



NWO Innovative Incentives Scheme / Talent Programme

Veni 2021

Call for proposals

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

2020



Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Background	2
1.2	Available budget	2
1.3	Validity of the call for proposals	2
2	Aim	4
2.1	Veni target group	4
2.2	Promoting female researchers	4
2.3	Knowledge utilisation	5
3	Guidelines for applicants	6
3.1	Who can apply	6
3.2	What can be applied for	7
3.3	When can applications be submitted	8
3.4	Preparing the application and the embedding guarantee	8
3.5	Specific conditions on granting	12
3.6	Submitting a pre-proposal/full proposal	13
4	Assessment procedure	15
4.1	Procedure application	15
4.2	Criteria for the pre-proposal	17
4.3	Criteria for the proposal	18
5	Contact details and other information	20
5.1	Contact	20
5.2	List of institutions	21

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In 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 category has one submission round per year. Assessment procedures may change, depending in part on the results of interim evaluations and/or on unforeseen and disruptive circumstances like the COVID-19 crisis

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 Veni round will be conducted in four procedures corresponding to the NWO domains. You apply for funding at the domain that best suits your application. Cross-domain Veni applications will be assessed within one of the domains.

Three domains – SSH, AES and ZonMw – will use a pre-proposal phase in the 2021 Veni round. Applicants in these domains must submit a shortened proposal before the deadline in January 2021.

NWO Domain Science is **not** using a pre-proposal phase for the 2021 Veni round. Applicants in this domain should submit a full proposal in May 2021.

Please note: if applicants are unsure about which domain is best suited to their application, they should contact NWO in good time before submitting it (see 3.6).

1.2 Available budget

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

Further budget is available for the AES and Science domains to fund additional proposals from female applicants. For the Veni rounds 2020 – 2022 a budget of 2 million euros is available for this purpose. This budget will be 1.5 million euros per 2023.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

The Veni round 2021 has two phases:

- Submitting a shortened application (the pre-proposal, only for the domains SSH, AES and ZonMw);
- Submitting a full proposal (for all domains).

The deadline for submitting pre-proposals is **January 7, 2021, 2:00 PM** (CET).

The deadline for submitting full proposals is **May 20, 2021, 2:00 PM** (CEST).

The Veni 2021 call for proposals is valid up to and including the date on which the board takes a decision on the full applications (see section 4.1 for the full time schedule of this funding round). For projects awarded funding within this call for proposals, the conditions stated will continue to apply during the entire duration of the project.

2 Aim

The aim of the NWO Talent Programme is to promote innovation in academic research and to provide encouragement for individual postdoctoral researchers¹ 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 Veni target group

The Veni target group consists of researchers with a striking and original talent and a great fascination for doing challenging and groundbreaking research. The Veni grant is intended for researchers whose qualities clearly exceed what is customary within their international peer group. They are expected to convince others of the quality and impact of their work and the originality and potential of their ideas. The focus is on innovative and curiosity-driven research. Candidates are at the start of their academic career, but have already demonstrated a remarkable talent for conducting research. Given the aim of the program, it is evident that researchers must be able to independently formulate and conduct research.

Researchers working at a foreign institution may also submit an application. The project to be funded must be carried out at an institution in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, that is recognized by NWO.

Researchers of all nationalities and from all research fields may submit a Veni application.

2.2 Promoting female researchers

NWO explicitly invites 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.

In addition, extra funding is available to improve the gender balance in the research fields of the AES and Science domains (see Section 1.2). This funding will be used to fund up to eight additional proposals submitted by female researchers. Proposals which have received a qualification of at least “very good” after the interviews and which cannot be funded from the budget for the 2021 Veni Talent Programme are eligible for this additional funding.

¹ In this call for proposals, the term “researcher” refers to all academics.

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 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.

3 Guidelines for applicants

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. The appointment will be at one of the host research institutions. NWO will ask candidates for an ['embedding guarantee'](#). (see 3.5.1).

3.1.1 Career deadline

Veni applicants must have obtained their doctorate within the last three years. The 2021 Veni round is open to researchers who meet this criterion on 1 January 2021. Researchers who have not yet been awarded a doctorate can apply. However, the electronic submission of the first Veni application (pre-proposal in case of AES, SSH and ZonMw, and full proposal in case of the Science domain) must be accompanied by an official declaration by the entire manuscript committee that the manuscript of the PhD thesis has been approved and that the PhD programme will have been fully completed no later than May 20, 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 [online](#). 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](#). 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 within the Domain you are applying for.

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 candidate may:

- submit a maximum of one application in the Veni 2021 round;
- enter the application process for the NWO Talent Programme for no more than one type of grant at a time;
- submit a Veni application no more than twice. 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 received a particular type of grant under the Talent Programme may not apply again for the same kind of grant.

d. A researcher in receipt of a current award under the NWO Talent Programme may submit an application for a following type of grant no more than 24 months before the planned end date of the current grant.

3.1.5 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.

3.1.6 Measure for candidates submitting to Veni round 2022 in case of rejection after interview Veni round 2021

The period between the Veni interviews in the 2021 round and the expected deadline for pre-proposals in the Veni round 2022 is relatively short. In that context, NWO has adopted the following measure:

Candidates who have been interviewed in the Veni round 2021 and whose proposals have been rejected, who want to submit in the 2022 round and still have a chance to submit, may immediately submit a full application in the 2022 round. The regular deadline for full proposals applies to submitting this application. Candidates who wish to make use of this scheme must notify NWO of their intention before 1 December 2021 by sending an email to talent@nwo.nl.

3.2 What can be applied for

The maximum amount for a Veni project is 250,000 euros for a period of three years. If the proposed research is of shorter duration (in months), 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 Agreement for Funding Scientific Research (<http://www.nwo.nl/salary-tables>), with the exception of indexation and end-of-project payments. The amount of these payments for the Veni 2020 round will be based on the standard rates in the Agreement.

Appointment of additional scientific personnel is not eligible for subsidy for Veni recipients. Thus, it is not permitted to list salary costs for additional scientific personnel in the budget submitted with the Veni application. Salary costs for additional non-scientific support staff may be listed in the budget. The actual appointment of additional non-scientific support staff requires NWO's approval.

Applicants who will devote no more than 25 percent of their contracted working hours to non-research activities (e.g. teaching, administration, management) and the other 75 percent to research for their Veni project may charge their entire salary to the project budget. If the applicant is to devote more than 25 percent of his/her contracted working time to other activities, only that proportion of working time devoted to the Veni project may be charged to the project budget.

The term "direct non-staff costs" means general non-staff costs plus the costs of knowledge transfer, knowledge utilisation, open access publication costs, data management costs, and internationalisation. Infrastructure costs (accommodation and office automation) and other overheads are not eligible for funding.

The proposed budget will be assessed by NWO. If it exceeds the maximum amount of the grant, the application must be accompanied by a letter from the prospective host institution or a third party (co-funder) guaranteeing to cover the excess costs requested from NWO. 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" on the Veni webpage of the relevant domain.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

The deadline for submitting pre-proposals in the domains SSH, AES and ZonMw is **January 7, 2021, at 2:00 PM CET**.

The deadline for submitting full applications in all domains is **May 20, 2021, 2:00 PM CEST**.

When submitting your application in ISAAC or Mijn ZonMw, you must also enter data online. Entering this information and uploading your application may take longer than you expect. 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 considered.

3.4 Preparing the application and the embedding guarantee

The forms for the Veni grant application and the embedding guarantee for the call of 2021 will be available on the programme website at least two months before the submission deadline.

3.4.1 Preparing a pre-proposal for the domains SSH, AES, and ZonMw

- Download the application and embedding guarantee forms from the electronic application system ISAAC or from NWO's website (on the grant page for this programme).
- Complete the application form
- After the discussion with the host institution complete the embedding guarantee form with the signature of the dean, make a scan of the document and save as pdf.
- **Complete your ISAAC/MijnZonMw account with up-to-date contact details (phone numbers and mail address)**
- Save the forms as a pdf files and upload them separately in ISAAC (www.isaac.nwo.nl) or in MijnZonMw (<https://mijn.zonmw.nl>) for the Medical Sciences (ZonMw).

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

- A description of the candidate's academic profile (min. 400 to max. 700 words)*;
- A description of the candidate's key output (max. 10 items, min. 400 to max. 700 words)*;
- The research idea (max. 50 words).

The completed and signed embedding guarantee (see also Section 3.5.1) must be uploaded via ISAAC at the same time as the pre-proposal form.

Applicants who have not yet obtained a doctorate may submit a pre-proposal only if the electronic submission is accompanied by a declaration by the entire manuscript committee stating that the manuscript of the applicant's doctoral thesis has been approved and that the PhD programme will have been fully completed by May 20, 2021.

3.4.2 Preparing a full proposal

Download the application form from the ISAAC online application system or from the NWO website (at the foot of the domain web page for the relevant funding instrument).

- Complete the application form;
- Save the form as a PDF file and upload it to ISAAC (www.isaac.nwo.nl/en/) or, for applications within the medical sciences (ZonMw), to MijnZonMw (mijn.zonmw.nl).

Full proposals must be written in English and must include:

- the candidate's curriculum vitae*, consisting of the following two sections:
 - A description of the candidate's academic profile (min. 400 to max. 700 words)*;

- A description of the candidate's key output (max. 10 items, min. 400 to max. 700 words)*;
- an outline of the research proposal and a completed motivation for the choice of institution (max. 2000 words, including in-text references);
- a completed knowledge utilisation section (max. 750 words);
- a completed data management section;
- a budget estimate.

Applicants who have not yet obtained a doctorate may submit a full proposal only if the electronic submission of the first application (the pre-proposal in case of the domains AES, SSH and ZonMw, and the full proposal in case of the Science domain) is accompanied by a declaration by the entire manuscript committee stating that the manuscript of the applicant's doctoral thesis has been approved and that the PhD programme will have been fully completed by May 20, 2021.

Applicants in the domains SSH, AES and ZonMw may only submit a full proposal after they have been informed that the board of the domain concerned has taken a positive decision on the applicant's pre-proposal. Applicants are not permitted to submit a full proposal in the 2020 Veni round following a negative decision on the pre-proposal.

Applicants in the NWO Domain Science should upload the completed and signed embedding guarantee (see Section 3.5.1) via ISAAC at the same time as the full application.

*** 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 requested 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 Specific conditions on granting

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

3.5.1 Embedding guarantee

NWO asks Veni candidates for an “embedding guarantee”. This means that researchers can only submit applications for Veni funding with the support of the institution where they intend to conduct their research.

The embedding guarantee should be laid down in the relevant Veni embedding guarantee form. This form is available on the [NWO website](#).

Choice of institution

Candidates are free to choose an approved institution (as listed in Section 5.2) in which they plan to conduct their research, but the embedding within the institution should be arranged by signing the embedding guarantee before submitting the pre-proposal (SSH, AES and ZonMw) or full proposal (NWO Science).

In consultation with the host institution, part of the research may be conducted outside the Netherlands. The applicant’s plans for achieving institutional integration may be a subject of discussion during the assessment.

Coordination

In all cases and before submission of the Veni application, the embedding of the proposed research must be coordinated in a discussion between the candidate and the intended supervisor at the hosting institution. The information in the Veni embedding guarantee form will play no role in the selection process.

Appointment

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 candidate must sign a written agreement with the board of the institution concerned.

3.5.2 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.

3.5.3 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 be 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.

3.5.4 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.

3.5.5 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 Veni 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.

3.5.6 User committees

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.

3.5.7 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.

Veni 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. Veni applicants must subscribe to and comply with the prevailing codes.

Veni 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 candidates to pay attention to the timetable for the Veni 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.

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 a pre-proposal/full proposal

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>).

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/MijnZonMw helpdesk (see Section 5.1.2).

3.6.1 Choice of NWO domain

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

Veni candidates should submit their applications to only one domain. If the proposed research is cross-domain in nature, the applicant must choose the domain that best suits the application. An application is assessed within only one of the domains.

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. Please find the contact information [here](#).

Annexes

The following attachments are permitted for a Veni application:

- The embedding guarantee (mandatory with every application);
- The statement of the manuscript committee (optional);
- The co-financing statement (optional).

No additional annexes may be added other than those listed above. Publications or letters of recommendation may not be submitted with your application.

NWO asks Veni candidates for an “**embedding guarantee**”. The Veni embedding guarantee format is available [online](#). The embedding guarantee must be uploaded as a separate PDF document in the attachments via ISAAC / Mijn ZonMw when submitting the (pre)application. The embedding guarantee is not forwarded to referees and committee members and does not play a role in the assessment of the application.

In the event that an applicant has not yet obtained his doctorate, a **statement from the full manuscript committee** must be sent along with the electronic submission of the (preliminary) application, stating that the dissertation manuscript has been approved. The document must make clear that the PhD programme will be fully completed no

later than 20 May 2021. The statement of the manuscript committee will not be forwarded to referees and committee members and does not play a role in the assessment of the application.

In the event of a contribution by the research institution and/or a third party, a co-funding statement from the party contributing ("in cash" or "in kind") must be submitted with the full proposal. It is important that this third party explicitly states the amount of the contribution, in euros, in the guarantee letter. Co-financing statements are unconditional and do not contain any cancellation clauses.

Co-financing for applications in the domains of Science, SSH and ZonMw

In the event of a contribution by the research institute and/or a third party, a 'Statement exceeding maximum funding, signed by the co-funding party, must be uploaded with the full proposal. These statements are not forwarded to referees and committee members at Science, SSH and ZonMw and are not part of the assessment of the proposal.

Co-financing for applications in the domain AES

If the maximum budget for AES applications is exceeded, the host institute must guarantee that it will pay for the exceeded amount, by means of a 'Statement exceeding maximum funding'. If parties other than the host institute make a "in cash" or "in-kind" contribution to the project, the AES-specific format "Letter of support" should be used. 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.

Please note: for co-funding statements, the domain-specific form must be used, which can be found on [the funding page](#) of the relevant domain.

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure application

The first step in the assessment procedure is to determine the admissibility of application. This is done using the conditions stated in Chapter 3 of this call for proposals.

The [NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests](#) applies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process.

The data management section in the application is not evaluated and hence is not considered in the decision on whether or not to award funding. However, both the referees and the committee can issue advice relating to the data management section. After a proposal has been awarded funding, the applicant should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants can make use of the advice from the referees and committee, if available, when they write the data management plan. The project can start as soon as the data management plan has been approved by NWO.

Veni applications are assessed in a national competition. The assessment of Veni 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.

NWO gives all Veni proposals a qualification. The applicant is informed of this qualification when the decision about whether or not to award funding is announced.

NWO gives all full proposals a qualification:

- excellent
- very good
- good
- unsatisfactory

For further information about the qualifications, see: <http://www.nwo.nl/qualifications>.

4.1.1 Eligibility

NWO screens applications to ensure that they comply with the formal requirements of the scheme (see Chapter 3). Only those proposals that meet the conditions are eligible and will be taken into consideration by NWO.

4.1.2 Pre-proposal

The domains SSH, AES and ZonMw are introducing the pre-proposal as a standard procedure in the Veni, in accordance with the decision of the Executive Board of NWO. Candidates who wish to submit an application in the 2021 Veni round within the social sciences and humanities, applied and engineering sciences, or health research and development must submit a pre-proposal before the deadline of January 7, 2021, 2:00 PM CET.

The SSH, AES and ZonMw Veni committees first assess the pre-proposals using the relevant criteria (see Section 4.2) and then prioritise them according to likelihood of funding, without making use of external referees. AES and ZonMw use a broadly composed multidisciplinary Veni committee. SSH divides the Veni committee into six multidisciplinary panels. The disciplinary composition of these panels can be found on the [NWO website](#).

Pre-proposal decision

Candidates whose pre-proposals are judged least likely to be awarded grants will be notified that the committee does not intend to select their applications for further consideration. If candidates have legitimate grounds to object to the committee's decision, they may send a reasoned response to the domain handling the application. On the basis of this response, the committee may change its decision and select the application for further processing after all.

The assessment of pre-proposals by the Veni committee results in a recommendation to the relevant domain board, which decides whether or not to invite applicants to submit a detailed proposal. The decision of the domain board is binding. Applicants who have submitted a pre-proposal in the 2021 Veni round are not permitted to submit a full proposal unless their pre-proposal has received a positive decision.

4.1.3 Pre-selection

Pre-selection only takes place if the number of full proposals received by a particular domain is at least four times the number of grants available. Otherwise, all applications are sent to external referees without pre-selection. Pre-selection is used because otherwise the number of referees to be consulted becomes too large and the chance of success for many candidates very small.

Pre-selection is based on the three Veni selection criteria for full proposals (see Section 4.2). In the event of pre-selection, the committee will assess all applications globally and comparatively and rate them in terms of their chance of success, without making use of external referees. Candidates whose applications are judged least likely to be awarded grants will be notified that the committee does not intend to select their applications for further consideration. If candidates have legitimate grounds to object to the committee's decision, they may send a reasoned response to the domain handling the application. On the basis of this response, the committee may change its decision and select the application for further processing after all. Otherwise, a formal decision letter rejecting the application will be sent to the applicant.

4.1.4 Hearing and rebuttal

All full proposals (or, if applicable, those successful in the pre-selection round) are submitted to external referees for their consideration. Candidates will then be given the opportunity to respond to the anonymised referee reports.

It is possible to indicate up to three non-referees. Candidates can submit the names of non-referees via ISAAC when they submit their full proposal. NWO will not approach these non-referees to assess the application as external referees.

Please note: even if ISAAC offers room for more non-referees, candidates may not indicate more than three names.

4.1.5 Interview (selection)

The full proposals, referees' reports and rebuttals are presented to the relevant assessment committee. The assessment committee selects a number of candidates for an interview or an alternative way of rebuttal. The selection committee makes its own consideration based on the referees' reports received and the candidates' responses to them. The highest-ranked candidates are then invited for an interview or an alternative way of rebuttal (hereinafter referred to as 'interview').

During the interview, the assessment committee has an opportunity to ask questions, including new ones not yet raised by the referees. The candidate 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, 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). Veni 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.

4.1.8 Indicative timetable

NWO aims to complete the entire selection procedure for the 2021 Veni round within eleven months. The indicative timetable for the 2021 Veni round (the exact timetable varies per domain) is:

Pre-proposals 7 January 2021 by 14:00 CET	(Domains AES, SSH, and ZonMw) Deadline for submission of Veni pre-proposals via the Isaac system/MijnZonMw
March 2021	Notification of decisions for the pre-proposal phase
Full proposals 20 May 2021 by 14:00 CET	(All domains) Deadline for submission of Veni full proposals via the Isaac system/MijnZonMw
Until September 2021	Consulting of referees and candidates' rebuttals
October 2021	Interviews
November 2021	Decisions by NWO domain boards NWO notifies applicants of decisions

4.1.9 Adjustments to the procedure

It is possible that NWO may deem it necessary to make adjustments to the procedure as a result of unforeseen, disruptive circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Any adjustments to the Veni 2021 procedure will be published on the NWO website. Please check the website regularly for accurate information.

4.2 Criteria for the pre-proposal

All pre-proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Academic profile (see Section 4.2.1);
2. Key output (see Section 4.2.3).

These criteria are weighted 50% each in the overall assessment of the pre-proposal.

NB: As of the Veni round 2021, the 'research idea' will no longer be an independent criterion in the pre-proposal phase. However, the research idea is still requested in this phase. The relationship between the academic profile

and the research idea and the relevance of the key output for the research idea are part of the criteria against which the pre-proposal is assessed (see description of the criteria below).

This change has been made on the basis of the results of the evaluation of the pre-proposal phase in Veni 2019 and 2020. The introduction of a narrative CV based pre-proposal phase has proved to greatly reduce the time candidates spend on the application process. The aim of the change is to achieve additional time savings and to further increase the evaluability of the form.

NWO would like to stress that – also in the Talent Programme, it still attaches great value to the quality, innovation and impact of the research proposals. Therefore these aspects continue to play an important role in the assessment of the full proposal.

4.2.1 Academic profile

- Fit in terms of profile in the target group;
- clear vision of the researcher about their place in science;
- clear positioning of the researcher's work with respect to scientific and (where possible) public themes or questions;
- (inter)national visibility;
- clear indication(s) that the researcher has a striking talent for doing scientific research;
- indication(s) of collaborative abilities;
- indication(s) of independence and/or independent research line(s);
- indications of other academic activities, including contributions to Open Science, 'academic citizenship', education and the linking of these to science;
- ability to translate the output of scientific research for the benefit of potential knowledge users outside of the own academic work area as well as within society;
- persuasiveness;
- clear alignment of the candidate's profile with the research idea, or clear vision of how this alignment will be achieved;
- inspiring enthusiasm for research and/or technology in general and for the execution of the research idea in particular.

4.2.2 Key output

- Scientific quality apparent from, amongst other things, the quality of the PhD thesis, publications and/or other scientific output and the contribution made by the applicant to the key output;
- the quality and impact of the scientific productivity in relation to the norm within the discipline concerned;
- validity of the description why the key output is important for the relevant disciplines and/or the profile of the applicant and / or for the research idea and / or for relevant public themes or issues.

4.3 Criteria for the full proposal

All proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. quality, innovative character and academic impact of the proposed research (see Section 4.2.1) (40%);
2. knowledge utilisation (see Section 4.2.2) (20%);
3. quality of the researcher (see Section 4.2.3) (40%).

4.3.1 Quality, innovative character and academic impact of the proposed research

- Challenging content;
- originality of the topic;
- innovative scientific elements;
- potential to make an important contribution to the advancement of science;
- effectiveness of proposed methodology;
- international importance of the proposed research area.

4.3.2 Knowledge utilisation

Potential

- 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 utilisation: to what extent the applicant has presented a concrete and convincing plan for the implementation of the available potential.
- If there is no potential for knowledge utilisation: the applicant's arguments as to why the proposed research does not lend itself to knowledge utilisation.

4.3.3 Quality of the researcher

- Fit in the target group in terms of profile;
- showing qualities that clearly exceed what is customary within the international peer group;
- academic excellence as demonstrated by e.g. the PhD thesis, publications, other academic output and/or other scientific achievements;
- inspiring enthusiasm for research and/or technology and for the execution of the research proposal in particular;
- persuasiveness;
- clear indication(s) that the researcher has a striking talent for doing scientific research;
- clear vision of the researcher about their place in science;
- (inter)national visibility;
- indication(s) of collaborative abilities;
- indication(s) of independence and/or independent research line(s);
- indications of other academic activities, including contributions to Open Science, 'academic citizenship', education and the linking of these to science;
- clear alignment of the candidate's profile with the research idea, or clear vision of how this alignment will be achieved;
- ability to translate the output of scientific research for the benefit of potential knowledge users outside of the own academic work area as well as within society;

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). 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.

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).

Central coordinator NOW Talent Programme

Website: www.nwo.nl/talent (information on Talent Programme funding) or:
www.nwo.nl/talentprogramma (general information on the Talent Programme)
E-mail: talent@nwo.nl
Coordinator telephone number: +31 70 344 0707

Addresses

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

NWO Talent Programme/Veni
NWO Social Sciences and Humanities
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2509 AC The Hague, The Netherlands
sgw-veni@nwo.nl

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

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

5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system ISAAC

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 (tel: +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 MijnZonMw application system can be addressed to the helpdesk during normal office hours (tel: +31 70 349 5178) or by email: servicedesk@zonmw.nl.

5.2 List of institutions

Grants may be requested by researchers from the following Knowledge Institutes:

- Universities established in the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- University medical centres;
- Institutes affiliated to the Academy (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (KNAW)) or NWO;
- the Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen;
- the DUBBLE Beamline at the ESRF, Grenoble;
- the Naturalis Biodiversity Centre;
- the Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL);
- the Princess Maxima Centre

Applicants are encouraged to contact the institution of their choice in good time, in order to obtain the compulsory embedding guarantee.

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