

# Research Strategy 2023-2028

Ghent University stands for **high-quality research with impact**. Ghent University researchers conduct fundamental and applied research in all fields of science. They work together, across disciplines and institutions, with partners inside and outside academia. The research is done with respect for the highest possible professional standards, with integrity and ethics. With their research, Ghent University researchers give new impulses to education and help lay the foundations for a progressive knowledge society, both locally and worldwide. Many stakeholders (fellow researchers, citizens, government, industry, civil society, etc.) rely on and place their trust in Ghent University research. This creates great expectations and places great responsibility on Ghent University. Ghent University wants to assume this responsibility and continuously ensure that it fulfils its ambitions and goals in the field of research.

In a dynamic and changing world with ever-changing challenges, Ghent University wants to create a context in which researchers can conduct high-quality and impactful research. It is therefore Ghent University's mission to shape an open research environment with a wide range of research disciplines and the highest scientific and ethical standards, a stimulating research culture and working environment for its researchers, and a fruitful symbiosis with society. The research strategy contributes to this.

The Research Strategy 2023-2028 shapes research policy (not research itself) for the next five years. It indicates the **strategic policy priorities or objectives** and outlines the main vision. The *Research Strategy 2023-2028* coordinates a number of specific research-related policy plans and is embedded in the broader vision and strategy of Ghent University (an overview of relevant policy plans and documents is included at the end of this document). The present strategy builds on the previous strategy to guarantee sufficient stability and continuity in the main vision and its implementation, but without standing in the way of agility and innovation.

Research strategy and its elaboration come about through cooperation between numerous actors. Internally, besides the research strategy in particular, the HR Strategy for Researchers, the internationalisation policy, the gender and diversity policy, the wellbeing policy, the sustainability policy and the education policy also help shape the context in which research is carried out at Ghent University. Moreover, there is an interaction between the university-wide research policy and the research strategy in the faculties, departments and research units. In addition, external actors feed the research strategy, such as the Flemish, federal and European authorities, research funders, strategic research centres and the interuniversity and international partnerships in which Ghent University is active.

## High-quality research with impact

'**Research quality**' is complex and multifaceted. What exactly constitutes 'high-quality' research is partly determined by the **context** in which the research takes place, the field of science, the nature and purpose of the research. What constitutes quality in a specific context has to be redefined each time. At the same time, it is not disputed that research can only be of high quality if it meets certain conditions. Research can only be of high quality if it is **conducted** responsibly and meets the professional standards in force regarding ethics and integrity. The professional norms and standards are in turn the subject of continuous critical reflection, which in an iterative process contributes to the culture of quality in research.

Research **aims** to push the boundaries of scientific knowledge and its applications and, consequently, to have an **impact**. A broad understanding of 'impact' is crucial here. Research contributes directly or indirectly, instrumentally or conceptually, in the short or long term, in full or in part, locally or globally, to the accumulation of knowledge about, understanding of and solutions to scientific and societal challenges. The impact of research can only be meaningful if the research itself meets the highest quality standards. Since impact is at the heart of what research is, conversely, research can only be truly of high quality when the pursuit of scientific, or socio-economic (incl. policy, cultural, environmental) impact is an inherent part of it. This also means that the various forms of research (curiosity-driven or basic research, practice-based, applied, participatory, etc.) are not pitted against each other or that one form is superior to another. Nor that one form of impact is considered more important than another. What is sought is the most appropriate value creation process ('pathway to impact'), taking into account the research question and form, the stakeholders and the impact goal.

### Core values

Central to the pursuit of quality and impact are a number of values that daily shape the work of every researcher and are co-expressed by every member of the Ghent University support services. (The order suggests no ranking).

**Academic freedom:** Researchers enjoy freedom of thought and expression. They are - always in accordance with professional standards of ethics and integrity - free to choose their research topics, questions and methods, the fellow researchers and external stakeholders with whom they collaborate, and the channels through which they share and disseminate their research results. Ghent University defends the academic freedom of the university as an institution and of its researchers. Ghent University ensures that researchers can work independently and free from external pressures and make their research results known.

**Ambition:** Researchers want to push the boundaries of existing knowledge. They look for domains and areas where their research can make a difference. They pursue excellence in research and impact at an international level. They want to be able to rely on the best possible framework and infrastructure. Ghent University's ambition is to support its researchers in the best possible way so that they, in turn, can realise their ambitions. The institution is also ambitious in terms of its own internal research organisation and support. These are adjusted and adapted where necessary to better contribute to research.

**Engagement:** Researchers are engaged with their research, their colleagues and their institution, as well as with the world outside the university. Through their engagement they help shape Ghent University and their scientific domain, and continue to grow and evolve as scientists. Ghent University is equally engaged with its researchers. It does not only care about the scientific work they do and the context in which they do it, but also about their mental well-being. Ghent University has an open view of the world around it. The university is locally anchored and is part of the social fabric in its immediate surroundings. At the same time, the university is committed to global partnerships, in particular also with the Global South.

**Diversity:** Ghent University is a diverse and inclusive university where research is conducted in all fields of science, where - within disciplines and across the boundaries of scientific domains - there is room for a multitude of research methods, theories and paradigms, and not least where researchers from diverse backgrounds work together. Bringing in different perspectives and experiences enriches research. Researchers engage in local, national and international collaborations within their own fields and across disciplinary boundaries, and in collaborations with a wide range of external partners.

**Integrity:** Researchers are committed to establishing a research culture of integrity at Ghent University. They conduct their research according to the professional standards of ethics and integrity, and participate in the ongoing dialogue to further develop these standards. Researchers interact with colleagues, researchers-in-training, students, external stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in their research and the general public in a professional, respectful and honourable manner. They comply with the provisions of their employment contract or fellowship agreement, Ghent University regulations, legislation and any other contracts or regulations applicable to their research. In turn, Ghent University, its directors and policy makers bear a responsibility regarding academic and administrative integrity in the decisions and initiatives they take.

**Openness:** Researchers pursue openness in all phases of their research and as far as possible within the legal and ethical frameworks. They are transparent about the organisation of their research and the methodologies used, the source of their research funding, and any collaborations and conflicts of interest. Regardless of the outcomes of their research, researchers share their results with fellow researchers and with non-specialists. Preferably, they make their published findings publicly available. They make their research data as much as possible FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) and openly available according to the principle 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary.' Researchers are prepared to account for and take responsibility for all aspects of their research. Ghent University is open and transparent about its own operations. It informs its researchers about policy priorities, quality and selection criteria, etc. Selections for recruitment and project funding are done in a transparent manner. Ghent University accounts for the use of the (research) funds allocated to it.

## Strategic objectives and operationalisation

In the period 2023-2028, Ghent University is working on five strategic objectives:

1. Ghent University is actively building a research culture in which openness, integrity, collaboration and impact are central issues
2. The Special Research Fund (BOF) is deployed to strengthen the quality and impact of research at Ghent University
3. Ghent University invests in talent
4. Ghent University watches over the quality and impact of research
5. Research is organised and supported in an efficient and high-performance manner

To achieve the strategic objectives, operational objectives are formulated. The text refers to a number of concrete actions by way of example, but the formulation of specific actions or projects under each of the objectives is beyond the scope of the strategy. The Research Council is kept up to date about the progress of the research strategy.

### 1. Ghent University is actively building a research culture in which openness, integrity, collaboration and impact are central issues

Ghent University wants to be a place where quality and groundbreaking research is carried out. The university wants its research to contribute to the advancement of science and to solving societal challenges. To this end, the university actively seeks partnerships, locally and globally, within and outside the academic sector - and maintains them in respect and reciprocity. These ambitions presuppose an active and unwavering commitment to building a vibrant and talented scientific community at Ghent University, equipped with sufficient resources and appropriate attitudes and skills.

An environment aimed at conducting high-quality research that is groundbreaking and has impact presupposes a research culture in which research is conducted (at least) with responsibility and integrity and in which researchers are motivated to cooperate and to share their findings, knowledge and results. Ghent University is committed to creating this culture. It does this with and for its researchers.

#### Operational objectives:

- 1.1. Ghent University makes explicit its **expectations** regarding research culture and responsible research practices in providing – among other things - the *Framework for Good Research Practice* and *Charter for doctoral students and supervisors*.
- 1.2. Ghent University is committed to a broad approach to **value creation and impact** of research. Ghent University recognises that value creation is a process that is interwoven throughout the entire life cycle of research, is relevant to all research disciplines and relies on special attention to the various stakeholders. In particular, Ghent University focuses on increasing the impact literacy of its research community and on structurally embedding recognition (e.g. as part of the portfolio of research dimensions used within the career model) and capacity (not only funding e.g. through the Societal Value Creation Fund but also intermediaries acting as knowledge broker or business developer, e.g. within the context of the IDC and IOF consortia). In addition, efforts are made to provide information, training and

support (across the various policy domains) and to make good practices in research impact visible (e.g. through impact success stories, registration of value creation activities in GISMO and output in laymen terms in Biblio).

- 1.3. Ghent University brings the **various aspects of integrity** in an academic context (social, scientific, organisational integrity) closer together so that a more holistic vision of integrity is established. Ghent University invests in the establishment and further development of an **integrity culture** in which all actors involved, not least the researchers, have access to information and training and where university-wide and discipline-specific basic facilities are present to realise and propagate the principles of research integrity.

Ghent University actively raises **awareness about research integrity** and gives further substance to the concept. The university, in close consultation with the faculties, further develops the various aspects of research integrity and provides support where necessary. The **Committee for Research Integrity** is visible, easy to approach, and is organised in a professional and efficient manner.

- 1.4. Ghent University informs and sensitises its researchers on the **ethical values** that research should comply with, and supports them to adhere to the highest ethical standards, e.g. on working with humans, animals or the natural environment, on research activities in the international context (e.g. on the exploitation of human or natural resources, import and export, and security of sensitive data and materials), etc. The functioning of the ethics committees is continuously optimised and professionalised. By analogy with international trends, **thematic ethics committees** are sought to which researchers can turn for advice and ethical approvals. The procedures for researchers to submit an application to an ethics committee are as simple and low-threshold as possible. Ethics committees should be able to rely on administrative and organisational support in fulfilling their advisory task.
- 1.5. Ghent University promotes and upholds the professional values and standards regarding **integrity and ethics** and takes remedial and sanctioning action where necessary.
- 1.6. Ghent University stimulates **cooperation** (including via the available funding channels and the evaluation policy): within and across the boundaries of departments and research groups, between scientific areas, with universities and research institutions at home and abroad and with non-academic partners. Ghent University promotes **interdisciplinary cooperation** (e.g. through interdisciplinary doctoral degrees and through targeted funding for initiatives with both a short-term and a more structural, long-term perspective, e.g. the Interdisciplinary Research Consortia focused on societal impact or IDC).
- 1.7. Ghent University engages in strategic multi- and bilateral **international collaborations**, and supports its researchers in setting up research projects with international partners. Ghent University is a driving force behind the European University Alliance ENLIGHT. Targeted support is given to quality bottom-up initiated collaborations, in particular in the form of ITNs (International Thematic Networks) and SIPs (Strategic International Partnerships built around existing research collaborations with international partner).
- 1.8. Ghent University actively pursues higher participation in **Horizon Europe** (and successors); a strongly developed EU team provides the necessary support for this.
- 1.9. Ghent University deliberately pursues capacity building, especially in the Global South. Research in the context of university **development cooperation** plays an important role here.

- 1.10. Ghent University encourages researchers to cooperate with a view to an **optimal and efficient use of (internally and externally) acquired research resources**. This might entail pooling of staff, financial means, infrastructure, ...
- 1.11. Ghent University promotes **openness** regarding the entire research process, the tools and the results of the research (Open Science), obviously without losing sight of any legal, regulatory, contractual and ethical limitations. Researchers are encouraged and sometimes obliged to actively contribute to the openness of research, e.g. by creating an ORCID id and linking it to their research output to e.g. increase the findability and visibility of their research and promote data exchange and interoperability between information systems, by making their academic publications publicly accessible e.g. via Biblio or by publishing directly in an Open Access platform or journal, by sharing the underlying research data, methods, protocols, computer codes etc. with fellow researchers, with stakeholders and with the general public etc. To make 'open research' practically feasible, Ghent University offers support in the form of information, training, advice and tools, among other things. Where possible, UGent links up with existing (international and inter-university) systems and infrastructures (if necessary with financial input from Ghent University). Where necessary, it invests in its own internal infrastructure. This is set up university-wide, but with an eye for the various scientific domains and close to the researchers.

## 2. The Special Research Fund (BOF) is deployed to strengthen the quality and impact of research at Ghent University

The resources from the Special Research Fund (BOF) are deployed in a well-considered manner to achieve Ghent University's ambitions in the field of research (see the appendix for an overview of the BOF's instruments and the regulations concerning the BOF and the Research Council). 'Quality' and 'impact' are the main guiding principles when spending the funds.

The BOF resources enable Ghent University to develop a differentiated research portfolio. Funding is granted to projects and mandates in all scientific domains, at seed, advance and excellence level. Investments are also made in infrastructure. The research is mainly researcher-driven, but by means of separate funding channels accents are set and priorities emphasised (interdisciplinarity, cooperation, societal impact, etc.). Sufficient attention is paid to high-risk research.

Complementarity is sought between BOF and IOF resources, both in terms of funding for research, value creation and infrastructure. The BOF resources also leverage the acquisition of external research funds, which in turn strengthen Ghent University's research ambitions.

A diverse research portfolio presupposes a diverse research population with maximum development opportunities. BOF funds are used to recruit talented researchers and contribute to Ghent University's HR policy, especially for doctoral students (via the Doctoral Schools). BOF funding for researchers from the Global South plays (together with the other research programmes in the context of university development cooperation) an important role in Ghent University's internationalisation policy and contributes to the global impact of Ghent University research through capacity building in the South.

### Operational objectives:

- 2.1. BOF funds give a strong impetus to research and allow Ghent University to support new and existing **policies and priorities**.
- 2.2. The BOF calls are **agile, efficient and effective instruments** intended to fund research with high potential in terms of quality and impact or to contribute in another way to the quality and impact of research at Ghent University (e.g. funding for social value creation or infrastructure). Existing calls can be adapted to new priorities and new support initiatives elaborated.
- 2.3. The **Research Council** defines the broad outlines of the calls and ensures that BOF calls are workable and manageable for applicants, for those preparing the selection and for those making the selection. The Research Council is responsible for the selection of applications for funding, mid-term and ex-post evaluation and quality assurance. In addition to the Research Council (and the Research Council Bureau), the administrative units involved in the calls operate in a transparent and efficient manner.
- 2.4. BOF uses **quality and impact** as the main selection criteria when screening proposals. **Policy aspects** may be defined in advance in a call and included as selection criteria. The Research Council defines for each call how 'quality' and 'impact' are defined, taking into account the specific finality of the call.
- 2.5. The methods and criteria used to evaluate quality and impact, the organisation and course of the selections and the communication about them are in line with the Ghent University **evaluation policy**. For selections, relevant principles from adjacent policy domains are also taken into account, in particular but not limited to the HR policy, the various aspects of the Open Science policy, the policy on

research integrity, data management, scholarly publishing and authorship, the value creation policy, the internationalisation policy and the gender and diversity policy.

- 2.6. Researchers are highly dependent on competitively acquired internal and external funding. Ghent University endorses both the advantages and disadvantages of a competitive system to distribute research funding, and introduces ways to overcome the disadvantages - **hypercompetition**, high **application pressure** vs. low success rate, **evaluation** challenges - related to internal competitively acquired funding (e.g. the automatic granting of a starting credit to newly recruited professors, or more broadly: shifting from competitively acquired funding to core funding for professors, without compromising the pursuit of quality and impact).

### 3. Ghent University invests in talent

Without researchers, Ghent University cannot fulfil its research ambitions. Ghent University's vision on research, the research infrastructure available and the funding opportunities the university has to offer undeniably exert an attraction on talented researchers, but they are not enough to create the research environment Ghent University envisions. A strong **HR policy for researchers** is crucial to attract and retain talented researchers, to shape and frame them. Central to this policy is recruiting the best possible researchers, continuously improving their working conditions and supporting their careers. Important in this respect is that sufficient differentiation is provided between the needs and expectations of doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, starting and more experienced professors, and that sufficient attention is paid to international researchers.

The HR policy for researchers at Ghent University meets the specific needs and requirements of its own institution and is also embedded in the principles of the *European Charter for Researchers* and *the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*. For its HR policy for researchers ('HRS4R'), Ghent University received the *HR Excellence in Research* logo from the European Commission (awarded in 2014, extended in 2020 after positive evaluation).

#### Operational objectives:

- 3.1. HR policy is **close to the researchers**. Researchers are informed about and involved in aspects of HR policy relevant to them (in particular the HRS4R). HR initiatives meet real needs and expectations of researchers, in their specific research context, department or faculty. HR policies for researchers are regularly evaluated and adjusted where necessary.
- 3.2. The HR policy and talent management contribute to making Ghent University more **inclusive and diverse** in terms of research and researchers.
- 3.3. The principles of '**Openness, Transparency and Selection based on Merit and Potential**' are central to the recruitment process as much as possible. This broadens Ghent University's recruitment base and contributes to the composition of a more diverse and international research community.
- 3.4. Funding channels and instruments (such as CSC, BOF-DOS, VLIR-UOS, MSCA, various bilateral agreements) are actively used to attract and train **talented researchers**.

- 3.5. All **evaluations** of researchers (recruitment, promotion, selection for funding, etc.) are in line with Ghent University's evaluation policy. This also applies to the evaluations of specific profiles such as business developers, IDC coordinators and core facility managers. Mainly **qualitative evaluation methods** are used, supported where appropriate by responsibly used quantitative indicators, with the aim of enabling the evaluation of a wide range of activities. Journal indicators (such as the Journal Impact Factor) are not used to assess the quality of an individual scientist's work (cf. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment).
- 3.6. Smooth integration contributes to a successful start to a successful research career. Therefore, Ghent University pays attention to its **welcome policy** so that all researchers feel welcome and are made to feel at home at UGent.
- 3.7. Ghent University develops clear **career paths and trajectories** for all researchers, including bridging figures such as business developers, IDC coordinators and core facility managers.
- 3.8. Ghent University takes care of the **wellbeing** of its researchers and monitors their **workload**.
- 3.9. Ghent University is fully committed to talent development. All researchers are offered the opportunity to (further) develop and evolve at Ghent University, so that they are able to spread their wings internationally, interdisciplinarily and intersectorally. Researchers have **access to training and coaching** at all stages of their career. The supply of training and guidance is optimally streamlined so that it matches the career stage a researcher is in and the roles the researcher assumes at this stage. The support for managers of researchers ('agile management') will be further extended. Doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers are not only offered training and guidance in function of the current research, but the wide range of career possibilities after the doctorate is also taken into account.
- 3.10. In its HR policy, Ghent University pays special attention to **researchers in (precarious) temporary positions** and to **international researchers**. This translates into a welcome policy, communication, etc. tailored to the various target groups. For doctoral students, special care is taken to ensure that, regardless of their status, they all have access to the same facilities and that they are correctly informed about them.

#### 4. Ghent University watches over the quality and impact of research

Ghent University not only takes initiatives to promote the quality and impact of research, it also takes care of and monitors this quality and impact. To this end, Ghent University is building an integrated **quality assurance system** for research. This quality assurance system takes many forms. It consists of various components and is situated at various levels. It can take the form of (among other things) monitoring, evaluation or feedback; it can be used to gather information and knowledge, to inform or take decisions, etc. The quality assurance system is situated at the micro (individual researcher), meso (departments and research groups, faculties or funding calls) and macro (institution) levels. The self-reflection report of doctoral students and the feedback on it from their supervisors, together with the informal feedback from supervisors to doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, is a concrete example of a quality assurance initiative at Ghent University. Other examples are the monitoring of various aspects of research and the research community in function of the internal distribution key, reports to the Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (e.g. on the Special Research Fund), the VLIR personnel statistics, the work of ECOOM (the Flemish Expertise Centre for Research and Development Monitoring) e. d.m. What binds the various elements in the quality assurance system together is that they are

intended to check whether and to what extent Ghent University realises its ambitions in the field of research and to further stimulate this research and its quality and impact.

Currently, in the quality assurance system, the **evaluation policy** in particular has been strongly developed and is mainly implemented in the **evaluations of individual researchers in the context of selection (recruitment, allocation of funding) and promotion**. Nevertheless, Ghent University's vision on evaluating research is also applicable at the meso and macro level.

#### Operational objectives:

- 4.1. Ghent University is building an **integral system of quality assurance** in research. In particular, Ghent University vision on evaluating research and researchers is fully rolled out within the organisation, so that **the meso and macro levels** are also captured. Research groups, departments and faculties are supported to (further) develop their internal quality assurance systems. Past research reviews in the alpha sciences can serve as inspiration, without imposing a one-size-fits-all model. Sharing and dissemination of good practices, empowerment and ownership are central. Elements of control are kept to a minimum.
- 4.2. Every evaluation at Ghent University responds to the principles in the **evaluation policy**. A well-considered and responsible choice is made between qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, also taking into account the aggregation level of the evaluation. When quantitative indicators are used, this should be done in a responsible manner.
- 4.3. Ghent University is taking **concrete actions** to further adjust the evaluation policy, in particular in line with the *European Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment*.
- 4.4. Ghent University continues to build on its special expertise in the field of evaluation of interdisciplinarity, (socio-economic) impact and Open Science.
- 4.5. Formal and informal **feedback mechanisms** will be strengthened, including by providing training.

## 5. Research is organised and supported in an efficient and high-performance manner

Ghent University organises research and research support in a professional manner, with a minimum administrative burden. The principles of good governance are embedded in the various (management) structures that decide on and shape research at Ghent University.

In the organisation, besides the departments, there is room for structures and entities focused on research (i.e. organisational units for research such as strategic research units and collaborative research units). These are organised flexibly and efficiently so that research can flourish in the best possible context. Research is organised in a way that maximises international and interdisciplinary collaboration and encourages efficient use of available resources (especially infrastructure).

Researchers have access to a wide range of support and resources - funding, infrastructure, training et al - that allow them to carry out their research in the best possible conditions. They are actively supported in acquiring these resources.

Professional support and services presuppose trained staff and a high-performance infrastructural framework. The Research Department (DOZA) is responsible for the development and organisation of the service, without therefore taking on each of the service tasks.

#### Operational objectives:

- 5.1. Ghent University provides **professional support, supervision and guidance** to researchers in achieving their research ambitions and goals. The **faculties** are supported in developing and implementing their own research strategy. The various DOZA offices work together to this end; where possible, they also work across central departments and cooperate with the faculties. Throughout their careers, all researchers have access to **information and training** on the elements around which the Ghent University **research culture** is built: openness, integrity, collaboration and impact. Researchers are informed about and supported in applying for funding. The **Ghent Funding Academy** takes on an important role here. Specific initiatives are taken for a number of funding channels, e.g. training of candidates applying for funding from FWO and BAEF, support for project applications and project management in the context of European funding,... For setting up (socio-)economic value creation, researchers can call on the Ghent University **TechTransfer** service (the interface service) and more specifically the IOF. In the coming years, these channels will be used to generate impact through spin-offs and licences. For societal impact, the IDC coordinators play the role of knowledge brokers in close cooperation with DOZA. **Financial project management** at Ghent University has been professionally expanded, not least by deploying front officers.
- 5.2. Ghent University invests in **systems and infrastructures** that support and facilitate (open) research, increase the visibility of research and stimulate collaborations. The **Integrated Research Information System (GISMO)** bundles all research-related information (researchers with their careers and expertise, projects, publications and other output, activities, infrastructure, etc.) and supports research-related workflows (application and management of projects, registration and management of research output and activities, reports, etc.). The **Research Explorer** gives more visibility to researchers and research at Ghent University. **Biblio** plays an important role in this. Biblio is not only the academic bibliography of Ghent University in which all publications by Ghent University researchers and, in time, the corresponding datasets can be found, but also the university repository with full texts of Ghent University publications. **Open Infrastructure, core facilities and science parks** strengthen research and cooperation within Ghent University, and between Ghent University, other research institutions and industry. Open Infrastructure and core facilities (for which an administrative and financial framework exists in both cases) contribute to the development and availability of state-of-the-art infrastructure for the university's own researchers and external parties. More and more attention is also being paid to the market-driven aspect and industrial applicability of the infrastructure (cf. Flipped TTO) at an early stage. The Ghent University science parks not only house Ghent University spin-offs, but also regional and international companies. This not only offers new perspectives for cooperation, it also increases the attractiveness of Ghent University and the region around Ghent.
- 5.3. Ghent University **monitors its research strategy, its implementation and outcomes**. For example, Ghent University researchers' chances of success in applying for research funding are monitored in order to optimise its services. Internal structures and processes that prevent research quality and impact from being achieved are adjusted. **Points for improvement** (e.g. in terms of administrative burden) in the organisation and framework of research are identified and eliminated. This also applies to stumbling blocks that arise in the realisation of the Research Strategy.

5.4. For the further development of its research strategy, Ghent University monitors local, national and international **developments** by establishing contacts with other universities and with research funders, by participating in relevant networks in various policy areas, etc. Use is also made of **policy-relevant research**, such as the work of ECOOM. Ghent University undertakes to integrate **(European) policy priorities** such as Open Science, Responsible Research and Innovation and responsible evaluation into Ghent University's research strategy, among others. Ghent University also actively contributes to the research policy at Flemish, national and international level. Ghent University conveys its **vision at the various policy levels**, enters into dialogue with internal and external stakeholders, and where possible takes an active role in determining the policy of actors who can influence the conditions of research at Ghent University.

