

## VLIZ-philanthropy: The sea as a good cause

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The Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ), recognized as a charitable organization, uses donations, bequests and other financial contributions in a targeted manner to support philanthropic projects and to award grants in order to increase scientific knowledge about the sea and promote social awareness of the major importance of the seas and ocean. The projects and grants need to fit under the following themes 1) Measuring is knowing, citizens can help, 2) The sea is a source of inspiration and innovation and 3) The ocean has no limits.

Currently three philanthropy projects are running:

- **SeaWatch-B**, a beach observation network that aims to generate reliable long-term data on our North Sea beaches using volunteering citizen-scientists. The generated data are relevant to study environmental changes of our sea and beaches, such as plastic pollution, climate change, etc. Donations are used to a.o. purchase sampling equipment.
- **WoRMS editors**. The World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) is an authoritative reference list of all life in the ocean. It aims to capture the names of all species described and is continuously updated by a group of taxonomic experts (the editors). Gifts are used to fill gaps in coverage, participate in international workshops, expand the content of taxonomic databases, etc.
- **Protect marine life in Chile**. The extremely productive coastal ecosystems of Chile are recently subject to a variety of economic developments affecting the traditional way of living. Therefore, a diversity of local initiatives has been set up in the region to protect these fragile marine ecosystems. Donations are used to buy equipment in order to monitor the marine biodiversity as well as to develop educational programs for local people and schools.

You can also put forward your project idea! An initiative needs to 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). The project needs to be supported by at least one VLIZ staff member, who will act as mentor of the project. Each project proposal is then presented to the VLIZ Scientific Committee, which in turn presents the project for approval to the VLIZ Board of Directors.

On top of that VLIZ philanthropy awards on a yearly basis the BMRI grant: 'Brilliant Marine Research Ideas', a call intended to inspire and enable PhD students (less than 6 years of research experience at pre-doc level) affiliated to a Flemish University or Flemish University College to execute a brilliant idea during their PhD within the frame of their research. This grant has a maximum fund of EUR 5.000 per person.

Also you can support 'the sea as a good cause'! Your membership fees, donations and bequests will be used worldwide 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.

- A gift to VLIZ-philanthropy: [www.vliz.be/make-gift](http://www.vliz.be/make-gift)
- Become a VLIZ member: [www.vliz.be/en/membership](http://www.vliz.be/en/membership)
- Buy a sweater, t-shirt or tote-bag from our Sea&Science collection. The profit goes to coastal, marine and ocean research worldwide: [www.vliz.be/en/VLIZ-shop](http://www.vliz.be/en/VLIZ-shop)

Feel free to contact [filantropie@vliz.be](mailto:filantropie@vliz.be) for more information.

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