NeXED
Training the next generation of toxicologists

Network for Cross-disciplinary assessment of Endocrine Disrupting compounds
https://www.nexed.eu

NeXED is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Doctoral Network, funded by the European Union. NeXED will recruit 15 enthusiastic, talented and driven Doctoral Candidates (DCs) who are highly motivated to be part of a new generation of cross-disciplinary toxicologists specialised in using harmonised approaches in a One Health framework to develop and support the implementation of innovations in the field of endocrine disruptor assessment.

All recruited fellows will be enrolled in a PhD degree programme and will be employed full-time in an interdisciplinary and intersectoral network with members from academia, government, industry and SMEs.

About NeXED

The EU has flagged endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), which interfere with normal hormonal function leading to adverse health effects, of particular concern. Advances in terms of new test methods and approaches for assessment of EDCs are needed to meet the continuously evolving regulatory requirements. **NeXED will train the next generation of true cross-disciplinary toxicologists specialized in both human and environmental risk assessment of endocrine disruptors, no longer approaching assessment of chemicals from either a human or an environmental health perspective separately**. NeXED will train its 15 DCs through individual research projects, network-wide training events and secondments. The research will apply an integrative One Health approach with an important focus on the development of new test methods and approaches and considering EDC effects in environmentally realistic (mixture) scenarios to shape regulatory EDC assessment of the future.

What we offer

- Selected candidates will be employed full-time by the host organisation on the MSCA Doctoral Network project for a period of **36 months**. Depending on the host organization, and following a positive evaluation, additional funding for a maximum of 12 months may be provided to complete a 4-year doctoral degree.
- The **expected start date** is in the period June - December 2025.
- **Last-year master students** expected to graduate by this time are encouraged to already apply.
- Doctoral candidates are offered an employment contract or other direct contract with equivalent benefits, including social security coverage, with a **competitive remuneration** based on the MSCA allowances in line with the MSCA WP 2023-2025. The final gross salary is based on the applicable regulations of the host institution and country (for more information, see MSCA information note). Moreover, funding is available for technical and personal skills training and participation in international research events.
- DCs will be enrolled in a **doctoral programme** at an outstanding university.

Funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme, under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (Grant Agreement number 101168892)

Funded by
the European Union

- DCs will be part of an MSCA Doctoral Network and benefit from a high-quality, interdisciplinary, intersectoral and international **training programme** focused on obtaining research knowledge/skills and transferable skills to support their career development.
- DCs will engage in innovative **multidisciplinary research** in a collaborative, interdisciplinary and intersectoral consortium with leading experts in the field of ED assessment and the broader field of (eco)toxicology and physiology.
- Each DC will be supervised by an interdisciplinary and intersectoral **Supervisory Team**.
- DCs will participate in **international secondments** to other organisations involved in the NeXED network and international research and outreach conferences.
- DCs will have access to the necessary **resources and infrastructures** that are available within the NeXED consortium for all aspects of the programme.

Eligibility criteria

As part of the MSCA programme, all recruited NeXED researchers must comply with the Horizon Europe MSCA eligibility criteria:

- **To be eligible as a Doctoral Candidate,** applicants cannot already be in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of the recruitment. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will not be considered eligible.
- **Mobility rule**: Applicants can be of any nationality, but must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting host organisation for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before the recruitment date*****. Compulsory national service, short stays such as holidays, and time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention are not taken into account.
- Applicants must be eligible to enrol in a **PhD programme** at the host organization (or at a designated university in case the host organization is a non-academic organization).

For more information about your rights and obligations as a MSCA fellow in a Doctoral Network, you can consult the information package of the European Research Executive Agency.

***** For the UK-based Doctoral Candidate only, we may consider relaxing this rule for exceptional UK national candidates.

General selection criteria

- You must hold a **Master's degree** (**or equivalent**, see specific job descriptions for more information if applicable) in a relevant field for the corresponding vacancy or you will have obtained it by the date of recruitment.
- You can demonstrate **excellent study results**.
- You have a **relevant scientific background**, with the necessary academic skills and relevant prior research experience.
- You have strong **English** language skills, both verbally and in writing.
- You have the motivation to successfully obtain **a doctoral degree** through an individual research project.
- You act with attention to **quality, integrity, creativity and cooperation**.
- You are **highly motivated to** share your research findings at international research events through engaging poster and oral presentations, as well as publish high-quality papers in international (peer-reviewed) journals.
- You are willing to participate in international meetings, trainings and secondments, as **international mobility** is a key concept for MSCA Doctoral Networks fellows.
- Additional institutional selection criteria may apply. If applicable, these can be found in the specific job descriptions.

Application procedure

- You can apply for **maximum 3 doctoral positions**.
- All applications must be submitted through the online job application platform on the NeXED website (www.nexed.eu) until **April 21, 2025, 23:59 CET**. Click on the 'Submit your application' button, complete the online application form and be sure to include a motivation letter, a recent CV (including a transcript of study results), and the contact information of two reference contact persons.
- In some cases it is required to also submit your application through the hosting institute's website. This will be clearly mentioned in the specific job description if applicable. In these cases you must therefore submit your application twice, at two different websites, for it to be valid.
- The NeXED Supervisory Board will review all applications after the application deadline. We will inform you about the next steps in the selection procedure as soon as possible.
- **Pre-selected candidates** will be invited to a teleconference interview with the selection committee.
- NeXED will follow an **open, transparent, merit-based, impartial and equitable** recruitment procedure, with particular focus on **fair gender representation and diversity**. The recruitment will align with the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the European Charter for Researchers and will follow pre-defined selection criteria.

Additional Information

For additional information about the NeXED research projects, job offers or the online application form, please contact Prof. Dries Knapen (dries.knapen@uantwerpen.be).

Overview of the 15 PhD positions

You can consult the specific job descriptions and requirements for each PhD position here.

PhD position	Host institution	Lead Supervisor
DC 1: Endocrine disruption of zebrafish brain and sensory organ development	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands	Lisa Baumann
DC 2: Improved NAM-based testing of ED-mediated reproductive toxicity	Danmarks Tekniske Universitet, Denmark	Terje Svingen
DC 3: A cross-species approach to assessing impaired neurological function caused by endocrine disruptors	University of Antwerp, Belgium	Dries Knapen
DC 4: Next generation regulatory assessment and identification of endocrine disrupting chemicals	Karolinska Institutet, Sweden	Anna Beronius
DC 5: Species differences in physiology and sensitivity to thyroid hormone system disrupting chemicals	Watchfrog, France	David Du Pasquier
DC 6: Endocrine and neurodevelopmental disrupting potential of relevant human exposure mixtures	Masarykova univerzita, Czechia	Klára Hilscherová
DC 7: From EATS exposome to EATS effectome – fish as vertebrate model	Syddansk Universitet, Denmark	Henrik Holbech
DC 8: AOP network-based assessment of interactions among endocrine axes in environmental PFAS mixtures	University of Antwerp, Belgium	Lucia Vergauwen
DC 9: Exposomics and metabolomics in zebrafish embryos for complex exposure scenarios	University of Antwerp, Belgium	Adrian Covaci
DC 10: Novel approaches to assess the impact of EDCs in the adult nervous system	Università degli Studi di Milano, Italy	Barbara Viviani
DC 11: Exploring nuclear receptor cross-talk in aquatic molluscs and how it translates to vertebrates	Syddansk Universitet, Denmark	Elvis Genbo Xu
DC 12: Development of a zebrafish metabolome atlas and bridging to EDC exposure	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands	Pim Leonards
DC 13: Central integration of peripheral endocrine signals	Centre national de la recherche scientifique, France	Jean-Baptiste Fini
DC 14: Disruption of thyroid hormone transport to the brain in organoid models, zebrafish, and humans	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands	Timo Hamers
DC 15: Explore the link between food, metabolic state and endocrine signalling across aquatic taxa	Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, United Kingdom	Ioanna Katsiadaki