

Short-term Postdoctoral Fellowship in biocontrol of fungal diseases of grapevine and fruit trees

Supervisor: Prof Lizele Mostert, Department of Plant Pathology (Research programme: Trunk diseases of grapevine and fruit trees)

Location: Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Duration: 3-months

Start Date: 1 April to 30 June 2026

Project Title: Development of sustainable disease management solutions through biocontrol

Scope of Research:

Biological control is an important strategy within plant protection in agriculture, however, the mechanisms involved, dose response and *in planta* efficacy are often not understood and requires in-depth research. The research will follow from prior projects that have identified potential biocontrol candidates. The fellow will be responsible to sequence identify fungal and bacterial biocontrol isolates, previously shown to have efficacy. Secondary metabolites will be extracted, characterized with UPLC-MS and tested at different concentrations for their antifungal properties. Additionally, different microscopy and molecular techniques will be employed to understand the main mechanisms employed by biocontrol fungi and bacteria *in planta*.

Requirements:

- PhD in Plant Pathology (must have graduated within the last 5 years).
- Evidence of the ability to publish in internationally acclaimed journals.
- Experience with molecular techniques (PCR and sequencing), microscopy and plant trials using biocontrol to control fungal diseases.

Remuneration: A fellowship will be awarded for a 3-month period, proportionally to the amount for a postdoctoral fellowship. Postdoctoral fellows are not employees of Stellenbosch University, and are therefore not eligible for employee benefits. The fellowship will be tax-exempted.

Closing date: 14 February 2026

Enquiries: A letter of application, accompanied by a comprehensive *curriculum vitae* that includes a list of publications and the contact details of at least two referees, must be sent to Prof. Lizele Mostert at lmost@sun.ac.za.