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2 BE or not 2 BE reproducible: The Belgian Reproducibility Network as part of the European Network of Reproducibility Networks

Ginette Lafit¹ Rita Bajraktari² Christophe Phillips³ Julia Eberlen²

¹KU Leuven, ²Université libre de Bruxelles, ³Université de Liège

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Abstract

The Belgian Reproducibility Network (BE-RN) was launched in November 2022 with the mission to support reproducibility in all academic disciplines in the Belgian research landscape. It is modelled after existing reproducibility networks such as the UK-RN, the Swiss RN, and the German RN. In those networks, the term reproducibility is used as an umbrella term that includes open science practices, computational reproducibility, replicability, transparency, and accessibility of scientific work. The BE-RN consists of a national steering group and an international advisory board. However, the network is based on the grassroots activities of local nodes, which are increasingly active within different Belgian universities. The local nodes of the BE-RN are at the Université de Liège, Ghent University, KU Leuven, the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, and the Université libre de Bruxelles.

The aim of the BE-RN is not only to support researchers striving to improve their scientific practices, but also to unite already existing initiatives and, ultimately, become a voice supporting reproducibility in dialogue with universities, funding bodies, academies, and other scientific organizations. The BE-RN thus creates a network of Belgian initiatives while being part of the European and Global Network of Reproducibility Networks. As the aim of the BE-RN is not to replace existing initiatives but rather to promote them and help them reach a larger audience, or to be reached by researchers in need of support, we collaborate with existing initiatives such as the Flemish Research Data Network and the Data Ambassadors initiative of the universities of the Brussels–Wallonia Federation. We share upcoming events of different projects across our — currently still irregular — newsletter and our website. Ultimately, we also aim to provide a library of resources on our website, enabling researchers and those interested in reproducibility to access both national, in-person resources — such as contacts to local colleagues who can assist directly (e.g., members of a university's local node) — and international online resources, such as the FORRT Educational Nexus.

Poster

2 BE or not 2 BE Reproducible:

The Belgian Reproducibility Network as part of the European Network of Reproducibility Networks



Julia Eberlen¹, Rrita Bajraktari¹, Ginette Lafit², Christophe Phillips³, Roosmarijn Vandenbroucke^{4,5}

¹Université libre de Bruxelles, ²KU Leuven, ³Université de Liège, ⁴Universiteit Gent, ⁵Vlaams Instituut voor Biotechnologie

What is a Reproducibility Network?

A strategic community effort to promote transparent and trustworthy research practices in the academic research system:

- Recognizes the need to **constantly evaluate and improve** research practices to conduct research of the highest quality, embedded within a collaborative and transparent research culture
- Recognizes the need for **flexibility**; different disciplines, institutions, and countries will face different challenges and have different needs
- Reproducibility Networks are all **structured along broadly similar lines** to facilitate this coordination function, whilst allowing national and local flexibility
- The term reproducibility is an umbrella term that includes **open science practices, computational reproducibility, replicability, transparency, and accessibility** of scientific work.

The Belgian Reproducibility Network

The Belgian Reproducibility Network **BE-RN** was launched in November 2022, with the mission to support reproducibility in all academic disciplines in the Belgian research landscape. It is modelled after existing reproducibility networks such as the UK-RN, the Swiss RN, and the German RN. The BE-RN consists of a national steering group and an international advisory board but is based on the grassroots activities of **local nodes** increasingly active within different Belgian universities.

The aims:

- Support** researchers striving to improve their research practices
- Unite** already existing initiatives
- Become a voice** supporting reproducibility in contact with universities, funding bodies, academies, and other scientific organisations.

The Student BE-RN

A particular initiative just getting started at the ULB is the student BE-RN. Involving students will allow us to better understand how we can support the next generation of researchers and contribute to improved scientific understanding in the professional population.

Creating Connections

International contact

The BE-RN is part of the international movement of Reproducibility Networks, actively working together and learning from each other.

Some networks, such as the UK-RN, are already fully formed and funded, with high interdisciplinarity between its members.

Regular meetings allow for exchange on best practices, but also to identify and apply to funding opportunities



National contact

We aim to facilitate connections between existing initiatives such as the Data Ambassadors and the ReproducibiliTea journal clubs, but also between researchers interested in reproducibility across institutions.

Institutional connections

The BE-RN lives because of its local nodes spread across Belgium. Our current local nodes are active at KU Leuven, ULiège, UCLouvain, ULB, and UGent. All members and contributors of the BE-RN are involved as **volunteers**:

- This is our **strength**: it allows for independence and flexibility from institutional regulations
- It is also a **difficulty**: we have to prioritize our day-to-day work over our involvement in the BE-RN.

Participating in the BE-RN

Do you want to find out more about the BE-RN? Visit:



or contact us via info@reproducibilitynetwork.be

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