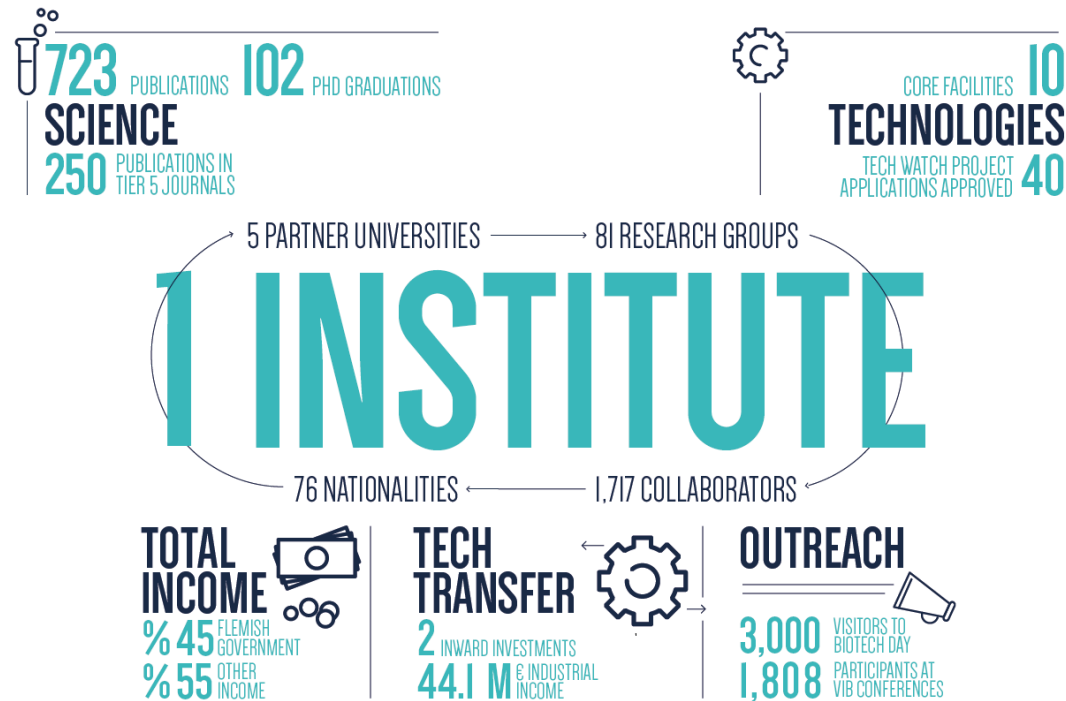


Measuring what matters

Core facility evaluation at the VIB

VIB, the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology



VIB evaluations of core facilities

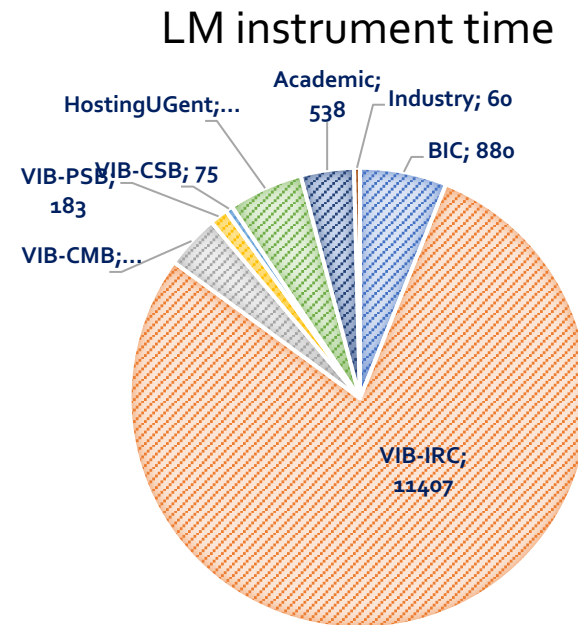


Initially

- Together with the research centers
- Expert panel for the center evaluation, chosen for the scientific expertise
- No clear definition of expectations and evaluation process for the core facility
- Info: facts & figures

Measuring – Facts & Figures

- Instrument park
- Instrument time
- FTEs
- User distribution
- # trainees
- Output



144 unique LM users/year
11000 LM hours/year
Hired 1 new FTE

Value of the evaluation for the institute

The panel recommendations (report) will support VIB in determining:

- **In which core facilities investment should be continued** in the next 5-year cycle
- **Which Core Facility Heads are well-positioned to steer** the platform in the next 5-year cycle
- **Policy and strategic measures to be taken** to improve the VIB core facilities and its overarching program

VIB evaluations of core facilities



Currently

- Separate and **tailored**
- Technology **service** experts
- Clear definition of the core facility objectives and **evaluation criteria**
- Info: facts & figures + **qualitative** assessment of user experience and core facility culture

What matters?

- What are the activities of the core facility? Facts & Figures
- Do we meet the expectations of the scientific community?
- What is the culture in the core facility like?
- Are we future-proof?

Determining what matters

- Dialogue between the core, scientists, science policy.
- Realistic mission, starting from the situation today.
- Advisory Board with internal and external panel members.

Evaluation Criteria - 5 main objectives

1. Running a top-level core facility

- ▶ Assist customers with the evaluation of project scope & experimental design,
- ▶ Generate data with quality standards and delivery times comparable with benchmarks in the field
- ▶ (Re-)evaluate running procedures
- ▶ Make efficient use of resources
- ▶ Provide excellent service activities, including user satisfaction.

Depending on the set-up of the individual core and the specific technology offered, the objectives above will result in:

- ▶ Acknowledgements on research papers
- ▶ Collaborations resulting in collaborative research papers
- ▶ Valorization through service to industry
- ▶ Service income
- ▶ Training of power users

Facts & Figures
Facility Users

Evaluation Criteria - 5 main objectives

2. Implementation of new technologies and user-driven method / application development

- ▶ Implement relevant novel methods, applications and technologies in a timely fashion
- ▶ Adapt technologies and methodologies to the needs of VIB researchers
- ▶ Co-create methodological applications with VIB researchers
- ▶ Scan the horizon for emerging technologies in the field
- ▶ Provide a state-of-the-art technology portfolio on par with leading benchmarks in the field

Expert
Understanding of the environment

Evaluation Criteria - 5 main objectives

3. Career management and staff coaching

- ▶ Leadership and team management
- ▶ Recruiting the right talents
- ▶ Training of staff members in the use of new technologies
- ▶ Create a stimulating environment, in which team members feel encouraged to perform at their best and grow in their profession

Staff
HR

Evaluation Criteria - 5 main objectives

4. Institutional building

- ▶ Proactive communication / branding of the core and its expertise in VIB and beyond
- ▶ Contribute and participate actively in seminars and conferences
- ▶ Participate in field-specific networks in VIB and beyond

5. Outreach - Participate in (inter)national alliances / collaborations to deal with:

- ▶ Gaps in the VIB technology portfolio
- ▶ Niche applications or overflow capacity
- ▶ (Re-) evaluation of SOP: community standards
- ▶ Benchmarking & setting quality standards

Expert
Understanding of the environment

Evaluation day(s)

- Panel:
 - ▶ Only externals
 - ▶ Not only microscopy
 - ▶ Think beyond own environment
 - ▶ Observer
 - ▶ Witness from Science Policy
- Discussion on the prepared written report on the core activities
- Visit to the core facility
- Discussion with the staff
- Discussion with users – user satisfaction questionnaire
- Breakfast and dinner
- Immediate reporting

What do you, as a core facility, get out of the evaluation?

- Get challenged to think about the next step for the facility
- Advise from experts
- Clear indications for future directions
- Trust from the scientific community
- Participation in strategic decisions

Measuring what matters.

Key ingredients in the process to 'shape' the evaluation:

- ▶ Start from today's situation
- ▶ Follow-up between evaluations
- ▶ Participate in the process