



# Guide for Selection Panels

CoDesign4 Transitions Doctoral Network

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# 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 participation<sup>1</sup>; (2) design for sustainability, which allows generation, exploration and assessment of new designs that enable ecological sustainability<sup>2</sup>; 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 platform<sup>4</sup>. 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 deliberation<sup>5</sup>; and (5) socio-technical approaches to transitioning societies to net zero across multiple levels<sup>6</sup>.

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
<b>R01</b> Examining the potential and limitations of prototyping to enable democratic participation in achieving climate transitions [SDG 9, 12, 13, 17]	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?
<b>R02</b> Analysing the potential and limitations of using materialisation and visualisation within democratic co-design for climate transitions [SDG 9, 12, 13, 17]	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?
<b>R03</b> Developing forms of design that facilitate practice-systems change through democratic co-design towards climate transitions [SDG 9, 11, 13, 16, 17]	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?

Table 1: Research objectives

## 2. Evaluation principles

The process for the selection of the applicants to CoD4T open positions will be extensive and transparent, with the aim of attracting the most talented and motivated students from around the world. Before starting the evaluation processes, all Evaluators will sign a letter of commitment, declaring possible conflict of interest, agreeing to confidentiality and committing to impartial assessment of all applications.

They will be required to read this Guide for Evaluators, the Guide for Applicants and the Program description on the CoD4T website (<http://codesign4transitions.eu>). A briefing session for the Evaluators will be organised by the CoD4T Team prior to the evaluation processes, to ensure Evaluators are fully equipped with the correct information, and to answer any questions they may have.

The CoD4T Team will oversee the entire evaluation processes, liaising with the Panel Chairs and participating in consensus meetings, where Evaluators will be discussing and deciding on the Applicants' ranking, to ensure evaluation principles are guaranteed and requirements are fulfilled.

Evaluators are prohibited from contacting Applicants during the evaluation process, discussing the evaluation outside the Panel and revealing the identities of the Evaluators.



## 3.Roles involved in the Selection Process

Diverse organisations and teams will be involved in the selection process, ensuring this is accurate and of high quality.

Directly involved:

**CENTRAL Recruitment Team** - POLIMI (Marzia Mortati), UAL (Lucy Kimbell), and AAU (Nicola Morelli) as leads of the three research packages + Project Manager (Michele Taschini)

**LOCAL Selection Panels** for the 13 positions. **The Panel is chaired by the Lead Supervisor.**

The Selection Panel will hold the responsibility of evaluating and ranking eligible Applicants to the position, and decide on selected and reserve Applicants. Each Selection Panel will comprise at least 3 Evaluators and will maintain their composition throughout the entire selection process unless a member is changed due to a conflict of interest arising or force majeure.

Each Selection Panel will be composed of:

- The 2 main supervisors for the research project – representatives of the Hosting University as per the position description;
- 1 other Evaluator – this may be decided based on relevance for the research project. The third evaluator can be another professor at the Hosting Institution, a representative of a non-academic entity relevant to the research field, an expert coming from another discipline relevant to the research project;

The Selection Panels will also fulfil the following criteria:

- Extensive experience in doctoral training and supervision;
- Diverse and relevant expertise in the disciplines involved in the research project proposed for the position;
- At least 2 nationalities represented;
- Gender balanced;
- Declare no conflict of interest.

**Indirectly involved:** Teams involved in human resources and PhD student selection in recruiting universities.

## 4.Overview of the Selection process

The application opens on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and closes on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### 4.1 Key dates and process

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?	Who is responsible	Timeframe
<b>Online application</b>	Applicants submit their application(s) through the online portal before the deadline.	Applicants	15 January – 26 February 2024
<b>Eligibility check</b>	CoD4T team conduct the initial eligibility check towards the requirements of the MSCA scheme. This will produce an initial Longlist of eligible applicants	CENTRAL Recruitment Team	27 February – 11 March 2024
<b>Assessment of eligible applications and first ranking</b>	Applications that meet the MSCA eligibility criteria will be assessed by the local Selection Panel against the eligibility requirements of local PhD programs and the network Evaluation Criteria (refer to section 4.3). This will produce a shortlist for each position.  Applicants in the shortlist will be invited for interview.	LOCAL Selection Panel	11 March – 18 March 2024
<b>Longlist review meeting</b>	Central selection team meets to check for balance of applications.	CENTRAL Recruitment Team	19 March 2024
<b>Interviews – first round</b>	Applicants shortlisted are invited for an interview (by videoconference).  Selection panels create short list for the second interview round and shares with the central team.	LOCAL Selection Panel	21 March – 15 April 2024
<b>Shortlist review meeting</b>	Central selection team meets to check for balance of applications.  Shortlisted Applicants are invited for second interview.	CENTRAL Recruitment Team	16 April 2024
<b>Interviews – second round</b>	Applicants shortlisted by the Selection Panel will be invited for the second interview (by videoconference).	LOCAL Selection Panel	18 – 30 April 2024
<b>Final ranking and allocation of positions</b>	Local Selection Panels produce the shortlist of Applicants for job offer and send a conditional offer letter for admission into the CoD4T Program.	LOCAL Selection Panel	2 – 8 May 2024





<b>Onboarding of successful applicants</b>	Successful Applicants enrol at the Hosting University.	LOCAL Selection Panel	15 May – 31 August 2024
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Table 2: Timeline for CoD4T selection process

## 4.3 Responsibilities during the selection process

Local Selection Panels are chaired by the Lead Supervisor of each research project. The chairs of the panel are responsible for:

- Replying to inquiries on the PhD position that might come directly to you via email;
- Arranging interviews with applicants;
- Uploading short and long lists in central repository;
- Uploading DCs recruitment summary to central repository;
- Providing HR with the material for the DC info pack upon hire (if required by your institution)
- Organising the two interviews with local involvement;

All Selection Panel Members are responsible for:

- Actively advertising PhD positions via personal networks;
- Contributing to the social media campaign (see Social Media).

## 4.4 Eligibility criteria

Applicants must fulfil ALL the following minimum eligibility criteria at the date of the call deadline (26 February 2024). These criteria will be checked centrally by the CoD4T Team. Nonetheless, it is relevant for all Selection Panels to be familiar with these criteria.

The hard criteria as foreseen by MSCA rules are the following:

- **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 Universities 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.

Soft criteria:

- We indicated the preference for a Master’s degree (MA, MFA, MSc degree or equivalent (level 7 in the European Qualifications Framework), however this is not a hard criteria for the EU (e.g., an applicant with multiple BSc degrees and postgraduate studies would equally qualify). In such cases, Evaluators may need to check with your university if this is a hard requirement in the submission system before encouraging to apply.
- We indicated that the applicant will need the certificate of the degree that qualifies them for this post at the moment of their starting date in 2024, however we can be flexible on this. Again, in such cases, you may want to check with your university.

## 4.5 Evaluation of eligible applications

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.

## 4.6 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 3. Evaluators will assess each application individually directly on the designated application platform (Slideroom).

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 as detailed in Table 3.

Criteria	How they are assessed
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		<b>Before interviews</b>	<b>At interview 1</b>	<b>At interview 2</b>
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 international professional environment	Cover letter, reference letters	Question at interview	Question at interview

**Table 3:** List of assessment criteria and how they are assessed

Each evaluation criteria will be scored using the system outlined in Tables 4 and 5.

		<b>Criteria</b>		<b>What is assessed</b>					
				<b>Need-to-have requirements</b>	<b>Nice-to-have requirements</b>				
1	Relevant skills and experience	Education results (final graduation grade) are good.	Reference letters present the applicant in a fair way.	Presentation at interviews is in line with the requests.	English Language proficiency.	Education results (final graduation grade) are excellent.	Awareness of the academic environment (ie previous collaboration in research and teaching.)	Participation in programs of excellence (ie double degrees).	Experience in specific fields related to the research project.





			<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	<p>Understanding of and alignment with the doctoral research project they are applying for and potential for original research</p>	<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 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	<p>Motivation for applying and expectations about future career</p>	<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	<p>Attitude to team working, collaboration, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, capacity to operate independently in an international professional environment</p>	<p>The cover letter and the reference letters portray fairly the attitude to research of the applicant, although interviews show partial or limited experience.</p>	<p>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.</p>

Table 4: 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 5: Scoring system

## 4.7 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.



## 5. Conflict of interest and confidentiality

All Evaluators must have signed the commitment letter, declaring that they do not have any conflicts of

interest with the position being evaluated. Should a conflict arise at any time in the process, Evaluators must immediately inform the CoD4T Team, who will arrange for a substitute to the conflicted Evaluator. The signed commitment letter also declares that Evaluators will maintain confidentiality of all Applicants' personal information and relevant information provided. All Evaluators must respect the confidentiality of the information disclosed in the evaluation process, both in documentation and verbally.

## 6. Contact

The Department of Design at Politecnico di Milano is coordinating the CoD4T network. For any inquiries or information that cannot be found in this guide, the guide for applicants or the CoD4T website, you can contact the central project email address: [cod4t-design@polimi.it](mailto:cod4t-design@polimi.it).



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