

ERC-funded postdoc position on inter-organelle communication during plant biotic stress responses

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Company: VIB

Location: Ghent

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About the Lab/PSB

The VIB-UGent Center for Plant Systems Biology (PSB) is a world-leading plant science institute located at the heart of a renowned Plant Biotech campus in Ghent, Belgium. Its mission is to unravel plant biological processes and translate this knowledge into value for society. Please visit us at [for more information](#).

Within the framework of an ERC Starting Grant, the lab of Prof. Inge De Clercq () aims to understand how plant cells perceive environmental signals (e.g. from attack by pathogens) and translate this into appropriate defence responses. We focus on studying the central role of intracellular organelles (mitochondria, chloroplasts, and the ER) in stress signal transduction, and uncover the mechanisms of how these organelles communicate with each other through stress-induced contact sites. To this end, we use interdisciplinary approaches by combining high-end cell biology (confocal and super-resolution microscopy), proteomics, proximity labelling, various other omics approaches and bioinformatics.

Job description

An ERC Starting grant-funded postdoc position is available in the group of Prof. Inge De Clercq at the VIB-UGent Center for Plant Systems Biology (PSB) and Ghent University, Belgium.

You will study inter-organelle (between mitochondria, chloroplasts, and the ER) communication during the plant's interaction with pathogens. Your project is embedded within the ERC-STG grant, entitled "COSI: Understanding organelle communication

through COntact Sites in plant stress responses”, which studies the direct association between organelles through stress-induced contact sites by implementing state-of-the-art cell biology and proteomics approaches. With this exciting project, we seek to provide new mechanistic and functional insight into how stress signals are perceived and transduced between intracellular organelles and how they are translated into appropriate defence responses. You will design and implement tools to detect the dynamic (or reversible) association between organelles and use these tools to monitor contact site dynamics during various (biotic and/or abiotic) stress conditions using confocal microscopy and super-resolution microscopy. In addition, you will be involved in the characterization of the dynamic proteome at these stress-induced contact sites. You will also be involved in guiding a Ph.D. project focusing on this topic.

Profile

Essential

You have a Ph.D. degree in Biotechnology, Biochemistry, Biology, Bio-engineering, or equivalent.

You are an expert in plant molecular biology and cell biology.

You can plan and conduct research independently and accurately.

You have a keen interest in organelle/cell biology, proteomics, intra-cellular signalling and plant-pathogen interactions.

You have excellent English communication skills.

Desirable but not required

Experience from Ph.D. and/or postdoc in plant cell biology, confocal microscopy, super-resolution microscopy, proteomics, and/or plant-pathogen assays is a plus as well as a publication record in peer-reviewed journals showing clear expertise in these areas.

Experience in supervising Ph.D. students is not required but is also considered a plus.

Key personal characteristics

You should work well in a team as you will be integrated into the international research environment of the VIB-UGent Center of Plant Systems Biology and participate in international collaborations.

You are proactive in establishing contacts with experts to solve problems and to communicate with other members of different team(s).

You have a strong sense of responsibility and maintain a clean working environment.

We offer

A 2-year postdoc position with possibilities for prolongation and/or for applying for personal funding.

An exciting and innovative project embedded in the ERC-STG 2020 grant 'COSI', covering an interesting combination of state-of-the-art techniques including cell biology (confocal microscopy, monitoring dynamic protein-protein interactions and (inter-)organelle dynamics, and high-resolution microscopy), proteomics (proximity labelling based on TurboID, protein pulldown), biochemistry, plant stress assays and various omics approaches.

A multidisciplinary and highly stimulating and supporting international research environment.

Access to state-of-the-art tools and infrastructure including core facilities for proteomics and super-resolution microscopy.

Various training opportunities are organized at VIB to broaden your expertise and skills (training.vib.be).

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