university of groningen / faculty of science and engineering

Public engagement Portfolio Science LinX

The department that connects the science of the faculty to the general public

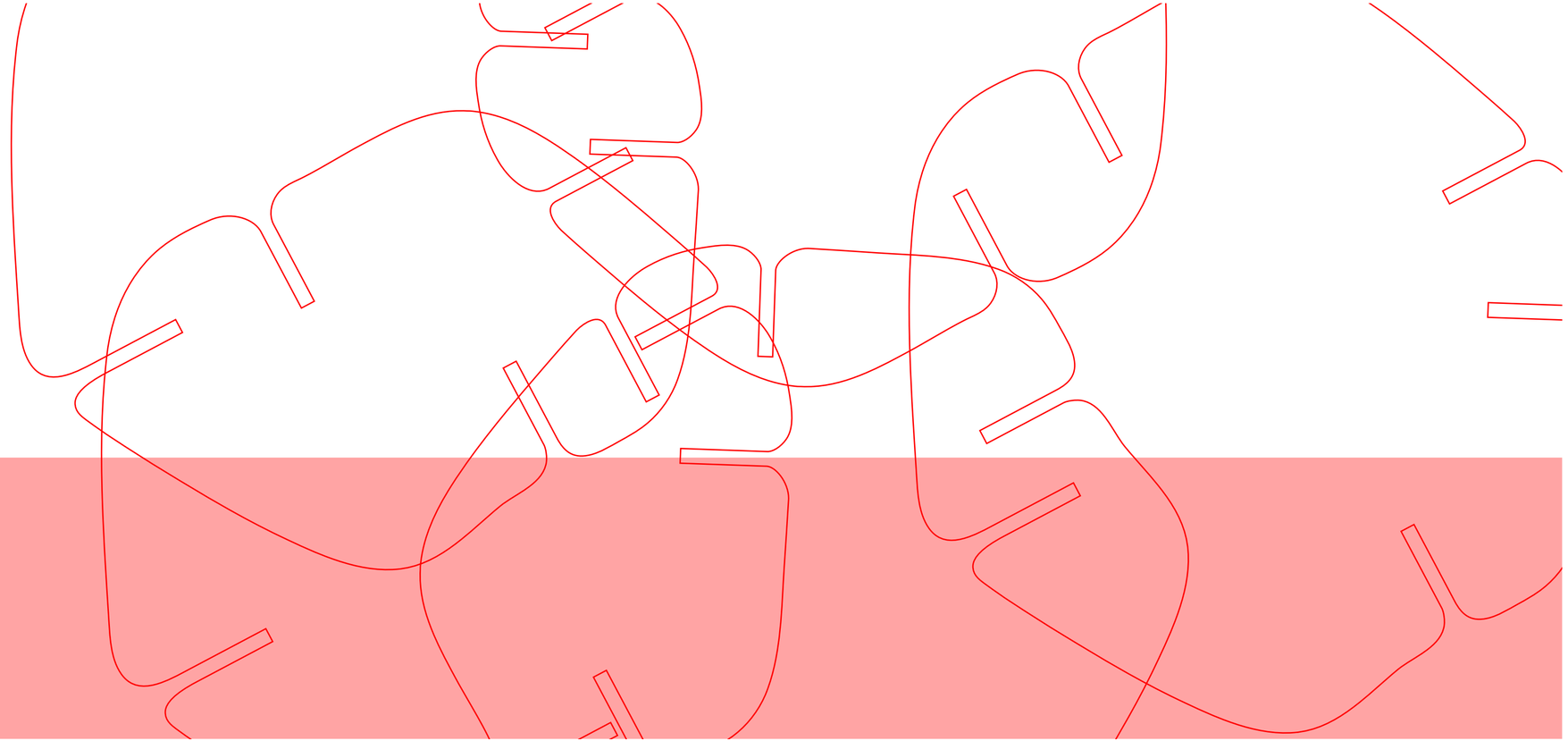
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Applied logos

- Objective
- Target audience
- When/ timeframe
- Example of how a researcher contributed
- Numbers
- Partners
- Support
- How can I contribute (as a researcher)
- Read more

SciCom Support



Science LinX will communicate the research of FSE using specific communication tools. This is done in line with the impact pathway of the faculty, in collaboration with the corporate communications team and the RUG-wide Open Science Programme (Public Engagement Pillar). Together with FSE researchers, Science LinX will develop, implement and evaluate public engagement activities. For evaluating and measuring impact, Science Linx will work with ISEC. Science LinX has also developed a Public Support Engagement Portal for FSE Researchers and will work on establishing a Public Engagement Community for FSE.

Science Newsroom



The FSE Science Newsroom was established in 2023 with the aim of making the institutes' unique discoveries in science more visible to the intended target audience and to implement and support the faculty strategic plan and research themes. In addition, research funders increasingly demand that research output is accessible to a larger audience, which is also aided by the Science Newsroom.

- Increase the national and international visibility of FSE research and research themes, scientific (top) talents and of the social impact of research (in line with the FSE Strategic Plan, FB and Research Institute priorities).
- Good coordination of external news both within FSE and with RUG central.

Research funders, press, general public.

Ongoing

Articles written by the Science Newsroom can be found on the website.

The Science Newsroom publishes an average of about four articles per month.

FSE Corporate Communicatiions

The Science Newsroom consists of a coordinator, an editor, a visual editor and a content strategist

The Newsroom keeps in touch with research institutes to stay informed on current and upcoming research lines, especially the research lines with a focus on societal relevance.. The Newsroom intends to put more emphasis on overarching articles (for example, on a research theme like hydrogen, or a long-term research line). The Science Newsroom can be reached through sciencelinx@rug.nl.

Science Newsroom



Tactile sensors

Published on: 29 April 2024

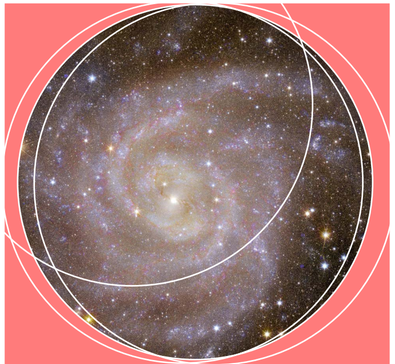
What if a prosthetic hand or limb could actually feel? At the Engineering and Technology Institute Groningen (ENTEG), Ajay Kottapalli develops bio-inspired sensors that could make this a reality. 'We create them as wearable electronics.' Right now, the main application of this technology lies in the use of smart insoles for Parkinson patients, who easily fall over. The insoles can detect dangerous movements and warn them in real time.



Picky green sea turtle has travelled to the same place to eat for generations

Published on: 18 July 2023

For approximately 3,000 years, generations of green sea turtles have returned to the same seagrass meadows to eat. This highlights the importance of protecting seagrass meadows along the coasts of North Africa.

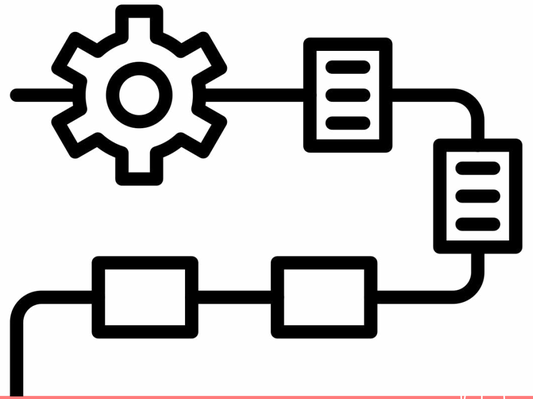


ESA presents first razor-sharp Euclid images of the cosmos

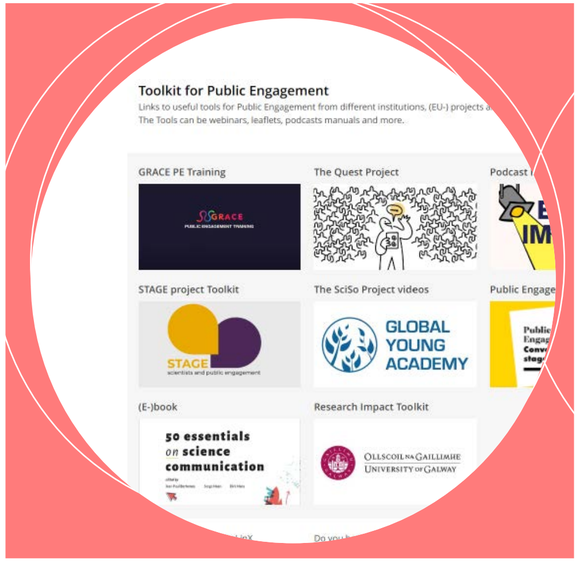
Published on: 07 November 2023

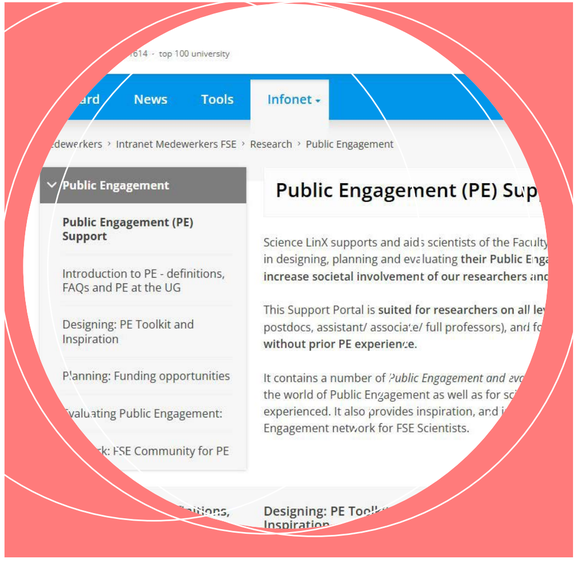
On 7 November, the first full-colour images of the cosmos taken by ESA's space telescope Euclid were presented. The University of Groningen is responsible for part of the data processing.

Public Engagement Support Portal, & Community building for FSE Researchers



Science LinX has developed a Support Portal and toolkit for researchers who want to engage in Public Engagement. The portal will help them take the right steps to achieve their specific goal with Public Engagement. The toolkit will be full of tools (trainings, webinars, decision trees etc.) that provide practical help with Public Engagement.
These tools are available to all researchers on the FSE intranet.
In addition, Science LinX can offer presentations and help with workshops, and developing training to research institutes, research groups, and other groups of researchers upon request.
Science LinX hopes to create an FSE Community in which researchers exchange experiences and tips around Public Engagement, which will go beyond their own research group. Science LinX can support this by organizing lunch meetings and/or symposia around this topic.





Showcases & Stories



- Science LinX helps create attention for specific (strategic) themes through stories about (groups of) researchers. Currently, the following media are used for this:
- Podcast Noorderlab
- Permanent exhibition in the lobby of the Bernoulliborg and temporary exhibitions

Science LinX expo’s Campus Groningen, Partnerships & Science festivals

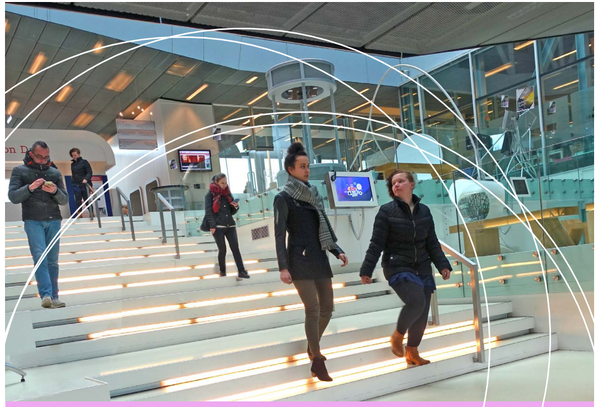


Photo: Peter van der Sijde

The Science LinX pop-up expos offer a platform to showcase the Science & Engineering research stories, translated into interactive installations and experiences. Curiosity, dialogue and connection between our FSE community, creatives and public are major in finding innovative solutions together within the context of todays societal and global challenges.

The Science LinX pop-up expos appear in Campus buildings like the Bernoulliborg, Energy Academy and interactive passage of the Feringa Building.

We develop the pop-up expos in collaboration with science communication students and the FSE Newsroom. Some pop-up expos travel to science festivals like the European Researchers Night at FORUM Groningen or Noorderzon and partners like the Schools, University Museum Groningen and Utrecht for more exposure also hybrid online.

The aim of the Science LinX pop-up expo’s are to showcase the research stories of Science & Engineering and contribute to dialogue about these themes and topics.

The Science & Engineering community, researchers, students and public, with special focus on secondary school children

The launch of Science LinX was in 2008, the pop-up expo’s are programmed around the highlights of the Academic Year in Spring and Autumn.

Casper van de Kooi contributed with SEM images to a visual show in the interactive passage of the Feringa Building in collaboration with microphotographer Wim van Egmond in the same period as his appearance in Vroege Vogels and around the Microscopy Day for general public.

2000 visitors at the Groninger Researchers Night with the RE:charge Sustainalbe Dancefloor.
500 Visitors at Campus Friesland wuth the RE:charge blenderbikes.

The Schools of the UG, especially Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health, University Museum Groningen, University Museum Utrecht, FORUM Groningen, Nonfiction Photo, Noorderlicht, FSE Newsroom, science communication

Projectleader
AV services and FTD FSE, deFine exhibition technique and FSE Newsroom
Student assistents for exhibition technique and tours

Do you want to tell your story in a Science LinX pop-up expo? Please contact us via sciencelinx@rug.nl.

Science Linx Exhibits
NB: Currently, Science LinX transitions towards the implementation of a new maintenance and content management system.



Photo: Josephine Kurvers

Science LinX BioGlobes exhibit



Photo: Elco van der Meer

Science LinX MindBall exhibit

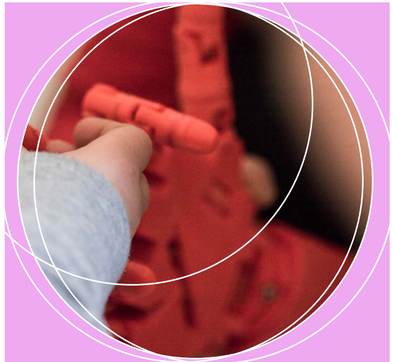


Photo: Lieke Dijkstra

Robotic hands

Science LinX robotic hands created by a Biomedical Engineering student in DIY Beyond the Lab in University Museum Groningen

Podcast Noorderlab



In 2022, Science LinX developed a podcast about research within the faculty on behalf of the Royal Physical Society and OOG TV.
Five episodes were made about the research of the Stratingh Institute for Chemistry.

The purpose of the podcast was to highlight the research of a number of researchers. This was a pilot edition to see if this format was suitable for communicating research.

General public, Groningers (which is why the podcast was also made in Dutch).

The pilot edition was made in 2022.

The episodes reflect a conversation with a researcher

Royal Physical Society
OOG TV
Production house PodGront

Projectleader

There are plans to produce podcast series for the other research institutes.

Noorderlab



In this brand new first episode, Jeffrey Buter talks about how it all started with his fascination with how our world is put together. Everything in nature is made of very small LEGO bricks, atoms, intriguing! In Ben Feringa's lab, he plays with molecules and builds smart Trojans, which can activate medication against Tuberculosis at the right place in our body under the influence of light. This is not easy yet, but fun and challenging!

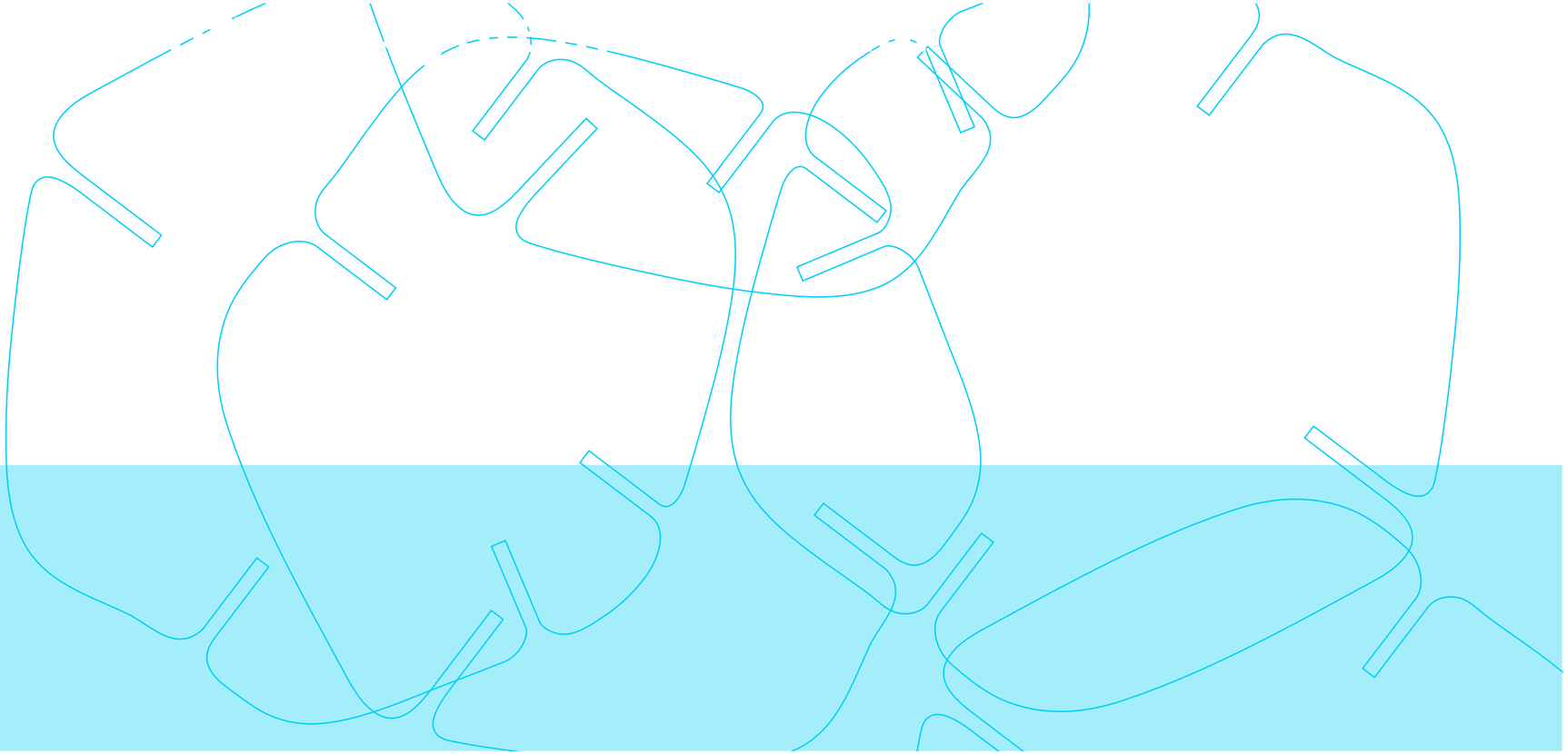


In this third 'sticky' Noorderlab episode, Marleen Kamperman talks more about how she makes superglue by looking closely at what interesting matter the mussel, sand castle worm, spider and velvet worm secrete. Nature is bursting with inspiration for new man-made materials with clever properties such as extreme stickiness. This polymers professor, like Jeffrey Buter from the first Noorderlab episode, also plays with LEGO molecules... combining plastics and inorganic materials into new materials.



A metabolic disease not only disrupts your blood sugar levels, but can also cause life-threatening long-term complications, such as fainting, seizures or falling into a coma. In this fourth episode of Noorderlab, Maaike Oosterveer therefore zooms in on mini-organs such as culture livers. In combination with laboratory animal research, she thus finds out more about diseases, such as liver cancer, resulting from long-term metabolic disorders.

Talent Development



Getting students interested in science and technology at a young age is the goal of most Talent Development activities. By introducing students to the diversity of science and engineering early in their school careers, Science LinX hopes that students will choose a profile or study in the direction of STEM.
To achieve this, Science LinX is developing a “Science and Technology Learning Ecosystem” in which every child in the Northern Netherlands has the opportunity to discover and develop talent in science and technology. To reach groups that are further removed from university, it is important to start young and go to the places where those target groups are.
Science LinX is also involved in a Master’s program within FSE where STEM students are trained as science communicators.

- Truck Your Energy of Tomorrow/ Your Technology of Tomorrow
- Science Hub and connecting activities/ Learning ecosystem STEM
- Next Education
- Master Science Education & Communication

Science truck “Jouw Energie van Morgen/ Jouw Technologie van Morgen”



The science truck of the RUG Faculty of Science and Engineering has been on the road since 2005 to enthuse young and old about technology and science. In recent years, the focus has been on energy. The offerings in the truck have now been expanded. In addition to energy, there is now “Your Technology of Tomorrow”. A new program about artificial intelligence in the world around us. What is ChatGPT? What are the limits, both technical and ethical? Can it be done just like that? This program is conducted in collaboration with a consortium led by the UMCG.

To introduce students to STEM science research, with the higher goal of getting them to choose a STEM profile and later STEM studies.The truck also reaches schools that are not near a university.

Pupils from upper primary and lower secondary schools (before making a profile choice) and general public.

The truck has existed since 2005, every three years Science LinX has to apply for new subsidy providers, so far always successfully.

The teaching materials used in the truck were developed in collaboration with researchers. They can also join the truck to give guest lectures at the school.

Reach: 120 school visits/ 25,000 students per year

Gasunie, UMCG, Gemeente Groningen, AI-Hub NN, Hanzehogeschool

Project leader
Student assistants for mainly guidance and developing teaching materials.

Developing lesson material
Guest lectures
Other

Jouw energie van morgen



Salt Express - lesson

For almost 20 years, FSE has had an alliance with the salt makers, now Nobian, in Delfzijl. In the truck, students are given a lesson and practical about salt, at school it is followed up with the salt crystal growth competition.



Piezo crystal - lesson

For years, energy has been a major theme in the truck, now with RWE. One experiment, both at school visits or events, is making energy from motion. A piezo crystal is used for this and a link is also made with ongoing research at FSE.



Events

Sometimes the truck is used for special events such as the visit of Nobel Prize winner Anne L’Hullier, Physics 2023, in 2024. Passionately, she informed the schoolchildren, mostly young women, about her research.

Bèta support point and connecting activities/ Learning ecosystem STEM



Science LinX's "STEM Learning Ecosystem" provides materials, workshops and several activities for students from elementary to high school.
The University of Groningen's STEM support point (Bètasteunpunt) helps students with a high-school final project or practical assignment.
In cooperation with the Scholierenacademie, Science LinX offers workshops on research skills applied to high-school final projects. This covers, for example, questions such as: How do you tackle your research? How do you draw up a work plan? How do you search for literature and which literature is reliable?
There are also other activities such as the STEM master classes and competitions such as the Mathematics Olympiad and the European Olympiad of Experimental Sciences (EOES) to which Science LinX actively contributes.

Introduce pupils from primary to secondary education to research & science in a continuous learning line.

School students and their teachers.

Ongoing

Elective classes are designed in collaboration with a researcher.

In 2023, 800 students were reached with the various workshops and 200 scholars' questions were addressed (in combination with alpha and gamma).
200 pupils attended the elective lectures.

Scholierenacademie Alpha/Gamma

STEM Support Coordinator
Student assistants to answer questions, make contacts and develop materials.

Would you like to help students with their profile paper? Or do you have an idea for an elective class? Then contact sciencelinx@rug.nl.

Bèta Support Point
Scholierenacademie
Local learning ecosystem



Keuzecolleges

During the "Keuzecolleges", technasium students from the North come to the university twice for an assignment and a presentation. These elective courses are designed by faculty researchers.



Final Research Project Event

The Support centres aim to help secondary school students in their final research project, usually written in the exam year. We help by offering workshops on academic skills, and pupils are always welcome to email us any questions. We can even host students who want to do an experiment in one of our lab facilities.



European Olympiad of Experimental Sciences (EOES)

In cooperation with the Hanze, Science LinX organizes the regional preliminary round of the European Olympiad of Experimental Sciences, a laboratory Olympiad. Pupils do three experiments in groups in the field of biology, physics and chemistry.

Master Science Education and Communication



The two-year Master of Science Education and Communication is a master's program for students with a science bachelor's degree who wish to pursue further study in either science communication, or education (teacher training in the school subjects of biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and computer science) - the latter in collaboration with the Teacher Training Program. The Communication track is a practical programme in which students learn about presenting, writing, designing and doing research in science communication or education, often using real assignments from companies and institutions.

To train students to become science communication professionals who can work on communication issues with a STEM background. To this end, the program collaborates with teacher-researchers from ISEC, teachers from PIE, and staff from Science LinX who provide courses and/or guest lectures. In addition, Science LinX provides many student assignments, both small assignments in the courses and larger projects for graduate students.

Students

The program has been in existence for 20 years.

ISEC researchers supervise students in research projects. Other projects are done in collaboration with the Science Shop. Example of a more science-like project with communication component?

About 25 students per year start in the master's program, about half of them in the Communication track and the other half in the STEM teacher training program

Teacher-scholars from ISEC
Trainers/teachers from the PIE group
External teachers
The Teacher Training Programme at the BSS faculty

Do you have a project that science communication students could contribute to?
If so, contact Science linX

Science Education and Communication



Podcast Studio

In one of the courses of the Master, students learn how to make a podcast about a STEM researcher. They can use the podcast studio of our Faculty to produce a professional podcast that is released by FSE Radio



External assignment

All students in the program do an external assignment with a real contractor. They can work for radio, a science museum, the government or a scientific organisation to gather real experience for their future career.



Science teachers

About half of the students in the program study to become teachers in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics or computer science. They learn how to effectively transfer scientific knowledge to high-school students by a year-long internship.

Societal Engagement



Together with different societal and scientific partners, Science LinX works in all kinds of projects, from nature management to Artificial Intelligence. Science LinX organizes annual or monthly recurring events such as Zpannend Zernike and the Knowledge Café and is also regularly involved in fringe programming of local, regional and national festivals. In addition, the Beta Science Shop is part of Science LinX. Through these activities, Science LinX aims to contribute to social change together with community partners and partners in education. .
The following sections explain more and give examples of these activities.
Zernike
Noorderzon (& other festivals)
Planetarium & other astronomy activities
STEM Science Shop
CurioUs and the Meet-o-Theek
Darkness of the Wadden Sea
Knowledge café

Zpannend Zernike/ Weekend of Science/ European Researchers Night



Zpannend Zernike is Groningen's science festival for young and old. It is the Groningen version of the activities that take place during the national Weekend of Science. In recent years, the Groningen version of European Researchers Night, an evening out filled with music, debate, science and stimulating experiments, took place on the last Friday evening of September.

The university's "open day" for the general public, engaging Groningers in the university's research, and getting children excited about science.

Families with children, general public

Every year, on the first weekend of October. On Saturday there is a program downtown/at the UMCG and on Sunday a program on the Zernike Campus with multiple locations.

Students

In 2023, 1500 visitors came to the Bernoulliborg alone.

- UMCG
- RUG
- The four interdisciplinary 'schools' of the RUG
- Hanze University
- Entrance
- European Union (grant)
- Weekend of Science

Project leader and other staff for further interpretation
Student assistants for public support

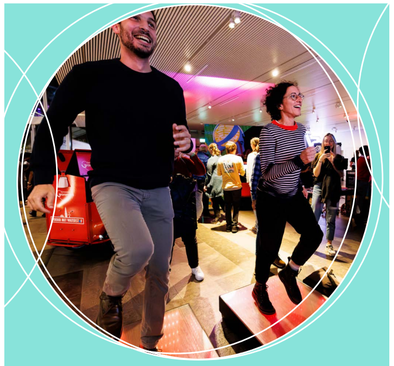
Want to present your research during Zpannend Zernike, conduct an audience survey or contribute in some other way?
Contact sciencelinx@rug.nl

Zannend Zernike
Weekend of Science
European Researchers Night



Zpannend Zernike

Groningen's Weekend of Science, in the first weekend of October. The naming of the event is Professor Frits Zernike, the Groningen professor who received the Nobel Prize in physics in 1953.



European Researchers' Night Groningen

The European Researchers' Night is an annual festival on the last Friday of September in several European cities, with the aim of bringing science to a wide audience.



Zpannend Zernike

Local, regional and national festivals



Science LinX is (has been) a regular presence at local, regional and national festivals. Examples are the Groningen MaakFestival, Let's Gro, the Noorderzon Festival of Performing Arts & Society but also national festivals such as Lowlands.
Let's Gro is the Groningen festival about the city of the future. The MaakFestival is a one-day festival about (sustainable) making, ingenuity, curiosity and innovation. At both festivals in and around Forum Groningen there are various activities for young and old to see and do, to which Science LinX contributed with, for example, The Meet-o-Theek (see 4th), hands-on activities and/or researchers from the faculty who could put their research in the spotlight.
Noorderzon is a combination of an international arts festival and a large summer festival in the Noorderplants, often including a series of lectures/talk shows with and by university researchers, sometimes combined with public activities about science for children. Science LinX was present in several years with diverse programming, sometimes free, sometimes for a fee.

To inform and enthuse general audiences about university research

General (festival) audiences and their children.

Different times for different festivals

Several RUG researchers have given lectures at Noorderzon in recent years, students from the iGEM team designed an activity for children, and the CurioUs project was present with measuring equipment where children could take direct measurements during the festival.

Visitor numbers vary quite a bit

The various festival organizers

Various project leaders and student assistants from Science LinX

At the Make Festival, as well as at Let's Gro, there is a lot of room to showcase the faculty's Engineering research. But there is room for other research as well; please get in touch if you think your research belongs at a festival.

Noorderzon
Let's Gro
MaakFestival



Groninger Maakfestival

GEN.ERATE has been developed to build together with public or pupils a structure that is growing and evolving as one big sculpture.



Performing Arts Festival Noorderzon
The Doubting Spectable
Niels Taatgen en theaterduo Sjors & Ruud

The content of the Doubting Spectacle, with examples from science, was developed in cooperation with several science museums, such as Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Science Center Delft, Batavialand, Science LinX, University Museum Groningen and De Museumfabriek.

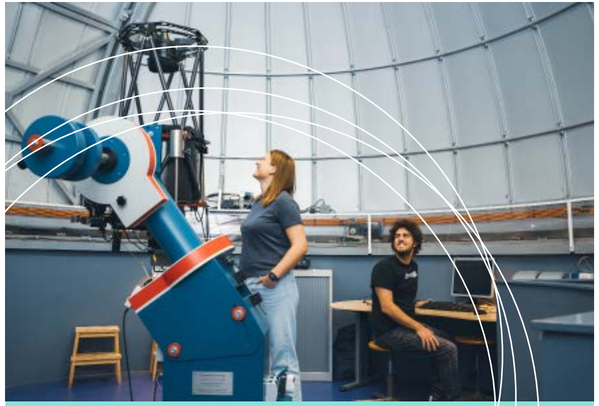


Expedition NEXT
Virtual Reality Experience: Can you build life?

The VR LIFE! is an experience and game for children ages 8 tm/ 80. The experience provides an insight into scientist's perspective and the question: what is life? Through a combination of filmed VR and game a the connection to the real world and the research world is made that takes place at the invisible level (molecular).

Developed for the Origins Center, NWO together with Science LinX.
Created by: Happy Ship & Chantalla Pleiter.

Kapteyn Mobile Planetarium, Blaauw Observatory & other astronomy activities



Since 2008, the University of Groningen has an observatory on the Zernike Campus: the Blaauw Observatory. It is located on top of the Bernoulliborg. The purpose of the observatory is to allow students to gain experience with astronomical observations and to show the universe to the general public. For the latter, among other things, regular public evenings are organized. This is organized by Science LinX in cooperation with the Kapteyn Institute. There is also a Kapteyn Mobile Planetarium, with which enthusiastic student assistants go to primary and secondary schools, visitor centers and children's festivals. The planetarium can be inflated on site and the starry sky is then projected inside. The students take the children on a journey through space. A planetarium visit often ties in with a school project week on Earth or the universe.

To give astronomy students experience making astronomical observations, as well as informing the public about the universe. The observatory does this with various public activities throughout the year, including national stargazing nights, shows at the DOT Live Planetarium and flexible stargazing nights.

General public, school students

Ongoing

Kapteyn Institute researchers and astronomy students make continuous contributions to public activities, such as lectures, star shows in DOT and stargazing nights.

Visitors Night of the Night Bernoulliborg: 250
Night of the Night Lauwersnest: 180
National stargazing days Zernike: 350
Solar eclipse NPZ+ city: 400
Star walks: 150
Kapteyn Mobile Planetarium: 4500+

Kapteyn Institute

Project Manager
Astronomy student assistants

Researchers at the Kapteyn Institute are regularly asked to contribute to organized activities

Kapteyn Mobile Planetarium
Blaauw Observatory



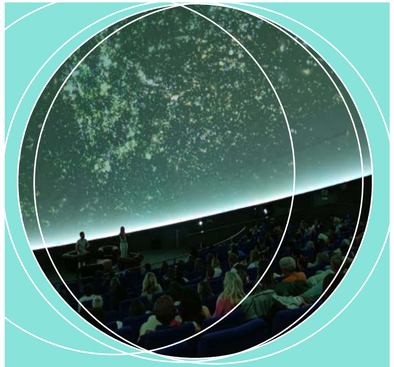
Kapteyn Mobile Planetarium

The Kapteyn Mobile Planetarium is an inflatable dome 3.5 metres high and 6 metres in diameter. Inside, interactive films are projected of the night sky, planets, stars and galaxies. Astronomy students from the University of Groningen use these projections to explain how beautiful, big and special the universe is!



Blaauw Observatory

The Blaauw Observatory gives students experience in making astronomical observations, and to show the universe to the general public. For the latter, regular public evenings are organized, among other things.



DOTliveplanetarium

The DOTliveplanetarium is a planetarium theater in the center of Groningen. From here, Astronomy students from the University of Groningen share their knowledge and enthusiasm about the universe every Wednesday evening. During these live shows the operators take the audience on a journey throughout the solar system and beyond. The students also explain how and why we research the universe in simple terms to a broad audience.After each show, the operators answer any questions the audience might have.

STEM Science Shop



The STEM Science Shop is the bridge between community organizations and knowledge in the STEM sciences. Organizations and scientific staff come with questions on a wide variety of topics. With the help of students, we work together to find answers.

The goal of the science shop(s) (they are there at each faculty) is to (have) questions from society answered with the help of students. For researchers, that means it is possible to have students conduct research for external clients. Also, if you are looking for opportunities for social impact of your (future) research, the science store can help. The student does such a project as part of his/her education and gets credits for it, the teacher-researcher supervises this project just like a research project.

Civil society organizations, university students and lecturer-researchers.

Ongoing, science stores have existed since the 1980s.

There are numerous examples of how a student has been able to answer a research question from society in a project, such as the question of which way to wash hands is most hygienic.
More examples can be found here.

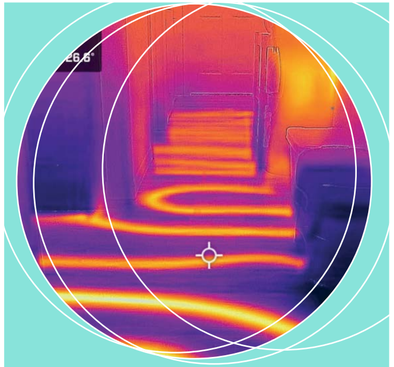
In 2022, 66 students did a project with/at the STEM Science Shop, there were 20 external publications, and 27 society inquiries were handled.

A variety of community partners

Coordinators STEM Science Shop.

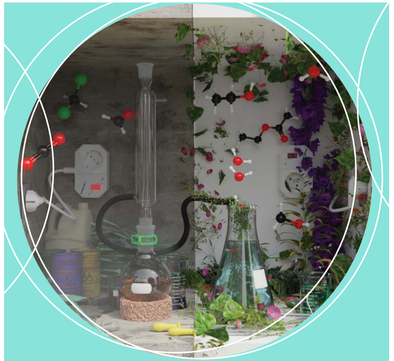
Do you have a societal and/or multidisciplinary question that could be answered in a student project? Or do you have space within an NWA project, for example, for a student to conduct a pilot? Or would you be willing to help a student that is working on a question within your area of expertise? If so, contact the science shop: science-shop-fse@rug.nl

STEM Science Shop



Energy use

Students of the Honours college used infrared cameras to map the heating in the Academy Building and recommend ways to save energy.



Green labs

Student-assistents of the UG Green Office have worked together with FSE Labs to study the use of Ultra Low Temperature freezers that are set at -80°C. It was concluded that -70°C was enough for the samples stored in those freezers, that led to an energy use reduction of 30%.

ENLIGHT

The science shops play a large role in the Universities Network ENLIGHT. The Science Shops of our University are used as a good practice of how to implement citizen science in higher education institutions.

Citizen Science: CurioUs and the Meet-o-Theek



CurioUs is our Citizen Science programme with the goal of connecting northerners to science through directly engaging them in projects relevant to their life and local environment.
CurioUs? aims to reach this goal through two main types of activities; citizen science projects and the “meet-o-theek”-concept.
Firstly, CurioUs serves as a platform for UG scientists to organize citizen science projects that fit within the mission of CurioUs. Within these projects CurioUs helps organize the recruitment and instruction of participants and facilitates the communication with the participants with the aim of ensuring engagement with the project. As a researcher interested in applying for projects consisting of or containing a citizen science aspect, you can contact CurioUs during the application process.
Secondly, CurioUs? has the first “Meet-o-Theek” in the Netherlands. Housed in the SmartLab of the Forum, we serve as a library for measurement equipment that anyone can lend for free to answer questions they might have concerning their living environment. In the next phase of the programme, we will be expanding the “Meet-o-Theek” to libraries in the province of Groningen.

Specific to each project.

To engage the public with science by helping and stimulating them to conduct research on their own environment, while giving researchers the opportunity to conduct citizen science projects.

Expansion of CurioUs to the province will take place in the next two years. Space for two citizen science initiative per year

Several researchers contributed research questions to the programme, leading to the organization of a “national rainworm census” and a “rainwater measurement”. Furthermore, researchers have noted CurioUs as a project partner within new applications to contribute relevant equipment to the Meet-o-Theek.

In the past between 200 and 1000 participants joined and contributed to our citizen science activities. Furthermore, the “Meet-o-Theek” has lend out more than 500 measure devices since it’s conception in 2020.

- Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health
- Groningen Forum
- Biblionet Groningen

We provide various forms of support, such as consultation and support during grant writing, communications and promotion of projects with (potential) participants and organizational support during projects.

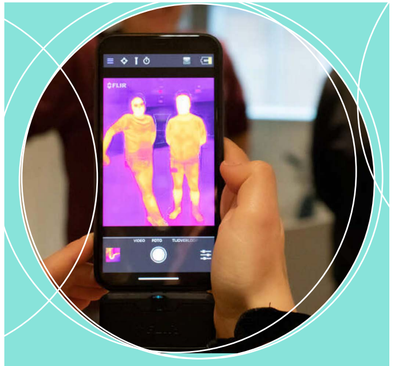
Do you have a research question that requires citizen science is and is directly relevant to a target audience with the northern provinces, or are you planning an engagement project that could include lendable measurement devices? Please contact us!

CurioUs
Forum



CurioUs?

CurioUs is the platform for citizen science in the Northern Netherlands, coordinated by Science LinX, Forum Groningen, the Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health and Biblionet Groningen. CurioUs wants to make citizens enthusiastic to study their own living environment by organizing activities like the worm count and the Meet-o-Theek.



Meet-oTheek

The “Meet-o-Theek” is our library of measurement equipment where we enable curious citizens to aks and answer their own questions through our devices. The Meet-o-Theek is now housed in the Forum Groningen, but will soon be expanded to more libraries throughout the province.



Photo: Jeroen Onrust

National worm count

CurioUs was the organizer of the national worm count in 2022, that was a huge success with a lot of media-attention. Hundreds of people from the whole country contributed to scientific research about earthworms.

Darkness of the Wadden



The Wadden area is one of the last places in the Netherlands where it still gets really dark. In an increasingly illuminated world, night still has free reign on the Wadden Sea. As a result, here you can still see the most impressive starry skies, truly unwind and be surrounded by unique night nature.

Together with entrepreneurs and local partners, we are developing a string of darkness experience spots along the Wadden coast. Everyone is welcome to experience the darkness for themselves, completely free of charge. This is how we ensure that the dark Wadden will continue to be loved and protected in the future. On behalf of the RUG, Science LinX is organizing several physical and knowledge projects within this program in cooperation with researchers and students.

The Darkness of the Wadden Program is committed to increasing awareness of the importance of darkness and inviting people to experience the unique darkness of the Wadden.

General public

From April 2020 to June 2024

Several scientists contributed in the form of texts on topics such as nocturnal biodiversity, astronomy and chronobiology. This input was then shared with the public in a public-friendly format in the form of articles, social media posts and in a darkness ambassador course.

Between 2020 and December 2023, 5 darkness experience sites and 4 night gardens have been realized from the Darkness of the Wadden program. A mobile darkness experience has been developed, 85 people have been trained as darkness ambassadors, a night map and photo book have been developed, and a network of free lending telescopes has been rolled out. A network of entrepreneurs has also been established who have collectively organized more than 300 night activities.

Nature and Environment Federations of North Holland, Friesland and Groningen, Staatsbosbeheer, Natuurmonumenten, The Wadden Association, Municipality of Het Hogeland, The Groninger Landscape Foundation

Project leader
Student assistants for guiding and organizing activities

Would you like to help students with their profile paper? Or do you have an idea for an elective class? Then contact sciencelinx@rug.nl

Donkerte van de Wadden
Leentelescoop



Telescope-borrowing network

The telescope-borrowing network aims to make experiencing the dark night's sky accessible to anyone in society, no matter whether they are poor or rich, and have prior experience with the sciences or not. The telescopes are lended out free of charge at locations throughout the north of the Netherlands, so that any member of the public can try stargazing themself and can learn about the beauty and joy that preserving dark nightly skies brings. An interactive map showcases the 37 locations (libraries, NGOs and small entrepreneurs) which take part of the telescope-borrowing network and together lend out a total of 80 telescopes.



STERRENZIJL

Noordpolderzijl is a beautiful place, which we cannot possibly make even more beautiful. The peace, space, silence and darkness must be protected here. Very often Noordpolderzijl is the darkest place in the Netherlands. And that is part of the real beauty of this place. Marc van Vliet designed Sterrenzijl with the goal of having the artwork be a stage for the environment and the dark.



Planet path

The planet path, which opened on 5 July 2024, is an initiative of Staatsbosbeheer and scientists from the RUG. During the walk of more than five kilometres, walkers, passing a planetary system on a scale, will be given explanations. And of course, in passing, they can enjoy the beautiful nature all around.

Knowledge Cafe/ Kenniscafé



The Knowledge Café is a collaboration between Science Linx, Studium Generale Groningen and Forum Groningen. Every meeting, a topical theme is discussed, introduced and illuminated from different angles by researchers from different backgrounds. Naturally, there is also room to ask questions and engage in conversation.

The Knowledge Café is a meeting place for curious people from Groningen and the surrounding area.To inform and allow Groningers to participate in the discussion of current scientific topics. The topics are chosen based on current projects, but sometimes also on current events.

General (scientifically) interested public

There is a knowledge café every month

Every month three researchers participate in the knowledge café. The editions are pre-discussed with the participants by the different partie.

10 times a year
30-100 visitors at a time

Studium Generale Groningen
Groningen Forum
The Agreement of Groningen

Project manager at Science LinX
Studium Generale

Do you have a good idea for a knowledge café theme?
Then please contact sciencelinx@rug.nl

Kenniscafé



The Futurists

The Futurists is a theatrical talk show in which theater-makers and scientists explore the future. A unique combination of interview and theater, in which musicians and writers translate the vision of a high-profile guest into a performance in one day. In this special edition of the Knowledge Café, spoken word artist Cissy Joan, singer-songwriter Isa Zwart, dancer Rosie Reith, writer Eise Ivo Smit and theater-maker Mariëlla van Apeldoorn explore the future of the countryside together with planologist Zef Hemel.



Knowledge Cafe: Faith, Hope and Love

What do you get satisfaction from in life? Sometimes life flies by without reflection, but every once in a while we are suddenly touched by it. Moments of love and joy, or the pain of loneliness or despair, challenge us to think about the meaning of our existence. What is the meaning of life? How do you give meaning to it? What is there to hold on to?
In this Knowledge Café these questions and more were discussed with several scientists and the audience.



Knowledge Cafe AI: Smarter than Human

Self-driving cars, cancer diagnostics or an undergraduate thesis written using chatbot Chat GPT. Artificial intelligence is being used in every conceivable way. The possibilities are spectacular and seem endless, but is AI better at everything? What can artificial intelligence already do, and what cannot?
In this Knowledge Café these questions and more were discussed with several scientists and the audience.