TOGAS TRAINING FOR OPPORTUNITIES AND GROWTH IN ACADEMIC SUSTAINABILITY

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

TOGAS Call for Postdoctoral Researchers

Deadline 8/2/2027 – 17h CET

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Universiteit Antwerpen



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Disclaimer

This guide provides potential applicants to the TOGAS call with practical information on how to apply, and a description of the assessment procedure. If you require further information about the TOGAS program, please contact the TOGAS Helpdesk: togas@uantwerpen.be

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1. TOGAS programme description

1.1. Overview of TOGAS programme

TOGAS (Training for Opportunities and Growth in Academic Sustainability) is a novel **postdoctoral talent attraction programme leveraging academic sustainability for postdoctoral researchers (PDs)**. It aims to support the academic career development of postdoctoral researchers by leveraging excellent research and academic training opportunities to prepare for a long-term independent academic career.

TOGAS will launch one call to recruit **five postdoctoral researchers** at the **University of Antwerp** (UAntwerpen) for a total fellowship period of **60 months** implemented in two phases: Phase 1 of 36 months and Phase 2 of 24 months. The transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 provides a structured career progression trajectory towards the development of key competences indispensable for an independent academic career position. Each of the five fellowships is aligned to a long-term perspective at UAntwerpen, beyond the TOGAS fellowship. TOGAS thus introduces a pre-tenure track model and provides a potential stairway to long-term academic career opportunities at UAntwerpen and beyond. Consequently, the programme addresses **promising PDs who are strongly motivated for an academic long-term career development trajectory at UAntwerpen**.

TOGAS is centered around **sustainability' as overarching cross-disciplinary research orientation**. More specifically, it addresses environmental and societal challenges in five sustainability research themes embedded in a set of scientific STEM disciplines ranging from chemistry and medical biochemistry to circular product design and (interior)architecture.

TOGAS is co-funded by the 'MSCA Choose Europe for Science 2025' initiative, which was launched by the European Commission under the Horizon Europe - MSCA programme to increase the attractiveness of research careers in Europe and to address the challenge of brain drain in the European R&I sector. With TOGAS, UAntwerpen strives to attract and retain postdoctoral research talent with a strong ambition and potential to grow into a sustainable independent academic position in a STEM domain.

TOGAS benefits for postdoctoral researchers

- **Attractive employment conditions**: competitive remuneration including a mobility allowance during Phase 1, longer-term (36+24 months) appointment with progressing academic autonomy
- A **three-pillar training programme** for the development of a wide-set of academic, research and teaching skills with a **vision for a long-term academic perspective**. This training programme will serve as the foundation for each PD's personal career development plan that will be designed to strengthen scientific knowledge, key research competences and transferable skills, aligned to their academic career progression path
- **High quality supervision and structured monitoring mechanism:** each of the PDs will receive high-quality supervision from an experienced supervisor in line with the MSCA supervision guidelines. A structured system of formal progress monitoring is in place, with the CDP as central follow-up tool, complemented by frequent informal follow-up meetings
- **Stimulating academic environments:** the five research themes are each embedded in excellent research settings exhibiting a track record of ground-breaking R&I and impact achievements with a wide range of interdisciplinary, intersectoral and international research and networking options for the individual projects of the PDs and access to state-of the art research facilities and infrastructure.
- **Contributing to the overall sustainability R&I agenda**: each PD can develop its own 5-yr research proposal addressing one of the five defined sustainability research themes
- **Prospect** for a long-term independent academic role at UAntwerpen, **beyond the TOGAS fellowship**

1.2. TOGAS Research themes and supervisors

TOGAS is centred around **'sustainability' as overarching cross-disciplinary research orientation**, addressing environmental and societal sustainability challenges in **five defined research themes**, each embedded in an interdisciplinary research environment:

- Catalytic methods for sustainable chemical transformations
- Plasma-based sustainable chemistry
- Co-governance for sustainable transitions: a systemic design perspective
- (Adaptive) reuse for environmental changes and stakeholder-driven design
- Molecular basis of disease and protein biochemistry

For each of these research themes, one PD will be selected. These research themes support the objectives of the European Green Deal and the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 through a sustainable green transition; (ii) align with the EU's strategic agenda for the green transition (2024–2029) and the forthcoming Circular Economy Act; and (iii) promote long-term sustainable development.

TOGAS employs an individual-driven research strategy: in response to the TOGAS call, applicants are to develop their **own individual research proposal to address a specific sustainability challenge within one of the five defined research themes** under the **supervision of an experienced academic supervisor**. The five academic supervisors are renowned experts in the respective research themes and have ample experience in supervising early career researchers. The involvement of a co-supervisor is optional but possible in case interdisciplinary and/or intersectoral needs for the individual project are identified by the applicant, either from within UAntwerpen or internationally embedded (via optional secondments[1] - to be included in the application). Further details about each of the five research themes are provided in Table 1, with indication of the supervisor and the research environment they are embedded in.

Table 1: Description of the TOGAS research themes & supervisors

Theme 1: Catalytic methods for sustainable chemical transformations
Applications within theme 1 should focus on the development of new synthetic methodologies for sustainable organic synthesis. These new synthetic methods are enablers for advanced modern organic synthesis and can be based on base metal catalysis, organocatalysis, photocatalysis, or electrocatalysis. Besides thermal also new activation modes (i.e. photochemical, electrochemical and mechanochemical) can be embraced. The expected results are new production methods that can be applied for the synthesis of specialty and fine chemicals in the sustainable chemical industry of the future. *Supervisor*: Bert Maes (Bert.Maes@uantwerpen.be) *Research environment*: ORSY/CASCH Center of Excellence
Theme 2 : Plasma-based sustainable chemistry
Applications within theme 2 will focus on one or more of the following gas conversion applications which are crucial to advance plasma-based sustainable chemistry: CO2 splitting into CO and O2, CH4 conversion into olefins, H2 and valuable carbon (e.g., C-black or C-nanotubes), the combined CO2 and CH4 conversion (dry reforming of methane, DRM) for syngas production, N2 fixation into NH3 or NOx, NH3 cracking for H2 formation, and plastic waste valorisation. Plasma technology is indeed gaining increasing interest for various sustainable chemistry applications, by the electrification of chemical reactions. The expected results will be either the development of novel fully-coupled computational fluid dynamics simulations with integrated plasma chemistry to gain detailed insights

[1] *Secondments (intersectoral, international or interdisciplinary) are periods of mobility up to max 3 months per Phase) to another academic or non-academic organisation (the host for secondment) if meaningful to achieve the objectives of the proposed research.*

in the underlying mechanisms, or the development of novel plasma reactors, with improved reaction performance in the lab, or the combination of both, for the above applications.

Supervisor: Annemie Bogaerts (Annemie.Bogaerts@uantwerpen.be)
Research environment: PLASMANT

Theme 3: Co-governance for sustainable transitions: a systemic design perspective

Applications within theme 3 should covers the development of co-governance approaches for sustainable transitions. The research will deepen the interchange between systems thinking and sustainable innovation from a systemic design perspective. It will address distributed and shared power, learning and responsibility across diverse stakeholders for building a systemic design capability to accelerate sustainable transitions. And it will advance knowledge on governance structures to enable coordination across individual, organizational and ecosystem levels. The expected results are novel design and innovation approaches to facilitate the complex transition to a more sustainable and circular economy, by taking into account the nested structure of recursive systems.

Supervisor: Els Du Bois (Els.DuBois@uantwerpen.be)
Research environment: REuseLab/Research group Product Development

Theme 4: (Adaptive) reuse for environmental changes and stakeholder-driven design

Applications within theme 4 will focus on the adaptation and reuse of existing buildings and tackle regenerative, resource-conscious, and socially equitable building cultures. The aim is to advance research that bridges interior design, the existing built environment, and social sustainability to develop spatial, material, and organisational strategies that support circular building practices and community-centred transformation processes. This includes (interior) architectural approaches that not only minimise environmental impact but also actively regenerate ecosystems through material reuse, low-carbon construction, and context-sensitive interventions. It further examines processes that engage current and future stakeholders in meaningful dialogue, integrating collective memory, identity formation, and community agency into the redesign of existing built environments. The expected results will provide insights into circular renovation practices, adaptive reuse methodologies, and socially embedded design strategies developed through prototyping, case-study analysis, and practice-based investigations. The project will contribute conceptual and methodological frameworks at the intersection of design, ecology, and stakeholder-driven design.

Supervisor: Sara Eloy (Sara.Eloy@uantwerpen.be)
Research environment: Architecture+Interior Research group

Theme 5: Molecular basis of disease and protein biochemistry

Applications within theme 5 strongly align with the SDG 3 “Health and Well-being", which emphasises strengthening research capacity for diseases, improving health systems and advancing the understanding of biological mechanisms underpinning human health. The aim is to conduct a profound investigation of host and/or pathogen factors involved in immune regulation, immunopathology, and inflammation (core processes that directly underlie human health and disease). The research will be conducted at the molecular level by leveraging expertise in recombinant protein production and purification, protein biophysics, structural biology, and antibody technology, and placing the obtained results within a systemic context through the use of in vitro models. This research will provide robust and rational foundation for the development of novel therapies and diagnostic methods, which are both central to improving population health. In turn, this will contribute to the following EU sustainability goals: reducing disease burden, decreasing CO2 emission and plastic waste through optimised workflows and establishment of core facilities, tool development based on knowledge and innovation, and strategic resilience in the field of biotechnology and life sciences.

Supervisor: Ingrid De Meester (Ingrid.Demeester@uantwerpen.be)
Research environment: Laboratory of Medical Biochemistry/Infla-Med Center of Excellence

Box 1: Contact with supervisor

Please note that candidates may contact the supervisor prior to submitting their applications exclusively concerning the following points:

- scientific advice on the proposed research
- information on the available infrastructure
- further information on the expertise available and
- the mission and vision of the host environment with respect to science and education

It is **not allowed** to involve the supervisor in the drafting of the proposal. Please note supervisors will not have any role in the selection process.

1.3. TOGAS Training program

The TOGAS training programme is tailored towards an all-round academic competence profile with three core academic roles (research, education and academic services).
It comprises three distinct pillars, each nurturing core competences and transferable skills essential for a future role as independent academic with three core roles:

- Pillar 1 Research Excellence: leading, managing and performing innovative *research;*
- Pillar 2 Academic Growth: delivering excellent academic *education* and developing horizontal *academic research skills* and
- Pillar 3 Research Impact: providing academic services (project reviewing, membership in academic committees, …) and disseminating knowledge to academia, society and industry to increase the impact of research.

The training programme will be defined partly individually, complemented with 5 joint training events to ensure the envisioned development to an all-round and excellent academic profile. The joint training components focus on Responsible Research, Entrepreneurship, Societal Engagement, ERC Grant Writing and an academic career path session.

Attention will be given to the diversification of the training between Phase 1 and Phase 2 related to language proficiency (see Box 2), grant writing skills and progression in the three key academic roles.

This training programme will serve as the foundation for each PD's personal career development plan (CDP) that will be designed together with the supervisor to strengthen scientific knowledge, key research competences and transferable skills, aligned to their academic career progression path and the perspective at UAntwerpen beyond the TOGAS fellowship. Elements of "triple-I" (international, intersectoral or interdisciplinary) mobility are encouraged but optional. The CDP will also be used as monitoring tool for the yearly follow-up meetings between the PD and the supervisor.

At the end of Phase 1, the CDP for Phase 2 will be updated with clear goals for the next 24 months of the TOGAS fellowship, aligned with the progression towards the increased academic responsibilities during Phase 2.

Box 2: Enhancing proficiency in academic language – the UAntwerpen context

Apart from further professionalisation in **Academic English**, with growing academic (teaching) responsibilities during Phase 2, the academic context at UAntwerpen requires particular attention to the development of **Dutch language skills**. UAntwerpen is bound by strict Dutch language proficiency standards, imposed by the Flemish Government for their teaching and academic staff to guarantee high-quality teaching. Therefore, the TOGAS training programme encourages the development of Dutch language skills starting already in Phase 1, as this will be advantageous for the PDs to reach the proficiency level as required for a potential long-term academic perspective at UAntwerpen.

2. TOGAS Call information

2.1. Call Timeline

The TOGAS programme will organise **one call for the five TOGAS fellowships** (one per research theme), according to the following indicative timeline:

STEPS	DATES	DETAILS
CALL OPENS	9/11/2026 at 9:00 CET	Online application system becomes accessible
CALL CLOSES	8/02/2027 at 17:00 CET	Deadline to submit complete applications
ELIGIBILITY CHECK	February 2027	Applications screened for the eligibility conditions by the TOGAS Call team
PEER EVALUATION	March – Mid May 2027	Proposals evaluated by independent peer reviewers
PRE-SELECTION	Mid – End May 2027	Peer-reviewed applications are ranked per research theme by the Selection Committee resulting in a list of pre-selected candidates that will be invited for the selection interview
SELECTION INTERVIEW	June 2027	Pre-selected candidates are interviewed by the Selection Committee resulting in a ranking list per research theme. The first-ranked candidate per research theme will be invited for the TOGAS fellowship.
APPOINTMENT	At earliest 1 September 2027 At latest 1 November 2027	Postdoctoral researchers start their Phase 1 in this time period

2.2. Admissibility and Eligibility conditions

The call targets promising early career postdoctoral researchers of any nationality.
All candidates for the TOGAS programme have to comply with the eligibility criteria:

- Candidates should be early career researchers who **have a doctoral degree** at the time of the call deadline (8th February 2027). Candidates who have successfully defended their doctoral

thesis prior to the call deadline remain eligible, even if their degree has not yet been formally awarded. The successful defence must be unconditional (no further requirements/ corrections that need to be addressed) and take place before the call deadline.

- The doctoral degree of the candidate should be in an area **relevant for the selected research theme**.
- They must have obtained their (first) PhD a **maximum of 6 years** before 8th February 2027. Years of experience outside of research and career breaks (e.g. due to parental and other care or medical related leave) will not count towards the amount of research experience and may thus extend the eligibility window.
- Candidates must comply with the **MSCA mobility rule**: they 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 8th February 2027.
- Candidates **cannot already be permanently employed by UAntwerpen**.
- Candidates must develop their own **research proposal aligned to one of the five TOGAS research themes** and the programme's overall sustainability research orientation
- Candidates must submit a **complete application in English**, using the provided templates and including all required annexes and supporting documents, through the online application portal by the 8th February 2027 deadline.

Further information on the **requirements for eligibility** is listed in Table 2.
All candidates will undergo an eligibility check to ensure that they meet the criteria and rules described in the table below. Candidates who do not meet the criteria are not eligible to apply for the TOGAS program.

Table 2- Eligibility and admissibility criteria and rules

Criterion	Rule
PhD Diploma	PhD Diploma certificate in English (accompanied by a certified English translation if the initial document is not in English) OR an official statement on headed paper from their academic PhD institution confirming that the successful and unconditional defence of the PhD before 8th February 2027 (in English).
Research Experience	Postdocs researchers must have a **maximum of 6 years of experience in research** from the date of award of their (first) doctoral degree. The limit can be extended (in days) for the following reasons: • Maternity Leave (18 months (548 days) per child born after the PhD award date, or the actual duration of the leave taken, whichever is longest). • Paternity Leave (the actual duration per child born after the PhD award date). • Compulsory national service • Periods of non-research professional experience • Long-term sick leave (periods greater than 30 days). Applicants indicate possible extensions in the CV template. They must not provide further evidence at the application stage but may be requested to provide proof for the extended period at some point in the selection procedure.

MSCA Mobility Rule	Candidates 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 8th February 2027. The following periods are not taken into account: a) compulsory national service; b) time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention; c) short stays (such as holidays) as long as the candidate did not reside or did not have their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country during that period. Candidates indicate the countries of their residence and main activity in the Structured CV. They must not provide further evidence at this stage but may be invited to provide proof at some point in the selection procedure.
Research Theme	Candidates must develop their own research proposal pertaining to one of the five defined research themes, connected to the overall Sustainability research orientation of the TOGAS programme. The alignment with the defined research theme will be checked and might be decisive during the eligibility check.
Nationality	The call is open to researchers of any nationality.
Formal application criteria	Applications must be complete and contain all parts, including all required annexes and supporting documents and submitted before the call deadline using the online application portal. All submitted documents must be in English. Applications must be submitted using the provided templates and comply with the editing instructions and other specifications indicated below or in the templates. The applicant carries the responsibility that all application documents are correct, complete and up to date and uploaded in the portal. **Incomplete or incorrect applications are not eligible and will not be considered for evaluation**.

Box 3: Proofs of eligibility
Candidates who are offered the TOGAS fellowship may be required to provide further documentary evidence to prove that they meet all eligibility criteria. If they cannot provide this, the appointment offer will be withdrawn.

2.3. Application components

An application for TOGAS consists of a part A and a part B:

Part A: collects personal information and key information on the individual research project via webforms.

- Three references (whom the Call Team might contact to request a recommendation before the interview step)
- Short summary of the research project and a minimum of three key words

Part B: consists of the following mandatory application documents:

- **Qualitative and narrative structured CV** describing main achievements in terms of research, teaching, management and leadership, intersectoral experience and services to wider society using the provided template and instructions.
- **Research proposal** addressing a research subject connected to one the five research themes and thematically fitting with the host environment and the supervisor (See Table 1). The following aspects are to be described using the provided template: research objectives;

interdisciplinarity, methodology and feasibility; impact and embedment in the academic environment at UAntwerpen including the complementary two-way knowledge-transfer. Applicants are encouraged to include, where relevant, one or more "triple-I" (international, intersectoral or interdisciplinary) mobility elements (secondments[1]) in their research proposal and to motivate the fit of this proposal with their current academic profile and the needs to reach their long-term career ambition.

- **Motivation statement** referring to the long-term research vision and long-term academic career ambition within UAntwerpen
- **Ethics self-assessment form** to identify ethical issues relating to their research proposal and how they will be addressed, the provided template is to be completed (see also section 4.1).
- **Copy of PhD diploma**, and if necessary accompanied by a certified English translation OR an official statement on headed paper from their academic PhD institution in English

Box 4: Use of generative AI tools

When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the research proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicant to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilized. See: Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research and recommendation for researchers, research organisations and funding organisations.

If generative AI is employed in the preparation of the proposal, applicants should disclose their use in their research proposal, detailing which AI tool was used, for which purpose, and the specific sections of the proposal to which it was applied.

2.4. Application procedure

Applications must be submitted online via the dedicated **application portal** that is accessible on the TOGAS website (https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/togas/call/applyhere/).

- The submission of applications will be possible online from **9th November 2026.**
- Deadline for submission of applications is **8th February 2027 at 17:00 (CET).**
- Only one proposal per candidate may be submitted to this call.
  - In case of multiple proposals submitted by the same candidate, only the **latest application will be retained for evaluation**
- Only applications that are complete and submitted by the application deadline via the online portal will be considered for evaluation.

The portal invites applicants to complete information online (part A) and upload the required part B application documents via a webform. Application templates for Part B can be downloaded from the TOGAS website using the links below. Candidates are invited to work on these documents off-line. For the submission, the application documents should be submitted in PDF format of maximum 2 MB each.

Application Templates for Part B
The part B templates are to be downloaded at the TOGAS website:

- Structured CV
- Research proposal
- Motivation statement
- Ethics self-assessment form

Templates, page limits and lay-out instructions are to be respected. Applications that do not comply with the compulsory lay-out and page limits will not be eligible.

Step 1 Access the online application portal: go to TOGAS Application Portal. No online registration is required to enter the portal.

Step 2 Enter your personal information and key project information in the webform.

Step 3 Then upload the following documents:

- Structured CV
- Research proposal
- Motivation statement
- Ethics self-assessment form
- Copy of PhD diploma, including a translation in English in case the diploma does not contain information in English (1 file) OR an official statement on headed paper from their academic PhD institution in English (1 file);

Each document must be uploaded as **a PDF document** no larger than 2 MB.
Each **document name** has to start with the family name of the applicant, followed by the document name as follows:

- The Structured CV: 'Family name_CV.pdf'.
- The proposed research project: 'Family name_Researchproposal.pdf'.
- The motivation statement: 'Family name_Motivationstatement.pdf'
- Ethics self-assessment form: 'Family name_Ethics.pdf'.
- The PhD diploma or statement: 'Family name_Diploma.pdf'

Step 4 Once the webform has been completed and all five application documents have been uploaded, the application portal will invite the candidates to submit via the submission button.

Step 5 Once the application is submitted the portal will send an email confirming the submission of the application.

If you encounter any problems with the online portal or your submission, please contact **togas@uantwerpen.be**.

3. Evaluation and selection process

The TOGAS selection and recruitment processes ensure Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment aligned with MSCA's standards and the European Charter for Researchers, through the combination of independent peer review and an assessment by an interdisciplinary Selection Committee. Substantial involvement of international and independent evaluators at all evaluation steps is ensured.

The process embraces qualitative assessment of candidates, as evidenced by the evaluation criteria (see section 3.3), recognising the quality of the PDs previous achievements including teamwork, leadership, teaching, mentoring, intersectoral experience and scientific impact/outreach and their potential to further develop these skills.

3.1. Procedural steps

Applications for the TOGAS fellowships will be evaluated via a **5-step selection process**:

Step 1: Eligibility Check
All applications are initially screened to ensure that they meet the admissibility and eligibility requirements indicated above. The check is completed by sending a formal notification to all candidates to inform them of the outcome and if they will be proceeding to the next step.

- The eligibility check will be conducted in *February 2027*.
- Candidates will be informed about the eligibility decision.

Step 2: Peer evaluation
Each eligible application (Structured CV + Research proposal) will be assessed by three independent peer reviewers of which at least two of them will be external to UAntwerpen. The independent peer review process is outsourced to an experienced peer review organisation. Peer reviewers will have domain knowledge of the theme of applicants' projects. They are academics or senior researchers in higher education institutions or research performing organisations. The focus of their assessment is on the quality of both the candidate and the project, in addition to the fit of the candidate in the host environment (see evaluation criteria in section 3.2).The assessments of the independent peer reviewers feed into the Pre-Selection Step. Those applications that did not meet the individual and overall evaluation quality threshold for at least 2 peer reviewers will not pass to step 3 (see 3.2).

- The independent peer review will take place in *March – Mid May 2027*.
- Candidates will be informed about the result of step 2 (passing to step 3/below quality threshold).

Step 3: Pre-Selection
There will be five TOGAS Selection Committees (SCs), each for a respective research theme. The SCs will be composed by a good balance of experts (internal and external members, academics and non-academics, with adequate gender and geographical representation).The SCs will formulate an integrated evaluation report and a consensus score for each peer-reviewed application passing to step 3 based on the reports and scores from the peer review (step 2) during their consensus meeting. The outcome of this step will be the ranking of the applications per fellowship position (1 per research theme) and a pre-selection of max five candidates for the interview phase of the evaluation (leading to an interview threshold score). Also a reserve list of max three candidates per research theme will be established.

- Pre-selection will take place in *the second half of May 2027*.
- Candidates will be informed about the result of step 3 (invited for the interview/reserve/below interview threshold).

Step 4: Selection Interview
The pre-selected candidates per fellowship position will be invited for an online structured selection interview with the Selection Committee in their role as interview panel. Candidates are expected to pitch their research project and the interview will consist of a round of questions to assess the candidate's competences and potential for an independent academic career path at UAntwerpen based on the interview evaluation criteria (see section 3.2) and taking into account the motivation

statement. Important aspects that will be assessed are the academic capacity or potential of the applicant (including teaching, leadership, funding acquisition skills), the scientific knowledge and insights in the proposed research project and a clear motivation for a professional future within UAntwerpen, including the willingness to meet the Dutch language criteria.
After the interview the final consensus score will be assigned and the evaluation summary report will be finalised for each of the interviewed applicants. These scores will be the basis for the final ranking of candidates for each fellowship position.

- Interviews will take place in *June 2027*
- Interviewed candidates will be informed about the result of step 4 (invited for the TOGAS fellowship/not invited but ranked (=reserve listed)/not ranked) and all step 3 candidates will be provided with their integrated evaluation report.

Step 5: Appointment procedure
The five selected postdocs will be invited for their respective TOGAS fellowship position and upon their acceptance, the appointment procedure will be initiated.

- The appointments are expected to start between *1st September 2027 and 1st November 2027*.
- The selected postdocs will receive feedback on their ethical screening

3.2. Evaluation criteria

The applications will be assessed in step 2 and step 4 on the basis of three **main evaluation** criteria and the aspects detailed in Table 3. The below defined weight factors per evaluation criteria are taken into account to calculate the consensus score per application used to determine the ranking lists in step 3 and step 4.

Table 3 - Evaluation criteria with the aspects taken into account

1.	**Qualifications, potential and motivation of the applicant (Weight 40%)**
•	**Quality of research achievements** *demonstrated experience in terms of quality and impact of research outputs (incl. publications, datasets, presentations at international conferences, prizes/awards) and attracted research funding/grants*
•	**Quality of contributions to teaching and mentoring** *prior professional activities showing a level of (i) educational experience and/or (ii) mentoring or supervision activities and/or iii) teaching professionalisation and the potential to further develop these skills*
•	**Team focus and leadership potential** *prior professional activities showing a level of (i) international and interdisciplinary networking collaboration (e.g. research stays, conference participation/organisation, interdisciplinary collaborations) and/or (ii) leadership activities (e.g. mentoring of PhD students) and the potential to further develop these skills*
•	**Intersectoral experience and broader impact** *prior activities showing a level of intersectoral experience or impact (incl. transfer of knowledge to industry or society, scientific outreach, network) and/or non-research experience (outside academia)*
•	**Motivation for the TOGAS fellowship** (*only step 4*)
2.	**Quality of the research project (Weight 30%)**
•	Quality and pertinence of the **project's R&I objectives** *Including ambition and progress beyond state of the art), proposed interdisciplinary synergies to realise innovative solutions for sustainability challenges will be valued positively*

• Soundness of proposed **methodology, procedures and feasibility** *Including realistic project timeline, required infrastructure, interdisciplinary approaches, track record of proposed methods, and appropriateness of Open Science practices* • Scale and significance of the contribution to **societal and economic impact** • Identification of relevant **international, intersectoral or interdisciplinary ("triple-I") mobility** needs benefitting the project
3. Integration within the academic environment (Weight 30%)
• **Integration in the research environment** *thematic fit and complementarity of the applicant ('two-way transfer') and its project with the research environment of the fellowship* • **Vision on long-term research plan** (including funding options) and **professional career ambition in the academic environment** (including educational vision) (*only step 4*)

Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 5 (half point scores may be given) with the interpretation of the scores following the Horizon Europe scoring methodology:

Scoring and interpretation
0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information. **1 – Poor**. The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses. **2 – Fair**. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses. **3 – Good**. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present. **4 – Very good**. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present. **5 – Excellent**. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

In order to ensure that only high-quality applications are funded, applications not meeting the following **individual and overall evaluation thresholds** will not proceed to step 3: (i) the minimum threshold of each individual evaluation criterion is 3 points; (ii) The threshold of the overall score is 10 points out of a total of 15 points before weighting is applied.

In case of ex-aequo in the consensus score, the following priority order will be respected: (1) applications will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion 'Quality and potential of the applicant'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion 'Integration in the academic environment'. If a distinction still cannot be made, the respective SC may decide to include one extra candidate for the interview phase. In case of ex-aequo scores, the used prioritisation factors will be clearly communicated in the feedback to the applicants.

3.3. Feedback and appeal

All candidates will receive *notifications on the outcomes* of each step throughout the entire selection process (see section 2.2).

Apart from the notifications on the outcome, the *evaluation feedback* is provided to the candidates as follows:

- At the end of step 2 (peer review): candidates whose applications scored lower than the defined quality thresholds by at least two peer reviewers will receive the anonymized assessment by the independent peers (and will not pass to step 3)
- Upon conclusion step 4 (interview): all peer-reviewed applicants having passed to step 3 will receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), containing the evaluation feedback drawn up by the SC and the anonymized assessment by the independent peers. For the interviewed candidates, suggestions for academic growth will also be made by the SC.

During step 5, the selected PDs will receive *feedback on their ethical screening* including ethical advice to ensure the implementation of the project according to the highest ethical standards. In case the

ethics issues were not addressed adequately in the Self-Assessment, the PDs will be requested to provide extra information on the ethical approach or the mitigating measures, prior to the start of their project.
Applicants are able to request *an appeal for step 1 & step 2 outcomes* within a 5-day period after receiving the formal notification on the outcome. The appeal procedure will assess whether the administrative procedures during the selection process have been followed as described in this Guide for Applicants. This request will be addressed by the Appeal Team and will either result in the rejection of the request, with due motivation sent as formal notification to the applicant; or the request is declared admissible and justified with corrective actions being taken that might result in admitting the applicant to proceed in the evaluation process. The appeal can be addressed to the TOGAS Program Coordinator, Liesbet.Cockx@uantwerpen.be.

4. Ethics and GDPR

4.1. Ethics

The TOGAS program operates with respect to the highest standards of research integrity and ethical conduct as described in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the Global Code of Conduct. Furthermore, it endorses the ethical principles of Horizon Europe as outlined in the Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe. All activities carried out within the program shall comply with the above principles and must comply with relevant national, EU and international legislations.

As part of the application process, applicants are requested to fill out an **ethics self-assessment** form to identify ethical matters relating to their research project. For identified ethical issues (answered with Yes in the table), further ethical information is requested in the ethic-self assessment form on (1) the Ethical dimension of the objectives, methodology and likely impact and (2) Compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations. In line with Horizon Europe ethics review methodology, the self-assessment covers key ethics topics, including privacy, protection of personal data, non-discrimination, informed consent, confidentiality and protection of the environment and human health. The ethical self-assessment template is available in the application portal.

For more detailed information on how to fill in the ethics self-assessment component of the application, please consult the Horizon Europe guidance document[2]. In case of questions of further ethical questions, applicants are invited to contact the TOGAS Ethics expert via TOGAS@uantwerpen.be (with ethics in the subject).As part of the selection procedure, the Ethics expert will (1) check the completeness of the ethical assessments during the eligibility check (step 1) and (2) screen the self-assessment, review potential ethics issues, assess the appropriateness of proposed measures for the five selected postdocs (and the reserve listed) during step 5. Then, the selected PDs will receive feedback on their ethical self-assessment including ethical advice to ensure the implementation of the project according to the highest ethical standards. In case the ethics issues were not addressed

Box 5: Ethical self-assessment

It is the applicant's responsibility to identify any potential ethical issue(s) in the ethics self-assessment form) and to indicate how these aspects will be addressed. This responsibility extends to the duration of the appointment of successful applicants and includes the notification of any newly arising ethical issue(s).

[2] how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf (europa.eu)

adequately in the ethics self-assessment, the selected PDs will be requested to provide extra information on the ethical approach or the mitigating measures, prior to the start of their project.

4.2. Use and protection of personal data

The personal data will be collected and stored through the IT-infrastructure of the University of Antwerp. All current safety measures will be taken to ensure the protection of personal data during the application phase. Data will be stored until 30/03/2038 in line with HEurope requirements on possible audits on the project execution and record-keeping.

The information provided in the application process will be available only for TOGAS call team and the people involved in the selection process. The legal ground for this processing is informed consent. At the start of the application in the TOGAS portal applicants will be asked to consent to the processing of the data that provided.

Personal data are processed as follows:

- The application with all elements will be shared with the Call Team for the eligibility check.
- Both key data of Part A (contact details, keywords, abstract) and the Structured CV, Research proposal will be shared with the peer review organisation and the peer reviewers for step 2.
- The same information and documents will be shared with the members of the relevant Selection Committee for step 3 and 4 of the selection process, who will also receive the Motivation Statement.

By applying for this call applicants are informed that these data will be collected with the stated goals and processing of personal data. Applicants have the right to access, correction and deletion of personal data. The data collected is stored securely and will be used only for the purpose stated in the application.

Applicants can address questions regarding the processing of personal data to the TOGAS helpdesk (TOGAS@uantwerpen.be) and to the data protection officer: privacy@uantwerpen.be

5. Appointment and working conditions

5.1. Appointment

5.1.1 Start Date and duration

Postdocs will be awarded a full-time position for a maximum duration of 60-months implemented in two phases: a Phase 1 period of 36 months and a consecutive Phase 2 period of 24 months.
The start date for the TOGAS postdocs is between *1st September 2027 and 1st November 2027* at latest.

5.1.2 Conditions

Phase 1 (co-funded by the EU): In accordance with the current Belgian fiscal regulations and the UAntwerpen regulations, PDs will be appointed full-time via yearly postdoctoral fellowship agreements for an envisaged total of 36 person months. A postdoctoral fellowship agreement is an equivalent direct contract with full social security adhering to the UAntwerpen postdoctoral fellowship regulations and tax-exempted in Belgium subject to national legislation.
Yearly monitoring meetings will be scheduled between the PD and the supervisor to follow-up on the research and career development goals defined in their CDP. Where needed corrective measures will be defined jointly by the PD and the supervisor and included in the updated CDP. For Phase 1, a positive

assessment is required to extend the postdoctoral fellowship yearly, up to the full Phase 1 period of 36 pm.

Phase 2 (funded by University of Antwerpen): During Phase 2, PDs will be employed full time in a combination of statutes: for 90% as a contractual postdoctoral researcher plus for 10% as a temporary academic staff (following - at the end of Phase 1 - the successful application to a 10% vacancy in line with the Higher Education Code of the Flemish Government). This combination provides an attractive appointment trajectory as it offers more opportunities and autonomy for the PDs during Phase 2 enabling the development of their academic competence profile.

The appointment conditions for the PDs during both Phases include full social security coverages: pension rights, unemployment rights, coverage in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases, health care benefits and parental benefits. Table 4 provides further details on the gross remuneration during both Phases

Table 4 - Description of remuneration for the PD

TOGAS fellowship	Description

Phase 1 – 36 pm	• Gross remuneration: EUR 4187,94 /month
	  ○ The monthly remuneration for the PD is calculated according to the scholarship amounts for postdoctoral scholarship holders on the pay scales for Contract Research Staff (Dutch: *Bijzonder Academisch Personeel*, BAP).
	  ○ Subject to national fiscal framework, this amount will be tax-exempted, but employee's social security contributions and other costs or compulsory deductions under national legislation are to be deducted
	• Mobility allowance: EUR 710/month
	  ○ The mobility allowance is part of the Phase 1 remuneration and is intended to cover personal mobility costs related to the physical mobility to UAntwerpen.
	  ○ Provided that the national fiscal legislation continues to allow a tax-exemption of postdoctoral scholarships, the monthly mobility allowance is a nett amount
	For the Phase 1, the minimum monthly gross remuneration costs for each PD will be EUR 6700/month as defined for the MSCA Choose Europe Programme.. This amount includes the remuneration, employer and employee's security contributions, taxes and other costs or compulsory deductions under national legislation linked to remuneration applicable for researchers recruited under the TOGAS Programme and is inclusive of the mobility allowance.

Phase 2 – 24pm	• Gross remuneration
	  ○ Contractual Postdoctoral researcher (90%): the gross monthly salary is calculated (proportionally) according to the pay scale for Principal research fellow (doctor-assistant) in the Contract Research Staff category (BAP).
	  ○ Temporary Academic Staff (10%): the gross monthly salary is calculated according to the pay scales for Senior Academic Staff (ZAP) and calculated proportionally, starting from the level of assistant professor.
	  ○ The gross salary in Phase 2 includes employer social security contributions, taxes and compulsory deductions linked to the remuneration under national legislation

	• The mobility allowance is not applicable during Phase 2: no personal mobility costs are associated with implementation of Phase 2. For Phase 2, the remuneration offered is set at a competitive level in line with the salary scales for academic staff at postdoctoral level (doctor assistant as defined by the Flemish Government) and considering the applicable seniority at the start of Phase 2.

5.2. Working conditions

HR Support UAntwerpen holds the 'HR Excellence in Research Award' since 2013. The principles are translated in its research, valorisation and HR strategy, comprising initiatives regarding ethical and professional aspects of research, recruitment, selection, working conditions, social security and training. UAntwerpen's International Staff Office (ISO) offers customized advice and support to selected PDs, e.g. practical information, administrative procedures and welcoming international colleagues. PDs can consult ISO prior to their arrival and during their stay on topics such as immigration formalities (incl. single permit procedure), residence/work permit, social security, taxes, health insurance, schools, daycare facilities and more. Advice and assistance are also offered to PDs' family members. With regards to social integrative support, the PDs will be invited to a welcome breakfast with all new international staff. This facilitates the integration within the research community of UAntwerpen and the initiation of personal contacts. Furthermore, all international students and staff and their family members are invited to join the MONDO community, a social network to strengthen cohesion at our university. Monthly activities are organized to provide networking opportunities with staff members of the ISO present to address practical and administrative questions.

Implementing support: A kick-off meeting will be scheduled with the PDs to support and inform them about the implementation aspects of their projects and to explain the set-up and objectives of the TOGAS programme, including its training and career development components.

Research and training support: To support the implementation of the research and training activities an allowance of EUR 700/month -managed by the supervisor- contributes to

- research related expenses (lab consumables, equipment costs, dissemination costs)
- training costs
- project-related travel costs, e.g. for workshops, conferences, and optional secondments

Infrastructure: The TOGAS PDs will each be embedded in a stimulating research environment exhibiting a track record of ground-breaking R&I. Access to state-of-the-art research facilities, infrastructure and equipment is available within the respective research environments for the five the research themes as described in Table 5.

Table 5 - Infrastructure of the five TOGAS research environments

Theme 1: Catalytic methods for sustainable chemical transformations
The ORSY division hosts fully equipped state-of-the art synthetic labs and has access to all analytical instruments for the separation and characterization of organic molecules [NMR, GC-MS, UPLC-(HR)MS, TLC-MS, IR , UV-VIS, cyclic voltammetry] required for organic synthesis. Preparative automated flash chromatography and preparative electrosynthesis equipment are also available. Within the CASCH consortium other analytical techniques [EPR, chiroptical spectroscopy (VCD, chiral Raman) and fluorescence spectroscopy] are available. A ThalesNano Phoenix flow reactor present at ORSY allows to transfer developed batch processes into continuous mode applying a wide range of pressures and temperatures.

Research environment: ORSY/CASCH Center of Excellence
Theme 2: Plasma-based sustainable chemistry
PLASMANT has many different types of plasma reactors (arc, gliding arc, microwave plasmas, atmospheric pressure glow discharges, and dielectric barrier discharges) available for gas conversion studies, as well as the necessary power supply units, and equipment for electrical and analytical characterization (probes, optical emission spectrometry, several gas chromatographs, NDIR, FTIR, GC-MS,...). For the computational work, PLASMANT has its own workstations and computer cluster, but also has access to the University Supercomputer and the Flemish Supercomputer Center. Moreover, chemical sustainability research activities are clustered (since 2025) in a new state-of-the-art chemistry building with fully equipped synthetic and analytic labs. *Research environment*: PLASMANT
Theme 3: Co-governance for sustainable transitions: a systemic design perspective
Product Development has all facilities to enable intense collaboration in various creative workspaces for brainstorming, cocreation, workshops and mapping exercises, relevant for research on governance for sustainable transitions. *Research environment*: REuseLab/Research group Product Development
Theme 4: (Adaptive) reuse for environmental changes and stakeholder-driven design
The A+I group has access to the Mekano Makerspace fabrication lab, the Light Lab and a Mixed Reality suite which supports both material prototyping and exploratory design research. The Mekano Makerspace fabrication provides facilities for 3D–printing, laser-cutting, wood- and material-working, casting and model-making, to more advanced fabrication technologies. The Light Lab enables optical and lighting experimentation and spatial atmospheres. Within A+I also equipment is available for immersive spatial simulations to prototype, visualise, and evaluate complex spatial, material, and ecological scenarios in real-time, bridging digital experimentation with embodied design exploration. *Research environment*: Architecture+Interior Research group
Theme 5: Molecular basis of disease and protein biochemistry
LMB is well-equipped to support the research within theme 5, it possesses fully equipped lab spaces for recombinant protein production in both bacterial and eukaryotic host systems and protein purification). The lab is fully equipped with various plate readers for read-outs based on colorimetry of fluorimetry. LMB also houses a biomolecular interaction platform granting direct access to surface plasmon resonance (SPR, BCT200), grating-coupled interferometry (GCI, WAVEdelta), and isothermal titration calorimetry (ITC, MicroCal PEAQ-ITC). LMB has also established a robust platform for structural biology including macromolecular X-ray crystallography (MX), small-angle X-ray scattering (SAXS) and cryogenic electron microscopy (cryo-EM). *Research environment*: Laboratory of Medical Biochemistry/Infla-Med Center of Excellence

6. Support

6.1. Contact

If you have read this guide and still have outstanding questions about the TOGAS project, please contact the helpdesk: togas@uantwerpen.be.

Additionally, you can contact the TOGAS helpdesk if you have questions relating to ethics and the completion of the mandatory Ethics self-assessment form. In this case please clearly state that your question refers to ethics in the email subject box. The TOGAS Call team can then ensure that your query is swiftly answered by an Ethics expert from the University of Antwerp.

Candidates may contact their potential supervisor prior to submitting the applications but only concerning a selective set of points. Please consult Box 1 before reaching out to them.

Theme	Supervisor	Email address
1	Bert Maes	Bert.Maes@uantwerpen.be
2	Annemie Bogaerts	Annemie.Bogaerts@uantwerpen.be
3	Els Du Bois	Els.DuBois@uantwerpen.be
4	Sara Eloy	Sara.Eloy@uantwerpen.be
5	Ingrid De Meester	Ingrid.Demeester@uantwerpen.be

6.2. Submission checklist

Before submitting your application, please ensure that you thoroughly check the list below as the submission of all stated documents is required. It is also necessary to name your documents in accordance with the specifications stated in the 'title' column.
Each document must be uploaded as **a PDF document** no larger than 2 MB.

Please note that **incomplete applications will be declared ineligible** and will not proceed to the next stage in the application process. It is advised that you do not wait until the final hours before the deadline to submit your application.

Part A: collects personal information and key information on the individual research project via an online webform. You do not need to submit any documents for part A.

Part B: consists of the following mandatory application documents:

Document	Title	Check
Qualitative and narrative structured CV	'Family name_CV.pdf'	☐
Research proposal	'Family name_Researchproposal.pdf'	☐
Motivation statement	'Family name_Motivationstatement.pdf'	☐
Ethics self-assessment form	'Family name_Ethics.pdf'.	☐
Copy of PhD diploma, including a translation in English if the initial document is not in English (1 file) OR an official statement on headed paper of your academic PhD institution in English (1 file)	'Family name_Diploma.pdf'	☐

6.3. Integration in Belgium

Starting a postdoctoral position in a new country is both a professional and personal transition. At the University of Antwerp, international researchers are part of a diverse academic community, with staff representing more than 100 nationalities. The University offers support to assist international researchers settle into their new environment, both at work and in everyday life.

The University of Antwerp provides a dynamic and internationally oriented environment for postdoctoral researchers. Its strong participation in European research programmes, including the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), reflects the University's commitment to international research and researcher development. UAntwerp has a long-standing track record in European research programmes and holds the **HR Excellence in Research logo,** demonstrating its commitment to creating a supportive environment for researchers and their professional development.

Living in Antwerp: Antwerp is a vibrant and international city in the Flemish region of Belgium. UAntwerp's Life in Antwerp webpages provide practical information to help you prepare for your move and settle into the city. Topics include:

- finding accommodation;
- immigration and residence formalities;
- health insurance and other social facilities;
- travelling to and around Antwerp;
- culture and leisure;
- sports and recreational activities;

Moving to Antwerp: The **International Staff Office** provides personalised support to incoming international researchers. Once your appointment has been initiated, the International Staff Office will contact you with information about the relevant immigration procedures.
Depending on your circumstances, the International Staff Office can advise you on:

- immigration formalities, including the single permit procedure;
- residence and work permits;
- social security and taxation;
- health and other insurance;
- housing;
- schools and childcare;
- family-related matters; and
- other practical and administrative questions related to living and working in Belgium.