



**NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED  
STUDY IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

**SELF EVALUATION**

**2008 - 2017**



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## *Preface*

This document was written in preparation for the external Evaluation of NIAS 2008-2017, which will take place 29-30 November 2017. It describes the core activities of NIAS between 2008 and 2017 and discusses the changes and developments that have taken place since the last evaluation. In addition, it focusses on the future and the opportunities that the new context in Amsterdam offers.

According to the guidelines set out in the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP), this evaluation should have taken place in 2014. However, because of the anticipated move to Amsterdam the Board of the KNAW decided to postpone the evaluation. The move to Amsterdam eventually took place in 2016.

In the meantime, a policy document entitled “*From Cloister to Beehive*” (midterm evaluation) was produced for the period 2011-2014. The document noted that the natural surroundings in Wassenaar guaranteed a peaceful working environment but it also drew attention to the downside of such isolation. NIAS had gained the reputation of being an elite ‘Cloister’, which meant there was a risk of becoming less attractive to talented mid-career researchers. A solution would be to move nearer to an academic setting.

During the past few years NIAS has adjusted its policy to the needs for novel types of fellowships, shorter and (also) focused on bridging the gap between the fields of the humanities and the natural sciences. The fellow population in 2017 is younger, more interdisciplinary and with an equal participation of men and women.

With the move to Amsterdam a turbulent period with many uncertainties came to an end. Two successive *ad interim* directors managed the transfer phase. Now at the end of 2017 the contours of a long-term policy become visible. In the coming years these contours need to be further elaborated.

Directorate NIAS

Amsterdam October 2017

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Mission Statement

NIAS is an Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and is currently located in Amsterdam. The core mission of the institute is to attract talented and high quality national and international researchers. The best applicants are selected by means of an external review process and are offered fellowships at NIAS to work on their research project for a period of time without the distractions and interruptions of daily university life. NIAS offers offices, research facilities, library services and (if eligible) accommodation. Researchers from Dutch Universities and Dutch research organisations can apply for a teaching replacement fund (to free them from teaching commitments), while international Fellows are eligible for a stipend and accommodation subsidy. The support facilities and the international and interdisciplinary community at NIAS provide an autonomous setting where advanced and creative ideas can flourish. NIAS also stimulates interaction between science and the arts by offering fellowships to writers, journalists and artists.

## 1.2 NIAS' National Position

NIAS is an independent interdisciplinary Institute for Advanced Study that fulfils a unique role in the national academic infrastructure of the Netherlands. The facilities at NIAS encourage researchers from all over the world and from disciplines who would rarely mingle in daily (university) life, to meet and interact, to produce new alliances and scientific directions aimed at new research questions or at solving relevant (societal) problems. Collaboration between humanities, social sciences and natural sciences is actively supported at NIAS.

The current research climate, of applying for subsidies and grants from the national funding organization NWO or Brussels, prioritizes large-scale projects involving a number of institutes and PhD students. In contrast, NIAS offers independent and individual grants in the form of fellowships (3, 5, or 10 months) that allow scientists to work on a smaller-scale within interdisciplinary partnerships to trigger new ideas and/or to complete publications. There is no other institute in the Netherlands that offers scholars such opportunities.

## 1.3 NIAS' International Position

NIAS was set up in 1970 and, apart from Princeton and Stanford, it is one of the longest established institutes of advanced study in the world. NIAS was the first institute of advanced study in Europe and it has an outstanding international reputation. The evaluation committee in 2008 stated that, *"The academic reputation of the institute is high. NIAS is well respected among the leading Institutes for Advanced Study in the USA and Europe"*.

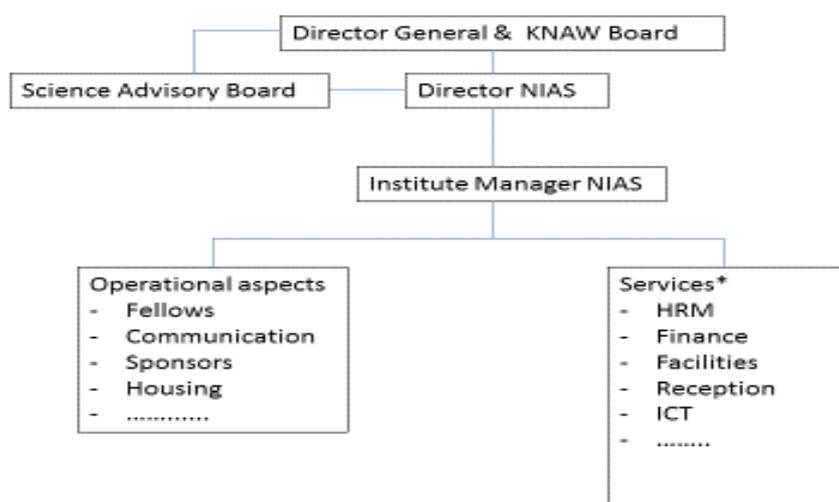
NIAS takes an active part in two international networks: SIAS - the prestigious transatlantic network of nine institutes of advanced study (Princeton-IAS, Radcliffe-Harvard, CASBS-Stanford, NHC-North Carolina, IIAS-Jerusalem, SCAS-Uppsala, NIAS-Nantes and WIKO-Berlin) and since 2006 NIAS has been also a member of NetIAS, the European network of 21 institutes of advanced study from 19 different countries. As a member of NetIAS, NIAS welcomed 22 EURIAS fellows as part of the EURIAS fellowship program during the academic years from 2011-2012 to 2016-2017. Although 2017-18 will be the last year NIAS offers EURIAS Fellowships, NIAS will continue to participate in discussions on future European cooperation.

## 2 ORGANIZATION

### 2.1 Organisation and management

NIAS has a small staff and a flat (horizontal) organizational structure with short lines of communication and minimal bureaucracy. The institute is led by the Director, who represents the institute and is responsible for strategic planning. The Director is supported by the Institute Manager who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the institute and the fellow-selection process. Together the Director and the Institute Manager form the Directorate and concerning matters that are relevant to the strategic direction of the institute they are advised by the Scientific Advisory Board. NIAS outsources financial and facilities services to the KNAW Humanities Cluster *Shared Services* (BB-HUC), with which it has a Service Level Agreement (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Organogram NIAS and links to HuC Shared Service Centre



\*arranged by means of Service Level Agreement with Shared Service Center of KNAW Humanities Cluster

### 2.2 NIAS Scientific Advisory Board

The Scientific Advisory Board (WECO) advises the NIAS Director, the Director General of the KNAW and the Board of the KNAW on matters concerning the long-term strategic policy of the Institute in relation to the Institute's core mission. The Scientific Advisory Board may offer advice with or without being requested. The scientific advisory board forms an important forum for the institute and its opinions are taken seriously.

After the (6-yearly) international evaluation of the institute the report of the peer review committee is presented to the scientific advisory board. The board is invited to react to the conclusions of the review. The response of the advisory board is sent to the Director General and the board of the Royal Academy. The Scientific Advisory Board meets at least once a year or as often as the Chair and two other members deem necessary. The Board can invite the NIAS Director to attend their meetings or they may choose to hold closed meetings.

#### Members of the NIAS Scientific Advisory Board October 2017

- Professor Johan Schot                      University Sussex                      History of Technology - Chair
- Professor Cars Hommes                      UvA    Economics
- Professor Marieke de Goede                      UvA    Political Sciences
- Professor Peter Paul Verbeek                      UT    Philosophy of Technology
-

## 2.3 Financial role KNAW

NIAS has been one of The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) institutes since 1988. NIAS receives an annual lump sum from the KNAW to cover the running costs of the institute, the fellowships and staff. Cutbacks in 2015 meant that NIAS' lump sum was reduced by a third and its lump sum has decreased from €2,511 M€ in 2014 to €1.750 M€ in 2017. (Table 1). This intervention was the direct result of serious cuts in the lump-sum of the KNAW by the Dutch government and was not related to any perceived lack of quality of the institute.

Table 1: Lump sum KNAW - NIAS

| 2014    | 2015    | 2016    | 2017    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2.511 M | 1.739 M | 1.753 M | 1.750 M |

After the budget cuts NIAS has managed to balance the books, but the cost of delays in the move to Amsterdam, the necessary replacement investments and substantial losses in book value have resulted in a substantial decrease in NIAS' reserves. This makes NIAS vulnerable if sudden and unexpected problems arise. Against the background of sensible risk-management a sufficient financial buffer is needed to absorb disappointing incomes from sponsors and/or to cope with (other) calamities. Moreover, insufficient reserves limit the possibilities of the institute to initiate new activities.

## 2.4 NIAS staff

The cutbacks imposed in 2015 resulted in a reduction in the number of staff. A restructuring plan was implemented in parallel with the move to Amsterdam. In 2014, the staff employed at NIAS, amounted to a total of 11.5 *fte* (including director) and this has since dropped to 5.9 *fte* (including director) plus hired (services-related) capacity of 3.75 *fte* via the KNAW Shared Services Centre. Hence, in total there is 9.6 *fte* available in 2017.

For NIAS this restructuring plan has meant a transition from direct control over the services-related staff to indirect control which has led to some misunderstandings and miscommunication, especially in the beginning when NIAS as well as the Shared Services Centre had to get used to the new situation. Now, reaching the end of 2017, after further clarification of tasks and responsibilities, the situation begins to stabilize. In spite of the start-up problems, the financial support, however, has improved and the same holds true for the support of fellows regarding residence permits. In 2017 a Counsellor for the fellows was appointed.

## 2.5 Sponsors

Over the years, NIAS has signed agreements with external parties to co-fund a range of fellowships. On average there are fourteen sponsors who are willing to pay (part) of the costs of a fellowship.

The sponsors, listed in appendix 8.2 contribute on average €225 K per annum to the cost of fellowships which adds to about 15 % of the lump-sum. These co-operations, however, are not just about funding but are also explicitly aimed at strengthening the bonds with specific societal institutions as well as attracting disciplines that are traditionally under represented at NIAS such as economics and law. The sponsors can all be found on the [NIAS website](#).

Financing fellowships via sponsors is intrinsically risky because the parties involved also have to deal with irregular sources of income and cutbacks and, often, sponsoring is the first to go.

## 2.6 Accommodation

In Wassenaar, NIAS had around 55 offices for Fellows and staff, several meeting rooms, a conference hall, grounds and a restaurant. Residential accommodation included: 22 studios and 8 apartments on campus and 9 family houses off campus in the town. Although the studios were

refurbished in 2009, following the Evaluation Committee's (2008) recommendations, they were originally intended for conference participants and were too small for longer periods of residence. Five of the family houses in Wassenaar were in excellent condition but 4 needed extensive modernisation to meet modern standards.

NIAS' current location in the historic 17<sup>th</sup>-Century *St Jorishof* in Amsterdam offers 35-36 workspaces for fellows, four staff offices, several small meeting rooms, a conference room, a library with reading room, a Fellows lounge and a lunchroom. Fellows' residential accommodation currently consists of 12 studios (80m<sup>2</sup> each) in a completely renovated historic building next to the main building of the Royal Academy and six modern family apartments in a popular area of Amsterdam. This means that NIAS can offer housing facilities to a maximum of 18 fellows. Fellows from abroad are guaranteed housing. Fellows from the Netherlands are offered housing only when the distance to their private homes takes more than 90 minutes by train (one way).

### 3 NIAS FELLOWS

#### 3.1 Fellowships

The maximum number of places for Fellows at NIAS, at any one time during the 10-month academic year, has since 2014 been reduced to 30 instead of 40. However, with a greater proportion of shorter fellowships, the total number of different researchers per year still remains around 50. It is argued here that a capacity of 30 fellows is needed to form a stable and functioning intellectual community.

In accordance with the NIAS mission to form an international and interdisciplinary community, half of the Fellows are from Universities or research organisations in the Netherlands and the other half are from affiliations abroad. Most researchers hold individual fellowships but some participate as members of a theme-group. Fellowships can be regular NIAS fellowships, co-sponsored fellowships or specific-programme fellowships such as, for example Guest of the Director, Visiting Grant Scholars or Scholars-at-Risk. Across the years the regular individual NIAS fellows form the largest category, although the number of co-sponsored fellows has increased (see section 6.2 b). The aim is that the number of co-sponsored fellows does not exceed 40% of the total number of fellows. The year 2016 was an exception because of the co-sponsored Descartes Centre theme-group which was made up of a large number of participants.

#### 3.2 Selection Procedure

The above mentioned increase in applications justified a critical analysis of the current application procedure which indicated that with a number of adjustments the process could be proceed faster and more efficiently. Therefore, in 2017 a start was made with streamlining the application process so that in the near future the call for fellowship applications opens at the same time for scholars from the Netherlands as well as for scholars from abroad. In the new procedure the Call opens 1<sup>st</sup> October and closes 31<sup>st</sup> December (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2: Time Line Selection Procedure for NIAS Regular Fellowship Open Call applications*

| <b>Call Open<br/>Call Closed</b> | <b>Formal<br/>Checks</b> | <b>Review-<br/>Evaluation</b> | <b>Selection</b> | <b>Formation<br/>Year-Group</b> | <b>Start fellowship</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>1 Oct<br/>31 Dec</b>          | <b>January</b>           | <b>February</b>               | <b>March</b>     | <b>April</b>                    | <b>September</b>        |

In January, all applications are screened by NIAS to see if they meet the formal application criteria and applicants who fail this check are immediately informed by mail. In February, all project

proposals are sent to reviewers with the appropriate expertise selected from a panel of 60 NIAS reviewers with expertise in a wide range of disciplines. It is planned that the novel selection procedure will be fully operational by 2019. Each proposal is reviewed by two reviewers. Reviewers are asked to give a score of **A**, **B**, or **C** (where **A** = Excellent, **B** = Good, **C** = Insufficient) for each of the three main criteria: 1) quality of the project, 2) quality of the applicant and 3) value of the project to the scientific community.

Another change will be that the reviewers' evaluations are no longer being sent directly to the director, but that all evaluations and scores will be presented to a Selection Advisory Board for a final review. This small board informs the NIAS Director of their recommendations by the end of March. The Selection Advisory Board has not been installed yet, since the employed procedure is still a matter of debate.

The NIAS Directorate uses all the above information to decide which applicants will be offered a fellowship and to compose a balanced year-group. The Science Advisory Board of NIAS (WECO) has no direct role in the fellow selection process but monitors the procedure and checks that all has been carried out correctly.

It will be clear that the role of the NIAS Director in the selection process has significantly altered. The Selection Advisory Board recommends which applications should be selected based on the external referees' reviews in combination with their own weighting of the quality and innovative value of the proposal. The NIAS Director is only involved in the last phase of the evaluation process when the final selections have to be made in order to compose a balanced and diverse year group. In forming the group (always about 50% from Dutch and 50% from non-Dutch affiliations), gender, age, discipline and regional affiliation are all taken into consideration. Besides, the limits on residential accommodation in Amsterdam may occasionally also determine the choices that are possible.

Less direct involvement by the NIAS Director in the selection procedure improves objectivity and transparency, in particular, with respect to the rationale behind awarding or rejecting applications. The reports of the external reviewers and the selection committee provide the academic arguments for selection or rejection. These reports can be used as a source of information if it is necessary to defend a decision should a rejected applicant register a complaint.

By combining the calls and selection procedures for national applicants as well as for applicants from abroad the selection process has been shortened by six months. This means that applicants who respond to the Call of 1<sup>st</sup> of October can start a fellowship within a year. This reduced processing time has the advantage that researchers are less likely to withdraw because they receive another offer while waiting for a result. Adjusting the application process is a clear response to recommendations by the last evaluation committee (2008), to speed up the process of selection and formation for theme-groups. The downside of merging the two Calls is that the peak workload for the selection office will be higher which may force the institute to hire temporary support.

#### **4 GOALS ACHIEVED SINCE 2008**

The previous evaluation took place in 2008. (See Appendix 8.1 for their main recommendations). In the next paragraphs, we describe the most important measures taken in response to the Evaluation Committee's recommendations and how these have been incorporated into NIAS policy.

## 4.1 Responses to the 2008 Evaluation Board's primary recommendations

### Teaching replacement

The issue of teaching replacement money for Fellows from Dutch Universities was finally resolved with OCW (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) by the NIAS Rector in 2009 and has proved successful in attracting excellent Dutch scholars. NIAS was in a position to pay teaching replacement funds to a fellow's home university to compensate for the loss of teaching man-power during the fellowship. For senior Fellows (i.e. 10 yrs. or more post-doctoral) this meant a maximum of €3800 euro and for junior Fellows (i.e. 4-9 yrs. post-doctoral) a maximum €2600 per month. In relation to the extent of the teaching burden at Dutch universities this usually meant that 50 – 60% of the maximum amount is paid to the university in question. Applicants from international universities are eligible for a stipend only if accepting a NIAS fellowship would result in a loss of income.

The number of applications submitted directly to NIAS steadily increased over the evaluation period with a slight dip in 2013-14 (see relevant *Table* under section 6.2a) with the largest increase (>50%) seen in the number of applications by scholars in the Netherlands (n=21 for the academic year 2009-10 and n=52 for year 2018-19). This could be related to the provision of teaching replacement funds or may reflect scarcity of grants for scholars in the Netherlands.

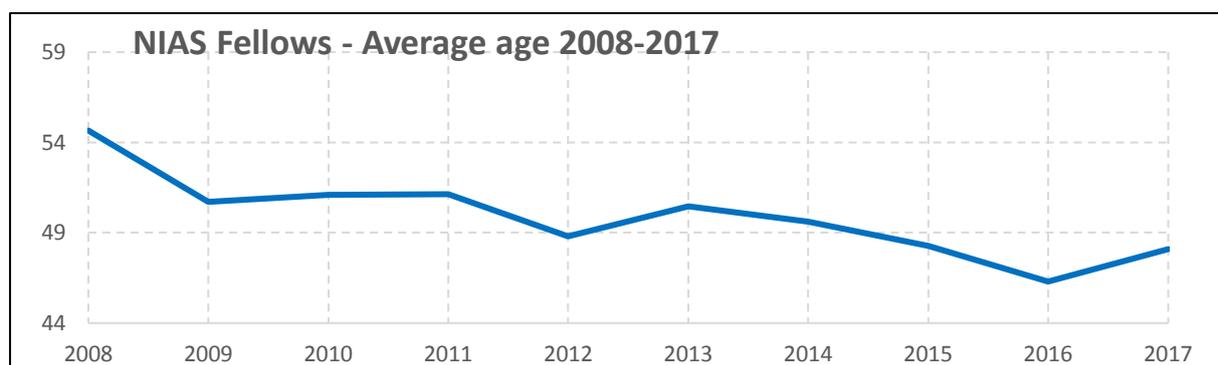
An increase, albeit smaller, was also seen in the number of applications by international scholars (n=61 for the academic year 2009-10 and n=77 for year 2018-19). Whether this is a general trend or related to the new location in Amsterdam remains to be seen over the coming years.

The overall increase in applications means that a highly critical and rigorous selection procedure is necessary, so that only the most qualified fellows are accepted at NIAS. The down-side is that an increase in applications will place a greater burden on the staff involved in the selection process.

### Age, Gender Balance and Regional Diversity

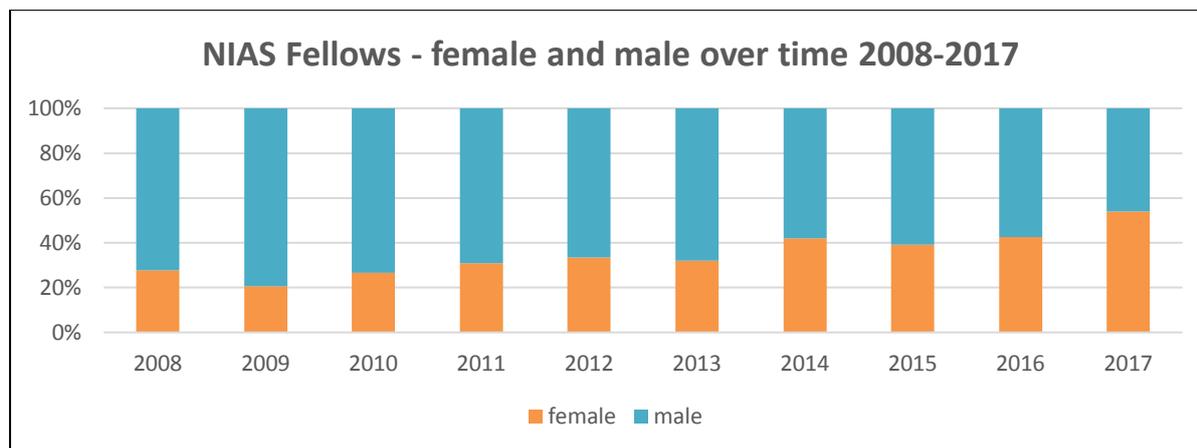
Over the years since the last evaluation, a great deal of effort has been made to bring down the average age of the fellow year-group, to redress the gender balance and to encourage regional and discipline diversity. This policy has generally been successful. The average age has steadily decreased over the evaluation period (*Figure 3*).

*Figure 3: Average Age 2008-2017*



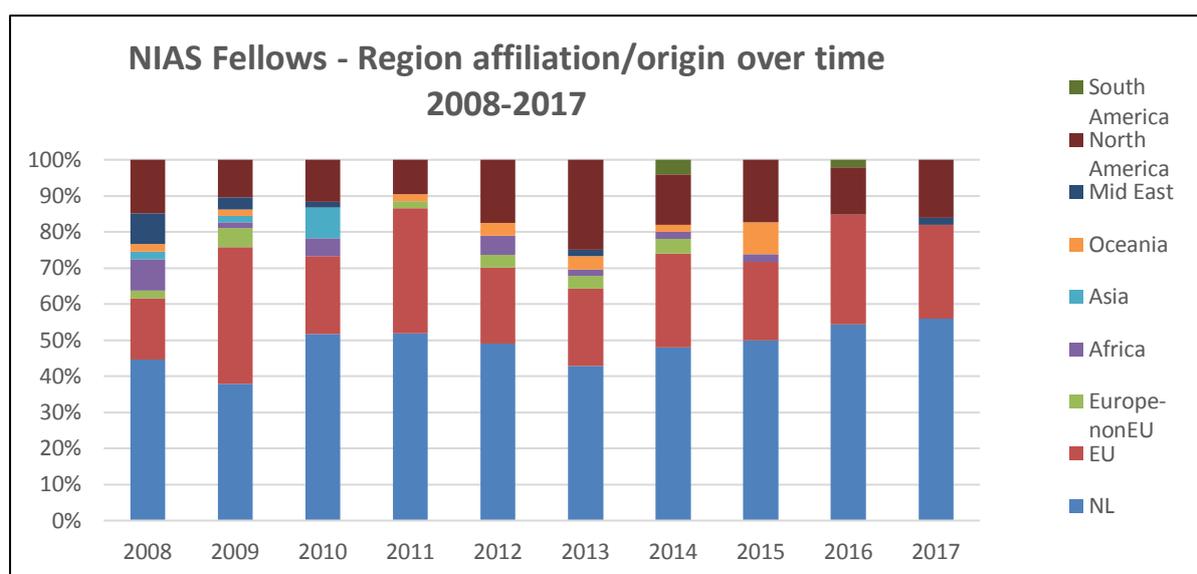
The proportion of men to women has equalized (*Figure 4*) and, although the humanities and the social sciences remain the dominant disciplines at NIAS, the range has extended somewhat to the life and natural sciences. In part these changes have been brought about by targeted selection and cooperation with co-sponsors, for example, the UNESCO –L'Oréal fellowships *For Women in Science* and the NIAS-Lorentz program for interdisciplinary research. Both partners focus on the life and natural sciences, while the UNESCO – L'Oréal programme exclusively supports talented young women researchers.

Figure 4: Gender Balance 2008-2017



However, geographical diversity is an issue that needs attention. The international fellow population within the year-group (50% of each year-group) continues to be dominated by scholars from Anglo Saxon areas while Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Eastern Europe are poorly represented. (Figure 5). To change the geographical and regional distribution a carefully formulated policy is necessary to set up cooperation with international organisations. Until now NIAS has not formulated such a policy.

Figure 5: Geographical Region (countries) of Fellows' home affiliation 2008-2017



### Fellowship formats

The previous Evaluation Committee's recommendation to take on permanent Fellows has not been implemented. The reason is that it is not desirable for NIAS to maintain a research programme of its own which inevitably would occur if NIAS had active researchers in the staff. Moreover, the personnel costs for permanent researchers would deplete the already limited funds, which could be better used to improve and renew fellowship policies.

Another recommendation made by the previous Evaluation Committee was that the full 10-month Fellowships should be the norm while shorter fellowships should be the exception. Recent years have taught us that there really is a demand for shorter fellowships especially in scholars from the behavioural sciences. This also holds for economists, neuro-scientists, and those from the life sciences who are at NIAS via the NIAS-Lorentz and the UNESCO-L'Oréal programmes. Researchers from these disciplines find 10 months and even 5 months too long. To cater to these disciplines NIAS now offers fellowships of 3, 5 or 10 months and occasionally even shorter stays

are facilitated. The demand for shorter fellowships seems to be related to the intensive pace at universities, the work pressure and staff shortages which make it impossible to replace researchers for long periods. Offering shorter fellowships has, indeed, worked in attracting scholars from disciplines that were under-represented or had not been represented in the fellows community before such as the behavioural sciences and the life sciences. It should be noted, however, that shorter stays also have a negative side. It can be more difficult to form a solid academic community and individuals have less time and intellectual space to develop creative ideas while the processing burden for staff increases.

## **4.2 From Wassenaar to Amsterdam: a turning point**

In 2013, the KNAW board made the decision that NIAS should move to Amsterdam and in the summer of 2016 NIAS, moved to the East Indies House in Amsterdam. This formed a turning point in the history of NIAS. After being located in Wassenaar for more than forty years the institute has to “re-invent” itself in the Dutch capital where many opportunities and challenges are waiting to be picked-up by the institute. The next section focusses on aims for the future.

## **5 AIMS FOR THE FUTURE**

The core ambition of NIAS is to maintain its position as one of the best Institutes for Advanced Study in the world. Open calls, high-quality fellows and an interdisciplinary intellectual community form key elements for achieving this goal. In addition, bridging disciplinary boundaries between the humanities, the social sciences and the (life) sciences will continue to be encouraged. NIAS’ goal in Amsterdam over the next years is to establish itself as a National Institute for reflection and advanced study that is recognized as a unique and valuable part of the national academic infrastructure. It wants to play a visible role in forming (temporary) interdisciplinary research collaborations that nurture novel research directions and questions and can also contribute to finding solutions to societal issues.

However, despite the various changes, NIAS is committed to remain an intellectual haven where it is possible to work without distractions and to carry out independent research that is motivated by curiosity and by the drive to find answers to tomorrow’s questions. NIAS will function as an intellectual centre in Amsterdam but with a different type of outreach than in Wassenaar.

### **5.1 Attracting the best scientists**

An important aim of NIAS is to attract high quality fellows. During the next years achieving this aim will be a major challenge for the directorate of the institute. Although NIAS has a good reputation abroad as well as with scholars in the Netherlands who know NIAS already, the full range of activities of NIAS is insufficiently known to all relevant stakeholders in the Netherlands. NIAS’ activities must become more visible to the outside world.

### **5.2 Improving visibility**

To reach this goal a new communication policy has already been drawn up. Further initiatives include:

- A modern interactive website that enables Fellows to connect and stay “linked” - with NIAS during and after the end of their fellowship
- Stimulating the role of ex-fellows as ambassadors – development of a policy directed at alumni
- Series of interviews and impressions of work in progress of the artists-in-residence
- Present NIAS seminars and public lectures online
- A pro-active approach to disseminating information about NIAS to universities and research institutes in the Netherlands and abroad.

- An annual NIAS Lecture on a challenging topic to be delivered by a renowned international speaker. The first lecture of this series with the title “The Value of Knowing” will be delivered by the historian Professor Walter Scheidel (Stanford University) on 11 April 2018 in the Waalse Kerk, adjacent to NIAS in Amsterdam.

### **5.3 Development of *Friends of NIAS* fundraising programme**

Amsterdam has a number of cultural institutions that could prove relevant for NIAS. Preliminary talks with the directors of the large museums such as the Rijksmuseum, the Stedelijk Museum and the Van Gogh Museum showed that interest exists in setting up joint fellowships, for example in the field of art history in the near future (from 2019). Similar initiatives have already been set up between NIAS and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten (RKD). These forms of cooperation should, of course, not be limited to Amsterdam but could also be explored with major museums in other cities.

In addition, over the coming years the plan is to develop a *Friends of NIAS* fundraising programme. In this way NIAS will not only connect with institutions but also with private individuals who value the existence of an intellectual haven that nurtures freedom of thought in the sciences and arts that may lead to out-of-the-box solutions to the grand societal problems that we face in the near future. However, the development of a Friends programme will take time and above all requires reputation, trust and sensitive diplomacy.

NIAS’ sponsor policy does not just focus on funding, but also targets scientific areas that are interesting but remain under-represented in the fellow applications e.g. law, ethics, economics, psychology, biology and informatics.

### **5.4 Intensifying relationships between NIAS and the Dutch universities**

NIAS is a national infrastructure for scientific reflection and innovation. Intensifying relationships with the universities in the Netherlands is important in fulfilling this national role. In fact the universities in the Netherlands can be considered as the natural partners of NIAS. In 2017 consultations were held with the Rectors of Dutch Universities and it became apparent that the majority are, indeed, interested in cooperation. Particularly interdisciplinary theme groups that connect universities and focus on challenging scientific and/or societal problems are of interest. A collaboration programme between NIAS and a theme-oriented coalition of (several) Dutch universities, who would consider co-funding, is a feasible option.

#### *Stimulating further collaboration between the Humanities, Social Sciences and the (Life) Sciences*

NIAS and the Lorentz Center in Leiden have cooperated closely since 2006. The Lorentz Center is located in Leiden and focuses on helping scholars in the natural sciences and the life sciences to organize short intense workshops. The cooperation between NIAS and the Lorentz Center is aimed at bridging the traditional gap between the humanities and the sciences and this has led to many surprising collaborations. NIAS hopes to continue this successful programme and, if possible, even expand the joint theme groups.

### **5.5 Theme Groups: Increasing societal impact**

Theme-groups allow researchers work together to address broader societal challenges and they are attractive option for active participation by the universities and other sponsors.

However, theme groups can take up a large portion of NIAS’ resources so the idea is that they should be facilitated on the basis of additional funding by partners. Until now NIAS has not been restrictive by indicating themes top-down. Researchers put forward their plans for a theme group and a research proposal to NIAS and an external review board will assess the quality and/or relevance and innovative value. In order to increase the visibility of NIAS it can be considered to

set a particularly challenging theme top-down, especially when a number of universities are willing to participate as intellectual partners and/or co-sponsors.

## 5.6 Modernizing the NIAS website

A new more modern NIAS website is being constructed that celebrates what NIAS offers and what the fellows' community achieves. The new website will improve the way NIAS is perceived by the outside world and stakeholders and will be more interactive with on-line seminars, podcasts, interviews, visual work by artists-in-residence to create a more lively impression of NIAS. Furthermore, it enables Fellows to remain connected to NIAS and each other long after their fellowship has ended, in other words - a lifelong link to NIAS. Moreover, it will allow applicants to submit their proposals electronically which will make the application process far more efficient and reliable for both applicants and staff.

## 6 EVALUATION ACCORDING TO SEP CRITERIA

NIAS is an Institute for Advanced Study so its quality cannot be measured on the basis of the criteria used by 'normal' research institutes: research output, number of PhD-students, research grants etc. The NIAS Directorate registers all Fellows' research output by means of the Progress Report Questionnaire that Fellows must complete before leaving as well as a three-year Follow-up cycle. This is explained with an example of the categories registered in Appendix 3.

However, NIAS cannot control or claim fellows' research results because, by definition, all NIAS Fellows from either the Netherlands or abroad, are employed at other organisations. Therefore, NIAS employs IAS-specific indicators and the following primary and secondary quality indicators were agreed with the Royal Academy in the **Covenant 2016-2020**:

### 6.1 NIAS Specific Primary Quality Indicators

#### A. Is NIAS able to attract eminent researchers as fellows?

Although the term "eminent" to a certain extent is subjective, it is clear the NIAS over the years has welcomed a large number of top-scientists, mainly in the fields of the humanities and the social science. Below some examples are given. The [NIAS website Fellows](http://www.nias.nl/fellows) (<http://www.nias.nl/fellows>) gives a feeling of the breadth of disciplines and level of scholarship among the varied year-groups of NIAS Fellows.

|                   |                              |                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Martin Hellwig    | Jelle Zijlstra Fellow        | Macro Economics  |
| Franjo Weissing   | Distinguished Lorentz Fellow | Biology          |
| Lisa Jardine      | KB Fellow                    | History          |
| Richard Goldstone | Spinoza Fellow               | Law              |
| Bernhard Schlink  | Guest of the Rector          | Law/writer       |
| Eveline Crone     | Guest of the Rector          | Neuropsychology  |
| Rudy Kousbroek    | Writer in Residence          | Fiction          |
| David Mitchell    | Writer in Residence          | Fiction          |
| Henk Wesseling    | Honorary fellow              | History          |
| Jonathan Israel   | Regular fellow               | History          |
| Robert Darnton    | Regular Fellow               | History          |
| E. Le Roy Ladurie | Guest of the Rector          | History          |
| Frits van Oostrom | Regular Fellow               | Dutch Literature |
| Cees Faseur       | Regular Fellow               | History          |
| Kees Schuyt       | Regular Fellow               | Sociology        |
| Joep Leerssen     | KB Fellow                    | Cultural History |

**B. Is NIAS able to attract reliable and relevant (co)sponsors? (This is a measure of the social relevance, valorisation value of NIAS' reputation).**

The range of current sponsors and partners that have collaborated with NIAS over the years can be viewed on the NIAS website (<http://www.nias.nl/fellowships/co-sponsored-fellowships>) or see the panel of current sponsors in Appendix 8.2 The former sponsor-programmes can be found on the NIAS website: (<http://www.nias.knaw.nl/fellowships/former-fellowship-programmes>).

**C. Is NIAS able to form international and interdisciplinary theme-groups that work on innovative topics? (This is a measure of NIAS' sensitivity to trends and its ability to respond to the science of tomorrow.)**

An overview of all the Theme Groups at NIAS and the research topics can be explored on the NIAS website: (<http://www.nias.nl/theme-groups>).

## 6.2 NIAS Specific Secondary Indicators

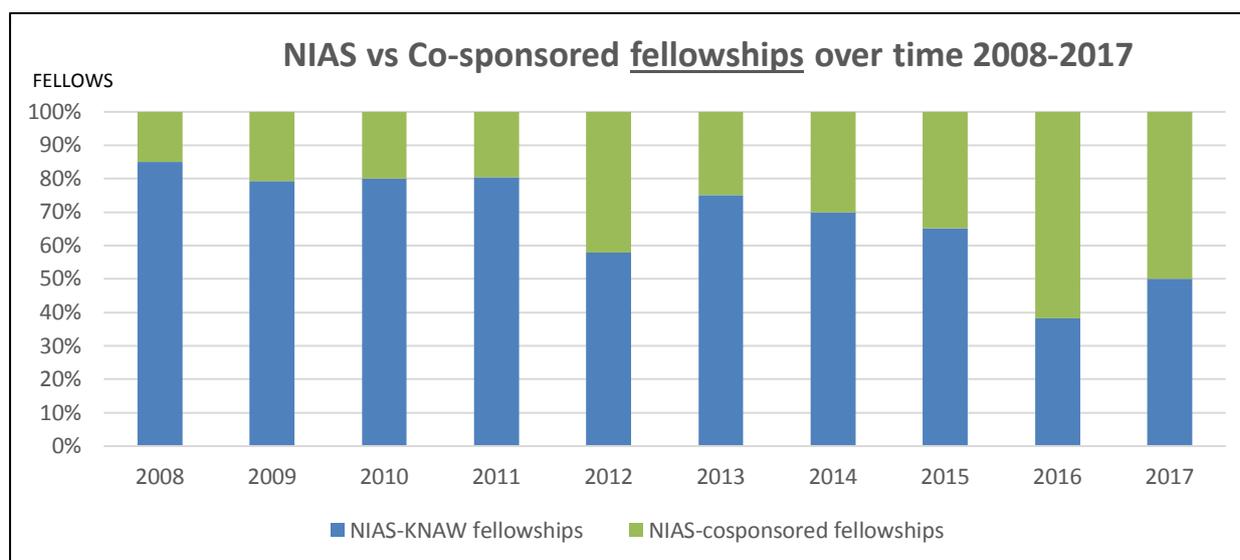
- a) Number of applications for regular fellowships
- b) Proportion of Regular vs Co-sponsored fellowships
- c) Key note lectures and masterclasses by fellows at Dutch universities
- d) Organisation of workshops or conferences by fellows
- e) Visibility in Dutch/International media
- f) Research collaborations after fellowship (see quotes Appendix)
- g) Self-report on impact of fellowship (see quotes Appendix)

Below relevant *Figures* and *Tables* with qualitative and quantitative data to illustrate the secondary indicators listed above (*sources: Applications and data Progress Reports*).

- a) *Applications submitted directly to NIAS for Regular Fellowships/Theme-group Fellowships (i.e. excluding co-sponsored fellowships processed via sponsors)*

| For Fellowship in academic year: | Applications by international scholars | Applications by scholars from the Netherlands | Total Applications |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--------------------|
| 2018-19                          | 77                                     | 52  | 129                |
| 2017-18                          | 77                                     | 45  | 122                |
| 2016-17                          | 65                                     | 48  | 113                |
| 2015-16                          | 62                                     | 37  | 99                 |
| 2014-15                          | 33                                     | 28  | 61                 |
| 2013-14                          | 27                                     | 19  | 46                 |
| 2012-13                          | 39                                     | 20  | 59                 |
| 2011-12                          | 61                                     | 20  | 81                 |
| 2010-11                          | 69                                     | 18  | 87                 |
| 2009-10                          | 61                                     | 21  | 82                 |

- b) *Proportion of Regular vs Co-sponsored fellowships during the evaluation period*



c) *Key note lectures or Master classes held by fellows at Dutch Universities*  
 (source: Progress Reports year groups 2009/2010 and 2016/2017<sup>1</sup>)

|                                | 2009 - 2010<br>(60 Fellows; 393 fellow months) |               |                       | 2016 - 2017<br>(50 Fellows; 271 fellow months) |               |                       |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------|-----------------------|--|---------------|-----------------------|
|                                | <i>n</i>                                       | Dutch Fellows | International Fellows | <i>n</i>                                       | Dutch Fellows | International Fellows |
| <b>Keynote/Invited lecture</b> | 31   | 15            | 16                    | 31   | 14            | 17                    |
| <b>Other lectures</b>          | 39   | 23            | 16                    | 11   | 11            | 0                     |
| <b>Master Classes</b>          | 19   | 15            | 4                     | 8  | 2             | 6                     |

d) *Workshops or conferences by fellows* (source: Progress Reports 2009/2010 and 2016/2017)

|                                 | 2009 - 2010<br>(60 Fellows; 393 fellow months) |                    |                    | 2016 - 2017<br>(50 Fellows; 271 fellow months) |                    |                    |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                 | <i>n</i>                                       | in the Netherlands | in other countries | <i>n</i>                                       | in the Netherlands | in other countries |
| <b>Workshops or Conferences</b> | 54   | 40                 | 14                 | 25   | 15                 | 10                 |

e) *Visibility in Dutch/International media* (source: Progress Reports 2009/2010 and 2016/2017)

|                                       | 2009 - 2010<br>(60 Fellows; 393 fellow months) |                    |                    | 2016 - 2017<br>(50 Fellows; 271 fellow months) |                    |                    |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                       | <i>n</i>                                       | in the Netherlands | in other countries | <i>n</i>                                       | in the Netherlands | in other countries |
| <b>Interviews TV or radio</b>         | 20   | 16                 | 4                  | 8  | 7                  | 1                  |
| <b>Newspaper or magazine articles</b> | 73   | 71                 | 2                  | 35   | 28                 | 7                  |

f) *Research collaborations after fellowship. Quotes Progress Reports in Appendix 8.4*

g) *Self-reported impact of fellowship. Quotes Progress reports in Appendix 8.4*

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<sup>1</sup> Samples from two academic years are shown – at the beginning and end of the evaluation period 2009/2010 and 2016/2017. Data from all years 2008-2017 has been registered and is available on request.

### **6.3 Viability**

Now that NIAS is settled in Amsterdam, and the first upheavals of moving have been dealt with, the time has come to focus on strengthening its position as a National Institute. This Self-Evaluation document is imbued with the sense that NIAS offers a unique infrastructure that will prove increasingly important for Dutch Academia as a whole. The relevance of NIAS is reflected not only in the increasing number of applications from scholars at Dutch Universities but also in the readiness of prestigious organisations in Amsterdam to work with NIAS to develop new co-sponsored fellowship programmes. NIAS now has every opportunity to consolidate its local and national networks and to initiate and strengthen alliances between the humanities, natural and life sciences, arts and sciences and society and sciences.

### **6.4 Integrity and Transparency**

The selection procedure is transparent. Applications are evaluated by independent external reviewers with the relevant expertise. The selection procedure is monitored by The Scientific Advisory Board. Fellowship holders are expected to uphold current standards of scientific integrity as stated in the Fellows' Agreement.

## 7 SWOT

### 7.1 Strengths

1. NIAS is a unique national institute that contributes to the national academic infrastructure. There is no other organisation in the Netherlands that offers similar facilities or a similar intellectual environment.
2. NIAS offers a really interdisciplinary, international community of Fellows and encourages the innovative exchange of scientific methodologies across disciplines.
3. At NIAS 'interdisciplinarity' is not just a *buzz word* but a daily reality.
4. NIAS is able to offer time and space for scientific reflection, in-depth research and innovation where only scientific quality and curiosity count.
5. NIAS is a flat organization with low bureaucracy and close contact between Fellows and staff.
6. NIAS staff is dedicated and committed.

### 7.2 Weaknesses

1. NIAS is not as well-known within the Netherlands as it is internationally.
2. NIAS is still viewed, one-sidedly, as only for humanities and social science disciplines. The fact that NIAS stimulates bridging the gap with the life and natural sciences is insufficiently known.
3. NIAS website does not meet the modern requirements of this time.
4. NIAS' selection procedures take too much time.
5. NIAS does not do enough to engage and stay connected with former fellows.

### 7.3 Opportunities

1. The location in Amsterdam offers various opportunities for cooperation with partners from all fields including the cultural and museum sector. This makes it feasible to initiate new joint areas of research.
2. Amsterdam is central to the Netherlands and a magnet for visitors which will have a positive effect on the number of applications and on attracting talented international fellows.
3. Proximity to other KNAW institutes as well as to the Dutch universities provides excellent opportunities for cooperation in terms of joint international theme-groups.
4. NIAS is in the position to attract European grant money.
5. NIAS is in the position to develop a successful sponsor and friend-raising policy.

### 7.4 Threats

1. Cuts in staffing are a threat to continuity of work processes as well as the service levels to fellows. This can damage NIAS' reputation and weaken its position in competition with other IASs in other countries.
2. Lump sum cuts have meant that some facilities that an IAS should be able to offer have been dropped completely or cannot be carried out to the necessary standard (e.g. offering Workshops to academic partners had to be terminated).
3. Any further cuts to the lump sum would not only exacerbate the issues above but would threaten the survival of NIAS and the Netherlands would lose its only IAS.
4. Any increase in the running costs of building or fellows' accommodation is not sustainable.
5. If teaching replacement funds are decreased, NIAS fellowships will be less able to attract scholars from Dutch universities.

## **8 APPENDICES**

- 1. Recommendations Evaluation Committee 2008**
- 2. Co-sponsors, Sponsors and Partners**
- 3. Questionnaire Progress Report: Research outcomes**
- 4. Quotes from Progress reports**

## 8.1 Appendix: Main recommendations Evaluation Committee 2000-2008

The previous NIAS Evaluation took place in 2008 in Wassenaar. The Evaluation Committee's recommendations are summarized below:

1. Take proactive measures to attract fellowship applications.
2. Increase the diversity of disciplines; the range of international applicants and attract more applicants from Dutch universities.
3. Finance replacement funds so that Dutch universities can cover Fellows' teaching tasks during fellowships.
4. Speed up the process of theme-groups formation.
5. Fellowships should be a whole academic year; short fellowships the exception.
6. Add two Permanent Fellows to the staff.
7. Improve the service level of support for fellows; employ student research assistants.
8. Improve Fellows' accommodation in Wassenaar.
9. Improve the visibility of NIAS.

## 8.2 Appendix: Overview of Co- Sponsors, Sponsors and Partners



The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation



P.R.I.M.E. FINANCE  
Panel of Recognised International Market Experts in Finance



See also [NIAS website](http://www.nias.nl/nias/partnerships-and-networks)  
(<http://www.nias.nl/nias/partnerships-and-networks> )

### 8.3 Questionnaire Progress Report: Research outcomes

All fellows are asked to complete a Progress Report Questionnaire before departure. The data is registered according to the categories below with publication status.

Fellows' books received by the NIAS library are noted as published. In addition, NIAS sends a Follow-up Questionnaire after three years together with a copy of the Fellow's original Progress Report to confirm publication status.

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#### Questionnaire Progress Report: Research outcomes

NIAS Year group : 201x-201x  
Name Fellow : xxx  
Type of Fellowship : Regular/Theme-group/Co-sponsored  
Period Fellowship : from dd/m/yr – dd/m/yr.  
Email address after leaving : xxxx@xxxx

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#### Progress Report (about 1-3 pages) keeping the following questions in mind

1. What progress did you make in your research?
  2. Does the progress you made match your initial plans?
  3. Do you feel that NIAS has made a specific contribution to your research?
  4. Did the interaction with other disciplines and cultures give you new ideas?
  5. Did your stay at NIAS contribute to your career prospects?
- 

#### List - Categories of Research Outcomes

Please report work carried out during your fellowship at NIAS by inserting under the relevant category and code. We ask you to mark publications related to your NIAS project as: *Published; In Press; Submitted; Draft.*

|   |  |    |                                   |
|---|--|----|-----------------------------------|
| A | Article in refereed Journal<br>( <i>Impact score;Open Access</i> ) | M  | Organiser Conference or Workshop  |
| B | Book or monograph  | N  | Grant Applications                |
| C | Edited book or proceedings   | O  | Web based tools or Apps           |
| D | Chapter in book or proceedings                                     | P  | Peer Reviewer, Panel member       |
| E | Reports  | QR | Article in Newspaper or magazines |
| F | Book Review  | S  | Media interviews on TV or Radio   |
| G | Other Scientific publications                                      | U  | Work used in Policy documents     |
| H | Keynote or invited speaker   | T  | Research Networks                 |
| I | NIAS Seminar   | V  | Scholarly Impact                  |
| J | Other Lectures   | W  | Impact on Career                  |
| K | Conference presentations   | X  | Other – e.g. citation index       |
| L | Master Classes or Courses  |    |                                   |

## 8.4 Quotes from Fellows' Progress Reports

### Collaborations after fellowship. Quotes Progress Reports (see 6.2 f)

*"Being a Fellow gave me the opportunity to deepen my collaboration with two colleagues from Dutch universities whose research interests and activities are relevant to my research proposal. This is of course an unmatched catalyst for future initiatives of mobility and internationalization."*

*"The NIAS-Lorentz workshop was highly stimulating - it was definitely one of the most interesting and inspiring I have attended during my career. Coming from different research fields, many participants had never met before, but because of the common theme everybody was highly interested in and motivated by the new perspectives that were provided. A genuine 'group feeling' developed over the course of the days, and new collaborations were initiated."*

*"Together with a philosopher and a psychologist I [classicist] have organized a workshop (spring 2017) about ancient philosophical texts and modern psychological theories."*

*"The contacts established through NIAS with the colleagues of the Huygens ING and Meertens Institutes are and will remain extremely valuable."*

*"I'm [science historian] concretely working together with two other Fellows on new projects (with an astrophysicist on cosmology and with a classicist on the philosopher Parmenides). Two publications will follow out of that."*

### Self-reported impact of fellowship. Quotes Progress Reports (see 6.2 g)

*"NIAS has been a life-altering experience for me; the way I think about science will never be the same again. Investigations have led me to conclude that there is a shift taking place in our scientific paradigm, in the way we think about reality."*

*"NIAS offers time, which is a scarce commodity in current academia. My fellowship has allowed me to say "no" to many things that I otherwise might have taken up, and the rhythm of spending a whole day at NIAS to do research allowed me to be productive without ever feeling that I had to rush things or finish off something too hastily."*

*"For me, the main advantage of a stay at NIAS has been social and cultural. Socially, I was constantly buoyed by the collective intellectual energy and friendship among fellows, which turned my year at NIAS into the most satisfying experience of my academic life. --- . I'm convinced that a NIAS fellowship is a gift for life that doesn't end when you return home."*

*"The time given by NIAS gives the unique opportunity to work on an overarching complex topic. Repeated discussions with the theme group, but also with the other NIAS fellows with completely different backgrounds (disciplines and cultures) contributed largely to being able to disentangle major obstacles in our field."*

*"The mock interview for my VIDI with a number of fellows who are NWO VIDI and VICI laureates was very useful."*

*"My research is rooted in neuroscience. Increasingly over the past years I have moved increasingly deeply into the "harder" more reductionist sciences, seeing people as collections of neurons to be manipulated. NIAS has, for me, been a return to the humanities, to seeing people as people, and to understanding where disciplines like ethics, anthropology, and history fit into my academic work and personal journey."*