QDNL

Top Talent Initiative (TTI): application procedure and guidelines

Goal of the programme

The initiative supports outstanding individuals who wish to develop themselves further in their field - or those who wish to venture with their expertise into a new field – while also contributing to the NL quantum ecosystem and the goals of the QDNL programme. The initiative aims to attract or retain talented individuals of international stature. QDNL does this by financially supporting individuals who have either recently settled or are about to settle in our quantum ecosystem, in realising their ambitions. By funding top international talent, QDNL enables ambition, excellence, and diversity within the ecosystem.

About the Top Talent Initiative (TTI)

The TTI is a personal grant. The candidate must have a permanent appointment with an organisation based in the Netherlands. The grant is meant to support a personal vision and ambition that contributes to one of the QDNL action lines (AL) or catalyst (CAT) programmes, or to the broader goals of the QDNL programme.

The budget is flexible for different projects/themes, but the candidate must explain clearly what s/he wants to achieve and how this connects to QDNL ambitions. For example: the candidate may use it for any project idea, as long as it is compliant with NGF/RVO regulations.

Individuals can have a background in any of research, education or policy, and a desire to contribute directly or indirectly to quantum technology development and impact through research, valorisation, entrepreneurship, education, communication or policy, by bringing in new concepts or expertise to our ecosystem.

Selection criteria

- Added value to ecosystem
- Excellence of applicant/leading in their field (top 10%)
    - Factual criteria determining whether a candidate is considered top in their field can be challenging to outline. The applicant must their provide proof of excellence through support letters, a detailed CV, history of publications, and other project-specific demonstrations of excellence.
- Plan (summary) must fit QDNL scope.
- Applicant has a (prospect of) an employment contract in NL.

Who can apply

Applications are welcome from individuals with a permanent appointment in the Netherlands. Applications must be completed and submitted within six months after the start of their employment and should be officially endorsed by employer/employing organisation based in the Netherlands.

An individual can apply only once.

What can be requested

Within this Call for Proposals, an applicant can apply for a minimum budget of €100.000 and up to a maximum of € 300.000. In case there is a very large cost involved in the proposed plan (e.g. in an academic experimental physics project), the amount may be increased to €400.000. The personnel costs can amount to maximum of € 300.000.

All costs would be at the discretion of and approved by QNDL, in accordance with to RVO conditions.

Topics

In principle, we have set no boundaries on the topics that can be submitted. However, we do want to share some inspiration:

- To develop new concepts in quantum technology, both at a fundamental research level as well as the applied level.
- To develop a new educational or societal or artistic initiative.
- To develop a policy initiative to increase a certain topic area. For example: entrepreneurial awareness.

When to apply

- Applications can be submitted throughout the year.
- Applicants can apply, at the latest, 6 months after they started in their new role in the Netherlands.

Submission process

1. Candidates should send their Intention to Submit to talent@qdnl.nl and Cc their (future) employer in the Netherlands.

Following receipt of the intention to submit, QDNL will arrange a call to discuss intention and process.

2. Application Requirements
    1. Summary: Summarise your project plan and describe your fit to the QDNL programme.
    2. Project plan: The proposed project must fit topically to one of the CATs or Action Lines (ALs) or with NanolabNL.
    3. Candidate assessment: The selection committee will review if the application is admissible based on the following
        - Profile of candidate (CV + description of key outputs and achievements).
        - Support letters indicating the candidate is a top talent in their field.
    4. Endorsement by host institution.

Application format

This is a free format. Maximum word count: 2500.

Assessment process

The main goal of the TTI is to support talented individuals within the top 10% of their fields. The assessment part of the application process will be focused on the candidate. If the candidate is assessed positively as a top talent, s/he has ample space to propose a suitable project. The main criterium for the project is fit within the QDNL programme.

The assessment process is managed by the QDNL programme office. The assessment consists of 4 steps:

1. Eligibility check by QDNL, including a financial check.
2. Check on fit, or conditions of partial fit, with QDNL.
3. Interview with the top talent committee.

In an online interview the committee intends to get a good view on the excellence of the candidate. An interview is deemed crucial to have a broader perspective for the committee than just CV + support letters to make a proper assessment. During the interview, the committee and the candidate will discuss the proposal, provide/receive feedback and, if necessary, further discuss how to improve fit to the QDNL ambitions.

4. The committee will give an official advisement to the QDNL-board, who will make the decision on the candidate.

In case of a positive decision by the board, the candidate will receive a grant letter.

Contact information

- Intentions, questions and the application can be sent to talent@qdnl.nl
- Contact person for additional information: Marike Boertien

Top talent committee

The top talent committee consist of:

- Prof. dr. ir. Bart van Wees - RUG
- Prof. dr. Stephanie Wehner – TUD
- Prof. dr. Erik Bakkers – TU/e
- Prof. dr. Carlo Beenakker - LEI
- Prof. dr. Stacey Jeffery – UvA/CWI