EVALUATOR'S CODE OF CONDUCT

You commit yourself in participating at the selection procedure of C4W programme as independent expert, following the rules established in the Grant Agreement No 101261746.

Please carefully read this Code of Conduct and tick the corresponding box upon connection to the evaluation platform.

If you have any doubt, do not hesitate to contact the C4W project manager (caroline.vliegen@umons.ac.be)

Performing the work

The experts must:

- Work independently, in a personal capacity and not on behalf of any organisation.
- Evaluate each application in a confidential and fair way, in accordance with the Horizon Europe rules and solely on the basis of the published C4W evaluation criteria, the content of the proposal and, where applicable, the interview.
- Perform their work to the best of their abilities, professional skills and knowledge, applying the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

The experts may not delegate the work to another person or be replaced by another person.
If a person or entity involved in an application (applicant, PI, Co-PI, host institution, partner or any other third party) approaches the expert before, during or after the evaluation, the expert must not engage with them and must immediately inform the C4W Project Manager.

Impartiality

The experts must perform their work impartially and take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the evaluation is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest.

More precisely, the following situations will automatically be **considered as conflict of interest**:

- The expert was involved in the preparation of the proposal or is in any way involved in the future project of the candidate.
- The expert is employed or contracted by the applicant's host institution (UMONS or UVAASA) or by a partner involved in the proposal (including secondment host), or holds a directorship, trustee or managerial role with them.
- The expert has close family ties (spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner, child, sibling, parent, etc.) or other close personal relationship with the candidate or their PI, Co-PI.
- The expert has (or has had) a scientific collaboration or co-publication with the candidate or her/his PI, Co-PI within the past 5 years.
- The expert has (or has had) a relationship of scientific rivalry, professional conflict or supervisor/mentor/mentee relationship with the candidate or their PI, Co-PI or any other person involved in the candidate's project.

In case of an actual or potential conflict of interest, arising before or during the evaluation (including at interview stage), the expert must immediately inform the C4W Project Manager and refrain from any evaluation of the proposal concerned. In case of doubt, the Project Coordinator will decide whether the expert may continue or must be replaced. The Project Coordinator may replace an expert at any stage to safeguard the integrity of the process.
Experts from industry must in addition declare any competing commercial interest, or any interest in IP, patents or spin-off activities, related to the proposals assigned to them.

Confidentiality

During the implementation of the selection process and until August 31 2031, the expert must keep confidential any data, document, or other material (in any form) regarding researchers and research proposals, including proposals, scores, individual and consensus reports, interview content, discussions in consensus meetings.

The expert must not use, for their own benefit or that of a third party, any scientific, technical or commercial information, idea, IP or business concept (including spin-off or patent potential) learned through the evaluation. Interviews and meetings must not be recorded, and proposals must not be copied, downloaded or stored outside the evaluation platform.

Data protection and use of AI tools

Personal data of applicants must be processed in compliance with the GDPR and exclusively for the purposes of the evaluation.
In compliance with the GDPR, the expert must delete or destroy all evaluation material in their possession (proposals, notes, drafts, reports and any other data, in any form) once the evaluation is completed.

Proposals and any related data must not be entered into generative AI tools or any external online service.
Experts are invited to read the European Commission's Guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research before starting the evaluation.

Ethics

Where a proposal raises potential ethical concerns (including those identified in the applicant's ethics self-assessment), the expert must flag them in the evaluation report. The expert does not decide on ethical clearance: this is the role of the competent ethics committee.