

The Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) GmbH (www.leibniz-zmt.de) is an independent research and teaching institute that provides scientific knowledge for the protection and sustainable use of tropical coastal ecosystems. To this end, we work in an inter- and transdisciplinary manner with our partners in the tropics. The ZMT is a member of the Leibniz Association.

Join our expanding research team on Earth Surface and Eco-Evolutionary Dynamics, which, as part of the [TropEcS](#) initiative (Modelling socio-economic dimensions across Tropical Coastal Ecosystems and the Earth System), is now seeking (subject to release of funds) a dedicated doctoral researcher to investigate trait variability of mangroves in the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP).

The offered position seeks to characterise mangrove morphological and photosynthetic trait variability across environmental gradients. Mangrove ecosystems serve as a vital carbon sink in tropical regions, yet their trait variability across temporal and spatial scales remains poorly characterised. This project will establish a trait-based baseline characterisation for mangrove plants in the ETP. This information is crucial to better predict the role these ecosystems have in Earth system models. To achieve this, field work on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica and Colombia will be developed in close collaboration with local partners.

Doctoral candidate (gn)

(Reference: 20-STB-PB4-PhD)

Your tasks:

- Conduct a research agenda that includes, among others: a quantitative literature review and field measurements of mangrove morphological (SLA) and photosynthetic-related (V_{cmax} & J_{max}) traits.
- Analyse trait variability patterns across different locations in the ETP.
- Collaborate with partners in Costa Rica and Colombia as well as with the Mangrove Ecology Group and the broader ZMT community.
- Prepare scientific publications and present results at scientific conferences.
- Prepare a dissertation and obtain doctoral qualification.

Requirements:

- Master degree in Ecology, Marine Biology, Environmental Sciences or related field.
- Strong interest in tropical coastal ecosystems and plant functional traits in particular.
- Sound knowledge about trait-based ecology, data analysis, and experimental design.
- Fieldwork experience and willingness to work under physically demanding conditions, e.g. tropical climate and remote environments.
- Demonstrable ability to use programming languages such as R or Python.
- Good communication and writing skills in English are essential and knowledge of Spanish is a plus.
- Ability to work collaboratively in an international working environment.

Further information:

For questions, please contact Dr. Esteban Acevedo-Trejos, email: esteban.acevedo@leibniz-zmt.de.

Details of position:

Salary will be paid according to the German TV-L (EG 13). The position is available for part-time (2/3 of a full-time position) employment starting as soon as possible for 36 months. The fixed term is for academic qualification according to § 2 (1) WissZeitVG (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz). Accordingly, only applicants who still have the relevant qualification periods according to § 2 (1) WissZeitVG can be considered. The position is intended to provide further academic qualification with the aim of obtaining a doctorate.

ZMT is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants with a migration background are welcome. Persons with severe disabilities are given special consideration if they have the same professional and personal qualifications. The ZMT values its diverse workforce and pursues the goal of providing equal opportunity, which incorporates gender neutrality (gn). We will be happy to accept your documents without a photo.

We offer:

- A challenging and varied job in an international, dynamic and interdisciplinary research environment
- A motivated and committed team from different countries and cultures
- An open and cooperative working atmosphere
- Opportunities for personal and professional development
- Interesting, varied and challenging tasks and family-friendly working conditions
- Company pension plan (VBL)
- Company health promotion and the opportunity to participate in company fitness with EGYM Wellpass

Submission of application:

Please submit your complete application documents (cover letter, CV, references, job references, certificates and attestations) and a letter of motivation **by 31.05.2026 as a single pdf file** with the reference number "20-STB-PB4-PhD" to Ms. Lena de Carné-Oehlmann, email: bewerbung@leibniz-zmt.de.

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