

8th March, Woman's Day 2025

“The great thing about science is that there will always be more to discover.”

Claudia Smits



1. What was your path/journey to reach your current position?

I am not a scientist by training but I have always had an interest in space. I had been searching for an opportunity in space policy but with no success since I hadn't yet worked in the space sector. I made it my goal to gain experience working on space-related projects and found a really interesting vacancy available with B.USOC. It allowed me to directly support ongoing space projects and the scientists behind them. I never expected to end up working at a scientific institute, nor did I expect my office to be just down the hall from where the science is happening!

2. What has been your greatest source of inspiration or motivation in your scientific career?

I am motivated by the endless amount of things we have yet to learn about our universe, and am inspired by the cooperation the world is capable of in its pursuit for knowledge and scientific development.

3. Which current research project excites you the most and why?

I'm not sure, but I do follow everything ESA astronaut Rosemary Coogan does because she's so cool, and we went to the same university! I really look forward to her being assigned her first mission.

4. Over time, what changes in the role of women in science have you observed?

As the space sector grows and evolves, there are more opportunities available than ever. More and more women are carving out their own spaces in their respective scientific fields. It would be great if there was more pressure put on organizations to strive for 50/50 gender balance, but already I feel as if in BIRA-IASB we have achieved an environment where being a women in science is the norm rather than the exception.

5. What message would you like to convey to young women who are hesitant to pursue a career in science?

I would like for young women and girls to remember that science is a wonderful pursuit and if you are interested in it, there is room for you. The great thing about science is that there will always be more to discover.