

The Annual VLIZ Master Thesis Awards are aimed at recognizing and rewarding the work of meritorious young marine researchers. This way, VLIZ hopes to encourage them to continue to provide high-quality scientific contributions in the future, and to promote marine scientific research in Belgium.

- Art. 1 Every year, Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) awards two scientific prizes to two **master theses**. Both **fundamental and applied** research in all branches of marine sciences are taken into consideration. One of both prizes is reserved for a **climate-oriented thesis**.
- Art. 2 The prizes amount to **500 EUR** and are reserved for young researchers who graduated from a Belgian college, or to young Belgian researcher who graduated from an (inter)national educational institution (graduation in 2023, 2024 or 2025).
- Art. 3 An **expert jury** of at least 3 members from at least 3 universities or scientific institutes of Belgium – installed by the VLIZ Board upon proposal of the Scientific Committee – will evaluate the contributions submitted. The jury members must be suggested by the Scientific Committee by December 2025 and approved by the Board before the submission deadline. The jury members will be announced on the VLIZ website.

The submissions will be judged and evaluated based on the scientific results, the study design and the translatability to the wider audience.

The jury advises the Board, who grants the award. The jury will forward a ranked list of their **top 3 candidates to the Board**. The Board is not obliged to follow the suggestion of the jury. If none of the submitted theses are deemed to be acceptable, the Board can decide not to attribute the award and to add the prize money to the next edition of the VLIZ Awards.

The jury may further bring to the attention of the Board:

- Violation of open science practices
- Violation of good code of conduct
- Violation of ethical principles (if needed supported by an ethics committee)
- Offensive and hurtful language
- Content harmful to VLIZ, its Board or third parties

The jury will sign a **non-disclosure agreement**; submissions that were not selected remain anonymous. A violation of the non-disclosure may result in the cancellation of the award. The evaluation sheets of the jury will be archived at VLIZ.

- Art. 4 All awards will be judged by a **5-page submission package**, consisting of:
- A max. 2-page CV
  - A max. 1-page reference letter from the thesis advisor
  - A max. 2-page summary of the thesis, in English
- Art. 5 At least **3 submissions** must be received for the award to be granted.
- Art. 6 All jury members are required to judge all submissions. **Conflicts of interest** must be immediately brought to the attention of the head of the jury. These include, but are not limited to:
- Submissions from members of the same research lab
  - Submissions from relatives in 1st or 2nd degree
  - Submissions from individuals with whom the jury member published within the last 24 months
- Submissions from the same university or faculty do not cause a conflict of interest if the conflicts mentioned above are not applicable.
- Art. 7 Candidacies of former laureates of the VLIZ Master Thesis Awards are not admissible.
- Art. 8 Candidates cannot submit the same contribution more than once for the VLIZ Master Thesis Awards.
- Art. 10 The award will be granted in February 2026. All candidates will be notified of the jury's decision by email before the end of the month.
- Art. 11 The award ceremony will take place at the VLIZ Marine Science Day on Wednesday 4 March 2026. The laureate will present the prize-winning contribution at the event.
- Art. 12 VLIZ has the right to publish a synthesis of the award-winning thesis and to announce this publication on its different media, provided that the author's name and function are mentioned.
- Art. 13 VLIZ has the right to deposit all submitted contributions in its marine scientific library. In consultation with the author, VLIZ can include a summary of the thesis in one of its publications.
- Art. 14 All interested candidates can request a free individual membership of VLIZ for the year 2026.
- Art. 15 Any problems or disputes that possibly may arise with regard to participating in and granting of the VLIZ Bachelor Thesis Award will be settled by the Board. The candidates have no recourse against its decision and are not entitled to any remuneration.
- Art. 16 All participants must agree upon these regulations.

## CANDIDACIES

You can register your candidacy at [link to form to be added](#)

Please bear in mind that your application can only be submitted if all mandatory fields are filled AND if you have attached all required documents.

For technical assistance or further information, please contact the VLIZ-secretariat by telephone on +32(0)59/33.60.00 or by email to [awards@vliz.be](mailto:awards@vliz.be)