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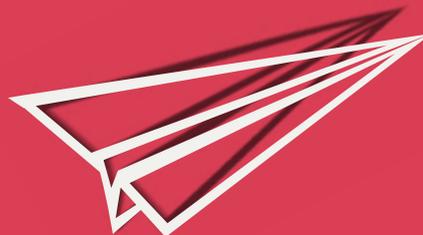


**OPENING
NEW
HORIZONS**

A year in
stories
2019

HILDE CREVITS

FLEMISH MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND INNOVATION



“Today, solid scientific research and accessible science communication are more important than ever”

The Research Foundation–Flanders (FWO) operates in a social context that is constantly changing at a rapid pace. This is nothing new. Science never stands still and neither does the environment researchers work in. However, since early March of this year we have been faced with unforeseen and unprecedented changes, both in terms of size and scope. The COVID-19 pandemic has left virtually no aspect of our lives untouched and has made us question many of our certainties.

At the same time, day after day, we are witnessing the importance of solid scientific research and accessible science communication. Rarely has the general public been so dependent on the daily bulletins of our researchers and scientists. Rarely has our society allowed itself to be guided to this extent by the substantiated analyses and recommendations of experts and professors. Policymakers too are relying on the most recent scientific findings to take administrative measures. This way, the general public has discovered how research is a continuous quest for answers that are seldom final. It is a permanent learning process.

The FWO has responded quickly to this crisis, immediately taking numerous measures to safeguard ongoing research and evaluation procedures, albeit subject to some adjustment and flexibility. I was also pleased to be able to make 2.5 million euros available for a special call for projects on COVID-19 that is currently being rolled out by the FWO. In addition to this, efforts have been made at European level,

where the FWO is working hard to set up a joint initiative of European financiers.

As such, the FWO is contributing to shaping a Flemish science policy that will always keep its finger on the pulse of the research world. The major reforms of the FWO application channels for pre- and postdoctoral research fellowships and the fundamental research projects launched three years ago have meanwhile been fully embedded into the FWO activities. Now it is time for a thorough evaluation, so as to retain what is working well and to consider where and how we can adjust course. After all, the organisation and operations of the FWO are also constantly improving and adapting to the ever-changing environment.

This annual gives a voice to the scientists who have been encouraged by the FWO to communicate their results to the general public and show how relevant they are to our daily lives. Other scientists testify how the FWO gave them easier access to European partnerships. This annual also contains testimonies from researchers who have bridged the gap between science and innovation through their shift to industry. These are all excellent examples of fruitful encounters and cross-fertilisations that demonstrate the important task, the dynamics and the valuable efforts of the FWO. I therefore look forward to once again joining forces in the years ahead so as to continue to put Flemish scientific research on the map.



66 Willy Verstraete
& Hans Willems

114 Jan Trachet
& Jonas Roelens

22 Tom Van Assche
& Serena Moretti

30 Senne Braem
& Laura Vandenbosch

38 Sophie Gresham
& Leila Paquay

46 Bart Neyns
& Kim Martinod

WILLY VERSTRAETE

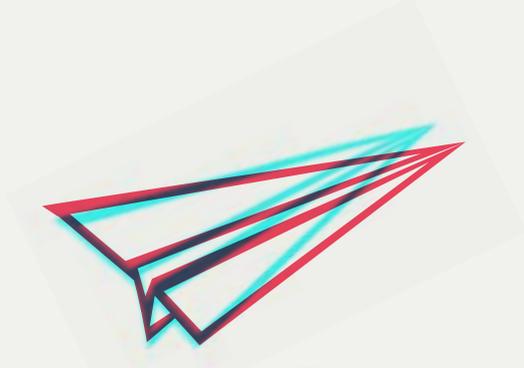
CHAIRMAN OF FWO



HANS WILLEMS

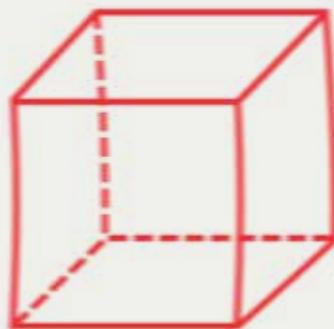
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF FWO





"SCIENCE MUST CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY"

The year 2019 was another year of change for FWO. Recent years laid the foundation for the reforms that were launched last year. Chairman Willy Verstraete and Secretary-General Hans Willems review this year of change while looking ahead to what's to come.



FWO does not stand still. In 2017 you started reforming your strategic procedures and processes, to gear them to better meet the demands of society. This year we are witnessing the first results of this reform. How did it go?

Willems: "A small change to our processes can have a major impact on researchers. Throughout the reform process, the researchers took centre stage. They were involved in every step, and today too we are asking them for feedback. We recently discussed with our stakeholders how they feel about the renewed procedures. Their reactions help us keep our finger on the pulse and make the necessary adjustments. We will also process the feedback of our expert panels. All stakeholders appreciate the fact that we listen to them."

Verstraete: "Before we implement new structures, we carefully weigh the pros and cons. You could compare FWO to a large boat that is not easy to manoeuvre and that needs a set sailing route. FWO must sail steadily and keep an eye on the horizon at all times. If you innovate too abruptly, you create unrest, and you are often faced with unforeseen effects. We take our time to roll out measures."

Why was change necessary?

Verstraete: "FWO encourages its researchers to look at the world with an open mind and to think far ahead. Where do the strategic scientific needs lie? For which challenges and fundamental issues

does society expect science to provide an answer? We listen to the concerns of society and its citizens. The Flemish Science Agenda, which gathers more than 10,000 questions from citizens, acts as a guideline."

Willems: "FWO will never impose a new vision of science policy from above. Citizens expect us to use our resources efficiently and to communicate transparently about the funding of scientific research. Our reforms will always meet what society at large expects of us."

Verstraete: "Researchers too have a voice and formulate their wishes. It is the task of FWO to give young researchers the opportunity to carry out bottom-up research and to steer it as they deem best. Some research ideas may not be meaningful at the moment, but they may prove valuable in the future. Let a thousand flowers bloom... At FWO, people find a place where they can shape their research in complete freedom."

Can you name some reforms that create opportunities for young researchers?

Willems: "In the past, junior researchers struggled to compete with their senior colleagues. That's why we have adapted the funding channels and split up the junior and senior research projects. As a result, both target groups are no longer in each other's way."

"At doctoral level, we created the junior and senior postdoc. Young

postdoctoral researchers can now enter an FWO process at different points in their careers. Before, they used to have to decide immediately after their PhD. Researchers who first went abroad or wanted to gain experience in industry fell by the wayside."

Does FWO intend to focus more on this interaction with industry?

Verstraete: "We want to give young researchers a broader vision of the labour market. We have developed measures to make it easier for them to move on from the academic world. We encourage our researchers to look over the hedge and show the business community what they have to offer."

Willems: "Companies or government institutions in our knowledge society are in desperate need of highly educated people. We pay

attention to the cross-fertilisation between academic institutions and the business community, with excellent results. Our researchers have had the opportunity to sign up for a business internship since 2019."

In the FWO policy plan 2019-2023, you announced that the expert panels would be revised. What will change?

Willems: "The current panel structure was 10 years old and needed an update. Our expert panels must reflect the entire Flemish research world. The so-called orphan disciplines must also find their way to FWO. Scientific research is becoming increasingly multidisciplinary. How are we going to evaluate that? How can we guarantee quality?"

Verstraete: "When two different disciplines or scientific fields cross paths, something new can emerge from an unexpected corner, resulting in new opportunities. It is difficult for the current panels to assess this transversality, even for the existing interdisciplinary panel. By introducing a safeguard for transversal proposals, we encourage researchers to also explore fields that are further away from their own and to enter into daring collaborations. Combinations that are not obvious are now more than welcome at FWO."

Willems: "The design of this project poses a challenge. Together with broad working groups, with both Flemish and international expertise, we are drawing up the new structure for the expert panels. The main outlines were agreed upon by the Board of Trustees in 2019, and we will continue to build on that in 2020."



"We encourage researchers to think transversally, beyond the boundaries of their own discipline"

HANS WILLEMS

Are we witnessing that same evolution across Europe?

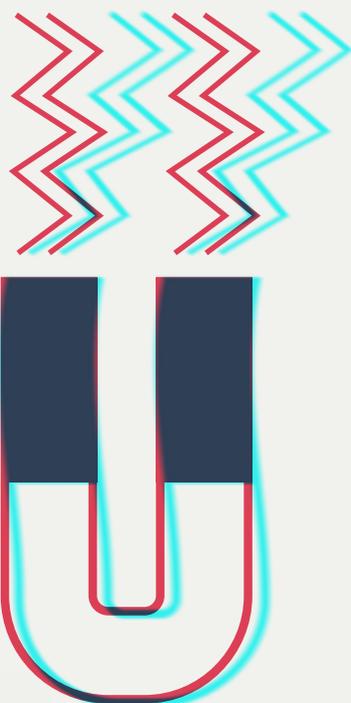
Willems: "Definitely. The challenges facing FWO, such as opportunities for young researchers, apply throughout Europe. All our European colleagues are looking for solutions to that challenge. International benchmarking gives us an insight into each other's approach."

"We sit around the table with other European institutions, such as the European Research Council (ERC), and we are members of Science Europe, which brings together 36 European Research Funding and Research Performing Organisations

(RFO-RPO) from 27 countries. We closely monitor trends, we participate in working groups ... Learning from each other is important, because we are not alone facing these challenges. Science is international."

How do you see the next few years?

Willems: "The scientific world never stands still. FWO will always continue to evolve. We are facing major challenges on a European level. If we want Flemish researchers to stay at the top of the European game, we need to constantly focus on their work – by strengthening European partnerships and effectively transposing the European framework to



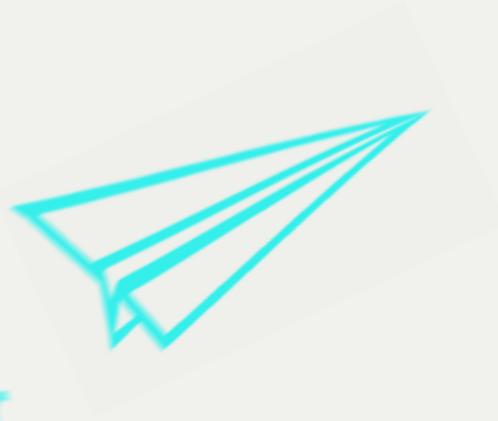
the Flemish context, for instance. And our evaluation procedure – specifically the period between the application and the granting of the subsidy – still requires some attention.”

Verstraete: “Society is paying more and more attention to scientific research. Society rightly wants to know what research the Flemish taxpayers’ money is pumped into and demands a transparent scientific agenda. In addition to their research and teaching tasks, researchers must also keep an eye out on the social aspect of science. We want to take into account their

efforts in this area in our panels’ evaluations. It is not just about the figures, the number of publications and the citations that a study achieves. The contribution of science to society – a *Gründung*, a term once used at the Max Planck Institute – is paramount. FWO is looking for methods to value that aspect.”

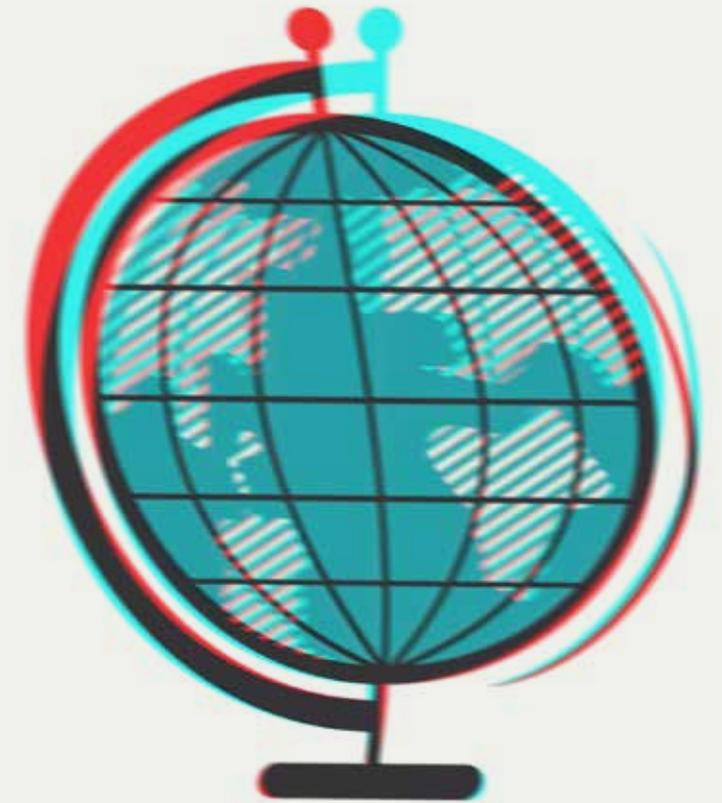
FWO wants to be a beacon of trust. For researchers, citizens and the government.

Willems: “Definitely. Citizens must trust FWO and scientific developments, which is reflected in the



“It’s not the number of publications, but the contribution of science to society that comes first”

WILLY VERSTRAETE



mandates and the resources that policy makers assign to us.”

Verstraete: “FWO begins and ends with the researcher. The Board of Trustees acts as a sounding board, listening to the wishes and needs of our researchers. They are involved in outlining the FWO

plans, and they help determine the research priorities. This is an exceptional position for researchers, and we want to nurture and safeguard it. FWO must always remain a place where researchers feel at home and where they can develop to their full potential.”

JAN TRACHET

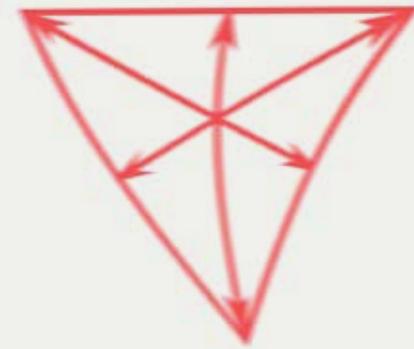
ARCHAEOLOGIST, GHENT UNIVERSITY



JONNAS ROELENIS

HISTORIAN, GHENT UNIVERSITY





"ANY SCIENTIFIC TOPIC, NO MATTER HOW SPECIALISED, CAN BE SHOWCASED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC"

Science communication is important in bridging the gap between science and society. Yet not enough scientists are opening up their work to the general public. For historian Jonas Roelens and archaeologist Jan Trachet (both from Ghent University), however, the need is obvious. In fact, they even won a prize for it.



Under the title 'Pourbus Troubadour', FWO postdoctoral researcher Jan Trachet toured Flanders and the Netherlands in 2018, giving lectures inside people's homes. The subject of those living-room lectures? A unique 16th Century map painted by Pieter Pourbus, an archaeologist at Ghent University. "Through Pourbus Troubadour I tried to tickle people's interest in local history, landscapes and archaeology," Trachet explains. "I believe everyone has this innate interest. It can serve as a stepping stone for a broader interest in the historical landscape."

Last year's tour earned Trachet the Young Promising Science Communication Prize of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts (KVAB) and the Young Academy. Historian Jonas Roelens, on the other hand, was the winner of the Flemish PhD Cup. His FWO doctorate, which has now been completed, charted the persecution of homosexuals. Roelens' research addressed 'sodomy' in the early modern Southern Netherlands between 1400 and 1700. "Sodomy is a collective term for all kinds of unnatural forms of sexuality, such as masturbation, paedophilia or bestiality, but it usually referred to homosexuality. I investigated why homosexuality was punished far more often in our region than in the rest of Europe," he says.

Why do you find it important to share the insights of your research with others?

Trachet: "The map of Pourbus, which lies halfway between late medieval painting and early modern cartography, offers a wealth of information about the landscape and archaeology of the Zwin area in West Flanders. I think it would be a shame not to share my knowledge with the local community; after all, they live in the area."

Roelens: "We can learn a lot from the historical persecution of homosexuals. Sexuality is also a hot topic today. That is why I wanted to go public with my research. I started writing opinion pieces for the newspaper and articles for popular science magazines, and I gave lectures. I also proudly co-authored the book, *Verzwegen verlangen. Een geschiedenis van homoseksualiteit in België*."

"Through science communication, I can also encourage people to adopt a critical mindset. It is difficult to distinguish between what is authentic and what is fake news in the abundance of texts and images we are confronted with. Historians like myself can help citizens think about the source of a message and the author's intention. The information you work with as a historian

is often subjective, complex and above all incomplete. You have to interpret this information correctly and turn it into a logical story. I would like to share my experiences doing precisely that.”

Your efforts have paid off. You have both won awards for the exceptional value of your science communication.

Roelens: “Yes, I won the PhD Cup, and to my surprise, both the audience prize and the jury prize. More than 1,800 doctorates are published in Flanders every year. Most of them end up in a digital archive, without being given much attention. Scriptie vzw, the organiser of the PhD Cup, aims to showcase research to a wider audience. In three minutes, the candidates explain what their research is about using accessible language.”

Trachet: “I received the Annual Prize for Science Communication and the Young Promise Prize from KVAB and Young Academy for my bicycle tour with living-room lectures. During the day I cycled through the medieval landscape depicted on the map, and after that, I gave a lecture at someone’s home in exchange for a place to sleep. That allowed me to reach a small but very diverse audience of families, neighbours and friends with an interest in local history.”

Why do you think science communication is important?

Roelens: “Scientists often sit comfortably in their ivory towers. But we must not forget that the community has the right to know what research they are co-funding through their taxes. What’s more, participating in the PhD Cup and

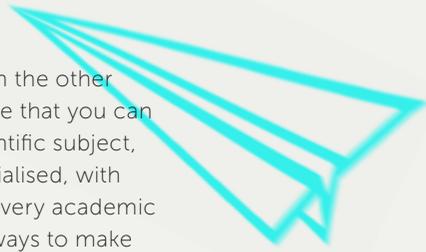
being in contact with the other candidates taught me that you can really share any scientific subject, no matter how specialised, with the general public. Every academic should think about ways to make their research accessible to that target group.”

“At the same time, you get a lot out of that interaction with the general public. I am asked the most fascinating questions, which I or my colleagues would never have thought of. You gain new insights and learn to think more outside the box. That only benefits the scientific results.”

Trachet: “I’m also helping to garner support for the archaeological sector, which doesn’t just have an academic side. For example, a new hospital is being built, but it turns out that archaeological excavations are required. The builder might have preferred to see things differently. By communicating clearly and transparently, we can prove that such excavations are useful, even if they may cost more money and time than initially provided for.”

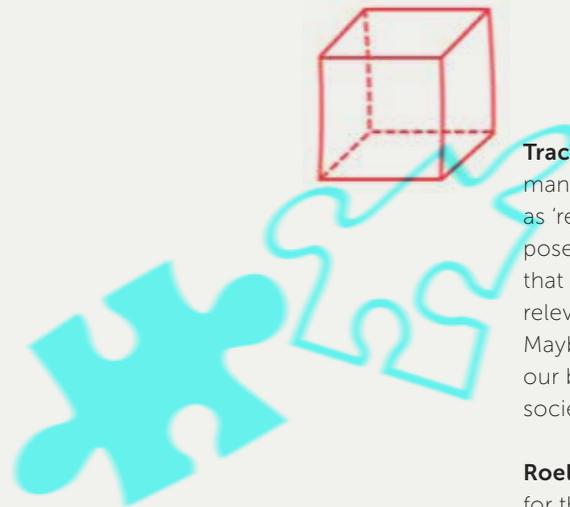
“If we keep communicating about science clearly, we will manage to get citizens to jump on the bandwagon. You awaken their interest to get involved. For example, through citizen science I am currently digitising the map. I want to make an appeal to citizens who might be interested to help me complete the database. There are a lot of similar projects in Flanders and abroad. Citizen science is the future, and as a result, science communication too.”

You’re both humanities scientists. Is it a coincidence that you just won an award for science communication, or is there more to it?



“Scientific communication must be given a structural place within scientific research”

JAN TRACHET



Trachet: “It’s probably telling. Humanities are not always recognised as ‘real’ science with a social purpose. The exact sciences are spared that distrust, because their social relevance is easier to pinpoint. Maybe that’s exactly why we do our best to defend our interests to society.”

Roelens: “There is more support for the exact sciences. I have also noticed that we need to prove ourselves more. During the first months of my PhD, I questioned my own research: why am I doing this? Who wants to know? I realised that I myself could make my research relevant by coming out with it. By bringing the subject to life. I can

easily respond to current events and, for example, dedicate an opinion piece to my work.”

Trachet: “But let’s not forget it’s just fun to do as well. Especially if you can integrate your passions into it. I think that’s the key to success. In ‘Pourbus Troubadour’ I was able to capture all my interests: fieldwork, nature, cycling, social contact and talking about archaeology.”

Roelens: “I truly enjoyed writing my book. Science communication is a very direct form of communication. People speak to you directly. It creates a greater dynamic than writing a scientific publication, for example. To be honest, I don’t understand

why we are still the odd one out and why aren't more researchers communicating about their work in this way."

Could lack of time have something to do with that?

Roelens: "I suppose so. Science communication requires a certain commitment from scientists. Our agenda is already jam-packed with research, teaching... I mainly wrote my book at night and during week-ends. Prizes such as the PhD Cup give the necessary recognition, but

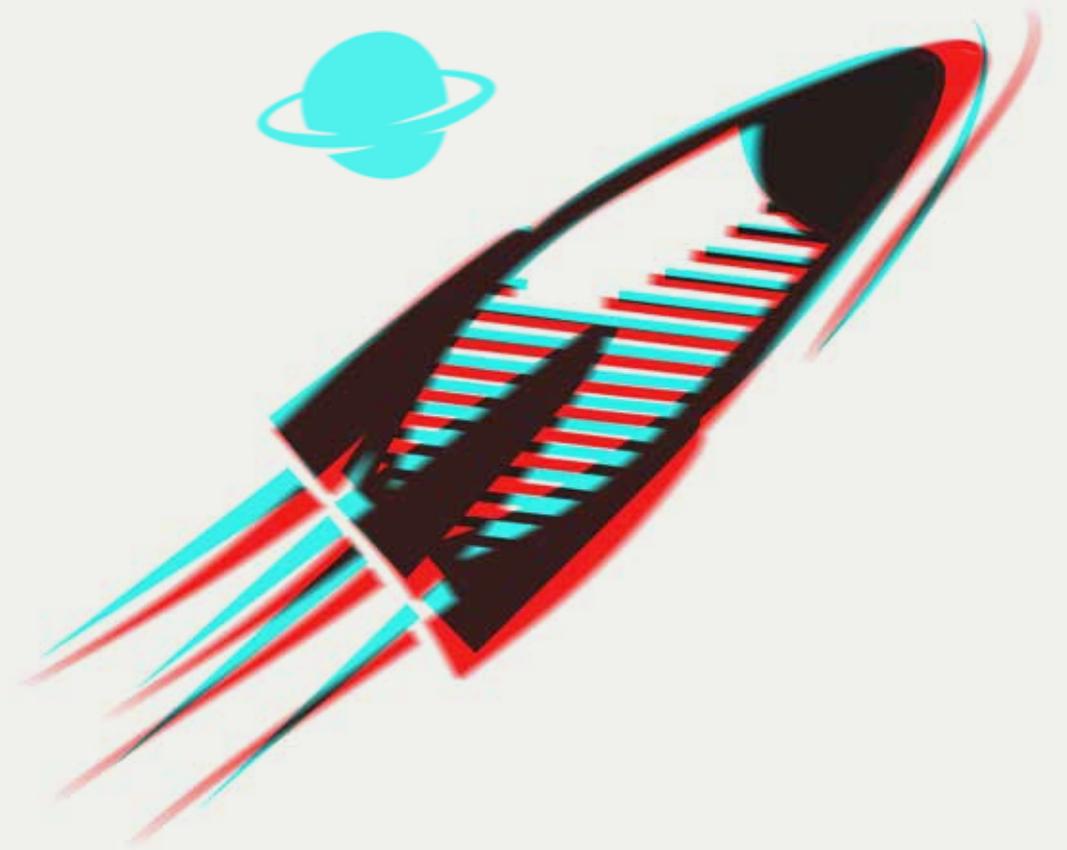
science communication remains too much on the sidelines. Universities and university colleges could stimulate science communication, for example by incorporating it into their funding mechanisms and evaluation models."

Trachet: "They still assess your academic career by looking at your list of scholarly publications. So it's only logical that you put your time into that rather than anything else. Scientific communication deserves a more structural place in our research. We shouldn't have to do



"By interacting with the general public you gain new insights and you learn to think outside the box"

JONAS ROELENS



that in our spare time. I myself am lucky that within our research group there is scope for science communication within our regular working hours."

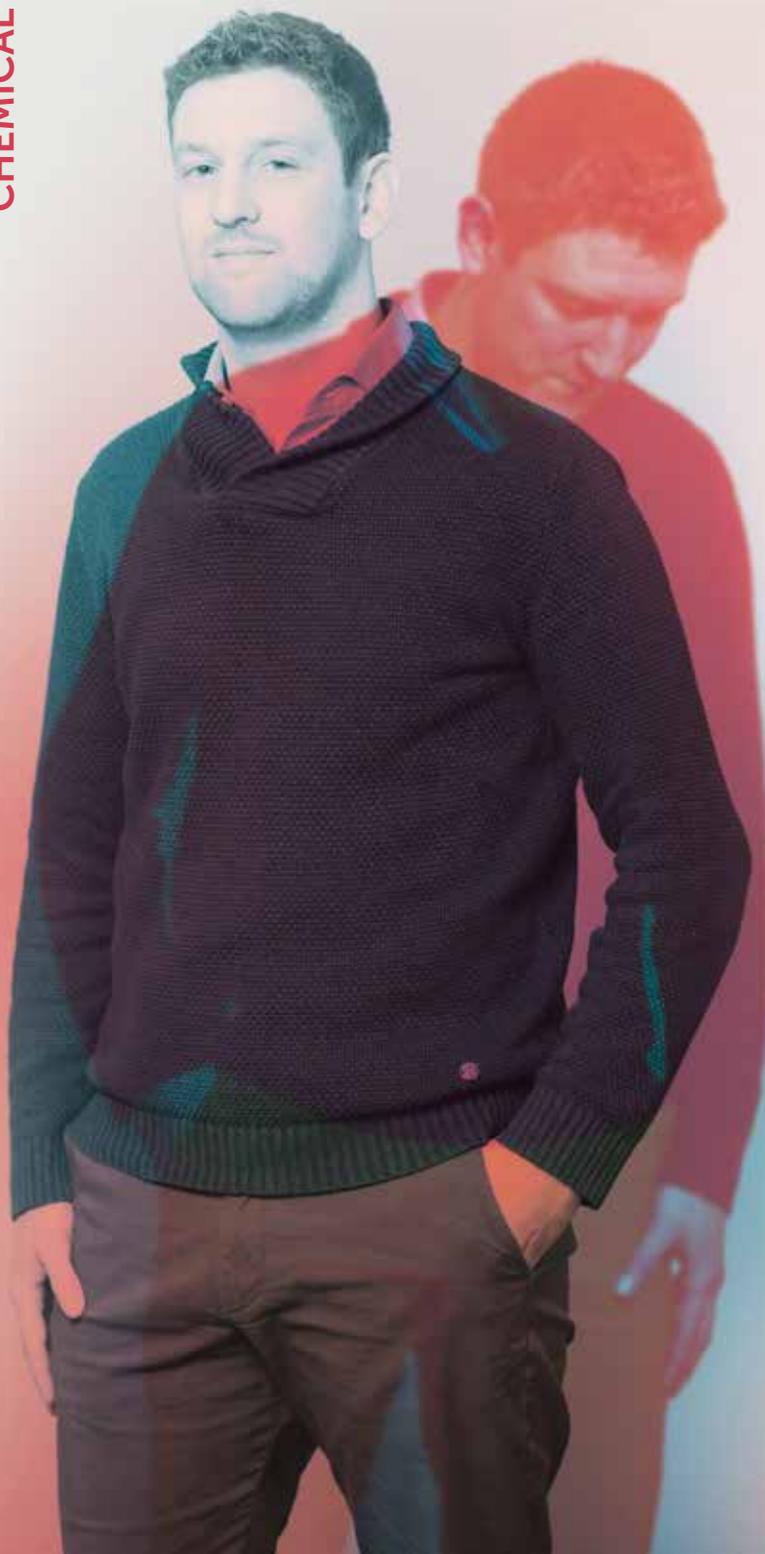
Roelens: "There's a shift going on. Ghent University was the first Belgian university to start a practical public history programme. During an observation and participation internship, students become acquainted with the broad practice of public history work [presenting history to a wider audience]. The students enter into a dialogue with the community and learn to appreciate the usefulness of this practice. Hopefully, it will become more natural for the current generation of students to engage in science communication."

What do you recommend to researchers who want to pursue science communication?

Trachet: "Create a project website about your research and explain what you are researching in a clear and comprehensible way. Start as soon as possible, because it will prepare you for the countless times you will have to explain what your new job entails. As a basis you can use the texts you have already written, for example for scholarship applications, which you can later supplement with research results. That digital business card is eagerly picked up by the media. Journalists can easily find you and you get requests for lectures, for example. If you really want to go big, you can also post videos on it and refer to them via social media, like I do."

TOM VAN ASSCHE

CHEMICAL ENGINEER, VUB



SERENNA MORETTI

INDUSTRIALIZATION EXPERT, BIO CARTIS





"AS A PHD STUDENT, THE CHOICES YOU NEED TO MAKE CAN BE OVERWHELMING, AS WELL AS EXCITING"



Should you continue to work as a researcher or switch to industry? And when should you make the leap? Former postdoc Serena Moretti (Biocartis) and recently appointed professor Tom Van Assche (VUB) discuss the move from the alma mater to industry and then back.



From academia to business, for many PhD students, recent PhD graduates and postdocs, it's a major step. Should I stay at the university or start working at a company? It's not an easy choice.

Late last year, Serena Moretti made the move from the University of Antwerp to the biotech company Biocartis in Mechelen. In 2015 this South African bio-engineer was granted an FWO fellowship at the University of Antwerp as a PhD student. Last year, she graduated with a PhD investigating microbes role in air pollution. Following a research stay at pharmaceutical giant Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, she joined Biocartis, where she has been working as an industrialisation expert since the autumn of 2019. "My role is to bridge the gap between science and industry. I help transpose the findings of cancer research to the product requirements and quality control processes of our Idylla diagnostic platform. This enables a more personalized patient treatment. To me, the move to Biocartis was the next logical step in seeing the full picture and benefits of applied research. But of course, many pieces of the puzzle needed to fall into place," Moretti says.

Tom Van Assche also worked in industry for a few years, but he has taken the opportunity to go back to academia. Today, Tom is a newly appointed professor in Chemical Engineering, having just completed his first year as a tenure-track lectur-

er at VUB. Following his studies in engineering, he started his PhD on chemical adsorption at VUB, focusing on the adsorption of gases and liquids on to solid substances. After working as a postdoc for a while, Van Assche decided to continue to focus on adsorption at Atlas Copco, the Swedish producer of compressors and air treatment systems, in Wilrijk.

Van Assche: "As my research appointment at VUB was coming to an end, my wife and I had a baby. I opted for job security at Atlas Copco, where I worked in R&D as project leader for three years. It was an incredibly enriching experience where you try to apply your knowledge on large-scale applications. After a while, I was looking for new opportunities and that's when I heard about the vacancy for a professor at VUB. Now I teach and conduct research into the possible use of zeolites, nanoporous minerals, for separations such as air purification. As a junior researcher, I was recently awarded my first grant through the FWO, which will hopefully allow me to attract PhD students. For this research, I have joined forces with professor Michiel Dusselier from KU Leuven."

How did you decide which career path was right for you?

Moretti: "I enjoyed my time as a researcher at the University of Antwerp. Yet slowly but surely I realised that science goes beyond merely

gathering and publishing insights. After years of research, I found myself more drawn to knowledge providing added value for society and findings translated into practical solutions. I registered for the BioBusiness Winter Retreat organised by BCF Career, where PhD students, postdocs and young professionals can meet representatives of life-science companies. To me, it was a real eye-opener. I realised that much multi-disciplinary work still lies ahead in developing and growing the ideas generated in academia.

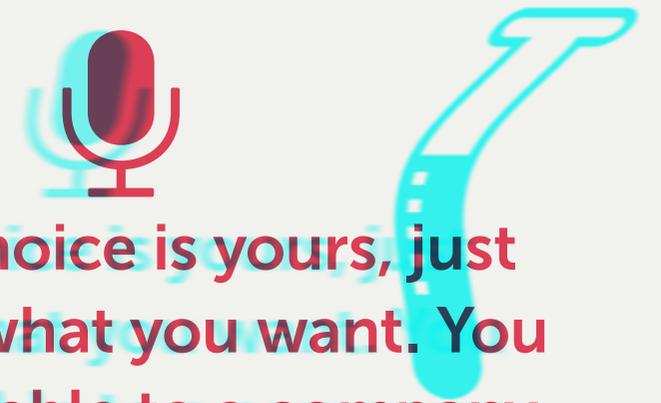
"During my six month research stay at Janssen, I made full use of training sessions for postdocs, as well as lectures and meetings to better understand the driving factors of the pharmaceutical industry. While carpooling, I also gained valuable advice from people at different stages in their career. They were the ones who helped me put together the puzzle in my head. I was always given the same piece of advice: the choice is yours, just decide what you want. You are valuable to a company if you are doing something you enjoy."

Van Assche: "I followed my gut feeling and I was lucky that I applied at VUB at just the right time. But at the end of the day, you make your own luck; life offers many opportunities, so keep looking. We are all responsible for our own passion, drive and insights, also in academia. When it comes to career choices, it's not just about following others' advice, but rather about getting all the information you need to make a good decision."

Is it becoming increasingly difficult for PhD graduates to make career decisions?

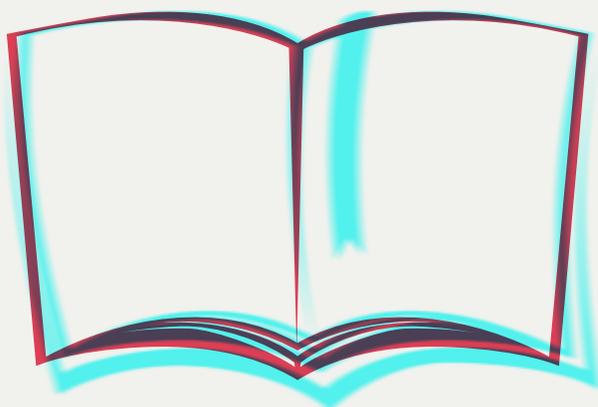
Van Assche: "Absolutely. The work field is becoming increasingly flexible, which creates more options but also requires more choices. Since more and more information has become available, it is becoming more difficult to make choices. As a lecturer, I can't give much advice on this. I can only be honest and give students and researchers access to the right information."

Moretti: "As a PhD student, being confronted with the choices you



"The choice is yours, just decide what you want. You are valuable to a company if you are doing something you enjoy"

SERENA MORETTI



need to make can be overwhelming. Or you can be excited at the prospect of all the possibilities that lie ahead. Turning an obstacle into a positive challenge: that is an important skill for researchers to have."

Did the path you took result in added value for your current job?

Moretti: "In my case, definitely yes, in many different ways. It is often during struggling times you learn the most, and a PhD offers bountiful opportunities! When I started my research at the University of Antwerp, the laboratory I would be working in still needed to be partly built and set-up. In the meantime, I had to

collaborate and work in various labs, which allowed me to gather the best procedures for the new research centre. Looking back at my PhD, I discovered that I was motivated by these tasks: questioning how we perform methods, updating outdated procedures with current knowledge, and ensuring reliable results through validated methods. All the insights I gathered on quality control come in handy in my current job. I support the Biocartis researchers develop procedures we use to test whether a useful research insight can also translate into a quality product. And that is precisely the challenge Applied Sciences face."

Van Assche: "In my research into adsorption I can build on prior insights. Apart from the teaching component, my current job description doesn't differ much from my tasks at Atlas Copco: organise meetings, financial project follow-up, searching for funds, analysing and evaluating results, and drinking a lot of coffee... (laughs). The main challenge is to find a good balance between science and soft skills: coaching staff without being patronising and trusting your co-workers.

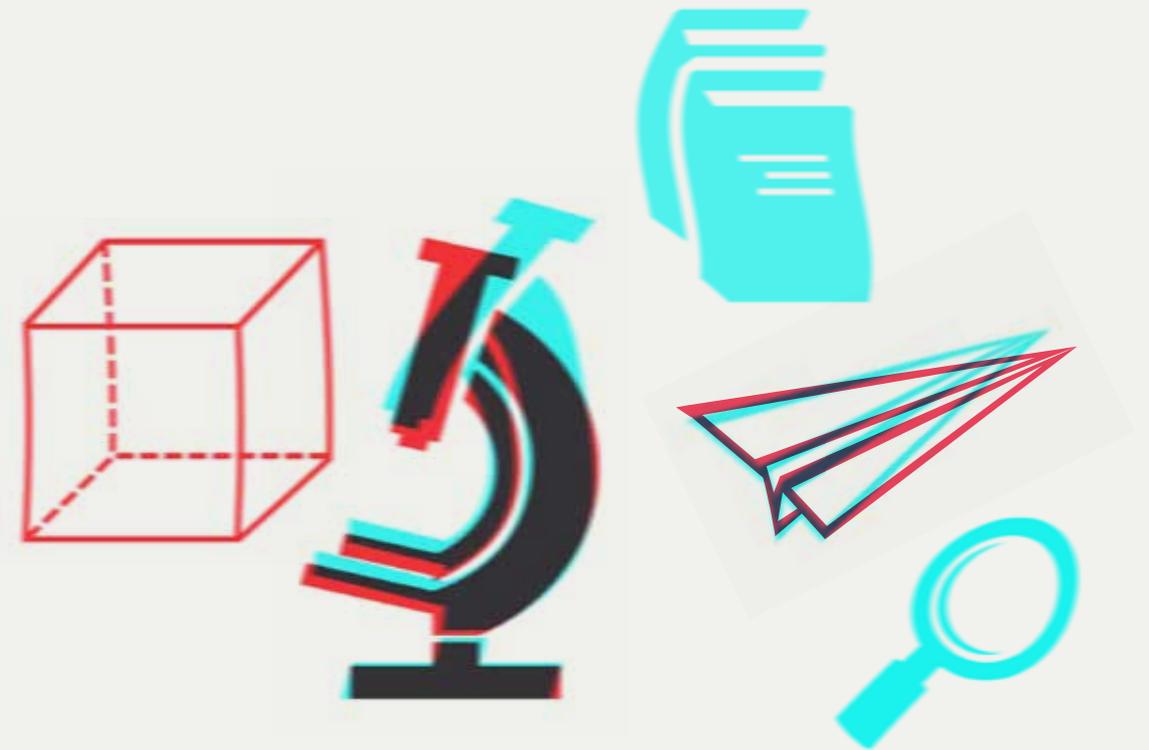
"Did my work at Atlas Copco make me a better scientist? Not neces-

sarily. But did it make me a better engineer or professor? Yes, because many of my students will end up working in industry. After all, particularly in the exact sciences, there is a close link between academia and industry. Nowadays, large businesses headhunt talented students even before they have graduated. Many PhD students conduct their research in collaboration with companies. Spin-offs are another example of shared innovation. As a lecturer, I can share my experiences in industry with students or researchers, which I see as a plus."



"When it comes to career choices, it's not just about following others' advice, but rather about getting all the information you need"

TOM VAN ASSCHE



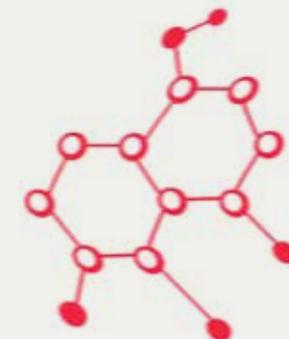
Is the door to academia still open? Are you considering going back one day?

Moretti: "I am happy with the opportunities I'm being given, so for now, it's not on the cards. Maybe in the future I would consider guest lecturing at university to better help bridge the gap to industry.

"In academia you build on your career mostly on an individual level. In product development, you work as a team, with your colleagues from research to sales... It gives me great satisfaction to be able to visualise

and create a meaningful product based on research."

Van Assche: "I started with a five-year, tenure-track position. That's as far as I am looking ahead for now. I do agree that in academia you build on your career individually, but at the same time, it gives you freedom. I have less experts to assist me with HR or IT matters, so I try to solve a lot of issues myself. That helps me grow as a person. I find it a privilege to work with inspiring people within my research group. They have always been a great example."



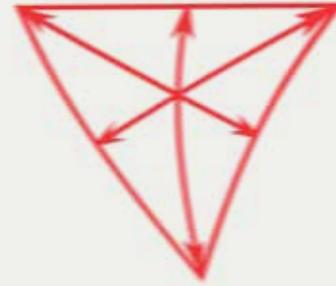
SENNE BRAEM

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LAURA VANDENBOSCH

COMMUNICATION SCIENTIST, KU LEUVEN



"THE LONG DURATION AND HIGH BUDGET OF AN ERC GRANT ALLOW RESEARCHERS TO MAKE BOLDER CHOICES"



Receiving a grant by the prestigious European Research Council (ERC) is not a given. Communication scientist Laura Vandebosch (KU Leuven) and experimental psychologist Senne Braem (VUB-Ghent University) are among the lucky ones. Their innovative research will gain momentum over the next five years.

The Starting Grant of the ERC is intended for young, promising scientists whose research can have a major impact on science and society. What exactly are you researching?

Braem: "I got a Starting Grant for my research into cognitive flexibility. In psychology, we traditionally distinguish between 'higher-order brain functions', which are responsible for cognitive flexibility and the rapid exchange of tasks and thoughts on the one hand, and the more simple forms of learning, through reward or fear, on the other. In my opinion, this traditional categorisation is a bit outdated. I want to review the interaction between the two forms of learning and investigate whether reward and fear can also adjust higher-order functions."

"Such basic research remains essential. We currently lack well-informed theoretical models of human behaviour. Recent technological innovations, however, have allowed us to take a different look at how the brain works, collect data and develop better models. For example, I will use modern techniques such as pattern analysis of brain data and computational models. At the same time, these new insights could help us to better understand behavioural disorders such as autism."

Vandebosch: "I conduct research into (social) media use among adolescents and the associated performance pressure. I want to gain an insight into the impact of social media, entertainment and fiction

on the development of adolescents' identity. How do they deal with the many expectations that social media creates? And when do these created norms and ideals lead to performance pressure?"

"More than 80 percent of youngsters regularly experience performance pressure. It's an impressive number. At the same time, we see that young people are becoming increasingly self-centred. It is therefore important to analyse how (social) media, which can be very self-centred, encourages this individualistic culture. I want to link this emphasis on the individual to the development of psychological problems in adolescents, such as performance pressure. Moreover, I want to look at how they deal with social issues around gender, ethnicity and sexuality through this individualistic identity."

Would your research have been possible without the financial support of the ERC?

Vandebosch: "No, at least not on this scale. The ERC allows us to build our own team. In my case, four PhD students and a postdoc will assist me in the research. Together, we will monitor more than 4,500 young people in Belgium, France and Slovenia for two years. In addition, we are analysing about 15 diary studies and various content on Instagram and TikTok. This will allow us to get a better insight into the daily pressures that young people face. Without the Starting Grant, it would not have been feasible to collect data on that scale and to

draw conclusions about the cultural context in which media effects occur.”

“It is quite challenging for me to get out of my comfort zone and rely on my networking skills to encourage French and Slovenian schools to join the project. That is a completely new experience for me. The only drawback of the ERC grant is the administrative burden that comes with it. But that’s understandable given that it is such a large-scale grant.”

Braem: “The ERC has allowed me to investigate something in five years that would normally take me four times as long. There are also

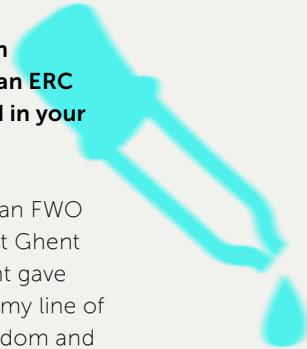
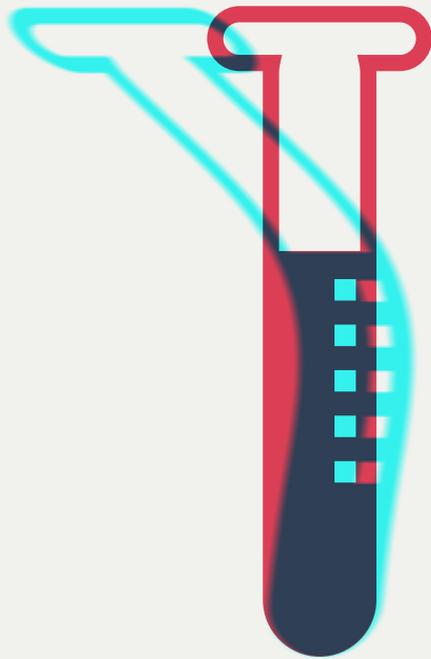
some hypotheses in my proposal that I wouldn’t have ventured into so quickly without the Starting Grant. And I too can count on a five-strong team: three PhD students, a postdoc and a laboratory manager. This is my first time supervising a larger team. I hope to offer them a stimulating work experience and an environment where they can develop their talents and skills as thoroughly as possible.”

FWO encourages Flemish researchers to apply for an ERC grant. Was FWO involved in your application?

Braem: “Previously, I was an FWO postdoctoral researcher at Ghent University. That FWO grant gave me the luxury to develop my line of research in complete freedom and independence. Moreover, my FWO postdoc gave me the necessary time and space to thoroughly prepare and write my ERC application, which took about three months. That’s a little more difficult if, for example, you have a lot of teaching obligations after your PhD, or if you have been appointed to conduct a specific research programme.”

“Moreover, the support of FWO allowed me to go abroad twice for a longer period of time in order to become more proficient in my research subject.”

Vandenbosch: “I completely agree with Senne. I obtained an FWO fellowship, followed by an FWO postdoctoral fellowship. These fellowships, along with various FWO travel grants, gave me the opportunity to develop a strong CV and broaden my research field through international contacts. For example, I stayed at the University of Toron-



“The ERC has allowed me to investigate something in five years that would normally take me four times as long”

SENNE BRAEM

to and Michigan as a researcher, where I was taught new techniques by international experts. That set the ball rolling and I was able to join KU Leuven as a research professor. So, you could say that FWO has played a key role in my career.”

The ERC funds only the best European researchers. Barely 13% of the applicants ultimately receive a grant. How happy were you when you found out you were one of the lucky ones?

Vandenbosch: “I was very surprised. While writing your application, you dream big, but you don’t really expect to receive the grant. In order to qualify for the grant, the ERC indicates that you must have a strong research profile and you must conduct research that can result in a fundamental breakthrough, a so-called paradigm shift. Since groundbreaking research can involve many risks, there is no guarantee of success, and the outcome may be different from the initial

expectations. Fortunately, the ERC understands this, although they do ask us to mitigate risks as much as possible.”

Braem: “I was not expecting to receive the grant at all, although I was secretly hoping I would. I am incredibly grateful for this scholarship, but at the same time it makes me humble. After all, there is a big element of luck involved. I am sure that my hard work and creative ideas definitely helped, but I also strongly believe it was a combination of circumstances that resulted in me obtaining the grant. I was the

right person with the right idea at the right time for that ERC panel.”

Vandenbosch: “As a researcher, you choose your research field at an early stage, and you build up your expertise over the years. If the social issues then change, your research project may suddenly be higher up on the agenda. You can’t always control that.”

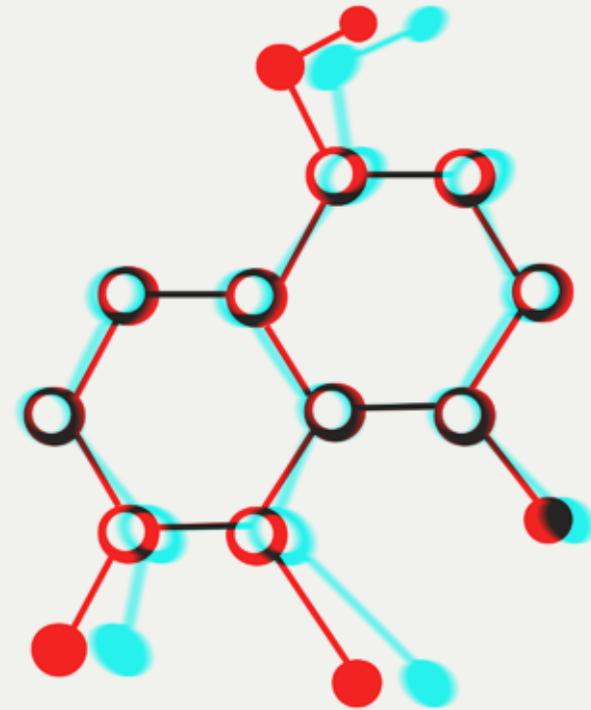
Why is it important for the ERC to award these scholarships?

Braem: “They guarantee a constant influx of new ideas and provide a



“An ERC scholarship allows us to think big”

LAURA VANDENBOSCH



platform for new generations. The long duration and high budget of an ERC grant also allow researchers to explore other avenues and make bolder choices. Moreover, an ERC Starting Grant can be a great steppingstone to a permanent position as a research professor, and that was exactly the position I was offered at Ghent University. I can now conduct research and teach on topics that I am passionate about, and I have job security.”

Vandenbosch: “Long-term financing with large budgets like those of the ERC allows us to think big. The emphasis is therefore not the same as that of short-term scholarships that may fund multiple researchers with one and the same budget. The two systems encourage a certain diversity of research. And that’s a good thing.”

SOPHIE GRESHAM

BIOLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF ANTWERP



58

LEILA PAQUAY

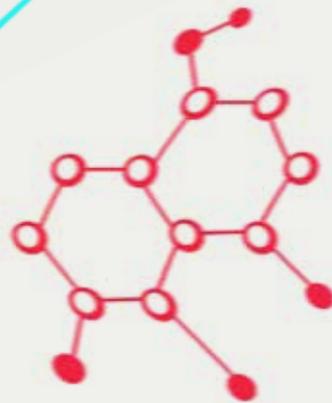
BIOINFORMATICS EXPERT, HASSELT UNIVERSITY



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**"THE THE
SELECTION
PROCESS
IS VERY
STRICT, ONLY
THE BEST
SUCCEED"**

Every year, the FWO grants PhD fellowships to young, promising researchers. Bioinformatics expert Leila Paquay (Hasselt University) and biologist Sophie Gresham (University of Antwerp) both secured this coveted fellowship. Over the next few years, the FWO is providing them with the support they need to obtain their PhD.



Congratulations to both PhD fellowship holders! What does your PhD research focus on?

Gresham: "I am researching how hybridisation influences the evolution of cichlids. Cichlids are an extremely diverse family of tropical fish, with most species found in the African Great Lakes. This large diversity makes them particularly interesting for in-depth genetic research into hybridisation. Cichlid fish cross-breed very easily, which results in the exchange of genetic material and potentially helps give rise to new species. Hybridisation, therefore, could possibly help explain why cichlids have become so diverse. I have always been interested in evolutionary biology. To me, evolution – the genetic change of organisms over time – is one of the most fundamental processes of life."

Paquay: "My PhD research focuses on industrial hemp. Unlike marijuana, industrial hemp has a very low percentage of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the substance that makes you feel 'high'. I am studying how fungi and bacteria interact with hemp as a host and how they can contribute to producing high-quality hemp with a high yield. We rarely focus on the interactions between microorganisms and plants. Yet it's an incredibly fascinating world."

Your PhD research runs for two years and can be extended for another two years. What are you hoping to be able to show at the end of this time?

Paquay: "Topics like sustainability and innovation are becoming increasingly important for industry. Companies are focusing more and more on sustainable measures in production, logistics and transport. Industrial hemp has a major role to play in this regard as it is a promising environmentally friendly alternative for a wide range of products. After all, hemp fibres are incredibly strong and durable. Hemp also grows quickly and doesn't need much water. The hemp fibres can be used as an insulation material in construction, for example, or for the production of interior door panels in the automotive sector."

"Gathering knowledge about the role played by bacteria and fungi in health and growth of crops is also a new strategy to develop sustainable agricultural practices. It can unlock new insights that farmers can use to improve crop yield or certain plant traits. Last but not least, I also want to contribute to bioinformatic analyses techniques for studying the plant microbiome."

"The industrial hemp market is still a niche segment for now, but it is clearly growing and riding the green wave. Nevertheless, more research is needed to increase the yield of high-quality hemp. I want to contribute to that."

Gresham: "My main aim is to get a better understanding of the mechanisms of evolution and how hybridisation plays a part in that. Cichlids lend themselves perfectly to this,

because the evolutionary processes that shape species are ongoing in cichlids, so in theory we can study evolution as it is occurring. In addition to this, I want to further develop the analytical techniques used to study hybridisation, to ensure they can be applied more widely to other species. My promoter is an expert on the latest bioinformatic techniques in this field and has access to a broad network of international experts. This allows us to work with extensive data sets of cichlids from Lake Malawi using cutting-edge techniques such as whole genome sequencing (WGS). WGS enables us to map out the entire DNA sequence of an organism – also known as the

genome – instead of studying single genes. As a result, we can use WGS to gain a much clearer picture of the evolutionary history of cichlids than ever before.”

“Finally, I have access to the infrastructure of the Flemish Supercomputer Centre (Vlaams Supercomputer Centrum – VSC) for my data analyses. Those supercomputers, which are managed by the FWO in collaboration with the five Flemish universities, have an enormous processing capacity which is vital for analysing our large genomic datasets.”

Paquay: “I also use molecular techniques for my research, more specifically amplicon sequencing and meta-transcriptomics. I will also create artificial microbial communities, which will be composed of the microbes that seem to play an outstanding role in the context of hemp agriculture. Doing so, I will be able to study the dynamic that exists within these simplified communities. I will also apply them to hemp in a ‘pot’ experiment. In this way, I will be able to confirm the action that they have on hemp yield and fibre quality, and I will be able to try to understand the mechanisms involved. I can rely on my background in biology and bioinformatics to help me correctly analyse this multitude of data.”

How did you decide to apply for a PhD fellowship from the FWO?

Gresham: “After obtaining my Master’s in Biology from Imperial College London, I started working at the Museum of Natural Sciences in Brussels as a research assistant. That is where I first conducted research into the evolution of cichlids, and I got to know several cichlid experts



“A PhD fellowship through the FWO creates many opportunities for the future, regardless of whether you want to pursue an academic career or a job outside academia”

LEILA PAQUAY



in Belgium, including my promoter at the University of Antwerp. He agreed to help me submit my application for a PhD fellowship fundamental research from the FWO.”

Paquay: “I met my supervisor while doing my Master’s in Bioinformatics at KU Leuven. She was looking for someone with an interest and expertise in data analysis in microorganisms. I was then given the opportunity to start my research on hemp at the laboratories of the Centre for Environmental Sciences of Hasselt University. We submitted an application, and a year later I was able to start working as a fully-fledged PhD Fellow through the FWO.”

Why is a PhD fellowship through the FWO so highly regarded? How does it differ from direct financing via your own research institution, for example?

Gresham: “Pursuing your PhD through the FWO offers you certainty and continuity. We receive financial support for a longer period of time, possibly for four years, which gives us the scope we need to conduct our research. Shorter grants or fellowships force researchers to constantly look for the support and financing they need to continue their path. That takes time and results in a lot of additional administrative work, and it keeps you away from



your actual research. It is extremely reassuring to know that thanks to my PhD fellowship through the FWO, I can fully focus on my research for the next four years."

Paquay: "The FWO is also a highly regarded institution in the scientific world. Being granted a fellowship through the FWO is an honour. The selection process is very strict. Only the best succeed. Knowing that a highly regarded institution such as the FWO appreciates your merits as a scientist and that the experts believe in you gives your confidence a serious boost. It also creates many opportunities for the future, regardless of whether you want to pursue an academic career or a job outside academia."

"As part of our application, we also had to draw up a clear multiannual plan. As such, we have been forced to think and plan ahead. What are we aiming to achieve with our research in four years? Which direction do we want to take? That broad view is not always a strict condition elsewhere. It really helps me to know where I'm headed, and it adds clarity and structure to my research. At the same time, the experts at the FWO gave us valuable feedback and recommendations."

You have both started your PhD research a while ago. How is it going so far?

Gresham: "For now it's going very well. I am getting acquainted with



"The FWO strongly encourages international cooperation: a great added value"

SOPHIE GRESHAM



the analysis techniques I will be using. I want to make sure I master them perfectly, which will allow me to correctly study my data later on."

Paquay: "I am also right on schedule. We have already sought contact with Canadian researchers and partners in industry, who can provide us with reliable data. I'm currently looking into the possibility of doing a PhD placement in Canada, for example on molecular research techniques."

Gresham: "That, too, is a great added value of a PhD fellowship through the FWO: international cooperation is strongly encouraged. The FWO is aware of the fact that the scientific world has a strong international dimension. PhD fellows receive a grant to help cover their operating costs, for example. That grant can be used for, among other things, accommodation costs abroad and

participation in international conferences that are in line with your research."

As a PhD fellow, your ultimate goal is, of course, to obtain your PhD. Are you already thinking about the next step?

Paquay: "It may be a crazy dream, but after my PhD I would like to do six months of research at a scientific base station like the one in Antarctica. There, too, I would like to study microorganisms and their interaction with other living organisms. And after that, I might want to explore the business world."

Gresham: "You never know what the future will bring. Who would have thought I'd end up in Belgium? Not me, that's for sure. I'm open to new opportunities, but I would like to stay in academia. A postdoctorate in evolutionary research is an option."

BART NEYNS

BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST, UZ BRUSSEL & VUB



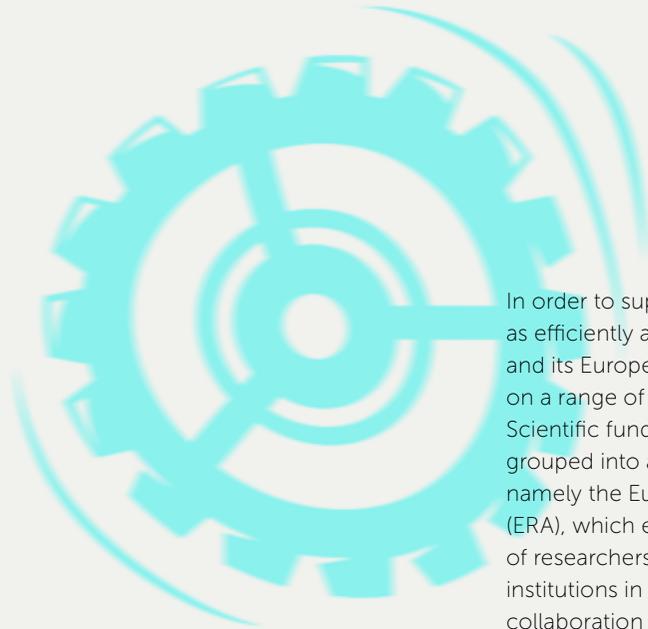
KIM MARTINOD

BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST, KU LEUVEN





"ALL TOO OFTEN, A PATENT STILL DETERMINES WHETHER YOUR RESEARCH CAN SAVE LIVES"



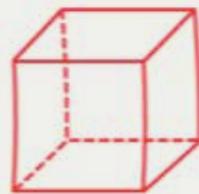
In order to support valuable research as efficiently as possible, the FWO and its European counterparts rely on a range of different strategies. Scientific funds, for example, are grouped into a shared research area, namely the European Research Area (ERA), which encourages mobility of researchers between knowledge institutions in Europe, as well as collaboration with expert colleagues abroad. ERA-NET awards grants for such collaboration initiatives. ERA-NET is a network of public funding organisations, like the FWO, that support the research communities of all participating countries. Each partner organisation pays for its own participants up to the amount of its contribution.

In addition to this, the FWO aims to continue to support valuable research that has remained under the radar. In the biomedical field, TBM (Applied Biomedical Research with a Primary Societal Finality) has been a well-established program for years. With this fund the FWO supports valuable, thorough research that has little potential of being commercialised on a large scale.

Kim Martinod and Bart Neyns are two biomedical scientists who are familiar with the ERA-NET and TBM financing. This academic year, Kim Martinod from the US started working as a tenure-track assistant-professor at the KU Leuven Cardiovascular Sciences department. As a cardiovascular scientist, she is studying the role of white blood cells

in pathological blood clotting. She says that in cases of infection, "white blood cells have a tendency to explode and release their DNA fibres into the blood stream. Those fibres, which we call NETs, can have an immune function by killing bacteria. However, since they are very sticky, they can also clog the blood stream and cause blood clots. Moreover, NETs are often activated when there is no infection, and that reaction leads to thrombosis. I am trying to find out why that happens, more specifically in heart disease."

Bart Neyns heads the Medical Oncology department at UZ Brussel and is also clinical professor of medicine at VUB. Neyns is often featured in the media, particularly for his innovations in immunotherapy, a cancer treatment that teaches the patient's own immune system to better detect and attack cancer cells. Immunotherapy is becoming increasingly important today, partly due to Neyns and his research group firmly believing in a therapy that was met with scepticism for years. "I was lucky enough to start working in the slipstream of excellent immunologists, such as Kris Thielemans (VUB) and Thierry Boon (UCL and Ludwig Institute¹), after my PhD in 2001. However, it took several clinical programmes for us to scale up the potential of immunotherapy, acquire the necessary funds and achieve meaningful clinical successes. These academic achievements allowed Kris Thielemans to set up the spin-off eTheRNA."



No funds, no research. Not all scientific findings instantly translate into a hard return, so for researchers it is not always easy to find financing for their research. The FWO offers specific support programmes that ensure that new therapies and diagnostic methods reach patients anyway. Two professors from the biomedical field explain the impact that this support has had on their research and career.

(1) Ludwig Cancer Research is an international community of cancer researchers, the successor to the renowned Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, a non-profit organisation with local branches in Lausanne, Oxford, Stockholm, Uppsala, San Diego and Brussels.

Acquiring the right funds at the right time can steer not only research, but also a person's career. How did things go for you?

Martinod: "I obtained my PhD and completed part of my postdoc in Boston, at Harvard Medical School and the Boston Children's Hospital. The Longwood Medical Area in Boston, which is home to several institutes and hospitals, brings together many world-class experts. That makes it the ideal place to study and learn, but I didn't feel I had all the tools available to be the type of researcher I aim to be or to run a lab as I envisioned. In the US, as a fundamental researcher it can be difficult to have direct contact with the clinical side of your research and lab structures are less focused on training PhD students."

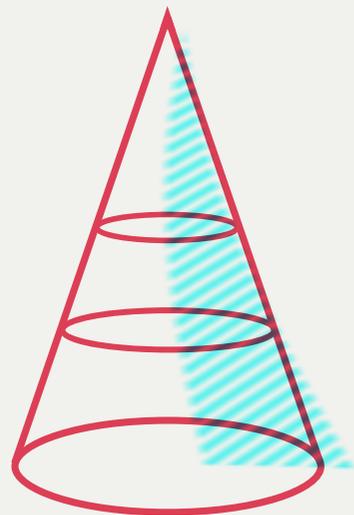
"In 2017 the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant² of the FWO gave me the opportunity to join KULAK in Kortrijk as a postdoc in a group with an excellent track record of training PhD students. I was happy to learn how to

guide trainees in that environment. Two years later, I started my own lab at KU Leuven. Without that financial support, my career would have been different. Not once have I regretted coming to Belgium and moving to Leuven. At the Gasthuisberg hospital campus I meet with doctors and clinical staff almost on a daily basis, which enables me to make an even better link between fundamental research and disease in patients. Moreover, KU Leuven invests not only in research opportunities, but also in researchers' soft skills, such as presenting and communicating the results of their research. I'm convinced that this is key to making real progress both as a researcher but also as a mentor to trainees."

Neyns: "At the time, I made the conscious decision to join UZ Brussel, a small yet dynamic research hub. The advantage of that environment is that you can swiftly move from the concept phase to testing on a first patient. I enjoy the intense collaboration with our fundamental researchers, sharing insights about new treatment methods. The support of the FWO through the TBM program has enabled me, as a researcher, to partly develop one of my therapies already. So that support has helped shape my career so far."

You both receive support from the FWO, respectively through an ERA-NET grant and a TBM program. What opportunities does this create?

Neyns: "TBM financing gives you a lot of freedom to test fundamental insights in clinical programs involving patients. For the time being, the treatment we are studying could only help patients with skin or



"My growth opportunities in the US were rather limited. What happens with the insights gained in your lab? Here in Europe, I could finally find out"



KIM MARTINOD

malignant brain tumours. This is a niche area with no quick return on investment for companies. The TBM program gives us the opportunity to focus on developments the pharmaceutical sector is not interested in. I first received TBM financing in 2012. At the time, this allowed us to run a new test among 39 patients with pretreated melanoma. We managed to cure eight of them instantly, and they are still doing well after more than 5 years of follow-up.

"Last year, we received another TBM program, which we are using to set up another clinical testing programme this year. The focus of this project is on radio-immunotherapy, a more effective treatment that

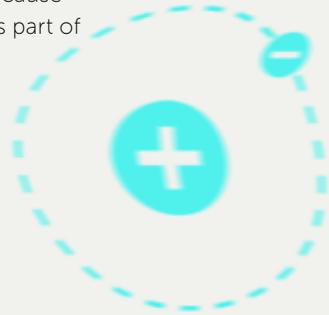
boosts the chance of survival for patients with a specific type of lung cancer. At the same time, we will analyse whether or not we can extend this method to other cancers."

Martinod: "With the support of the FWO in the context of the ERA-NET for cardiovascular research, an early career call programme especially for young researchers, I have set up a collaboration which would have otherwise been impossible to arrange at this stage in my career. Over the next three years, our team at KU Leuven and UZ Leuven will be working with colleagues from Paris and Freiburg on the impact of NETs in heart failure. I am the coordinator of this partnership and the only

fundamental researcher of the team, while all the other partners are clinical researchers. This brings together fundamental and clinical expertise.

"Over the past 10 years, I studied the specific process of NETs in disease through experimental models in the lab and observational studies in patients. ERA-NET has given that research a considerable boost. We are moving from insights to practical testing and we are systematically

investigating when, where and how this process occurs in patients. Our test subjects are patients with a congenital heart defect. They underwent surgery as children which saved their lives, but now they are at risk of heart failure in their thirties or forties and dying prematurely. It is precisely that risk group we want to help first. At the same time, we will learn the most from them because they have extensive testing as part of their normal clinical care."



"The support of the FWO and the TBM fund have enabled me, as a researcher, to partly develop one of my therapies already. So that support has helped shape my career so far"

BART NEYNS



Is it becoming increasingly difficult for researchers to raise public funds for early-stage biomedical research?

Neyns: "Yes and no. The TBM program remains an important source of financing. Many valuable insights and methods are difficult to patent, so companies show little or no interest in them. From a financial perspective, that is still a fact. As a researcher, my aim is not to make money through immunotherapy. I just want to understand how certain cells work to cure people from cancer. The TBM program of the FWO helps me do exactly that. At the same time, more and more private individuals are setting up their own funds to improve the treatment of rare or persistent diseases. It goes without saying that we are incredibly thankful for that."

Martinod: "Still, I am very concerned about the shift over the last decade in investment priorities of pharmaceutical companies when it comes to medicines in cardiovascular disease that can save lives. Stroke and heart disease are currently the main causes of death worldwide. Yet we know very little about these diseases that threaten us the most, because there is far too little investment in fundamental research that can drive improved treatment methods. One of our best treatments for patients with heart problems is still aspirin, a medicine that has been used for decades and which doesn't bring in a ton of profit for industry. I worry that a lack of systematic funding will slow down much needed progress in this area."

556 Our mission

58 Which researchers do we support?

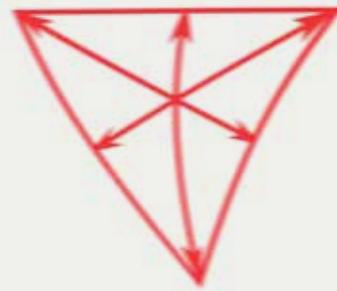
59 How does the decision-making process work?

60 Facts & figures

62 Organization

64 Stay up to date

OUR MISSION



Science opens up new horizons

The Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) stimulates and financially supports fundamental scientific research, strategic basic research, clinical scientific research, the purchase of large-scale and medium-scale research infrastructure, and the management of large computing capacity in Flanders. With the financial resources we receive, mainly from the Flemish Government, we subsidise fellowships and research projects, infrastructure, travel grants and international scientific cooperation.

Science creates opportunities

Fundamental scientific research is focused on expanding knowledge about human beings and their environment. As the level of knowledge of our society grows, so does the quality of life in general and the quality of training in particular. Young people are thus given every opportunity to deploy their talents in a broad array of disciplines.

Research financed by FWO, especially strategic basic research, also contributes to the valorisation of scientific breakthroughs.

Science is the driver of innovation

Fundamental research seldom adds economic or social value in the short term. It is, however, essential for ensuring our welfare and well-being in the long term. That is why the FWO is dependent on government funding. A balanced distribution of resources between targeted and non-targeted research is required.

With the financing of strategic research in the broadest sense, the FWO takes an important step to valorisation.



Science is essential for our well-being

In the long term, such a high level of knowledge in combination with the resulting human capital paves the way for targeted and applied research that can also support policy. Decisions in economic or social domains can then also be influenced by the work of excellent research groups. This is not surprising, as ground-breaking research may lie at the heart of solutions to the key challenges facing our society today (environment, mobility, health, etc.).



FWO and the international community

Europe has a tradition of non-governmental research councils. FWO is a member of Science Europe and supports the activities of the European Research Council (ERC) through various initiatives, for example. In addition, FWO is closely involved in various European research initiatives (ERA-NET, JPI, ESFRI etc.) through a range of programmes. Furthermore, FWO has signed a large number of bilateral cooperation agreements with leading funding agencies worldwide, including in China, Russia, Quebec and Switzerland.

FWO supports the Flemish Supercomputer Centre (VSC)

The Flemish Supercomputer Centre (VSC) is a virtual centre making supercomputer infrastructure available for both the academic and industrial world. This centre is managed by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) in partnership with the five Flemish university associations.

WHICH RESEARCHERS DO WE SUPPORT?

Young talents who want to prepare for a PhD, researchers who have obtained their PhD and want to further develop their skills as postdoctoral researchers, or professors who want to set up a fully-fledged research project with their team all qualify for FWO support. Our aim is both to help train the researchers of tomorrow and to assist experienced scientists in their explorations. Moreover, FWO covers all scientific disciplines.

The main focus is on the quality of the researcher and their research proposal, regardless of their scientific discipline, the institution where they are working, their gender or political or religious convictions. We implement family-friendly measures and offer flexible working conditions in order to achieve a good balance of male and female researchers. Scientists with disabilities can count on additional support to purchase adapted material.

FWO stimulates international cooperation within the European Union and beyond. We promote international mobility by giving researchers the opportunity to gain experience abroad or by attracting foreign researchers.

Every year, FWO awards scientific prizes. Not only do we reward excellent research, we also highlight the social relevance of scientific research.

For more information and lists of beneficiaries go to www.fwo.be/en



HOW DOES THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WORK?



In order to decide which researchers and research proposals will receive funding, FWO calls upon independent experts from Belgium and abroad. They are brought together in expert panels, whose composition and procedures depend on the funding channel.

For the fundamental channels there are 30 subject-specific panels and one interdisciplinary panel.

Applications for PhD fellowships strategic basic research are processed by 24 thematic panels. At least one third of the members of these panels have an industrial background.

The expert panels for strategic basic research projects are generalist panels, which evaluate thematically linked economic and social projects.

As for Applied Biomedical Research with a Primary Societal Finality, once the call has been closed, the submitted project proposals are classified into thematic groups based on their topic.

For the evaluation of research infrastructure, FWO relies on the Science Committee for the scientific evaluation and the Invest Committee for the financial feasibility.

The Cross-Domain Panel (CDP) assesses applications submitted for various scientific fields, which may or may not have an international dimension.

The International Collaboration Committee (CIWC) provides advice on applications concerning the international mobility of researchers and the organisation of scientific meetings in Belgium, among other areas.

For a complete overview of all panels and members go to www.fwo.be/en.



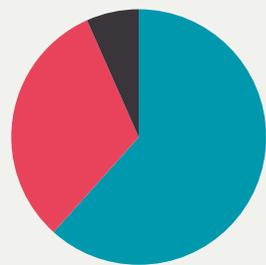
FACTS & FIGURES



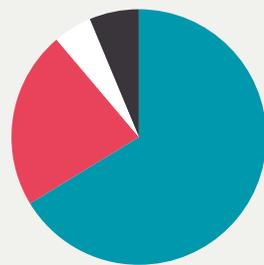
EVOLUTION OF REVENU



SUBSIDY DISTRIBUTION

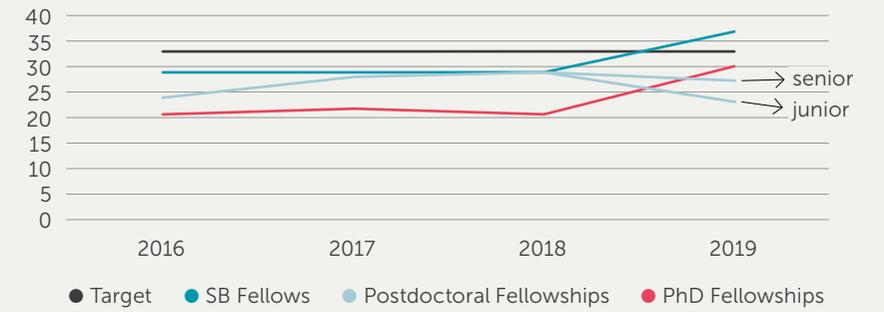


- 62% Research projects
- 32% Fellowships
- 6% Infrastructure

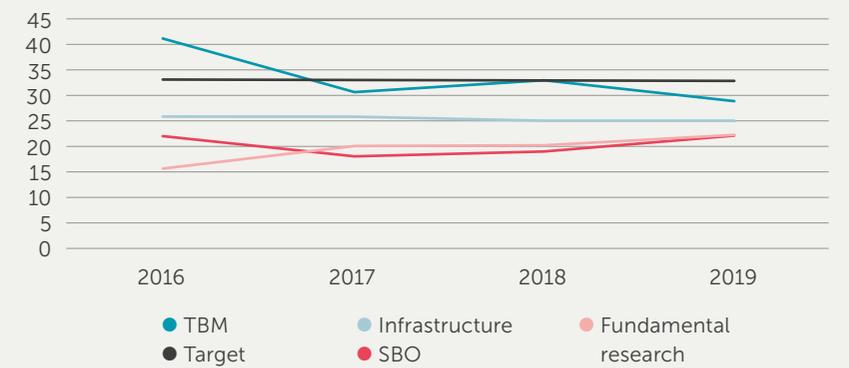


- 66% Fundamental programs
- 22% Strategic basic research
- 7% Research infrastructure
- 5% Clinical research

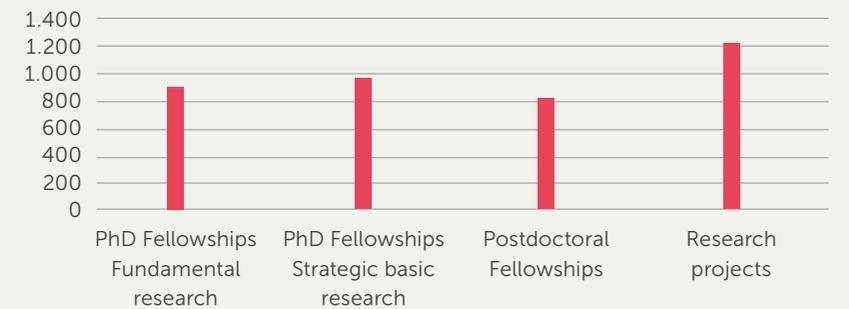
EVOLUTION SUCCES RATE FELLOWSHIPS



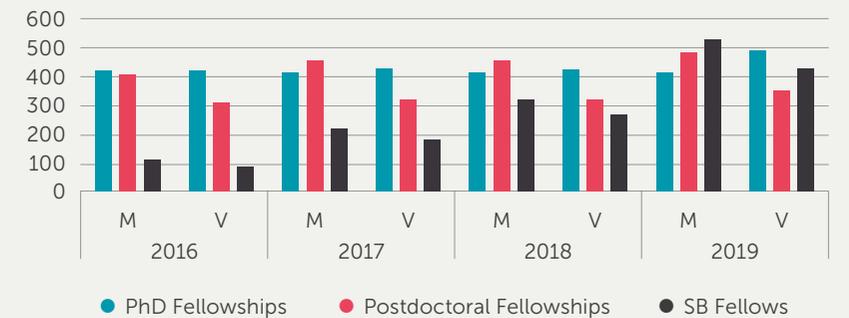
EVOLUTION SUCCES RATE RESEARCH PROJECTS



RESEARCHERS IN FUNCTION (1/11/2019)

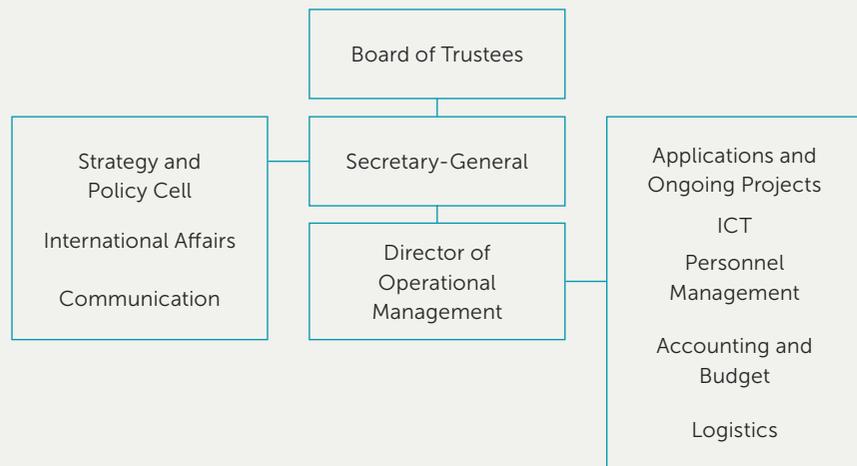


RATIO MALE / FEMALE





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The Board of Trustees makes decision on the recommendations of expert panels and scientific committees, as well as the activities, budget and accounts of the FWO.

The Board of Trustees will be reconstituted in the spring of 2020. On the facing page is the composition of the Board of Trustees in 2019 and the new members already appointed by the Flemish Government at the time of publication:

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Danny Huysmans
Director of Operational Management - FWO

*Member until 13/03/2020

**Member since 13/03/2020

Administration

The FWO team is always ready to assist researchers. It ensures the efficient organisation of the various evaluation processes within FWO to guarantee that the various projects and fellowships are awarded and followed up in a timely and qualitative manner. Our administration always aims for a researcher-friendly approach.

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