

How to... find your niche in a few steps

K. F. Dziubek¹

¹*Institut für Mineralogie und Kristallographie, Universität Wien, Josef-Holaubek-Platz 2, A-1090 Wien, Austria*

kamil.dziubek@univie.ac.at

At any funding level, one of the key factors evaluated during the review process is the originality of a research proposal. Research may be disqualified as ‘incremental science’ if it primarily focuses on extending ideas based on previously published work. There is a strong emphasis on *cutting-edge* research methods, *state-of-the-art* technologies, and *innovative* approaches. While this focus is perhaps intended to promote achievements that „confer the greatest benefit to humankind“ [1], it may inadvertently favour hype over research rigor [2]. Noteworthy, an excessive emphasis on novelty could be counterproductive and hinder, rather than boost, scientific progress [3]. In my contribution, I will share a personal perspective on finding a balanced approach between the pursuit of originality and the importance of identifying your niche, which can help in achieving sustainable scientific progress while staying true to the primary mission of science.

[1] Nobel, A. (1895). *Testament*. <https://www.nobelprize.org/alfred-nobel/full-text-of-alfred-nobels-will-2>

[2] Franchini, M. (2024). *Integr. Zool.*, **19**, 1009.

[3] Cohen, B.A. (2017) *eLife*, **6**, e28699.