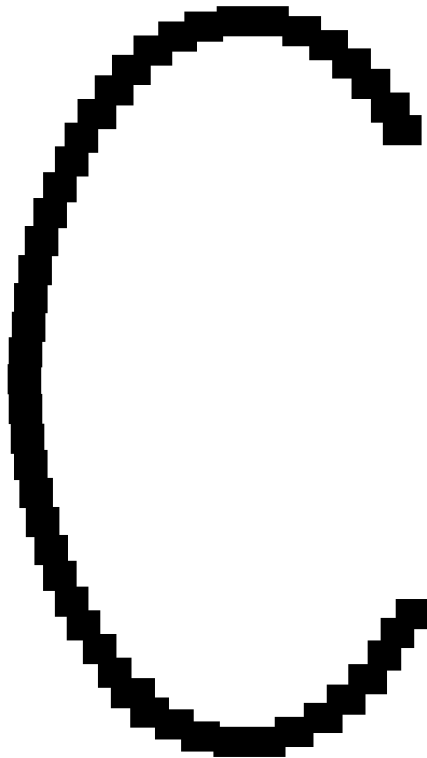


Open Call Emerging Design Practices ABCSSS



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The Creative Industries Fund NL is calling for starting designers based in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius or Sint Maarten to register for the pitch day. The pitch day is a live event that will be organised on one of the islands in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Designers present their development idea to a jury and have a chance to receive a grant which they can use to professionalise their practice. With this open call, the Fund wants to stimulate talent development in the design sector.

in summary

- For starting designers who live and work in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
- For activities such as mentoring and coaching, workshops to learn new skills or to improve them, and making and presenting new work.
- Four participants will each receive € 25,000 to professionalise their design practice.

important dates

Submission opens	Tuesday 13 January, 10:00 AST
Submission deadline	Wednesday 18 March 2026, 11:00 AST
Online consultation hours	Tuesday 17 February 2026, 11:00 AST and Thursday 5 March 2026, 10:00 AST
Invitation to pitch day (if selected)	Friday 27 March 2026
Pitch day in Sint Maarten	Week 19 (4-10 May), exact date will follow asap

who is this open call for?

Starting designers from the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (one to four years active within the design and creative field), who independently develop creative or artistic products. They could, for example, be fashion designers, animators and cartoonists, architects or game designers. However, creative entrepreneurs who focus on issues around the climate, nature, food, heritage and sharing neglected stories are also eligible.

what is this open call intended for?

With a total budget € 100,000, four grants of € 25,000 are available. You can use the grant to deepen and professionalise your own starting design practice. You can do this, for example, by means of mentoring and coaching, workshops to learn new skills or to improve them, and by making and presenting new work. The period in which you implement your plan starts on 1 September 2026 and runs up to 1 November 2027.

You may not use the grant for:

- Standard operating costs, such as rent or studio/office furnishings.
- Acquiring property, materials or equipment that will also have a value outside the context of the development plan. Such as a laptop.

conditions

- You are 18 years or older.
- You are established in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
- You have been active in the design and creative field for one to four years.

Applications may not be submitted by:

- Designers who have already received a grant for the implementation of a development plan under one of this open call's previous editions or the Open Call Scout Nights, the Talent Development Grant Scheme or an Artist Start contribution from the Mondriaan Fund
- Visual artists, documentary makers, filmmakers, writers and journalists, theatre makers, musicians and DJs, dancers, photographers

- Cultural institutions
- Applicants who are registered for or during the grant period will register for a full-time or part-time course at a school accredited by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders [NVAO] or an acknowledged senior secondary vocational education course or have been or will be admitted to postgraduate institutions during the grant period

If you are not sure whether or not you are eligible, then join one of our online consulting hours or contact the Fund via emergingdesignpractices@stimuleringsfonds.nl.

registration

You can submit your application via the Fund's application platform between Tuesday 13 January 10:00 AST and Wednesday 18 March 2026, 11:00 AST. To submit your application, you need an account with which you can log in to the Fund's [application platform](#). Create this account in time. It takes one working day before a new account is activated.

Please note:

- It is not possible to apply via email.
- Make sure you submit your application on time. After the deadline has passed, the application platform will close and you will no longer be able to submit.

Your application should consist of a number of documents:

- A motivation letter (max. 3 A4, 4MB, in PDF) or a motivation video (no more than 3 minutes). In it, you explain in words and/or images:
 - What kind of work do you make and why? What do you want to say or question with your work? Give a clear substantive description and link this to the work in your portfolio.
 - What story you want to tell with your work. Which theme or themes are central to your work? Why do you find these important? Explain how you relate to this theme/these themes.
 - How long you have been active.
 - Which development question you want to investigate. How do you want to develop in the coming year? What are your development goals and why is this step important right now to further develop your practice?
- CV (max. 2 A4, 4MB, in PDF), in which you indicate your relevant education, work experience and skills. You should also include your email address and telephone number.
- Portfolio with images of your work (max. 10 A4, 12MB, in PDF). This may also contain sketches or a link to a website for a video or sound clip. When providing images, refer to the project's title, the year in which it was made and which materials you used. If the project was part of a collaboration, clarify your role within the project.
- Optional: an extract from the Commercial Register of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce or from one of the Commercial Registers that fall within the Kingdom.

Please note: If you do not live in Sint Maarten and you are selected to participate in the pitch day, you must submit a copy of your passport and an emergency contact number no later than Tuesday 22 April.

Tips:

- Take your time to answer the motivation questions.
- Ask others for feedback to hone your motivation video or motivation letter.
- The video does not need to be a high-quality production. A video recorded with a smartphone is sufficient. Make sure that the video is accessible to the committee and is not digitally locked. If you use a password, state the password in the application form next to the link.
- Have a look at the [Fair Practice Code](#) and the [Diversity and Inclusion Code](#) for

guidance on a fair and future-proof practice.

the pitch day

By Friday 27 March 2026 at the latest, you will receive an email message from the Fund whether you have been invited to the live pitch day. During the pitch day, all ten participants give a pitch to the jury. After the pitch, the jury asks you a number of questions. Everyone gets the same amount of time. Your pitch may last a maximum of three minutes. Answering questions from the jury takes a maximum of five minutes. You may use visual material during your pitch, but this is not mandatory.

For the pitch, it is important that you formulate a development question that you want to investigate with the grant. For example, a development question could be: “How can I translate local weaving techniques into modern, sustainable fashion?” or “In which ways can I convert Caribbean oral history into interactive games?” You will receive more information about how to prepare properly for the pitch if you have been selected to participate via email.

assessment of the pitch

The selection during the pitch day is based on the pitch itself and the documents you have submitted. Applications will be assessed by an independent jury that is composed by the Fund. You are not permitted to contact the jury about your application beforehand.

The jury will give each application a score between 5 (very good) and 1 (unsatisfactory) based on the following criteria:

a. The applicant's artistic and reflective ability

The jury assesses the applicant's ability to reflect critically on their own work. It looks at the innovation of existing working methods, the use of creative or artistic techniques and how the current practice relates to the creative industry. The jury considers the following points:

- The originality and uniqueness of the work
- The ability to reflect critically on their own work and to explain the creative or artistic choices in their work
- How the projects contribute to current issues or discussions in the creative sector

b. The applicant's intended development strategy

The jury assesses how clearly the applicant explains their development question and which concepts or themes are important during the development year. In doing so, the jury considers the following points:

- How well the chosen development question matches the applicant's work, long-term vision and ambitions
- The extent to which creative or artistic work is being innovated, existing knowledge enriched or new insights developed
- The extent to which the development strategy is relevant to the broader creative industry.

c. How new connections are made and outcomes are shared

The jury assesses:

- The manner in which the applicant wants to enhance and/or broaden their own network
- The manner in which the applicant wants to share the artistic outcomes with an appropriate audience

The end score of your application is the average score of these criteria. A ranking then ensues. If several applications have the same end score and the number of available grants is exceeded with these applications, then the application that best contributes to diversity within the selection will be given priority. In that case, the jury members will award a supplementary score for this and in doing so consider: the discipline, cultural

diversity and regional spread.

In this open call, the four selected designers receive a provisional grant. They then draw up a written development plan with the Fund's supervision. The grant becomes final as soon as the applicant submits a written development plan and it has been approved by the Fund. The development plan can be submitted in PDF to emergingdesignpractices@stimuleringsfonds.nl up to and including Friday 12 June 2026. As soon as the development plan has been submitted and approved, you will receive a € 25,000 grant to implement your plan.

obligations

Applicants who receive a grant under this open call, participate in the Fund's Talent Development programme. This programme consists of:

- Substantive orientation programme in the Netherlands (Europe)
- Progress meeting (online)

accountability

An appointment is made for an online accountability meeting no later than sixteen weeks after the grant period has expired, and the accountability form is completed and submitted via the online application platform. If the activities have been implemented according to plan and all the obligations have been met, the board will then determine the grant within ten weeks after the accountability has been submitted. If it appears that activities have not or have only partly been implemented, the grant may be set lower. The board may give the recipient further instructions regarding the verification of compliance with the conditions attached to the grant.

good to know

- In the 2025 - 2028 policy period, the pitch day for the Open Call: Emerging Design Practices ABCSSS will take place annually on one of the islands. In 2025, it will take place in Sint Maarten. Participants who do not reside on the island in question, will receive compensation for the journey and accommodation.
- A maximum of 10 participants will be invited to the pitch day. At least one participant will be invited per island, provided that they meet the conditions.
- To prepare for the pitch day, you can take part in one of the online consulting hours. During these consulting hours, you will receive more information about the open call, the registration procedure and how the selection is made.
- You can submit applications in Dutch and in English. The language that will be spoken on the live pitch day and all formal correspondence is to be in English.
- As the Fund is based in the Netherlands (Europe), there is a time difference. Up to Sunday 29 March, it is five hours earlier than in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (CET). After that, summer time starts and then it will be six hours earlier (CEST). Take this into account when you contact a Fund employee.
- When registering for the pitch day, you do not have to be registered with the Chamber of Commerce. If you are selected, you will need to send an authenticated extract from the Chamber of Commerce that is no more than one year old together with your development plan.

formal conditions

This application procedure and the grant provision is based on the [Open Call Grant Scheme](#). For this call, the following articles of the Open Call Grant Scheme are not applicable:

- Article 4(2)
- Article 6(2)
- Article 7(1b),(1c),(1d)
- Article 7(2a)
- Article 8(4)

- Articles 16, 17, 18, 19.

contact

If you have a question or a comment, send your message by email to emergingdesignpractices@stimuleringsfonds.nl or to scout Cleo de Brabander via scout.abcsss@stimuleringsfonds.nl.