



Stan Gielen: Mission driven research

High Level Meeting Madrid

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Why mission-driven research projects?

1. Point at the horizon

- Focus: Relevant for consortia with many *multi-disciplinary* researchers and *societal* partners
- Open for periodic evaluation

2. Promoting societal impact, including economic, impact and citizen science.

- National Research Agenda The Netherlands

3. Grasp public imagination

- Focus on societal challenges and SDG's. A purely scientific or technical approach will not work!



Selection of missions

1. Allow bottom-up proposals
2. Top-down themes, related to societal challenges and SDG's

“Knowledge Coalition”:

- Universities
- Universities for Applied Science
- NWO
- Royal Academy for Arts and Sciences
- Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers
- Confederation of Dutch SME's
- Institutes for applied research
- Ministries

Broad support and sufficient funding



How to evaluate scientific excellence and societal impact ?

- First peer review to select excellent science
- Then priorities set by a team with broad expertise and proven skills for successful impact, such as
 - Venture capitalists
 - Successful entrepreneurs
 - R&D engineers from industry
 - Politicians
- Mission defines not only output: include process, outcome and impact indicators



Best practices

1. Societal partners and industry should contribute in cash or in kind:
 - Indication for involvement and interest
 - “guarantee” for societal/economic impact when expected results will be obtained
2. Several societal / industrial partners should be involved
 - To ensure (precompetitive) research to achieve a mission and to avoid “contract research”
 - To ensure that all relevant partners are on board
3. Project duration \geq 4 years (preferably 4-8 years)
 - Start-up process takes time (explaining/‘training’ scientists, matchmaking events scientists-practitioners; what can new partners offer and contribute?)
 - Midterm evaluation: “on the right track” ?; discuss “what if ...” scenario’s
 - Also role for high-tech SME’s or SME in niche markets; researcher (PhD) should be involved
4. No “one size fits all”

Other comments regarding mission-driven research

Not only mission-driven research projects !

- Curiosity-driven research opens new opportunity windows for new missions !

IP guidelines simple and straightforward

Facilitate new start-ups to ensure (potential) innovation; "Proof of concept" grants



Thanks for your attention

