

MALAYSIA

2025

IBR

**ECONOMICS AND
BUSINESS
FACULTY ASSOCIATION**

2025

INDONESIA



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INTRODUCTION TO IBR

International Business Research (IBR) is a research project affiliated with the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Groningen. Since 2014, the faculty has ranked among the top 1% of global business schools, underscoring the high quality and standards it upholds.

Established in 1988, the IBR project consists of an Executive Board, 20 to 24 student consultants, a carefully selected Advisory Board, and two supervising professors from the University of Groningen. The project specializes in conducting tailor-made research in emerging markets outside of Europe. For 2025, the focus will be on Malaysia and Indonesia.

The IBR project serves two key purposes. First, it provides companies with customized research in emerging markets at cost price, overseen by two University of Groningen professors. Second, it offers 20 to 24 highly qualified senior students the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in a real-world setting by conducting research for potential future employers, both domestically and internationally. These students are in the final stages of their undergraduate programs or are pursuing master's degrees within the Faculty of Economics and Business.

Each research project is handled by two senior students, selected based on their outstanding academic and extracurricular achievements. Through the Local Student Consultant Project, local students are paired with these Dutch research teams, contributing valuable local insights while gaining international experience. Starting in January 2025, the team will conduct extensive desk research through April. This will be followed by five weeks of on-the-ground field research to gather relevant data. Upon their return to the Netherlands, the research team will finalize and present the report. All research and findings will remain confidential and will be handled with the utmost integrity.



SUPERVISING PROFESSORS

The research conducted by IBR 2025 will be supervised by Karel-Jan Alsem and Albert Boonstra. Based on their extensive research experience, it is ensured that the conducted research will meet high academic standards. They will advise the students throughout the different research phases and accompany them during the field research.



Dr. Karel Jan Alsem

Dr. Karel Jan Alsem is Assistant Professor in marketing at the University of Groningen and Professor of Applied Sciences ('Lector') in marketing at Hanze University of Applied Sciences. His specific interests are in branding and sustainability. He has published in several academic marketing journals and is author of several marketing books. Among these, his (Dutch) Strategic Marketing Planning is famous in the Netherlands and often called 'the Alsem'. This book is also published in an international version. In the latest editions (9th ed, 2023 Netherlands; 2nd ed. 2024 International) digital marketing and sustainability are fully integrated in the whole marketing planning process. This will be Karel Jan's eleventh time supervising IBR, having previously supervised projects in a.o. India, Vietnam, South Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, Brazil, China, Colombia.



Dr. Albert Boonstra

Dr. Albert Boonstra is a full professor of Information Management at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Groningen. His expertise lies in the challenges of implementing digital technologies and their transformative impact on healthcare organizations. He has published several textbooks and over 70 academic articles in this field. In addition to his academic work, Albert Boonstra has served as a consultant on IT-enabled organizational change projects for various organizations. He is also a regular speaker at international academic and industry events. This will be Albert's fourth time supervising IBR, having previously supervised projects in India, Vietnam and Thailand.



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RESEARCH DESIGN

The International Business Research project consists of three phases:

THE GENERAL PREPARATION PHASE

This phase focuses on equipping students with the knowledge needed for the destination countries, while also enhancing their expertise in market research and methodology. Students will attend guest lectures given by country experts, participate in sector analyses, and take part in workshops on research methodologies, led by the supervising professors. These professors will also accompany the students on the research field trip, ensuring they have the necessary skills to conduct their research effectively.

THE COMPANY-SPECIFIC RESEARCH PHASE

In this phase, the project is tailored to meet the specific needs of the client, involving the following key steps:

1. Research Framework:

A customized research framework is developed based on the client's requirements, and presented as a research proposal. Once approved, a contract will be finalized.

2. Desk Research in the Netherlands:

From January to mid-April 2025, students will carry out extensive desk research in the Netherlands. Progress and findings will be reported to the client, and strategies for the upcoming field research will be determined and prepared.

3. Field Research in the country of Destination:

Between April and May 2025, students will spend five weeks conducting field research in Malaysia or Indonesia. During this time, they will visit companies, universities, and governmental institutions. Interim reports will be created and shared with provisional findings.

THE REPORTING PHASE

In the final phase, the research will be completed and the results compiled in a final report. All findings will be presented to the client by September 1st, 2025, with strict confidentiality and integrity maintained throughout the process.

TIMELINE

GENERAL PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

NOVEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025

Students dedicate an average of ten hours per week to activities related to the IBR project. During this time, they will deepen their knowledge of Malaysia and Indonesia and participate in several market research training sessions. Additionally, they will take a course specifically designed for IBR participants.

SPECIFIC PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

JANUARY - MID-APRIL 2025

Students increase their commitment to around twenty hours per week, focusing on their assigned research projects. Over these months, they gain deeper insights into their designated companies. Future meetings in Malaysia and Indonesia are coordinated with the support of the Local Student Consultant program, which pairs IBR teams with students from leading local universities.

FIELD RESEARCH

MID-APRIL - MAY 2025

Students travel to their destination countries and, over five weeks, conduct intensive field research, dedicating an average of 40 hours per week to the project. All meetings and interviews with local companies and institutions take place during this period.

REPORTING PHASE

JULY - AUGUST 2025

In the final phase, students compile and document all findings and interviews into a comprehensive final report, offering well-reasoned recommendations. The report is confidential and will be presented to the client in August.



OPPORTUNITIES

IBR provides companies with tailor-made research solutions, carried out by motivated student-consultants from the University of Groningen. Whether your company faces specific challenges or seeks to explore new opportunities, IBR can assist in identifying solutions. We offer a wide range of research services, including competitor analyses, consumer research, distribution analyses, partner analyses, sector studies, import and export analyses, and feasibility assessments.

In short, at a cost of €9800,- (excl. VAT) we offer:

- Research conducted by senior students (student-consultants) from the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Groningen, ranked among the top 1% of global business schools;
- Two student-consultants who have been selected based on academic and extracurricular achievements and motivation;
- Up to three months of desk research in the Netherlands;
- Five weeks of field research in Malaysia or Indonesia in April and May of 2025;
- Cooperation with students from local prestigious universities (the Local Student Consultant Project);
- Supervision by two professors from the University of Groningen;
- Guidance from an Advisory Board composed of experienced managers and advisors from relevant sectors, ministries, and embassies.

For more information, visit our website at www.ibr-groningen.nl. If you have any questions or would like references from previous clients, please feel free to contact us. Our contact details can be found on page 10.





REFERENCES

“It was a big pleasure to receive the IBR students to Versuni Brazil. They demonstrated strong commitment, and we conducted weekly meetings on the progress of our Circular Economy project. The students were very bold in choosing a country where the language is not understood, but with their creativity and strategy of partnering with local students, they were able to not only achieve their goal but also add value to our project by bringing relevant consumer insights.”

S. Tamai – Head of Marketing Latin America Versuni

“Effectiveness and competence; these are essential ingredients to a successful research in a foreign environment. In this case, a research conducted in South-Africa in 2017. These characteristics combined with a solid amount of academic knowledge yielded a valuable market research including potential customers in the field of research. Our business, De Nederlandse Plastic Industrie, is very pleased with the enjoyable and dynamic way in which IBR participants have laid a solid foundation for the development of a customer base in South-Africa.”

H. Aal - Director Nederlandse Plastic Industrie B.V.

“The research, conducted in 2010 in Vietnam, has provided FMO with useful advice that we will use to increase FMO’s influence in the banking sector in Vietnam. The students were very professional, committed, and well prepared which all aided to a pleasant cooperation.”

B. Rekveld - Former Manager Financial Institutions Africa FMO

“Heineken has always had two distinct objectives. Firstly, Heineken believes that international companies should enable students to get a first-hand look at international business by being involved in actual business projects in foreign countries. By cooperating with IBR from the beginning, Heineken has given students this opportunity. Secondly, Heineken has used the IBR project as a way to conduct research. This has occurred in countries like China, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam. We have always been impressed by the professional and dedicated way these research projects were executed at such a reasonable cost. The results were useful for local management to better understand their business activities.”

M. H. Rijkens – Former Director Asia Pacific and Central & Eastern Europe Heineken N.V.

ADVISORY BOARD

The students will be advised by experts from different industries as well as countryspecific experts. This year's Advisory Board consists of:

Ad de Leeuw - siSinga consultancy - Director
Cees van der Helm - Meijburg & Co. - Partner
Dirk Aleven - FoodVentures - CEO
Erik Schoevers - EASTWINGATE - Founder
Erik de Wild - Optimum Sorting Asia Pacific - Director
Eva Oskam - Dutch Embassy Kuala Lumpur - Deputy Ambassador in Malaysia
Evert-Jan Schouwstra - World Trade Center Leeuwarden - Managing Director
Eward van der Schoot - Kraft Heinz - Global Renewable Energy Lead
Frans Eusman - Heineken International BV - Executive Director Global Audit
Frans-Jan Willemen - WSP Nederland B.V. - Commercial Director
Freek Keppels - Foreign Affairs - Financial Director
Geerhard de Vries - Formerly with Ortec - Retired
Gerrit Jan Steenbergen - AS Watson Group - Group Retail Technology Director
Greetje Frankena - Atradius Trade Credit Insurance - Deputy Head of Economic Research Department
Henk Jan Jonge Poeierink - BESI - SVP Global Operations
Henry Sandee - STC Group - Senior Trade Logistics Specialist
Jan Kemeling - Sunsynk Smart Storage Sdn Bhd - Founder & Co Owner
Jan Jaap Folmer - UPP! UpCycling Plastic B.V. - Chief & Founder
Jan Willem Kijlstra - Hapam - Commercial Director
Jan Willem Strijker - Brantas - Co owner & General Manager
Johannes Andriessen - Gasunie New Energy - Business Developer
Marguerite Soeteman-Reijnen - Siemens & NautaDutilh & Kelp Blue - Member of the Supervisory Board & Vice-Chair Supervisory Board & Chairman Board of Directors
Marjolein Warburg - WARBURG Consultancy - Business Plan Consultant
Matthijs van den Broek - Further East Consult - Managing Director
Matthys van der Lely - Asi Aspire Pte Ltd - Managing Partner
Maurice de Kok - Van Oord - Manager Engineering Department
Nicole van Spronsen - Marin - Project Manager
Noreen van Holstein - Gotcha! - Founding Director
Paul Verlinden - Koninklijke Metaalunie - Policy Secretary for International Business
Pieter Swart - SeaLeopard Engineering - Director
Remco Gaanderse - R. G. Interim Management, Training, Advisory - Owner
Robbert Birkhoff - Meyn Food Processing Technology - Director Sales & Projects
Tjibbe Beckers - Novartis - Customer Engagement Manager
Veronique de Bruijn - Zeeman Textielsupers B.V. - Buying Manager
Wilma van der Maten - Asian Travel Pioneer - Freelance Journalist and community-based tourism in Asia

CSR AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The IBR project is strengthening its focus on sustainability, recognizing the critical need for a transition to a more sustainable future. To mitigate the environmental impact of flights to Malaysia and Indonesia, we are investing in carbon dioxide (CO₂) offset initiatives. Additionally, we donate €2,000 annually to charitable causes and have previously undertaken pro bono contracts to support organizations in need. Our project also aims to give back to society by engaging in several days of volunteer work.

Moreover, we aspire to conduct sustainability analyses on our research projects, helping businesses enhance their social impact. In past years, we have successfully carried out numerous projects aimed at improving the sustainability practices of various firms. Through these efforts, we strive to make a meaningful social impact.

IBR not only offers valuable opportunities for our student-consultants but also benefits local students through the Local Student Consultant Project. By partnering these local students with our Dutch research teams, we provide them with invaluable international experience and insights that contribute to their personal and professional development. This collaboration amplifies the social impact of our project and underscores our commitment to sustainability and community engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the credibility of our project and our experiences, the quality of IBR is endorsed by the Board of Recommendations. Our Board of Recommendation (BoR) consist of the following people:

- *De Nederlandsche Bank N.V. - Prof. Dr. K.H.W. Knot - President*
- *DHL Supply Chain - O.P.M. de Bok - CEO*
- *EVOFENEDEX - B. Koopman - Managing Director*
- *Heinkenen N.V. - R.G.S. van den Brink - CEO & Chairman Executive Board*
- *Heineken N.V. - Drs. M.H. Rijkens - Former Director Asia Pacific*
- *KPN - Drs. H.C. Figuee - CFO & Member Executive Board*
- *N.V. Nederlandse Gasunie - Drs. J. Hermes - CFO*
- *Randstad N.V. - Ir. A.M. van 't Noordende - CEO*
- *Royal Boskalis Westminster N.V. - Dr. P.A.M. Berdowski - CEO*
- *Royal DSM - F. Sijbesma - Honorary Chairman & Chairman of the Managing Board*
- *Royal Haskoning DHV - Drs. M.E. Hulshof - CEO*
- *Shell Nederland - Drs. B.F. Everts - President Director*
- *SHV Holdings N.V. - F.F.J. de Ryck - CEO*
- *Siemens & NautaDutilh & Kelp Blue - Mr Dr h.c. M.G.H.A. Soeteman-Reijnen - Member of the Supervisory Board & Vice-Chair Supervisory Board & Chairman Board of Directors*
- *Unilever PLC - H. Schumacher - CEO*
- *University of Groningen - Prof. Dr. Ir. J.M.A. Scherpen - Rector Magnificus*
- *VNO-NCW & MKB-Nederland - Drs. F.W. Vijselaar - General Director*

CONTACT DETAILS

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