

Part 2. Grant writing

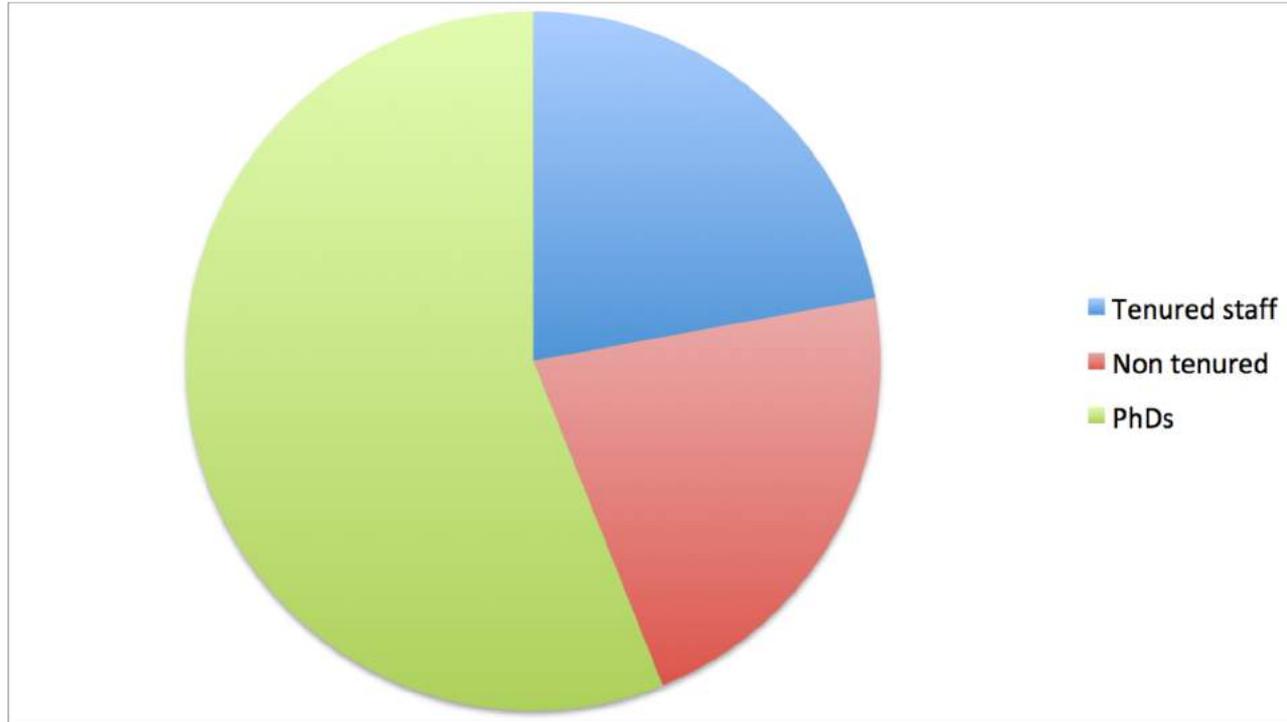
Interdem Academy Workshop



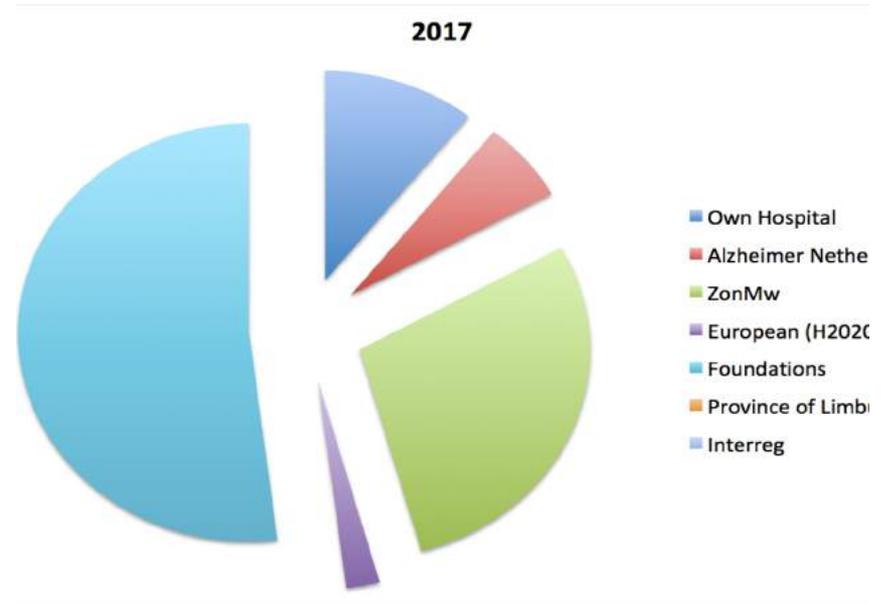
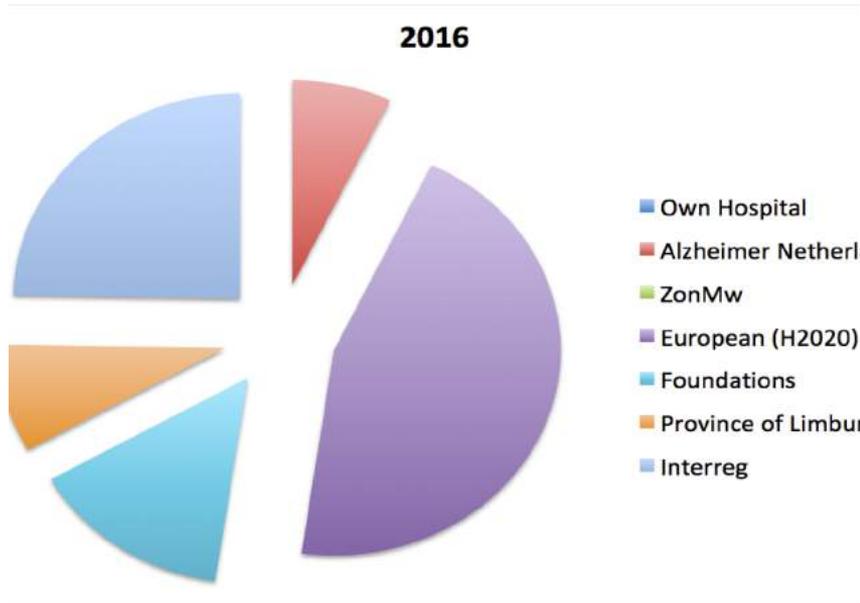
Alzheimer Centrum Limburg



Tenured vs non-tenured vs PhD



Sources of income



What worked well?

- Some calls were successful
 - Joint Program on Neurodegenerative Diseases
 - Actifcare, Rhapsody
 - ITN H2020
 - INDUCT
 - Interreg
 - Several ‘Soft Money’ Foundations

What did not work?

- Actifcare 2
 - Too little detail on intervention,
 - PPI
- INDUCT 2 (but still on reserve list)
 - Too little detail state of the art
- Some national calls
 - PPI did not value

Grant writing

- Mostly highly competitive
- Continuous pressure
 - On researchers
 - On own research division
 - On own department/ School
- Always looking for opportunities
- Always unsure about the future

Grant writing

- Acquired skill you can learn
- Look for examples, e.g., your own research proposal
- Ask your supervisors
- Go for small and less competitive grants first

Tips and tricks, general

- **Start early**
 - Start with a draft early
 - You need time to review again and again
 - Have it reviewed by colleagues/ advisors/ someone not in the field
 - Sometimes you need recommendation letters
 - Budget plans take time

Tips and Tricks

- **Follow grants instructions very closely**
 - Tailor your proposal to complement goals of granting agency
 - Know your grantor
 - Take close look at the guidelines, websites, previous winners
 - What purposes do they have
 - What do they hope will come out
 - Do not hesitate to call them
 - Try to be compelling
 - Be ambitious, but certainly not too much

Consortium

- **Choose your partners carefully**
 - Shared values and mission
 - Experiences in the past
 - Reliability
 - Collaborative skills
 - Once invited, difficult to drop

Tips and Tricks

- **Not enough detail**
 - Own level of familiarity may be an obstacle
 - May be difficult to explain the big picture
 - Details of your organisation not obvious to reviewer
 - Not only research question,
 - First *problem description*
 - Why is it important to solve this problem?
 - Not: No research so far -> circular reasoning
 - Impact
 - Fit every single requirement
 - Equity, teaching opportunities, policies

Tips and Tricks

- **Not enough detail**
 - Too much emphasis on *Why?*, not on *How?*
 - Proposal must focus on step-by-step solutions
 - Measurable objectives, explicit plan of actions
 - What records/ data will be included
 - How will you measure program accomplishments

Write clearly

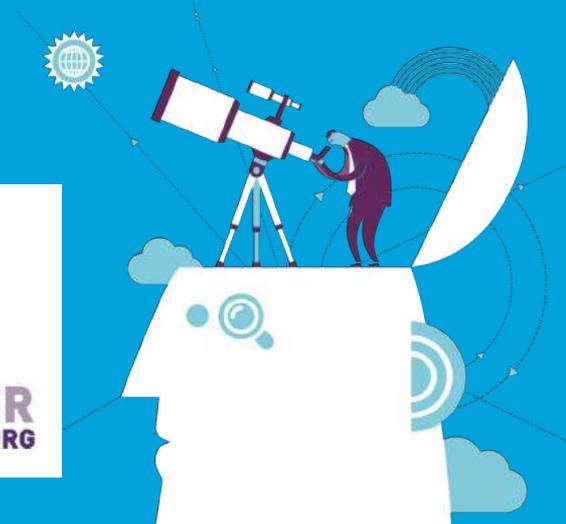
- Reviewers will probably have little patience for bad writing
- Tell a compelling story
- Structure important, WPs, deliverables
- Be consistent in terminology, goals, no loose ends
- Avoid jargon, flowery language,
- Say explicitly how agency's goals fit with objectives
 - But do not cut/ paste phrases from their guidelines

Budget

- **Unrealistic or Inadequate cost analysis**
 - Start early, ask financial controller
 - Look carefully to grant guidelines
 - Not always: the less you ask, the more likely you will get it
 - Be as specific you can
 - VAT, Overhead, bench fees
 - Additional funding may be a benefit
 - Small foundations may not want to be the sole source

“Thank you for submitting an application, unf...”

Sebastian Köhler, PhD
Associate Professor
School for Mental Health and Neuroscience
Maastricht UMC+



Biography

- 2005-2009 PhD student, Dpt Psychiatry & Neuropsychology, Maastricht University, NL
- 2008-2009 Visiting researcher, Newcastle University, UK
- 2009-2013 Postdoc, Dpt Psychiatry & Neuropsychology, Maastricht University, NL
- 2010-2013 MSc Epidemiology, University of London, UK
- 2013-2018 Assistant Professor/Senior researcher, Dpt Psychiatry & Neuropsychology, Maastricht University, NL
- 2015-2018- Permanent staff (tenured), Head Neuroepidemiology Associate Professor/Senior researcher, Dpt Psychiatry & Neuropsychology, Maastricht University, NL
- (Co-) PI of different ongoing cohort studies and projects with 6 PhDs, 1 postdoc
 - Methodological consultant within Maastricht UMC+
 - Advisor to Ministry of Health, EU JPND, WHO on dementia prevention



My brilliant failures (PI, Co-PI, WP lead)

- 2010 **Dutch Brain Foundation fellowship**
- 2011 **Dutch Excellence Scheme (Veni)**
 - International Alzheimer Foundation (ISAO) standard grant
 - Dutch Brain Foundation fellowship**
- 2012 **Dutch Excellence Scheme (Veni)**
 - International Alzheimer Foundation (ISAO) pilot grant
 - Alzheimer Nederland standard grant
- 2013 International Alzheimer Foundation (ISAO) standard grant
Knowledge Axis Program Limburg
- 2014 International Alzheimer Foundation (ISAO) standard grant
Science Foundation Netherlands (NOW/ZonMW), 4 projects
- 2015 **H2020 JPI HDHL**
 - NARSAD Young Investigator Grant
 - NIH major grant**
- 2016 **H2020 ERA-HDHL**
 - US Alzheimer Association project grant
 - International Alzheimer Foundation (ISAO) standard
 - NIH major grant**
- 2017 **Marie Curie Sklodowska** Individual Fellowship (H2020)
 - Alzheimer Nederland standard grant
 - Science Foundation Netherlands (NOW/ZonMW), 3 projects**
- 2018 US Alzheimer Association project grant
Dutch Kidney Foundation, consortium grant

If brilliant failures pave your road... (and also if they don't):

1. Do what you love and go for it
2. Develop specialized skills and competencies
3. Start networking
4. Be opportunistic
5. Keep work-life balance





Thank you
and...



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Grant writing and top down calls

prof Lieve Van den Block



Supported by grants from:

Research Foundation Flanders

EU FP7 (PACE) and H2020

Collaborative research projects

Marie Curie ITN

Charities

Strategic University grants

Reviewer experience:

Reviewer for European Research Council

Reviewer for national funding agencies (BE, UK, NL, SW ...)

Chairman of Psychosocial Commission Flemish Cancer Charity (KOTK)

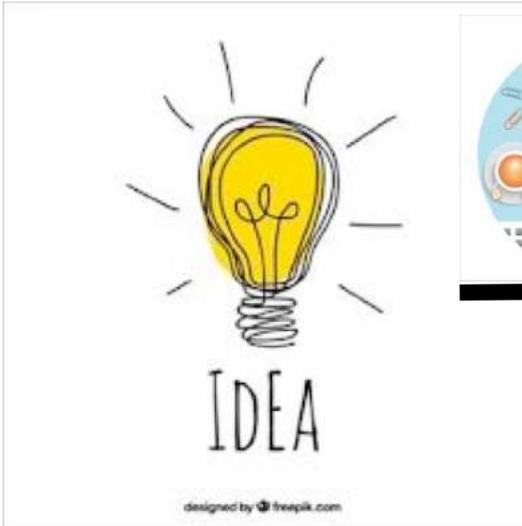
And some rejected proposals!

ERC, Research Foundation Flanders, JPND, ...



IDEA

designed by  freepik.com



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You can start either way BUT
They are clearly dependent

Many different calls



- Fundamental research?
- Discipline?
- High risk?
- Societal impact?

**Match between idea/proposal/applicant
and funding stream is essential**

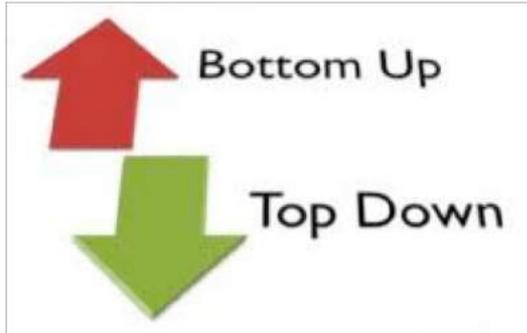
- For individuals or groups? For early postdoc or senior PIs?
- For one country/region or several (which?)

How to know what is important in a call?

- Call text!
- Aims/goals of funding agency; mission statements
'History' of funding stream: is it policy driven?
- Guide for applicants
- Selection and evaluation criteria: implicit and explicit
- Review process, evaluating panel and its individual members
- Examples of successful and unsuccessful projects in that call

Study early on, not at end of writing

One essential distinction



Any topic

Vs

Topic

described/delineated
(often driven by policy
or practice)

An example at EU level

EU portal

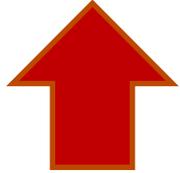
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>



The screenshot displays the homepage of the European Commission's Research & Innovation Participant Portal. The header features the European Union flag and the text "RESEARCH & INNOVATION" and "Participant Portal". A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header, a navigation menu includes "HOME", "FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES", "HOW TO PARTICIPATE", "PROJECTS & RESULTS", "EXPERTS", and "SUPPORT". A "LOGIN" button and a "REGISTER" button are also present. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column, titled "EU Programmes 2014-2020", contains a "Search Topics" field, "Updates" and "Calls" sections with calendar and RSS icons, and a list of programmes including "H2020" and "3rd Health Programme". The right column, titled "Funding Opportunities", features a "H2020 ONLINE MANUAL" button and text encouraging users to find funding opportunities and search for new or closed calls of the programmes described on the page. It also provides a link to see the full list of Commission funding programmes.

H2020 pillars

Excellent science



ERC!

Marie-Sklodowska-Curie Actions

individ
innova

SME specialized in EU funding workshops

Societal Challenges



Health dem
wellbeing (

Industrial Leadership



KS

d

The example of PACE (2014-2019)



FP7

Cooperation, Collaborative research

Health Programme 2007-2013

Work Programme 2013

Health.2013.3.1-1 **Comparative effectiveness research (CER) in health systems and health services interventions.** FP7-HEALTH-2013-INNOVATION-1.

Top-down call

HEALTH.2013.3.1-1: Comparative effectiveness research (CER) in health systems and health services interventions. FP7-HEALTH-2013-INNOVATION-1. Projects will evaluate the impact of two or more alternative health system and health services interventions in terms of their health benefit, patient needs, patient safety, effectiveness and quality of care. Research should also address the structural and policy components as well as cost effectiveness. It should use a multidisciplinary approach and take into account some of the different organisation of care models within Europe. A broad array of interventions and approaches may be studied under this topic, ranging from comparing effects of different

PACE started from the idea of replicating a national study internationally ...

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Study II Impact of 'Pace Steps to Success' as a health service intervention

Compare in terms of quality of care, outcomes, and costs

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Analyse which partners you need to answer your research questions

PACE consortium covers all disciplines needed to perform the research

- Research partners from social sciences incl coordinator
 - Expertise in cross-sectional study designs, complex interventions and trials
- Research partners from health sciences and medicine (geriatrics, primary care, dementia)
 - Expertise in clinical trials, access to specific patient populations, in specific settings
- Research partners health economics

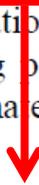
Also...

Carefully align project and partners with
expected impact

Analyse which partners you need
to achieve the expected impact

Expected impact: Results should assist policy makers and decision makers to make informed decisions regarding the implementation or improvement of health system and health services interventions in view of improving patient outcomes, quality of life and increase the cost-effectiveness of interventions, ultimately improving health status at individual and population levels.

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PACE AIMS TO assist policy and decision-makers at **national and international level** in making informed and evidence-based decisions regarding best palliative care practices in nursing homes

PACE will develop **tools and products** to assist policy- and decision-makers eg policy briefs, open access intervention toolkit

Analyses of the **key drivers of change** in this field: practice, policy, nationally and internationally

Which partners are needed to develop the necessary tools?

- 4 dissemination partners working to achieve this impact across Europe became part of PACE consortium (eg AGE/AE prepare policy briefs)



European Association for Palliative Care
Non Governmental Organization (NGO) recognised by the Council of Europe



- International stakeholders: who are regularly informed about results and are asked to disseminate further
- National stakeholders: to achieve impact per country

PACE bridges different

- clinical disciplines
- sectors
- research backgrounds
- countries
- individuals



Important to...

take time to understand each other
identify shared goals with all partners in the consortium
develop common language
bilaterally and as a group



5%



5%



90%

So choose wisely

lvdblock@vub.be





Call for new members

PhD students and post-docs working on psychosocial research projects are welcome to apply for INTERDEM Academy membership, to be held up-to-date regarding our seminars and fellowships.

Criteria

- Are you involved in psychosocial research about dementia?
- Do you consider yourself a junior researcher in the field?
- Are you affiliated with or supervised by an INTERDEM member?
 - We also welcome members who are not affiliated with INTERDEM; they are welcome to be informed about and attend our activities, though they are not eligible for the INTERDEM fellowship.

Send the completed application form (can be found on www.interdem.org) to Fania Dassen: f.dassen@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Annexes with tips

Writing the proposal

do not expect evaluators to derive the evaluation criteria from your proposal,
but write the proposal by giving them an easy way to find what they need

use exact wording from the call text

Adapt writing style to evaluators (specialists or not, PPI or not)

strictly follow the structure imposed by the funders

good opening paragraph preferably with aims clear early on

use highlight, bold for good purpose (not for meaningless titles)

allow and ask for feedback from peers, partners and other (eg national contact points)

explain why you need the budget – make this transparent for evaluators

avoid any type of repetition or overlap

use figures

Some final tips

The power of mock interviews

Follow a course that has a good reputation and ask questions about your proposal: look for call-specific training (in or outside your university)

Keep on smiling 😊

Resubmit