

Call for Experts
Membership of
VLIR-UOS

**Assessment Commission for the
Global Minds Programme**

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1. Background

1.1. VLIR-UOS

VLIR-UOS – part of the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) – is the platform through which Flemish universities and university colleges pool expertise and efforts and work together in the context of university cooperation for development. VLIR-UOS supports partnerships between universities and university colleges in Flanders and partner countries that seek answers to global and local challenges. This international network of experienced and committed academics, researchers, institutional coordinators and students works across the boundaries of institutions, disciplines, languages, countries and continents.

Funded by the Belgian Federal Government (DGD), VLIR-UOS is the main sponsor of partnership projects between academics from Flanders and partner countries, as well as scholarships for students and professionals from Flanders and partner countries. These partnership projects aim to improve the research and educational performance of local higher education institutions through capacity building, while at the same time developing innovative solutions (new knowledge, applications or services) to global, developmental problems. Through these partnerships, institutes for higher education evolve into key actors that shape the economic and societal systems in their countries. By supporting relevant, high-quality educational programmes in Flanders and by providing scholarships for students from partner countries, VLIRUOS invests in future changemakers, and contributes to the globalisation, diversity and quality of Flemish higher education.

1.2. Context

There is an increasing consensus on the role of strong higher education institutions and systems in addressing sustainable development challenges. Through their threefold mission, higher education institutes (HEIs) in Flanders and VLIR-UOS partner countries play a key role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming to end poverty, protect the planet, foster gender equality, defend and promote cultures and cultural understanding, and ensure prosperity for all. In Flanders and elsewhere, HEIs are increasingly acknowledging their pivotal role in contributing to the necessary changes for the global goal of sustainable development. Higher education offers disciplinary and trans-disciplinary teaching and research and HEIs generate and contribute to the development of new and innovative approaches to global, regional and local issues. Through research, HEIs play a unique role, as drivers of change, by producing new knowledge and innovation to address global challenges, by transferring knowledge through training, by providing evidence for informed (public) policy and implementation, and by knowledge mobilization. Through teaching, universities develop generations of new leaders and skilled professionals who will drive sustainable development. HEIs provide lifelong learning, and train today's students, decision-makers and professionals to think both critically and ethically, to learn to cope with ethical dilemmas and apply systems-thinking approaches to serious and complex societal problems. HEIs have also taken up a central role in the provision of global citizenship education to nurture a global understanding, intercultural awareness and values that enable students to assume active roles in resolving global challenges. Through service delivery and community engagement, HEIs work with a rich variety of stakeholders – including governments, the private sector, and civil society – for local, national, regional and global impact. As such, higher education has a direct impact on the sustainable development of every country. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be achieved without partnerships with and contributions from HEIs.

1.3 The Global Minds programme

Global Minds (GM) is a flagship programme of VLIR-UOS which enables Flemish higher education institutions (HEIs) to operate as drivers of change for sustainable development by producing and valorising relevant knowledge and expertise through mutually beneficial partnerships with and between (non-) academic actors in Belgium and partner countries, and by creating a conducive environment for their students, staff and alumni to act as critical global citizens.

VLIR-UOS will contribute to the achievement of sustainable and equitable development by promoting knowledge-driven global partnerships, capacitating skilled individuals that can act as global citizens, and facilitating the valorisation and uptake of relevant knowledge. GM represents a pivotal programme in that regard, because the impact of an SDG-proof model of higher education cooperation stems in large part from the ability of Flemish HEIs to initiate and sustain partnerships with actors in Belgium and partner countries through which relevant knowledge can be co-created and valorised.

GM projects focus to varying degrees on educational, research and organisational capacity strengthening of diverse Flemish HEIs. In general, the GM projects of Flemish HEIs are expected to structure as well as monitor their activities and deliverables around six core domains reflecting the key components of higher education institutional capacity: (i) education programmes and methods, (ii) research programmes and methods, (iii) individual capacity strengthening, (iv) outreach and policy support, (v) networks and partnerships and (vi) systems, policies and infrastructure. Global Minds is formulated and implemented by the Flemish HEIs, in line with their institutional policies. Every Flemish university develops its own Global Minds project. The Flemish universities of applied sciences & arts develop 1 joint Global Minds programme.

2. The Global Minds assessment commission

2.1. General

The GM commission is composed of 4 international experts, with no affiliation whatsoever to a Flemish HEI, in order to guarantee impartiality and integrity. The Global Minds assessment commission will assess 6 Global Minds project proposals on the basis of the VLIR-UOS assessment criteria for the Global Minds programme.

The GM commission is an assessment and not a selection commission, meaning that the purpose of the assessment by the GM commission is to assess whether the individual programme proposals meet the requirements to obtain project funding. Funding is guaranteed, as these are institutional programmes. However, interuniversity exchange when drafting the proposals and support by VLIR-UOS, in combination with recommendations for improvement by the GM assessment commission are geared to improve the quality of the GM project proposals.

The assessment of proposals is prepared by all 4 commission members prior to the meeting, and further discussed during a commission meeting, during which the 6 Global Minds applicants present the highlights of their proposal and are interviewed by the commission. One or more representatives of DGD are present during all VLIR-UOS selection committee meetings.

The table below presents the set of generic assessment criteria that will function as guidelines for the assessment of GM proposals. VLIR-UOS also provides descriptors which serve as an objective interpretation of the criteria, for the GM assessment commission.

Criteria	Definition
Relevance and coherence of the project	The extent to which the proposal responds to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies (relevance) and fits with the programme Theory of Change (ToC) and within the institution/context (coherence)
Quality of the project design	The extent to which a proposal presents a convincing project strategy
Implementation set-up of the project	The extent to which the proposal presents a strong plan and partnership for the execution of the project
Potential impact and sustainability	The extent to which the project is likely to produce positive long-term effects (impact) and benefits which will be continued after the project duration (sustainability)

2.2. Assessment procedure

The purpose of the assessment by the GM commission is to assess whether the individual programme proposals meet the requirements to obtain project funding.

The assessment will be based on the submitted proposals, in combination with an interview per institution. Each of the institutions will be given the opportunity to explain the submitted proposal orally, after which the GM commission will be able to ask questions. Since non-selection without a chance of remediation is not possible for GM projects, only two assessment results are possible:

1. Approved without conditions:

The assessment commission is of the opinion that the proposed GM project meets the assessment criteria to the extent that no recommendations are made other than non-binding suggestions. The institutions will have the opportunity, if they so wish, to incorporate these suggestions into their project.

2. Conditional approval:

The assessment commission considers that the proposed GM project only partially meets the assessment criteria, to the extent that recommendations are made which must be followed up in order to obtain the funding.

After notification of the decision of the assessment commission, the applicant has a period of 1 month to make the necessary adjustments and to submit an adapted proposal, which will be submitted to the commission by written procedure. If necessary, VLIR-UOS can provide assistance in optimising the project proposal.

3. Call for experts

The object of this call is to receive applications for membership of the assessment commission of the Global Minds programme. We seek **high profile international experts that add expertise and diversity** to the current commission. **Female experts** in particular are invited to apply for commission membership, and (female) experts from [VLIR-UOS partner countries](#). 2-4 experts are sought of which 2 effective commission members and a pool of 2 back-up commission members.

3.1. Composition and size of the assessment commission

The GM commission is composed of 4 international experts (effective members), with no affiliation whatsoever to a Flemish HEI, in order to guarantee impartiality and integrity. In addition, substitute members are selected in case an effective member cannot participate due to force majeure or conflict of interest. VLIR-UOS attaches great importance to participation of commission members from partner countries within its selection and assessment commissions.

Requirements for each individual selection commission member:

- Affiliation: a selection commission member cannot be staff of a Belgian HEI or research institute.
- Each selection commission member should have the following competences:
 - o an international academic background with interest in the broader development challenges or a development co-operation background;
 - o (basic) knowledge of the Agenda 2030, SDGs and the 3 principles ('Leave no one behind', 'Multistakeholder partnerships' and 'interconnectedness'). More in-depth knowledge is an advantage;
 - o experience with interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approaches;
 - o very good command of English, as all proposals to be assessed are elaborated in English, and all selection meetings will be in English.

Each commission has to contain a mix of profiles, professional and cultural, regional backgrounds and expertise, and should include:

- international academic and development cooperation expertise;
- in depth knowledge about the 3 SDG principles, including gender and diversity for the 'leave no one behind' principle and stakeholder management and multi actor partnerships;
- methodological/technical expertise (OECD-DAC criteria, Theory of Change, intervention modalities,...);
- expertise on 'creating the conditions for uptake' and 'science society interface';
- expertise in higher education policy, scientific research policy and practice. At least 50% of the commission members should have expertise in higher education policy, scientific research policy and practice;
- experience with interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approaches;
- knowledge of the Flemish higher education system;
- a gender balance, minimally 25-75% and preferably 50-50%.

The **mandate** of commission members will be limited in time in order to guarantee sufficient dynamism, but long enough to also allow stability and continuity. Each new member will be trained and coached by VLIR-UOS.

3.2. Additional criteria specific for the Global Minds Assessment commission

At the level of the Global Minds commission VLIR-UOS strives to have a diversity of scientific disciplines as VLIR-UOS strives to have alfa, beta and gamma sciences in the commission.

Two of the four members have already been reassigned. The expertise of the two new members is to be complementary with the expertise of the present members. The current members cover education

and medicine, so we are primarily looking for (female) **experts in exact sciences**. However, since we are also looking for back-up members, experts in other disciplines can also apply.

For the Global Minds Commission, there are additional criteria which are as follows:

- experience with management and policy development at a higher education institution
- experience with universities of applied sciences and arts or its equivalent in other countries¹
- demonstrable expertise in Global Citizenship Education²
- demonstrable expertise in gender equality and/or diversity.

3.3. Assignment and budget

The selection commission members will be compensated for the delivered services. In the case of the Global Minds Programme the number of proposals is 6. A day fee of € 400 (excl. VAT) is foreseen both for the training as well as for the preparation of the assessment meeting (reading and assessing the proposals), and the meeting itself.

Commission members are requested to be available for a 2-hour preparatory briefing by VLIR-UOS (mid-April) and the online selection meeting which is expected to take place in the week of 16-20 May, 2022. In total we foresee: 1 day for training and getting acquainted with general VLIR-UOS documents, 5 days for preparing the assessments (6 proposals), and 1,5 days for the commission meeting,. In general, VLIR-UOS foresees at least 1 month of preparation time for the assessment commission.

In case meetings are organised with physical presence in Belgium, then for international selection commission members living outside Belgium, accommodation and transport will be organized and costs reimbursed by VLIR-UOS. Commission members living in Belgium –outside Brussels- will get their transport reimbursed.

3.4. Application modalities

Candidates for membership in the assessment commission Global Minds are requested to:

1. electronically submit a CV to VLIR-UOS, for the attention of Steven Schoofs (steven.schoofs@vliruos.be), with cc. to info@vliruos.be;
2. complete an online form: <https://forms.office.com/r/UX8HJaqn2c>

Deadline for submission is **Friday 11 March 2022** (13H Belgian time). Assessment commission members will be appointed on **25 March 2022**.

¹ Universities of applied sciences and **arts** are higher education institutions with a strong practice-based focus, offering associate degrees, professional bachelor's degrees, advanced bachelor's degrees and postgraduate certificates.

² VLIR-UOS understands global citizenship as a transversal set of competencies, including: (i) the capacity to understand and question global power structures, communicate and work/study effectively outside one's environment, (ii) the consideration of interdependence and social concern for others, and (iii) civic engagement in the form of pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour

3.5. More information

For more information, please contact Steven Schoofs, steven.schoofs@vliros.be