

Hosting offer for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) 2022 at Centre of Excellence Global Change Ecology

[MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships](#) are individual research grants offering excellent postdoctoral researchers the chance to develop their skills by means of international mobility. Through the implementation of an original and personalised research project, MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships aim to foster excellence through training and mobility and to equip researchers with new skills and competences in order to identify solutions to current and future challenges.

The Global Change Ecology Centre of University of Antwerp invites motivated postdoctoral researchers to jointly prepare an application for the [MSCA-PF-2022 call Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships](#) call ([MSCA-PF-2022](#)) with them as host organisation.

Description of Hosting organisation/group

The research mission statement of the GCE excellence consortium is to conduct excellent science on Global Change and Ecology-related topics, that advances the field and increases the visibility of UAntwerpen in the Key UAntwerpen Research Domain “Ecology and the environment”. However, GCE’s research mission goes beyond pure research excellence. GCE engages to create a research environment that fosters a creative atmosphere, allowing to train world class researchers, ready to contribute to our society and have a brilliant career in- or outside academia. Finally, GCE pays strong attention to communication to stakeholders and the general public, a.o. through citizen science initiatives. Combined, these three objectives ensure world-leading UAntwerpen-research that makes a difference.

Global change equally includes fragmentation and urbanization of the landscape, spread of invasive species, excessive human appropriation of water and ecosystem products, and modification of elemental cycles. All these **global change factors interact in their impact on ecosystems**, but research combining multiple global change factors is challenging. GCE therefore proposes to perform research and research training that responds to the challenges outlined above. **In addition, the GCE excellence consortium aims to contribute significantly to research on both mitigation of and societal and biological adaptation to multiple global change pressures.**

www.uantwerpen.be/gce

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Topics/expertise

We welcome candidates interested in following topics

The Blue Carbon pump in coastal wetlands: This topic includes research that focuses on disentangling the factors of carbon burial in various coastal wetland types (marshes, mangroves), and how the burial is affected by wetland bio-geomorphology and alterations in sea level. This builds on the outstanding research excellence [prof. Stijn Temmerman](#) has achieved in the geomorphological and ecological functioning of coastal wetlands. Stijn Temmerman adopts these novel research lines in ongoing studies in multiple field sites across the world where he already has long-term research engagements, including the Schelde estuary and other tidal marsh areas in Europe and the USA, and mangroves in South-East Asia and South-America.

Bird and tick phenology: Topics are guided by [prof. Erik Matthysen](#), who has a long-standing research history on studying the phenology in bird (great and blue tit) populations, and how this relates to phenology of the trees in the forest they inhabit through different trophic levels. Erik Matthysen has also achieved significant advances in studying the complex transmission dynamics of tick-based diseases, and is currently initiating research lines that connect this to phenology. We welcome research proposals that link phenological components in two or more trophic levels (trees, insects, birds and bird ticks). You can make specific use of the long-term forest observatory in 'Peerdsbos', where we have a unique dataset on phenology of 1600 individual trees coupled to long-term (since 1979) monitoring of bird population dynamics and phenology. We may also utilize data at larger geographic scales such as the SPI-Birds platform and ICP-forests, to compare the dynamics and long-term trends at our study sites with other European forests.

Aquatic-terrestrial coupling in ecosystem functioning. This topic can be guided by [prof. Jonas Schoelynck](#), who has strong expertise in assessing aquatic ecosystem functioning, and how this relates to river basin processes. Achieving this coupling also in experimental infrastructure, is currently one of the main shortcomings in experimental infrastructure on ecosystems in general. Yet, the importance of achieving this connection is clear: nutrient input into rivers mostly derives from terrestrial sources, the water holding capacity of terrestrial soils largely governs the occurrence and amplitude of extreme events in the aquatic environment, while flooding can have long-lasting effects on adjacent agricultural soils. GCE hosts advanced infrastructure on both aquatic and terrestrial systems in the [AnaEE](#) ESFRI ERIC.

Your profile

- You must have a completed PhD in biology, bio-engineering, environmental sciences at the time of the call deadline (September 14, 2022). We also welcome candidates with a PhD in other specializations, as long as sufficient experience with key skills can be proven.
- Candidates must have a maximum of 8 years full-time research experience from the PhD award date until September 14, 2022. Periods of inactivity in research (e.g. unemployment, periods of employment outside research, parental or sick leave) do not count towards the time of research experience.
- For European fellowships, candidates can be of any nationality and must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Belgium for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before September 14, 2022.
- Highly motivated candidate with an excellent research track record appropriate to career stage, as evidenced by academic publications and other scientific output.

What we offer

- Support and guidance for the preparation of your MSCA PF proposal
- A stimulating, interdisciplinary environment for high-level research.

How to apply?

Indicate your interest by contacting the host institution as follows:

Please contact eric.struyf@uantwerpen.be by e-mail with a short CV and motivation to indicate your interest to prepare a MSCA-PF application.

After the supervisor agrees to support you as a MSCA-PF candidate, you can start preparation of MSCA PF project proposal and will be supported further by the supervisor and the Research Support Office of the host university.

For more information on the MSCA PF scheme or the host institution, you can contact the MSCA coordinator of the University of Antwerp: Dr. Liesbet Cockx (Research, Innovation & Valorisation Antwerp, Grants Office): Liesbet.cockx@uantwerpen.be