Call for proposals

Comenius programme
Leadership Fellows

2019

The Hague, June 2018
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research
Contents

1 Introduction 1
  1.1 Background 1
  1.2 Available budget 2
  1.3 Validity of the call for proposals 2

2 Aim 3
  2.1 Projects in the Comenius programme 3
  2.2 Leadership Fellow and Leadership Fellow projects 4

3 Guidelines for applicants 6
  3.1 Who can apply 6
  3.2 What can be applied for 7
  3.3 When can applications be submitted 9
  3.4 Preparing the letter of intent and application 9
  3.5 Grant conditions 10

4 Assessment procedure 12
  4.1 Procedure 12
  4.2 Criteria 16

5 Contact details and other information 18
  5.1 Contact 18
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

On 7 July 2015, the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science presented the 2015-2025 Strategic Agenda for Higher Education and Research, 'The Value of Knowledge', to both Chambers of the Dutch parliament. In this publication, the Minister put forward a number of proposals to invest the resources that will become available after introduction of the Studievoorschot (student loan system) in the quality of higher education in the Netherlands.

The Strategic Agenda sets out ambitions for the development of Dutch higher education. It is a conscious choice not to define precisely in this Strategic Agenda how these ambitions should be achieved, the point of departure being that they can best be achieved by giving the professionals involved the desired scope. According to the Strategic Agenda, the teachers, education leaders and directors that work in Dutch higher education institutions are inspired, successful and have a proven track record. They are crucial in signalling opportunities for innovative education and designing ways to achieve this.

The Comenius programme was set up to give these education professionals sufficient scope to implement their vision. Johannes Amos Comenius (1592-1670) was a 17th century pedagogue and education innovator. He is often called the founder of modern education. In search of good education, Comenius combined education research with the development and implementation of innovative teaching methods. The Comenius programme enables education professionals to implement their vision of education in practice, in the spirit of the programme’s eponym.

The educational innovation projects funded by the Comenius programme contribute directly to innovation and improvement of higher education in the Netherlands.

By valuing excellent and inspired teaching in a visible way, the Comenius programme contributes to making varied career paths possible for teachers and researchers at research universities and universities of applied sciences.

The Comenius programme offers grants to Teaching Fellows (£50,000), Senior Fellows (£100,000) and Leadership Fellows (£250,000). The Fellows are distinguished on the basis of experience and the extent of their impact on education. They can use the grant\(^1\) to implement educational innovations and improvements in their own educational practice on a scale suited to their position and the duration of the project (for instance within a course, in a degree programme or faculty or in the entire institution).

This call for proposals provides an overview of the application procedure for a Comenius grant for a Leadership Fellow as well as the assessment and selection of applications.

\(^1\) Although this is called a Comenius grant, it is formally an increase of the government grant. This grant will be awarded through modification of the higher education financing scheme (Regeling financiën hoger onderwijs) in connection with changes to the budget of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for the financial year concerned; as from then, it will be a legal obligation. The Comenius grant is therefore not a personal grant.

The calls for proposals for Teaching Fellows and Senior Fellows are available on the Comenius programme page of the NRO website.

### 1.2 Available budget

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will make a total of €5,800,000 available for grants for the 2019 round of the Comenius programme. The grants will be divided equally between universities of applied sciences (Dutch acronym: hbo) and research universities (Dutch acronym: wo).

A total of €1,500,000 of this total grant is available for Leadership Fellow projects. The grant amount for each project is €250,000, which means that six proposals can be awarded funding.

The grants will be divided equally between universities of applied sciences and research universities. This means that three grants are available for projects at research universities (Dutch acronym: wo) and three for projects at universities of applied sciences (Dutch acronym: hbo).²

### 1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

The deadline for submitting letters of intent is **4 September 2018**, 14:00 hours CEST.

The deadline for submitting applications is **9 October 2018**, 14:00 hours CEST.

A prerequisite for submitting an application is the timely submission of a letter of intent.

See 4.1 of this call for proposals for the procedures for submitting a letter of intent and an application. See 4.2 of this call for proposals for the assessment criteria of the application.

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² In case of cooperation between a university of applied sciences and an academic university, the coordinating institution determines the category under which the proposal will be treated.
2 Aim

2.1 Projects in the Comenius programme

As described in Chapter 1, the aim of the Comenius programme is to give impetus to educational innovation and improvements by professionals in higher education. Teaching Fellows, Senior Fellows and Leadership Fellows and their projects are distinguished on the basis of their impact on education, which becomes broader at each ‘tier’ in the programme.

This chapter describes how the Comenius projects contribute to the objectives of the Comenius programme as outlined in Chapter 1. How this should be reflected in a project proposal is always mentioned.

The characteristics of a Leadership Fellow project are set out in 2.2.

Improving education through evidence-informed innovation

The Comenius programme aims at enabling innovation projects to the extent that they are also considered innovative outside the institution implementing the project.\(^3\)

The innovation must be aimed at improving teaching practice. The improvement must directly benefit students at a publicly-funded Dutch institution of higher education. The innovation is implemented in the student’s (online) educational environment.\(^4,5,6\)

The proposal should clearly define the specific context and scope of the project.

The motivation and inspiration for the project must be derived from the educational environment and the Comenius Fellow’s own vision of education. The envisioned project results must be made plausible by means of a substantiation of the problem definition and the intended intervention, and by means of a clear project plan.

The innovation must be set up in an evidence-informed manner. This means that it must be clear from the proposal why an improvement in education is desirable and why it is likely that the proposed innovation will be an improvement. References to relevant specialist literature and any practical arguments from the applicant’s own teaching experience must be used for this purpose. The project plan must outline how the project will be set up and implemented, what expertise is required and how this is provided for in the team.

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\(^3\) The proposed innovation must fall within the scope of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act applicable at the time the application is submitted.

\(^4\) See Section 1.8 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (only available in Dutch) for a complete list of publicly-funded institutions. Projects should focus on programmes in initial higher education or on pathways that improve access to initial higher education (e.g. transition programmes between intermediate vocational and higher professional education). This means that projects aimed at post-initial higher education, including programmes for PhD students, are excluded.

\(^5\) Projects whose primary objective is the professional development of teachers are therefore excluded. Of course, the professional development of teachers can be a (necessary) component of successful implementation of an innovation in the student’s learning environment.

\(^6\) The development of education and training materials that are not implemented or used in education until after the end of the Comenius project cannot be financed through a Comenius grant.
If the Comenius Fellow wishes to apply an innovation that has proved successful elsewhere, they must show in the project proposal that the application requires a different, and therefore innovative, approach in their own educational practice. If the project is building on a pilot, the applicant must demonstrate how further development and/or scaling up of the pilot requires a new approach and can produce new results.

Evaluation and sharing of results with the teaching community
Because of the innovative nature of the projects, the experiences and results will be interesting and valuable for other teachers and/or education professionals.

The ability to evaluate and share the experiences and results gained from the project is an essential aspect of a Comenius project. The proposal must clarify how the intervention will be evaluated and how success and failure factors can be identified. The applicant must also pay attention to how results and experiences are shared within and outside the applicant’s own field of expertise, institution and the Comenius Network.

Contributing to the professional development and career of the Comenius Fellows
Awarding the grant will offer Comenius Fellows the opportunity to focus on improving their own educational practice during the project period and for further development as an education professional. Membership of the Comenius Network offers a community of educational innovators who can exchange knowledge and experience with each other.

The main applicant must demonstrate, in the professional statement, their own vision of higher education (and its development); how they express this in their own work and the proposed project; and how they aim to inspire others in their work as an educational professional.

2.2 Leadership Fellow and Leadership Fellow projects

With the Leadership Fellow project, the Leadership Fellow must have an impact on education in several faculties or in an entire educational institution.

The Leadership Fellow must, through their experience and network, have a broad view of the field of education and be well-informed of current developments in the field of the intended innovation.

The Leadership Fellow must have educational leadership qualities and a demonstrable impact on the educational climate in their own institution. The Leadership Fellow must demonstrate, with the Comenius project and through membership of the Comenius Network, their ambition to develop into an educational leader at the national level and to inspire colleagues.

In addition, the Leadership Fellow (possibly through the composition of the project team), should have the mandate and ‘sway’ to implement this innovation within the faculty or institution. The education CV of the Leadership Fellow and their team members must demonstrate how they have previously implemented educational innovations (individually or in cooperation).

The proposed project must take place within several faculties or an entire educational institution. Collaboration between faculties of different higher education institutions is also possible. The grant amounts to €250,000; the project has a minimum duration of 36 months and a maximum duration of 42 months.
A Comenius Leadership Fellow project must give impetus to the education ambitions formulated in the institution’s strategic education plan. This will enable the institution to showcase itself in this area and to take a leading role at the national or even international level. The project must be in line with recent (international) developments. The proposal must clarify how the project will contribute to this, including through the research linked to the innovation. In the dissemination plan, the applicant must take publication channels outside their own institution\(^7\) into account for the future.

\(^7\) In this context, ‘publication’ should be understood in the broadest sense possible, i.e. public dissemination of information about the project, for example in a trade journal, on an online platform, through presentations at conferences or in a scientific journal.
3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Applications can be submitted by education professionals working in publicly-funded higher educational institutions in the Netherlands.8 Each institution may only submit one Leadership Fellow application.9 The Executive Board endorses the proposal with a substantive recommendation and a statement that the project leader and the project team will be given sufficient scope to implement the project if the grant is awarded.

An applicant acts as a project leader and can designate three co-applicants in their application.10 The proposal should set out the composition of the entire project team, including the expertise required for the project and the scope of the project members’ mandate.

In any case, the project should also include educational expertise from within or outside the institution (e.g. by liaising with an educational research group or lectorate or by involving education advisers). Students should, preferably, make an active contribution to the project.

The applicant must:
- have an appointment for at least the duration of the project and at least 0.5 FTE;
- have at least seven years’ experience in higher education;
- have a coordinating or administrative role and be able, in this capacity or through the team composition, to implement the innovation across the entire scope of the proposed project;
- designate at most three co-applicants when submitting the application;
- demonstrate, with a recommendation from the Executive Board, that the project is ‘supported’ within the institution and that the project team will be given sufficient scope to implement the project if the grant is awarded.

Conditions for submitting applications within the Comenius programme and membership of the Comenius Network
- An applicant may submit an application for only one of the three grants in the Comenius programme (Teaching, Senior and Leadership Fellows) per year.
- A Fellow who has previously been awarded a Comenius grant can ‘move up’ within the programme, but cannot apply again for the same grant, or for a grant at a lower tier. To ensure the continuity of projects, an application for a grant in the next-level tier may be submitted in the last year of the current Comenius project, but they cannot overlap11.

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8 See Section 1.8 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (only available in Dutch) for a list of institutions.
9 Institutions that were awarded a grant in the Comenius Leadership Fellows 2018 round are excluded from submitting an application this year.
10 The project team may consist of more than four members. Co-applicants are persons who actively contribute to designing the project and writing the application. Members of the project team who are only involved at a later stage do not have to be listed as co-applicants.
11 An applicant who applied unsuccessfully for a grant in the 2017 or 2018 round of the Comenius programme may again submit an application in the 2019 round. As from 2020, the maximum
• If awarded a grant, in principle only the main applicant (and not the rest of the team) will be appointed a Leadership Fellow and will be admitted to the Comenius Network (see 3.5 ‘After grant award’).

The applicant may only be involved in one application, either as a main applicant or a co-applicant.

The applicant must submit the application in ISAAC and, during the assessment procedure, will receive all relevant communication from NRO and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. If and after the grant is awarded, the main applicant will be the contact person for NRO and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Members of the assessment committee in this round of the Comenius Leadership Fellows are excluded from submitting applications, both as a main applicant and a co-applicant.\(^{12}\)

### 3.2 What can be applied for


Applications can be submitted for projects with a duration of at least 36 months and at most 42 months. The start date of a project cannot be before the planned announcement of the decision, so not before 1 May 2019.

A budget of up to €250,000 is available for each application. The requested budget may not exceed €250,000 and may not be less than €237,500.

The total budget of a project may, however, exceed the maximum amount of the grant, on condition that the role and the guarantee of co-financing (by the institution or a third party) is detailed and explained in the application. Co-financing may not exceed the requested budget (because the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science must remain the main financier of the project). Co-financing must be guaranteed at the time the application is submitted.

A budget can be requested to cover direct staff costs as well as the material costs associated with the project.

The Comenius grant will be disbursed to the institution where the project will be implemented through government funding. This means that the accounting for the financial handling of the project must be included in the institution’s annual report.

#### 3.2.1 Staff costs

A budget can be requested for the salary costs of the staff to be appointed for the research. This includes in any event the salary costs of teachers and teaching assistants who actively contribute to the project and are employed by higher education institutions.

\(^{12}\) Members of the assessment committee are not excluded from submitting an application in the other tiers (Senior Fellow, Leadership Fellow) of the Comenius programme.
To budget the costs of staff at higher education and research institutions that receive public funding, the fees may be based on the fees applicable at the institutions, provided these do not exceed the maximum (per hour/per day) fees in the 2017 Government Fees Guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Hourly Fee</th>
<th>Daily Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat / Students</td>
<td>€53/424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior/research assistant for academic</td>
<td>€72/576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and non-academic staff/teaching staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-level/university teaching staff/lecturer-researchers</td>
<td>€87/696</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior/associate professor</td>
<td>€95/760</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/professor/lector</td>
<td>€119/952</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The stated fees are based on the cost-effective fee plus additional fees. The cost-effective fee includes the average gross salary plus expected wage development, holiday pay, year-end bonus, employer’s charges and an additional fee for overhead costs.

These fees are explained in further detail in the Guide to Government Fees for 2017, which is available at www.nwo.nl/nroprojectbeheer (only available in Dutch).

Note: salary costs for staff in the project who are not employed by a publicly-funded higher education institution should be entered under material costs (or can be covered by in-kind or other co-financing; in this case, too, these costs should be entered under material costs).

The application must indicate how the requested staff costs will be allocated to the different members of the project team, and it must also explain the reasons behind this allocation.

### 3.2.2 Material costs

The requested budget for material costs may not exceed 20% of the total budget requested. All costs must be substantiated.

A budget can also be requested to cover material costs such as:

- training sessions or courses for the applicant and members of the project team, as needed for the project;
- remuneration for professionals who are not affiliated with a publicly-funded institution of higher education (for example: external advisers, software developers, designers, etc.);
- travel (e.g. to visit research institutions in the Netherlands and abroad that contribute substantively to the project);
- attending national and international conferences, as needed for the project;
- costs associated with the dissemination of project results, knowledge transfer and knowledge utilisation, including the costs associated with publishing academic publications about the project through open access.

Costs of purchasing previously developed digital teaching materials and licences for such materials are not eligible for funding under the Comenius programme, even if they have to be purchased specifically for the project. The time spent on further development of these teaching materials by the applicant or project staff, however, can be entered under staff costs.

The costs of equipment, consumables or administrative or technical assistance that must be considered part of the normal facilities package of an educational institution and the costs of using laboratories and computers in data centres are not eligible for funding, unless the research requires the use of facilities that demonstrably exceeds normal use.
Only costs relating directly to the research are eligible for funding, which means that accommodation, overhead, maintenance and depreciation costs may not be funded from the budget.

### 3.3 When can applications be submitted

The deadline for submitting a letter of intent is **4 September 2018**, 14:00 hours CEST.

The deadline for submitting an application is **9 October 2018**, 14:00 hours CEST.

When submitting your application in ISAAC you will have to enter some additional details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

### 3.4 Preparing the letter of intent and application

**Registering the institution and the main applicant’s account in ISAAC**

The main applicant must submit the letter of intent and application through their ISAAC account. Applicants who do not have an ISAAC account are advised to create this at least one day before submitting the application.

When creating an account, the applicant must specify the institution (and department of that institution) they work for. In a few cases, the institution may not yet be registered (small or new universities of applied sciences; all research universities and major universities of applied sciences are registered). In that case the registration can be applied for via relatiebeheer@nwo.nl. Indicate at least give the full official name, address (correspondence and visiting address) and general telephone number of the institution. As it takes a few days to process the request, it must be made no later than one week before the deadline.

If you have any questions about ISAAC, please consult 5.1.2.

#### 3.4.1 Submitting a letter of intent

The applicant indicates that they will submit an application in this round by means of a letter of intent. The timely submission of a letter of intent is a prerequisite for submitting a full application.

Letters of intent must be submitted no later than **4 September 2018, 14:00 CEST**, through the online application system, ISAAC.

The letter of intent must be entered directly in ISAAC; there is no separate form for this. You can access the online portal for submitting the letter of intent through the grant page of the NWO website.
When submitting the letter of intent, the main applicant must provide some administrative details. After the letter of intent has been submitted, the main applicant can no longer be changed. The applicant must also list in the letter of intent, under the heading 'summary', the following:

- Title of the project proposal
- Summary of the project proposal
- Composition of the project team
- Suggestions for international referees (not compulsory)

Applicants will be notified of receipt of the letter of intent.

The letters of intent will be used to:

- gain insight into the maximum number of applications. As soon as possible after the deadline for submission of letters of intent, the applicants will be notified of the total number of letters of intent submitted within the Leadership Fellows 'tier';
- recruit international referees. The suggestions for referees will be checked for formal involvement; if the referees are found suitable, they will be contacted by NRO. Based on the summary of the proposal, these and other referees will be contacted and asked to assess the elaborated application. The referees are not expected to assess the content of the summary;
- to set up the Assessment Committee. The necessary scope, involvement of committee members with the main applicant and the distribution of the applications across individual members according to their expertise must be taken into account.

If, after submission of the letter of intent, an applicant decides not to submit an application, for whatever reason, they are requested to notify the Secretary of the Comenius programme of this by email as soon as possible at comenius@nro.nl.

### 3.4.2 Submitting an application

A standard form for submitting the project proposal is available on the grant page of the NWO website. Applicants must adhere to the research questions and associated explanatory notes in this form, as well as the guidelines for the maximum number of words and pages.

The main applicant is obliged to submit the application through their ISAAC account. Full applications must be submitted no later than **9 October 2018, 14:00 CEST**. Submission after this time is not possible. Applicants will be notified of receipt of the application.

When submitting your application in ISAAC, you will have to enter some additional details online, including a summary of the project proposal. You should therefore start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

If you have any technical questions, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk (see 5.1.2).

### 3.5 Grant conditions

The NWO Regulation on Granting (2017) and the Agreement on Funding for Scientific Research (2008).
Developing teaching material

Developing teaching material and conducting educational research can be part of a project, but it cannot be the ultimate goal – any teaching material that is developed must be implemented in teaching practice within the project period. Developing material that can only be implemented in teaching practice after project completion cannot be the main aim of a project within the Comenius programme.

Creative Commons

Teaching material developed within the framework of the projects must be made available under a Creative Commons Licence (at least ‘Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike’ or less restrictive) at a publicly accessible location.

Open access

All scientific publications resulting from research funded by grants awarded through this call for proposals must immediately (at the time of publication) be freely accessible worldwide (open access). There are several ways for researchers to publish through open access. A detailed explanation be found at www.nwo.nl/en/policies/open+science.

Deadlines for the start and end dates of a project

The projects must begin in the academic year following the year of award (2019-2020). The completion phase of a project may not continue beyond two months in the academic year following the last year of the project.

The start-up phase of a project can begin as soon as the award decision has been published; the planned start date cannot be before 1 May 2019.

After grant award

Obligation of effort

Whether the project will deliver the intended result cannot yet be established at the start of the project, which is why the project leader explicitly assumes an obligation of effort after the grant has been awarded. There is, however, no obligation of result.

The effort expected of the Comenius Fellow consists of the following elements:

- The Fellow carries out the project plan proposed in the application to the best of their abilities.
- Fellows report to NRO and each other about project progress and completion (in the interim and no later than three months after the end date of the project).
- NRO reports to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on the project results.
- A brief report on the project is published in the institution’s annual report.
- Active membership of the Comenius Network: a Comenius Fellow becomes a member of the Comenius Network, which is hosted by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW).

Changes in the project team

Any changes in the project team that affect the duration of the project or that concern the Comenius Fellow must be reported immediately to NRO. NRO will advise the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, on a case-by-case basis, of the possible consequences of these changes for awarding the grant.
4 Assessment procedure

The application and assessment procedure is implemented by NRO. NRO forms an assessment committee of experts for the substantive assessment of the applications. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science decides whether or not to award the grant based on the opinion of the NRO assessment committee.

The relevant conflict of interest code applies to all individuals and NRO staff involved in the assessment or decision-making process.

4.1 Procedure

The procedure consists of the following steps:

- Publication of the call for proposals
- Submitting letters of intent
- Submitting applications
- Check by NRO of the admissibility of applications
- Possibility of pre-selection by the assessment committee before further processing of applications
- Assessment of the application by international referees
- Opportunity for the applicant to respond to the referees’ report
- Assessment by the assessment committee
- Decision by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science

4.1.1 Submitting a letter of intent and an application in ISAAC

For deadlines, guidelines and the procedure for submitting a letter of intent and an application, see 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

4.1.2 Admissibility check and processing the application

After submitting the proposal, the main applicant will be notified of whether or not the application will be processed. The NRO secretariat determines this on the basis of a number of admissibility criteria. These are provided in 4.2.1.

If an application does not meet any of these criteria, the Minister will qualify it as ‘inadmissible’ and the application not be processed.

4.1.3 Pre-selection in the event of a large number of applications

If the number of applications submitted exceeds four times the maximum number that can be awarded, a pre-selection may be part of the procedure.

The maximum number of awards has been set for each education sector (maximum of three for each sector). NRO reserves the right to apply pre-selection in only one of the two sectors.

Pre-selection is intended to prevent overburdening the assessment procedure and to be able to give applicants of unsuitable proposals clarity in the short term.

After determining admissibility, the NRO secretariat determines whether there will be a pre-selection of applications. Applicants will be notified of this immediately.
In the event of pre-selection, the proposals will be submitted to a number of members of the assessment committee. They will be asked to assess the proposals based on the assessment criteria set out in 4.2.2.

The assessment committee will then present the Minister with its opinion on whether or not to admit the applications for further assessment. If the assessment committee intends to advise the Minister not to admit a proposal for further assessment, the applicant will be notified of this, along with an explanation of the committee’s opinion. The applicant will be given the opportunity to respond to the assessment committee’s opinion within three working days. This response will be submitted for consideration to a number of members of the assessment committee, after which the committee may decide to modify its opinion to the Minister.

The Minister takes the final decision on admission of applications for further assessment.

If an application is not admitted for further assessment, the applicant will be notified of this in writing, along with a brief explanation of the opinion.

If the application is admitted for further assessment, the applicant will receive confirmation of this by email.

4.1.4 Assessment of the application by referees

The applications admitted for processing are submitted to a number of independent referees (from the Netherlands and abroad). The referees are asked to give substantive and substantiated comments on the research proposal. They will do this on the basis of the assessment criteria and a standardised form.

The referees are selected based on their expertise and may not be involved in the applications. When submitting a letter of intent or an application, applicants may suggest potential referees with whom they have no direct working relationship. Suggesting referees is no guarantee that these referees will be approached to assess the application. The members of the assessment committee may also be asked to make suggestions.

The NRO bureau determines who will be approached as a referee. If it appears that a referee’s comments are overly focused on the person of the applicant or researcher, or otherwise unprofessional, the bureau reserves the right to have these comments modified before submitting them to the applicant, or not to submit them.

4.1.5 Response

The main applicant will receive anonymised referee’s comments on the application and be given the opportunity to submit a response of no more than 1500 words within five working days.

If the main purport of the referees’ comments is negative, the applicant is urgently recommended to withdraw the application. The probability of a positive assessment in the case of predominantly negative comments by referees is generally very small. If the applicant decides to withdraw the application, they must notify the NRO bureau in writing as soon as possible, via comenius@nro.nl.
4.1.6 Assessment of the application file by preliminary assessors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition of the assessment committee</th>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment committee in the Comenius Leadership Fellows round assesses applications from research universities as well as universities of applied sciences.</td>
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The assessment committee consists of at least:
- educational researchers
- directors or former directors in Dutch or Flemish higher education
- students with experience in representative bodies/teaching evaluations at institution-wide level

Applications will be assessed by the full 'science-wide' committee. In forming the assessment committee, the aim is to achieve as wide a background as possible in disciplines and education sectors.

After receiving the referees’ comments and the applicant’s response, the application file (consisting of the original application, the referees’ comments and the applicant's response) is submitted for comment to at least two members of the assessment committee (the preliminary assessors).

On the basis of the assessment criteria, the preliminary assessors provide substantive and substantiated written comments on the referees’ report and the applicant’s response. The members of the assessment committee must take into consideration the comments already raised by the referees and which the applicant has had the opportunity to respond to. The preliminary assessors may not be involved in the applications on which they provide an assessment.

The application, the referees’ comments, the applicant’s response and the preliminary assessment serve as input for the assessment meeting.

4.1.7 Assessment meeting and final opinion

During the assessment meeting, members of the assessment committee meet and discuss all proposals, after which they assign a score to each proposal.

All applications are given a qualification based on the weighted average score. The following scale is used:
- 1.0 up to 1.4: excellent
- 1.5 up to 3.4: very good
- 3.5 up to 5.4: good
- 5.5 up to 9.0: unsatisfactory

For more information about the qualifications, see this page.

The committee then prioritises the applications according to likelihood of success. On the basis of this prioritisation, the assessment committee prepares an opinion to the Minister with the recommendation to invite at most six applicants (of the highest-scoring proposals) per education sector for an interview with a delegation of the assessment committee, and not to honour the other proposals.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science takes the final decision on selection for the interview round.

After the decision, the applicants will be notified as soon as possible of the outcome (invitation or rejection), along with a brief explanation of the opinion of the assessment committee.
4.1.8 Final opinion after the interview

During the interview, the applicant will have the opportunity to comment on the questions or the opinion of the committee, as explained in the written invitation. The applicant and the assessment committee then discuss the project proposal.

At the end of the interview, the assessment committee again assigns a score to the proposal. The interview may result in a re-assessment of the proposal’s qualification and its score.

All applications are again assigned a qualification based on the weighted average score, for which the above scale is again used. Only applications that receive at least the qualification ‘good’ for all criteria will be eligible for funding.

The assessment committee prioritises the proposals and advises the Minister of Education, Culture and Science on the applications to be honoured.

4.1.9 Decision by the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science takes the final decision. Applications will be honoured on the basis of the criteria set out in 4.2, the prioritisation determined by the assessment committee and the available budget.

Applicants are notified about the outcome as soon as possible, along with a brief explanation of the opinion of the assessment committee.

4.1.10 Objection and appeal

An interested party may object in writing to a decision relating to the 2019 round of the Comenius programme – Leadership Fellows within six weeks of the date on which the decision was communicated to the interested party. The interested party should lodge their objection to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. More information on lodging an objection can be found at www.bezwaarschriftenocw.nl (only available in Dutch).

4.1.11 Time schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Publication of the call for proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 September 2018, 14:00 CEST</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting the letter of intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 October 2018, 14:00 CEST</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting the application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October - November 2018</td>
<td>Assessment by referees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2018 - January 2019</td>
<td>Applicant’s response (five working days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January - February 2019</td>
<td>Assessment by committee, preliminary assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Assessment meeting, selection of candidates to interview and interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late April 2019</td>
<td>Decision by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No later than 1 May 2019</td>
<td>Applicants notified of whether their application has been awarded or rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 The Comenius grant is paid in the form of an increase in the government grant to the institution where the applicant is employed. This means that if the applicant wishes to lodge an objection, it is the institution that formally lodges the objection.
4.1.12 Amendments to the procedure

NRO or the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science may consider it necessary to adapt the time schedule during the course of the ongoing procedure. Applicants will be informed of this as soon as possible.

4.2 Criteria

4.2.1 Formal admissibility criteria

For an application to be eligible for admission to the assessment procedure, it must be reviewed against a number of formal conditions, as described below. Only applications that meet these conditions will be admitted to the assessment procedure.

- The main applicant has submitted a letter of intent on time;
- The application has been submitted by a person who meets the requirements set out in 3.1 of this call for proposals, including the restrictions in this paragraph on submitting applications within the Comenius Leadership Fellows round and within the entire Comenius programme;
- The application has been submitted through the main applicant’s ISAAC account;
- The application has been submitted on time;
- The application has been written in English;
- The application falls within the scope of the aim of this Call (see Chapter 2);
- The main applicant has not submitted a preliminary application/full application in one of the other ‘tiers’ of the Comenius programme;
- The application form has been completed accurately and in full, in accordance with the instructions;
- The application must be accompanied by a signed statement by the Executive Board of the institution from which the application is being submitted. This statement must indicate that if the grant is awarded, the applicant will be given sufficient scope to implement the proposed project;
- There are no Annexes to the application.

4.2.2 Assessment criteria

1. Innovative nature of the project: (25%)
   a. Does the project proposal sufficiently describe the innovative nature of the project?
   b. How will the innovation be visible, and is it indeed innovative?

2. Expected result of the project: (25%)
   a. Is the scale and context of the project and the intended result consistent with a Leadership Fellow project as described in 2.1?
   b. Has a clear description been provided of how the project aligns with the institution’s strategic (education) plan?
   c. Does the proposal clearly describe where and why an improvement is desirable in the described educational context?
   d. Has it been made plausible in the application, e.g. by referring to relevant literature and or practical examples, that the proposed innovation could lead to an improvement?
   e. Has the intended result of the project been clearly defined? Has it been convincingly substantiated why and how the project could be of value for other education professionals?
3. Quality of the project plan (25%)
   a. Have the methods used been sufficiently defined and are they adequate, and is the planning clear and achievable?
      • Does the project plan clearly define what the project team’s activities will entail?
      • Does the project plan describe how the results of the project will be evaluated? Are the methods proposed for this suitable?
      • Does the project plan provide for an evaluation of project implementation? Are the methods proposed for this suitable?
   b. Has it been clearly defined which roles and expertise are necessary for the project, and how these are provided for in the team? Is this sufficiently solid?
   c. Is the dissemination plan (plans for disseminating the results) suitable and sufficiently ambitious?

4. Teaching experience and vision of the applicant (25%)
   a. Does the applicant match the Leadership Fellow profile (as described in 1.1 and 3.1), given their teaching experience and current role at the educational institution?
      • Does the applicant or the team have the right experience, given the subject matter of the proposed project?
   b. Does the applicant’s professional statement demonstrate:
      • a vision on education and educational leadership, how they apply this in educational practice and how the proposed project is in line with this;
      • the contribution the Comenius Fellowship and membership of the Comenius Network can make to the applicant’s educational career.

4.2.3 Policy considerations

When honouring the proposals, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science can also take budgetary considerations into account in addition to the quality criteria.
5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about the Comenius programme and this call for proposals, please contact:

Dorien Aartsma, MSc
T: 070 – 3440928
E: comenius@nro.nl

5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system, ISAAC

If you have any technical questions about the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the ISAAC manual before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours CEST on +31 (0)20 346 7179. You can also send your queries by email through isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will receive a response within two working days.
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