



Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee vzw
Flanders Marine Institute

VACANCY

Researcher marine micro- and macroplastics quantification and ecological assessment

SITUATION

For 20 years, the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) has been strengthening the accumulation of marine knowledge and the excellence of marine scientific research in Flanders. VLIZ is a coordination and information platform, a focal point for marine and coastal research, which also serves as an international contact point for marine science. Important activities are national and international networking, information and data management, scientific communication for policy and industry, education and the general public, and logistical support of marine research. Since 2017, the institute also initiates, promotes and executes innovative and multidisciplinary marine research, and this at the service of, in collaboration with or complementary to Flemish and international marine research groups.

To strengthen its research capacity, VLIZ is hiring 14 new colleagues in its Research Department. Join our multidisciplinary team in Oostende at the Belgian coast and be part of a new wave of marine research in Flanders. You will work in a unique institute in which your science will be supported by state-of-the-art data systems and services, research infrastructure, science communication and an extensive marine library. Moreover, VLIZ is part of a wide network of Belgian and international marine research groups, offering many opportunities for scientific collaboration.

In addition to these open positions, VLIZ sets up a recruitment reserve for potential temporary jobs. Opportunities may arise for the following profiles: ecological modeler, environmental data analyst/modeler with experience in R, marine biologist/taxonomist, molecular ecologist, marine geologist. Candidates with such a profile are encouraged to make a spontaneous application.

For each function, VLIZ considers enthusiastic involvement, open servitude, excellent professionalism and integrity as important characteristics.

RESEARCHER MARINE MICRO- AND MACROPLASTICS QUANTIFICATION AND ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Microplastics, small pieces of plastic debris (< 5 mm), are globally dispersed and reported at an increasing rate and at increasing concentrations in marine ecosystems. Microplastics are known to wash ashore, to sink to the seafloor, to be ingested by organisms, to float around in both air and water, and to be packed in sea ice. Due to their persistence in the marine environment it is expected that the global plastic problem will last for decennia. Despite the term microplastics being first used about fifteen years ago, there still are relatively unexplored fields of research.

Without willing to give an exhaustive overview, and with some sense for generalization, there is need for additional research on:

- 1) cost-effective detection and identification of small micro- and nanoplastics;
- 2) quantification of current (and future) concentrations in different environmental compartments;
- 3) assessment of effects at individual and population level;
- 4) quantification of risks at local, regional, and global level;
- 5) direct and indirect impact of plastics on the human health and wellbeing;
- 6) the role of the media in the perception of plastics the general public;
- 7) removal of plastics form the marine environment, including quantification of the efficiency of the method applied;
- 8) quantification of the additional stress due to plastics in an already (multi-)stressed marine environment (e.g. chemical pollution, climate change, ocean acidification);
- 9) improved global distribution models.

To develop this research, VLIZ hires a post-doctoral researcher in the Research Department.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- To build a research line on microplastics;
- To plan and perform research projects with internal funds;
- To write high quality research papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals;
- To write proposals and to prospect for external funding (in collaboration with relevant colleagues at the institute and with external partners) to initiate new research projects;
- To possibly contribute to research and innovation projects in collaboration with partners from the Blue Economy;
- To discuss planning and report progress to the head of the research unit;
- To supervise MSc and PhD students;
- To contribute to other research projects in the VLIZ research department, to interact and collaborate with colleagues at VLIZ to increase interdisciplinarity in various projects, to give advice on colleagues' research;
- To network at national and international level with other (marine) scientists;
- To present research at national and international conferences;
- To contribute to events organized by the Department or the Institute, such as the VLIZ Marine Science Day;
- To review research proposals, manuscripts and abstracts.



PROFILE

- PhD in (Applied) Biological sciences with an interest in marine science or equivalent through experience;
- Experience with aquatic research or microplastics research is a plus;
- Experience with programming in e.g. Matlab, R, or Python is a plus;
- Documented and strong academic track record;
- Documented project writing skills;
- Experience with project management is a plus;
- Critical and creative;
- Scientifically integer;
- Working independently;
- Strong interpersonal skills, a motivated team player;
- Connection in an international scientific network is a plus;
- Open minded and taking initiative;
- Willing to learn new skills on a regular basis;
- Willing to work in an international context;
- Good oral and written English communication skills.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information concerning this vacancy, please contact:

- Gert Everaert, head of the research unit Ocean & Human Health
 - Mail: gert.everaert@vliz.be
 - Telephone: +32 (0)477 44 55 83
- Michiel Vandegehuchte, Research Director VLIZ
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 - Telephone: +32 (0)471 61 22 49



OUR OFFER

- We offer a challenging job in the dynamic environment of VLIZ
- A contract of three years as post-doc researcher, which can be followed by a tenure track position in case of a positive evaluation, or a contract in a tenure track position, depending on your profile and qualifications. The salary follows the salary scales of scientific personnel in the Flemish Government.
- Fringe benefits: holiday pay, end-of-year bonus, meal vouchers, hospitalization insurance, bike allowance, free public transport for home-work commuting and an attractive holiday arrangement

DOES THIS VACANCY APPEAL TO YOU?



Send in your cover letter and CV until May 15th 2019 (23:00 CEST):

- By post: Jan Mees, General director VLIZ, InnovOcean site, Wandelaarkaai 7, 8400 Oostende
- By mail: jobs@vliz.be with subject "01 OHH - Vacancy Marine Litter"

Contact us by telephone on +32 (0)59 34 21 30.

VLIZ promotes equality and diversity in the workplace. You will be recruited based on competencies. Qualities of people are decisive, regardless of gender, religion, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation or any disability.

PROCEDURE

Based on the received motivation letters and CVs, a select group of candidates will be invited for a job interview. You will be informed by email. The job interviews take place in the offices of VLIZ.

Employment can start immediately after the selection procedure and ideally not later than 1st October 2019.

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