

New Year's speech Jos Baeten

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New Year's speech 2019

CWI is your guide to the digital world. This is the central theme of the strategic plan 2019-2024, that we drafted in 2018. I want to reflect on a couple of other things that happened in 2018. First, as of January 1, 2018, CWI is part of the institute organization of NWO. This is now our employer. Some things are now centralized, such as the salary administration, and this gives advantages, but also diminishes a little bit the flexibility the supporting services can show to the scientists.

The services are working hard to implement the changes, and at the same time to serve the scientists as best as possible. I commend their hard work and achievements.

Also in 2019 and beyond the transition will require extra efforts, for instance in the harmonization of the ICT infrastructure.

Another thing we spent extra effort on is diversity. An adequate representation of women at all levels of our organization remains an important issue. We address this in several ways (one way being the WISE program). We are also looking at diversity in other respects, and so we became a member of Workplace Pride supporting our LGBTI employees. Angelique Schilder has an NWO-wide role in furthering diversity.

The system of scientific publications is going to change the coming years. It is no longer acceptable that access to scientific results is locked behind pay walls. This so-called open access movement has been given a boost by the publication of the European Plan-S last summer. NWO is one of the signatories of this plan. This month, there is a consultation phase that we contribute to, and long time open access advocate Krzysztof Apt is organizing a meeting in the Turing room on the 25th about this. You are welcome to come and join the debate.

Soon, we will see the outcome of the portfolio analysis that was done last year. I expect we will be happy with the result, but it could lead to a small shift in focus in the execution of our strategic plan.

In the coming half year there will be the drafting of the so-called Sector Plan for the sciences and engineering. The Sciences Sector Plan concerns extra government millions going into the basic university funding for physics, chemistry, mathematics and computer science. CWI does not

receive extra funding in the framework of the Sector Plan, but we can contribute to the plans of the universities and help in the implementation.

To get back to our strategic plan, in the coming period we want to invest in new research directions, especially in software security and in AI, artificial intelligence, our new research theme. As we cannot count on being granted additional basic funding, we will also need to realign some lines of research. Also, I expect we will work more closely together with our sister institutes in the NWO family, and also with the institutes in the KNAW family.

I have been updating you regularly about CWI's successes in obtaining grants, establishing public-private partnerships and so on. We are doing great in this respect, and I expect we will keep on doing so. As a measure of this success, we just received the SEO grant. SEO stands for Stimulerend Europees Onderzoek (encouraging European research). Our grant is 361 k€, and this is 9% of all the European funding CWI obtained in 2018. CWI is doing well, as we get 1/3 of all the money going to the NWO institutes. The next update is on the 11th of February, when we will also celebrate our 73rd birthday.

In this day and age, the new insights and the new knowledge that are being generated at CWI really do contribute to society at large. Every aspect of daily life is fast becoming digitized, as we all know. Mathematics and computer science research are at the base of the digital world. I want to stress that our research can contribute to a better understanding and ultimately to the right choices regarding digitization in society. In the Strategic Plan 2019-2024 I called this CWI's guiding role in the digital world.

Happy New Year to you all, I wish all of you well, both professionally and privately.

Let's have a toast to a great 2019!