



Vasilis Kokkoris

Candidate for Vice-President

Associate Professor

Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam

Candidate statement

Vasilis Kokkoris is an Associate Professor at Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam. He has developed a strong publication record on arbuscular mycorrhizal (AM) fungi, contributing across multiple fields including ecology, agriculture, genetics, and cell biology, effectively bridging cellular mechanisms with ecological function.

A defining contribution of his work is the study of nuclear organization and dynamics in AM fungi. Kokkoris has demonstrated that nuclear populations are not passive entities but dynamic regulators of fungal behavior, responding to environmental and host-derived cues with direct consequences for symbiotic performance. By combining molecular tools with advanced imaging techniques and high throughput automations, his research reveals how genetic diversity within nuclei is maintained, partitioned, and functionally integrated during fungal growth and symbiosis. This work led to the award of an ERC Starting Grant in 2022 and represents a significant conceptual advance in understanding AM fungal biology. His contributions have been internationally recognized through awards including Nikon Small World, Olympus Image of the Year, Early Career Award for Excellence in Mycorrhiza Research from the International Mycorrhizal Society, and most recently the 2025 KNAW Early Career Award.

Kokkoris is running for the position of Vice President to actively contribute to the continued growth and international engagement of the IMS community. He is particularly motivated to strengthen connections across disciplines and to support early-career researchers in navigating and contributing to this highly interdisciplinary field. In addition, he is committed to enhancing outreach and public engagement, with the goal of bringing broader attention to the ecological and biological importance of mycorrhizal fungi.

Kokkoris brings substantial governance experience, having recently completed a four-year board term with the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology, and currently serving in his third year on the board of the Royal Netherlands Society for Microbiology, within the Mycology section.

