



Guide for applicants

CoDesign4 Transitions Doctoral Network

20/12/2023



Funded by
the European Union



Index

Table of Contents

Index.....	2
1.About CoD4T	3
2.Recruitment campaign	4
2.1 Key dates	4
2.2 Open positions and projects	5
2.3 Who can apply?	5
2.4 Equal opportunities	6
3.How to apply?.....	6
3.1 Before applying	7
3.2 Your application	7
3.3 Applying for different positions.....	7
3.4 Supporting documents	7
4. Assessment and selection	9
4.1 Assessment of the applications	9
4.2 Interviews	12
4.3 Successful applicants.....	12
4.4 Appeal/redress.....	13
5. Data Protection	13
6. Annex	15
Redress request form	15





1. About CoD4T

CoDesign4Transitions aims at establishing a European-based, international doctoral network to develop a cohort of 13 transdisciplinary Doctoral Candidates (DCs), 10 funded by MCSA and 3 funded by 2 national governments. Working at the intersection of co-design, design for sustainability, service and systems design, democratic innovation and climate transitions, DCs will be equipped and empowered to develop new theories, approaches, and validated prototypes for action benefitting from extensive and varied engagement and training across a network of 8 universities from 7 countries and 12 non-academic partners. Such transdisciplinary co-operation is urgent to enable governments, businesses and civil society organisations (CSOs) to develop and deliver multi-level societal solutions required to achieve net zero targets committed to in the Paris Agreement. Design is central to achieving this because of its well-established creative capacities for enabling small-scale experimentation to de-risk solutions through prototyping, synthesising ideas and evidence into materials and visual forms for engaging the stakeholders in exploration of dilemmas and contested topics and facilitating participation in innovative change. In the politicised domain of sustainability transitions, where issues of identity, equity and diversity provoke disruptive responses, design provides a connective tissue essential to engaging publics through democratic innovation towards delivering net zero transitions. State-of-the-art knowledge in design sub-disciplines provides a partial foundation for efforts to engage the public in co-creating solutions towards climate transitions in: (1) co-design and social design: which emphasises creative participation with citizens, public servants, businesses and CSOs in designing (for) transitions through public participation¹; (2) design for sustainability, which allows generation, exploration and assessment of new designs that enable ecological sustainability²; and (3) service and systems design, recognising working towards systems change holistically by developing new service experiences and processes and configuring value constellations.

As a result, design is already integrated into the EU's New European Bauhaus as well as initiatives such as the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities platform⁴. But contemporary design practice and research rooted in industrial logics are not fully equipped to deliver the expectations put upon designers to help businesses, governments and CSOs to work at multiple levels towards achieving transitions to net zero and to address societal conflicts. Design-specific knowledge is understood as central to enabling transitions, but it also suffers from low integration with other fields bringing domain-relevant expertise, specifically: (4) politics and governance within democratic innovation, including co-production and deliberation⁵; and (5) socio-technical approaches to transitioning societies to net zero across multiple levels⁶.

Combining and integrating these five disciplinary perspectives will leverage the connective capacities of design to forge crucial action-oriented integration between democratic innovation and climate transitions. Through this, the potential for achieving the ambitious goals for carbon-neutral transitions set out by the European Commission rises exponentially. To achieve this, CoDesign4Transitions will deliver new research extending sub-disciplines of design by breaking disciplinary silos resulting in proposing new design approaches which integrate theories, concepts and methods from democratic innovation and climate transitions. Capacities of design for (1) prototyping; (2) materialisation and visualisation; and (3) facilitating practice-systems change will drive crucial new connections between knowledge in democratic innovation and climate transitions, organised through three cross-cutting Research Objectives summarised in Table 1.





Research objectives	Research questions
<p>R01 Examining the potential and limitations of prototyping to enable democratic participation in achieving climate transitions [SDG 9, 12, 13, 17]</p>	<p>What forms and practices might be associated with prototyping for climate transitions through democratic design and under what conditions? To what extent does design prototyping enable mediating social conflicts in climate transitions?</p>
<p>R02 Analysing the potential and limitations of using materialisation and visualisation within democratic co-design for climate transitions [SDG 9, 12, 13, 17]</p>	<p>How do materialisation and visualisation of data enable agonistic forms of democratic design in relation to climate transitions? To what extent might different practices for materialising policy options enable just climate transitions?</p>
<p>R03 Developing forms of design that facilitate practice-systems change through democratic co-design towards climate transitions [SDG 9, 11, 13, 16, 17]</p>	<p>What forms, methods and practices might be associated with design-led approaches to facilitate changes to practice-systems across multiple social levels? How can design-led approaches facilitating democratic participation be scaled and institutionalised?</p>

Table 1: Research objectives

2. Recruitment campaign

2.1 Key dates

Recruitment of CoD4T researchers will be carried out in a unique call for applicants. This will be launched on 15 January 2024 for 13 fully funded positions, selected according to the schedule provided below.

Step	What will happen?	Timeframe
<p>Online application</p>	<p>Submit your complete application through the online portal before the deadline.</p> <p>Note that applications not complying with CoD4T and the recruiting university requirements will be disregarded.</p>	<p>15 January – 26 February 2024</p>
<p>Eligibility check</p>	<p>CoD4T team and the recruiting university will check whether your application complies with the requirements and meets the MSCA eligibility criteria.</p>	<p>27 February – 11 March 2024</p>





Assessment of eligible applications and first ranking	Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed by the assigned Selection Panel against the Evaluation Criteria (refer to the Guide for Evaluators for more information).	11 March – 19 March 2024
Interviews – first round	Applicants shortlisted by the Selection Panel will be invited for an interview (by videoconference). Applicants will be contacted at least 5 days before the date of the interview.	21 March – 15 April 2024
Shortlisting	Selection Panels create a shortlist of applicants invited for the second round of interviews.	16 April – 17 April 2024
Interviews – second round	Applicants shortlisted by the Selection Panel will be invited for an interview (by videoconference). Applicants will be contacted at least 5 days before the date of the interview.	18 – 30 April 2024
Final ranking and allocation of positions	If you have been successful at the interview and are the preferred applicant for the position, you will receive a conditional offer letter for admission into the CoD4T Program.	2 – 8 May 2024
Onboarding of successful applicants	You will need to complete the registration process to be enrolled as a Doctoral Candidate at your recruiting university and formalize your employment contract. You will then receive your offer letters issued by the institutions.	15 May – 31 August 2024

Table 2: Timeline for CoD4T selection process

2.2 Open positions and projects

All open positions are published on CoD4T website: [www.codesign4transitions.eu](http://codesign4transitions.eu). There are 13 research projects available. Applicants must choose their preferred ones and apply to maximum 3 projects ranking their interests.

You may find on CoD4T website (<http://codesign4transitions.eu>) the list of Hosting Universities involved in Europe and the profiles of the main supervisors and their research interests.

2.3 Who can apply?

CoD4T is open to excellent students and researchers of any age, nationality and gender, early in their career.

Applicants must fulfil ALL the following minimum eligibility criteria at the date of the call deadline (26 February 2024):



- **Applicants must have not yet been awarded a doctoral degree** (MSCA rule). Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will NOT be considered eligible to apply.
- **Mobility rule** (MSCA rule): Applicants may not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the Hosting University (or Universities) to which they are applying for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the call deadline (i.e., since 26 February 2021). Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention (1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol), compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.
- **Employment rule** (MSCA rule): Applicants may not be already permanently employed by the chosen Hosting University at the time of call deadline.
- **Minimum level of studies**: Applicants must meet the academic criteria for admission to the doctoral programs at the Hosting University.
- **English language proficiency***: Applicants must have a demonstrable C1 level of English (both speaking and in writing). Evidence must be provided pre-admissions/enrolment into the program following the guidance and minimum requirements specified by the Hosting University. In the absence of a recognised certificate, applicants should check the rules at the university where they will be enrolled.
*Native English speakers are exempt from this requirement.
- Applicants must agree to do the planned secondment(s) in the associated partners as detailed in the description of positions on the project website.
- Applicants must agree to not receive any other source of income during employment.

In addition to the above minimum eligibility criteria, Applicants must comply with the eligibility and admission requirements of the Hosting University of their chosen position, as described in the corresponding position description and the Hosting University websites.

2.4 Equal opportunities

Our selection process is in line with the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment. The consortium adheres to the principles of the European Commission's Strategy on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and promotes genuine equal access opportunities. CoD4T is fully committed to eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity for staff and students. Researchers at risk, from different genders, backgrounds and origin are encouraged to apply. Furthermore, a researcher with disability requiring extra support might be eligible for a Special Needs Allowance.

Additionally, CoD4T is fully committed to provide doctoral candidates in the network with equal opportunities regarding well-being and financial support. Specific measures to balance budgets among beneficiaries of the EC grant have been agreed in the network, aiming to ensure that during periods abroad (secondments) doctoral candidates are fully supported and do not have to incur in double expenses (i.e. paying double rent).

3. How to apply?

We require all Applicants follow the same application process to ensure that the selection process is consistent and fair: only applications that are complete, in English and submitted through the online platform (<https://codesign4transitions.slideroom.eu>) before the deadline will be considered eligible. Incomplete applications and documents received by other means (postal mail, email or similar) will be discarded.





3.1 Before applying

Confirm that you meet all eligibility criteria for both the MSCA scheme and the enrolling university.

Read the full description of the positions advertised on CoD4T website and make your choices. Applicants may apply for up to 3 positions.

Each position involves: (a) employment in the Hosting University; and (b) enrolment in the PhD program of the Hosting University to carry out a project specified in the Doctoral Network.

Prepare all the requested supporting documents.

3.2 Your application

The application form is entirely online and needs to be completed before 26 February 2024, in English through the application portal available on CoD4T website (<http://codesign4transitions.eu>). The portal is user-friendly and intuitive. In case of doubts, you may consult the [online user manual](#) or contact CoD4T Helpdesk at cod4t-design@polimi.it.

The online application process requires completion of the following steps:

1. Create your Applicant profile: you must enter your basic personal and contact details. Applicants will receive an automatic email with login details to access the online portal, a unique reference number and further instructions for completing the application.
2. Choose the position and research project you wish to apply for. Applicants may apply for up to 3 research projects, expressing a preference in terms of ranking.
3. Complete and submit your application: you may login, modify and save your application as many times as desired until all required fields are complete, and all necessary documentation is uploaded. To complete your application, you will have to accept the data protection statement and certify that the answers provided are true and complete. Once all fields are completed and as long as the call deadline is not passed, the option to submit will then become available. Once the application is submitted no further modifications are possible.

3.3 Applying for different positions

You may apply to up to 3 different positions, nominating their order of preference. However, you do not need to produce different applications, your order of preference can be attached to one application only. Note: if there are duplicated applications only the last submission will be considered.

3.4 Supporting documents

Applications will require the completion of all fields of the application form, including the declaration that the Applicant meets the MSCA, CoD4T and PhD awarding institutions criteria, and the upload of the following supporting documents:

1. Scanned copy of a valid ID (national ID, passport or equivalent)

Important: a valid ID must be a national ID, passport or equivalent that includes your photo, full legal name, date of birth, nationality and other personal information.



<p>2. CV (Curriculum Vitae/ Resume) Your CV should clearly indicate the starting and ending period and date of all your education, work and research experiences (2-4 pages).</p>
<p>3. Cover letter The cover letter should explain your motivation to apply and your interest in the position(s) you are applying for. It should also include a reflective text on the topic of 'Sustainable Transitions through Democratic Design' that follows academic writing conventions such as academic referencing and a bibliography (max 500 words, excluding references). If you are applying for multiple positions (up to 3 allowed), you must mention each position in one cover letter.</p> <p>Tips: in the cover letter, consider explaining why you are a good fit for the position and summarizing relevant skills, experience knowledge and personal behaviours you have that fit the role.</p>
<p>4. Copy of your official academic transcripts and Master's Diploma (or declaration of equivalence of the requested diploma if applicable). Academic records not written in English should be accompanied by a translation into English (it can be either an official translation or self-translation). If you have not yet been awarded your Master's degree, you may upload a provisional degree or document from your institution attesting that you will be awarded the Master Degree prior to the official date of employment. You should explain the scoring system (minimum and maximum grade), indicating the threshold for passing.</p>
<p>5. Two reference letters References should come from previous roles covered, guaranteeing for the good attitude and quality of the work produced in previous work/study environments. These should include names and email addresses of the referee (university lecturers or scientists who are familiar with your academic work and who can judge your potential as a doctoral researcher).</p>
<p>6. Portfolio The portfolio is mandatory only for positions linked to practice-based research (DCs 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13). The portfolio is free in terms of format and must showcase 5 projects or activities relevant to the position. It should be maximum 5 pages. For collaborative projects/activities make sure to highlight your personal role and contribution.</p>
<p>7. Evidence of complying with the mobility rule Compliance with the mobility rule can be proven by uploading official documents that can prove where you have resided in the 3 years immediately before the call deadline (i.e., since 26 February 2021). Such documents might be electricity bill, tenancy agreement – home rental, or any other proof that explicitly declares your name and place of residence.</p>
<p>8. Scanned copy of your English Proficiency Certificate or other proof of English proficiency, if English is not your first language Note: If your English proficiency certificate is not available yet, you may attach a statement about your commitment to present C1 scores at the time of enrolment at the latest. Failure to submit a valid C1 certificate that complies with the minimum criteria before enrolment may lead to rejection of your admission.</p>

Table 3: List of supporting documents requested for application

All documents must be in English or accompanied by an English translation. We recommend you to submit your documents in non-editable format (PDF preferred). Applicants who have minor issues with their applications (scans not fully legible, residency status unclear) or where further information



is needed to evaluate eligibility, will be contacted by CoD4T team and asked to provide further documentation.

4. Assessment and selection

CoD4T is committed to Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment. You may refer to section 2.1 of this guide and to the Guide for Evaluators available on CoD4T website for more information about the schedule for the assessment of the applications received.

At each stage, Applicants will be informed of the outcome by email.

4.1 Assessment of the applications

Applications successfully passing the eligibility check will be assessed by a dedicated Selection Panel for each position against the Evaluation Criteria detailed in Table 4. A first ranking will be produced based on average scores granted by the Selection Panel and up to 6 Applicants per position will be shortlisted for an interview. Where Applicants have expressed preference for more than one position, they will be assessed by the Selection Panel of the first preference expressed. Applicants might also be contacted by the CoD4T team to propose the second or third option expressed in special cases. These will be discussed individually with applicants.

Applicants will be evaluated on a set of evaluation criteria including academic merit, scientific quality and research potential, ability to carry out a research project and work in an international context.

	Criteria	How they are assessed		
		Before interviews	At interview 1	At interview 2
1	Relevant skills and experience	CV, cover letter, 2 reference letters, portfolio (for practice research projects)	Presentation of skills and experience presented at interview	Skills and experience presented at interview
2	Understanding of and alignment with the doctoral research project they are applying for and potential for original research	Cover letter, reference letters, portfolio (for practice research projects)	Question at interview	Presentation and discussion at interview; question at interview
3	Motivation for applying and expectations about future career	Cover letter	Question at interview	
4	Attitude to team working, collaboration, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, capacity to operate independently in an	Cover letter, reference letters	Question at interview	Question at interview





international professional environment			
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Table 4: List of assessment criteria and how they are assessed

Each evaluation criteria will be scored using the system outlined in Tables 5 and 6.

	Criteria	What is assessed	
		Need-to-have requirements	Nice-to-have requirements
1	Relevant skills and experience	<p>Education results (final graduation grade) are good.</p> <p>Reference letters present the applicant in a fair way.</p> <p>Presentation at interviews is in line with the requests.</p> <p>English Language proficiency.</p>	<p>Education results (final graduation grade) are excellent.</p> <p>Awareness of the academic environment (ie previous collaboration in research and teaching.)</p> <p>Participation in programs of excellence (ie double degrees).</p> <p>Experience in specific fields related to the research project.</p> <p>Reference letters present an excellent applicant with high motivation and great independence.</p> <p>Presentation at interviews is excellent and exceed expectations.</p>
2	Understanding of and alignment with the doctoral research project they are applying for and potential for original research	<p>The achieved results in the previous functions are Fair and partially relevant to the research project.</p> <p>The cover letter is partly relevant to the topic of the research project.</p> <p>Presentation at interviews is in line with the requests.</p>	<p>The achieved results in the previous functions are excellent and relevant for the research project.</p> <p>High relevance of the cover letter to the topic of the research project.</p> <p>Previous academic publications (journal articles, books, book</p>





			<p>chapters, conference papers) related to the research topic.</p> <p>Presentation at interviews is excellent and exceed expectations (ie clear objectives, research methodology and planning).</p>
3	Motivation for applying and expectations about future career	<p>The cover letter demonstrates understanding of the opportunities and obligations of entering the program.</p> <p>During interview, the applicant can articulate motivations for entering the program, although these are sometimes unclear.</p>	<p>The cover letter demonstrates complete understanding of the opportunities and obligations of entering the program and shows clear objectives for a future career.</p> <p>During interview, the applicant can clearly articulate motivations for entering the program outlining the added value of his/her previous experience.</p>
4	Attitude to team working, collaboration, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, capacity to operate independently in an international professional environment	The cover letter and the reference letters portray fairly the attitude to research of the applicant, although interviews show partial or limited experience.	The cover letter and the reference letters portray an excellent attitude to research of the applicant, and this is proven by the experience demonstrated and discussed during interviews.

Table 5: List of what is assessed for each criteria

Criteria	Scoring points meaning			
	0	1	2	3
General description	The applicant does not meet the minimal requirements or does not provide enough evidence.	The applicant does meet the minimal requirements (need-to-have) in relation to the criteria.	The applicant meets all need-to-have and one or more of the nice-to-have functional requirements in relation to the criteria.	The applicant meets all need-to-have and most of the nice-to-have functional requirements in relation to the criteria.



Table 6: Scoring system

4.2 Interviews

Interviews of the shortlisted Applicants will be conducted by videoconferencing between 21 March – 15 April 2024 (first round) and between 18 – 30 April 2024 (second round). Applicants shortlisted will be informed at least 5 days before the interview. Interviews will be performed by the members of the Selection Panel appointed for the position. They will assess each Applicant against the Evaluation Criteria detailed in Table 4 and following the outline provided below.

First round. This round focuses on whether the applicant has the relevant skills and experience to be considered for employment and for a doctoral position at the Hosting University.

Each applicant is asked to prepare a 5-minute presentation about their background, experience and skills, and motivation for applying for the position. The remaining 20 minutes are for questions from the Selection Panel. These questions can go further into the skills and experience of the Applicant as well as their understanding and expectations of the doctoral position they are applying for. The discussion ends by asking the Applicant if they have questions for the Panel, and informing them about next steps.

Second round. This allows a more in-depth assessment of the Applicant's understanding of, alignment with and likelihood of successfully carrying out and completing the doctoral research in the time available through the funding.

Each Applicant is asked to prepare a 10-minute presentation responding to the research project description they are applying for. Example question: *What do you see as the main challenges in carrying out this doctoral research project and how would you prepare for it?*

The remaining 15 minutes are for questions from the Panel. These questions probe both the quality and originality of the Applicant's presentation, as well as enabling a practical assessment of their skills and relevant experience. The discussion ends by asking the Applicant if they have questions for the Panel, and informing them about next steps.

The same scoring system will be applied for interviews, as outlined in section 4.1.

4.3 Successful applicants

Successful Applicants will receive a conditional offer letter for admission into the CoD4T Program. They will be offered a 36-months full-time employment contract by their Hosting Universities, in line with the conditions detailed in the position description. A specific application to the Hosting University's doctoral program might be required (successful applicants will be informed of each institution's requirements in time to complete this process).

A position will be considered filled once the successful Applicant has signed his/her employment contract and is successfully enrolled at the Hosting University. If an Applicant fails to meet all enrolment requirements and is rejected, the CoD4T offer will be withdrawn.

Note that at admissions phase, successful Applicants must be able to provide the originals of all academic documents issued by their home institution(s), or relevant body, duly legalized by apostille, or in their default, legalized by diplomatic means, and along with the corresponding official translation to English or the hosting country official language (if required). CoD4T has made all efforts to ensure



that the enrolment requirements of participating universities are described in the open position descriptions, but as these requirements are subject to change, Applicants are advised to check these carefully directly on the relevant degree-awarding university' websites.

Successful Applicants will be expected to relocate to their Hosting University location before starting their employment contract.

4.4 Appeal/redress

Unsuccessful Applicants may lodge an appeal within seven days after receiving the notification email if they believe that the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect and/or feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their application was evaluated at the assessment and/or interview stages.

To appeal, Applicants must submit a request for redress clearly describing the reasons why they are requesting a redress:

- If a redress is related to the eligibility check (step 1), Applicants should explicitly refer to 1 or more eligibility criteria. Redresses that do not clearly refer to the criteria cannot be considered.
- If a redress is related to the assessment of eligible applications (step 2) or the interviews (step 3), redress should explicitly refer to evaluation criteria concerned. Only if there is clear evidence of a factual shortcoming in the application evaluation, the application will be reassessed. This means for example, that a problem relating to 1 evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-assessment if an application has failed anyway on other criteria. The scientific evaluation of the expert-evaluators (Selection Panel) will not be called into question.

To be considered, a request for redress must:

- Be explicitly related to one stage of the evaluation process, and
- Be completed using the request for redress form, and
- Be submitted personally by the Applicant no later than seven days after the email notification is sent,
- and
- Be sent by email to cod4t-design@polimi.it with the following subject: CoD4T Program – Redress request – [Applicant Full Name]

The request for redress will be assessed by CoD4T Team and the outcomes will be communicated to the Applicant within seven days after reception, so that the applications of successful appellants may be included in the next stage of selection.

Important: The redress process cannot be used as an opportunity to submit documentation that were not submitted in the original application by the call deadline.

5. Data Protection

The personal data collected as part of the recruitment process (application form, supporting documents and interviews) will be processed for the purpose of considering their application for the CoD4T Program. The legal basis for processing this personal data is performance of a contract. Applicants' personal data will be shared or disclosed with third parties external to Politecnico di Milano, including external academic and/or industry reviewers who will consider and assess their application, academic and/or administrative personnel of CoD4T Hosting University and their associated universities (where applicable).





Applicant's personal data will be transferred outside of the EEA, will be kept securely by Politecnico di Milano and will be retained for a period of five years after the closure of the CoD4T Program. Politecnico di Milano is the Data Controller of this information and is committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with Data Protection Legislation. The collection, processing and sharing of personal data and / or special categories of personal data will comply with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) and other applicant regulation on personal data.

Applicants are invited to visit Politecnico di Milano's Privacy Policy webpage for further information in relation to their rights and how Politecnico di Milano processes their personal data. Politecnico di Milano's Data Controller can be contacted through email sent to CoD4T Helpdesk at cod4t-design@polimi.it and any requests or complaints should be made in writing to the Politecnico di Milano's Data Controller.





6. Annex

Redress request form

Position reference	
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Personal information

First Name	
Last Name	

Research project you applied to

Title of the project	
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Stage of evaluation concerned

<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility check	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment of application	<input type="checkbox"/> Interview
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Reason for redress request

Please describe the grounds of your request which may relate either to:

- the eligibility check: if this is the case, please specify the eligibility criteria your redress request relates to; or
- the assessment of your application and/or the interview results: if this is the case, please specify the scientific criteria concerned.

NAME

DATE

SIGNATURE



Guide for applicants



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