

In order to stimulate research being done in and with museums and cultural heritage collections in the Netherlands, NICAS has decided to launch a permanent funding scheme to support small projects. Applicants can submit proposals all year, with decisions on funding being made twice a year. The annual budget for this funding programme will be at least €50.000.

### Topics

Research proposals should focus on collection- or object-based questions that are relevant for museums and other cultural heritage collections and heritage management. Projects should emphasize the materials and techniques used to create objects, and address either art historical questions or questions regarding conservation history or (preventive) conservation treatment.

Of particular interest is the object's material biography: how was it made, how did it change over time, and how will it change in the future? Rather than focusing on questions and problems of single objects, NICAS welcomes proposals use objects as case studies to address larger-scale problems or shed light on wider object categories

Each proposal should have specific relevance for the research programme of NICAS as described on the website (consult [nicas-research.nl/about](http://nicas-research.nl/about) for a general description and links to the five research areas)

### Applicants

Applications can be submitted by researchers as main applicant, if they:

- possess a PhD or equivalent qualification. If this is not the case, the main applicant should have a proven track record in research and provide a description of this in the application;
- hold an appointment at a Dutch university, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands or the RKD;
- are appointed for at least the duration of the application process and the research for which the grant is being applied for.

Each main applicant can only submit one proposal in that capacity. He/she cannot submit another proposal until either the proposal has been officially rejected or a proposal has been granted. If a project is granted, a main applicant cannot submit another proposal until after the grant period of that project.

In addition, each proposal should list a single co-applicant from a Dutch heritage institution, thus ensuring the relevance and embeddedness of the research in the field. The heritage institution can be a museum or a (historical) collection, as long as the collection is accessible to the public.

The co-applicant can be a curator or a conservator, have a proven track record in research and hold an appointment for at least the duration of the application process and the research for which the grant is being applied for.

## **What can be applied for?**

Applicants can submit a proposal to obtain funds to work on:

- ideas that need further elaboration or proof of concept;
- small projects that have a 'high risk, high gain' character;
- small project with clearly defined goals and expected outcomes.

For each proposal, funding can be applied for:

- costs that will enable necessary testing/analyses;
- organisation of (online) conferences/workshops/expert meetings, including travel expenses and accommodation costs for participating researchers and experts in the case of physical meetings;
- Personnel costs for research assistants or replacement costs (at the salary level of a junior employee).

NICAS will not fund:

- long-term organisational running costs, including core staff costs;
- costs relating to ongoing overheads, including equipment.

Please note that the budget of each proposal can fall in a bandwidth up to €10.000 or €10.000 to €20.000. The amount requested has to be justified by the proposed research and has an impact on the amount of co-financing required. Please remember that due to the budget constraints, NICAS especially welcomes smaller projects in order to support as many projects as possible.

## **Co-financing and letter of support**

Applicants and co-applicants should demonstrate the commitment their own organisation is making to the activity, in cash or in kind. For each proposal, a co-financing contribution by the partners involved in the proposed research is expected to supplement the contribution by NICAS.

NICAS especially welcomes commitment from the museum partner by matching research time of museum employees involved in the research project and by giving access to relevant collections and on-site facilities to enable the research activities specified in the context of the proposal.

Please add the letter of support from the museum, confirming the committed co-financing, as a separate pdf file in the submission form.

## **Review: Scientific Working Group**

Each proposal will be assessed by one member of the NICAS Scientific Working Group and one advisory member of the Extended Scientific Working Group with the required expertise, using the relevant criteria. In exceptional circumstances, an external expert may be asked to assess the proposal.

The Scientific Working Group of NICAS in its extended form will discuss and rank the proposals during a meeting. The SWG will consider the expert assessment and will issue a ranking. In their deliberations, the SWG will expressly take into account the formation of a coherent research programme for NICAS as well as the diversity of the proposals with regards to objects and applicants.

## **Deadlines and decisions**

Twice a year, the Scientific Working Group will make a decision on funding. This means that all proposals submitted at least two months before the announced decision date will be reviewed and ranked during that meeting. All proposals submitted after that date will be discussed during the next meeting.

For a decision in May, all proposals will be considered that are submitted **before 15 March**.  
For a decision in November, all proposals will be considered that are submitted **before 15 September**.

Depending on the number and quality of the submitted proposals and the amount of funding requested, NICAS reserves the right to allocate different portions of the yearly budget. Proposals that are eligible for funding but do not get selected because of budget constraints will be carried forward towards to the next decision moment. If the proposal does not receive funding a second time, it will not be carried forward further.

## **Criteria**

Each proposal will be evaluated on three main criteria: quality of the proposal (60%), relevance to NICAS (25%), and potential (15%).

### Scientific quality of the proposal (60%)

- Originality/soundness of the topic and approach;
- Clearly formulated goals and a feasible work plan;
- Scientific relevance and urgency, addressing gaps in current knowledge;
- Expected effectiveness of proposed methodology.

### Relevance to NICAS (25%)

- Potential to make a relevant contribution to the one of the research areas of NICAS;
- Coherence and cross-links with other projects within NICAS.

### Potential of project (15%, for full proposals)

- Proposal's potential for further research;
- The potential impact of the research results if no follow-up research is realized.

## **Contact**

We encourage potential applicants to get in touch with NICAS to discuss potential projects before submitting an application. We will be able to give you advice on eligibility, timescales and deadlines for applications. For this purpose, you can contact the Coordinator of NICAS, dr. Benjamin Rous ([b.rous@nicas-research.nl](mailto:b.rous@nicas-research.nl), 020-6747360).

If you encounter any difficulties submitting the application, please email [info@nicas-research.nl](mailto:info@nicas-research.nl).