

PhD position, 100% TV-L E13 for 36 months
LMU Munich, Faculty of Biology, Zoology
Starting date: 01 September 2023
End of application: 15 April 2023

Doctoral position (f/m/x) – Fate and transport of the microplastic in soil mesofauna

We are inviting a motivated doctoral candidate to participate in the exciting project titled “Fate and transport of the microplastic in soil mesofauna”. The project is focusing on the fate and impact of microplastic particles (MP) and associated chemical pollutants on the soil fauna.

The successful candidate will conduct a series of mesocosm experiments, aimed at the identification of the fate and pathways of the MP transport in the soil mesofauna (mostly insects), to determine hotspots and moments in the biogenic MP soil transport. Additionally, the successful candidate will run a series of acute and chronic toxicological experiments to identify the impact of the MP transport through the soil food webs on the mesofaunal organisms, in particular to find threshold concentrations of the different types of MP pollutants. Results of the experiments will be used to estimate the impact of the MP transport in soil onto ecosystem functions of the mesofauna.

The successful candidate will be based in the workgroup of Zoomorphology at LMU Munich at the campus Martinsried (part of municipality Planegg) south-west of Munich, in close proximity to Munich. Child care facilities as well as schools are nearby. The project will involve short secondments to the University of Nis (Serbia), University of Birmingham (UK) and California Water Board (Berkeley, California, USA). Additionally, the candidate will spend extended secondment (1–3 months) at the Estación Biológica de Doñana in Seville (Spain), conducting experiments with soil mesofauna.

The candidates must not yet be in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of recruitment. The position is part of a doctoral network (see below) and provides ample opportunities for international and inter-sectoral secondments, international joint experiments, advanced training courses (ATCs) among other activities. The candidates can be of any nationality, but must comply with the following mobility rule: At the time of selection by the host organization, the candidates must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the host organization for more than 12 months in the three years immediately prior to recruitment.

The candidates should hold a Master of Science degree in Biology/ Ecology/ Toxicology/ Biotechnology/ Environmental Science or similar. Strong interest in animal ecology and insect ontogeny will be necessary for the completion of the project. Strong command of quantitative analysis in R, python or equivalent will be a strong asset. Background in mesocosm experiments and interest in insect larval ecology and ontogeny will be considered a plus.

The candidates must demonstrate that their ability to understand and express themselves in both written and spoken English is at a sufficiently high level to derive the full benefit from their training.

We are especially seeking for a good team worker being able to cooperate closely with people in the workgroup and national and international colleagues of a wide network.

We are offering a supportive and stimulating research environment at the Zoomorphology workgroup at LMU Munich and a large support network of mentors and co-supervisors. Working conditions in the lab are conducive for a good work-life balance. We are offering flexibility of working time, and are in general a family-friendly lab.

The candidates will be remunerated according to the standard Marie Curie rate, which includes monthly living allowance, mobility allowance, and if applicable family allowance and allowance for the long-term secondments. The candidates will also be able to join the Life Science School Munich (LSM), a graduate school at LMU Munich, which provides excellent opportunities for career and personal development.

The successful candidate will become a part of the PlasticUnderground Horizon Europe ITN Project. Overall, applications are invited for 14 PhD positions funded by the Marie-Skłodowska-Curie Actions Doctoral Network PlasticUnderground.

The PlasticUnderground Doctoral Network (DN) is an international, multi-partner, inter-sectoral doctoral research-training network with the aim to prepare an international cohort of Doctoral Candidates in the development of solutions to the emerging plastic pollution crisis in soils and groundwater. Given the evolving understanding of subsurface soil and groundwater ecosystems as long-term storage pools of micro- and nanoplastics, interdisciplinary capacity that can support and provide guidance for the management of these systems, as well as development of adequate technological, social behavioural and legislative solutions is urgently needed. This interdisciplinary DN will integrate comprehensive training opportunities in cutting edge technological innovations, regulatory and behavioural approaches across traditional disciplinary and sectoral boundaries. The consortium comprises universities, research institutions and companies located in the UK, France, Spain, Serbia, Italy, Switzerland, Cyprus and Germany.

We offer: Horizon Europe-funded PhD position (100 %) for 36 months; interdisciplinary research project and working environment; modern imaging equipment (macro- and microscopic); international and inter-sectoral secondments; advanced training courses

We expect: MSc (or equivalent) in Biology/ Ecology/ Toxicology/ Biotechnology/ Environmental Science; good English communication skills (oral and written); ability to work in teams; high mobility; high motivation; strong interest in animal ecology and insect ontogeny

The position is limited to 36 months with a starting date of 01 September, 2023.

Applications of women are strongly encouraged. Severely challenged persons will be given preference in case of otherwise equal qualifications.

Please send your application to jhaug@bio.lmu.de until April 15, 2023. The application should include CV, transcript of records, letter of motivation and the names and contact details of two potential referees.

For further information contact:

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