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**ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

# Chairperson's statement

Reflecting on 2023, it is with great pride that we see CRIG further flourishing into a vibrant community of dedicated cancer researchers, solidifying its status as a recognized institution. This progress has been made possible by the collective efforts of researchers, clinicians, supporters, collaborators, fundraisers, ...

Our visibility has not only expanded within the Ghent area and Belgium but also on the global stage, with CRIG emerging as a reputable institute internationally. A testament to this is the successful hosting of the PriOMiC-OncoPoint symposium, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations between CRIG and renowned cancer research institutes worldwide. This event marked the beginning of a partnership with the Bordeaux Institute of Oncology at Bordeaux University, also a member of the ENLIGHT consortium, a network of 10 European universities. A delegation from CRIG attended the inaugural 'Enlight Cancer Days' in Bordeaux, laying the groundwork to collaborate on cancer research and education with several ENLIGHT universities, further expanding CRIG's international network.

In 2023, we launched the 'Pieter Van Vlierberghe Award' for best paper in oncology, in memory of our esteemed colleague and CRIG group leader Prof. Van Vlierberghe who lost his battle against cancer end of 2022. With this yearly award, we want to stimulate young researchers and acknowledge their important contributions in cancer research.

Throughout the year, numerous CRIG researchers and teams secured funding for promising new cancer research projects, including four prestigious ERC grants. CRIG's 'young investigator proof-of-concept' grants, of which ten were awarded in 2023, have served as catalysts for several successful project applications by CRIG researchers. We must emphasize that these grants are only possible thanks to the numerous donations and several fundraiser actions for CRIG, for which I want to explicitly thank every contributor. I am thrilled to announce that CRIG has also been named the beneficiary of a substantial legacy (the full extent of which was not yet known by the end of 2023). This remarkable contribution will fuel our growth and support for exciting new initiatives in the years to come.



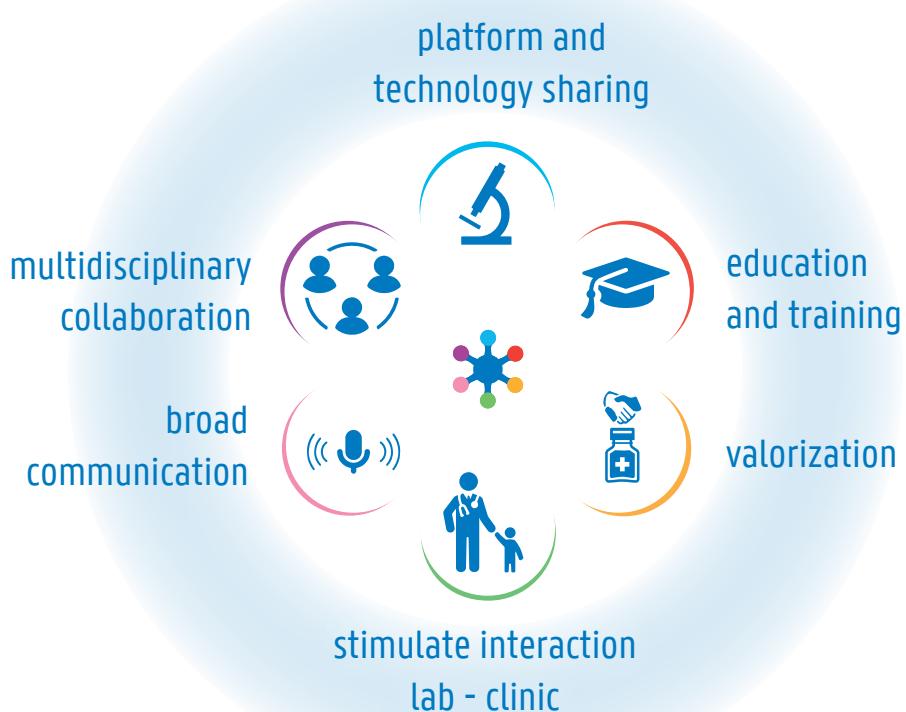
As we look ahead to the coming year, I anticipate a period filled with fresh initiatives, opportunities, and achievements, all made possible by the unwavering support and dedication of everyone of you.

Prof. Katrien De Preter  
On behalf of the steering committee

# CRIG in a nutshell

Cancer Research Institute Ghent stimulates and accelerates cancer research in Ghent, and comprises over 600 researchers from more than 80 research groups at Ghent University, Ghent University Hospital and VIB-UGent.

CRIG also joins forces with other research institutes, foundations & industrial partners, and reaches out to society. CRIG's mission is to stimulate fundamental, translational and clinical cancer research across expertise domains, towards more effective treatments and better survival of cancer patients.



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# CRIG management

The CRIG management consists of 3 committees in close contact with each other, to translate CRIG's mission into concrete action points.

## CRIG STEERING COMMITTEE

UGent • medicine & health sciences	Prof. Kathleen De Preter (chairperson)
	Prof. Wim Ceelen
	Prof. Steven Goossens
UGent • sciences	Prof. Kris Vleminckx
UGent • pharmaceutical sciences	Prof. Koen Raemdonck
UGent • veterinary medicine	Prof. Evelyne Meyer
UZ Gent delegate	Prof. Karim Vermaelen
VIB delegate	Prof. Geert van Loo

## CRIG OPERATIONAL COMMITTEE

Coordinator	Dr. Pieter Rondou
Project and communication manager	Dr. Eva De Smedt
Administrative assistant	An Rose

## CRIG BUSINESS UNIT

UGent	Dr. Cristina Pintucci (dedicated project manager & POC for the business unit)
	Dr. Daisy Flamez (IOF consortium Biomarked)
	Dr. An Van Den Bulcke (IOF consortium ChemTech Life Sciences)
	Dr. Dominic De Groot (IOF consortium DISCOVERE)
	Dr. Tim Desmet (IOF consortium ACT-T)
	the business developer of the IOF consortium MedTeg

The CRIG business unit is further supported by the business and innovation center of VIB-UGent (dr. Griet Verhaegen), HIRUZ (Health, innovation and research institute) and HoWest (dr. Paco Hulpius) for collaborations with VIB-UGent, UZ Gent and HoWest, respectively.

### The **steering committee**

consists of 8 elected CRIG group leaders from different faculties of UGent and representatives from UZ Gent and VIB-UGent, ensuring the multidisciplinary character of CRIG. It is responsible for the strategic and financial plan, and monitors all CRIG related initiatives.



Under the direct supervision of the CRIG steering committee and its chairman, the **operational committee** is responsible for the daily management and the implementation of the strategic plan, such as the coordination and organization of CRIG events, follow up of cancer research activities and initiation of new projects within CRIG, as well as collaboration and communication with different stakeholders.



The **CRIG business unit** supports CRIG researchers and their partners in setting up and managing collaborative innovation projects in oncology, and assists in intellectual property rights management, business development, R&D partnering, licensing & venturing and strategic research funding.

# CRIG 2023 in numbers



600+  
researchers



3

partner  
institutions



research  
groups

80+  
• • • • •



3 FTE in  
operational  
team



PhD theses

49  
• • • • •



>270 A1  
publications

young investigator  
proof-of-concept  
projects granted (>143K €)

10  
• • • • •

>93K €

donations and  
legacies received  
€



granted via UGent  
industrial research  
fund (IOF) projects  
to specific CRIG teams

1.5M €  
• • • • •

>7.5M €

external project  
funding acquired  
€ by CRIG researchers



valorization  
project income  
for specific CRIG teams

10.8M €  
• • • • •

25 bilateral  
contracts



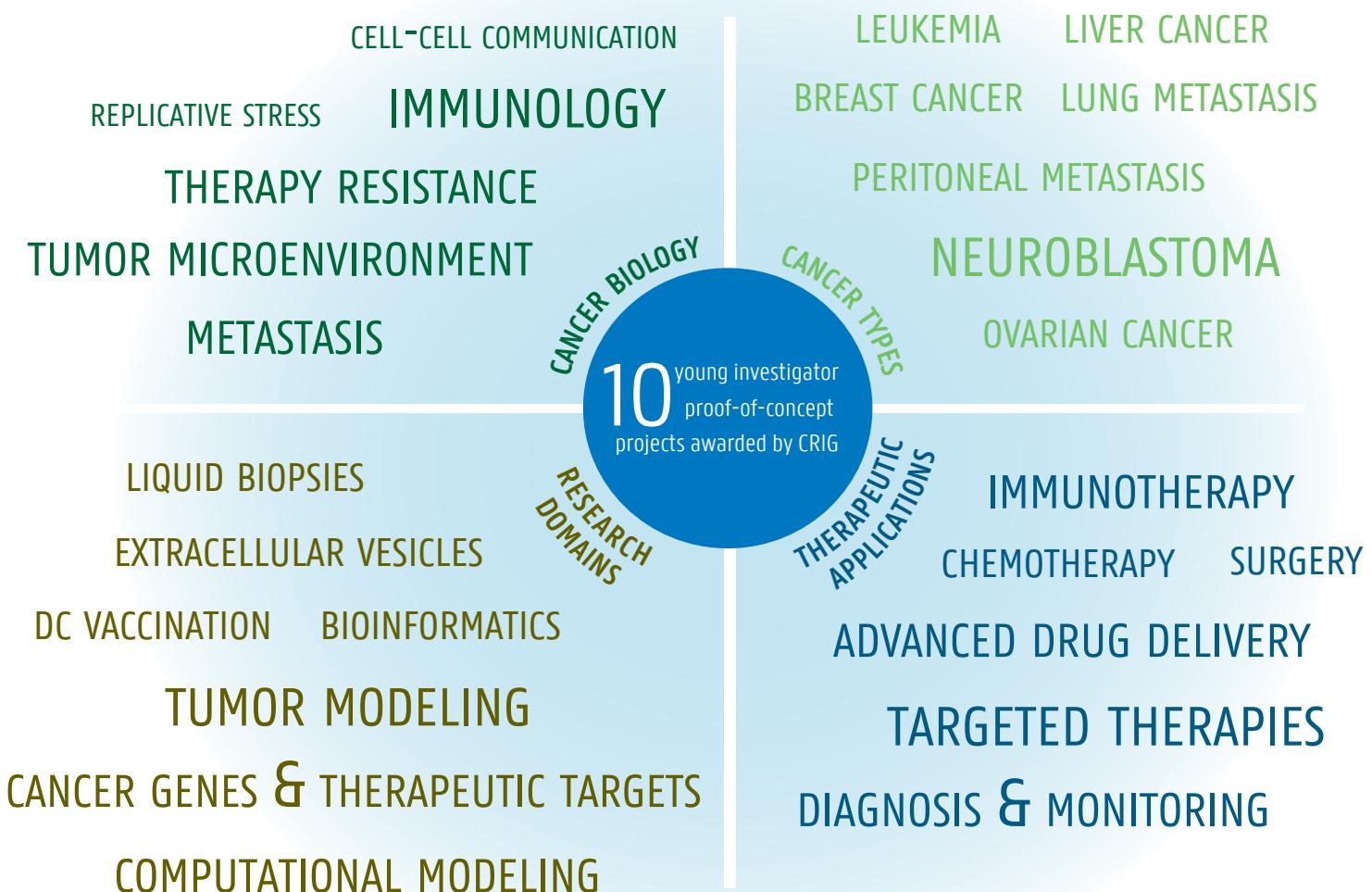
... CRIG unites 80+ research groups, 600+ researchers (>10% growth in 2023) from 3 partner institutions (UGent, UZ Gent and VIB-UGent) ...  
3 full-time equivalents in operational committee ... 49 PhD theses defended by CRIG doctoral fellows ... >270 A1 publications (co-)authored by CRIG group leaders ... 10 young investigator proof-of-concept projects granted by CRIG for a total of >143 K EUR ... >93 K EUR from donations and fundraisers (excluded: fundraisers that were earmarked by the benefactors for specific research teams) ... 16 cancer research projects (personal mandates excluded) – for >7.5 M EUR in total – have been granted to CRIG researchers by 'Kom op tegen Kanker' (3 biomedical grants, 1 psychosocial grant, >1.7 M EUR), Fund for Scientific Research (FWO Vlaanderen: 4 'junior', 4 'senior', 1 'Kom op tegen Kanker', 2 'TBM' research projects, > 5.4 M EUR) and Stichting tegen Kanker (1 'cancer prevention' project, > 368 K EUR) ... 10.8 M EUR of valorization project income obtained by specific CRIG teams; 1.5 M EUR granted by UGent Flemish industrial research fund (IOF) to specific CRIG teams for projects aiming to bring new technologies/products further to market; 1 license and 25 UGent bilateral contracts with companies realized by UGent; 1 spin-off launched and 5 spin-off projects in the pipeline; 2 patent applications in priority phase, 2 IDFs filed ... >4600 mentions in Altmetrics of CRIG publications in social and other media (of which the majority on Twitter)

# Achievements in 2023

- Supporting innovative research projects by young investigators

Since 2017, CRIG actively supports innovative cancer research in Ghent by awarding 'young investigator proof-of-concept' (YIPOC) projects to postdoctoral fellows (and senior doctoral researchers). With this seed funding (max 15 000 EUR per project), the awarded young researchers are able to generate proof-of-concept results to increase the success rate of future external grant applications. Numerous completed projects from the past years have demonstrated a clear output and lever effect, including the acquisition of postdoctoral fellow mandates and research project funding, new collaborations, valorization and several high impact publications, in which data from CRIG proof-of-concept grants were included.

In 2023, CRIG awarded 10 projects, for more than 143 000 EUR in total. The funding allocated for these projects is financed by CRIG (through proceeds from donations and fundraisers) and co-financed by vzw Kinderkankerfonds via a strategic partnership.



## Awarded young investigator proof-of-concept projects

**Dr. Sarah Bonte**  
Towards an automated detection tool for measurable residual disease in acute myeloid leukemia

**Dr. Jill Deleu**  
The exploration of cell-free mRNA to monitor therapy response in a neuroblastoma xenograft model

**Dr. Lisa Depestel**  
Disrupting RRM2-PHF6 interaction to target replication stress resistance in neuroblastoma

**Dr. Cláudio Pinheiro**  
A fine-grained view on the biomolecular corona of extracellular vesicles to steer therapeutic applications

**Dr. Mohammad Rahimi Gorji**  
Developing a coupled in silico-experimental approach to optimize intraperitoneal aerosolized drug delivery using a realistic patient-specific abdominal model

**Dr. Niki Rashidian**  
Towards Dynamic Image-Guided Hepatectomy using Computer Vision for 3-D Scene Rendering

**Dr. Martijn Schuijs**  
Defining novel alveolar macrophage gene-targets to prevent pulmonary metastasis

**Dr. Joachim Siaw**  
A spatial transcriptomic approach to determine the tumour micro-environment response to pharmacological inhibition of RUVBL1/2 as promising novel therapeutic targets for high-risk neuroblastoma

**Dr. Jonas Steenbrugge**  
Proof-of-concept on lipocalin 2 as novel immunotherapeutic and lymphangiogenic target in triple-negative breast cancer

**Dr. Sandra Van Lint**  
Reprogramming monocyte transcriptional circuits for fast and autonomous generation of dendritic cells for cancer immunotherapy

As we believe it is important and transparent to show what type of research we are able to fund thanks to donations and actions for CRIG, we also made short educational movies with the 2023 CRIG grant laureates. More information about this initiative can be found on page 16 and via the '[CRIG@the movies page](#)' on our website.

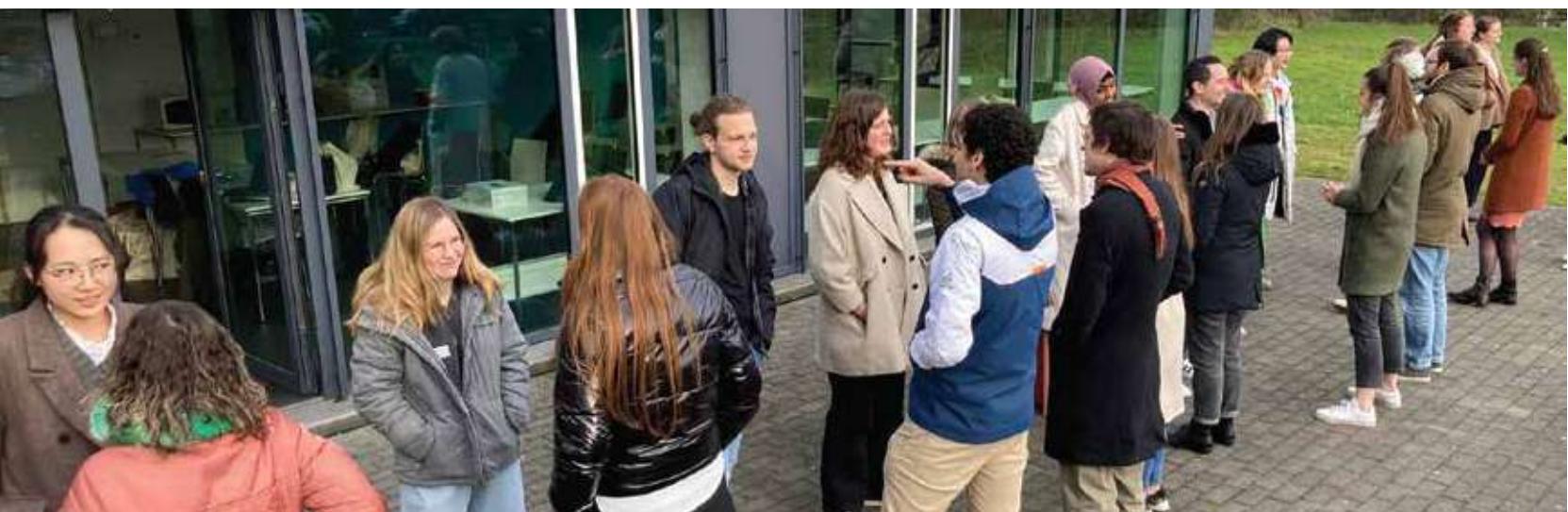
Interested in supporting these grants?  
Take a look on [our donate page](#) or contact us at [crig@ugent.be](mailto:crig@ugent.be)!

• • • • • Organizing symposia and providing education for researchers

Through the organization of various symposia and events, CRIG provides opportunities for cancer researchers to present their latest results, to meet fellow researchers and to start collaborations to accelerate research.

**March 15, 2023 - PhD welcome event for new CRIG researchers**

CRIG aims to bring together and support all cancer researchers in Ghent from the very start of their careers. Therefore, for the second time, we organized an informal welcome event for all first year PhD students within CRIG. About 30 young researchers were introduced to CRIG, and got to know each other during a speed dating session and a social gathering.



**Spring 2023 - Doctoral Schools specialist course on cancer - 6th edition**

CRIG's Doctoral Schools specialist course on cancer is targeted to Ghent University doctoral fellows with different educational backgrounds and active in distinct cancer research disciplines. The educational course, lectured by CRIG experts, covers a broad variety of fundamental, translational and clinical cancer research topics, technologies and applications. The 2023 course was attended by almost 50 doctoral fellows. As the course is very well-received by the attendants, the seventh edition is organized in the first half of 2024.



## May 3 & 4, 2023 - PriOMiC-OncoPoint symposium

'PriOMiC' is CRIG's International Thematic Network on cancer that stimulates collaboration between CRIG and several international partners. OncoPoint is CRIG's annual symposium to gather and stimulate interaction between cancer researchers in Ghent. In May, the two initiatives were combined in a unique 2-day symposium. The meeting included a mix of presentations by international experts and PriOMiC partners, as well as selected abstract and poster presentations from CRIG researchers. Next to plenary sessions on Precision oncology, Immuno-Oncology and Modeling in Cancer (the themes of 'PriOMiC'), also parallel sessions were hosted on (i) fundamental and translational, and (ii) clinical and psychosocial cancer research (co-organized by Kankercentrum UZ Gent). With a record number of over 250 unique participants, the meeting has successfully boosted interdisciplinary and international collaborations and created opportunities for new promising cancer research projects.





## October 6, 2023 - CRIG's industrial partnering event – 4th edition

After 3 successful biennial events, the fourth CRIG Industrial Partnering Event gathered 53 delegates representing 32 life science companies and 77 academics, making it another successful occasion uniting various stakeholders in the collective effort to advance the fight against cancer. Bringing together researchers, clinicians, pharma and biotech companies, and other key players, the event served as a platform to showcase CRIG's expertise.

From 2 dynamic brainstorming sessions to 3 keynote presentations and 40 pitches over 8 parallel sessions, the event created a buzzing environment for networking and building connections across the different players in the oncology research.

With the support of 13 sponsors, the fourth CRIG industrial event not only fostered collaboration and knowledge-sharing but also provided a unique platform for companies to align with cutting-edge advancements in cancer research.

To further stimulate education and networking, CRIG provided several '[mobility grants](#)' (via our 'PrIOMiC' network, see above) to support short research stays of young cancer researchers at international partner institutes, for example to learn novel techniques or start synergistic collaborations. Via the 'PrIOMiC' network, CRIG also (co-)funded several invited speaker seminars that were hosted by CRIG teams in 2023.

Furthermore, CRIG organized test defenses for about 30 young CRIG researchers that applied for a (post)doctoral mandate at FWO Vlaanderen, to help them maximizing their chances. Of note, half of them indeed succeeded to obtain such a grant in 2023.

Finally, next to organizing symposia and educating ourselves, CRIG further stimulates participation of our members and network partners in events (symposia, seminars, ...) that are organized by individual CRIG research groups or partner organizations.

The core objective of the CRIG business unit is to foster collaboration among innovators in oncology, accelerating the delivery of solutions to patients and fortifying the fight against cancer. Dr. Cristina Pintucci, supported by the Flemish Industrial Research Fund (IOF), is dedicated to promoting CRIG's valorization pipelines alongside the [unit's business developers](#).

In line with the previous years, 2023 saw a rise in valorization initiatives, leading to a total valorization budget of 10.78 million EUR allocated to CRIG teams. About 1.5 million EUR funding from the UGent Industrial Research Fund ([UGent-IOF](#)) was obtained to bring twelve CRIG projects further to market, including:

- The elucidation of the molecular targets of fibroblast modulators using the CRISPRi platform (Prof. Pieter Mestdagh)
- The roadmap toward clinical trial testing of less toxic and more stable asparaginases using a UGent proprietary poly-oxazoline platform, for the treatment of leukemia (Prof. Steven Goossens, supported by Prof. Hilde De Rooster, Prof. Tim Lammens and Prof. Richard Hoogenboom)

Prof. Ward De Spieghelaere ([dPCR expertise center](#)) together with UZ Gent and the companies pxlence and CellCarta were granted the DIG-DEEP project subsidized by VLAIO-MEDVIA to develop higher-order digital PCR multiplexing technology to track private mutations in a cancer patient's blood plasma.

Academia-industry collaborative VLAIO R&D project funding was granted to CRIG researchers collaborating with UGent/CRIG spin-offs:

- lncRNAs modulating T-cell activation (Prof. Pieter Mestdagh, in collaboration with Flamingo Therapeutics)
- further development of novel intracellular delivery technology towards clinical cell-based therapeutic applications (Prof. Bart Vandekerckhove, in collaboration with TRINCE)

A substantial part of the CRIG valorization accomplishment was achieved by the GMP facility at UGent and UZ Gent, the [CellGENTherapies](#), headed by CRIG group leader Prof. Bart Vandekerckhove. CellGENTherapies secured funds from the City of Gent and the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO), which marked an important step in the expansion of the Ghent GMP Unit. At present, CellGENTherapies is backing three academic cell therapy clinical trials, with plans to commence production for two academic CAR-T clinical trials in the upcoming year. Additionally, the Ghent GMP unit is responsible for overseeing the production for early-phase commercial clinical trials.

Still in the domain of cell therapy, CRIG principal investigators Prof. Tom Taghon and Prof. Kevin Braeckmans received over 3.6 million EUR from the European Union's EIC program for researching high-throughput production of CAR-T cells from stem cells in the project [NoViSTEM](#) (NON-VIral gene modified STEM cell therapy).

In 2023 CRIG researchers have entered into 25 bilateral research collaborations with industrial partners, including 13 companies that sponsored the [4th CRIG Industrial Partnership Event](#) (October 6, 2023).

Launched in 2023, [Amalus Therapeutics](#), a UGent/CRIG spin-off, is at the forefront of developing a groundbreaking class of drugs designed to selectively target defective fibroblast cells. This innovative approach holds significant promise for enhancing outcomes in patients with cancer or fibrotic condition. Founded on former pioneering research by CRIG members Prof. Christian Stevens and Dr. Bart Roman, Amalus Therapeutics received essential guidance from the CRIG business unit and financial support from IOF funds at UGent. The Belgian-Danish company is supported financially through the BioInnovation Institute's Venture Lab (Novo Nordisk Foundation) acceleration program, for which it was selected among many candidates.

## ••••• CRIG research(ers) in the spotlight

In 2023, CRIG teams obtained more than 7.5 M EUR funding in total for 16 cancer research projects granted by 'FWO', 'Foundation against Cancer' & 'Kom op tegen Kanker'. Furthermore, 4 CRIG research teams are involved in interuniversity research consortia that were awarded by iBOF in 2023. In addition, many CRIG researchers obtained personal mandates to pursue novel research projects. Amongst others, 12 PhD fellowships (fundamental & strategic basic research fellowships) and 6 postdoctoral fellowships were awarded by FWO Vlaanderen to CRIG researchers. For the majority of these laureates, CRIG organized upfront test defenses with CRIG experts as jury.

We proudly announce that 4 CRIG affiliated researchers obtained a prestigious **ERC Consolidator Grant** to continue their groundbreaking research.



In his 'ZIGNALLING' ERC project, **Prof. Jonathan Maelfait** (team leader at VIB-UGent) will study the function of ZBP1, a nucleic acid sensor that can induce antiviral and anticancer immunity. The project holds future promises for therapeutic interference with ZBP1-mediated immune responses, such as to promote anticancer immunity. Interestingly, Jonathan received a CRIG proof-of-concept grant in 2021 to conduct research on the relevance of ZBP1 in cancer ([watch the movie via our website](#)), demonstrating the relevance and leverage effects of the CRIG grants.

In her 'DeliChoP' ERC project, **Prof. Roosmarijn Vandenbroucke** (group leader at VIB-UGent), will explore ways to breach barriers that obstruct successful delivery of drugs in the central nervous system. Amongst others, her team will investigate the use of nanobodies to transport peptide drugs into the brain, which could be a relevant therapeutic option to treat brain tumors. Of note, postdoctoral researcher Lien Van Hoecke from the team earlier (in 2022) received a proof-of-concept grant from CRIG to study the latter approach ([watch the movie of Lien via our website](#)).



In her 'MeMOSa' ERC project, **Prof. Lynn Vanhaecke** (group leader at UGent faculty of Veterinary Medicine) aims to demonstrate that the metabolome in an individual's body can be predicted on the basis of its sources (such as dietary intake, microbiome, lifestyle, drug intake, ...). As such, the metabolome could serve as a framework to revert unhealthy to healthy metabotypes through personalized interventions in children. The team also wants to develop a novel and rapid metabotyping method, which has the potential to be implemented in routine clinical practice.

An ERC Consolidator Grant was also awarded to **Prof. An Ghysels** (group leader at UGent Faculty of Engineering & Architecture) for the 2022 call, and the project 'PASTIME' started in Sep 2023. In this project, Prof. Ghysels investigates the role of time in biomedical processes, with applications for cancer therapy.



At the end of 2022, we had to say goodbye to CRIG group leader Prof. Pieter Van Vlierberghe, after his unfair battle against cancer. Pieter was one of the driving forces of cancer research in Ghent, made great contributions in the field of (pediatric) leukemia and lymphoma, embodied the mission of CRIG to collaborate, and was an excellent leader, motivator and friend to many of us. To honor and remember him, CRIG launched the '**Pieter Van Vlierberghe Award**' in 2023, a yearly award for the best paper in oncology published by young CRIG researchers. The laureates from this first award are **Dr. Lisa Depestel & Dr. Carolina Nunes** for their (shared) paper 'RRM2 enhances MYCN-driven neuroblastoma formation and acts as synergistic target with CHK1 inhibition' (published in *Science Advances*, 2022), opening new therapeutic opportunities for the childhood cancer neuroblastoma. The laureates were awarded during CRIG's PrIOMiC-OncoPoint symposium in May 2023, in the presence of Prof. Van Vlierberghe's relatives.



Numerous scientific studies on fundamental, translational and clinical cancer research are yearly published by CRIG research teams in peer-reviewed international - and often top ranked - journals. In 2023, about 275 A1 articles in the field of oncology were (co-)authored by CRIG group leaders (detailed overview on <https://www.crig.ugent.be/en/publications>).

We want to congratulate all CRIG researchers for their valuable contributions to cancer research in 2023, and their continuous efforts in the battle against cancer.

## ••••• Outreach to the patients and the general public

CRIG engages in providing relevant communication to the broad public and patients about cancer and the latest breakthroughs in cancer research. Also in 2023, we organized and participated in several outreach initiatives.

### November 25, 2023 - Kankercongres 'Kanker, van onderzoek tot hoop'

Our annual conference on cancer is a unique concept since it is accessible for everyone. We bring together researchers, health care professionals, students, patients & their relatives, and delegates from foundations, companies & patient organizations. This year's edition successfully attracted almost 300 participants, and was again organized by CRIG & Kankercentrum UZ Gent, the foundations 'Beautiful After Breast Cancer' and 'Stop Darmkanker', and the 'Center for Oncological Research' (UAntwerpen).

Various experts provided a clear overview of innovations regarding cancer research, prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment. This year's central theme was prevention and early detection of cancer. During the lively meet-the-expert sessions, participants asked their questions about breast cancer, colon cancer, research & clinical studies, and the care trajectory of cancer survivors. There were also information stands from various organizations and stakeholders. We were honored to have (amongst others) federal minister Frank Vandenbroucke in our closing panel debate, during which the future of prevention and cancer detection was discussed.





## November 26, 2023 - Dag van de Wetenschap

Each year, the last Sunday of November is 'Dag van de Wetenschap', a day filled with scientific tours, workshops and activities throughout Flanders. For the second time, the UGent Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences organized its own varied science festival. More than 200 researchers and volunteers transformed the UZ Gent Campus into a true science campus for one day with 42 activities for young and old such as lectures, workshops, demos and guided tours. CRIG participated as well, with our fact-or-fiction quiz on cancer and our CRIG escape room on personalized medicine.



## CRIG laureates present their research projects in short educational movies

As described earlier (page 6), CRIG awards 'proof-of-concept' projects to support innovative cancer research by young CRIG researchers. Since these projects are financed for a large part by donations and actions for CRIG, we find it important to be transparent and to show how the funding is used. Therefore, we make short educational movies about the research projects of the CRIG laureates. In 2023, we compiled several movies (in Dutch) that are targeted to a broad audience and can be found via our '[CRIG@the movies](#)' page on our website.

Finally, several CRIG researchers also actively engaged in science communication at different events and in the media.

Stay up to date via our website [www.crig.ugent.be](http://www.crig.ugent.be), social media channels ([Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#)) and monthly newsletter!

## • • • • • Fundraising

As a network of cancer researchers, we have a good understanding of the gaps in research funding, and try to address those with CRIG grants. As such, we support young (post)doctoral researchers to start promising new projects (read more on pages 6-7), and we help to bridge the gap between the lab and the clinic by awarding 'partnership' grants every other year. It goes without saying that those initiatives are impossible without funds.

We are extremely grateful for all donations we received in 2023, all fundraising actions that were set up for both festive (wedding anniversaries, birthdays ...) and sad occasions (in memoriams), and all beautiful actions that were organized for CRIG.



We appreciate every action, and every single euro that is raised. In this annual report, we decided to highlight the sporty fundraising action '**SportYves tegen Kanker**', as they already organized their action for CRIG for the third time. 'SportYves tegen Kanker' was founded in 2018 as a sporty fundraising event by the family and friends of Yves De Lausnay who died of stomach cancer. Meanwhile, the initiative has grown into a warm event in honour of all families who are confronted with cancer under the motto #ledereen-ZijnYves. Over 600 sporters, together with many helping hands and supporters, joined the latest edition on 17-18 June 2023 and together raised a record amount of 36 626,14 EUR! The fourth edition is already scheduled, so block your agenda on June 22 & 23!

It is also great to see that every year again, new initiators choose to support CRIG! As such, de '**Lustige Stappers Lebbeke**' organized several walks to support our research, and eventually raised more than 5 200 EUR!

Like previous years, we also try to do our bit ourselves, and have turned December into a real 'CRIG fundraising month' again! We started off with a brand new initiative, and designed warm, fashionable, bright blue **CRIG beanies** that were for sale throughout winter. Lots of CRIG teams also bought tasty **SinterCRIG** bags again, filled with chocolates and sweets. December 17, we organized the fourth edition of **CRIG walk**, together with our walking friends from Deinze. The weather was perfect this year, making CRIG walk 2023 a real record edition with 1147 walkers, raising 10 258 EUR!



Also in 2023, there were some joint fundraising initiatives together with the 'Kankerfonds' of UZ Gent. During the past years, CRIG intensified its collaboration with the Cancer Center of UZ Gent (Kankercentrum) that focuses on cancer treatment and care, to create a strong oncology hub in Ghent. As part of this partnership, we co-organize both scientific and fundraising initiatives. As such, we have for example participated in the '**Gent ABSoluut 10 Mijl**'.

Thanks again to everyone who contributed in any way, because it is only by the combination of all actions, donations and volunteering that we can make a difference. Do you want to help us make a difference in 2024? [Subscribe to our newsletter](#) or follow us on social media to stay up to date about our research and actions, or take a look on the [donate page](#) on our website.

## • • • • Strengthening our CRIG community

As CRIG's mission is to stimulate and accelerate cancer research through collaboration, we try to bring researchers together in several ways. One way is by organizing research symposia such as our yearly OncoPoint symposium (read more on page 9), where cancer researchers present their work to each other and have the opportunity to network. In a similar way, our industrial partnering event (read more on page 10), invited speaker seminars, public PhD defenses, ... all bring together researchers in a scientific context.



Next to these scientific initiatives, we also organize more informal events to strengthen our CRIG community. Our PhD Welcome Event (read more on page 8) is one example, and we organize a yearly 'Kubb Cup' as well for all researchers. Also while participating together in outreach and fundraising initiatives, researchers can get to know each other('s expertise).

At CRIG, we are convinced that both scientific and more informal gatherings are crucial in building a vivid CRIG community.

# Financials

## INCOME

donations & fundraiser actions <sup>(1)</sup>	93 064 EUR
vzw Kinderkankerfonds <sup>(2)</sup>	75 000 EUR
UGent funding for CRIG's International Thematic Network <sup>(3)</sup>	60 000 EUR
sponsoring and registration fees for CRIG events <sup>(4)</sup>	46 579 EUR
UGent Doctoral Schools	4 250 EUR

## EXPENSES

young investigator proof-of-concept grants	143 820 EUR
personnel	83 716 EUR
organization/expenses of meetings, symposia, events, education, mobility grants <sup>(5)</sup>	76 645 EUR
website, IT, office, movies, promo	14 436 EUR

(1) All income from donations and fundraiser actions are integrally used for cancer research, including the support of the young investigator proof-of-concept grants. Excluded in the numbers are fundraisers that were earmarked by the benefactors for specific research teams. Also excluded in the numbers is a unique legacy for CRIG, for which the total proceeds were not yet finally known end of 2023 (but will be exceeding 3 M EUR) (2) In the context of a partnership with CRIG, vzw Kinderkankerfonds provides co-funding to support the CRIG young investigator proof-of-concept grants and the CRIG partnership grants that focus on (or have applications in) pediatric oncology. (3) Funding by Ghent University to support 'PriOMiC', CRIG's International Thematic Network on cancer (60 K EUR/year during 2019-2023; funding is used for CRIG personnel, organizing symposia, mobility & mobility grants, ...). (4) Sponsoring by companies & external organisations for (i) the 'PriOMiC-OncoPoint' symposium, (ii) 'Kankercongres' and (iii) the 'Industrial Partnering Event'. Only for the latter event, registration fees were collected by CRIG. (5) Indicated expenses do not include co-financing by individual CRIG teams or partners for specific events or mobility.



[www.crig.ugent.be](http://www.crig.ugent.be)

follow us [@crighent](https://twitter.com/crighent)



## Special thanks to all our supporters!

We wish to cordially thank all our supporters for the donations and actions that were organized for the benefit of CRIG! We wish to stress that the proceeds of such initiatives always go to promising cancer research. Non-research activities are never paid by donations.

Finally, we also would like to thank our partners and sponsors for financial and other support that enabled us to realize CRIG's objectives in 2023.

You can donate to CRIG (with possible tax reduction) via transfer on "Fondsenwerving UGent" - IBAN: BE26 3900 9658 0329 (BIC: BBRUBEBB) with reference "CRIG", or via the [online donation platform](#). More information and possible ways to support cancer research at CRIG on the [donate page of our website](#).