



July 15, 2025

Agroecology Researcher

Location: MVARC, Moinhos de Vento de Baixo, 7750-217 Espírito Santo, Mértola, Portugal

Contract Type: Full-time / 24 month fixed-term. Possibility for part time or job share.

Salary: In line with Level 12 Tabela Remuneratória Única

(https://www.dgaep.gov.pt/upload//catalogo/SRAP_2025_V25_06_05_jun.pdf)

Closing Date: 15th August 2025

Start Date: 1st September, 2025

About MVARC

MVARC is an independent research centre committed to advancing sustainable agricultural practices and ecological resilience in southern Portugal, across Europe and worldwide. We work across multiple disciplines to provide rigorous, field-based evidence that informs agroecological transitions, food system sustainability, and climate-smart agriculture. Our projects serve a diverse set of partners, including policymakers and farming communities, and we work with partners across Europe and beyond. Current projects include developing farmer-focused sustainability assessments and digital tools (e.g. [DIGITAF](#), [GFM](#)), investigating agroecological approaches to livestock and crop production (e.g. [Re-Livestock](#) and [AGROMIX](#)), developing alternative approaches to resource use efficiency aligned with regenerative agriculture ([MyRockrose](#)), and investigating biodiversity impacts of agriculture (e.g. AGROMIX, DIGITAF). Based on a research farm in south-east Portugal, we establish and manage on farm trials as well as work closely with local farmers and other stakeholders to ensure the relevance and upscaling of our research. For more information about MVARC's work, please visit www.mvarc.eu.

About the Role

We are seeking a motivated and enthusiastic MSc-level researcher to join our research team. You will contribute to designing, implementing, and analysing agroecological field studies, supporting interdisciplinary research that bridges ecological science, food systems, and rural livelihoods. This role is ideal for someone with a strong academic foundation in agroecology, environmental science, or related fields, and a passion for applied, impact-oriented research. Fieldwork will be a core part of this position.

Your primary role will be within the ESTEVA+ research project, an interdisciplinary project aimed at enhancing the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of *Cistus ladanifer* (rockrose) essential oil and hydrolate production. From optimizing harvest practices and developing novel biomass-based products to modelling carbon balances and creating digital tools, this project is redefining sustainable agricultural practices and strengthening the circular bioeconomy in south-east Portugal. Trials will focus on the potential use of the shrub for bioenergy production, soil improvement (ramial chipped wood, compost or biochar) and animal feed. You will also be required to engage in other ongoing and new research projects and activities as and when required.

Key Responsibilities

- Assist in the design and execution of agroecological field studies and trials
 - Collect, manage, and analyse ecological, agronomic, and/or socio-economic data
 - Conduct literature reviews and synthesize evidence relevant to agroecological systems
 - Support stakeholder engagement with farmers, community organizations, and project partners
 - Contribute to technical reports, academic publications, and knowledge dissemination
 - Ensure data quality, ethical compliance, and research integrity
 - Support proposal writing and contribute to research funding applications
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Essential Requirements

- MSc in Agroecology, Environmental Science, Sustainable Agriculture, Ecology, or a related field
 - Strong understanding of ecological principles as they relate to agricultural systems
 - Experience with qualitative and/or quantitative research methods
 - Proficiency in data analysis tools (e.g., R, Python, Excel, QGIS)
 - Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal
 - Experience working with a range of stakeholders (especially farmers and land managers)
 - Ability to work both independently and collaboratively
 - Willingness to participate in fieldwork, sometimes in rural or remote locations and challenging climate conditions
 - Willingness to travel internationally
 - Driver's license and own transport to office location
 - Language requirements: Portuguese C2, English C2
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Desirable

- Experience in participatory research methods or co-design with farming communities
- Knowledge of soil science, agroecosystem modelling, or biodiversity monitoring
- Familiarity with food systems, agroforestry, or climate adaptation practices

- A publication record or contributions to academic or policy reports
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Why Join MVARC?

- Contribute to meaningful research at the intersection of ecology, agriculture, and development
 - Be part of a mission-driven, interdisciplinary team
 - Work on high-impact projects with real-world applications
 - Opportunities for fieldwork, publishing, and career growth
 - Flexible, inclusive, and supportive working environment
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To Apply:

Please send your CV and a cover letter outlining your interest and suitability for the role, addressing the essential and desirable requirements above to josmith@mvarc.eu by 15th August. If you wish to discuss the job position further, please contact Jo Smith at josmith@mvarc.eu.