

ITM-DGD Pre-doctoral Grants Call Call 2026

Concept

In the 2026 predoc call the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) at Antwerp will award maximally 5 pre-doctoral grants to selected candidates as part of a comprehensive capacity strengthening programme supported by the Directorate General for Development (DGD). These pre-doctoral grants will allow selected candidates from low and middle income countries (LMIC) to carry out an ad hoc individual preparatory training programme lasting minimum 3 months and maximum 6 months in order to strengthen and assess their research skills and capacity to undertake doctoral research. Candidates must have high potential for PhD research (e.g., based on study results) but still lack some (research) competences which can be gained through the proposed predoctoral programme. The PhD Committee will evaluate the quality and suitability of the proposed training for the candidate. If competences can be gained by taking a single course, then a predoc grant application is not a good fit and the candidate is advised to apply for that specific course and not the predoctoral training programme. It is also not the idea that candidates just present a 'laundry list of courses', but rather a coherent programme to build competences. Taking courses to meet the [ITM language requirements](#) can be part of the programme too. Writing, reading, getting to know the supervisor and research environment is valued as well. If candidates already did a Master in collaboration with ITM, then they must specify why they still need a predoctoral period.

Candidates are expected to be in an early stage of their career to be able to- as potential future PhD holders - support the training of the next generation of early stage researchers and/or more generally to strengthen the home institute and/or country. Candidates must be linked to a scientific institute or university in the LMIC country providing a supportive research training environment and must present a training programme proposal co-supervised by supervisors at the home institute and ITM. Candidates are strongly encouraged to come over to ITM for their predoctoral training period, but the candidate and supervisors may argue why a home institute/home country based predoctoral period is needed or recommended. Candidates who pass the pre-doctoral programme with success – assessed by their supervisors – are invited to compete for a PhD grant in the '[Individual PhD scholarship programme](#)' competition.

Eligibility criteria

- A complete application according to the guidelines in annex 1 submitted by the deadline of 9 September 2025.
- A supervisor at both the home institute and the ITM must declare their support and commitment to the predoctoral training programme. The supervisors (supervisory team) must be eligible as supervisors for doctoral candidates according to their national/institutional regulations.
- The proposed programme must contribute to capacity strengthening at the home institute and/or country.
- Candidates must have primary residence in a LMIC and be a national of a country eligible for DGD funding (list in annex 2). A limited number of grants can be awarded to nationals from [any](#)

[developing country](#). Candidates are not eligible to apply if: they are nationals from a high-income country too (multiple nationalities); they performed a professional activity for more than 1 year in a high-income country in a period of 3 years before the application deadline (this is 9 September 2025), they are/were on ITM's payroll before.

- Candidates must be fully committed to their predoctoral training programme during the grant period.

Grant conditions

Predocctoral grant for period spent in Antwerp:

The grant includes a living allowance (28 €/day, max. 6 months in Antwerp), a housing allowance, a bench fee to cover training costs (1470 €/month), one ticket for the predoctoral candidate to travel to and from Antwerp, insurance (63 €/month) and coverage of indirect travel costs (200 €).

The payment and follow-up will be ensured by ITM Student Support.

The grant does not constitute an employment relationship between ITM and the grantee; in Belgium the candidate will have the legal and fiscal status of a student.

Predocctoral grant for period spent at home institute/home country (if any):

Given that the candidate is embedded in a home institute with local salary it is assumed that a local living allowance is not needed. However, the candidate and supervisors might argue why a living allowance is needed for the period spent in the home institute. Also the amount of the local living allowance – if any - must be justified.

The grant specificities will be detailed in a 'Study Contract for Individual Traineeship'. DGD regulations apply.

Duration

The pre-doctoral grant is allocated for a period of minimum 3 months and maximum 6 months. and must be taken up between 1/1/2026-31/12/2026.

Evaluation criteria

All eligible applications will be examined by the ITM PhD Committee. The evaluation criteria are:

Quality of the candidate

Candidates must have high potential for PhD research (e.g. based on study results) but still lack some (research) competences which can be gained through the proposed predoctoral programme. The PhD Committee will evaluate motivation, study results, competences, ...

Quality of the proposed training and activities programme

The PhD Committee will evaluate the quality and suitability of the proposed training for the candidate. If competences can be gained by taking a single course, then a predoc grant application is not a good fit and the candidate is advised to apply for that specific course and not the predoctoral training programme. It is also not the idea that candidates just present a 'laundry list of courses' but rather a coherent programme to build competences. Taking courses to meet the ITM language requirements can be part of the programme too. Writing, reading, getting to know the supervisor and research environment is valued as well. If candidates



already did a Master in collaboration with ITM, then they must specify why they still need a predoctoral period.

Training environment and supervision

Submission and selection procedure

- Applications must be completed and submitted by the candidate, with support from the supervisors, according to the guidelines in annex 1 by 9 September 2025. Submissions received after the deadline or incomplete applications will be considered as not eligible.
- The ITM PhD Committee will review the eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria of the call.
- The evaluation advice by the ITM PhD Committee will be sent for approval and final decision to the ITM Management Committee.



Timeline

- 23 May 2025: launch of the call
- The deadline for submission of applications is 9 September 2025.
- The evaluation by the ITM PhD Committee will take place in September 2025.
- The final decision is taken by the ITM Management Committee in September 2025.
- The candidates and their supervisors will be notified at the latest by 1 October 2025.

Contact

Further information can be obtained from Ann Verlinden, ITM Head Research Office (averlinden@itg.be; +32 (0)3 247 66 86), to whom the applications should be sent in electronic form by the deadline, copying Nathalie Brouwers, nbrouwers@itg.be).



ANNEX 1. Application form



Predoctoral Scholarship Programme

ITM-DGD

Call 2026

TITLE predoctoral training programme

Candidate:

- LAST and first name candidate
- Date of birth
- Nationality
- Gender
- Email address
- Home institute + country

Supervisors:

- Name ITM supervisor(s)
- Name + Contact details supervisor home institute

Please send your application including this cover page electronically to Ann Verlinden, ITM Head Research Office by 9 September, 5 p.m. Belgian time (averlinden@itg.be, 32-(0)32476686). Please copy nbrouwers@itg.be. All applications will be checked using URKUND, plagiarism checker.



The pre-doctoral grant application must include:

Candidate

1. Motivation letter by the candidate
2. A CV including transcripts of higher education records (at Master and postgraduate level), a short description of the candidate's present employment.

Training and activities programme (do not exceed 3 pages)

1. Training goals/[learning objectives](#)¹:
At the end of the pre-doctoral training the trainee should be able to... (specify)
2. Activities and training during the pre-doctoral period (including timeline and justification on how the bench fee will be spent)
3. Abstract showing the envisaged PhD project (1-2 pages including a short description of the thematic, the knowledge gap, potential impact of obtained evidence, the objectives, and design)

Training environment and supervision

1. Letters of acceptance and support from the supervisors (home institute, ITM).
2. Supervision team: expertise, role, responsibilities and contribution of the supervisors to the predoctoral training programme
3. Assessment
The trainee will be assessed through.../by... (*specify method and name assessor*)

¹ Please check 'Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Write Effective Learning Outcomes' on <https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/>. See also: Forehand, M. (2005). Bloom's taxonomy: Original and revised. Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology, 8, 41-44.



ANNEX 2. Countries eligible for DGD funding

- Benin, Bolivia, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Vietnam, Zimbabwe

-A very limited number of PhD scholarships can be awarded to nationals from [any developing country](#).

