

## Marc-Alain Widdowson ITM's new Director

The Board of Governors has appointed Dr Marc-Alain Widdowson as new Director of the Institute. Widdowson will take over from Prof Dr Bruno Gryseels in August 2019.

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Dit is de omschrijving

**The Board of Governors of the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp, Belgium has appointed Dr Marc-Alain Widdowson (50) as new Director of the Institute. Widdowson will take over from Prof Dr Bruno Gryseels in August 2019. The Board of Governors expresses its gratitude to Gryseels for his achievements. Over the past 24 years he oversaw the transformation of ITM into a science-driven centre of excellence with fruitful partnerships all over the world.**

Dr Marc-Alain Widdowson graduated from the University of Cambridge in Biological Anthropology and Veterinary Medicine and completed a MSc in Communicable Disease Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is a seasoned infectious disease epidemiologist and has managed scientific projects throughout the world, with field experience living in Bolivia, Zimbabwe and the Netherlands. He has broad expertise in epidemiology, public health, laboratory science and One Health. The past 18 years, Marc-Alain Widdowson has worked for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). He eventually became Director of the Division of Global Health Protection at CDC-Kenya.

The appointment by the Board of Governors of ITM comes at a crucial time for the organisation. ITM has gone through substantial reform in recent years to strengthen the scientific foundations of its education, research and service delivery in tropical medicine and international health. Dr Cathy Berx, Governor of the Province of Antwerp and Chair of the Board of Governors of ITM, said: "The Institute of Tropical Medicine and the international context in which it operates are evolving. Through its many experts with plenty of field experience the Institute often punches above Belgium's weight in health issues of global importance, conducting research on infectious diseases and outbreaks such as Ebola, leading efforts to control and eliminate diseases such as sleeping sickness, and studying how to improve access to life-saving health interventions for all. My sincere thanks go out to Bruno Gryseels for nearly a quarter of a century of inspired leadership. I am sure Marc-Alain Widdowson and all staff at ITM will do their best to reaffirm the Institute's credentials as a point of reference in tropical medicine and international health."

Dr Marc-Alain Widdowson is looking forward to the new challenge: "What struck me about ITM is the tremendous amount of expertise and the ambition to contribute to better health for all by advancing the medical sciences in tropical medicine and public health. I am eager to contribute to the excellent work that is being done in advanced education, scientific research, medical services and cooperation with partners worldwide."

Outgoing Director Prof Dr Bruno Gryseels commented: "I have been privileged to work with terrific colleagues, partners and sponsors bringing ITM into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Together we have turned the Institute into a science-driven centre of excellence, while maintaining our societal values and building long-term partnerships in the South. I am happy that the Board has selected Marc-Alain Widdowson, a splendid scientist but also a seasoned field worker, to take over the helm. He is the right person to lead the Institute further to the international top in its field and I wish him and ITM staff all the best in their future endeavours."

ITM is an autonomous foundation of public utility and postgraduate academic institute. It has around 450 staff members and a budget of approximately € 65 million, coming from different Flemish and federal ministries as well as from a variety of external sources. Each year, more than 600 students and about 100 PhD fellows from all over the world follow highly specialised courses or training at the Institute. Its researchers publish around 300 scientific papers each year and collaborate in hundreds of projects with partners around the world, with subjects ranging from medical anthropology to molecular biology. ITM structurally supports 19 institutional partners across Africa, Asia and Latin-America through its capacity-building programme financed by the Belgian Development Cooperation. More than 20.000 people visit our clinic each year for vaccination, treatment and advice on travel health issues, HIV and

sexually transmitted diseases.