I will explain that well-known vanishing and generation results for direct images of dualizing sheaves on complex projective manifolds have effective analogues for direct images of pluricanonical bundles. The generation properties are expressed as Fujita-conjecture type statements. These in turn govern a number of fundamental properties of pluricanonical bundles, like weak positivity, additivity of Iitaka dimension, or generic vanishing. This is joint work with Christian Schnell.