Cleantech
4 Wallonia & Vaasa
A Cleantech bridge for companies

Guide for Applicant

Applicants are invited to regularly check the C4W COFUND website at https://c4wcofund.eu/ for updates of the guides and templates

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UMONS Vaasan yliopisto UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions 30 years Curiosity that changes the world

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1. Introduction

1.1 C4W in brief

Cleantech4Wallonia/Vaasa (C4W) is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) COFUND programme, co-funded by the European Union under Horizon Europe (Grant Agreement No 101261746). It is jointly run by the University of Mons (UMONS, Belgium), which acts as Coordinator, and the University of Vaasa (UVAASA, Finland). Through two open calls, C4W funds **25 postdoctoral fellowships of 30 months each**, dedicated to research in the cleantech field.

Together, the two mid-sized universities bring around 1,500 senior researchers and 950 doctoral candidates. UMONS (1,100 senior researchers and 650 doctoral candidates) comprises 10 research institutes and 11 technological platforms. UVAASA (400 senior researchers and 300 doctoral candidates) is organised in four schools, supported by four research platforms. Both universities belong to the EUNICE European University alliance, together with eight other members located in Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Greece, Sweden and Portugal. This membership gives fellows access to a broad European network and supports the dissemination of results across Europe.

C4W offers targeted, interdisciplinary training in cleantech, with an emphasis on regional decarbonisation, energy transition and sustainability. The two hosts complement each other: UMONS contributes its expertise in industrial decarbonisation and entrepreneurial training, while UVAASA contributes its position within EnergyVaasa, a major energy innovation cluster, and a business-oriented ecosystem. Fellows thus gain access to two innovation ecosystems: Heart for Cleantech in Cœur du Hainaut (Wallonia) and Energy Transition Valley in Vaasa.

Each fellowship includes a mandatory secondment of 3 to 6 months in an academic or non-academic organisation, which adds an interdisciplinary, intersectoral or international dimension to the research project.

Within C4W, fellows follow a structured training programme that combines scientific, transferable and entrepreneurial skills. It is designed to prepare them to develop competitive funding applications, to present their work to academic and non-academic audiences, and to strengthen their employability in both the academic and the industrial sectors.

1.2 Call Timeline (Call 1)

- ⇨ Call opening: Thursday November 05th 2026- 09.00 Brussels time (UTC + 1)
- ⇨ Call closing: Friday February 05Th 2027 at precisely 16:00 Brussels time (UTC + 1)
- ⇨ Eligibility check: 09-12.02.2027
- ⇨ Evaluation: February-April 2027
- ⇨ Information to applicants: End May 2027
- ⇨ Start of projects: Between July and September 2027

FELLOWSHIP DURATION: 30 MONTHS

2. Eligibility

- Applicants of any nationality and any age are eligible. There is no restriction on the number of years of research experience since the doctorate.
- Applicants must be experienced researchers, that is, in possession of a doctoral degree at the call deadline, 5 February 2027.
- Applicants must comply with the MSCA mobility rule. The rule applies to the country of the recruiting host, which is the university of the Principal Investigator (PI) chosen by the applicant. An applicant who applies to a PI at UMONS must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Belgium for more than 12 months in the three years immediately preceding the call deadline (between 5 February 2024 and 5 February 2027). An applicant who applies to a PI at UVAASA must meet the same condition with regard to Finland. A researcher who is currently based in one of the two host countries may therefore still be eligible for a fellowship in the other.

  The following periods are not counted when assessing compliance with the mobility rule: short stays, such as holidays, and time spent in the context of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Neither the duration of that procedure nor the period during which refugee status is held is taken into account.
- Applicants must be fluent in English.
- Projects must address a topic within the broad cleantech domain. Eligible areas include renewable energy, energy efficiency, recycling, green chemistry, biotechnology, sustainable mobility, sustainable electronics and the circular economy, as well as other innovations that contribute to climate neutrality. (See C4W • C4W)
- Projects must also meet the following conditions: they last 30 months, they include a compulsory secondment of 3 to 6 months, they comply with the C4W ethics standards, and they follow the recommendations of the MSCA Green Charter.

3. Submission

Applications must be submitted online, in English, through the dedicated submission platform, which is accessible from the C4W website (https://c4wcofund.eu/). Applications sent by any other means, such as e-mail or post, will not be considered.

Each applicant may submit only **one proposal per call**. The proposal can be edited and re-submitted as many times as needed until the call closes. Only the last version submitted before the deadline is taken into account.

The **submission platform closes automatically on Friday 5 February 2027 at 16:00 CET** (UTC+1, Brussels time) and will not accept any submission after that time. Applicants are strongly advised to submit well before the deadline, to avoid delays caused by the high number of submissions expected in the last hours. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit on time.
No extension will be granted, except in the case of an unequivocal technical failure of the submission platform, as established by the Project Manager (PM). In that case, all applicants will be notified of the new arrangements. Applicants who encounter a technical difficulty can contact the helpdesk at c4w@umons.ac.be. They must do so as early as possible and should not wait until the last hours before the deadline, since a request sent at the last moment may not be handled in time.

The platform accepts a submission only if all required fields are completed and all required documents are uploaded (see Section 3.1 for the list of documents). Each file name must follow the format Firstname_SURNAME_ACRONYM_DocumentName, where ACRONYM is the acronym of the submitted project, for example “John_DOE_ACRO_proposal”.

After each submission, the applicant receives an **automatic confirmation of receipt**. This confirmation only attests that the application was received. It does not confirm that the application is eligible, which is verified in a separate step after the call closes (see Section 4).

The platform checks that the required fields and files are present, but it does not check their content. It is therefore the **applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all documents are correct, complete and uploaded in the right place**. Incomplete or incorrect applications will not proceed to the evaluation stage.

3.1 Requested documents

All documents must be **uploaded as PDF files**. **Each file name must follow the format Firstname_SURNAME_ACRONYM_DocumentName**, where ACRONYM is the acronym of the submitted project and DocumentName identifies the document. For example, the proposal is named John_DOE_ACRO_Proposal and the proof of the PhD is named John_DOE_ACRO_Degree.
An application is complete only if it contains all the documents listed below.

Part A – Administrative forms

- ✓ **Personal data**

- ✓ **Place of activity during the last three years**

The applicant indicates the period(s) and the country or countries in which they legally resided or had their main activity during the three years preceding the call deadline, that is, between 5 February 2024 and 5 February 2027. The applicant must be able to prove this information. Supporting documents, such as an employment contract or a residence certificate, may be requested from the applicant by the Project Manager or by the Human Resources department of the recruiting host at any time before the signature of the employment contract between the fellow and the recruiting host. All personal data provided are processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (see Section 8).

- ✓ **Copy of the PhD degree**

(file name: Firstname_SURNAME_ACRONYM_Degree)
The applicant uploads either a scanned copy of the PhD diploma or an official statement confirming the successful defence of the PhD. The document must state the date of the defence and confirm that the PhD has been unconditionally granted (no major or minor modification or other condition remains to be fulfilled). Applicants who are unsure whether their evidence meets these requirements must contact the helpdesk (c4w@umons.ac.be) before the call deadline.
Official supporting documents, such as the doctoral diploma or certificates, may be submitted in any official language of the European Union. Documents written in English, French or Finnish do not need to be translated. Documents written in another language must be accompanied by an English translation, for which an unofficial translation is accepted.

Part B – Project proposal of max 10 pages

A compulsory template is available on the call website. Applicants are required to read carefully and comply with the layout instructions at the top of the template (font, font size, margins, line spacing included). Projects exceeding the 10-page limit will be declared ineligible.

✓ **Research proposal**

The research proposal is written in English and is limited to 10 pages, excluding a cover page.
It must identify the Principal Investigator (PI) and a Co-PI, the planned secondment. It must address a research topic within the cleantech domain (see Section 2, Eligibility).

The proposal must describe:

Excellence

- the quality and pertinence of the research and innovation objectives;
- the relevance of the cleantech thematic
- the quality and appropriateness of the secondment;
- the appropriateness of the training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the applicant and the hosting group;
- the quality of the researcher and potential to reach professional independence

Impact

- the added value of the fellowship to enhance the future career prospects of the researcher
- the contribution of the project to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts;
- the valorisation of results and entrepreneurial potential
- the quality of the strategy for the dissemination and communication of the results and activities;

Implementation

- the coherence, feasibility and effectiveness of the work plan;
- the appropriateness of risk management.

The information on **ethics issues** is provided separately and does not count towards the 10 pages (see Annex 10.2. Ethics self assessment).

Curriculum vitae: The applicant submits a detailed CV, including a complete publication list, using the CV template included in the research proposal template.

Use of generative AI

Applicants who use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to prepare their proposal must exercise caution and remain fully responsible for the entire content of the proposal, including any part produced with an AI tool.
On the cover page, applicants must:

- disclose which AI tools were used and how they were used;
- verify the accuracy, validity and appropriateness of the generated content and citations, and correct any errors or inconsistencies;
- provide a list of the sources used to generate content and citations, including those generated by the AI tool, and check that each citation is accurate and properly referenced;
- check the original sources to make sure that the tool has not reproduced substantial text from other authors, and that intellectual property rules are respected;
- acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool, including the potential for bias, errors and gaps in knowledge.

Applicants are also invited to consult the European Commission's "Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research" (https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/artificial-intelligence-ai-science_en).

3.2 Submission Platform

In addition to uploading the documents listed in Section 3.1, the applicant must complete the following fields in the online form of the submission platform :

- ✓ **Proposal acronym and title**

The applicant enters the acronym and the title of the proposal. The acronym is the same used in the file names (see Section 3.1).

- ✓ **Cleantech thematic**

The applicant selects one cleantech thematic among the three following families: Energy transition | Sustainable resource management | Transforming economic and societal sectors.

- ✓ **Abstract**

The applicant enters an abstract of the proposal of at most 1,000 characters, including spaces.

- ✓ **Breakthrough and environmental impact**

The applicant answers the following question: "What is the technological or methodological breakthrough of your project, and what major environmental impact does it aim to address?" The answer must be brief, in 3 to 4 sentences (approximately 600 to 800 characters). A more detailed justification of the cleantech dimension of the project is required in the research proposal.

- ✓ **Keywords**

The applicant enters between 5 and 7 keywords.
The applicant must choose them carefully, in English, so that they reflect the scientific content of the project accurately, because they play a determining role in the composition of the panel of experts that evaluates the proposal.

- ✓ **Excluded evaluators**

The applicant may propose up to five experts who must not be involved in the evaluation of the proposal. For each expert, the applicant provides the title and name, the institution (if applicable) and the e-mail address. No justification is required.

Part C – Hosting institution and supervision

The applicant enters the name and the research unit of the **preferred host Principal Investigator** (PI) and of the Co-PI.
The PI must appear in the list of available PIs published on the C4W website (page "Our supervisors").
The Co-PI does not need to appear in this list. The university of the potential PI is the recruiting host, which determines the country to which the mobility rule applies (see Section 2, Eligibility).

> **The applicant must choose supervisors who have the expertise, infrastructure, resources and capacity to supervise the fellowship. Supervisors can be contacted directly, and it is the applicant's responsibility to contact the potential supervisors in order to confirm that the resources and research infrastructure required to carry out the project as proposed will be available if the project is selected.**

Contact with supervisors must remain scientific. It is limited to discussing the research topic, the supervisor's expertise and the available infrastructure.

Supervisors cannot help to draft the proposal. They cannot contribute to writing or reviewing the application.

No pre-approval is needed. Neither the supervisor nor their host institution can approve an application in advance, and no approval is required for submission.

Part D – Secondment

Applicants must include a secondment in their research project, and the proposal contains a dedicated section for it. The secondment must add an interdisciplinary and/or intersectoral dimension and, as far as possible, an international dimension. It must be relevant, feasible and beneficial for the applicant and for the project. It involves physical mobility and takes place at an academic or non-academic host, ideally located in a country different from that of the recruiting host.

The **secondment lasts between 3 and 6 months** in total and takes place between months 6 and 24 of the fellowship. It may be split into several shorter periods, provided that their total duration is within this range. In the form, the applicant indicates the host organisation and the name of the secondment supervisor. No letter of support from the secondment host is required at the application stage.

4. Evaluation



Step 1 – Eligibility check

After the call closes, the Project Manager (PM) checks the eligibility of each application against the conditions set out in Section 2 (Eligibility) and Section 3 (Requested documents). To ensure impartiality, an independent external institution, the University of Luxembourg, verifies in parallel that the topic of each project falls within the cleantech domain and double-checks the eligibility conditions. Any ambiguity is referred to the Project Coordinator (PC), who takes the final decision. This step takes approximately one week. All applicants are then informed in writing (by email) of the eligibility status of their application. An applicant who believes that the decision results from an error may use the redress procedure (see Section 5.2. Appeal).

Step 2 – Peer review

Each eligible proposal is assigned to three external evaluators of the External Evaluator Panel (EEP), who are specialised in the scientific domain of the proposal and are selected on the basis of the fields indicated by the applicant. Experts excluded by the applicant (see Section 3.2) are not assigned to the proposal.
Before accessing any proposal, each evaluator signs a Code of Conduct and receives the Guide for Evaluators. They receive the complete application file and access to an online evaluation form .
The three evaluators work independently and remotely. They give a score and detailed comments for each evaluation criterion (see Evaluation criteria below). They evaluate the proposal as it stands, solely on the basis of the submitted documents, without assuming any improvement.

Step 3 – Consensus meeting

The three evaluators then meet online to agree on a consensus score for each criterion and on consolidated comments. The meeting is moderated by the PM, who does not vote and does not score. One of the evaluators acts as rapporteur and writes the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR).
The peer review and the consensus meetings together take approximately 10 weeks.

Step 4 –Ethics review

Proposals for which ethics issues have been flagged, either by the applicant in the ethics self-assessment or by the evaluators, are reviewed by the relevant ethics committee. The same standards apply to all shortlisted proposals, whether they are finally placed on the main list or on the reserve list. For each proposal reviewed, the ethics committee issues one of the following opinions.

- ⇨ Ethics clearance: the ethics issues are adequately addressed and the proposal remains on the ranked list.
- ⇨ Conditional ethics clearance: the applicant must clarify some issues. The proposal remains on the ranked list, but the additional information must be provided before the start of the fellowship.
- ⇨ No ethics clearance: the proposal addresses topics that are ineligible or ethically non-compliant. The proposal is removed from the ranked list.

The ethics committee writes a short report, which the PM adds to the ESR. This step takes approximately four weeks. Shortlisted applicants are then notified of their invitation to the interview.

Step 5 – ShortList

After the consensus meetings, the 25 highest-ranked proposals that meet all the thresholds are shortlisted for the interview.

Step 6 – Interview

Applicants are interviewed online by the same three evaluators who assessed their proposal. The interview lasts 20 minutes: a 5-minute presentation (pitch) followed by 15 minutes of questions and answers.
The panel gives a score between 0 and 5. The interviews take place within approximately one week.
Interview scores contribute 20% to the final evaluation (proposal = 80%).

Step 6 – Funding decision

The PM calculates the final scores and the PC validates the ranking.
The Project Steering Committee (PSC) ratifies the main list and the reserve list. This step takes approximately one week.

Evaluation criteria

Each proposal is scored on 3 criteria, on a scale from 0 to 5 with decimal values of 0.1 permitted.
A threshold applies to each criterion. A proposal that scores below the threshold on at least one criterion is not funded.

Criterion	Evaluated elements	Threshold	Weighting
1. Scientific excellence	• Quality, methodological rigour, relevance and novelty of the research and innovation objectives; • Relevance of the cleantech thematic; • Quality and appropriateness of the secondment; • Training and two-way transfer of knowledge between the applicant and the hosting group; • Quality of the researcher (publication and patent record) and potential to reach professional independence	≥ 4.0	40%
2. Impact	• Added value of the fellowship for future career prospects: fit of the project with the applicant's CV and career objectives, networking plan (workshops, conferences), impact of mobility and secondment design; • Contribution to scientific, societal and economic impacts (patent and spin-off potential, industry collaboration plan, market and sector fit analysis, sustainability); • Valorisation of results and entrepreneurial potential; dissemination and communication strategy	≥ 3.5	40%
3. Implementation	• Clarity, coherence, feasibility and effectiveness of the work plan and timeline; availability of resources; • Appropriateness of the risk-mitigation strategy	≥ 3.5	20%

Final score and ranking

The final score is the peer-review score multiplied by 0.80, plus the interview score multiplied by 0.20. If two or more proposals obtain the same final score, they are ranked according to their score for criterion 1; if they are still tied, according to criterion 2, then criterion 3, then criterion 4.

Main list. The highest-ranked applicants are offered a fellowship: up to 13 in call 1 and up to 12 in call 2. Offers are subject to the verification of the supporting documents (see Section [X]) and, where applicable, to ethics clearance.
Reserve list. The next-ranked shortlisted applicants are placed on a reserve list. They are contacted, in order of ranking, if an applicant on the main list withdraws, declines the offer or cannot be funded.
Not funded. Proposals that score below a threshold, and proposals that are not placed on either list, are not funded. Applicants who are not funded in call 1 are encouraged to apply again in call 2.

All applicants are notified of the outcome of their application. They receive the ESR and, where applicable, the interview report and the ethics report. This feedback includes the scores and a summary of strengths and weaknesses, which may support future applications.

5.Results

5.1 Communication of the evaluation outcome

Applicants will receive written feedback during the evaluation and selection process. All feedback will be through a letter sent by email. First, all applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt after the submission of their application. After the eligibility check, all applicants will receive feedback on the eligibility status of themselves and/or the proposal. Applicants will be informed about reasons why their application was deemed ineligible. At this first point of feedback, applicants will be informed about the redress procedure.

After the peer review evaluation, ethics review if relevant, and interview, applicants will be notified of the funding decision; they will be offered a fellowship / be informed of their position on the reserve list / be informed that their proposal will not be funded. They will all receive feedback in the form of the ESR (including the Interview report and an ethics report if relevant).

For the 1st call, candidates the 13 best-ranked applications will be offered a fellowship. Selected applicants will be informed by the end of May 2027. They will be given 2 months to relocate to Belgium/Finland and must start their fellowships at the latest in September 2027.

They will be asked to **confirm their acceptance of the fellowship within 10 working days***. Passed this deadline, they will receive a second and final notification to confirm acceptance of the fellowship within five (5) working days. If the second notification does not receive a reply, it will be concluded that the applicant is not interested in the fellowship and therefore we will invite the next candidate in the ranking list.

** Monday to Friday, excluding the national and regional public holidays (such as Christmas, New Year's Day, and Easter Monday)*

5.2 Appeal

A redress procedure will be allowed in cases where the applicants perceive unjust procedural or eligibility issues, not in cases where the applicants perceive unjust scientific judgement during the evaluation process.

The complaint must be described in max 2 A4 and should be addressed to the Project Manager (PM) via the email address c4w@umons.ac.be, no later than 5 working days after notification of the eligibility status / funding decision. The communication should have as subject "Redress_C4W_Surname_Firstname" and clearly state the reasons for the appeal.

The PM will convene the Redress Committee (RC), that will discuss the redress and provide its answer, recommending an appropriate course of action, within 5 working days of receipt of the redress. The applicant will be informed (letter sent by email) whether the request for redress is accepted. If the request is accepted, the proposal is re-evaluated or re-interviewed, as appropriate, and re-ranked accordingly. The decision of the RC is final within the C4W selection procedure.

6. Recruitment

Fellows will be hosted by UMONS and UVAASA, two institutions renowned for their excellence in research and training. Both universities have been awarded the HR Excellence in Research (HRS4R) and have a proactive approach to welcoming international researchers and offer a range of institutional support services.
"University Hospitalière" (UMONS) and "Vaasa Welcome Office" (UVAASA) will also guarantee tailored support for vulnerable groups (migrants/refugees).

6.1 Starting date & duration

The starting date of the project is foreseen at the latest in September 2027.
The fellowships will last 30 months.

6.2 Remuneration

Researchers selected for the C4W fellowship will receive a **competitive salary** that complies with national standards for postdoctoral researchers in the countries of the hosting organisation (Belgium for UMONS researchers, Finland for UVAASA ones). The **monthly gross salary will be €5215**, which is in line with the competitive standards for postdoctoral researchers in the regions and ensures financial sustainability throughout the fellowship period.

In addition to the salary, the following monthly allowances will be provided:

- **Mobility Allowance** (500€/Month): Researchers will be eligible for a mobility allowance to cover relocation and travel expenses incurred during the fellowship.
- **Family Allowance** (350€/Month): If applicable, researchers with dependents will receive a family allowance to support the living costs of their family members during the fellowship.

All candidates are entitled to the mobility allowance that is provided as a net amount. The family allowance is provided also as a net amount only to candidates that have family obligations.
Family is defined as persons linked to the candidate:

1. by marriage or
2. by a relationship of a status equivalent to marriage recognised by the legislation of the country or region where this relationship was formalised
3. as dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher.

The family status will be determined at the deadline of the call and will not be revised during the fellowship.

For each fellowship, there will be a 30-month full-time contract (fixed term), managed according to the labour law of the employer - UMONS or UVAASA. Both hosts will use the same template contract and salary scale (currency parity considered), to ensure consistency across two partners. Social security will cover full health, unemployment, pension coverage per Belgian/Finnish law. Paid annual leave is defined according to the labour law of the hosting country: 25 days (Belgium) / 30 days (Finland). Maternity/paternity leave periods are also defined as per national regulations.

Research budget

Each fellow has a research budget of €15,000 for the whole fellowship (30 months. It covers costs directly related to the fellow's research project, such as consumables, small equipment, conference fees and open-access publication costs, … The fellow manages this budget freely, in collaboration with the Principal Investigator (PI), within the financial rules of the recruiting host and the eligibility rules of Horizon Europe. It is not paid to the fellow as income.

Travel allowance

Each fellow is entitled to a travel allowance of €3,000 for the whole fellowship, to support participation in international conferences and travel related to the secondment.

External training envelope

A dedicated envelope of €2,800 per fellow, for the whole fellowship, is allocated to external training activities, such as specialised courses, workshops or certified training. The fellow selects and manages these activities freely, in close agreement with the PI, in order to develop skills that match the fellow's research project and career plan.
The training activities organised by the programme are not charged to this envelope.

6.3 Career development

C4W is designed to help fellows develop their scientific, transferable and entrepreneurial skills, so that they can pursue a career in academia, industry or entrepreneurship. Career development is organised around five elements: supervision, an individual development plan (IDP), training, a secondment, and career support.

Supervision and Supervisory Board

Each fellow is supervised by a Principal Investigator (PI) and a Co-PI. Each fellow is also assisted by an industry mentor and by a Knowledge Transfer Officer (KTO) or a business developer. Together, they form the fellow's Supervisory Board (SB). The SB advises on dissemination and exploitation of results, supports the fellow's career objectives and contributes to the individual development plan (IDP).

Individual development plan

C4W will follow innovative training by integrating personalized and tailored training on research skills based on a skill analysis by the PI and the establishment of the IDP at the start of the fellowship. The fellow integrates into the IDP the courses and activities described below and updates it regularly with the SB. Each IDP will be developed with PI, HRD and Research Administration and will be reviewed biannually with the SB to align objectives and career goals

Training

Fellows will benefit from a comprehensive professional training program that includes not only technical skills related to their research, but also non-research oriented transferable skills such as project management, entrepreneurship, and leadership. Additionally, the program will provide opportunities for international networking, further enhancing career development. Finally, the fellows will have access to state-of-the-art laboratories, research centres, and equipment at UMONS and UVAASA, ensuring that they are equipped to carry out high-quality research.
C4W further supports transferable skills through a dedicated two-day Summer/Winter School for each cohort, offering lectures, discussions, and workshops on career development and research and technology transfer.

Entrepreneurship is a core element. All fellows follow an entrepreneurship pathway: the UMONS Entrepreneurial Pathway (26 modules), the UVAASA Executive Education programme, or a mixed combination of both when online training is possible.
It explicitly addresses research maturation, exploitation, and innovation strategies, directly enabling researchers to translate their findings into viable commercial opportunities.

Teaching
Fellows are encouraged, though not required, to teach master students (maximum 10 hours/year) in courses related to their research, and to supervise master or doctoral students under PI supervision,

thereby developing essential teaching and supervision competencies beneficial for leadership roles in academia and non-academia.

Secondment and industry links

Fellows must undertake a 3–6 month secondment, adding an intersectoral, interdisciplinary, and preferably international dimension to their research.
In a non-academic host, the fellow works on a market-oriented mini-project under joint supervision. The fellow may also take part in industry events and, where relevant to the project, a short placement with a public authority.

Networking

Fellows attend at least two international conferences or trade fairs, and may join joint seminars of the EUNICE alliance.

Career support

The UMONS Career Center and the UVAASA Career Services offer CV coaching, job fairs and industry matchmaking. The Research Support Offices of both universities assist fellows with intellectual property, technology transfer and grant management, and with career counselling. Practical onboarding services are described in Section 6.4 (Administrative support).

6.4 Administrative support

Both host universities provide excellent institutional administrative support.

The HR Departments will be involved in the preparation and signing of employment contracts, payment of wages and social security payments, but also in recruitment policies and activities relating to career development.

The research offices will provide support on topics such as technology transfer (IP protection, establishing links with stakeholders, exploitation), research promotion (dissemination, public outreach), legal issues, and Open Science.

The Financial Departments will provide support for budget management and financial reporting.

In addition to support provided by the universities, Fellows will also be informed of the services of the Belgian/Finnish EURAXESS Centres.

Recruited fellows will be provided with a comprehensive “vade mecum” for new recruits containing:
▷ Rights and obligations as a member of the UVaasa/UMONS community
▷ Key actions to ensure a regular monitoring of the progress during the fellowship
▷ Contacts of relevant personnel (names, e-mails, phone numbers)
▷ Information on housing, visa, banking, childcare, cultural orientation, and spouse support (Vaasa Spouse Program).

7. Ethics, Open science and research data management

The C4W programme is committed to supporting research conducted according to the highest standards of scientific integrity and ethical responsibility, in alignment with Horizon Europe principles.

How to complete your ethics self-assessment

7.1 Ethics

Proposals where ethics issues are flagged (either by the applicant as above, by an external evaluator during the external peer review, or by the Evaluation Committee members), will undergo an ethics review. This clearance procedure applies equally to proposals placed on both the main list and the reserve list. They will be evaluated by the relevant Ethics Committee of the recruiting university.

The relevant ethics committee will consider whether the applicant has addressed ethics issues adequately and whether the proposal follows the C2W ethics policy. The relevant ethics committee will provide ethics clearance (ethics issues addressed well, proposal remains on ranked list), temporary ethics clearance (the applicants needs to clarify issues, proposal remains on ranked list but additional information must be provided before project start) or no ethics clearance (the proposal addressed topics that are ineligible, proposal removed from ranked list). Only proposals with (temporary) ethics clearance will be included on the ranked list and could receive funding.

As part of their application file, applicants will be required to include an ethics-self assessment responding to questions on ethical implications of their project (see Annex 10.2). Candidates will be required to explain what the ethical issues are and how they are planning to deal with them. The ethics self-assessment and the explanations therein will not count towards the limit of 10 pages of the core proposal. Evaluators will be accordingly briefed to be able to assess if ethical concerns have been properly addressed.

To help candidates complete a thorough self-assessment, proposals should be aligned with European standards and guidelines. Depending on the nature of the research, applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the relevant official references :

- Research Integrity: the European principles for conduct and scientific rigor (ALLEA Code)

https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/

- Data protection and digital issues: EU guidance on ethics in data processing and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ethics-and-data-protection_he_en.pdf
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679

- Environmental impact and sustainability: guidelines relative to the "Do No Significant Harm" (DNSH) principle and the MSCA Green Charter

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/267/oj

https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/cce579e3-9347-4c28-ba0f-409bf35b09b4_en?filename=c_2023_6454_f1_annex_en.PDF&prefLang=de
https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/green-charter

- Emerging technologies and Dual-Use: EU guidelines for trustworthy Artificial Intelligence and Horizon Europe guidance on dual-use research

https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai
https://ai-act-service-desk.ec.europa.eu/en/ai-act-explorer
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2021/1700/oj/eng

7.2 Open Science & Research Data Management

C4W will comply with the Open Access (OA) policies of Horizon Europe, with national OA policies and with the OA policies of both universities. UVaasa/UMONS Researchers, including the C4W Fellows must deposit their manuscripts published in scientific journals and conference proceedings of which they are the author, co-author or scientific editor in the UVaasa repository (institutional repository SoleCRIS, https://uwasa.cris.fi/en) or in the UMONS repository (ORBI - ORBi UMONS: Home). C4W fellows are free to deposit their research outputs in addition to larger repositories such as OpenAIRE or ROAR.

For **OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE**, researchers are free to choose an Open source license if legal aspects, IP rights and license compatibility are cleared are adhered to. It is strongly recommended to seek advices from the Knowledge Transfer Offices.

Regarding **OPEN DATA**, the European Commission recommends to use Zenodo as the main data repository to share and preserve datasets via the EU Open Research Repository.

With regards to **RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT**, both universities subscribe to tools that are compliant for Horizon Europe projects, in Belgium dmponline.be and in Finland dmptuuli.fi. The Data Management Plan (DMP) Online Belgium and DMP Tuuli Finland project's main goals are to promote good data management practices in research and education in Belgium and Finland. There is a dedicated section to FAIR data where researchers must make sure that data are Findable, including provisions for metadata, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable (through clarifying licenses) by applying the "as open as possible, as closed as necessary" principle.

Fellows will write an individual DMP within the first 6 months with the PI (and co-PI); it will be reviewed on a yearly basis.
The DMP includes information on how research data are produced, in which form, how they are stored, backed up and archived, who has access to them, if they are subject to any legal and ethical constraints, etc. The fellows will be supported in this procedure by the Department of Research Administration. The Data Management Plan is not required at submission stage.

For further documentation, candidates are invited to consult the official EU Open Science guidelines.

8. Contact information

For any questions related to C4W:
C4W Project Management
UMONS | Department of Research Administration
Place du Parc, 22
7000 MONS, Belgium

E-mail: C4W@umons.ac.be

Privileged language for communication will be English, but support can be provided in French. This support will be preferably given through email exchange. In general, a policy of “answer within three (3) working days” will be applied in the framework of C4W. When a call is open the deadline for an answer by e-mail will be reduced to a maximum of two (2) working days.

9. Personal Data Protection

The Université de Mons (UMONS) – 20 Place du Parc, 7000 Mons, is the controller of the personal data collected within the framework of the C4W applications. As such, UMONS complies with the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR).

UMONS's privacy charter can be consulted at: https://web.umons.ac.be/app/uploads/2019/12/Charte-Vie-privée-UMONS-20190605.pdf

The data collected by UMONS via the submission platform are processed solely for the purpose of assessing research project applications against the eligibility and evaluation criteria, and of selecting projects with a view to a contractual agreement with the applicant. The legal basis for the processing is the contract (performance of pre-contractual measures and establishment of the contractual relationship between UMONS and the expert applicant). We cannot examine your application without the provision of these data.

Your data are retained for a maximum of one year after the end of the C4W call for unsuccessful applicants, and for three years after the end of the project for successful applicants.

Within UMONS, only the departments that need to process the data have access to your data. Your data will be shared with authorised members of the University of Vaasa, with external evaluators as part of the evaluation process, and with two members of staff of the University of Luxembourg responsible for verifying the eligibility criteria (see the eligibility procedure).

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), you may exercise your rights concerning your personal data (right of access, rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, and data portability).

In the event of a dispute concerning your personal data, you also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Belgian Data Protection Authority (https://www.autoriteprotectiondonnees.be, contact@apd-gba.be).
We recommend that you first contact UMONS's Data Protection Officer at dpo@umons.ac.be.

10. Annexes

10.1. Submission form

Part A | Administrative form

- Consent*

I have read the information on the processing of personal data carried out in the framework of C4W and agree to it.*

- Email*
- Gender*
- Last Name* First Name*
- Address*
- Place of activity of the last 3 years*

From (dd/mm/yyyy)
To (dd/mm/yyyy)
Country
Please list all countries where you have legally resided and/or carried out your main activity (work, studies, etc.) during the 3 years preceding the submission deadline. Add one row per period; short stays (e.g., holidays) should not be included.

- Copy of the PhD degree*

Max. file size: 10 MB.

Part B | Project proposal

- Project Proposal*

(based on the mandatory C4W project template available the C4W website) – Upload .pdf document*
Accepted file types: pdf, Max. file size: 50 MB.

- Proposal Acronym*
- Proposal Title*
- Cleantech Thematic Panel*
  - Energy transition
  - Sustainable ressource management
  - Transforming economic and social sectors
- What is the technological or methodological breakthrough of your project, and what major environmental impact does it aim to address?*

Keep it brief: a more in-depth justification of your project's Cleantech dimension will be required in the full proposal. Expected format: Maximum 3 to 4 sentences (approx. 600 to 800 characters).

- Key Research Area*
- Research Abstract*

(max. 1000 characters, spaces included)

- List of non-grata evaluators (max 5) excluded by the applicant (Name, institution, e-mail address)

Part C | Hosting unit

- Full Name of PI*
- University of the PI*
  - University of Mons / University of Vaasa
- Research Unit of the PI*

- Full Name of the co-PI*
- University of the co-PI*
  - University of Mons / University of Vaasa
- Research Unit of the co-PI*

Part D | Secondment

- Organization of the secondment supervisor*
- Full Name of the secondment supervisor*
- Email*

Submit

10.2. Ethic self assessment

1. HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS AND HUMAN EMBRYOS		Page
Does this activity involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Will they be directly derived from embryos within this project?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they previously established cells lines?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are the cell lines registered in the European registry for human embryonic stem cell lines?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Does this activity involve the use of human embryos?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Will the activity lead to their destruction?	Yes ☐ No ☐	

2. HUMANS		Page
Does this activity involve human participants?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Are they volunteers for nonmedical studies (e.g. social or human sciences research)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they healthy volunteers for medical studies?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they patients for medical studies?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they potentially vulnerable individuals or groups?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they children/minors?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they other persons unable to give informed consent?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Does this activity involve interventions (physical also including imaging technology, behavioural treatments, etc.) on the study participants?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Does it involve invasive techniques?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Does it involve collection of biological samples?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Does this activity involve conducting a clinical study as defined by the Clinical Trial Regulation (EU 536/2014)? (using pharmaceuticals, biologicals, radiopharmaceuticals, or advanced therapy medicinal products)	Yes ☐ No ☐	

↳ If YES: Is it a clinical trial?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Is it a low-intervention clinical trial?	Yes ☐ No ☐	

3. HUMAN CELLS / TISSUES (not covered by section 1)		Page
Does this activity involve the use of human cells or tissues?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Are they human embryonic or foetal cells or tissues?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they available commercially?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they obtained within this project?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they obtained from another project, laboratory or institution?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they obtained from biobank?	Yes ☐ No ☐	

4. PERSONAL DATA		Page
Does this activity involve processing of personal data?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Does it involve the processing of special categories of personal data (e.g.: sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, genetic, biometric and health data, political opinion, religious or philosophical beliefs)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Does it involve processing of genetic, biometric or health data?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Does it involve profiling, systematic monitoring of individuals, or processing of large scale of special categories of data or intrusive methods of data processing (such as, surveillance, geolocation tracking etc.)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Does this activity involve further processing of previously collected personal data (including use of preexisting data sets or sources, merging existing data sets)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Specify the type of personal data and countries involved:		
Is it planned to import personal data from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Specify the type of personal data and countries involved:		
Does this activity involve the processing of personal data related to criminal convictions or offences?	Yes ☐ No ☐	

5. ANIMALS		Page

Does this activity involve animals?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Are they vertebrates?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they non-human primates (NHP)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they genetically modified?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they cloned farm animals?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Are they endangered species?	Yes ☐ No ☐	

6. NON-EU COUNTRIES		Page
Will some of the activities be carried out in non-EU countries?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Specify the countries:		
In case non-EU countries are involved, do the activities undertaken in these countries raise potential ethics issues?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Specify the countries:		
Is it planned to use local resources (e.g. animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna or flora samples, etc.)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Is it planned to import any material (other than data) from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? For data imports, see section 4.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Specify material and countries involved:		
Is it planned to export any material (other than data) from the EU to non-EU countries? For data exports, see section 4.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ If YES: Specify material and countries involved:		
Does this activity involves low and/or lower-middle income countries? (if yes, detail the benefit-sharing actions planned in the self-assessment)	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Could the situation in the country put the individuals taking part in the activity at risk?	Yes ☐ No ☐	

7. ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH and SAFETY		Page
Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to the environment, to animals or plants (during the implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Does this activity deal with endangered fauna and/or flora / protected areas?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to humans, including those performing the activity (during the	Yes ☐ No ☐	

implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?		

8. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE		Page
Does this activity involve the development, deployment and/or use of Artificial Intelligence based systems? (if yes, detail in the self-assessment whether that could raise ethical concerns related to human rights and values and detail how this will be addressed).	Yes ☐ No ☐	

9. OTHER ETHICS ISSUES		Page
Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
↳ Please specify: (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		

☐ I confirm that I have taken into account all ethics issues above and that, if any ethics issues apply, I will complete the ethics self-assessment as described in the guidelines 'How to Complete your Ethics Self-Assessment'.

If you have entered any issues in the ethics issue table, you must perform an ethics self-assessment in accordance with the guidelines 'How to Complete your Ethics Self-Assessment' and complete the table below.

Ethical dimension of the objectives, methodology and likely impact
Explain in detail the identified issues in relation to: – objectives of the activities (e.g. study of vulnerable populations, etc.) – methodology (e.g. clinical trials, involvement of children, protection of personal data, etc.) – the potential impact of the activities (e.g. environmental damage, stigmatisation of particular social groups, political or financial adverse consequences, misuse, etc.)

Compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations
Describe how the issue(s) identified in the ethics issues table above will be addressed in order to adhere to the ethical principles and what will be done to ensure that the activities are compliant with the EU / national legal and ethical requirements of the country or countries where the tasks are to be carried out. It is reminded that for activities performed in a non-EU countries, they should also be allowed in at least one EU Member State.