

## Case study 1: Databases of economic growth and development

Our research school is renowned for its expertise in developing comprehensive databases on indicators of economic growth and development. This will be one of the pillars of the envisioned research theme focusing on future prosperity and sustainability. In the past years, the European Union granted the EUKLEMS project led by Prof. Bart van Ark € 5M. Within the EU FP7, € 4M was granted to the project “**World Input-Output Database (WIOD)**” coordinated by FEB full professors Erik Dietzenbacher, Marcel Timmer and Bart Los with 11 international partners. On the project’s website ([www.wiod.org](http://www.wiod.org)), an overview is provided of both policy papers and research based on WIOD data (over 100,000 unique visitors each year according to Google Analytics). The background article published in Economic Systems Research was ranked at a certain stage in the top 0.1% of citations in the field according to Web of Science. The **Penn World Table (PWT)**, coordinated by FEB professors Marcel Timmer and Robert Inklaar, and Prof. Robert Feenstra (University of California, Davis) is a widely used database with information on relative levels of income, input, output and productivity across countries in the world for a long period of time. The website of the Groningen Growth and Development Centre provides access to this dataset, as well as detailed documentation. A paper providing the details of this database has been published in the American Economic Review in 2015 and already received over 1000 citations according to Web of Science.

The **Groningen Growth and Development Centre (GGDC)** brings together FEB researchers who study the interactions of globalization, technology and institutional change, and its impact on long-run economic growth, structural change, productivity and inequality. It provides unique information on comparative trends in the world economy in the form of easily accessible datasets, along with comprehensive documentation and is a textbook example of open science. These data are made publicly available, which enables researchers and policy makers from all over the world to analyze productivity, structural change, and economic growth in detail. A wide range of organizations actively uses these data, ranging from banks and the CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis, to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD).

The centre also organizes seminars, summer schools and conferences, such as the annual Maddison lecture series. Over the years, a steady stream of PhD students contributed to compiling the databases and used the data for their PhD projects. An example is former PhD student Timon Bohn, who was supervised by Steven Brakman and Erik Dietzenbacher. One of the chapters of his thesis has been accepted by the *Journal of International Economics* with a column in [VOXeu](http://voxeu.org). Graduates are now working or have worked at organizations like the OECD and the CPB Netherlands Bureau for Policy Analysis. By pushing the boundaries of economic measurement, the work by the GGDC stimulates the development of new or improved statistics. A notable example is the **OECD Trade in Value Added (TiVA)** database that was launched following the success of WIOD in charting global value chains. The ‘FEB Research’ magazine featured the GGDC in its [2017 winter issue](#) at the occasion of the GGDC’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In 2017, the British Economic and Social Research Council selected several research consortia for conducting research on the process and consequences of the **UK leaving the European Union**. Prof. Marcel Timmer participates in the project “The Economic Impacts of Post-Brexit Trade Options”, coor-

dinated by the Institute of Fiscal Studies in London. Prof. Bart Los is a member of a consortium led by the University of Birmingham, with participants from the University of Sheffield and Erasmus University Rotterdam. The title of their project is “The Economic Impacts of Brexit on the UK, its Regions, its Cities and its Sectors”.

Most recently, the Platform Digital Infrastructure Social Sciences and Humanities granted € 820K to Prof. Herman de Jong and colleagues from Utrecht University and Monash University for a project creating financial metadata for economics, finance and economic history in the Netherlands. The project fills the rapidly growing demand for digital corporate information of economists and economic historians. It is part of a H2020 consortium of universities and institutes developing digitalization of historical corporate and financial data, funded by the European Commission in 2017.

## Case study 2: Research in public health

Consistent with our ambition to conduct high-quality research addressing major issues in society, health-related research was stimulated and has become very prominent and successful in our school over the last decade. A case in point is our **Centre for Public Health in Economics and Business (CPHEB)**, linking academic expertise to questions from practice by conducting multidisciplinary research to support the healthcare sector. Experienced researchers from different research programmes, focusing on healthcare management and health economics, work closely with FEB students and various organizations to answer practically relevant research questions. This applied research ties in with the latest developments and issues in society, and focuses on translating fundamental knowledge into healthcare policies and practice. The centre has hosted a conference about expensive medication at the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG), set out a study about financial benefits of youth care with Accare, and organized an executive education course for healthcare professionals.

The researchers of CPHEB collaborate with researchers from other faculties in the Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health (AJSPH), a joint initiative of FEB and the UMCG. Key FEB researchers are Jochen Mierau (scientific director of AJSPH), Koert van Ittersum, Rob Alessie, Viola Angelini and new hire professor Gerard van den Berg, who also chairs the Aletta Council. AJSPH researchers conduct multidisciplinary research and are responsible for education in the area of public health. They have contributed to and make use of large evolving databases documenting the **healthy ageing** of a large cohort from the northern part of The Netherlands (e.g., [www.lifelines.nl](http://www.lifelines.nl)). Moreover, researchers work closely with regional partners to co-create knowledge, exchange this knowledge through seminars and workshops, and reach out to the public through (social) media exposure and other initiatives. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic they developed the regional **Corona Dashboard** providing information about health, well-being and economic circumstances such as unemployment levels ([www.coronabarometer.nl](http://www.coronabarometer.nl)).

Collaborating in multidisciplinary projects in CPHEB and AJSPH has resulted in a number of successful grant applications. For example, as part of a larger H2020 project, FEB professor Robert Lensink received a large grant to examine the **effectiveness of interventions related to non-communicable diseases** such as obesity and high blood pressure. The focus is on interventions within community groups and health centres in Indonesia, Vietnam and Myanmar. Several PhD positions are financed from this project. Another example is the CPHEB project of FEB professor Koert van Ittersum, together with Wageningen University, focusing on ways to stimulate consumers to make **healthy and sustainable food choices**. Finally, in 2016, NWO financed a large project with four PhD positions to examine the **role of incentives in healthcare**. Findings from these and other projects have been published in high-quality outlets and oftentimes open access, like the *American Journal of Public Health*, *Social Science and Medicine* and *Preventive Medicine*.

FEB's commitment to and investment in high-quality research to respond to important societal issues has also paid off during the pandemic. The school has seen many proposals being developed and granted for research on topics related to **COVID-19**, and is engaging with society via urgent and relevant research. FEB professors Taco van der Vaart and Gerben van der Vegt, for example, obtained large grants from ZonMw for corona-related research. The project of van der Vaart examines the role of national and regio-

nal coordination for managing the availability of scarce medical resources (e.g., vaccines). The project by van der Vegt examines the impact of the corona crisis on the well-being of hospital employees and tests the effectiveness of several interventions aimed at improving these employees' resilience. Many FEB researchers have made important contributions to the debate on COVID-19-related policies and economic consequences. Researchers from the research programme OPERA have helped the Martini Hospital Groningen to start up regular patient care again after each wave. FEB's health researchers in the Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health have been visible in the public debate about health management, such as ethical prioritization in patient care. Finally, In the LEAD researchers have continuously and publicly highlighted the crucial role of good leadership in times of crisis.