

The Cluster of Excellence on Plant Sciences CEPLAS invites applications for

## 12 Postdoctoral Research Associates (m/f/d)

Location: Düsseldorf/Cologne/Jülich/Gatersleben

Start date: 01.06.2026

Limited until: 31.05.2029

### Your profile

- strong scientific background in molecular plant sciences, genetics, quantitative biology, computational biology or a related discipline
- PhD in a relevant field, preferably awarded within the past 2–3 years, or close to completion. Applicants nearing completion must have submitted their doctoral thesis by the end of the selection process.
- High level of English language proficiency
- Strong motivation to conduct scientific projects in an international, interdisciplinary research environment
- Motivation to contribute to a dynamic and diverse academic community
- Excellent communication, organizational, and analytical skills
- Motivation to actively plan your next career step

### Our Offer

CEPLAS offers postdoc positions for three years for the following projects (details are available at [www.ceplas.eu](http://www.ceplas.eu)):

1. Genetic architecture of photosynthetic traits in barley under dynamic light and temperature conditions (S. Matsubara, FZJ)
2. Gene regulatory networks governing barley shoot development - from genes to growth in 4D (R. Simon, HHU)
3. Experimental evolution of plant-associated microbial communities (L. Rose, HHU, R. Garrido-Oter, MPIPZ)
4. The Secret Lives of Soil-Borne Fungal Pathogens: Spatiotemporal dynamics of intermicrobial interactions in natural soils (B. Thomma, UoC)
5. Tissue-Specific Immunometabolic Strategies in barley and Arabidopsis during Biotic Stress (A. Zuccaro, UoC)
6. Soil-Inspired Microfluidics for Root–Microbe Dynamics (G. Grossmann, HHU)
7. GRN Foundry – Context-Aware Foundation Models for Plant Gene Regulation (J.J. Szymanski, FZJ, T. Jores, HHU)
8. Synthetic bioprinted tissues for model-supported predictive analysis (M. Zurbriggen, HHU)
9. GRNs governing barley shoot development galore - towards 4D data across many accessions BARVISTAnext (B. Usadel, FZJ)
10. Understanding the structure-function relationship of leaf photosynthesis through multi-scale modelling (N. Töpfer, UoC)
11. Understanding and engineering carbon allocation strategies and root trait outputs for improved phosphorus acquisition (R. Giehl, IPK)
12. Developing trans-generationally stable centromere elimination (K. Schneeberger, MPIPZ/HHU)

CEPLAS creates a dynamic, international, and interdisciplinary research environment in plant science. We offer state-of-the-art laboratories and facilities, as well as a comprehensive training program for early career researchers tailored to your respective career level.

The place of employment is determined by the respective research project. The employment is limited to a period of three years, starting on June 1, 2026 (or as agreed).

We offer qualification positions within the meaning of the Act on Fixed-Term Employment Contracts in Academia (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz-WissZeitVG), which serves to promote the scientific qualification of the employee. The pay scale grouping will be, depending on the personal qualification of the applicant, up to pay grade 13 TV-L for HHU, UoC and IPK /TVöD-Bund for FZJ and MPIPZ.

## About us

The Cluster of Excellence for Plant Sciences CEPLAS is a joint initiative of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf (HHU), the University of Cologne (UoC), the Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research Cologne (MPIPZ), Forschungszentrum Jülich (FZJ) and the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK) Gatersleben. CEPLAS develops innovative strategies for sustainable plant production and promotes innovative training programs for early career researchers.

Detailed information about CEPLAS is available at [www.ceplas.eu](http://www.ceplas.eu).

All participating institutions are equal opportunity and family-friendly employers and strive for gender equality and excellence through diversity. Applications from people of all genders are expressly welcome. Applications from women will be given preferential consideration in accordance with the State Equal Opportunities Act. The application of severely disabled persons and persons with equivalent disabilities is also welcome. In order for a severe disability or equality to be taken into account, please provide evidence of this with suitable documents.

Applications are accepted exclusively via the HHU application portal. It is required to state in your motivation letter for which of the projects (max 2) you apply for and what qualifies you for the position (one application per person only). Here's a list of the documents required (please upload as one single PDF file < 5 MB):

- Motivation letter including a statement for which project(s) (max 2) you apply and what qualifies you for the project
- CV and publication list
- Contact info of two references
- previous degree certificates; applicants near completion of their PhD must include information about the timeline for the submission of their PhD thesis

## Contact

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