Postdoctoral researcher in aquatic ecotoxicology (F/M/X), full-time, 3-year position (annual renewal)

Faculty: Faculty of Sciences
Department: Department of Biology (URBE)
Category: Scientific personnel
Contract: 3 years, full-time (fixed-term), renewed each year upon positive evaluation
Start date: 01/10/2025

Context

The Faculty of Sciences at the University of Namur (UNamur) comprises nearly 1400 students and 500 staff members, including 60 academic and 300 scientific personnel. It offers first-, second-, and third-cycle programs and supports a vibrant research culture.

The postdoctoral researcher will join the Research Unit in Environmental and Evolutionary Biology (URBE) and the Institute of Life, Earth and Environment (ILEE), and will be hosted in the Laboratory of Adaptive Biodynamics (LAB)—a young and dynamic team studying how environmental stressors affect aquatic animal physiology and behaviour.

This position is part of the INTERREG ORION project, which uses a multidisciplinary, cross-border approach to diagnose and predict the quality of aquatic environments in the Meuse River basin. ORION investigates the combined effects of chemical and microbiological pollution in the context of global change, with the aim of supporting the sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems.

The postdoctoral researcher will be responsible for Work Package 4 of the project, assessing physiological responses—in the lab and in the field—to pollution in sentinel fish species, particularly Atlantic salmon. The position builds on pioneering work initiated by Prof. Patrick Kestemont, who remains involved as a collaborator. The Work Package is now under the scientific leadership of Dr. Eli Thoré, Assistant Professor at UNamur and head of the LAB.

Your missions

You will take a central role in implementing, coordinating, and advancing Work Package 4 of the ORION project. More specifically, you will:

- Coordinate and participate in *in situ* deployments of caged Atlantic salmon at multiple sites in the Meuse catchment across two field seasons;
- Conduct and supervise laboratory experiments and biomarker analyses, targeting endpoints related to immunotoxicity, reproductive toxicity, and endocrine disruption;

- Collaborate with partners on sampling logistics, harmonisation of methodology, and data exchange;
- Organize and lead project follow-up meetings and public outreach or stakeholder engagement events;
- Co-supervise PhD candidates and guide MSc and BSc students involved in ORION-related theses;
- Contribute to scientific communication, including peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, and consortium deliverables;
- Apply for external research funding to sustain and expand the research program;
- Actively participate in the daily life of both the LAB and URBE, contributing to a positive, supportive, and interdisciplinary team culture.

Your profile

Diploma and experience

- You hold a PhD in biology, ecotoxicology, aquatic ecology, or a closely related field;
- You have demonstrated experience in fish physiology and/or aquatic ecotoxicology research;
- You have experience with fieldwork in aquatic ecosystems and controlled laboratory experiments;
- You are fluent in both French and English, which is essential for cross-border collaboration and field logistics.

Skills and competencies

- You communicate clearly and diplomatically with partners, colleagues, and students;
- You are able to work independently while actively contributing to team discussions and general functioning of the LAB;
- You are organised, reliable, and capable of managing multiple project components simultaneously;
- You have a strong track record of publications, presentations, and scientific engagement;
- You are motivated to pursue an academic career trajectory and are actively developing your own research profile;

- You have proven experience collaborating across international and interdisciplinary teams, and enjoy working in a cross-cultural, multilingual context.
- You are adaptable and flexible, capable of adjusting to evolving project demands and shifting priorities.

Selection criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Scientific excellence and relevance of experience;
- Motivation to engage in interdisciplinary, applied environmental science;
- Communication, collaboration, and coordination skills;
- Capacity for both scientific independence and effective teamwork;
- Demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in dynamic research environments;
- Experience in international or cross-institutional research collaborations;
- Commitment to academic growth, including funding acquisition and student supervision.

What we offer

- A 3-year, full-time postdoctoral contract, renewed annually upon positive evaluation, at the University of Namur;
- Employment under UNamur's "assistant avec thèse" status (Assistant 1 or Assistant 2 + thesis), in accordance with INTERREG personnel budget eligibility;
- Integration within a supportive, ambitious, and growing research team;
- Access to well-equipped field and laboratory infrastructure, with collaborative links across Belgium, France, and beyond;
- Participation in a high-impact European project with real-world environmental relevance;
- Career support for early-stage researchers, including co-supervision opportunities and mentoring;
- Salary and benefits per UNamur postdoctoral salary scales (see here);
- Additional advantages such as public transport reimbursement, bike allowance, parking, childcare access, and training opportunities (see details).

How to apply

Please send the following documents in a single PDF file to eli.thore@unamur.be, with the subject line "Postdoctoral application – ORION project", by 31 May 2025:

- A detailed CV (including a complete publication list);
- A motivation letter (max. 2 pages), including a narrative of your professional trajectory and fit with the project and the LAB;
- Contact details of three academic referees;

Further information

Scientific contact:
Dr. Eli Thoré – Assistant Professor, Laboratory of Adaptive Biodynamics, URBE
eli.thore@unamur.be

Prof. Patrick Kestemont – Full Professor, URBE
patrick.kestemont@unamur.be

Dr. Frederik De Laender – Associate Professor, Head of URBE
frederik.delaender@unamur.be