Call for proposals

Comenius programme
Senior Fellows

2019
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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 grant1 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 Senior Fellow as well as the assessment and selection of applications.

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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 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 Leadership Fellows are available on the programme page of the Comenius programme on NRO’s website.

1.2 Available budget

The 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 €2,200,000 is available for Senior Fellow projects. The grant amount for each project is €100,000.

The grants are divided between three fixed themes and one open theme (see 2.3 - 2.5) according to the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Universities of applied sciences</th>
<th>Research universities</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: International Classroom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: Smarter and better learning with technology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 3: Focus on student wellbeing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free theme - The Value of Knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 a preliminary application is **2 October 2018**, 14:00 hours CEST.

The deadline for submitting a full application is **4 December 2018**, 14:00 hours CEST.

A prerequisite for submitting a preliminary application is the timely submission of a letter of intent. The letter of intent will not be assessed on content.

On the basis of the preliminary application, the applicant will receive a positive or negative recommendation to elaborate the preliminary application into a full application.

See 4.1 of this call for proposals for the procedures for submitting a letter of intent, a preliminary application and a full application. See 4.2 of this call for proposals for the assessment criteria of the preliminary application and the full application.
### 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 section describes how the Comenius projects contribute to the objectives of the Comenius programme as outlined in Chapter 1. It is also mentioned how this should be reflected in a project proposal (preliminary application and/or full application).

The characteristics of a Senior Fellow project are set out in 2.2. The themes for the 2019 round of the Comenius Senior Fellows are set out in 2.3 - 2.6.

*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.²

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.³,⁴,⁵ 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

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² The proposed innovation must fall within the scope of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act applicable at the time the preliminary application is submitted.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.
how the project will be set up and implemented, what expertise is required and how this is provided for in the team.

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 education professional.

2.2 The Senior Fellow and Senior Fellow projects

With the proposed project, the Senior Fellow must have an impact on education in a faculty, a degree programme or a substantial study programme of a higher education institution.

The Senior Fellow should have a broad view on education in their own discipline based on their current role and teaching experience. The Senior Fellow must have contact with teaching staff and/or lecturer-researchers and preferably also regularly teach the students for whom the proposed innovation is intended.

The Senior Fellow must have at least five years of teaching experience in higher education and must demonstrate ambition in the area of educational leadership and/or in developing and researching education for his own discipline or area of interest.

The team that carries out the Senior Fellow project must possess leadership (in education) as well as experience in practical education research. The team’s composition must be such that the project can

- contribute to the didactic knowledge about higher education in a specific field (e.g. an academic discipline; a specific student population; in line with societal and technological developments);
- introduce an innovation across the entire breadth of the project’s scope, and thus involve all the relevant stakeholders (teachers, students, etc.).
The education CV of the Senior Fellow and their team members must demonstrate how they have previously implemented (small-scale) educational innovations (individually or in cooperation).

The proposed project must be implemented within the context of a faculty, a degree programme or a substantial department of a higher education institution. The grant amounts to €100,000; the project has a minimum duration of 24 months and a maximum duration of 30 months.

The aim of a Senior Fellow project is to contribute to the educational knowledge base in the field of the envisaged innovation. The proposal should clearly describe how the project is in line with recent developments in this field and how the project can contribute to this. In the dissemination plan, the applicant must take potential publication channels outside their own institution into account for the future.

2.3 Theme 1: international classroom

Awareness of and focus on international competencies is an indispensable part of student education in the 21st century. An international educational environment contributes to more challenging education and, therefore, better prepares students for working in a globalising world.

The presence of international students and students with a migration background enables us to provide education to the majority of students in the Netherlands in an international and intercultural setting. This culturally diverse educational environment, the ‘international classroom’ in which Dutch and international students meet, offers many opportunities for challenging and trendsetting education.

In the international classroom, education is designed in such a way that Dutch and international students can develop international competencies. Confrontation between different cultural perspectives contributes to building intercultural skills, an investigative attitude, flexibility and problem-solving capacity. A variety of perspectives and a global outlook contribute to the vision and personal development of the student as a ‘global citizen’.

An international classroom that is of real added value to Dutch and international students is not a given. This requires international and cultural skills of students and teachers, but also adaptation of the curriculum and possibly adaptation of the way in which education is provided.

The ‘international classroom’ theme is in line with the vision statement on internationalisation that was sent to the Lower House of Parliament on 4 June this

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6 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.


Against this backdrop, we are looking for educational initiatives that can make an innovative contribution to promoting the quality of the international classroom. Important aspects of an international classroom may include: the curriculum, language policy, diversity and student experience, including in the social context.

2.4 Theme 2: smarter and better learning with technology

The possibilities offered by technology are growing at an unprecedented rate. Nobody can predict how digitalisation will change higher education in the next ten years, but we can be sure that digitalisation will have a major impact. The time to fast-track innovation is now. Digital openess can teach us to transform in a meaningful way.

Digitalisation can help to improve the quality of education. Online preparation by students means that contact time between teachers and students can be used more efficiently. This offers new opportunities for both project-based and distance learning. Digital formative tests can give students a better understanding of their progress and offer opportunities for tailored guidance. Learning analytics and modern student monitoring systems keep students up to date and give direction and depth to their academic efforts. New technologies such as 3D graphics, virtual reality and online labs enable learning in realistic practice environments.

The theme ‘Smarter and better learning with technology’ is linked to the Acceleration Agenda for Education Innovation (2017) of the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, VSNU and SURF. We are looking for educational innovations in which new and existing technologies are used to improve the quality of education and the learning process of individual students.

2.5 Theme 3: focus on student wellbeing

Higher education places high demands on students’ vitality and resilience. Young adults seek a balance between the pressure (they experience) and demands of their educational environment and their individual circumstances.

Numerous studies and examples from practice in higher education have shown that many Dutch students experience a high degree of pressure to perform, which can lead to psychological complaints. These complaints have an impact on their academic performance. Students often seek insufficient help for their complaints, or do not seek help in time. They underestimate their complaints, feel ashamed, or are not

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9 (only available in Dutch):

10 Applications submitted under this theme will be evaluated by an international committee. Applications should therefore be prepared in English. See also 4.2.1

11 For a summary of examples of how technological developments can improve education, and for more information, see: https://www.surf.nl/binaries/content/assets/surf/nl/kennisbank/2016/surf-trendrapport-07112016-.pdf

12 https://www.surf.nl/binaries/content/assets/surf/nl/2017/versnellingsagenda-voor-onderwijsinnovatie-web-08112017.pdf

aware of the support available to them through the educational institution. Students who seek help do benefit from the support offered to them.\textsuperscript{14}

In the international debate, too, there is an increasingly strong call for education aimed not only at achieving study success but also student wellbeing in intellectual, physical, socio-emotional and ethical areas.\textsuperscript{15} A prerequisite for this is an inclusive and safe educational environment where attention is paid to early identification and discussion of psychological or other complaints; where students feel at home; and where the circumstances of each student are taken into consideration.

For the ‘Student wellbeing’ theme, the applicant may seek alignment with the Student Welfare Action Plan\textsuperscript{16} (among others) and seek educational innovations that promote student wellbeing by focusing – within the learning environment – on connection and a safe learning environment, inclusiveness, early detection of psychological or other complaints, personal development of the student, promoting vitality and resilience and long-term participation in work and society.

2.6 Open theme – the entire scope of The Value of Knowledge

The 2015-2025 Strategic Agenda for Higher Education and Research, ‘The Value of Knowledge’, charts a course for the future of higher education. A central tenet of the Strategic Agenda is that higher education must, in the coming years, take a leap into the future. The time to take this leap into 21st-century education is now. The focus is on three policy themes: world-class education; accessibility, talent development and diversity; and societal relevance.

To achieve the ambitions in these areas, it is important to give education professionals and teachers sufficient scope to develop and implement their own plans. They are best qualified to identify where opportunities lie and which innovations can significantly contribute to the quality of higher education.

Projects suitable for the open theme in the Strategic Agenda are those that match the topics and ambitions set out in the Agenda. It is the express intention that applicants use their experience in teaching practice to reflect on which innovations will make the greatest contribution to higher education.

The full text of the Strategic Agenda can be found at:


Selecting a theme
Applications are submitted and assessed within one specific theme.

Connection with the theme is one of the admissibility criteria. A project may have areas of overlap with two or even all three of the defined themes. In that case, it is advisable to submit a proposal within the theme closest to the applicant’s main motivation for carrying out the project.

If the main motivation for the project is not directly related to one of these themes, the application can be submitted in the open theme.
3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Applications can be submitted by education professionals working in publicly-funded higher education institutions in the Netherlands (Article 1.8 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act; only available in Dutch).

One application may be submitted for each faculty\textsuperscript{17,18}. The dean and/or the faculty director should endorse the application with a substantive recommendation and a signed statement that the project leader will be given sufficient scope to implement the project if the grant is awarded.

A main applicant acts as the project leader and can designate up to three co-applicants in their application. The application should clarify what expertise is required for the project and how this is provided for in the team, or will be provided for after the application is awarded. The applicant should preferably demonstrate that the project will also involve educational expertise from within or outside the institution. Student assistants who actively contribute to educational innovation can also be part of the team.\textsuperscript{19}

The applicant must:
- have an appointment for at least the duration of the project and at least 0.5 FTE;
- have at least five years’ experience in higher education;
- is responsible for the design and/or organisation of education in the context in which the project is carried out (this responsibility may be shared between the main applicant and the co-applicants);
- demonstrate, with a signed statement from the dean/faculty director, 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.\textsuperscript{20}

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

\textsuperscript{17} In this call for proposals, the word ‘faculty’ is used as the most common term for ‘part of the organisation within a higher education institution that falls directly under the Executive Board in the organisation chart’. Institutions use different names for these parts of the educational organisation, for example ‘domain’, ‘institute’ or ‘academy’. Interdisciplinary education centres (like Centres of Expertise) that offer full education programmes but are not linked to one specific faculty and (therefore) fall directly under the remit of the Executive Board of the institution can also submit a maximum of one application.

\textsuperscript{18} Specific limits apply to a number of institutions with a non-standard organisational structure. See the Annex to this call for proposals.

\textsuperscript{19} The project team may therefore 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.

\textsuperscript{20} If applicants from several faculties are involved, the statement of the dean of the coordinating faculty can indicate that the other deans have been consulted.
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 overlap\textsuperscript{21}.

- If awarded a grant, in principle only the main applicant (and not the rest of the team) will be appointed a Senior 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 preliminary application and full application in ISAAC and will, during the assessment procedure, 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 Senior Fellows are excluded from submitting applications, both as a main applicant and a co-applicant.\textsuperscript{22}

### 3.2 What can be applied for


Applications can be submitted for projects with a duration of at least 24 months and at most 30 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 €100,000 is available for each application. The requested budget may not exceed €100,000 and may not be less than €95,000.

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.

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\textsuperscript{21} 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 number of full applications in the same tier in the Comenius programme will be set at two applications in consecutive years.

\textsuperscript{22} Members of the assessment committee are not excluded from submitting an application in the other tiers (Teaching Fellow, Leadership Fellow) of the Comenius programme.
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.

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:

- Secretariat / Students €53/424
- Junior/research assistant for academic and non-academic staff/teaching staff €72/576
- Mid-level/university teaching staff/ lecturer-researchers €87/696
- Senior/associate professor €95/760
- Director/professor/lector €119/952

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](http://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 a preliminary application is **2 October 2018, 14:00 hours CEST**.

The deadline for submitting a full application is **4 December 2018, 14:00 hours CEST**.

When submitting your letter of intent, preliminary application and full 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 and submitting the letter of intent, preliminary application and full application

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

The main applicant must submit the letter of intent, preliminary application and full 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.

There is no separate form for preparing a letter of intent. You can enter the details directly in ISAAC.
Letters of intent must be submitted no later than 4 September 2018, 14:00 CEST, through the online application system, ISAAC.

After the letter of intent has been submitted, the main applicant can no longer be changed.

Under the heading 'Summary', the main applicant should provide the following information:

- For which theme (see 2.2 - 2.6) the application will be submitted. After submission of a letter of intent, the theme can no longer be changed.
- Title of the project proposal (this can no longer be changed)
- Summary of the project proposal. This can still be changed when submitting the preliminary application

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

The purpose of the letters of intent is to provide an idea of the (maximum) number of applications. After the deadline for submission of letters of intent, the applicants will be notified of the total number of letters of intent submitted and the distribution over the different themes.

The NRO bureau will also use this information to gain insight into the composition of the assessment committee (determining any involvement with the main applicant) and the distribution of applications among the members of the assessment committee depending on their areas of expertise. The content of the letters of intent (e.g. the summary) will not play a role in the further assessment process.

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 as soon as possible at comenius@nro.nl.

3.4.2 Submitting a preliminary application

The preliminary application must include:

- a summary of the project proposal;
- a brief problem outline and a substantiation of the innovative character and the expected results of the project;
- the education CVs of the main applicant and co-applicant and a professional statement.

To submit a preliminary application, the applicant must use the application form 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 preliminary application through their ISAAC account.

Full applications must be submitted no later than 2 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 preliminary application at least one day before the deadline. Preliminary 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).

The preliminary application will be reviewed against the admissibility criteria set out in 4.2.1 and the assessment criteria set out in 4.2.2.

### 3.4.3 Submitting a full application

After the preliminary application has been processed and assessed, the main applicant receives a recommendation on elaborating the proposal in the preliminary application into a full application. Applicants who have received a negative recommendation are strongly advised not to submit a full application in view of the limited chance of success.

As a supplement to the preliminary application, the full application should also include a detailed project plan, including the budget and a CV, and a professional statement by the main applicant.

The main applicant is obliged to submit the application through their ISAAC account.

Full applications must be submitted no later than **4 December 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. 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 education 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](http://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 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 preliminary applications
- Check by the NRO bureau of the admissibility of preliminary applications
- Assessment of the preliminary applications by the assessment committee
- Applicants are notified about the recommendation whether or not to elaborate the preliminary application into a full application
- Submitting full applications
- Check by the NRO bureau of the admissibility of applications
- Assessment committee’s preliminary assessments
- Opportunity to respond to the preliminary assessment
- Assessment by the assessment committee
- Decision by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science

4.1.1 Submitting a letter of intent and a preliminary application in ISAAC

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

4.1.2 Checking the admissibility of and processing the preliminary application

As soon as possible after submitting the proposal, the main applicant will be notified whether or not the preliminary 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 a preliminary application does not meet one of these criteria, the Minister will qualify it as ‘inadmissible’ and the application will not be processed.

4.1.3 Assessment of the preliminary application by the assessment committee

Each preliminary application is submitted to the assessment committee. The assessment committee assesses the preliminary applications based on assessment criteria 1, 2 and 4 set out in 4.2.2 of this call for proposals. The assessment committee provides the preliminary applications with a negative or positive recommendation to elaborate the preliminary application into a full application. Preliminary applications will not be compared, scored or prioritised.
4.1.4 Notification of recommendation on elaborating the preliminary application into a full application

At the beginning of November 2018, the applicant will be notified about the assessment of the preliminary application.

This notification includes a positive or negative recommendation to elaborate this preliminary application into a full application. If the assessment committee issues a negative recommendation for the preliminary application, the applicant will receive a brief explanation for this decision.

Applicants who receive a negative recommendation are strongly advised not to prepare a full application. Since this concerns a recommendation, it is not open to objection or appeal.

4.1.5 Submitting the full application

For deadlines, guidelines and the procedure for submitting the full application, see 3.4.3.

4.1.6 Checking the admissibility of and processing the full application

As soon as possible 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.

4.1.7 Assessment of the application by preliminary assessors

Each application is submitted for comments to two members of the assessment committee (the preliminary assessors). On the basis of the assessment criteria set out in 4.2.2, the preliminary assessors provide substantive and substantiated written comments on the proposal. In addition, the preliminary assessors assign a score for each major criterion. The preliminary assessors may not be involved in the applications on which they provide an assessment.

4.1.8 Response

The preliminary assessments are then anonymised and presented to the applicant.

The applicant will be given the opportunity to submit a response, of 1000 words at most, within one week. In the response, the applicant may identify factual errors in the preliminary assessment and clarify any ambiguities in the application as noted by the preliminary assessors.

Submitting a response is not compulsory. Furthermore, an applicant may decide, based on the preliminary assessment, to withdraw the proposal from further assessment.²³

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

²³ The applicant can notify the secretary of this at comenius@nro.nl. The secretary will ask the applicant to register the application as ‘withdrawn’ in ISAAC.
4.1.9 Assessment meeting and final opinion

The members of the assessment committee meet during the assessment meeting and discuss and score the application files consisting of the full application, the preliminary assessments and the responses.

All applications are given a qualification based on the final 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

Please note: Only applications that receive at least a score of 5.4 or higher for all criteria will be eligible for funding. For more information about the qualifications, see: www.nwo.nl/qualification system.

All applications within the same theme and educational sector will be prioritised on the basis of scores given to the proposals. On the basis of this prioritisation, the assessment committee prepares an opinion on the proposals to be honoured. This is presented to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science.

Composition of the assessment committee

In the Comenius Senior Fellows round, the assessment committee consists of four different divisions.

Each division of the assessment committee must have at least the following expertise:

- Practical experience in educational innovation projects
- Theme-related expertise; a higher education professional who incorporates research and practice into this theme in their own work
- Education researcher/educationalist
- Student-related expertise

The different divisions of the assessment committee assess the applications submitted in the various themes. Proposals from universities of applied sciences (Dutch acronym: HBO) and research universities (Dutch acronym: WO) are assessed within a single division. Members of the assessment committee currently work, or have recently worked, in higher education. Students in the assessment committee have proven experience in representative bodies and/or with teaching evaluations. Applications will be assessed by the full 'science-wide' committee. When forming the assessment committee, the aim is to achieve as wide a background of disciplines as possible. However, it cannot be guaranteed that all disciplines will be represented in the committee.

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

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science takes the final decision on the submitted applications.

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.
4.1.11 Objection and appeal

An interested party\textsuperscript{24} may object in writing to a decision relating to the 2019 round of the Comenius programme for Senior 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 \url{www.bezwaarschriftenocw.nl}.

4.1.12 Time schedule

The deadline for submitting a letter of intent is \textbf{4 September 2018}, 14:00 hours CEST.
The deadline for submitting a preliminary application is \textbf{2 October 2018}, 14:00 hours CEST.
The deadline for submitting a full application is \textbf{4 December 2018}, 14:00 hours CEST.

\begin{tabular}{|c|l|}
\hline
\textbf{June 2018} & Publication of the Call for Proposals \\
\hline
\textbf{4 September 2018, 14:00 CEST} & Deadline for submitting the letter of intent \\
\hline
\textbf{2 October 2018, 14:00 CEST} & Deadline for submitting a preliminary application \\
\hline
\textbf{October} & Review against admissibility criteria; assessment of preliminary applications, establishing the recommendations \\
\hline
\textbf{No later than 5 November 2018} & Recommendation about elaborating the preliminary application sent to applicants \\
\hline
\textbf{4 December 2018} & Deadline for submitting full applications \\
\hline
\textbf{December 2018} & Proposals sent to the assessment committee; the assessment committee prepares preliminary assessments \\
\hline
\textbf{Second half of January 2019} & Preliminary assessments sent to applicants; response requested (within five working days of receiving the preliminary assessment) \\
\hline
\textbf{February 2019} & Members of the assessment committee prepare meetings based on the applications, preliminary assessments and responses \\
\hline
\textbf{March 2019} & Assessment meetings; the assessment committee provides the Minister with an opinion on awarding/rejecting proposals \\
\hline
\textbf{April 2019} & Minister’s decision to award/reject proposals \\
\hline
\textbf{No later than 22 April 2019} & Applicants notified of whether their application has been awarded or rejected \\
\hline
\textbf{May 2019} & Festive kick-off meeting with all 2019 Comenius Fellows (Teaching, Senior & Leadership) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

4.1.13 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.

\textsuperscript{24} 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.
4.2 Criteria

4.2.1 Formal admissibility criteria

For a preliminary application and full 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 preliminary application / full 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 Senior Fellows round and within the entire Comenius programme;
- The preliminary application / full application has been submitted through the main applicant’s ISAAC account;
- The preliminary application / full application has been submitted on time;
- Theme 1: the preliminary application / full application has been written in English;
- Themes 2, 3 or the open theme: preliminary application / full application has been written in Dutch or English;
- The preliminary application falls within the scope of the aim of this call for proposals (see Chapter 2);
- The theme for which the preliminary application / full application has been submitted matches the category for which the letter of intent was submitted;
- The main applicant has not submitted a preliminary application / full application in one of the other ‘tiers’ of the Comenius programme;
- The preliminary application form / full application form has been completed accurately and in full, in accordance with the instructions;
- The preliminary application / full application falls within the subject matter of this call for proposals, as set out in Chapter 2;
- The preliminary application / full application must be accompanied by a signed statement by the dean or head of the organisational unit submitting the application. 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 preliminary application / full application.

Additional admissibility criteria for the full applications:
- The budget has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines in 3.2 of this call for proposals;
- The period for which the budget is requested is at least 24 months and at most 30 months. The planned start date of the project is between 1 May 2019 and (on or before) 1 September 2019. The planned end date of the project is before 31 October 2019.

4.2.2 Assessment criteria for preliminary applications and full applications

The full applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria. The preliminary applications are assessed against criteria 1, 2 and 4; in this phase, the criteria are weighted at 33.3%.

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 Senior Fellow project as described in 2.1?
b. Does the project align with the chosen theme as described in 2.2 and 2.3? 
   c. Does the proposal clearly describe where and why an improvement is desirable in the 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 provide for an evaluation of the project results? 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 Senior Fellow profile (as described in 1.1 and 3.1), given their teaching experience and current role at the institution?
   b. Does the applicant or the team have the right experience, given the subject matter of the proposed project?
   c. Does the applicant’s professional statement demonstrate:
      • a sophisticated vision of education, how they apply this in their own work 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 teaching 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.

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25 With the exception of the open theme.
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:

Marchje van der Veen MSc (programme secretary)
T: 070 344 0928
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.
6 Annexes

6.1 Summary of specific agreements for higher education institutions with a non-standard organisational structure

6.1.1 Research universities

Universities based on religious or philosophical principles
Universities based on religious or philosophical principles listed under Article I of the Annex to the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act may submit at most one application per institution.

Wageningen University & Research (WUR)
Each of the five departments (Agrotechnology & Nutrition Sciences, Animal Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Plant Sciences, Social Sciences) in which (formal) education is organised at WUR may submit one application at most.

6.1.2 Universities of applied sciences

Small-scale or specialised universities of applied sciences
Small-scale or specialised universities of applied sciences with fewer than 2000 enrolments a year, as published on the website of the Dutch association for universities of applied science (Vereniging Hogescholen), may only submit one application.

Hogeschool Utrecht
Eight applications can be submitted by institutions affiliated with Hogeschool Utrecht. The HU Grant Office is responsible for coordinating applications from these institutions. Interested parties can contact Femke During at hugrantoffice@hu.nl.

Hogeschool Saxion
Eight applications can be submitted by institutions affiliated with Hogeschool Saxion. Julia van de Geijn is responsible for coordinating applications from these institutions. Interested parties can contact her at j.j.m.vandegeijn@saxion.nl.

Avans Hogeschool
Eight applications can be submitted by institutions affiliated with Avans Hogeschool. Jetta Wille is responsible for coordinating applications from these applications. Interested parties can contact her at ja.wille@avans.nl or on +1 (0)88-5257513.

Fontys
Eight applications can be submitted by institutions affiliated with Fontys Hogeschool. Johan Vlugter is responsible for coordinating applications from these applications. Interested parties can contact him at j.vlugter@fontys.nl.

Hanzehogeschool Groningen
Eight applications can be submitted by institutions affiliated with Hanzehogeschool Groningen. Hoa Pham is responsible for coordinating applications from these applications. Interested parties can contact her at v.n.h.pham@pl.hanze.nl.

Van Hall Larenstein
Each of the three domains in Animals and Business, Delta Areas and Resources and Food and Dairy may submit one application at most.