Interviews (AES and ZonMw)

January 2024 | Assessment committee meeting

February 2024 | Decision by the board

### 4.3 Criteria

#### 4.3.1 Substantive assessment criterion pre-proposal

The pre-proposal submitted within this Call for proposals will be substantially assessed on the basis of the following criterion:

**Quality of the researcher**

The committee assesses:

- Whether the researcher fits in the target group: is the researcher at the stage of consolidation of their leadership/research group, and to what extent will the Vici contribute to the researcher’s development in this area?
- The extent to which the researcher’s qualities clearly exceed what is customary within the international peer group, as evidenced in the CV by the quality and impact of the key output and by other academic achievements.
- The extent to which the researcher’s work is clearly positioned with respect to scientific and (where possible) societal themes or questions.
- The quality of the (inter)national network, collaborative abilities and visibility of the researcher.
- Whether the researcher’s key output and academic profile clearly align with the research idea, or whether the researcher presents a convincing vision of how this alignment will be achieved.
- The extent to which the researcher demonstrates the capability of generating innovative ideas and independently developing these successfully.
- The extent to which researcher’s established leadership and mentorship skills and approach to mentorship and contribution to the development of individuals, as demonstrated in the academic profile are appropriate.

#### 4.3.2 Substantive assessment criteria proposal

The applications submitted within this Call for proposals will be substantially assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

---

1 Examples of ‘other academic achievements’ are contributions to the development of scientific theories and methods, indications of independence, contributions to Open Science and ‘academic citizenship’.
1. Quality and innovative character of the research proposal (75%)
2. Scientific and/or societal impact (25%)

Quality and innovative character of the research proposal

- The extent to which the proposed research has the potential to make an important contribution to the advancement of science.\(^2\)
- The extent to which the proposed research contains (elements of) scientific innovation in terms of theory, methods and/or topic.
- The extent to which the proposed research goes beyond an incremental evolution of the applicant’s current research.
- Whether the proposed research strikes an equitable balance between being challenging and feasible.\(^3\)
- Whether the proposal is in line with the researcher’s expertise, or whether the researcher presents a convincing vision on how this alignment will be achieved.
- The extent to which the proposed approach is appropriate.
- The clarity of the proposal, including question(s) posed and the objectives.

Scientific and/or societal impact

Applicants can choose to focus in their research project on scientific impact, societal impact, or a spread across both forms of impact.

NWO assesses scientific impact as follows;

- whether the proposal conveys an ambitious vision and appropriate strategy regarding the dissemination and/or implementation of the research results in one’s own discipline, related disciplines and the broader scientific field.

NWO assesses societal impact as follows:

- The extent to which the project has added value for societal impact;
- the extent to which the project has potential for societal impact in the short and long term;
- whether the proposal conveys an ambitious vision and appropriate strategy regarding the way(s) in which the proposed research may lead to societal impact.

In addition to the above, the assessment committee, as part of this criterion, will also weigh:

- The extent to which the motivation for the focus on scientific impact and/or societal impact is convincing;
- If the focus is primarily on scientific impact: how proportional attention is given during the course of the project to increasing (unforeseen) opportunities for social impact;
- If the focus is primarily on societal impact: how proportional attention is given during the course of the project to increasing (unforeseen) opportunities for scientific impact.

\(^2\) NWO uses a broad definition of the term science, which includes technology, clinical research and scholarship.

\(^3\) Aspects that can be included in the assessment of feasibility include the logical and technological framework, planning and timeframe, and resources, such as allocation of human resources, data, tools, technology, expertise, experience, network and institutional support. NWO is open to the selection of high risk - high gain projects.
5 Obligations for grant recipients

This chapter details the various obligations that - in addition to the conditions stated in Section 3.5 - apply after funds have been awarded.

5.1.1 Start, completion 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.

Guidelines for the financial accounting reports for NWO Talent Programme grants

1. The starting point for the expenditure of funds awarded to you is the final budget you submitted. This final budget serves to support the financial report.
2. In your proposal you have already stated which budget items are necessary for the realisation of the research under the heading Cost Estimates. As this distribution of items has already been assessed and approved on intrinsic grounds (can the proposed research be carried out with these?) this provides the foundation for drawing up the final budget.
3. The final budget should, for the purpose of excluding possible omissions, be drawn up in consultation with the financial manager of the recipient institution. The budget provides the basis for the financial management of NWO and of the recipient institution, as well as for the accountant who shall have to issue an auditor’s report in retrospect for the annual accounts.
4. The format in which the final budget must be presented is the same as the format in which the financial report must be presented after the project has been completed.
5. Within 3 months after the end date of the grant you should submit a final scientific report as well as a financial report for all financial transactions attributed to the research project. The grant received and the costs booked for the research are part of the standard auditing procedure by the accountant for the purpose of the annual accounts.
6. The final establishment and possible payment take place once the final scientific report and the financial report have been approved. In addition to this a general qualification is made for the event that any shortcomings emerge following the financial audit of institutions.

5.1.2 Data management

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. For this, applicants can make use of the advice from the referees and committee. The applicant describes in the plan whether use will be made of existing data, whether new data will be collected or generated, and how the data will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. Before submission, the data management plan should be checked by a data steward or similar officer of the organisation where the project will be realised. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within 4 months after the proposal has been awarded funding. NWO will check 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.

More information about the data management protocol of NWO can be found at: Research data management | NWO.
5.1.3 Intellectual property and consortium agreement

With respect to intellectual property (IP), the NWO IP policy applies. This can be found in Chapter 4 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017.

Applicants must carry out a project funded by NWO during the time that they work for the knowledge institution. If an applicant or a researcher funded by NWO is appointed by more than one employer, then the other employer should relinquish any possible IP rights that emerge from the project of the applicant.

In case of co-funding

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the conclusion of a consortium agreement is one of the conditions for starting the project. In this agreement, arrangements are made about intellectual property and publication, knowledge transfer, confidentiality, co-financing payments, progress reports, and final reports. Approval from NWO is required before the project can start.

The responsibility for arranging the consortium agreement lies with the applicant. NWO will subsequently check whether the consortium agreement meets the conditions and will not itself sign the agreement.

The model agreement that NWO makes available must be used and can be found on the funding page of this Call for proposals. This model agreement has been drawn up in accordance with the NWO Grant Rules 2017.

Parties can choose to use the standard text from NWO in the model agreement but may also choose to make their own agreement or to apply existing agreements for the component parts intellectual property and publication procedure. The model consortium agreement provides for this.

5.1.4 Socially responsible licensing

The knowledge that emerges from the project could be suitable for use in society. When agreements about licensing and/or the transfer of research results developed under this Call for proposals are made, due consideration should be given to the ten principles for socially responsible licensing, as stated in the NFU factsheet “19.4511_Ten_principles_for_Socially_Responsible_Licensing_v19-12-2019.pdf (nfu.nl)”.

5.1.5 User committee

After a project submitted to the AES Domain has been awarded funding, a user committee will be appointed in accordance with Article 3.3.2.a of the NWO Grant Rules 2017. The committee will follow the project and advise about the progress.

To promote the effective transfer to users of knowledge generated by the research, NWO Domain AES sets up a user committee for each research project in consultation with the project leader, based on the users proposed in the project plan.

Users of research are defined as natural or legal persons (at national or international level) who are able to apply the results of the research. A distinction can sometimes be drawn between direct users of the knowledge generated, usually companies, and end users, who buy the products from those companies. Both have their own role to play in the innovation chain and must be named in the knowledge utilisation plan. It is the explicit intention that potential technology users and end users outside the immediate circle and outside the research field of the researchers submitting the application should be involved in the project from beginning to end. Users should be able to apply the knowledge generated by the research in the medium to long term. Actual and potential users, if known, should be indicated in the research application.
A minimum of four users must sit on the user committee and should be included in the application. At least two non-academic parties must be represented on the user committee. These users are not required to contribute financially, but they should participate in the user committee. Academic users may include, but are not confined to, (associate/assistant/full) professors working at another university and interested in the proposed research. Non-academic parties include, amongst others, companies, clinics, patient associations, foundations, and civil society or public organisations. Users may include Dutch as well as foreign citizens and may work at a Dutch or foreign organisation, institute, knowledge institution, university and/or company. Foreign universities and knowledge institutions may provide co-funding.

5.1.6 Open Access

As a signatory to the Berlin Declaration (2003) and a member of cOAlition S (2018), NWO is committed to making the results of the research it funds openly accessible via the internet (Open Access). By doing this, NWO gives substance to the ambitions of the Dutch government to make all publicly funded research available in Open Access form. Scientific publications arising from projects awarded on the basis of this Call for proposals must therefore be made available in Open Access form in accordance with the Open Access Policy.

Scientific articles

Scientific articles must be made available in Open Access form immediately at the time of publication (without embargo) via one of the following routes:

− publication in a fully Open Access journal or platform registered in the DOAJ;
− publication in a subscription journal and the immediate deposition of at least the author accepted manuscript of the article in an Open Access repository registered in Open DOAR;
− publication in a journal for which a transformative Open Access agreement exists between UNL and a publisher. For further information, see Open Access | http://www.openaccess.nl/

Books

Different requirements apply to scholarly books, book chapters and edited collections. See the Open Access Policy Framework at Open Science | NWO.

CC BY licence

To ensure the widest possible dissemination of publications, at least a Creative Commons (CC BY) licence must be applied. Alternatively – in case of substantial interest – the author may request to publish under a CC BY-ND licence. For books, book chapters and collected volumes, all CC BY licence options are allowed.

Costs

Costs for publication in fully Open Access journals can be budgeted in the application using the budget module for “material costs”. Costs for publications in hybrid journals are not eligible for reimbursement by NWO. For Open Access books, a separate NWO Open Access Books Fund is available.

For more detailed information about NWO’s Open Access policy, see Open Science | NWO.
6  Contact and other information

6.1  Contact

6.1.1  Specific questions

For specific questions about this Call for proposals, please contact one of the desks below:

For general questions about the Talent Programme and applying for an extension:
Email: talent@nwo.nl

For specific questions about your proposal for one of the domains:

NWO Talent Programme/Vici
Science
PO Box 93460
2509 AC The Hague, The Netherlands
enw-vici@nwo.nl

NWO Talent Programme/Vici
Social Sciences and Humanities
PO Box 93461
2509 AC The Hague, The Netherlands
sgw-vici@nwo.nl

NWO Talent Programme/Vici
Applied and Engineering Sciences
PO Box 3021
3502 GA Utrecht, The Netherlands
ttw-vici@nwo.nl

NWO Talent Programme/Vici
Health Research and Development
PO Box 93245
2509 AE The Hague, The Netherlands
vici@zonmw.nl

6.1.2  Technical questions about the web application 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 on +31 70 34 40 600. However, you can also submit your question by email to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.

For technical questions about the use of Mijn ZonMw you can contact the helpdesk. This helpdesk is available during working hours through phone number +31 (0)703495178, or through email servicedesk@zonmw.nl.

6.2  Other information

The whole text of this Call for proposals has been published in both Dutch and English. The Dutch version is deemed authentic. For legal interpretation the text of the Dutch version will be decisive.
NWO processes data from applicants received in the context of this Call in accordance with the NWO Privacy Statement, Privacy Statement | NWO.

NWO might approach applicants for an evaluation of the procedure and/or research programme.
7 Annexe(s):

7.1 Explanation of the budget

You can find an explanation of the available budget items below.

**Personnel**

It is possible to apply for the funding of the salary costs of personnel who make a substantial contribution to the research. Funding of these salary costs depends on the type of appointment and the organisation where the personnel are/ will be appointed.

- The calculation of eligible staff costs must be based on actual gross salaries and (maximum) associated costs as specified in the current Dutch agreement on the funding of academic research (‘Bekostiging wetenschappelijk onderzoek’), with the exception of indexation and end-of-project payments. The amount of these payments for the Vici 2023 round will be based on the standard percentages in the agreement (Salary tables | NWO).
- For university appointments, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the UNL salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (Salary tables | NWO).
- For university medical centres, the salary costs are funded in accordance with the NFU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (Salary tables | NWO).
- For personnel from universities of applied sciences, educational institutions and other organisations, salary costs will be funded based on the collective labour agreement pay scale of the employee concerned in accordance with the applicable rate at the time of awarding the grant as taken from Table 2.2, column ‘Hourly rate productive hours, excl. Dutch VAT’ from the Handleiding Overheidstarieven [HOT- Manual Dutch Government Rates] (Salary tables | NWO).
- For the Caribbean Netherlands, the Dutch government employs civil servants on Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba under different conditions than in the European part of the Netherlands Employment terms and conditions | Working at the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland | Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland (rijksdienstcn.com).

NWO will apply a mandatory one-off indexing of the salary costs with respect to:
- UNL rates: for proposals submitted before 1 July and that are awarded funding after 1 July;
- NFU rates: for proposals submitted before 1 August that are awarded funding after 1 August;
- HOT rates: for proposals submitted before 1 January that are awarded funding after 1 January.

The mandatory one-off indexing has no influence on the level of the grant ceiling or on the maximum amount of the grant awarded per proposal. The level of the grant ceiling and the maximum amount of the grant awarded will remain unchanged during the assessment procedure. The mandatory one-off indexing will be applied after the decision-taking about awarding or rejecting proposals has been completed.

If co-funding is required or permitted then the one-off mandatory indexing will have no consequences for the co-funding requirement or the IP rights that can emerge from the co-funding.

The rates for all budget modules are incorporated in the budget template that accompanies the application form. For the budget modules “PhD student”, “EngD” and “Postdoc”, a one-off individual bench fee of €5,000 is added on top of the salary costs to encourage the scientific career of the project employee funded by NWO. Remunerations for PhD scholarship students (‘bursalen’) at a Dutch university are not eligible for funding from NWO.
Material

For each FTE scientific position (PhD student, postdoc, EngD) applied for, a maximum of €15,000 material budget can be applied for per year of the appointment. Material budget for smaller appointments can be applied for on a proportionate basis and will be made available by NWO accordingly. Per 0.2 FTE scientific employee applied for at a university of applied sciences, educational institution or other organisation (with a minimum appointment of 0.2 FTE for 12 months) a maximum of €15,000 in material budget can be applied for per year.

The applicant is responsible for distributing the total amount of material budget across the NWO-funded personnel positions. The material budget that can be applied for is specified according to the three categories below:

Project-related goods/services
- consumables (e.g. 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 [CBS]), 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, citizen science, etc.);
- personnel costs for the appointment of a postdoc and/or non-scientific personnel for a smaller appointment size than those offered in the personnel budget modules.

Travel and accommodation costs for the personnel 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 by the project researchers;
- costs for Open Access publishing (solely in full gold Open Access journals, registered in the “Directory of Open Access Journals” https://doaj.org/);
- costs data management;
- 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, office furniture, etc.);
- maintenance and insurance costs.

If the maximum amount is not sufficient for realising the research, then this amount may be deviated from, if a clear justification is provided in the proposal.

Knowledge utilisation

The aim of this budget module is to facilitate the use of the knowledge that emerges from the research. As knowledge utilisation takes many different forms in different scientific fields, the applicant needs to specify the required costs, e.g. costs of producing a teaching package, conducting a feasibility study into potential applications, or filing a patent application.

The budget applied for should be adequately specified in the proposal.

---

4 In this budget module, the definition for “knowledge transfer” as used by the European Commission in the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (PbEU, 2014, C158) applies.
Internationalisation

The budget for internationalisation is intended to encourage international collaboration. The budget applied for may not exceed €25,000. The amount requested must be specified. If the maximum amount is not sufficient for realising the research, then it may be deviated from if an adequate justification is provided in the proposal.

Funding can be requested for:

- travel and accommodation costs in so far as these concern direct research costs emerging from the international collaboration and additional costs for internationalisation that cannot be covered in another manner, for example from the bench fee;
- travel and accommodation costs for foreign guest researchers;
- costs for organising international workshops/symposia/scientific meetings.