

Digital Culture Grant Scheme

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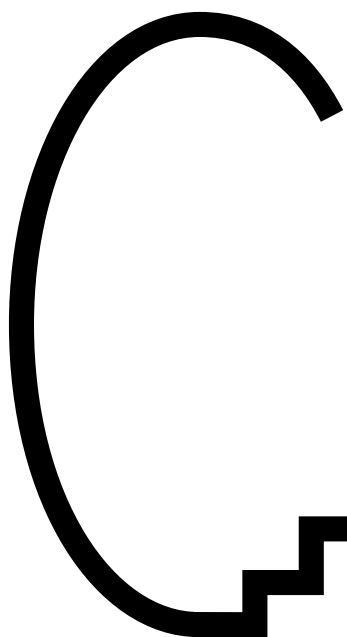
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In view of Article 10.4 of *Wet op het specifiek cultuurbeleid* (Specific cultural policy act, available in Dutch only), the board of the Creative Industries Fund NL adopts the following scheme for providing grants to makers and other parties for the implementation of projects that promote the quality of the creative industry.

This document is a descriptive translation of the original Dutch *Regeling Digitale cultuur*. The English translation is provided for reference purposes only, and in all instances the original Dutch text takes precedence. If you would like to report a translation error or inaccuracy, we encourage you to contact the Creative Industries Fund NL.

Chapter 1: Definitions

Article 1. Definitions

The terms used in this scheme have the same meaning as in *Regeling op het specifiek cultuurbeleid* (Specific cultural policy regulations, available in Dutch only). Within this scheme specifically, the following definitions apply:

- 1 **advisory committee**: an independent committee of external experts appointed by the board.
- 2 **applicant**: a natural or legal person who applies for a grant from the Creative Industries Fund NL under the scheme laid out here.
- 3 **board**: the Executive Director of the Creative Industries Fund NL, as referred to in Article 5 of the Creative Industries Fund NL Statutes and Regulations (available in Dutch only).
- 4 **co-financing**: additional funding in the form of another grant, sponsorship, investment, or the applicant's own income from, for example, ticket sales or a contribution from an external party that is used in addition to the grant awarded by the Creative Industries Fund NL for a project. The applicants' own contribution in the form of investments or joint discounts are not counted as co-financing.
- 5 **Creative Industries Fund NL**: the English name for the foundation known in Dutch as *Stichting Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie*.
- 6 **creative industry**: the areas of activity in the disciplines of design, architecture and digital culture, including possible crossovers between these disciplines.
- 7 **cultural institution or organisation**: a non-profit, private legal entity with a function to initiate, produce or support projects within the field of digital culture such as a lab or workshop, a platform or presentation venue.
- 8 **decision date**: the date as stated on the decision
- 9 **decision**: the letter in which the board formally declares if a grant will be awarded.
- 10 **design agency**: a group of makers who have organised and positioned themselves professionally within the field of digital culture.
- 11 **field of digital culture**: this includes design in relation to new media and technologies, games, audio-visual performances, world-building, creative coding, sensory storytelling, art-sciences, posthumanism and internet cultures, as well as related activities aimed at research, experimentation and reflection within these areas.
- 12 **follow-up application**: an application for a project directly resulting from a preliminary research or startup phase subsidised by a Creative Industries Fund NL grant awarded under the Creative Industries Kick-start Grant Scheme or under another startup grant awarded in the years 2023 or 2024.
- 13 **grant ceiling**: the maximum total amount available for a grant scheme within a grant period.
- 14 **grant period**: the time span during which an application may be submitted under this scheme.

- 15 grant request:** the amount requested from the Creative Industries Fund NL under this scheme. This amount is formed by the total project costs minus co-financing and any of the applicant's own contributions.
- 16 Kingdom:** the Kingdom of the Netherlands, consisting of the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, as well as the public bodies of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba.
- 17 maker:** a designer, image-maker, programmer or hardware developer who positions themselves professionally within the field of digital culture.
- 18 observer:** a writer, programme-maker or curator whose work relates to the field of digital culture.
- 19 producer:** a legal entity whose business is the development, coordination and production of media productions such as films or other types of audio-visual projects and who acts as an applicant on behalf of a maker.
- 20 project:** all the work involved in an independent, concretely defined activity, clearly defined in both time and purpose.
- 21 publisher:** a legal entity whose business is to develop, produce and distribute books or other publications and that acts as an applicant on behalf of an author or maker.
- 22 revised application:** a grant application that, provided with new information, is resubmitted after a negative decision from the advisory committee for a Creative Industries Fund NL grant.

Article 2. Creative Industries Fund NL mission statement

- 1 The task of the Creative Industries Fund NL is, from the cultural perspective, to continue and renew the rich design tradition of the Netherlands by stimulating the processes of experimentation, research and making, as well as to promote good commissioning practices.
- 2 The board shall, in accordance with the statutes and the provisions laid down in laws and grant schemes, provide grants to natural persons and legal entities that contribute to the promotion of the high-quality development and professionalisation of the contemporary creative industry in the Kingdom.

Chapter 2: General Provisions

Article 3. Scope and objectives of the Digital Culture Grant Scheme

- 1 Based on this grant scheme, Creative Industries Fund NL may subsidise projects by makers, observers, design agencies or cultural institutions with a grant request from €10,000 to a maximum of €50,000.
- 2 Projects are primarily non-profit and contribute to strengthening the quality, development or deepening of the field of digital culture from one or more creative industry disciplines, or from crossovers with other disciplines.
- 3 The grant is consistent with the following general policy objectives of the Creative Industries Fund NL:
 - a To promote design quality and its development.
 - b To stimulate experimentation, research, reflection and debate.

Article 4. Grant ceiling

- 1 A grant is always awarded under the condition that sufficient funds are made available to the Creative Industries Fund NL by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
- 2 The grant ceiling is announced for each grant period on www.stimuleringsfonds.nl/en.

Article 5. Application submission and review procedure

The process of submitting an application in this scheme has two phases, each with its own review moment:

1 Phase I:

- a** Every year the board shall announce on www.stimuleringsfonds.nl/en the grant periods within which applications may be submitted under this scheme.
- b** The board shall establish a maximum for the total number of applications that can be considered per grant period. In doing so, the board shall also establish a maximum number of revised applications and follow-up applications for this grant period. This information shall be published at least two weeks before the start of phase I of this scheme on www.stimuleringsfonds.nl/en.
- c** Applicants shall use the designated application form in the Creative Industries Fund NL's application platform for submissions. Article 8 of this grant scheme defines the application's content. See also: the [Digital Culture Grant Scheme manual](#).
- d** Applications shall be submitted no later than the date specified in the grant period as mentioned in Article 5.1.a.
- e** Applications will be reviewed against the requirements described in Article 6.
- f** Applications will be reviewed in order of receipt. Revised applications and follow-up applications will also be ranked in order of receipt until the maximum number of revised applications and follow-up applications described in Article 5.1.b. is reached. Subsequently, the remaining applications will be ranked until the maximum number of applications for the grant period is reached. The ranking is determined from the moment the application is complete according to Article 8.1.
- g** The board shall reject an application if it is not submitted within the relevant grant period.
- h** The board shall reject the remaining revised applications and follow-up applications if the maximum number of revised applications and follow-up applications within the relevant grant period has been exceeded. The board shall reject the remaining applications if the maximum number of applications within the relevant grant period has been exceeded.
- i** The board shall reject applications that do not meet the entry requirements described in Article 6.
- j** Applicants in the ranking described in Article 5.1.f will receive an invitation to complete the application from phase I and submit it for phase II.

2 Phase II:

- a** Applicants who have received an invitation described in Article 5.1.j shall complete their application with the requested information described in Article 8.2 and submit it for phase II.
- b** The latest submission date for phase II is four weeks after the announcement of the phase I selection. The latest submission date is stated in the invitation to selected applicants.
- c** Applications completed in phase II will be assessed by the Creative Industries Fund NL again using the entry requirements described in Article 6 as well as the conditions described in Article 7.
- d** Applications that are not completed in time, not fully completed, or which do not meet the entry requirements of Article 6 and the conditions of Article 7 shall be rejected. All other applications will be submitted to the advisory committee for review.
- e** The advisory committee will advise the board on which applicants should be awarded grants based on the evaluation criteria described in Article 10.

Article 6. Entry requirements

Applications submitted under this grant scheme will be reviewed against the following entry requirements:

- 1 A grant under this scheme may be awarded only if the applicant is:
 - a A designer, maker, observer, design agency, cultural institution or organisation that demonstrably positions themselves within the field of digital culture.
 - b Listed in the Business Register of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce or in one of the Business Registers within the Kingdom.
- 2 Those not eligible for funding under this scheme are:
 - a Applicants financed through the *Subsidierегeling culturele basisinfrastructuur 2025-2028* (Grant Scheme for Basic Cultural Infrastructure 2025-2028), with the exception of regional museums and heritage museums within the creative industry.
 - b Applicants financed through another structural grant from the central government.
 - c Applicants who, for the duration of the project, receive a grant from the Creative Industries Fund NL under the Four-year Institutional Grant Scheme 2025-2028 or the Creative Industry Activities Programme Grant Scheme.
 - d Educational and post-academic institutions, as well as projects by researchers and lecturers (including guest researchers and lecturers) carried out from within these institutions.
 - e Applications aimed at the development of educational programmes and the related activities of educational institutions.
 - f Applications for costs covering participation in residencies at institutions excluded from this scheme as described in Article 6.2.a, 6.2.b and 6.2.c.
 - g Applicants who, at the time of application, are affiliated with a post-academic institution excluded from this grant scheme according to Article 6.2.a.
 - h Applications for projects which, at the time of application, already have an application pending within another grant scheme of the Creative Industries Fund NL.
 - i Applications for projects that have already been subsidised under a grant scheme of the Creative Industries Fund NL.
 - j Applicants who are already receiving support for the implementation of their development plan from the Talent Development Grant Scheme of the Creative Industries Fund NL during the duration of the project.
 - k Applications for large-scale festivals eligible for support under the Festivals and Public Presentations Grant Scheme.
 - l Applications for projects that have previously been used twice in a grant application to the Creative Industries Fund NL and which have been rejected after negative decisions.
 - m Applications that are not submitted on time or that are incomplete.
- 3 Applicants may not submit more than one application under this scheme per grant period.
- 4 Applicants cannot receive a grant under this scheme more than once per calendar year, however an exception applies to publishers and producers.

Article 7. Conditions

Applications completed according to Article 5.2 will be reviewed in accordance with the following conditions:

- 1 Grants in this scheme may be awarded only if the following conditions are met:
 - a The elaboration of the application for phase II is in line with the description and positioning of the project as submitted for phase I.

- b** The project is consistent with the mission statement of the Creative Industries Fund NL as described in Article 2 and fits within the scope and objectives described in Article 3.
 - c** The project contributes to strengthening the quality, development or deepening of the field of digital culture in the Netherlands or the Kingdom.
 - d** The project, or the project phase to which the grant relates, does not start before the decision date. This means that a project may start from eleven weeks after the submission date for phase II.
 - e** The project starts within six months of the decision date.
 - f** The duration of the project does not exceed 24 months.
 - g** Applications are submitted in Dutch or English.
 - h** The project has a budget deficit and, in the opinion of the board, the need for a grant has been demonstrated.
 - i** There is a reasonable level of co-financing contributing a minimum of 20% of the total project costs.
 - j** The applicant's methods can be reasonably expected to achieve the goals they have set.
 - k** The results of the project will be published or otherwise made public.
 - l** Applicants apply the [Fair Practice Code](#) in the implementation and justification of the project.
 - m** If the application is submitted on behalf of a cultural institution, it applies the [Cultural Governance Code 2019](#).
- 2** No grant may be awarded under this scheme to or for:
- a** Activities that have already taken place or start before the decision date.
 - b** Projects for which a grant is re-applied for after a rejection without the applicant citing new information or circumstances.
 - c** Projects, residencies or trips that take place as part of academic studies, training schemes or a PhD.
 - d** Projects that are being revisited or reprinted.
 - e** Serial production projects other than professional publications.
 - f** Labour costs for employees of state, provincial and municipal institutions.
 - g** The acquisition of property, materials or equipment that will continue to have value after the project is completed.
 - h** Projects aimed at digitisation, such as the digitisation of collections.
 - i** Projects aimed at heritage other than digital heritage.
 - j** The establishment of websites or online platforms, the content of which does not sufficiently connect with the field of digital culture.
 - k** Activities and costs directly related to establishing a company or organisation, market exploration, or commercial feasibility study.
 - l** Activities that do not exceed regular business activities.
 - m** Employees of the Creative Industries Fund NL.
 - n** Members of the Creative Industry Fund NL's board or Supervisory Board.
 - o** Applicants who are a member of the advisory committee for this scheme and who will review grant applications.
- 3** In addition to the conditions described in Article 7.1 and 7.2, the Creative Industries Fund NL will assess applications involving a trip abroad on the following points:
- a** Safety of travel: consideration shall be given to whether restrictions or urgent advice applies to international travel to the country in question at the time of the planned trip. The travel advisories on www.netherlandsworldwide.nl are decisive in this regard. Grants may not be used for travel to an area where a travel advisory code red is in effect at the time of travel.

- b Sustainability: the board encourages sustainable travel. If a project trip is no more than eight hours by train, the board will only reimburse costs for land travel.
- 4 Within the framework of European legislation and regulations regarding state aid, applicants who can be regarded as ‘undertakings’ will also be refused a grant under this scheme if they:
 - a Are subject to a recovery order as described in Article 1.4.a of the General Block Exemption Regulation 651/2014.
 - b Qualify as an ‘undertaking in difficulty’ within the meaning described in Articles 1.4.c and 2.18 of the General Block Exemption Regulation 651/2014.

Chapter 3: Grant Applications

Article 8. Application contents

- 1 A summary application is submitted in phase I, for which all formal requirements and guidelines are described in the Digital Culture Grant Scheme manual, as published on the website of the Creative Industries Fund on the date the grant period opens.

An application for phase I consists of:

- a A fully completed application form, including:
 - The basic details of the applicant.
 - Any intended collaborative partners.
 - A very brief summary of the intended project.
 - The applicant and project’s positioning within the field of digital culture.
 - b A digitally authenticated extract no more than one year old from the Business Register of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce or one of the Business Registers within the Kingdom.
 - c CV(s) of the main player(s) in the project or, if the application is made by an institution or organisation, a brief description of the institution or organisation’s mission.
- 2 For phase II, a supplemented application shall be submitted with additional documents. A complete application for phase II includes the documents listed below. With the exception of the image described in Article 8.2.i, these documents will be made available to the advisory committee. Formal requirements and guidelines are described in the manual, as published on the website of the Creative Industries Fund NL on the date the grant period opens.

An application for phase II consists of:

- a A fully completed application form.
- b A project plan providing insight into the purpose and design of the project.
- c A balanced budget that includes a cover plan, insight into the required co-financing, and follows the principles of the [Fair Practice Code](#) in accordance with the format of this scheme.
- d A timetable that takes into consideration the latest decision date.
- e A communications plan.
- f CVs of all those implementing the project.
- g A relevant portfolio.
- h Letters of intent or cooperation agreements with key partners, if applicable.
- i A project image intended for the Creative Industries Fund NL communications, for which the necessary rights of the image lie with the applicant.

Chapter 4: Awarding of Grants

Article 9. Procedure for processing applications

- 1 Applications submitted in phase II that are complete and meet the entry requirements and conditions shall be submitted for review to the advisory committee.
- 2 The advisory committee shall advise the board on whether to award a grant.
- 3 The advisory committee shall formulate their advice based on the information provided by the applicant.
- 4 A positive decision may be accompanied by a substantiated recommendation on the amount of the grant to be awarded, and by additional substantiated recommendations for the removal of support for specific activities.
- 5 The advisory committee follows the Advisory Committee procedure of the Creative Industries Fund NL published on the website of the Creative Industries Fund at the start of the grant period.
- 6 Based on the advisory committee's advice, the board shall decide whether to award the grant.

Article 10. Assessment

- 1 When assessing applications for a project grant, the advisory committee uses the following criteria, each of which is of equal importance:
 - a **Significance of the chosen theme or question for the field.** Strengthening the quality, development or deepening of the field is an important goal in this scheme. When assessing this, the positioning of the project is considered alongside the extent to which it is distinctive and of added value compared to existing knowledge or examples within the field. Does the project challenge or build on standard ways of thinking and working?
 - b **Artistic quality of the project.** When assessing the quality of the artistic content, the relationship between the form and content of the project is considered. What is the substantive goal or starting point, and how is that translated into a design assignment, research topic, form, or other project? If the application is submitted by one or more makers, the advisory committee shall look at how the project fits within their broader practice or portfolio, as well as at comparable expressions within the genre or field. If the application concerns a presentation, the advisory committee shall consider the event or publication, its artistic and content-related principles, and its curator, writer or programme-maker's reflection on the field of digital culture. The advisory committee also looks at what steps applicants want to take with their project.
 - c **Extent to which the project is effective in terms of design, methodology and the expertise involved.** The application must show how and by whom the project is carried out. When assessing the project, the advisory committee shall look at the degree of consistency in purpose and design. Consideration shall be given to the clarity of the planning, whether an effective methodology is being used, and whether the project is set up in such a way that can achieve the intended goals. The advisory committee shall assess whether the necessary expertise is present to achieve these goals, and whether the plan follows the [Fair Practice Code](#).
 - d **Support for the project.** The Creative Industries Fund NL considers it important that projects in this scheme have a broader interest than the direct interest of the main applicant. Support for a project can be demonstrated by the involvement of partners, the expected audience reach, and the methods and degrees of co-financing.
 - e **Extent to which the project contributes to a more diverse and equal design sector.** The Creative Industries Fund NL expects that applicants shall contribute

to the strengthening of diversity and equality within the field with their project, in various ways, based on their own strengths and local context. This involves examining the extent to which the project contributes to creating space for underexposed visions or perspectives within the design sector. Consider diversity in gender, cultural background, or age, but also the district, location or region where activities take place. The [Diversity and Inclusion Code](#) offers concrete tools for setting goals based on the project's programme, audience, employees and partners.

- 2 Only positively assessed applications are eligible for a grant.
- 3 If the total number of applications eligible for a grant exceeds the available budget in the grant period, prioritisation will take place as follows:
 - a Applications shall be prioritised based on the scores achieved on the criteria described in Article 10.1, creating a ranking of all applications.
 - b A grant shall be awarded to the applicants whose application is placed highest in the ranking.
 - c The highest-ranking applications are awarded the amount recommended by the advisory committee, providing the total does not exceed the grant ceiling.
 - d The applicant for whom a full grant would lead to exceeding the grant ceiling is awarded the remaining funds up to the grant ceiling, provided that this is at least 50% of the requested amount. If the remaining amount up to the grant ceiling is less than 50% of the requested amount, the application is rejected.
- 4 If applications end up equal in the ranking based on their average final score and the grant ceiling is exceeded with these applications, priority is given among these applications to the applicant rated highest on the criterion described in Article 10.1.a. If this score remains the same, the score on the criterion described in Article 10.1.b is considered, then 10.1.c, 10.1.d and 10.1.e.

Article 11. Awarding of a grant

- 1 The board shall inform the applicant in writing of their decision within 11 weeks of the final submission date for phase II.
- 2 In this decision, the board may attach other obligations to the awarding of the grant than those stated in Articles 13 to 15.
- 3 The decision to award a grant shall contain a summary of the advice and considerations of the board, the conditions under which the grant is awarded, the duration of the grant period, the obligations that apply to the recipient, the maximum grant amount, and information on payment and advance payments.
- 4 The recipient shall not derive any rights from the awarding of a grant with regard to subsequent applications.

Article 12. Advance payments

In the event of an award, the Creative Industries Fund NL shall pay out 80% of the amount by way of advance payment. The remaining part shall be paid out at the conclusion of the grant.

Chapter 5: Obligations of the Grant Recipient

Article 13. Administration

- 1 Grant recipients shall maintain administration structured in such a way that the rights and obligations relevant to the conclusion of the grant, as well as income and expenses, can be checked at all times.
- 2 Grant recipients shall, upon request, provide the board with insight into this administration.

- 3 Grant recipients shall retain the administration and the associated documents for seven years after the grant has been concluded.

Article 14. Mention of the Creative Industries Fund NL

In all public statements about the subsidised activities, grant recipients shall mention the Creative Industries Fund NL as the grant provider. The logo of the Creative Industries Fund NL shall be included in publications and reports relating to the subsidised activities, as well as on invitations, announcements, websites and audio-visual productions relating to these. If a grant recipient includes logos of other parties, the logo of the Creative Industries Fund NL shall be displayed in a comparable size and layout in proportion to the contribution.

Article 15. Notifying the Creative Industries Fund NL

If one of the following situations occurs, grant recipients shall immediately inform the board:

- 1 The activities for which the grant has been awarded will not take place or will not take place in full.
- 2 The obligations associated with the grant will not be fully met.
- 3 There are significant artistic or business changes compared to the application on the basis of which the grant was awarded.
- 4 There are developments that could hinder the implementation of the activities such as reports of undesirable behaviour or involvement in legal proceedings.

Chapter 6: Grant Assessment

Article 16. Assessment

- 1 No later than 16 weeks after the conclusion of the project, an accountability form shall be submitted by the grant recipient on the Creative Industries Fund NL application platform.
- 2 If the activities have been carried out in accordance with the application and all obligations associated with the grant have been met, the board shall determine the conclusion of the grant within 10 weeks after the submission of the accountability form, in accordance with the grant schemes.
- 3 If it appears that activities have not been carried out or have only been carried out in part, the grant may be determined to be of a lower amount.
- 4 The board may provide the recipient with further instructions on monitoring compliance with the conditions associated with the awarding of the grant.
- 5 Specifically for research projects, the grant recipient may be asked to draw up a public version of the research report for the purpose of knowledge sharing and development. The most important results and insights shall be in this report so that they can be exchanged with colleagues and other interested parties.

Article 17. Accountability for grants between €10,000 and €25,000

- 1 The grant recipient shall demonstrate in the accountability form that the activities for which the grant was awarded have been carried out and that the obligations associated with the grant have been met.
- 2 A financial report may also be requested on a sample basis. In the financial report, the grant recipient shall demonstrate the following:
 - a The realised costs eligible for reporting.
 - b The total realised revenue, including co-financing.
 - c If applicable, the realised total of the grant recipient's own contribution.

Article 18. Accountability for grants between €25,000 and €50,000

- 1 The grant recipient shall demonstrate in the accountability form that the activities for which the grant was awarded have been carried out and that the obligations associated with the grant have been met.
- 2 As well as a statement of realised costs, the grant recipient shall demonstrate in the financial report the following:
 - a The realised costs eligible for reporting, with a specification of each item.
 - b The total realised revenues, including co-financing.
 - c If applicable, the realised total of the grant recipient's own contribution.

Chapter 7: Final Provisions

Article 19. Objections

An interested party may object to a decision of the board taken based on this grant scheme by submitting an objection to the board. The term for submitting an objection is six weeks, starting from the day after the decision date. The procedure for objections is published on www.stimuleringsfonds.nl/en.

Article 20. Protection of personal data and Archives Act

- 1 The Creative Industries Fund NL does not provide confidential data regarding, among other things, company and manufacturing information to third parties.
- 2 The Creative Industries Fund NL handles personal data with care according to Articles 22 to 33 of the Dutch General Data Protection Regulation Implementation Act. The Creative Industries Fund NL does not use this data for any purpose other than that for which they were provided, unless their provision results from a legal obligation or does not clearly infringe on personal privacy.
- 3 As an autonomous administrative body (Dutch ZBO), the Creative Industries Fund NL complies with the *Archiefwet* (Dutch public records act). Application files shall be transferred to the National Archives of the Netherlands after the specified period, in which case said files will be classified as *beperkt openbare* or limited public documents.

Article 21. Hardship clause

In exceptional cases, the board may deviate from the provisions in this grant scheme in favour of the interested party if implementation may lead to significant unfairness.

Article 22. Entry into force and expiry

- 1 This grant scheme will enter into force on 1 January 2025.
- 2 The Creative Industries Fund NL grant schemes 2018 will not apply to the regulations laid out here.
- 3 This grant scheme will expire on 1 January 2029 but remain applicable to the settlement of grants awarded on the basis of this scheme.

Article 23. Citation

This scheme shall be cited as Digital Culture Grant Scheme 2025-2028. This document will be published in the Dutch *Staatscourant* (Government Gazette).

The Creative Industries Fund NL.
S Groeneveld, Executive Director