

APPENDIX 3:

RESEARCH BRIEF REGARDING ACADEMY'S COLONIAL PAST

1. INTRODUCTION

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) has decided to start an investigation into its past ties with colonialism and slavery. The investigation is consistent with the Academy's policy of promoting social justice in its organisation and mobilising the necessary resources to become more inclusive. An understanding of its own past is crucial in that context. By examining its historical ties to colonialism, the Academy will be able to gain more awareness of the past and its ramifications for the present, take responsibility for its history, confront possible blind spots, and reflect on its own values and practices.

The Academy's existing historiography makes little mention of colonialism and its role in that system. The focus of such documents is more on celebrating the past. But as argued by the creators of the Black Heritage Tours and others, there must also be a place in that celebration for the untold stories in the organisation's history. We must not only celebrate the blessings but also acknowledge events and attitudes that can be judged as less successful or simply wrong. Accountability is not only about recognising the Academy's complicity in the colonial system. It also means inviting those who have, until now, encountered barriers in our organisation to take the stage. Understanding the many and varied facets of history will lay the foundation for dialogue and reflection with a view to becoming a forward-looking and inclusive organisation.

The investigation thus also offers the Academy an opportunity to reflect on knowledge production: what has it done or neglected to do in the pursuit of knowledge and in its communication, and what effects has this had? By positioning itself as the embodiment of the best that Dutch science and scholarship have to offer, the Academy sanctions the knowledge produced by its members and the manner in which they do so, as well as prevailing notions of what 'relevant' knowledge is. How has the Academy framed that responsibility? Has it adopted a position, explicitly or implicitly, on matters that concern the work of its members/institutions in a colonial context? And has that position changed over time?

2. CLIENT

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences is the client and will fund the investigation.

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE COMMISSION

The Academy aims not only to examine its own role in the history of colonialism (including in science and scholarship), but also to use this knowledge to raise awareness about the impact of the history of colonialism, racialisation and slavery and to reflect on what it means today.

The investigation must be based on a broad understanding of colonialism that considers networks of connections, knowledge and power relations. Focusing on the colonial past will, almost automatically, reveal the Academy's stance towards slavery while also doing justice to the complexity of colonialism in its various manifestations.

Possible topics of investigation are: the institutional structures and everyday procedures that have made the Academy what the Academy is today. Examples include nomination procedures, advisory reports and awards, but also buildings, objects and collections, as well as any ties that the Academy, the Learned Society and the Academy's institutes had, explicitly or otherwise, to slavery and colonialism and/or what role the Academy played within the broader system of science and scholarship.

The Academy's position in the science system is made manifest not only in its specific opinions, assets and advisory activities, but also through its institutional role within the broader system of science and scholarship. The investigation should strike a balance between examining the Academy's specific role in the science system and the activities of the Learned Society and institutes on the one hand, and studying the institutional role that the Academy plays in academia, the economy and politics on the other. That also means taking viewpoints informed by local knowledge and knowledge institutions in the former colonies explicitly into account in the research design and the investigation itself.

The investigation should focus primarily on the Dutch colonies, both in Suriname and on the Caribbean islands, as well as the Dutch East Indies and Dutch commercial outposts, in particular in Asia and South Africa. However, where applicable, it should also examine the Academy's involvement in colonies founded by other nations.

To ensure that the investigation has real-world relevance and to breathe life into its results, it would be advisable to develop a number of specific case studies.

4. GUIDANCE FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

4.1 The research proposals must include the following:

- Recasting of the Academy's objectives into an overarching research question and subsidiary questions (max. 250 words)
- Theoretical framework (max. 700 words)
- Approach and methodology (max. 700 words)
- Work plan and intended end products
- Description of how the research team intends to procure the expertise of Academy members and researchers at Academy institutes.
- Relevance to society
- Risk analysis and possible actions to minimise risks
- Approach to communication and interaction with Client
- Members of research team:
 - The following should be submitted for each member of the research team (including the project coordinator):
 - An evidence-based CV (profile of no more than 700 words and a list of five to ten outputs)
 - Description of the work that the investigation will involve
 - The volume of work in hours
 - Statement that the researcher will adhere to the principles and standards set out in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

- Intended composition of guidance committee
- Budget: salary, cost of materials, travel and accommodation, any overheads and VAT to be offset, any contingencies
- Pre-DPIA to review personal data processing; full DPIA to be submitted upon contract award.¹
- Data management sketch and publication plan (FAIR principles): detailed plan to be submitted upon contract award.

4.2 Intended end products

In addition to the final report on the substance of the investigation, a final activity report and a final financial report must be submitted once the investigation is completed.

The final report on the substance of the investigation should consist of:

- a scholarly publication that also makes recommendations for follow-up actions;
- a product aimed at the general public.

4.3 Guidance committee

In accordance with the Academy's *Guidelines for Historical-Scholarly Contract Research* (2007) (see Appendix 4 of this tender), the contractor will be responsible for arranging supervision for the investigation. In its proposal, the research team must suggest a guidance committee to serve as an external scholarly sounding board for the team.

4.4 Timeline

The projected timeline for the investigation is 2025-2028. The final report must be submitted no more than three years after the investigation starts.

5. ACCESS TO SOURCES

The Academy has asked the institutes under its supervision to grant the researchers access to their archives, subject to the constraints of prevailing legislation. The Academy has not conducted its own preliminary research into the state of these archives.

There is a document available indicating the degree to which the archives of all Academy institutes are accessible. As this document includes the personal data of staff, it cannot be made publicly available and shared. Removal of this personal data would render the document useless.

Parties submitting a research proposal may request a copy of this document from the Academy using the TenderNed message box. This document will only be made available to Project Coordinators / Contractors. It will not be made available to participants and researchers.

If you request a copy, you must provide the following information:

- Name and contact details of the requesting party
- Job title of requesting party
- Intended role of requesting party

¹ For reference, see: <https://www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/themas/basis-avg/praktisch-avg/data-protection-impact-assessment-dpia>

The Academy itself will decide whether or not to share the document with the requesting party.

6. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CONTRACTOR AND CLIENT

6.1 Communication with Academy's contact working group

Organisations that examine their own role in colonialism are forced to face what may be thorny questions of identity and responsibility. This is no different for the Academy. The independent nature of the research team is therefore crucial. The Academy would, however, ask the research team to enter into dialogue with the organisation during the investigation, and to join it in considering the potential consequences of the investigation for the organisation, its staff and its members and how the organisation can respond. The Academy intends to establish a contact working group to this end that will meet with the research team twice annually to discuss what the investigation means for the organisation. The task of this group is to support the Academy in informing its members and staff about the investigation's progress so that the topic remains relevant within the organisation. After the investigation has been completed, the contact working group will advise the Academy on possible follow-up measures.

6.2 Communication about the investigation

The Academy will draw up a communication plan in consultation with the research team.

7. FINANCES

The Academy estimates that it will take two or three years to complete the investigation. The Academy will make €1,100,000 available to carry out the investigation (including any recoverable overheads and VAT). This sum will be paid against itemised expenses.

8. TERMS & CONDITIONS AND PROVISIONS

Teams that cannot guarantee that they will complete the investigation within the specified time and budget should not respond to the tender or, if such uncertainties or time-sensitive deviations are merely marginal in nature, should make this explicitly known during the question round.