

VITO OTMR Policy

VITO is a leading independent research organisation in the area of cleantech and sustainable development. VITO is a provider of intelligent, high-quality solutions that can help small and large businesses achieve a competitive edge. VITO offers objective research, studies and advice which industry and government bodies can use to inform their future policies. VITO has around 1,000 employees that help to shape international projects across the globe. Seven out of ten employees are researchers and this group comprises over 40 nationalities. Vacancies for research positions open up every year. As research continues to be VITO's core activity, this also accounts for the high ratio of researchers among the total workforce. VITO believes open, transparent and merit-based recruitment adds value for all its employees. The research cycle, as illustrated in the strategy one-pager or the Applied Research Life Cycle, requires excellent researchers who develop outstanding, market-oriented research activities and create impact. (add visual) VITO was awarded the European "HR Excellence in Research" quality label at the start of 2016. VITO's operational processes were revised and harmonised based on the 40 clauses of the European Charter and Code for Researchers. Our goal is to advance and develop this further to safeguard our ability to attract and retain talented staff and researchers for the future.

In 2015 and 2016, researchers were asked to participate in a self-assessment and survey aimed at evaluating whether the recruitment process at VITO is in line with the 40 clauses of the European Charter and Code for Researchers. In relation to recruitment and selection, actions were launched to update the job search website with targeted information on the recruitment process, as well as relevant information regarding employment conditions and career opportunities. For international candidates, a 'Living in Belgium' section was also added.

The selection procedure was revised and simplified, and a new training course was developed for HR and hiring managers in order to support open, transparent and merit-based selection of the right candidate. Naturally, the topics in the Code for Researchers received additional attention during the training course.

VITO recognises furthermore that onboarding is a vital step in successful recruitment and for this reason the onboarding process was also overhauled.

Open and transparent

VITO applies a uniform, clear and inclusive recruitment policy in respect of all candidates and vacancies. The process for PhD students forms an exception to this, which is clearly outlined in the doctoral regulations. This is because each of these recruitment procedures is carried out in close collaboration with a university.

A wide range of recruitment channels (including LinkedIn, Researchgate, Euraxess, Academic Positions and Stepstone) is used to reach the right talent. VITO engages with new trends, uses social networks and collaborates with specialised recruitment and selection partners. This ensures vacancies are circulated among a wide audience. VITO uses modern tools to support the acquisition process. Candidates are able to create an online profile that allows them to be linked to the digital HR and recruitment platform. This digital process means the application procedure is simplified and facilitates a fast and precise response to applications. Candidates are also able to track and manage their application online. Candidates are sent an automatic response when they submit their application and the aim is to provide feedback as soon as possible. At any stage of the recruitment procedure, candidates can contact the recruiter with any questions or comments they may have. Candidates are given the recruiter's contact details so they know where they can direct their questions. Each online job advert also clearly lists a contact.

If a candidate is invited for an interview and the outcome of this is positive, online tests are sent out so the candidate is able to complete these remotely. The interview with the candidate may be held via Skype or other online tools so that no travel is necessary and the process is carried out in a cost-efficient manner. Every effort is made by HR to ensure the candidate has the best possible experience. Candidates are able to request status feedback at any time and also receive feedback during the selection procedure.

VITO ensures the details of candidates are processed in accordance with the GDPR, which means that candidates can change or delete their data at any time.

In order to prepare new employees, VITO focuses on preboarding and onboarding. The well-being and welfare of new employees is a priority and VITO aims to collect feedback from new starters during their first 100 days in order to closely monitor their experience. In addition, each employee is also assigned a mentor when they start and an induction programme is prepared to provide support and guidance during the initial period. In 2020, VITO will invest in a new tool to promote the social and functional integration of new employees.

VITO supports talent development and career progression for researchers by means of a varied and open Learning and Developing offering and through the Development and Performance Management cycle.

Merit-based

All individuals involved in the recruitment process are trained professionals who speak the language of the candidate and carry out objective assessments of the applications. VITO pursues a recruitment approach that is not only open and transparent, but also based on merit. Consideration is given to the individual's natural competencies, talents, motivations and personality to ensure that academic knowledge and experience are not the sole deciding factors and to assess the match with both the role and the organisational culture. This is done not only for the purpose of acquisition, but also with a view to retention.

In order to enable VITO to attract international (research) talent, English serves as the working language. In exceptional cases job adverts may be published in Dutch only (in which case an absolute pre-requisite is that a new starter is fluent in Dutch). Job adverts are written in a clear and inspiring manner, providing targeted information about the role and the desired competencies. Each advert will specify technical and behavioural competencies, as well as personality traits. This helps each candidate to easily identify whether they would qualify. Tests focus more widely than simply testing intelligence. Personality, professional values and other aspects will also be measured to ensure the best possible match during the selection procedure.

The parties involved in the recruitment process (HR and hiring managers) have been trained in neutrally examining candidates regarding their experience and competencies, so that the assessment and comparison is carried out in the most objective manner possible.