Open PhD-Position in the Cluster of Excellence TERRA

The newly funded Cluster of Excellence TERRA "Terrestrial Geo-Biosphere Interactions in a Changing World" is an interdisciplinary research initiative of geoscientists, biologists, and computer scientists at the Universities of Tübingen and Hohenheim and the Senckenberg Society for Nature Research in Frankfurt, investigating how the interactions between the living and non-living worlds shape global change from single microorganisms to the globe, in the geological past, at present, and in the future. It has started on January 1, 2026. We seek for a doctoral researcher in a coordinated Focus Unit Projects (FUNs) starting on April 1, 2026, lasting for 3.5 years. The following position is located at the University of Tübingen.

Project Name: INVADERS - INVAsive species enhancing Dynamics in Erosion of RiverbankS

This interdisciplinary project addresses possible positive feedback loops between the geo- and the biosphere which may accelerate invasion by non-native plant and animal species. The case studies are riverbanks, where on the one hand, invasive species may promote erosion, and where on the other hand, invasive species may benefit from disturbances. This feedback will be investigated by using a nested approach starting from large-scale, multi-species, and multi-river investigations, to regional-scale field surveys on fewer species.

FUN04_3: Doctoral Researcher (m/f/d; E 13 TV-L, 75%)

starting 1.4.2026 until 31.9.2029

Feedback between plant invasions and river morphology - a combined observational and experimental approach

This project aims at establishing causal relationships between riverbank dynamics and the abundance of invasive plant species *vs*. diversity of native plant communities. This will be done by conducting detailed surveys in the field, combined with manipulations of plant density and diversity, for two abundant plant invaders. On a small-scale, we will utilize common garden experiments for gaining a mechanistic understanding of the relationship between plant species diversity and physical and chemical substrate dynamics. This subproject is a collaborative effort among several groups at Tübingen (e.g., K. Tielbörger, O. Bossdorf) and Senckenberg in Frankfurt (D. Leigh).

We are searching for a candidate with an MSc degree in a relevant field and good background in theory and methods in plant ecology and/or invasion biology. The candidate should have experience in designing, conducting, and analysing ecological experiments, and sh/e should be able and willing to spend extended periods in the field. Excellent communication skills in English are essential, too.

Joining TERRA, you will be member of a pioneering team exploring a new research domain with impact on addressing the multiple crises of global change (www.terra-cluster.org). You will be part of the new Graduate School of Terrestrial Geo-Biosphere Interactions, profiting from the supervision by an interdisciplinary Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC), and receiving tailored training.

For questions concerning the post contact Katja Tielbörger (katja.tielboerger@uni-tuebingen.de). The Universities of Tübingen is committed to equity and diversity and actively promote equal opportunities. Equally qualified candidates with disabilities will be given preference in the hiring process. Your application should comprise a letter of motivation, CV, contact details of two references, and certificates. Please submit a single pdf (max. 10 MB) to katja.tielboerger@uni-tuebingen.de under the heading "Application: Your Name [FUN04_3]". Only complete applications will be considered. The deadline for applications is February 10, 2026. With the application you agree that your personal data will be shared among the participating institutions (University of Tübingen, University of Hohenheim, Senckenberg) for the purpose and over the duration of the recruiting procedure.