

MSCA Doctorate Network

CONTRABASS

zero-CO₂ cement ThRough cArBonation of cAlcium Silicates and aluminatES

Deliverable D 4.1 **DC recruitment complete and contracts** **awarded**



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1. Executive Summary

This document presents the recruitment strategy and process followed in the CONTRABASS project. The recruitment strategy for CONTRABASS were set up to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion. The strategy is stated in the Description Of the Action (DOA) and includes widespread advertisement of the project and open PhD positions, publication of the CONTRABASS website with information on the application process, recruitment guidelines for pre-selection of candidates, and interview and feedback templates. This document provides information on the recruitment process and compares it with the recruitment strategy.

The recruitment process deviated slightly from the recruitment strategy. This is addressed and accounted for in the document, and it is concluded that the recruitment was transparent, comparable, and followed the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researcher.

The present document constitutes the Deliverable D4.1 “DC recruitment complete and contracts awarded” in the framework of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Doctoral Network Project 101119715 – CONTRABASS as described in the HORIZON-MSCA-2022-DN-01.

2. Recruitment process

As stated in the grant agreement, the recruitment followed the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researcher, with principles and requirements applicable to DC (ethics, professionalism, scientific misconducts, data use) and to Beneficiaries (non-discrimination, work conditions).

- **Advertisement**

Advertisements for the CONTRABASS PhD positions were published in the end of July 2023¹. Joint advertisement for the 10 PhD positions was done on the EURAXESS website and on the social networks LinkedIn and X. The advertisement on EURAXESS contained information on the theme and objectives for each individual PhD project, the institution and supervisor. Furthermore, it stated the requirements and benefits of the positions. The postings on the social networks included information on the overall themes and objectives of the CONTRABASS project and referred to the CONTRABASS recruitment web (<https://sites.google.com/view/contrabass-cement>) for detailed information. The positions were also advertised jointly on FindAPhD late October 2023.

The partners shared the joint advertisements and additionally posted their specific PhD position through their own HR services. This included posting the individual positions on the University websites as well as websites such as EURAXESS, FindAPhD.com, and LinkedIn.

Advertisement was done on no other specialised national websites for ESR recruitment. Neither were advertisements made on webpages targeting under-represent groups such as Graduate Women in Science 43 or Science for Refugees 44. At the beginning, there was not an

¹ Advertisement can be seen in 5.1 Appendix 1: Advertisement



established budget for advertising the positions and as there were fees to pay in FindAPhD, Graduate Women in Science and Science for Refugees, the first one was chosen as it was thought to have the most coverage of the three.

- **Application**

The application process was outlined on the CONTRABASS recruitment web. Candidates were to send digital copies of academic certificates and transcripts (in English), a detailed CV and motivation letter (in English) and two letters of recommendation to the CONTRABASS email (contrabass.msca@gmail.com)². For admission, the candidates were required to hold a Master's degree or an equivalent degree in chemistry, physics or engineering, and an English certificate if it is not their native language. Additionally, the applicants needed to comply with the mobility rules and they should not hold a doctoral degree at the date of their recruitment.

For several of the institutions, the supervisors were obliged to advertise the positions on the University HR website, or other specific recruitment platforms, and receive the applications through there. Together with the individual advertisements of the position, this led to 8 out of 10 institutes received applications outside the CONTRABASS email.

- **Preselection**

The applications sent to the CONTRABASS email were filtered based on the DC number stated in the subject of the application email. This was done by the project leader (Hegoi Manzano) before sending the applications to the respective institutions. No other preselection was done by the WP4 leaders.

To make the recruitment internationally comparable and homogeneous it was planned to have a general recruitment score as guideline to use by each recruiting beneficiary. However, it was chosen that the institutions followed their own recruitment guidelines as was mandatory for some institutions. All candidates were selected based on their expertise, academic performance, their professional and scientific experience, and the motivation and reference letters provided, with weights defined by the individual hosting institutions.

A template email was provided to send to the applicants not selected for interview. Due to the high volume of applicants, there was no personalized feedback for the rejected applicants.

- **Interviews**

An interview template was given to the recruiting beneficiaries and interviews were conducted by the supervisors following the interview and recruitment guidelines of the recruiting institutions. The industrial mentors and WP4 leaders did not partake in the interviews but were available for advice and discussion.

Each supervisor provided personalized feedback to the rejected applicants after the interview.

The employment contracts were issued by each beneficiary and all formal requirements, following signed EU Grant Agreement guidelines, were accomplished by the hosting beneficiary prior to the start of the DC.

² The applicant list is available and stored in accordance with local data protection rules



The recruitment was finalized in August 2024 with the acceptance of Zahid A. Khan by AGH.

3. Applicants

A total of 421 applications were received for the 10 PhD positions advertised within the CONTRABASS project. Several of the applicants applied for more than one position, however, this has not been considered in the following statistics.

- **Institutes**

The applications were distributed between institutions as shown in Figure 1.

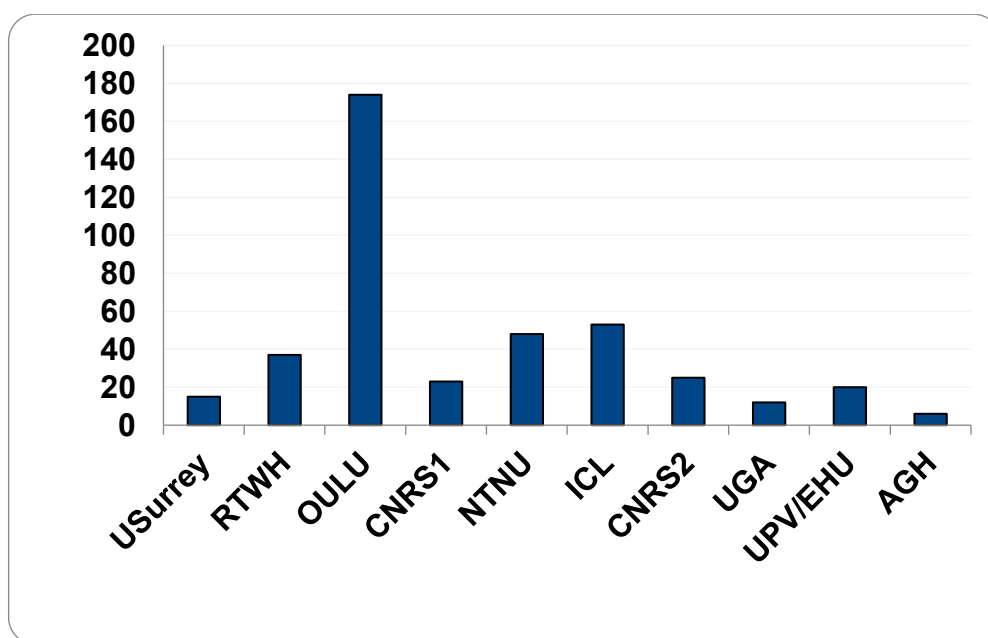


Figure 1 Distribution of applications between institutions

- **Gender distribution**

The gender distribution of the applicants shows that 30% were female (Figure 2). Of the hired candidates we have 3 women and 7 men, thus correlating with the overall gender distribution of the applicants.



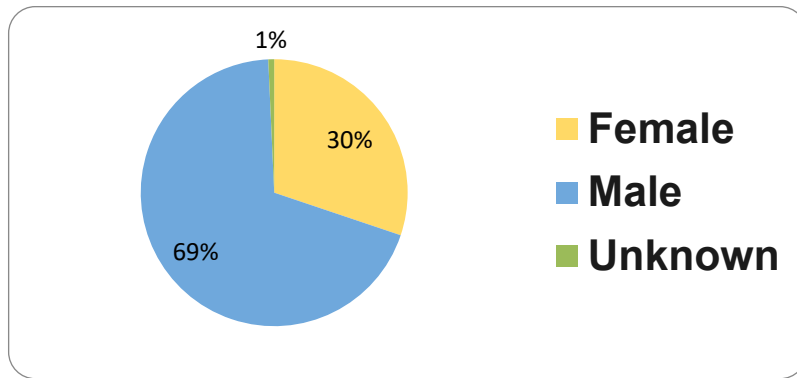


Figure 2 Gender distribution of the applicants

- **Nationality distribution**

Figure 3 shows the distribution of nationalities of the applicants. Several countries are represented, and we have a widespread when considering nationalities. The countries with the highest representation were Iran, Pakistan, and India, followed by China. Considering the selected candidates, we also see a widespread of nationalities, with 7 countries being represented (Figure 4). Like the overall distribution, India is highly represented when considering the selected candidates.



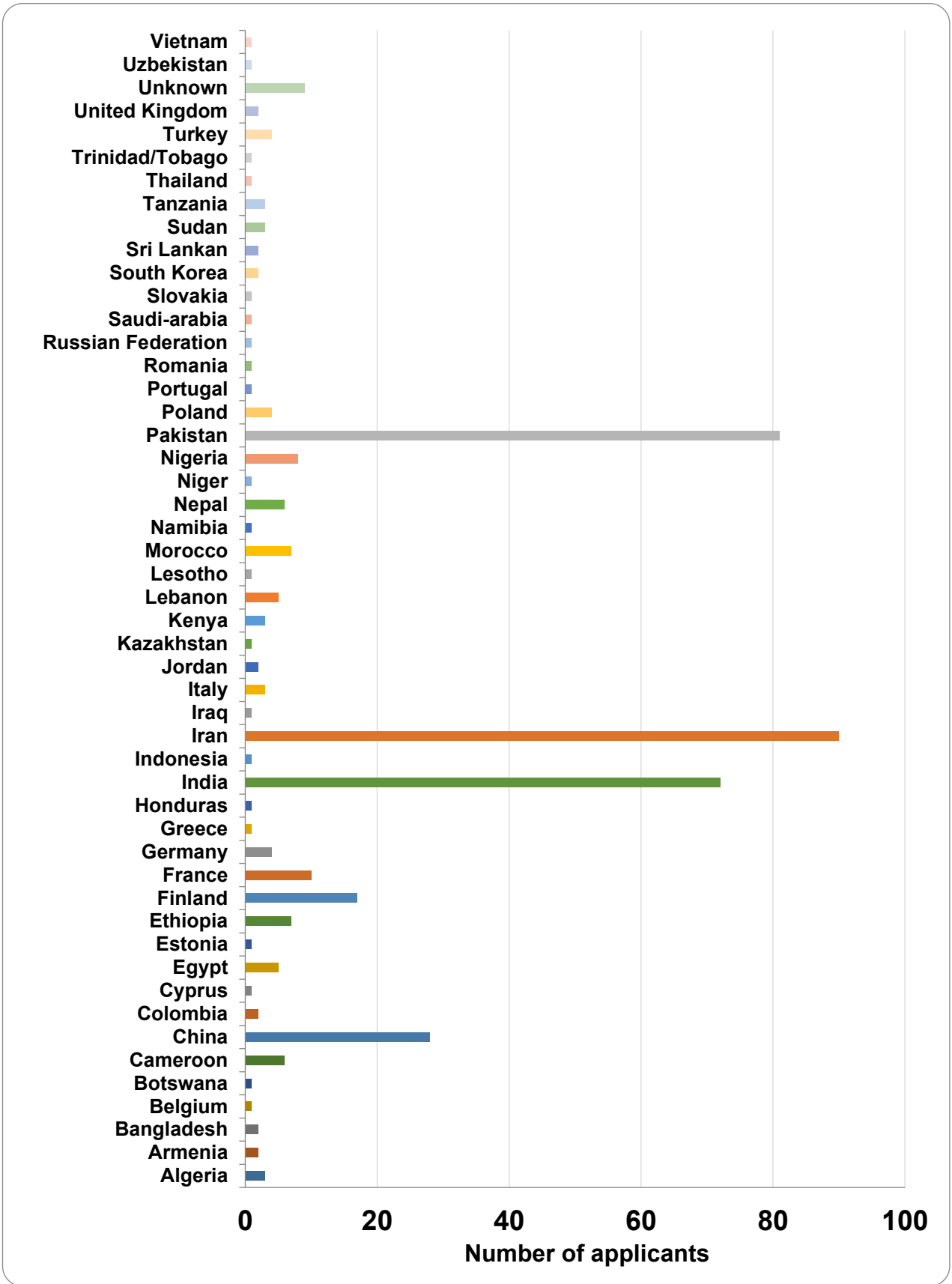


Figure 3 Distribution of nationalities of the applicants



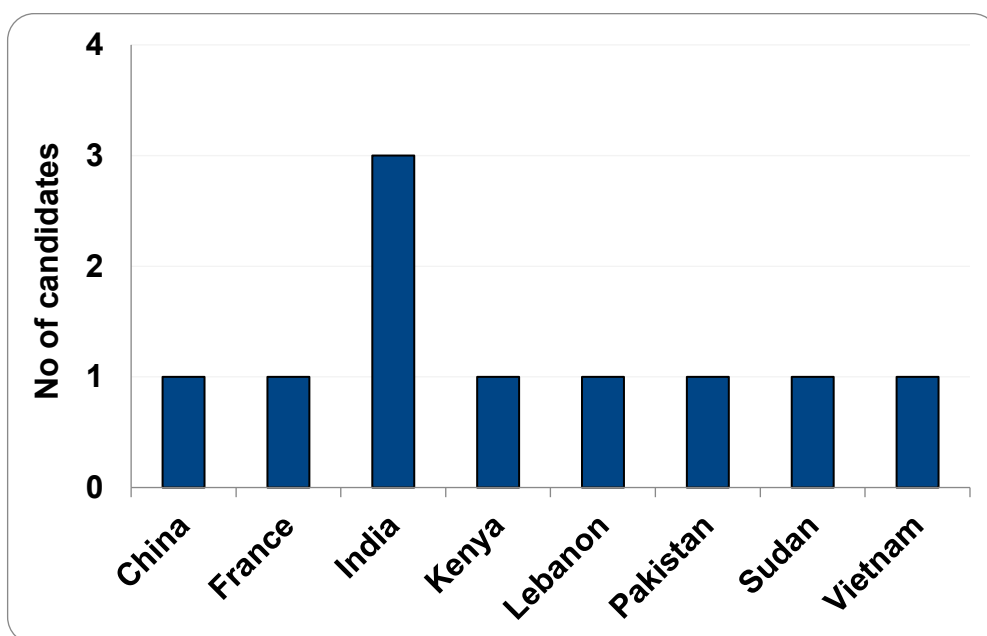


Figure 4 Distribution of nationalities of the selected candidates

4. Conclusions

This deliverable outlines the recruitment strategy and how each point was followed during the recruitment process. Furthermore, the applicant distributions in terms of institutions, gender, and nationality were presented.

The advertisement of the 10 open PhD positions within CONTRABASS was done jointly on social networks, EURAXESS, and FindAPhD, and individually through the institute’s recruitment platforms. This led to a total of 421 applications, with 30 % being from female applicants. Thus, a high degree of women applied even though the positions were not advertised on Graduate Women in Science. A higher female quotient may have been achieved, had the positions been listed on this website, which should be considered for other projects.

The applicants represented 52 different countries, illustrating the wide reach of the advertisement. No advertisement was done on Science 4 Refugees, which may have had an impact on the represented nationalities, as we received no applications which indicated refugee or asylum seeker status.

The applications were received through the CONTRABASS email or through the internal recruitment platforms of the institutes and pre-selection of candidates for interviews was done based on expertise, academic performance, professional and scientific experience, and the motivation and reference letters provided. The weights of each criterion were defined by the individual hosting institutions, based on their internal recruitment strategy. The selection criteria were applicable to all and ensured a comparability in the recruitment.

The candidates (either for interview or the position) received a feedback email based on a template created by the WP4 leader. The template did not include suggestions for personalized feedback, which should be considered for future projects to ensure comparable personalized



feedback for all. Due to the high number of applicants, no personalized feedback was given to the ones not selected for interview. The applicants rejected based on the interview received personalized feedback from the supervisor.

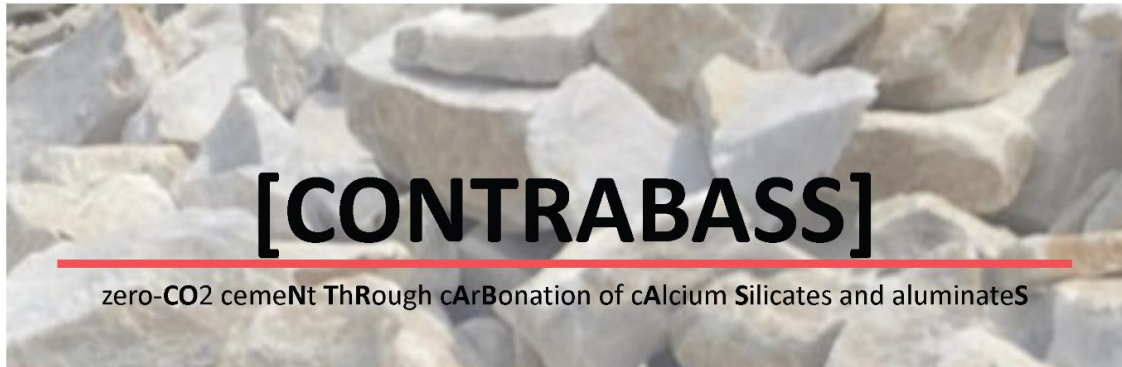
The distribution in gender and nationality of the selected candidates represented well the distribution we saw for the total amount of applicants. This proves a non-biased, equal, diverse and inclusive recruitment process.

It is concluded that the tasks listed in the DOA for WP4 has been completed and that the recruitment was transparent, comparable, and followed the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researcher.



5. Appendices

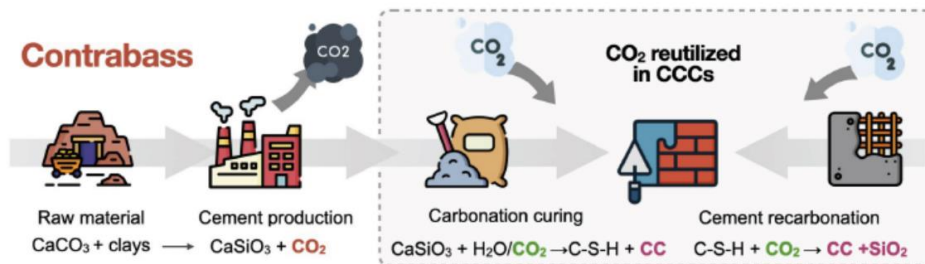
5.1. Appendix 1: Advertisement



WE ARE HIRING!

10 OPEN PHD POSITIONS:

- Carbonation curing
- Cement recarbonation
- Carbonate engineering
- Atomistic simulations
- Carbonation experiments
- Thermodynamic properties



Objectives:

- To identify the fundamental carbonation mechanisms of the clinker components, with special focus on calcium aluminates
- To understand the carbonation processes of the C-S-H gel and the cement paste as a whole
- To unravel the factors and conditions that govern CaCO_3 polymorphism, nucleation and growth rates
- To build coherent databases for thermodynamic and reactive-transport modelling of clinker and cement carbonation
- To communicate effectively the benefits of CCCs to society, media and policy makers

APPLY NOW

Visit <https://sites.google.com/view/contrabass-cement>



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