The Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) is an independent agency that supports fundamental research in all disciplines in Flanders. The FWO provides the necessary funding on the basis of an interuniversity selection, and as such, is the Flemish successor to the national fund for scientific research, which was founded in 1928.

Knowledge opens new horizons
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Knowledge creates opportunities
Deepening knowledge about human and environment is the mission of the FWO. That knowledge also touches upon the essence of fundamental research. For as the level of knowledge of society grows, so does the quality of our education, thereby providing young people with every opportunity to deploy their talents in a broad array of disciplines.

Research paves the way for development
Fundamental science extends the boundaries of our knowledge. Only then can innovation take root. For knowledge that opens new horizons paves the way for all new developments. And that is the only guarantee for economic growth, welfare and well-being.
The FWO invests in young talent
• PhD fellowship offers young researchers the opportunity to obtain their PhD after four years of research.
• A clinical PhD fellowship allows young clinical scientists to devote themselves part-time to their PhD research for a period of two years.
• Non-scientific researchers can work one year full-time on the completion of their PhD thesis with a special PhD fellowship.

The FWO stimulates scientific careers
Young researchers with a PhD who wish to embark on a scientific career
• A postdoctoral research fellowship allows them to perform full-time research at postdoctoral level for a period of three to nine years.
• This support is also available to young clinical scientists with a PhD. A senior clinical fellowship allows them to work part-time on their postdoctoral research for a period of five to ten years, alongside their clinical activities.

The FWO extends grants to individual researchers
• A research grant provides individual researchers affiliated with a Flemish university, with funds to finance their research.

The FWO supports research teams
For research teams, the FWO provides funding via a research project. The funds can be used to hire extra scientists and technicians, or for equipment and operating costs associated with the execution of the research project.

The FWO rewards excellence in research
• Every five years the FWO rewards five eminent Flemish researchers, selected by an international jury, with a prestigious prize. In addition, the FWO, in collaboration with the business community, awards scientific prizes to outstanding researchers. Both scientists and young talents thus receive recognition for their outstanding accomplishments.

The FWO without borders
Research is international. That is why the FWO stimulates international cooperation and promotes scientific mobility. How? By giving Flemish scientists every opportunity to acquire research experience in international research groups and by attracting scientists from abroad who can share their research expertise with Flemish researchers. This is achieved in various ways.
• Foreign researchers can apply for a visiting postdoctoral fellowship to get the necessary resources to temporarily continue their research at a Flemish university.
• Flemish researchers are offered numerous funding schemes for financing short or long stays abroad, in order to be maximally mobile and to build an international network.
• Flemish research teams are offered logistic and institutional support in their collaboration with colleagues abroad. This is often necessary to participate in major international projects or to co-ordinate research networks or platforms.

At the moment, agreements for bilateral research cooperation are being concluded with several countries, which are intended to enhance international collaboration in specific domains.

The FWO also works together with its European and international sister organisations in various networks. The FWO is, for example, an active member of the European Science Foundation and the European Heads of Research Councils.

Organisation
The FWO fulfills its task – to stimulate fundamental research in all scientific domains – in total scientific independence. The two main budget lines of the FWO are individual fellowships (Ph.D. fellowships, postdoctoral fellowships, …) and research projects. Furthermore, extensive means are available for international cooperation and mobility. The FWO also awards various scientific prizes in collaboration with private companies.

Scientific selection
Top scientists evaluate and select for themselves. The scientific community evaluates all applications and scientific activity reports itself. To this end, the FWO puts together scientific committees including top researchers from Belgium and abroad. The FWO also consults external experts.