

The sea as a good cause

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The Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) uses donations, bequests and other financial contributions in a targeted manner to increase scientific knowledge about the sea and to promote social awareness of the major importance of the seas and ocean and to finance specific projects and actions. Not only do we need more fundamental knowledge about the sea, but also more insight into current topics such as ocean heating and acidification, overfishing and the disappearance of marine biodiversity. Knowledge is also crucial to drive opportunities including the development of new pharmaceutical products and biomaterials from sea organisms, new technologies for ocean observations and sustainable energy generation from ocean power, sustainable food production at sea, pollution, the relationship between the sea and human health, etc.

Donations enable our scientists, engineers and students to come up with creative solutions for current problems, to develop innovative techniques and to support sustainable use of our seas and ocean.

Eligible projects should contribute to the scientific knowledge about coastal and marine areas anywhere in the world. Each project needs to carry a neutral and objective message. Projects can be inspired by mere curiosity or wonder. In any event, projects should contribute to more sustainable ocean management in the short or long term by generating new scientific knowledge and measuring data. It is furthermore recommended that the projects involve not only professional scientists but also children, youngsters and other layers of society in the acquisition and collection of knowledge (citizen science, ocean literacy). Each project proposal is presented to the VLIZ Scientific Committee, which includes representatives from all Flemish universities and research institutions performing marine research. The Scientific Committee annually draws up a list of projects to be funded and in turn presents this list for approval to the VLIZ Board of Directors.

Some examples:

- **Measuring is knowing, citizens can help**
VLIZ is participating in the development of a measuring network for our coastal waters with the assistance of experts and volunteers. Regular monitoring of the beach and the North Sea by means of specialised measuring equipment generates a large volume of data that our scientists can use to expand their knowledge, to analyse problems and to propose possible solutions.
- **The sea is a source of inspiration and innovation**
Innovative topics can be examined in research projects. Your contribution enables young scientists to conduct research into all kinds of topics, with a special focus on emerging and new issues such as jellyfish invasions, plastic pollution, recently discovered marine structures, phenomena and species, underwater archaeology or new sampling and exploration technologies.
- **The ocean has no limits**
A worldwide and interdisciplinary network of marine researchers is required to address certain issues with regard to our oceans. Through its north-south programme VLIZ wants to offer young scientists the possibility to gather knowledge and to exchange experience with colleagues in other coastal regions.

More information can be found at <http://www.vliz.be/en/your-contribution>.