

/// TTOPSTART



NWO Talent Programme Guide

How to enhance your
research career with
personal excellence
grants

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NWO TALENT PROGRAMME FUNDING SERVICES

The Dutch Research Council (NWO) is a funding body to boost the scientific excellence of outstanding individual researchers in any field of research. As the largest and most prestigious individual excellence grants in the Netherlands, the NWO Talent Programme provides the means for talented scientists to accelerate their game-changing research lines and transform our world. Are you ready to take your research to the next level? Let us help you reach that goal!

Are you looking to enhance your research career with personal excellence grants?

Across the Dutch funding landscape, there are several individual research and personal excellence grants available, but the NWO Talent Scheme offers grants that are amongst the most prestigious. Here are the facts:

Why?

This funding scheme encourages scientists to conduct research of their own choice which boosts innovative research and facilitates career progression at scientific research institutes.

How

The VENI, VIDI, VICI grants are awarded through open competition to both starting and established researchers, irrespective of their origins, to carry out their research in the Netherlands at a Dutch institution recognized by NWO. Assessment rounds consist of preproposal, full proposal, and interview. The projects are assessed by peer review by referees and expert evaluation panels spread across 4 broad disciplines: Sciences (ENW), Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH), Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES), and Health Research and Development (ZonMW).

For Whom?

The grants and funding available depend on career stage of the candidate. Talented researchers can apply for:

- **VENI:** €280K; ≤3 years post-PhD defense
- **VIDI:** €800K; ≤8 years post-PhD defense
- **VICI:** €1.5M; ≤15 years post-PhD defense and senior researchers with a track record of significant research, mentorship and leadership achievement

OVERVIEW CRITERIA NWO TALENT PROGRAMME

NWO Talent programme	VENI	VIDI	VICI
Purpose	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.	Allow researchers who have already spent several years doing postdoctoral research to develop their own innovative line of research, and to appoint one or more researchers for this.	Support researchers at the stage of consolidation and further development of their leadership/research group to contribute to the researcher's development in this area.
Field of research - 4 Domains	I) Science (ENW)		
	II) Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES)		
	III) Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)		
	IV) Health Research and Development (ZonMw)		
Who?	Max. 3 years since PhD achievement prior to reference date	Max. 8 years since PhD achievement prior to reference date	Max. 15 years since PhD achievement prior to reference date; Senior researchers with academic qualities that clearly exceed what is customary within international peer group, and established leadership- and mentorship skills
Proposal Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Quality and innovativeness of project (75%) II) Scientific and/or societal impact (25%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Scientific quality and innovativeness of project (40%) II) Scientific and/or societal impact (20%) III) Quality of researcher (40%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Quality and innovativeness of project (75%) II) Scientific and/or societal impact (25%)
Team	Individual researcher		
How much?	€ 280K for a period of 3 years max.	€ 800K for a period of 5 years max.	€ 1.5M for a period of 5 years max.
Call	Yearly		
Additional conditions	Submission no more than two times	Submission no more than two times	Submission no more than three times

NWO funding is competitive, but we can help you succeed.

Whilst the NWO Talent Programme represents a great career opportunity, acquiring VENI, VIDI or VICI funding is no small feat. They are popular and require a considerable intellectual effort to stand out from the crowd. Our experience at ttopstart shows us that successful projects and candidates largely adhere to the following criteria. Thankfully, we are experienced in ensuring you to develop and highlight all of them:



Ambitious

VENI, VIDI, VICI research should aim high regarding the ambition of the envisaged scientific achievements, as well as the creativity and originality of the approach. However, the goals should be feasible within the lifetime of the proposed project.



Scientifically Multiplying

The project should generate more questions at the end than answers. Therefore, the end goal should not be a specific application, but rather a novel paradigm at the frontiers of the relevant field, yielding fuel for further research.



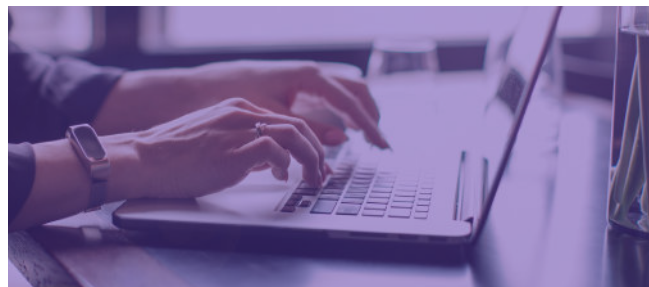
Unconventional

They should involve new, ground-breaking, or unconventional methodologies, whose risky outlook is justified by the possibility of a breakthrough with an impact beyond a specific research domain.



Innovative

Research proposals should rise to innovative challenges at the frontiers of the field(s) in question, going well beyond the current state-of-the-art.



Be independent

All researchers should demonstrate the capability of generating innovative ideas, quality of international collaborations and visibility. Young researchers should demonstrate a transition to independence, and show excellence compared to their peers. Medior researchers should demonstrate the capability of generating innovative ideas and independently developing these successfully. Senior researchers should have a clear track record, having established their own successful and innovative research line.



Have a vision and made unique contributions to science

NWO Talent research should take crucial steps towards achieving a long-term vision for the researcher, the field in question, and beyond. The ideal candidate should have an ambitious vision for how this funding would transform their career, challenge current dogma and have societal/scientific impact.



Demonstrate sound leadership and mentorship

Your independence, excellence and leadership as a researcher should be reflected depending on the phase of your career, for example by the number of PhDs and/or postdocs you have supervised, your established collaborations, involvement in international conferences, and even (at later stages) by the set-up of your own research line

OUR MISSION

It is our mission to enable leading academic researchers to pursue ambitious research goals that will disrupt diverse scientific fields. At ttopstart, we empower and strategically guide excellent researchers by assisting them in acquiring prestigious grants. By ensuring pioneering academics are rewarded, we aim to overcome the barriers they face and thereby strengthen the Dutch research landscape.

WHY TTOPSTART?

We are the go-to source for top academics wishing to acquire VENI, VIDI or VICI funding. Our expert consultants possess diverse scientific backgrounds up to PhD or post-doc level, and have experience with all types of NWO Talent Programme grants from myriad scientific disciplines.

Our team is therefore unique and ideally placed to challenge and transform your ideas into a competitive concept. We provide robust intellectual and writing support, coupled with hands-on guidance on how to translate innovative concepts into an appealing and personal research grant with a high chance of success.

Our expertise spans the full extent of project development, allowing us to take you from early-stage concepts to full proposals and beyond to interview training. Drawing upon our extensive skills and experience, we help you with the description of your researcher profile, constructing an attractive and compelling research proposal, providing a coherent structure, plus defining a clear impact on science and society.



WHAT DO WE OFFER?

ttopstart has an excellent track record in developing successful personal excellence projects including NWO talent programme grants. We offer various service levels: Assessment, Concept Canvas, Review Support, and Hands-on support. Moreover, we provide Interview trainings. All of these incorporate our tried and tested Fast Forward (FFWD) methodology, best practices, and writing strategies.

Assessment

Support to help you to decide if this is the right time to apply for a VENI, VIDI or VICI grant:

- Are you eligible?
- Is your researcher profile competitive?
- Is your research idea competitive?

Concept Canvas

Gap analysis of the backbone of proposal and alignment of the hypothesis with the objectives, work-package structure, and risk/gain balance.

- Is the project idea clearly stated and in line with the rationale/background?
- Does the proposal sufficiently address the proposed problems?
- Are the methodological developments adequate to address the research questions, innovative/beyond state-of-the-art?
- Is the work plan clear, well-structured and pragmatic?
- Is the framework of the project optimally structured?
- Is the project plan in line with the official regulations and can it score a high impact?

Review Support

Strategic support and reviewing of your proposal.

- Critical strategic guidance on core elements that describe the disruptive and innovative nature of the proposal, its authenticity and impact as well as keeping the balance between being challenging and feasible. Moreover, a clear, concise and convincing presentation of the research idea will be evaluated.



- Check on consistency and quality of the proposal through two iterations of reviewing each part of section 2 of the research proposal including:
 - 2a. Description of the proposed research
 - 2b. Scientific and/or societal impact
- Consequently, one final review of both sections 2a and 2b.

Hands-on Support

Strategic and writing support to ensure a competitive proposal and the achievement of the ultimate impact of your research efforts. In our hands-on support, we co-develop the research framework through an iterative process with the researcher. Special emphasis is placed on defining the core underlying research questions, the critical hypotheses, and the nature of the work plan.

- Co-creation and critical assessment of the concept and scope with strategic suggestions for improvement coupled to development of the underlying framework and research questions.
- Check on consistency and quality of the proposal through multiple reviews which go beyond simply checking syntax and spelling to engaging with the core idea and overall coherence.
- Optimization and refinement of the proposal's text and other components as written by you.
- Assistance in budget planning.

Interview Support

Personalized intensive interview training for candidates invited to the interview.

- Introduction to the basics of VENI, VIDI, VICI interviewing
- An in-depth SWOT analysis of the proposal focusing on strengths and weaknesses, including common panel questions
- Support in the development of your pitch deck and your storyline
- Guaranteed sufficient one-on-one attention due to the presence of several ttopstart experts
- 2 rounds of interviews with our internal expert panel, followed by questioning and feedback session



CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR A NWO TALENT PROGRAMME GRANT?

Let us help you co-develop a competitive proposal to facilitate this pivotal next step in your career. Before beginning the long road of proposal development, contact us for a free assessment that can help you to decide whether this is the right moment to apply and, if not, what aspects of your profile and project should be improved before you do.

Upcoming deadlines for NWO Talent Programme:

- **VENI 2023**
 - Full proposal: January 30th 2024
- **VIDI 2023**
 - Full proposal: March 26st 2024
- **VICI 2024**
 - Full proposal: Deadline to be announced

CONTACT US

We can tailor the service level and timeline to your needs. Should you have any questions related to apply for a VENI, VIDI or VICI or would like to discuss your needs with us, please contact us at info@ttopstart.com.



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