

Job Announcement Ref. #11-26011

Senckenberg – Leibniz Institution for Biodiversity and Earth System Research (SGN), headquartered in **Frankfurt am Main**, is seeking to fill the following position in the **Department of Molecular Ecology** at the **Senckenberg Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre (SBIK-F)** as soon as possible:

PhD (m/f/d) Transcriptional Regulation in Beetle Sociality (65%)

Location:	Frankfurt
Employment scope:	Part-time: 65%
Type of contract:	Temporary, limited to 3 years
Remuneration:	Collective agreement of the state Hesse (TV-H) / E13

The Senckenberg Society for Nature Research is a member of the Leibniz Association and has been investigating the “Earth System” worldwide for more than 200 years, examining the past, analysing the present, and developing projections for the future. We conduct integrative geobiodiversity research with the aim of understanding nature in all its complexity and diversity in order to preserve it as the foundation of life for future generations and to ensure its sustainable use. Across eight institutes and five research stations throughout Germany, scientists from more than 40 countries conduct research at the highest international level. The city of Frankfurt, where the Senckenberg Society was originally founded, hosts the organization’s central administrative services along with two research institutes housing extensive scientific collections and one of Senckenberg’s most renowned institutions, the Senckenberg Natural History Museum Frankfurt. Senckenberg is as much a part of the city’s identity as its skyline and its traditional apple wine.

Subsociality (parental care) is considered a prerequisite for the evolution of eusociality. While the genomics of eusociality are well studied, the transition from solitary to subsocial lifestyles has received little attention. Subsociality evolved independently in 10 beetle families, with a single transition to eusociality (the ambrosia beetle, *Austroplatypus incompertus*). The aim of this project is to uncover the detailed regulatory architecture that emerged with the evolution of subsociality and controls complex interactions between parents and offspring.

The project will be in close collaboration with the Sandra Steiger research group (University of Bayreuth), Peter Biedermann (University of Freiburg), and a joint modelling project located at the Dirk Metzler group (LMU Munich) and Mark Harrison (Coventry University). The project is also part of an interdisciplinary consortium studying the “[GEvol: Genomic Basis of Evolutionary Innovations](#) (GEvol)” (Priority Programme, SPP 2349 funded by German Science Foundation (DFG)).

We are recruiting a highly motivated PhD candidate with interest in molecular evolution, genomics, epigenetics, and behavior to identify key regulators and epigenetic modifications shaping the evolution of social behavior using a multi-omics approach.

Your tasks

- Conduct experimental work and collect samples from eight beetle species across three parental-care phases from carrion and ambrosia beetles.
- Perform essential laboratory work (e.g. RNA extraction, library preparation)
- Carry out bioinformatic analyses to analyse multi-omics data gene-expression data with epigenetic regulatory states.
- Publish results in internationally peer-reviewed journals, and present those at international conferences
- Closely collaborate with the modelling counterpart

Your profile

- Master's degree (or equivalent) in Biology, Evolutionary Biology, Molecular Biology, Bioinformatics or related field
- Strong interest in evolutionary processes, genomics, and behavior
- Prior experience with NGS data, R, another programming language is a plus
- Experience with formulating scientific questions, planning and executing a research project
- Very good English communication skills, curiosity, independence, and interest to collaboratively work in an interdisciplinary team

Desirable skills

- Experience in conducting experiments
- Experience in dissection of specific tissues
- Experience in molecular laboratory procedures, including RNA extraction, preparation of Enzyme-seq and CUT&Tag libraries
- Familiarity with transcriptome, methylation and/or histone modification analyses

We Offer

- Access to an international network of scientists, policymakers, and research organizations
- Integration in an interdisciplinary consortium studying the "[GEvol: Genomic Basis of Evolutionary Innovations](#) (GEvol)" with additional training opportunities and collaborations across Germany.
- A dynamic working environment in Frankfurt, a diverse and vibrant city offering a high quality of life
- Flexible working hours – mobile working options – Support with childcare or caring for family members (certified by the "audit berufundfamilie") – employee ID card with free admission to municipal museums – annual special payment – collectively agreed vacation entitlement – company pension plan (ZVK)

Senckenberg is committed to diversity. We benefit from the different expertise, perspectives and personalities of our staff and welcome every application from qualified candidates, irrespective of age, gender, ethnic or cultural origin, religion and ideology, sexual orientation and identity or disability. Applicants with a severe disability will be given special consideration in case of equal suitability. Senckenberg actively supports the compatibility of work and family and places great emphasis on an equal and inclusive work culture.

How to apply?

Please **upload your application** (letter of motivation with a short description of your previous and current research foci, a CV, certificates of academic achievements, list of publications as well as letter(s) of recommendation, if available) **(as a single PDF file) on our website by March 29, 2026.**

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If you have any specific questions about the position, please contact Dr. Barbara Feldmeyer at barbara.feldmeyer@senckenberg.de, or Prof. Dr. Sandra Steiger at Sandra.Steiger@uni-bayreuth.de.

For data protection information on the processing of personal data as part of the application and selection process, please refer to the privacy policy on our homepage at <https://www.senckenberg.de/en/imprint/>

Please visit our website at www.senckenberg.de for further information about the Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung.