



The Department of Plant Microbe Interactions at the Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research (MPIPZ) invites applications for

## Postdoctoral positions

The Department of Plant Microbe Interactions at the MPIPZ in Cologne, Germany, is a global leader in research that seeks to define the principles as well as consequences of plant interactions with harmful and beneficial microorganisms.

### Facilities

Our institute constitutes part of a hub of world-class plant science research centres in the Rhineland that includes institutions in Cologne, Bonn, Düsseldorf, Jülich and Aachen, and is part of CEPLAS, Germany's only purely plant-focused Cluster of Excellence. The department is equipped with cutting-edge technical facilities and expertise, and our work is further supported by core institute service groups with proficiencies in next-generation sequencing, microscopy and protein mass spectrometry as well as plant growth facilities. The institute's postdoctoral coordinator provides extensive support to postdocs as they develop their research project at the institute and plan next career steps.

### Working environment

We are a friendly, dynamic and international department that hosts workshops, speakers and scientific meetings. The excellence of our environment for early-stage researchers is reflected in the large numbers of our PhD students and postdoctoral students that have gone on to gain independent positions in academia. A departmental scientific project manager provides editorial and training support for early career researchers and assistance with both identifying and applying to suitable sources of third-party funding.

### Offer

We are seeking exceptional postdoctoral candidates. Successful applicants will be given an employment contract at the MPIPZ and will be provided with initial funding in the form of a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. Salary and benefits are commensurate with public service regulations (TvöD; 100% E13). The final number of offered positions will depend on the applicants, but in all cases, candidates will be expected to attract their own third-party funds. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a symposium at MPIPZ on **20 April 2020**. Here, they will present previous and/or current research and ideas on a research programme they propose to embark on in our department. These presentations will be given to a panel of senior researchers from the department, and time will also be allocated for invited candidates to meet PIs, PhD students and postdoctoral researchers in order to learn more about our research and get to know department members.

Starting dates are flexible, but successful candidates should ideally begin in the department by autumn 2020.

### Expectations

We seek to recruit independent thinkers with a passion for cross-disciplinary research that interfaces with or overlaps with the core research focus of the department. We also wish to see evidence of a distinct research focus and thus, applicants should be able to demonstrate not only why they are suited to the department but also how they will contribute to furthering our scientific excellence. Successful candidates will be actively supported and guided in establishing themselves as independent scientists. They will first





develop a programme of research in collaboration with a supervisor. They will then be expected to take leadership of that programme, develop the research towards independence and see the project through to publication in leading specialist or general research journals. Proposed projects should address central questions in the field and findings should have profound implications for our understanding of plant-microbe interactions. Collaborative projects supervised by two group leaders within the department are also possible and encouraged in cases where there is a convincing scientific rationale.

### Your qualifications

#### *Essential:*

- Have (obtained within the last five years) a PhD degree or equivalent qualification in plant science, microbiology (bacteriology, mycology), host-microbe interactions, immunology, bioinformatics or a closely related field.
- At least one first-authorship in a peer-reviewed journal that reported novel biological findings or significant methodological advances in the respective research area.
- Experience with various laboratory techniques in plant science, microbiology, molecular biology or expertise in bioinformatics.
- An interest in applying interdisciplinary approaches to the study of plant-microbe interactions.

#### *Advantageous:*

- Training and experience in the application of the latest statistical and bioinformatics approaches for the analysis of sequencing data or a strong interest in gaining proficiency in such methods.

### Application

The Max Planck Society is committed to increasing the number of individuals with disabilities in its workforce and therefore encourages applications from such qualified individuals. Further, the Max Planck Society seeks to increase the percentage of women in those areas where they are underrepresented and therefore we explicitly encourage female candidates to apply. To apply, please submit, by **27 March 2020** a cover letter detailing your experience and interest in the topic, a research proposal (3 pages maximum, not including references and figures) and your CV. Please also give the names and contact details of two academic supervisors and your relation to him/her. Submissions will only be accepted if they are sent through the online application platform accessible [here](#).

The research proposal offers group leaders in the department an opportunity to assess the candidate's ability to design an interdisciplinary research project and will shape the final research programme. However, the research project actually undertaken by the successful applicant will be finalised together with the postdoctoral researcher's supervisors in the department. Shortlisted candidates will be informed by **late March, 2020** and should be available for the symposium in Cologne on **20 April 2020**.

Questions about the application process should be directed to Neysan Donnelly [donnelly@mpipz.mpg.de](mailto:donnelly@mpipz.mpg.de). For questions about the research and the positions, please contact Paul Schulze-Lefert (director and head of department) [schlef@mpipz.mpg.de](mailto:schlef@mpipz.mpg.de), Jane Parker [parker@mpipz.mpg.de](mailto:parker@mpipz.mpg.de), Stephane Hacquard [hacquard@mpipz.mpg.de](mailto:hacquard@mpipz.mpg.de), Ruben Garrido-Oter [garridoo@mpipz.mpg.de](mailto:garridoo@mpipz.mpg.de), or Tonni Grube Andersen [tandersen@mpipz.mpg.de](mailto:tandersen@mpipz.mpg.de). Applicants are also strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the research in our department by reading our recent papers and visiting our pages on the institute's [website](#) as well as our dedicated departmental [website](#).

