

# Veni Pre-Proposal Workshop

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The Netherlands



Leids Universitair  
Medisch Centrum

LURIS 

# Programme

- Introduction 15 minutes
- Working Sessions:
  - 1. Academic Profile 15 minutes
  - 2. Key Output 15 minutes
  - 3. Research Idea 15 minutes
- Support available 5 minutes

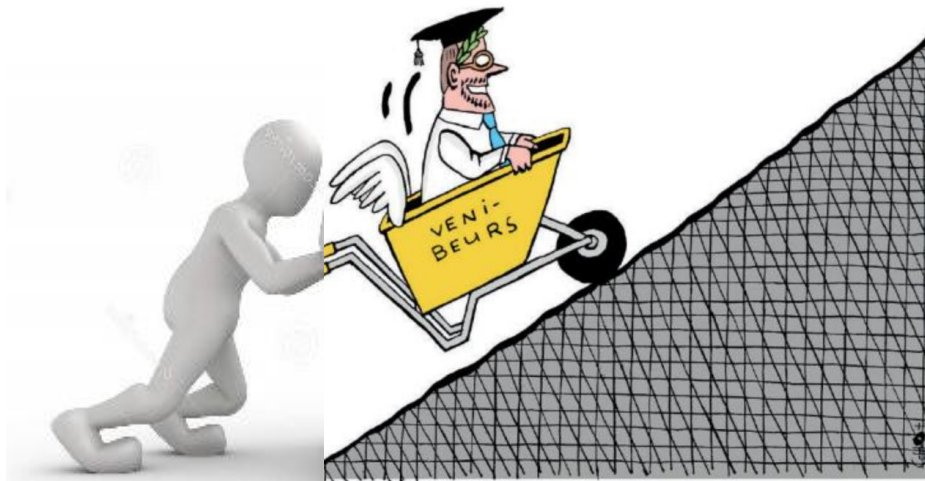
# NWO Talent Scheme

‘Grants enable scientists to conduct research of their own choice. This gives innovative research a boost and facilitates career progression at scientific research institutes.’



# Veni - The Basics

- 36 months of research
- Based at an approved Dutch Host Institution
- Budget €250,000 per awarded grant
- Open to all scientific fields
- Only the best 10-20% are selected



# Veni - The Basics

- Academic Researchers:
  - Obtained their PhD in the last 3 years (reference date 1 January 2020).
  - Any place of origin
  - Funding for own salary, and equipment (no hiring of scientific staff)
- Apply as an individual not a group or team
- Max. one application per round
- May not submit more than twice

# Submissions

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Applications	1,124	1,056	1,127	1,115
Awards	161	158	154	154
Success Rate	14.3%	14.9%	13.6%	13.8%

# 2019 Timeline

Time period	Veni procedure
03 September 2019 14:00	Pre-proposal deadline
October 2019	Pre-proposal selection decision
09 January 2020 14:00	Full proposal deadline (for all domains)
Mid-May 2020	Rebuttal
May/June 2020	Interviews
Mid-July 2020	Funding decision

# Domains

- Pre-proposal pilot
  - Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES/TTW)
  - Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH/SGW)
  - Health Research and Medical Sciences (ZonMw)
- Regular procedure
  - Science domain - exact and natural sciences (ENW)



# Committees

- AES (TTW): Broad committee
- ZonMw: Broad committee
- SSH (SGW): Committee divided into 8 (multi)disciplinary panels:
  1. Behaviour and education
  2. Cultural sciences
  3. Economics and business administration
  4. Historical sciences
  5. Law and public administration
  6. Linguistics
  7. Philosophy and religion
  8. Social sciences
- Science (ENW): **no pre-proposal**
- *Pre-selection now only applies to Science (ENW) proposals*

# Why The Pre-Proposal

- Evolving pilot by NWO
- It is an abridged version of the detailed proposal
- Provide an outline of your idea and explain why/how it is innovative
- No requirement to provide details of the project
- If successful CV will be resubmitted again at full proposal stage
- Intended to limit application pressure

# Old Pre-Proposal Format

... for who applied before

- Academic Profile 30%
  - Max. 700 words
- Scientific Output 30%
  - Key publications, max. 300 words
  - Output, max. 400 words
- Research Idea 20%
  - Max. 300 words
- Motivation 20%
  - Max. 400 words

# New Pre-Proposal Format

- Academic Profile 45%
  - Max. 700 words
- Research Idea 5%
  - Max. 50 words
- Key Output 50%
  - Max. 700 words

**NB:** Embedding Guarantee must be submitted with your pre-proposal. Think Summer Holidays for signatory! (ref. chapter 3.6 of guidelines)

# Workshop Session Format

1. Guidance and Tips
2. Criteria
3. Reviewer Comments
4. Questions to Ask Your Colleague (or yourself!)

# Academic Profile



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# Academic Profile – 45%

- Achievements, focus, agenda, vision
  - Your position in the field
  - Motivation
  - Academic and societal potential
  - Theoretical or methodological contributions
  - Collaborations and networking
  - Membership of boards and committees
  - Invited lectures, prizes, awards, grants
  - Narrative form, including references (no hyperlinks)
- ❖Tip: highlight & explain why you are different & stand out.

# Academic Profile – Criteria

- Fit in terms of profile in the target group
- Clear vision of your place in science (and public themes or questions)
- National and international visibility
- Clear indication that you have a striking talent for research
- Collaborations; independence; other activities (e.g. education)
- Ability to translate research to wider users
- And more, see full list in the Call for proposals



# Reviewer Comments – Bad

‘Unsure if they are really able to look beyond the boundaries of their own discipline and translate that into a real contribution to societal issues’

‘The international status of the applicant is not easy to determine. They do not position their work clearly in the international debate. How they will revolutionise the field remains slightly unclear’

‘Still not convincing that there is a clear indication that the researcher possesses a striking talent for research, collaborations, or independence’

‘The research profile focuses too strongly on [one research field]. A broader embedding in related fields is missing. Therefore the researcher’s international network is limited.’

‘The overall scope of their work seems limited, adding and describing new material, though not advancing novel ideas or methodologies’

# Reviewer Comments – Good

‘A very good presentation of their work and career shows how they became a national and international expert on [this research field]’

‘The researcher has a clearly visible profile in the field’

‘An outstanding researcher's profile. The candidate has unique expertise that nobody else has. Their research has very strong societal impact.’

‘The researcher seems to be very good in what she does. She has international experience’

‘They have single authored and collaborative publications, including a monograph. This testifies both to independence and the ability to collaborate’

# Positive Word Exercise

Quality	Negative Word	Positive Word
<i>E.g. studied one research field</i>	<i>Narrow/Limited</i>	<i>Focused/Specialised</i>
	<i>Broad</i>	<i>Multidisciplinary</i>
	<i>Risk</i>	<i>Chance/opportunity/high gain</i>
	<i>Difficult</i>	<i>Challenging</i>

# Academic Profile – Questions

- Do you have a clear sense of what they've done and how they fit in their discipline?
- Have they convinced you of their vision and profile?
- Did they just tell you, or really show you?
- Are acronyms and uncommon terms explained?
- Do you feel like they've skipped anything that you'd want to know?

(15 min - in pairs)

# Research Idea



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# Research Idea – 5%

- Concise description
  - Potential importance of results
  - What you're going to investigate
  - Innovative character of research
  - An 'indication' rather than a 'fully thought-out plan'
- 
- ❖ Tip: At full proposal stage you can make (minor) changes to title and short proposal, but contact NWO to get approval if in doubt.

# Research Idea – Criteria

- Originality of the question
- Research challenge
- Innovative scientific elements (i.e. methodology)
- Potential to make important contributions to science
- And public themes or questions, where possible

❖Tip: the 50 words research idea can include a figure or diagram!  
(but the number of words do count)

# Reviewer Comments – Bad

‘The suggested research looks interesting and feasible, but how new it really is is difficult to determine; the applicant does not go into much detail on the international position or the methodological innovation of the proposal work’

‘It is unclear how this research project fits into the larger research field’

‘I think the research is very interesting, but I don't see why the researcher now wants to move on to this different field’

‘Not clear at all what the candidate plans to do.’

‘The research idea is interesting and innovative, it is not clear however how the proposed research questions can be answered’

‘It is hard to see how this adds challenge and/or innovation in comparison to the candidate's previous research.’

‘It is not clear what the specific theory or hypothesis is that guides this research project’



# Reviewer Comments – Good

‘This is both scientifically and societally an interesting topic’

‘An excellent and innovative proposal with a good situation vis à vis existing research in the field: clear added value’

‘The societal dimension of the project is well articulated.’

‘The research idea is extremely interesting, and of strong impact potential’

‘The suggested research looks interesting and feasible, and is presented in a well-formulated narrative’

# Research Idea - Questions

Research Idea:

- Do you have a clear idea of why and how it's original?
- Do you know what they're going to do?
- Does it sound feasible, or too conservative?
- Does it seem like it really needs to be done? (e.g. urgent, important)

- (15 min - in pairs)

# Key Output



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# Key Output – 50%

- Refer to max. 10 publications
- Only publications in print, or unconditionally accepted
- Explain why you selected them
- Don't use H-indexes or impact factors
- Refer to positive citation or impact
- Explain in relation to prevailing standards in your field
- Explain importance within and beyond your field
- Relevance to your research idea, and your profile

❖Tip: Don't be modest!

# Key Output – Criteria

- Excellence apparent from PhD theses, publications etc.
- Quality of output relative to the norm in the discipline
- Pertinence of the description as to why they're important
- Relevance to public themes and questions, where possible

❖Tip: Find ways in showing your independence.

# Reviewer Comments – Bad

‘They focus solely on written publications; it would have been interesting to include other output types as well’

‘Still not convincing why the publications are important for the relevant disciplines, and where possible other disciplines’

‘They use one publication to demonstrate their commitment to broader knowledge utilisation, but this comes across as a bit artificial’

‘Few of the listed publications have been published in peer-reviewed journals’

‘The paragraph explaining the quality of their output and its relation to the proposal is not very clear’

‘The publication record is good but not excellent. It suggests a lack of breadth that should be worked on’

# Reviewer Comments – Good

‘The relevance of the publications is clear’

‘The publications are in both highly specialised and more general journals’

‘Very good survey of their output and the wide audience they reach through different kinds of publications’

‘The research output is excellent. The researcher has publications in top venues, shows knowledge of several subfields, and is kept in high consideration by their peers, as testified by conference attendance and the many awards obtained.’

‘The research output is very good. Several publications in top venues’

# Key Output – Questions

- Are you convinced of the quality and importance of their publications?
- Do you understand the relation to the norm in their discipline?
- Again, does the description just tell you, or show you?
- Have you got a clear idea of how their publications relate to the project they're going to do?

(in pairs, 15 min)



# Submission & Support



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# ISAAC\*

- Online submission system for NWO: <https://www.isaac.nwo.nl>
- Create an account
- Open a new application
- Enter title, abstract, research field, and keywords
- Upload form as pdf
- Upload host institution letter as pdf

\* My ZonMw or Project Net for ZonMw

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# Full proposals

## Shift of Criteria:

40% quality of the applicant

40% quality of the proposal

20% knowledge utilisation – potential and plan

❖ Tip: you can make (minor) changes to title & 50 word research idea as long as it does not modify the core of the idea (contact NWO).

# Assessment procedure

## Pre-proposal

- Review by committee
- Advice to board
- Pre-proposal decision

## Full proposal

- Pre-selection (Science only)
- External reviews
- Rebuttal
- Interview

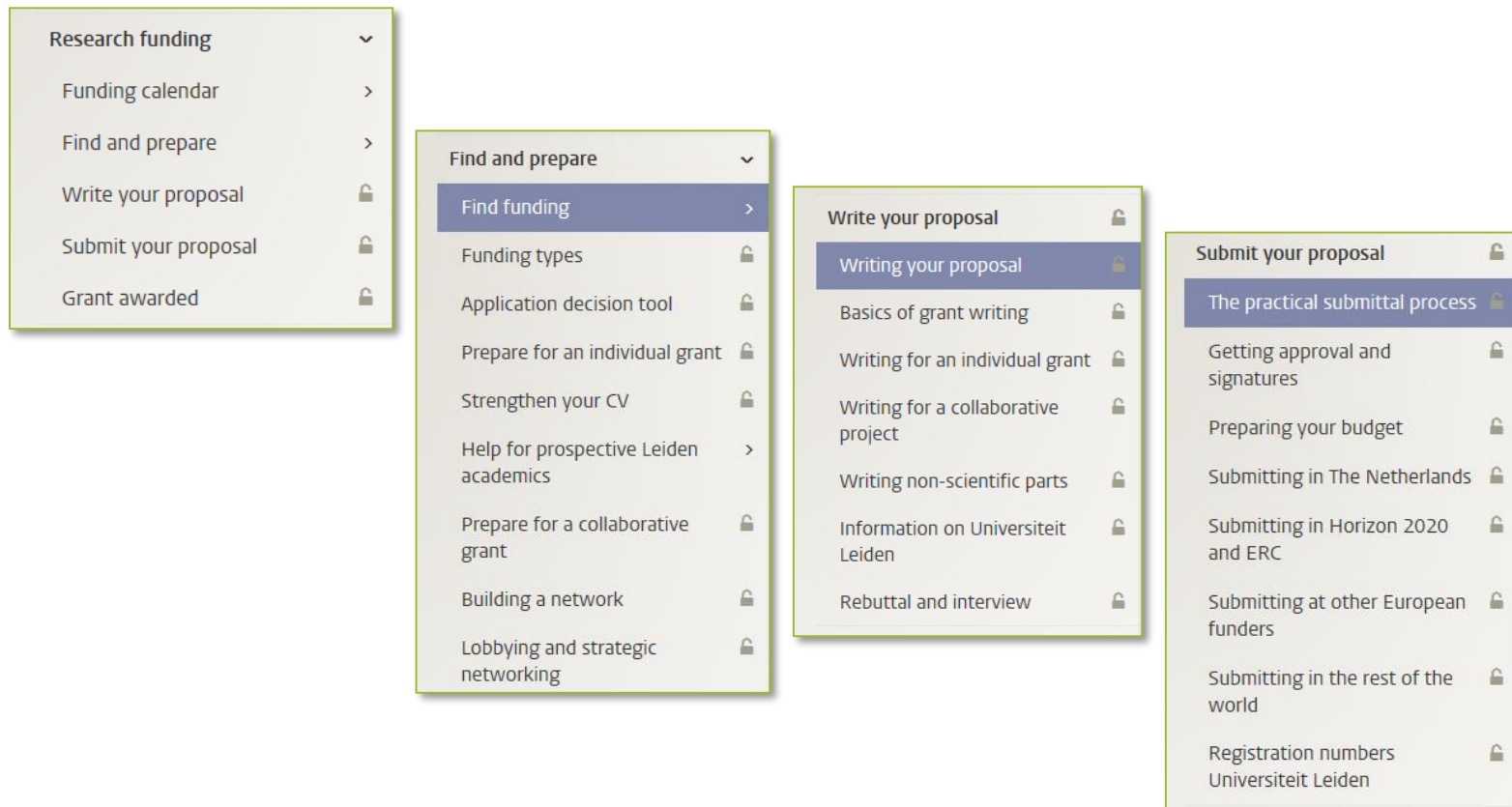
# Available support

- Institute Manager/Research Advisor (embedding guarantee- letter)
- Luris – proposal review – contact: [grants@luris.nl](mailto:grants@luris.nl)
- Interview training
- University Staff Portal/Medewerkers Portal



# Staff Portal

<https://www.staff.universiteitleiden.nl/research/research-funding>



# Questions?



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# Extra Exercises



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# Writing your CV

What are they looking for?	Evidence
Strong basis	Prizes, cum laude, awards, period taken for study/PhD, research during study
Productivity	Publications in relation to work experience and actual time spent on research.
Independence	Invited presentations, research visits, (international) collaborations, change of research environment
Expertise	Reviewing for journals and funders, PhD or other committee work, editorships, being asked for collaborative projects, conference chairs
Original ideas	Grants, original articles, awards
Quality	Peer reviewed, journal or publisher rankings, invited presentations, awards, reviews or editor comments on your book/article
Flexibility & commitment	Scholarship, international experience
Enthusiasm	Conference and workshop organisation, academic duties in your Institute, public outreach
The next research leader	Supervision skills, collaborations

# CV - Tips

- Avoid jargon and explain acronyms and national initiatives for evaluators
- Grant successes: don't forget about smaller grants (e.g. fieldwork, travel grants, organising meetings), and those you won as a student
- International experience (e.g. visits, collaborators etc.)
- Remember 'good citizen' work: writing references, doing reviews, sitting on committees etc.

# Practical Exercise

- Sketch out your research profile using headings
- Compare your profile with your partner, discuss what needs to be explained in more detail.

# Writing an Abstract

- An abstract should
  - Describe the project
  - Demonstrate the importance and relevance of your research
  - Is used as a guide to the full proposal
  - Is used to decide who should review your application

# Practical Exercise

- In one sentence for each, address the following points:
  - The problem
  - Current situation
  - Your solution
  - Expected results
  - Societal relevance (if any)
- Exchange your abstract to your partner and give each other feedback