

Research and Innovation Policy Plan 2022-2026

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1. Introduction

In accordance with the provisions of the Flemish Government Decree regarding the Special Research Fund financing for Flemish Community universities, Hasselt University has included its strategic objectives for research and innovation for the period 2022-2026 in its 2022-2026 Research and Innovation Policy Plan.

In accordance with the Decree of the Flemish Government concerning the support of the Industrial Research Fund (IOF) and the interface activities of the associations in the Flemish Community, the associations draw up a Strategy Plan every five years concerning the valorisation of research. This Strategy Plan is the concrete 'action plan' of the Innovation section in the present R&I Policy Plan and will run over the period 2024-2028.

The Research and Innovation Policy Plan outlines the research and innovation policy for the next five years and establishes the policy priorities for research and innovation. The policy priorities are categorised under four strategic objectives that are further developed into operational objectives, current initiatives and possible focus points. Alongside the additional, internal and external resources, BOF (Special Research Fund) and IOF (Industrial Research Fund) resources will be optimally used to achieve these objectives.

This Research and Innovation Policy Plan was partly created thanks to the input of researchers delegated from, among others, the Research and IOF Council united in a working group in which the aspirations for the next five years with regard to research and innovation were listed. After submission to various internal executive institutions, including the Research and IOF Council, the Advisory Board of Directorial Institutes and Centres, the Board of Deans, as well as the Executive Board, the policy plan was further tested through submission to the Board of Directors in order to create a wide support base among both the policy and the research community of Hasselt University.

Furthermore, the policy plan was submitted to an international sounding board group, consisting of experts from the academic world and the business world, to evaluate and further optimise the strategic and operational objectives. All of this combined has led to an ambitious, but well-considered and widely supported Research and Innovation Policy Plan for the period 2022-2026. To guarantee its implementation, it requires cooperation from various services and academics within Hasselt University. In addition, a coordinated use of budgets (BOF, IOF, operating resources, external resources, etc.) will be required to establish new mechanisms that will contribute to the implementation of this policy plan.

2. How the Research and Innovation Policy Plan (R&I) fits within the strategic positioning of Hasselt University

This policy plan is based on the covering transversal policy of Hasselt University for the period 2020-2023: learning, inclusive, international and sustainable. Furthermore, this takes into account the implications of strategic frameworks and realities from outside the university: both administered by financiers, government, external partners.

Hasselt University wants to further embed with the region on the basis of its DNA, its civic character and its connection by using it as an asset in well-considered domains, in which socially relevant research resonates both regionally and internationally and mutually enrich each other.

3. Strategic (SO) and operational (OO) objectives of the Research and Innovation Policy Plan

SO1: Hasselt University is a dynamic university that focuses its research on spearheads with an eye for the entire knowledge chain.

Hasselt University continues to grow into a university in which high-level research with an important economic or social impact is carried out. To give researchers space to develop and implement innovative ideas, Hasselt University offers them the support, resources and infrastructure that is needed. A conscious choice is made to focus on research in spearheads, from fundamental to applied research. The Special Research Fund is used as a lever to tap into new research funding. To render permanent the expertise and quality that has already been built up is of paramount importance. Subsequently, complementary efforts are made from the Industrial Research Fund on the valorisation of this research. The support of valorisation through specific resources and expertise will be further professionalised in the coming policy period for an increased knowledge transfer and return to society, both in the region and beyond. Furthermore, high-level research requires a high degree of dynamics within its research domain, as well as strategically responding to internal and external factors within research is organised.

Based on its own unique character and location, Hasselt University creates research environments that facilitate research to a maximum. This is done internally through transparent structures with short lines of communication and flexible processes that work at an accelerated pace to share knowledge and expertise. We focus on research collaboration, both within and outside the organisation via synergies and complementarity, to further strengthen and develop research themes into attraction poles for other knowledge institutions and the business world both in the region and at home and abroad.

OO 1 – Hasselt University strengthens its current research structure by which spearheads are clustered in institutes and centres, with increased focus on uniting research groups in thematic clusters.

Hasselt University, due to its unique character, focuses on the bundling of research expertise in spearheads that, based on knowledge and experience, further enhances the acquired position of Hasselt University research in the international research environment. By joining forces and aligning structures and processes with the dynamics specific to the research world, but which also characterises Hasselt University, the university is able to work towards an international profile within core themes.

Current Initiatives

- *Developing a vision for evaluation and sustainability of institutes and centres focused on three specific grand challenges (Healthy Society, Sustainable Society and Inclusive Society) and in line with the SDGs, including increasing its visibility;*
- *Setting up thematic clusters around AI, circular construction, and other current research topics;*
- *Aligning IOF business developers with institutes, centres and others research entities.*

Focus points

- *Aggregating expertise in related disciplines in research structures, including in Human Sciences, and providing a forum for cooperation (action with starting point short-term (ST));*
- *Developing sustainability research as a core theme, optimising cooperation for this purpose within the organisation and the international profiling of the broad knowledge of Hasselt University concerning (green) sustainability (action with starting point at medium term (MLT));*
- *Developing an organisational model and management structures whereby flexible and ad hoc work can be carried out with thematic clusters, in which researchers are actively united around themes covering the entire value chain (ST);*
- *Increasing the visibility of Hasselt University research entities both within and outside the institution (ST);*
- *Setting up quality care systems that are a stimulus for the growth of R&I (MLT), inspired by data and parameters with regard to quality.*

OO2 - Hasselt University strives for a social and economic impact with a sharp eye to its entire research and knowledge spectrum, and translates this internally into her valuation and financing policy R&I.

Research as a driving force for society is the motto of Hasselt University, which can be found both in the values of Hasselt University researchers, as well as in research practice. Hasselt University as a growing university with international and civic ambitions, is also committed to research that contributes to the sustainable development of the region on a socio-economic level. Researchers will be stimulated through BOF and IOF funding to contribute as much as possible to the region - and more broadly to civic global social problems. This will, among other factors, also be included in the evaluation policy in research and innovation.

Current Initiatives

- *Optimising networking in the region aimed at identifying potential research projects with and for the region, e.g. Hasselt University collects research questions through the research centre ORA that are posed by the local actors in the region (province, community, police, judiciary, etc.);*
- *Supporting researchers by means of IOF business developers via applied research and valorisation;*
- *Inclusion of efforts in terms of valorisation in evaluating researchers, implementation of financial return to researchers from valorisation income.*

Focus points

- *Elaborating social and/or economic impact in R&I policy and its implementation in research(ers) (MLT);*
- *Coordinating with regional umbrella organisations such as POM and LRM about the economic developments in the region and examine how Hasselt University's research and valorisation policy can optimally respond to this (ST);*
- *Perpetuating and expanding ORA as a centre to collect, bundle and pass on social questions to researchers of Hasselt University in cooperation with external partners (ST);*
- *Developing a new BOF/IOF programme to finance social and/or economic finality for (doctoral) research with (inter)national and intersectoral partners (MLT);*
- *Increasing the valorisation of not only (patentable) technology, but also the sustainable integration of knowledge from Human Sciences, among other things by contributing to the repurposing of buildings, refurbishment of residential areas, fulfilling a building master position in municipalities and cities, citizen panel surveys,... (ST);*
- *Taking social and economic impact into account as one of the criteria and the increased appreciation of valorisation within the evaluation of research(ers) (MLT);*
- *Striving for the start-up of Hasselt University spin-offs in the nearby region for the creation of a high regional impact (ST);*
- *Increasing communication regarding social and economic relevant research, including valorisation-output, and the researchers involved (ST).*

OO 3 - Hasselt University fully utilises its unique location in the EU region for welcoming talent and maximising collaboration in R&I.

Not only will Hasselt University use its location more near the Netherlands and Germany, but Hasselt University will also actively use its position as technological top region in the centre of Europe for research and innovation to recruit international top researchers at various levels. Not only does this grant a boost to the research itself, but also stimulates the manner in which researchers conduct research with an open, broadened view. Furthermore, it offers opportunities to strengthen collaboration concerning research and innovation with external partners, including but not limited to obtaining access to high-quality research infrastructure.

Current Initiatives

- *The three "O's" are taken into account when implementing the policy plan: Open Science, Open Innovation and Open to the World, on which Hasselt University continues to act as a learning organisation.*
- *The policy of Hasselt University aligns itself with this, among other things, when monitoring EU policy regarding R&I and implementing this further among*

research(ers), including in the Doctoral Policy, the policy concerning FAIR and Open Science, ...;

- Formalising partnerships through framework agreements, which give researchers a basis for long-term cooperation.

Focus points

- The further development and consolidation of a Hasselt University image, and focus on strengthening the international reputation of Hasselt University (ST);
- Maximising opportunities to attract international talent through networking and increased spread of job postings (ST);
- Developing an inclusive reception policy aimed at welcoming and integrating all researchers at Hasselt University (ST);
- Exploring opportunities within the BOF programme to initiate international and European networks to exchange research expertise and utilise research infrastructure (ST);
- Further developing joint PhDs through the BOF programme, and an aimed focus on strengthening collaboration with universities from the EU region, among others. University Aachen (MLT);
- Developing possibilities for cooperation with industrial and social actors, and funding research(ers) through crowdfunding and gifts (MLT);
- Striving for Interreg project(s) on cooperation in R&I in the EU region (ST);
- Developing trajectories for networking and lobbying further explored from the physical proximity of Brussels (ST);
- Monitoring and identifying joint supervision agreements (MLT).

OO 4 - Hasselt University strives for a manoeuvrable organisational structure with rapid information flow, efficient internal processes and transparent support towards researchers via central services.

In recent years, Hasselt University has grown strongly as an organisation and will continue to do so in the coming years. In the coming policy, Hasselt University will optimise its internal processes to the new organisational structures in order to supply efficient and maximum information. Hasselt University believes that strong commitment to such processes is primordial to progress as an organisation in a research world that is subject to great dynamics and in which changes continuously takes place. Being able to respond quickly and flexibly to external and internal factors based on the specific nature of the organisation, and communicating about this efficiently, is essential here.

Current Initiatives

- Clarifying the vision, mission and services of the central services regarding research and knowledge transfer, and achieve maximum efficiency in this;
- Increasing the physical presence of the Research Coordination Directorate on both campuses to support research(ers);
- Organising the internal Learning Network R&I in which researchers and employees exchange R&I expertise.
- Further elaboration of My Doctoral File (phase III (final phase): workflow 2-4 (request cover/invitation/announcement, printing thesis, input service communication and possibly phase IV (doctoral schools))

Focus points

- Further developing a decentralized network of research support staff to accelerate information flow bidirectionally, and disciplinary oriented, and to recognise and maximise opportunities for research (ST);
- Evaluating meeting and decision-making structures, as well as processes concerning R&I (e.g. project management, ...) in function of the growth of Hasselt University with an eye for manoeuvrability and ease of use for research(ers) and employees (ST);
- The development of a functioning information system for management and use of, among others, R&I data, based on which a BI system is build, that can be used by researchers and employees for analyses and strategy formation (ST);

- Streamlining Doctoral School requirements with due regard to the individuality of disciplines, but with a view to simplification and digitisation (ST);
- Development of a doctoral guide (MLT).

OO 5 – BOF, IOF and internal resources R&I are used as a lever for acquiring external resources, subjected through a targeted effort for maximum impact.

Hasselt University specifically deploys BOF and IOF as seed money, but also other internal resources regarding Research and innovation so that researchers find the necessary stepping stone to access external financing. The focus will be on the core themes within which Hasselt University wishes to excel at on an international level, but will also focus on research and innovation with sustainable social impact.

Current Initiatives

- Evaluating existing financing mechanisms with regard to leverage and its use as seed money.

Focus points

- Increasing the visibility of successful applications to external financing and communicating about this (ST);
- Building expertise in the criteria to enhance the chance of success of external research funding and share information about this with researchers and, where possible, incorporate this into the evaluation criteria of BOF/IOF (ST);
- Developing a strategy that increases the participation of both junior and senior researchers on evaluation panels (e.g. EU, FWO, ...) (MLT);
- Evaluating and optimising criteria for the evaluation of research(ers), (e.g. impact, internationalisation, development cooperation, ...) (MLT);
- Developing a quality care system for research (MLT);
- Further professionalising the IOF business developers team (from detection to spin-off/license) to support researchers (ST);
- Aimed use of IOF resources to leverage as well as strengthen the link to external funding channels (e.g. Qbic3, LRM) for the further development of the research results into a licensable product (ST);
- Involving - where possible - local family investment funds (family houses) in investment rounds in spin-offs in order to strengthen the anchoring of the spin-off region (ST).

SO2 - Hasselt University strives for excellence through its research organisation in relation to research, people, policy and impact

Hasselt University focusses on excellent research and innovation in the entire knowledge chain: from fundamental to applied and innovation-oriented research with socio-economic impact. For this reason, Hasselt University creates optimal conditions to allow both research and researchers to excel in domains where they play an important role regionally, nationally and internationally. In order to achieve this excellence, Hasselt University gives all its researchers, during all levels of their career path, the chance to develop their talents and develop their competences, with the possibility of diversifying career perspectives. The following items are provided: the necessary framework, an efficient quality care system and the necessary investments in research infrastructure and support. This is how FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and Open Science as well as RRI (Responsible Research & Innovation) become integrated into the culture and practices of Hasselt University R&I. Excellent research generates opportunities for excellent valorisation: high-level research attracts the necessary partners to work together to launch research in society. Researchers are supported at this by an experienced knowledge transfer team.

OO 1 - Hasselt University stimulates excellence in research - from fundamental to valorisation - through the implementation of a differentiated career policy, where

each researcher can excel in a specific domain, with their own focus and with room for creativity.

Each researcher should be able to excel in a targeted manner based on his or her own strengths and specific affinity. In order to ensure that each individual can work optimally through an individual plan and customised support, Hasselt University is setting up a differentiated career policy. The Hasselt University policy realises that room for creativity is of crucial importance for research and innovation.

Current Initiatives

- *Creating a mentor programme for PhD students and postdocs (doctoral schools) and for tenure track teachers.*

Focus points

- *Continuously monitoring the balance between tasks in education, research, management and valorisation, allowing the necessary creative 'thinking' space to be released (ST);*
- *Developing qualitative working conditions for researchers, including through a targeted action plan with regard to an HR strategy for researchers (ST);*
- *Establishing a Hasselt University career centre for researchers, including the development of a career policy within doctoral schools: drawing up a competence profile and emphasising the importance of (working on) competencies for young researchers (ST);*
- *Establishing criteria for career advancement of ZAP members (MLT);*
- *Stimulating active participation in research networks for access to research expertise and infrastructure, and an increase in international mobility (ST).*

OO 2 - Hasselt University unites committed employees who carry out the values of Hasselt University and offers everyone equal opportunities to professionalise.

Hasselt University, based on its individuality and civic ambitions, attaches considerable importance to impact, cooperation and socio-economic return to society. This transcribes in an active recruitment policy in which these values are explicitly included. In addition, Hasselt University is developing an elaborate training programme in which expertise, skills and values are further developed in all employees.

Current Initiatives

- *Researchers and employees R&I exchange expertise through the internal Learning Network R&I;*
- *Expanding the range of R&I training for young researchers via the doctoral schools.*

Focus points

- *From the transverse pillar of inclusivity, Hasselt University is open to other cultures and supports researchers with different cultural backgrounds (ST);*
- *Discussing and improving the psychosocial well-being of young researchers (doctoral schools) (ST);*
- *Identifying the specific needs of postdocs and the doctoral school training systems to these needs (doctoral schools) (ST);*
- *Stimulating entrepreneurship among young researchers through structural embedding this theme in the training systems (doctoral schools) (ST);*
- *The (further) development of a support programme for promoters to optimise the supervision of PhD students (doctoral schools) (ST);*
- *Clarifying the vision and values of Hasselt University in policies and programmes regarding R&I, including these in evaluations in such a way that they are experienced by researchers (MLT);*
- *Offering opportunities and minimum mandatory course to increase management skills of ZAP members (MLT);*

- Continuing to strengthen valorisation skills with both researchers as well as the doctoral students and the tech transfer employees, via the Learning Network and doctoral school sessions (ST).

OO 3 – The policy of Hasselt University stimulates sustainable excellence in its R&I policy.

Sustainable excellence requires a sustainable Hasselt University policy in R&I. This includes specific investments in R&I infrastructure and capacity, transparency and participation in the R&I policy, setting up a sound R&I quality care system and enhanced efforts in international marketing to put Hasselt University further on the map. To optimise so-called 'technology platforms' is a concrete and important focus point in the coming policy period.

Current Initiatives

- Using a 0,5 (FTE) open-ended contract to expand the expertise concerning research infrastructure and technology platforms.

Focus points

- Focusing on policy in consultation with Hasselt University:
 - Specific investments in infrastructure and capacity R&I (ST);
 - Transparency and participation in internal policy (ST);
 - An R&I quality care system (MLT);
 - Technology platforms with:
 - State of the art lab and research infrastructure, further expansion infrastructure and support staff (ST);
 - Cost models to keep technology platforms sustainable (e.g. marketing unused time on infrastructure, ...)(MLT);
 - Profiles and career paths for managing technology platforms (e.g. Staff Scientists, ...) (MLT).
 - Considering to provide internal funding, depending on the availability of resources, for 'blue sky ideas': not competitive based on project applications, but via interview/pitch before an (internal) jury (MLT);
 - Open access to junior/senior projects in the small BOF projects for all ZAP members with a contribution key (MLT);
 - Developing an overall Hasselt University strategy and implementation on international marketing (MLT).

OO 4 - The Hasselt University policy stimulates FAIR and Open Science in research, provides transparency during the research process and puts this into practice.

In recent years, Europe has increasingly focused on opening up cooperation between knowledge institutions through initiatives such as FAIR and Open Science. Entangled legislation on privacy and medical devices obliges knowledge institutions to enable appropriate procedures to allow research to continue in accordance with imposed restrictions. Furthermore, within knowledge institutions, there must be an eye for ethics and integrity. Concluding, the research process is part of a complex society in which researchers require specialised support.

Current Initiatives

- Updating and implementing the Integrity Charter in cooperation with an ethics and integrity steering committee;
- Implementing the VLIR Integrity tool in Blackboard for researchers and creating communication to make this tool known;
- Implementing the sensitisation and training plan for (young) researchers on the subject of Research Data Management (RDM) (RDM-team in collaboration with doctoral schools);
- Developing the RDM policy plan.

Focus points

- *Drawing up a GDPR flow for research (ST);*
- *Developing a specific training (VLIR tool and implementation) (ST);*
- *Supporting and facilitating clinical studies, by setting up a (limited) Hasselt University Clinical Trial Unit (ST to MLT);*
- *Developing a practical guideline and supporting authorship and copyright under investigation in collaboration with the working group on copyright (ST);*
- *The further professionalisation and support of strategically important committees: e.g. committee for medical ethics, committee for societal ethics, ethical committee for animal testing, biosafety, biobank(ST);*
- *Providing tools and infrastructure that allow researchers to store research data during and after the execution of a research project (ST);*
- *Developing data sharing strategies and implementing them to the lowest granular level in the research organisation (MLT);*
- *Organising FAIR and Open Science events to promote the openness of the research process to bring about a culture change among researchers (ST);*
- *Developing and monitoring FAIR and Open Science research practices (ST)*

OO 5 - Hasselt University strengthens excellent valorisation through the strategic focus on excellent research

Research is the foundation for valorisation and because of that excellent research leads to excellent valorisation. Excellence will translate into increased industrial cooperation with top companies, exclusive licenses and the creation of successful spin-offs. Whereas in the past policy period, full efforts were made to raise awareness and professionalise with regard to valorisation. However, in the next policy, the processes and approach will be further refined and strengthened based on experience. Specifically, this is about setting up individual coaching valorisation processes, specific valorisation financing and (further) involving the external network.

Current Initiatives

- *Supporting valorisation among all researchers within institutes and centres via the TT team (IOF business developers and the TTO), as well as with researchers within faculties that express a commitment to valorisation;*
- *Unfolding the current Policy Plan TT 2019-2023 AUHL (actions based on SMART objectives).*

Focus points

- *Updating the current patent policy:*
 - *Further fine-tuning the patent policy focused on strengthening/valorising excellent research, e.g. to ensure the interest of external investors regarding a valorisation process (ST);*
 - *Attracting external research partners for patent processes to further establish joint, continued development, financing and exploitation (MLT).*
- *Strengthening the Hasselt University spin-off activity:*
 - *Further expanding and optimally using partnerships with external investors (e.g. Qbic3, LRM) to maximise spin-off creation (ST);*
 - *Setting up and offering an intense coaching programme for entrepreneurial researchers (ST);*
 - *Investing in both 'classic' spin-off processes (bottom up from research by its own researchers into a patent and from there to a spin-off or license), as well as on 'other' processes and projects for more economic activities in the region (ST). E.g.*
 - *support by Hasselt University researchers and TTO in the expansion and implementation of incubators in the region (e.g. Health Campus, Energyville,...) together with other actors such as POM and LRM*
 - *the follow-up of spin-in files by the TTO in case a link can be made with own research and therefore economic activity in the region becomes possible;*
 - *Assisting in valorisation files of other actors the region (ZOL, Jessa,...).*

- *Reflecting the commitment to valorisation in Hasselt University valuation policy: e.g. IOF professors (in addition to BOF professors), mainly assessed based on results regarding "Applied-Basic Research" impact (MLT);*
- *Appointing an IOF BD at the Faculty of Law (as foreseen in 2023) and the start of valorisation support for new research groups (ST to MLT);*
- *Preparing a new Strategy Plan TT 2024-2028 based on this R&I Policy Plan (ST to MLT).*

SO3 - Hasselt University stimulates connectivity to address complex research questions with an open mind

Hasselt University invests its excellence, developed within well-considered domains, to build a sustainable future beyond the research disciplines. The university will nourish and flourish the development of economic and social growth – and future sectors – in the region and beyond, via research with impact. For this purpose, researchers are stimulated to collaborate in multi- and interdisciplinary institutes and centres and beyond the boundaries of research groups. Both fundamental research and strategic basic research, ground breaking research and social services play an important role in executing this. Hasselt University is able to find sustainable answers to complex issues thanks to an intense collaboration within and outside the university. On her path to a civic university, Hasselt University includes a clear commitment towards the region and wants to valorise her knowledge regionally via cross-pollination. Not only does Hasselt University act as a link in regional and international networks, but also carries out its connecting role and propagates its vision. Hasselt University continues to focus on science communication to express the importance and impact of Hasselt University research to society.

OO - 1 Hasselt University unites its researchers in order to optimally deploy and combine the available expertise.

Hasselt University is a growing university both in size and from a geographical point of view. As a result, researchers no longer run into each other by default and therefore no longer are fully aware of each other's expertise. As a result, complementary expertise is sometimes wrongly sought outside its own university walls, while a Hasselt University colleague would actually be a perfect partner. Hence the importance of stimulating internal connectivity through online and physical initiatives, and facilitated by central staff members.

Current Initiatives

- *Uniting researchers and employees R&I via the internal Learning network R&I based on own or new expertise;*
- *Exchanging experience at the level of industrial cooperation and valorisation via the internal IOF BD network;*
- *Updating the Hasselt University website with clarification of the expertise in R&I;*
- *Initiating opportunities for collaboration when identified by the R&I central services.*

Focus points

- *Organising internal network(ing) days for researchers, including Day of Humanities, sessions in collaboration with Conversation Starter (ST);*
- *Creating a database with 'best practices R&I' of successful projects in all relevant funding channels (ST);*
- *Viewing the possibility of interdisciplinary doctorates or a doctoral degree to prepare in multiple disciplines at Hasselt University (MLT);*
- *The data-driven identification of thematic clusters from ECOOM (MLT);*
- *Analysing research profiles in the context of Flemish, Federal and European policy priorities, including the SDG/SOG's and stimulating bringing together researchers (ST).*

OO 2 - Hasselt University commits to strengthening the cooperation with other knowledge institutions and networks.

Hasselt University research is consciously focused on clear spearheads: what we do is top notch, but we don't do everything. Hence the importance of external connectivity: Hasselt University proactively seeks cooperation with other knowledge institutions and networks for complementary expertise. This leads to strong research projects and results, the efficient use of joint funding and an accelerated exchange of experience.

Current Initiatives

- *Maintaining structural contacts with - but not limited to - the following knowledge actors:*
 - *Regional: PXL (AUHL), universities of applied sciences, knowledge institutions and platforms;*
 - *Flanders: SOCs, SPCs, VLAIO, VLIR, EWI;*
 - *Europe: interreg/ERDF, Horizon Europe through panels and working groups;*
 - *International: involvement in VLIR UOS projects.*
- *Maintaining an active membership in the Crowdhelix platform and EARMA;*
- *Encouraging the participation of researchers in specific events to make networking possible.*

Focus points

- *The further development of:*
 - *Regional: specifically investing and supporting regional initiatives concerning R&I, including expanding the expertise network of CIEL as knowledge/research hub on social mobility (ST);*
 - *Flanders: striving for increased interaction with VLAIO and cabinets, the further development of relationships with SOCs and SPCs and other Flemish initiatives (ST);*
 - *Europe: participating in a European network, which publicises sustainability research of Hasselt University, as well as participation in international expert panels (ST);*
- *The further unfolding of clear, findable communication about research and researchers (who's who, good research group web pages) (ST);*
- *Encouraging a wider dialogue with external stakeholders that are involved in the development of a sustainable society (MLT);*
- *Promoting a university-wide human rights policy in which support will be provided via a hotline for questions and via a committee of experts to support potential issues related to human rights (ST);*
- *Stimulating joint funding programmes (BOF doctoral fund with UM/ULiège/UNamur)/(inter)national mobility (BOF-BILA) to increase the number of joint PhDs (ST);*
- *Developing a course on effective networking and lobbying for researchers (ST);*
- *Developing a decentralized network of research assistants who can participate in networking events (cfr. attendance of business developers and IOF managers at knowledge transfer events) (ST).*

OD 3 - Hasselt University researchers connect with society to answer complex research questions in synergy.

Since its foundation, Hasselt University has always worked from a concrete need of region and wider from society: from demand to outflow of highly educated talent, to academically researching challenges and issues in contemporary society. Due to this, close relationships are maintained with social and economic actors in the Limburg region, but also far beyond, through international projects and development cooperation.

Current Initiatives

- *Consciously responding to questions from society, directly through projects or via intermediary actors such as professional field actors:*
 - *Regional: including LRM, VLAIO, Province/POM, employers' organisations, companies - and internal Hasselt University via ORA - see SO1 (regional actions);*
 - *Flanders: including SPCs and European projects with companies.*

- *Stimulating research projects in collaboration with society with an economic and social goal.*

Focus points

- *Stimulating citizen science initiatives (e.g. Open Knowledge Belgium, ...) (ST);*
- *Visualising how 'design thinking' fits within the vision of Hasselt University: more and more problems we encounter have no 'solution' (= wicked problems; e.g. obesity, climate change) and therefore go beyond engineering problems (ST);*
- *Further stimulating and supporting industrial cooperation through the IOF BD network (ranging from externally funded doctorates towards setting up and professionalising 'Hasselt University service centres') (ST);*
- *Continuing to focus on cooperation with employers (organisations) to involve young researchers in tackling challenges within the company (doctoral schools) (MLT).*

OO 4 – Hasselt University is building internal structures and systems to maximise information and expertise transfer for the benefit of its R&I.

All too often valuable time is spent or lost on the ad hoc collecting and specific (re)use of available R&I data in the context of monitoring, analysis and policy. Given the growth of Hasselt University, it is of the utmost importance to establish data management and a corresponding business intelligence system for the coming policy period. The goal is to make it easily accessible for Hasselt University researchers and policymakers.

Current Initiatives

- *Analysing and optimising current R&I data systems*

Focus points

- *Setting up a CRIS system that facilitates R&I processes and that highlights the transversal policy themes with an emphasis on internationalisation (ST);*
- *Setting up a Business Intelligence (BI) system for R&I that provides an answer to complex R&I questions, making this a monitoring instrument with regard to R&I in order for researchers to evaluate their results on a daily basis on macro, meso and micro level, in line with strategy and evaluation criteria, from input to analysis to strategic instrument: Example: in the context of a Joint PhD: developing a tool in which researchers can easily see which universities we already collaborate with or have worked with in the past and within which faculties (MLT);*
- *Linking other databases to My Doctoral File (e.g. Fintra, PER) (ST);*
- *Automation (tool) of start-up joint doctorates and communication about this on website (ST).*

OO 5 - Hasselt University uses the power of science communication as an instrument for impact.

Researchers of Hasselt University deliver top notch research. However, the necessary time needed to exhibit the achieved result is not always taken before the researcher begins a new research challenge. Together with the Communication and Marketing Department, the R&I team - researchers, support staff and central services - will be fully committed to the roll out of the Science Communication policy plan, in order to reduce the impact and to propagate and strengthen the image of R&I Hasselt University in society.

Current Initiatives

- *Unfolding/Creating the Science Communication policy plan (coordination Department Communication and Marketing (DCM));*
- *Holding a structural consultation with DCM/DOC/TTO to coordinate R&I activities;*
- *Making an appealing and clear Hasselt University website on which communication about research at Hasselt University will be given a central place.*

Focus points

- *Aligning the actions in the respective policy plans with the Communications department (ST);*
- *Appointing a Science Communication Officer / an employee science communication / decentralised (MLT);*
- *Stimulating the attention of research (supporters) for science communication and facilitate the path to the Science Communication Officer (ST);*
- *Stimulating researchers to participate in training courses concerning science communication e.g. FWO EOS Pipet, Flemish PhD Cup, University of Flanders, ... supporting researchers with presenting their research by using visualisation techniques, setting up a training on (social) media use for PIs / business developers, incorporating science communication as a subject in the Doctoral School Training, as well as pitching about research for all researchers (ST).*

SO4 - Hasselt University occupies a strong international position in research and valorisation as an engine for society

Conducting high-quality research at an international level is one of the 4 transversal policy themes of Hasselt University. To this end, Hasselt University propagates participation at institutional level at European and international (university) networks and encourages the international mobility of researchers and their employees within this context. Thanks to these collaborations the exchange of knowledge and experience is facilitated and mutual access to state-of-the-art research infrastructure is increased, which stimulates excellence. In addition, Hasselt University stimulates and supports its researchers with European and international project applications, which provides researchers with maximum opportunities to further their international network and strengthens international visibility and appeal from the university. Through participation in programmes to draw attention of top researchers, including the ERC programme, and the HRS4R label of the European Commission, Hasselt University further propagates recruiting international profiles. Furthermore, based on her social commitment, Hasselt University also participates in programmes that aim at the development of capacity building in the field of research and social services developing countries, what further strengthens the impact of Hasselt University research in the world and broadens the view of the world. From this focus on internationalisation and development cooperation, Hasselt University encourages its researchers and employees to participate in the social and political debate on R&I with a critical, open view and connecting attitude.

OO 1 - Hasselt University propagates to draw attention of international talent and increasing international mobility.

Hasselt University pursues a stimulating policy in which attention is given to the development of an international network through inbound and outbound mobility. Hasselt University wishes to integrate Limburg hospitality even more through an inclusive reception policy. After all, a clear reception policy forms the basis for welcoming international talent. Researchers are, due to a thorough vision on international cooperation, also encouraged through various channels to strengthen their network via international research stays. This puts Hasselt University even more firmly on the map.

Current Initiatives

- *Recruiting a staff member for the Research Coordination Office to stimulate mobility within Hasselt University;*
- *The BOF BILA channel offers opportunities for mobility in the context of creating joint doctorates;*
- *The Mobility channel within BOF offers opportunities to travel abroad and invite international researchers;*
- *The Global Minds programme also offers the opportunity to recruit international talent through mobility financing.*

Focus points

- *Analysing and optimising the current internal mobility programmes and optimise where possible (ST);*

- *Informing about mobility opportunities and supporting applicants (ST);*
- *Developing and implementing a sustainable travel policy for researchers, in line with the policy of Hasselt University (ST);*
- *Offering clear communication to and for international researchers - maximising information in English (ST);*
- *Improving the visibility of research via the website, folders,... (ST)*
- *The further development of an inclusive reception policy for international researchers (ST);*
- *Analysing niches for recruitment -> (de)centralised, targeted financing channels, networking (MLT);*
- *Exploring possibilities Euraxess (KT);*
- *Collaborating with other departments with regard to an alumni policy for researchers and maximising its use in view of the international positioning of Hasselt University and recruitment (e.g. visualise alumni with a well-developed career on web pages I/C, ...) (MLT);*
- *Developing possibilities to attract top researchers e.g. via ERC, ... (ST);*
- *Elaborating the profile of the faculty coordinators for internationalisation and include the elaboration of the profile of the faculty coordinators for internationalisation and increasing international mobility in the goals (ST).*

OO 2 - Hasselt University takes initiatives to increase the participation to European and international research projects and networks as a means to complementary expertise, network, reputation and access to increase research infrastructure.

Hasselt University continues to encourage its researchers to participate in external funding programmes for research and innovation. For this purpose, the university is committed to find better support for researchers at a central level and facilitates the access to applications that also highlights lesser-known channels. Naturally, Hasselt University will also continue to focus on the strengthening and broadening of networks with other universities, strategic research centres, but also with societal and economic actors.

Current Initiatives

- *Recruiting an EU staff member will guarantee an improved follow-up of the policy and will stimulate, inform and guide researchers more to increase participation in European research funding;*
- *Exploring lesser-known European and international channels via access to applications such as Research Connect;*
- *Participating in knowledge transfer networks including ASTP network, GRD, network via ongoing TT interreg/ERDF projects;*
- *Implementing and monitoring the ongoing incentive policy for increased participation in European funding programmes.*

Focus points

- *Stimulating participation in events of interesting networks, both university-wide and disciplinary oriented, and profiling Hasselt University R&I on Flemish, Federal and European level (ST);*
- *Visualising and actively sharing existing networks, societies and working groups in which Hasselt University researchers participate, as well as with which universities Hasselt University already cooperated with (ST);*
- *Identifying with which international universities we can start up structural collaborations (new frameworks) (ST);*
- *Developing a network strategy with a clear focus together with the policy (MLT);*
- *Creating a learning network about good practices in the context of, among others, European financing (ST);*
- *Targeted participation in international R&I matchmaking events type BIO US (ST).*

OD 3 - Hasselt University invests in development cooperation to generate broader social impact, and lets this reflect in its internal valuation policy.

Based on its social involvement and as civic-oriented university, Hasselt University invests in research and innovation that has an important impact. But Hasselt University also invests in those areas of the world where strong and sustainable development through cooperation can be obtained. To this end, research opportunities are facilitated or created through participation in external or own calls for research funding and researchers are encouraged, but above all also appreciated for their contribution to the societal impact of the university.

Current Initiatives

- *The inclusion of dedication to development cooperation and the possibility to explain this specifically in the academic file (important for promotion);*
- *Executing VLIR UOS projects from the Research Coordination departments and TTO.*

Focus points

- *The further development of the academic file regarding the ZAP profile and the expectations in this respect with regard to internationalisation and development cooperation (MLT);*
- *Monitoring initiatives of internationalisation and development cooperation on macro, meso and micro level, drawing up goals and expectations to be achieved, as well as the communication about this (ST).*

OO 4 - Hasselt University takes up an active role in the external political and social debate on R&I.

Findings from research and innovation have acted as a catalyst for society for decades. Hasselt University wishes to further focus on this leveraging effect by encouraging researchers and research assistants to take an active role in the communication about R&I in various forums. Putting scientific themes on the political agenda, leaves room to discuss complex social issues to which R&I can make an important contribution. In addition, actively sharing knowledge can contribute to new insights through an open view of the world and at the same time there may be an increased visibility of the world on R&I of Hasselt University.

Current Initiatives

- *Hasselt University organises courses for young researchers through the Doctoral Schools with regard to science communication.*

Focus points

- *The development of an R&I Hasselt University lobby network on regional, Flemish and European level in consultation with Hasselt University policy (ST);*
- *Realistically estimating the workload in function of desired participation in politics and/or public debate, committees, and provide the necessary capacity for this (ST);*
- *Offering, among other things, a course on effective networking and lobbying for employees and researchers (ST)*

4. Implementation R&I Policy Plan

To achieve the strategic and operational objectives within the foreseen policy period, a multi-year plan will be drawn up, in which the goals to be achieved each year with regard to the objectives will be defined. The focus points, of which the starting point is indicated on short or mid-to-long term in this policy plan, will hereby be further specified in operational action plans of the Research coordination departments (*Strategic Action Plan research, university library and internationalisation 2022-2026*), TTO (*Strategic Action Plan TT 2024-2028*) and DCM (*science communication*). The ST actions will hereby be scheduled in the first half of the policy period, whereby the realisation is usually entirely situated within the period of the R&I Policy Plan 2022-2026. Actions scheduled MLT will, depending on their size, be realised in whole or in part with continuation of the actions in a

subsequent policy period. The action plans will be monitored on a regular basis and adjusted where necessary as such that the predetermined objectives are achieved.

5. Financial substantiation of the R&I Policy Plan

An appeal will mainly be made to the resources obtained from the Special Research Fund, the Industrial Research fund, as well as internal resources dedicated to R&I for the realisation of the R&I Policy Plan. These resources are supplemented by resources made available for specific purposes including research data management, science communication, etc. A multi-year budget will be drawn up to further establish this strategic R&I Policy Plan in which personnel and operating resources are allocated annually to programmes and initiatives to achieve the proposed actions, in line with the multi-year planning. An evaluation of the planned focus points will be carried out on a regular basis in order to make financial adjustments where necessary, so that the predetermined objectives are achieved.

6. Broader context of the R&I Policy Plan within Hasselt University

The Policy Plan for Research and Innovation (R&I) is part of the university-wide policy framework and implements the strategic positioning of Hasselt University based on Research and Innovation. Considering the implications of strategic frameworks and realities from outside the university: prompted by financiers, government and external partners.

University-wide policy plans, including (not restrictive):

- Good Governance Charter, cfr. VLIR
- Future vision Think tank 2030
- Policy plan Doctoral Schools 2019-2024
- P&O Policy Plan
- Policy Plan Flemish expertise cells for science communication 2019 – 2023
- Gender Policy Plan

In addition to the policy plans listed above, Hasselt University is also working on four transversal policies (learning, inclusive, international and sustainable) and their development of civic engagement.

Cross-service policies including:

- Integrity Charter
- Open Access policy
- Research data management policy plan

Addendum:**Abbreviation list**

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Full word</i>
<i>AI</i>	Artificiële intelligentie (Artificial intelligence)
<i>AUHL</i>	Associatie Universiteit-Hogescholen Limburg (Limburg University Colleges Association)
<i>BD</i>	Business Developer(s)
<i>BI</i>	Business Intelligence
<i>BIO US</i>	BIO International Convention (US)
<i>BOF</i>	Bijzonder Onderzoeksfonds (Special Research Fund)
<i>CIEL</i>	Consortium for Innovative Environments in Learning
<i>CRIS</i>	Current Research Information System
<i>DCM</i>	Hasselt University Communications and Marketing Office
<i>DNA</i>	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
<i>DOC</i>	Dienst Onderzoekscoördinatie Universiteit Hasselt (Hasselt University Research Coordination Office)
<i>EARMA</i>	European Association of Research Managers and Administrators
<i>ECOOM</i>	Expertisecentrum Onderzoek en Ontwikkelingsmonitoring (Expertise Centrum voor O&O Monitoring)
<i>ERC</i>	European Research Council
<i>ERDF</i>	European Regional Development Fund
<i>EWI</i>	Economie, Wetenschap en Innovatie (Economy, Science and Innovation)
<i>FAIR</i>	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable
<i>FTE</i>	Fulltime-equivalent
<i>FWO</i>	Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (Research Foundation – Flanders)
<i>GDPR</i>	General Data Protection Regulation
<i>GRD</i>	Groupe Recherche et Développement
<i>HR</i>	Human Resources
<i>HRS4R</i>	Human Resources Strategy for Researchers
<i>I/C</i>	Onderzoeksinstituten en -centra
<i>IOF</i>	Industrieel Onderzoeksfonds (Industrial Research Fund)
<i>IOF BD</i>	Industrial Research Fund Business Developers
<i>Jessa</i>	Jessa ziekenhuis (Jessa hospital)
<i>KT</i>	Action with starting point short term
<i>LRM</i>	Limburgse Reconversie Maatschappij (Limburg Reconversion Company)
<i>MDF</i>	My Doctoral File
<i>MLT</i>	Action with starting point mid-long-term
<i>OO</i>	Operational objective
<i>ORA</i>	Onderzoekscentrum Regioanalyse (Regional Analysis Research Centre)
<i>PhD</i>	Doctor of Philosophy
<i>PER</i>	Personeelsdienst Universiteit Hasselt (Hasselt University HR Office)
<i>PI</i>	Principal Investigator
<i>P&O</i>	Personeel en Organisatie (Staff and Organisation)
<i>POM</i>	Provinciale Ontwikkelingsmaatschappij (Provincial Development Agency)
<i>RDM</i>	Research Data Management
<i>RRI</i>	Responsible Research & Innovation
<i>R&I</i>	Research and Innovation

<i>SMART goals</i>	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound
<i>SO</i>	Strategic objective
<i>SOC</i>	Strategische Onderzoekscentra (Strategic Research Centres) (IMEC, VIB, VITO, FlandersMake)
<i>SOG</i>	Strategic objective goal
<i>SPC</i>	Speerpuntcluster (Spearhead cluster)
<i>TT</i>	Technology Transfer
<i>TTO</i>	Hasselt University Tech Transfer Office
<i>ULiège</i>	Universiteit Liège (University of Liège)
<i>UM</i>	Universiteit Maastricht (Maastricht University)
<i>UNamur</i>	Universiteit Namen (University Namur)
<i>VLAIO</i>	Vlaams Agentschap Innoveren en Ondernemen (Flemish Agency for Innovation and Entrepreneurship)
<i>VLAIO-UOS</i>	Vlaams Agentschap Innoveren en Ondernemen - Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Flemish Agency for Innovation and Entrepreneurship – University Cooperation for Development)
<i>VLIR</i>	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (Flemish Interuniversity Council)
<i>ZAP</i>	Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel (Independent Academic Staff)
<i>ZOL</i>	Ziekenhuis Oost-Limburg (Hospital East Limburg)