



NWO Spinoza Prize 2012

The Hague, June 2011
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

Introduction and aim

The NWO Spinoza Prize is a grant scheme directed at individuals at the very top of the research profession. A NWO Spinoza Prize is a lifetime achievement award but above all an encouragement for continued research. The granting of a NWO Spinoza Prize means an appreciation of what the winner has accomplished so far and confidence in what s/he may achieve in the next couple of years. NWO invites a select group of individuals to nominate candidates for NWO Spinoza Prizes.

The NWO Spinoza Prize provides a way of identifying and funding top-flight research by focusing on individuals. The setting in which an NWO Spinoza Prize candidate works is also important, of course, but the key factor is the individual.

Who can nominate

Candidates for the NWO Spinoza Prize can be nominated only by individuals whom NWO has invited to submit nominations; researchers cannot apply of their own volition. NWO invites each of the following individuals to nominate candidates:

- the principals of all Dutch universities (1 candidate each)
- the chairs of the Humanities and Science Divisions of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) (max. 2 candidates each)
- the chairs of the advisory councils of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) (max. 2 candidates each)
 - Social Sciences Council
 - Council for the Humanities
 - Council for Medical Sciences
 - Council for Earth and Life Sciences
 - Council for Technical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences and Informatics, Physics and Astronomy and Chemistry
- the chair of the Netherlands Society of Technological Sciences and Engineering (max. 2 candidates)
- the chair of the Dutch national network of women professors (max. 2 candidates)
- the chairs of the NWO Divisions including WOTRO (max. 2 candidates each).

Who can be nominated

Candidates for the NWO Spinoza Prize should:

- have a permanent position at a Dutch research institute;
- be young enough to have ample time to continue doing top level research.

What can the candidates be nominated for

Each NWO Spinoza Prize winner receives 2.5 million euro. This amount may be spent (up to a certain point) at the discretion of the recipient. In the financial plan which needs to be approved by the governing board of NWO the recipient may include costs of staff, materials, investments, travel expenses and accommodation costs, visits by foreign researchers, etc.

The prize should be spent within a 5 years period.

When can nominations be submitted

The deadline for the submission of nominations to the Governing Board of NWO is on 1 November 2011.

Drawing up a nomination

Instructions on how to draw up a nomination are included in the Annex to this brochure.

Specific conditions

NWO expects strict confidentiality during the selection procedures, also towards the nominated candidates.

Each year a maximum of four NWO Spinoza Prizes are awarded. In any given year, the Governing Board of NWO will make no more than two awards within any one of three clusters - physical sciences, mathematics and engineering; life sciences (including medicine); and arts & social/behavioural sciences – and no more than three awards in the first two of these clusters taken together.

Submitting an nomination

Due to confidentiality the nominations cannot be submitted through Iris, the electronic handling system of NWO. The nominations should be sent in pdf format to NWO by email, spinoza@nwo.nl.

Procedure

A committee installed by NWO consisting of esteemed international researchers selects the best nominated candidates and advises the governing board of NWO on who should be awarded a Spinoza prize. The governing board bases its decision on the advice of the committee.

Criteria

The assessment and selection of the candidates takes place on the basis of past performance taking into account the following quality criteria:

- Internationally acknowledged top quality
This should be evident from the scientific achievements of the candidate, the influence s/he has had on the development of his/her field of research, successes in research funding competitions, acknowledgement by way of achievement awards, invitations, editorials, etc.
- Power of attraction to young researchers
This should be clear from how many PhD students s/he has attracted from the Netherlands or abroad, and his/her ability to provide inspirational leadership for fellow researchers in his/her research group.

Additionally, it should be evident that it is expected that the NWO Spinoza Prize will enable substantial advances to the candidate's research.

Composition of committee

The committee consists of renowned scientific researchers lead by a technical chair.

Contact

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Annex: Instructions for drawing up a nomination for the NWO Spinoza Prize 2012

The nominations should be written in English. Each nomination must clearly state the achievements that qualify the candidate to be regarded as a top researcher in the national and international arena, the further advances that his/her research is expected to achieve and the probable knock-on effect of the award on the candidate's research group.

To facilitate a comparative and smooth assessment of the nominated candidates, the nominations should be drawn up in a comparable way, see below for the layout. The maximum length of the nomination may include 5 to 6 pages A4, excluding annexes.

The nominations may not include recommendation letters. Any such documents included will be removed by NWO. An accompanying letter by the nominator may be included provided the letter is written in English.

In drafting nominations it should also be remembered that the broad-based membership of the selection committee means that the majority of members will have only a 'lay' understanding of the substance of specific proposals.

Content of the nomination

1. Name, position and address of the candidate
2. Date of birth
3. Cluster: humanities and social sciences (alpha/gamma), physical sciences, physics, chemical sciences and technical sciences (beta); life sciences (including medical sciences), (more than one option is possible)

The track record of the candidate should be described under the following obligatory headings:

4. Internationally acknowledged scientific top quality
 - 4.1 innovative contribution to science, including possible breakthroughs
 - 4.2 scientific stature in the Netherlands
 - 4.3 international scientific stature
 - 4.4 power of attraction on foreign researchers
 - 4.5 evidence of recognition (prizes, honorary doctorates, editorial memberships)
 - 4.6 past performance in national and international funding competitions
 - 4.7 ability to develop a scientific/scholarly movement in the Netherlands and abroad (schoolvorming)
 - 4.8 leadership qualities
 - 4.9 expectations with regard to future contributions to the relevant field of research
5. Power of attraction on young researchers

Each nomination should include the following annexes

- An overview of 10 most important publications in relation to the field of research, including if applicable internationally renowned books, contributions to books and book chapters. The impact of each publication should be indicated.
- Numerical details:
 - number of PhD dissertations supervised since full professorship
 - number of periods abroad longer than 6 months
 - number of invited lectures
- Output according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2009-2015, including at least: refereed articles, non-refereed articles, books, book chapters and conference papers

- A recent CV (including an explicit indication of any period or periods in the course of the candidate's career when academic productivity has been reduced by e.g. family care responsibilities)

SEP categories output

Refereed articles
Non-refereed articles ¹
Books
Book chapters
PhD theses
Conference papers
Professional publications ²
Publications aimed at the general public ³
Other research output <specify> ⁴

¹ Articles in journals that are non refereed, yet deemed important for the field

² Publications aimed at professionals in the public and private sector (professionele publicaties), including patents and annotations (e.g. law)

³ Also known as 'populariserende artikelen'

⁴ Other types of research output, such as editorships, inaugural lectures, designs and prototypes (e.g. engineering) and media appearances

Published by:
Netherlands Organisation
for Scientific Research

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Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië 300
2593 CE The Hague

June 2011