VLIZ
pioneer in marine science

2021 2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

BRILLIANT MARINE RESEARCH IDEA GRANTS 2027

OFFERED BY VLIZ PHILANTHROPY The Sea as a Good Cause

Call open to **PhD students**
affiliated with a Flemish university or university college

Summary

Budget 2027	20.000 EUR funded by VLIZ philanthropy The Sea as a Good Cause. Maximum fund per grant: 5.000 EUR
Implementation period	The proposed idea has to be executed within one year after the grant is awarded. Start date: 1 March 2027. End date: 28 February 2028.
Eligibility	PhD students affiliated to a Flemish university or Flemish university college with, at the time of application, less than 6 years of research experience at predoc level (i.e. since starting PhD research). Applicants can only benefit from this grant once during their PhD.
Launch of the call	30 October 2026
Submission deadline	No later than 18 January 2027
Selection	The selection will be made before 28 February 2027, by the VLIZ Scientific Committee.
Topics	Marine research ideas contributing to solving a research question linked to a.o. the themes identified in the philanthropy research agenda: climate change, ocean and human health, complemented by explorations, marine observations and technological innovations.
Required documents	- application form (download form here) - cv of the PhD student - letter of consent of the supervisor affiliated to the student's university or university college (free format) - optional: copy of your PhD proposal

VLIZ philanthropy, named The Sea as a Good Cause, is a program set up by the Flanders Marine Institute vzw (VLIZ) in order to raise additional funds to support 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. Any form of support means a step forward for our scientific knowledge.

With this grant for a 'Brilliant Marine Research Idea', we hope to inspire and enable ***PhD students at Flemish universities or Flemish university colleges*** *to explore and pan out a brilliant idea, an out of the box idea, an on the top research topic, but always framed within their ongoing marine research.*

For more information regarding VLIZ philanthropy, check vliz.be/sea-good-cause and vliz.be/brilliant-marine-research-idea-grant

What is a grant for a 'Brilliant Marine Research Idea'?

Grants for a 'Brilliant Marine Research Idea' are intended to inspire and enable PhD students affiliated to a Flemish University or Flemish University College to execute a brilliant idea during their PhD within the frame of their research. It should concern an out of the box idea, an additional research topic that was initially not foreseen in the PhD, but that would add an extra value to the ongoing research.

The fund of maximum 5.000 EUR can be used to assist PhD students in lab and/or fieldwork, data acquisition and analysis, visits to other institutes to use specialized facilities, acquisition of equipment or software needed for a certain analysis and so on. The fund cannot be used to reimburse the use of existing lab infrastructure within his/her research group/department, for personnel costs, to pay for travel costs that amount to more than 50% of the grant or to attend conferences.

Who funds the 'Brilliant Marine Research Idea' grants?

The Brilliant Marine Research Idea grants are funded by **VLIZ** philanthropy **The Sea as a Good Cause**.

VLIZ - Flanders Marine Institute - has become, over the last 25 years, a knowledge institution indispensable to the marine research landscape. What started as an institute focusing on science support, has evolved into a national and international point of contact for marine research. VLIZ initiates and carries out multidisciplinary research and supports marine experts by providing research infrastructure, data, information and knowledge. VLIZ supports the blue economy and reaches out to a broad public. VLIZ further broadens its marine horizons and aims at becoming a world player in the field of marine and coastal research.

VLIZ is, alongside its core activities, recognized as a charitable organization and therefore developed a financial separate philanthropy program named The Sea as a Good Cause. Through this program, VLIZ is able to raise additional funds through membership fees, donations, sponsorships, bequests, etc. to provide financial support to promote marine research worldwide.

Budget and implementation period

The overall budget available for the predoc BMRI grants is 20.000 EUR from VLIZ philanthropy The Sea as a Good Cause. Each grant has a maximum fund of 5.000 EUR. The grant will be awarded to the successful applicant personally and the terms and conditions (including a short contract) of the award will be discussed and negotiated prior to the implementation of the idea.

The proposed idea has to be executed within one year. The selection of the ideas will take place before 28 February 2027. The successful applicants can start their activities from 1 March 2027 and complete them by 28 February 2028.

Eligibility and selection criteria

Eligibility of applicant

- PhD student with, at the time of application, less than 6 years of research experience at predoc level (i.e. since starting PhD research)
- Affiliated to Flemish university or Flemish university college
- Consent of the university (college) supervisor

Eligibility of budget and implementation period

- Maximum request for 5.000 EUR
- Maximum duration of 1 year
- Implementation between 1 March 2027 and 28 February 2028

Eligibility of activities and related costs

The grant (budget allocated by The Sea as a Good Cause) includes all possible university/institute 'overhead' or other costs, i.e. no additional will be accepted:

- No personnel costs
- No conference fees
- No reimbursement of the use of existing lab infrastructure within your research group or department
- Travel costs cannot amount to more than 50% of the grant
- If required by your university or university college, overhead should be included in the budget
- The research topic should concern an out of the box idea, an additional research topic that was initially not foreseen in the PhD, but that would add an extra value to the ongoing research

Eligibility of research domain for the VLIZ philanthropy BMRI grant

The Sea as a Good Cause seeks to fund a marine research idea that contributes to solving a hypothesis-based marine research question. Topics of interest are, amongst others and not limited to, the themes identified in the philanthropy research agenda:

- Climate change (the interaction between ocean, climate and biodiversity)
- Ocean health and the relationship of the ocean with human health
- Ocean explorations
- Marine observations
- Technological innovations

Eligibility of submission modalities

Timely and complete submission. **Submission deadline**: No later than 18 January 2027

Selection procedure

After the deadline has passed, the scientific board of VLIZ will evaluate the submitted applications and make a final selection. The jury has the right to withhold the grants, if it decides that none of the proposed proposals can be taken into consideration.

All applicants will be personally informed about the success of their proposal.

The grant is awarded during the VLIZ Marine Science Day on 3 March 2027. The successful applicant will be invited to present his/her work at the VLIZ Marine Science Day 2028.

How to apply?

Candidates can apply for the grant by sending **following documents** to filantropie@vliz.be:

- application form (download here)
- cv of the PhD student
- letter of consent of the supervisor affiliated to the student's university or university college (free format)
- optional: a copy of your PhD proposal, to proof the add-on value of your BMRI proposal

Subject of the e-mail: Proposal for a 'Brilliant Marine Research Idea' 2027 (PhD students)

Where to turn for more information?

Institute

Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ)
The Sea as a Good Cause
InnovOcean Campus
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Contact person

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