Call for proposals

Comenius programme
Senior Fellows

2020

The Hague, June 2019
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research
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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 higher education in the Netherlands. 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 freedom of scope. According to the Strategic Agenda, the teachers, education leaders and directors that work in Dutch institutions of higher education 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 seventeenth century pedagogue and education innovator. He is often called the founder of modern education. In his search for good education, Comenius combined education research with the development and implementation of innovative teaching methods. The Comenius programme allows 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 (€500,000). The Fellows are distinguished on the basis of their experience and the extent of their impact on education. They can use the grant to implement educational innovations and improvements in their own teaching practice on a scale suited to their position and the duration of the project.

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.

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 financiering hoger onderwijs) in connection with changes to the budget of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen) for the financial year concerned; as from then, it will be a legal obligation. The Comenius grant is therefore not a personal grant.
See Chapter 2, 'Aim', of this call for specific information about the nature of the projects and the thematic areas for 2020.

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 Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will make a total of €6,200,000 available for grants for the 2020 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 free 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: Inclusive education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: ‘Bildung’ and identity-building</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 3: Societal relevance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<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>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

The deadline for submitting a letter of intent is 3 September 2019, 14:00 hours CEST.

The deadline for submitting a preliminary application is 1 October 2019, 14:00 hours CEST.

The deadline for submitting a full application is 3 December 2019, 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 develop the preliminary application into a full application.

See 4.1 of this call for proposals for the procedures for submitting a letter of intent, the preliminary application and the full application. See 4.2 of this call for proposals for the assessment criteria for the preliminary application and 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. How this should be reflected in a project proposal (the preliminary application and/or full application) is always mentioned.

Chapter 2.2 describes the specifics of a Senior Fellow project. The thematic spearheads for the Comenius Senior Fellows 2020 round are described in 2.3 - 2.6.

Improving education through evidence-informed innovation

The Comenius programme is aimed 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 education. The improvement must directly benefit students at a publicly-funded Dutch institution of higher education and the innovation must be 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 substantiating 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 examples from practice must be used for this purpose. If the applicant makes reference to arguments derived from their own

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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 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 pathways 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 component of successful implementation of an innovation in the student’s learning environment.

\(^5\) The development of educational resources that are not implemented or used in education until after the end of the Comenius project cannot be financed through a Comenius grant.
teaching experience, they should demonstrate familiarity with relevant developments within and outside their own institution.

In their proposal, the applicant must clarify the distinctiveness and added value of the project compared to other projects with the same objective. If the applicant wishes to apply an innovation in the project 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 teaching practice. If the project is building on a pilot, the applicant must demonstrate how further development and/or scaling up of the pilot requires an innovative, original approach and can produce new results.

A description of the evaluation of the innovation and its implementation should be included in the project plan.

The project plan must outline how the project will be set up and implemented, what expertise is required and what the team composition is. It should also set out clearly how students will be involved in the project.

**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. It should be clear from the proposal how the innovation and implementation will be evaluated so that the results of the project are visible. The applicant must also consider how the results and experiences will be shared with educational professionals within and outside their own institution.

**Contributing to the professional development and career of the Comenius Fellows**

The grant will offer Comenius Fellows the opportunity to focus on improving their own teaching practice during the project period and for further development as an education professional. Comenius Fellows become members of the Comenius Network of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (*Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, KNAW). This is a network of education innovators who can share knowledge and experiences and work together on projects to improve higher education. The network serves as a discussion partner for policy makers, politicians and citizens in the field of higher education teaching.

The applicant’s professional statement must reflect their own vision of higher education and the development of higher education; how they express this in their own work and how they will do this in the proposed project; and how they hope to inspire others in their role as educational professionals.

### 2.2 The Senior Fellow and Senior Fellow projects

With the proposed project, the Senior Fellow must have an impact on education at a faculty, large programme or substantial department of an institution of higher education.

The Senior Fellow must have a comprehensive view on education in their own research field through their current position and experience in education. The Senior Fellow must have contact with lecturers and/or lecturer-researchers and preferably also teaches (some or all of) the students to whom the proposed innovation is directed on a regular basis.
The Senior Fellow must have at least five years of teaching experience in higher education and show ambition in the field of educational leadership and/or in research and development of education for their own research field or area of interest.

The team that carries out the Senior Fellow project must have educational leadership but also experience with practical educational research. The composition of the team should make it possible to:
- contribute to the didactic knowledge of higher education in a particular field (e.g. an academic research field – or a specific student population – in line with social and technological developments);
- implement the innovation across the entire breadth of where the project is implemented, and thus involve all the stakeholders in this, such as teachers, students, and so on.

The teaching CV of the Senior Fellow and their team members must demonstrate how they have previously implemented educational small-scale innovations (individually or in cooperation).

The proposed project should take place within the context of a faculty, a large programme or a substantial department of an institution of higher education.

The grant amount is €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 knowledge base of education in the field of the intended innovation. The proposal makes clear how the project fits in with recent developments in this field, and what the project can add to this. In the dissemination plan, the applicant should look ahead to possible publication channels within and outside their own institution.⁶

2.3 Theme 1: Inclusive education

Projects that aim to make every student feel at home within their educational environment, regardless of their cultural or socio-economic background.

2.4 Theme 2: ‘Bildung’ and identity-building

Projects in which the personal development of the individual student is central. The innovation can be introduced outside, within or in addition to the regular curriculum.

2.5 Theme 3: Societal relevance

Projects that aim to strengthen the connection between education and the labour market, educational institution and society and/or between different educational sectors.

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.
2.6 Free 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 Strategic Agenda has three central 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 educational professionals and instructors freedom of 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 free 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: [https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2015/07/01/the-value-of-knowledge](https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2015/07/01/the-value-of-knowledge).

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**Selecting a theme**

Applications are submitted and assessed within one specific theme. Connection of the project with a 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.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / Comeniusprogramma Senior Fellows 2020

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply?

Conditions for submitting applications in the Comenius programme
Applications can be submitted by education professionals working in publicly-funded institutions of higher education 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. 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.

An applicant will be acting as project leader and may, in their application, specify a team of colleagues, advisers and students (the project members).

- 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 Comenius Fellow who previously received 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 overlap.
- If a grant is awarded, only the applicant – so not the rest of the team – will be appointed a Comenius Fellow and will be admitted to the Comenius Network (see 3.5 ‘After grant award’).

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. After the grant is awarded, the applicant will be the contact person for NRO and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

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7 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.

8 Specific limits apply to a number of institutions with a non-standard organisational structure. See the Annex to this call for proposals.

9 It is no longer possible to register a co-applicant in ISAAC; all members of the project team can be stated on the application form.

10 An applicant who unsuccessfully submitted a full application for a grant in the 2018 or 2019 round of the Comenius programme may again submit an application in the 2020 round. As from 2020, however, the maximum number of full applications in the same tier in the Comenius programme will be set at two applications in consecutive years.
Conditions for submitting applications in the Comenius Senior Fellows round

The applicant must:

- At the time the grant is awarded, have a contract of employment with the institution where the project is intended to be implemented for at least the duration of the project and for at least 0.5 FTE. If the applicant has a contract of employment for less than 0.5 FTE with the institution at the time of submitting the application, it must be indicated in the statement of the dean/faculty director (part of the preliminary application) that the contract will be extended for at least the duration of the project at the time the grant is awarded;
- Have at least five years of experience in higher education;
- Have responsibility for the design and/or organisation of the education in the context in which the project will be implemented (this responsibility may be shared by the project members);
- Demonstrate, with a recommendation from the dean/faculty director, that the project is ‘supported’ within the institution and that the project team will be given sufficient opportunities to implement the project if the grant is awarded.\(^{11}\)

Members of the Assessment Committee in this round of the Comenius Senior Fellows are excluded from submitting applications and may not be part of an applicant’s project team.\(^{12}\)

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 2020.

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 €90,000.

A separate format (Excel file) is available for processing the budget associated with your application. You must fill in this budget format and send it as an appendix to your application if you submit it digitally.

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

If co-financing is made available, the total budget of a project could exceed the maximum amount of the grant (€ 100,000). Co-financing may, however, not exceed the requested budget as the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science must remain the main financier of the project. Furthermore, the budget format must clearly indicate which staff costs or material costs are covered by co-financing, whether in cash or in kind. Co-financing must be guaranteed (by means of a letter of guarantee) at the time the application is submitted. The application form, the statement of the

\(^{11}\) If the applicants are from more than one faculty, the statement of the dean of the budget-holding faculty may state that the deans of the other faculties have been duly consulted.

\(^{12}\) Members of the Assessment Committee are not excluded from submitting an application in the other tiers (Teaching Fellow, Leadership Fellow) of the Comenius programme.
dean/faculty director and the letter of guarantee (in the event of co-financing) must be submitted as a single, merged PDF file.

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 institutions of secondary or higher vocational education.

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 Guide to Government Fees for 2017:

- Secretariat/Students: €53/424
- Junior/research assistant for AS and NAS/teaching staff: €72/576
- Mid-level/university teaching staff/ lecturer-researchers: €87/696
- Senior/associate professor: €95/760
- Director/professor/lecturer: €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 project staff who are not employed by a publicly-funded secondary or higher vocational education institutions should be entered under material costs. Even if these costs are covered by co-financing, whether in cash or in kind, they should still 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 educational resources and licences for such resources 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 educational resources 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 3 September 2019, 14:00 hours CEST.
The deadline for submitting a preliminary application is 1 October 2019, 14:00 hours CEST.
The deadline for submitting a full application is 3 December 2019, 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

**Applicant’s account in ISAAC and registration of the institution**
The 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 at relatiebeheer@nwo.nl. Indicate at least 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 3 September 2019, 14:00 CEST, through the online application system, ISAAC.

There is no form for preparing a letter of intent available on the NRO or NWO websites. If you click on ‘Digital application for this grant’ on the grant page of the NWO website for this specific round you will reach the ISAAC application page, where you can create an account. Once you have done this you can follow the next steps as set out in the ISAAC manual.

After the letter of intent has been submitted, the applicant can no longer be changed. Under the heading ‘Summary’, the 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;
- the title of the project proposal;
- the faculty submitting the letter of intent;
- a summary of the project proposal. This can still be changed when submitting the preliminary application.

Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt of the letter of intent.\textsuperscript{13} 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 applicant) and the distribution of applications among the members of the Assessment Committee depending on their areas of expertise. The Assessment Committee does not assess the letters of intent (e.g. the summary).

If, after submission of the letter of intent, an applicant decides not to submit an application, for whatever reason, they are requested to withdraw their letter of intent in ISAAC. The \texttt{manual} explains how this should be done.

The applicant is not obliged to provide a reason for withdrawing the letter of intent; if the applicant nevertheless wishes to explain this, they can do so at comenius@nro.nl.

3.4.2 Submitting a preliminary application

The preliminary application must include:

\textsuperscript{13} This confirmation will be sent to the email address registered in the applicant’s account. If the applicant does not receive confirmation after submission of the letter of intent, NRO recommends that they contact the ISAAC helpdesk as soon as possible (see 5.1.2.).
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- a summary of the project proposal;
- a brief problem outline, substantiation of the innovative character and substantiation of the expected results of the project;
- the professional statement of the applicant.

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

Full applications must be submitted no later than 1 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 applicant will receive a recommendation regarding development of the proposal in the preliminary application into a full project proposal. Given the low chance of success, applicants who have received a negative recommendation are strongly advised to refrain from submitting a full proposal.

As a supplement to the preliminary application, the full application should also include a detailed project plan and a project budget.

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

Full applications must be submitted no later than 3 December 2019, 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).

Research field codes

You must specify one or more research field codes that apply to the proposed research on the application form. You can only use the NWO research field codes for this. These are available at www.nwo.nl/research.field.codes. This information must
also be entered in ISAAC (in the ‘General’ tab at ‘Research fields’) before submitting the application. The research field code for ‘Educational Sciences’ (41.90.00) must in any case always be stated on the application form and in ISAAC. Below that, you should state the main research fields and sub-fields in order of importance.

### 3.5 Grant conditions

The NWO Grant Rules (2017) and the Approval of funding for scientific research (2008) apply to all applications.

**Developing educational resources**

Developing educational resources and carrying out education research can be part of a project, but not the final aim. Any educational resources developed must be implemented in teaching practice within the duration of the project. Developing educational resources that can only be implemented in practice after project completion cannot be the main aim of a project within the Comenius programme.

**Creative Commons**

Educational resources 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 that is easy to find. The project team can use a suitable storage environment of their own choosing. NRO suggests the following two options. SURFsharekit, which is a repository service provided by SURF. Another good option, which is free of charge, is Wikiwijs. In addition to storing open educational resources, Wikiwijs offers a development environment where users can jointly develop, share, and evaluate resources.

**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 can 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 (2020-2021). 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 2020.

**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 elements set out below.

- The Fellow carries out the project plan proposed in the application to the best of their abilities.
- The Fellows report to the NRO in the interim (December 2020, 2021) and no later than three months after the end date of the project on the substantive progress and completion of the project; the NRO will provide a format for this. NRO reports to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on the project results.
• The financial statements of the projects are included in the annual report of the institution where the project is implemented. At the end of the project, it must be possible for the directorate of Student Grants and Loans in Higher Education (HO&S) to request a financial statement for the project from the institution where the project has been implemented.
• 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 to NRO immediately. NRO will advise the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, on a case-by-case basis, of the possible consequences of these changes for grant award.
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;
• Submission of letters of intent;
• Submission of preliminary applications;
• Check by NRO 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;
• Submission of full applications;
• Check by NRO of the admissibility of full 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 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 set out 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 how to develop the preliminary application into a complete application

In early-November 2019, the applicant will be notified about the outcome of the assessment of the preliminary application.

This notification includes a positive or negative recommendation to develop this preliminary application into a full application. The applicant receives a brief substantive explanation of the recommendation.

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 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 set out in 4.2.1.

If an application does not meet any of these criteria, the Minister will qualify it as ‘inadmissible’ and the application will 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.14

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

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14 In that case, the applicant can notify the secretary at comenius@nro.nl. The secretary will then ask the applicant to register the application as ‘withdrawn’ in ISAAC.
4.1.9 Assessment meeting and final opinion

During the assessment meeting, the members of the Assessment Committee meet to discuss and score the application files, which consists of the full application, the preliminary assessments and the responses to the preliminary assessments.

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: insufficient

Please note: Only applications that receive 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:
- research expertise (researchers in educational sciences);
- practical expertise (educational professionals with experience in designing and implementing educational innovation projects);
- thematic expertise (education professionals who link research and practice on this theme);
- student-related expertise (students with experience in educational evaluations and/or participation).

The different divisions of the Assessment Committee assess the applications submitted in the different themes. Each division assesses proposals from research universities as well as universities of applied sciences. If the number of applications within a theme is too large to be assessed by one division, applications by research universities will be separated from those by universities of applied sciences. Members of the Assessment Committee currently work, or have recently worked, in higher education.

Applications will be assessed by the full ‘science-wide’ committee. When forming the Assessment Committee, NRO aims to achieve as wide a background in research fields as possible. However, it cannot guarantee that all research fields will represented in the committee.

4.1.10 Decision by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science makes 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 will be 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{15} may object in writing to a decision relating to the 2020 round of the Comenius programme – 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 www.bezwaarschriftenocw.nl (only available in Dutch).

4.1.12 Time schedule

The deadline for submitting letters of intent is \textbf{3 September 2019, 14:00 hours CEST}.
The deadline for submitting a preliminary application is \textbf{1 October 2019, 14:00 hours CEST}.
The deadline for submitting a full application is \textbf{3 December 2019, 14:00 hours CEST}.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|p{20cm}|}
\hline
June 2019 & Publication of the call for proposals \\
3 September 2019, 14:00 CEST & Deadline for submitting the letter of intent \\
\hline
1 October 2019, 14:00 CEST & Deadline for submitting a preliminary application \\
October 2019 & Review against admissibility criteria; assessment of preliminary applications, establishing the recommendations \\
Early-November 2019 & Recommendation about elaborating the preliminary application sent to the applicants \\
3 December 2019, 14:00 CEST & Deadline for submitting full applications \\
December 2019/early January 2020 & Proposals sent to the Assessment Committee; the Assessment Committee prepares preliminary assessments \\
second half of January 2020 & Preliminary assessments sent to applicants; response requested (within five working days after receipt of the preliminary assessment) \\
February 2020 & Members of the Assessment Committee prepare meetings based on applications, preliminary assessments and responses \\
March 2020 & Assessment meetings; the Assessment Committee provides the Minister with an opinion on awarding/rejecting the proposals \\
April 2020 & Minister's decision to award/reject the proposals \\
Mid-April 2020 & Applicants notified of whether their application has been awarded or rejected \\
May 2020 & Festive kick-off meeting with all 2020 Comenius Fellows (Teaching, Senior & Leadership) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{15} 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.
4.1.13 Amendments to the procedure

NRO or the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science may consider it necessary to adapt the timeline 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 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 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 applicant’s ISAAC account.
• The preliminary application/full application has been submitted on time.
• The preliminary application/full application has been written in Dutch or English.
• The preliminary application/full application falls within the scope of the aim and themes of this call (see Chapter 2).
• The theme for which the preliminary application/full application was submitted matches the category for which the letter of intent was submitted.
• The applicant has not submitted a preliminary application/full proposal in one of the other ‘tiers’ of the Comenius programme.
• The preliminary application/full application form has been completed accurately and in full, in accordance with the instructions.
• The preliminary application/application was submitted by the same applicant that submitted the letter of intent, within the same theme.
• The preliminary application/full application must be accompanied by a signed statement by the dean and/or the head of the faculty that is 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.

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 01 May 2020 and (on or before) 01 September 2020. The completion phase of a project may not continue beyond two months in the academic year following the last year of the project;
• Apart from the budget, no appendices may be attached to the full application. The application form, the statement of the dean/faculty director and the letter of guarantee (in the event of co-financing) must be submitted as a single, merged PDF file.
4.2.2 Assessment criteria for preliminary applications and full applications

Full applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria. In the preliminary application, criteria 1, 2 and 4 are equally important for considering whether to issue a positive or negative recommendation.

1. Innovative nature of the project (25%)
   a. To what extent does the project concern the implementation of a new or improved solution (products, services, processes) that meets a need in higher education?
   b. To what extent and in what aspects does the proposed solution differ from other initiatives with the same objective?

2. Expected results of the project (25%)
   a. Is it convincingly explained where an improvement is desirable in the educational component and why?
   b. Does the applicant demonstrate that the proposed innovation can lead to an improvement (for instance by referring to relevant literature or examples from practice)?
   c. Have the intended results of the project been clearly described and defined in demonstrable terms? Are the benefits for the student clearly described?
   d. Is the scale and context of the project and the intended result consistent with a Senior Fellow project as described in 2.1?
   e. Does the project align with the chosen theme as described in 2.2 - 2.6?
   f. Has the applicant convincingly substantiated why and how the project could be of value for other education professionals?

3. Quality of the project plan (25%)
   a. Does the project plan contain specific activities and does it make clear how these will contribute to achieving the intended results?
   b. Have the methods used been clearly defined and are they adequate, and is the planning clear and achievable?
   c. Does the project plan describe how the activities are distributed among the project team members and is this appropriate?
   d. Has it been convincingly defined which roles and expertise are necessary for the project and how these are provided for in the team?
   e. Does the project plan describe how the activities and results of the project are evaluated? Which criteria and procedures have been drawn up for the evaluation and are they suitable?
   f. 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 2.2 and 3.1), given their teaching experience and current role at the institution? Are the teaching experience and role suitable for the project as described in the application?
   b. Does the applicant’s professional statement demonstrate a sophisticated vision on education, how they apply this in their teaching practice and how the proposed project is in line with this? Does the applicant go into detail on how the Comenius Fellowship and membership of the Comenius Network can contribute 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.
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:

Lars de Bruin MA (programme secretary)
T: +31 (0)70 344 0928
E: comenius@nro.nl

5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system, ISAAC

If you have any technical questions about 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 at isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will receive a response within two working days.

5.2 Contact details of the institutions

You can find a list of contact details of persons at an institution of higher education who can provide applicants with advice and support at www.nro.nl/comenius-programme. NRO keeps this list up to date as much as possible. NRO advises applicants to contact an adviser before submitting a letter of intent.
6  Annexes

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

6.1.1  Universities

**Universities based on religious or philosophical principles**

Universities based on religious or philosophical principles listed under Article 1 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 the different 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 the different institutions affiliated with Hogeschool Saxion. Julia van de Geijn is responsible for coordinating applications from these institutions. Interested parties can contact Julia van de Geijn at j.j.m.vandegeijn@saxion.nl.

**Avans Hogeschool**

Eight applications can be submitted by the different institutions affiliated with Avans Hogeschool. Jetta Wille is responsible for coordinating applications from these institutions. Interested parties can contact Jetta Wille on +31 (0)88 525 7513 or at ja.wille@avans.nl.

**Fontys**

Eight applications can be submitted by the different institutions affiliated with Fontys Hogeschool. Johan Vlugter is responsible for coordinating applications from these institutions. Interested parties can contact Johan Vlugter at j.vlugter@fontys.nl.
Hanzehogeschool Groningen
Eight applications can be submitted by the different institutions affiliated with Hanzehogeschool Groningen. Hoa Pham is responsible for coordinating applications from these institutions. Interested parties can contact Hoa Pham at v.n.h.pham@pl.hanze.nl.

Van Hall Larenstein
Each of the two domains of Delta Areas and Resources and Food and Dairy may submit one application at most.
Publication:
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

Visiting address:
Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië 300
2593 CE The Hague

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