



# ACADEMY



The **PLANT 2030**  
Competence Network  
of Applied Plant Science  
in Germany

# **Mentoring Guide**

## Worksheets



# ACADEMY

Dear Mentees,  
we are pleased to welcome you  
to the mentoring program of the  
PLANT 2030 ACADEMY.

The PLANT 2030 ACADEMY fosters the professional and personal development of doctoral students and early stage postdocs involved in plant science initiatives funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). A key element of the PLANT 2030 ACADEMY is mentoring as an effective instrument for individual support and the exchange of experiences.

The worksheets accompany the mentoring guide and lead you through the developmental phases of a successful mentoring cooperation. The questionnaires and templates help you setting goals, finding a matching mentor and preparing the mentoring relationship. The objectives and timeline given are suggestions and you are free to choose a way that suits you best. However, the more specific you define what you want to accomplish via mentoring, the more effectively the mentor will be able to support you.

Do not hesitate to contact us in case you have any questions or problems. We look forward to fruitful cooperations and wish you an inspiring time in the course of the PLANT 2030 ACADEMY.

**Your organizing team of the PLANT 2030 managing office**

Dr. Matthias Arlt, Dr. Hanna Berger and Dr. Alexander Graf

***plant2030@die-blattmacher.com***

***www.plant2030-academy.de***

»Tell me and I forget,  
teach me and I may remember,  
involve me and I learn.«

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Benjamin Franklin



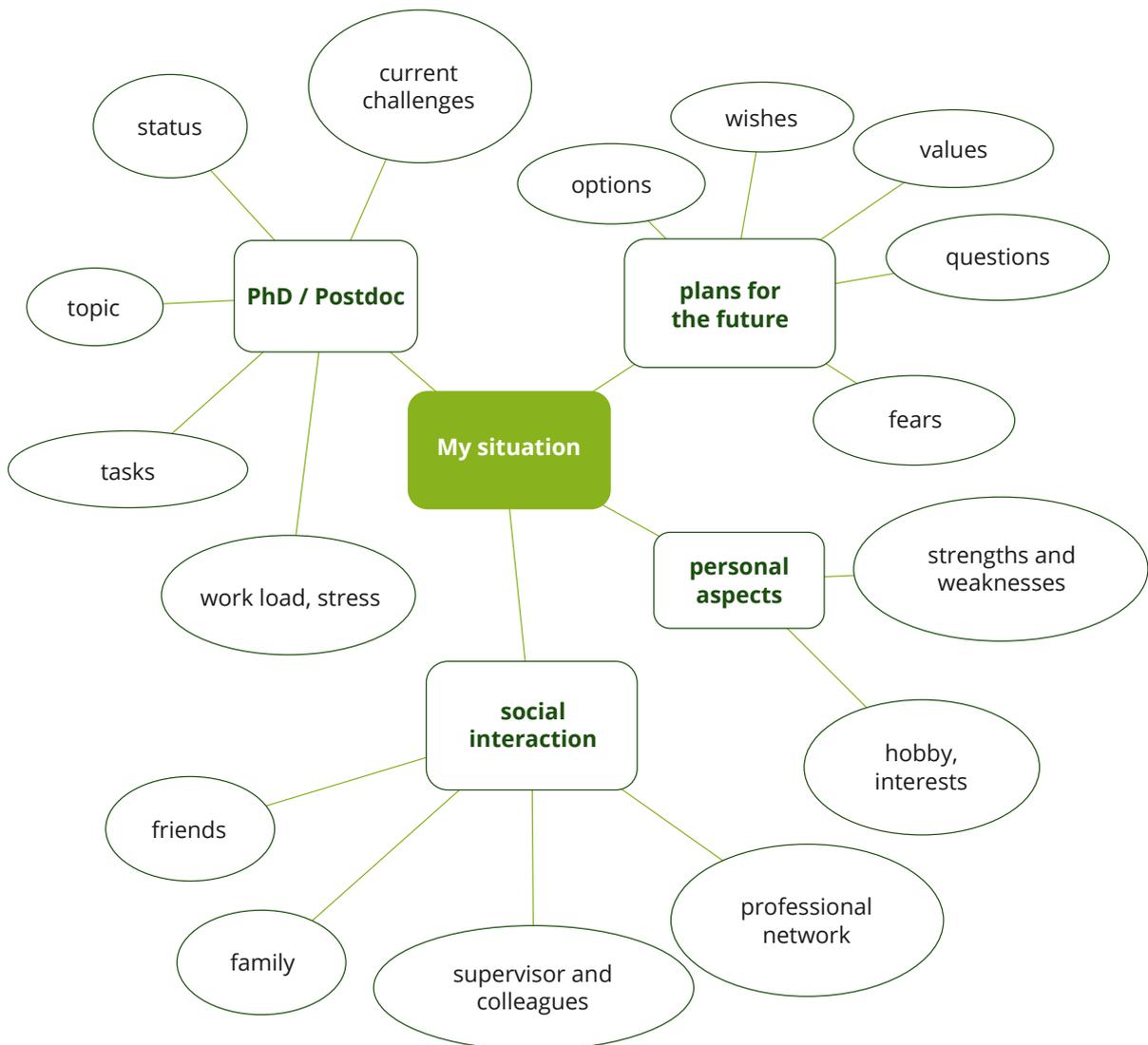
Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research

	Mentoring Stage	Worksheet No.	Timeline
	<b>1 Analysis</b> of the mentee's individual situation and goals	1.1 Personal situation analysis 1.2 General goal setting 1.3 Mentoring goal setting 1.4 Checklist: Are your goals SMART?	<b>September–October 2022</b>
<p><b>The analysis</b> of the individual situation and goals establishes a solid foundation for a fruitful mentoring cooperation. The more specific the mentee defines what he or she wants to accomplish via mentoring, the more effectively the mentor will be able to support.</p>			
	<b>2 Match</b> Criteria and search strategies	2.1 Criteria to find a matching mentor 2.2 Mentor search strategies 2.3 The matching process	<b>November–December 2022</b>
<p>During the <b>matching phase</b>, the mentee clarifies the individual criteria and suggests a potential mentor. The mentor receives an official request by the PLANT 2030 managing office including the mentee's motivation and decides whether he or she would like to meet for a first noncommittal get-together.</p>			
	<b>3 Preparation</b> of general topics, the initial session and a mentoring agreement	3.1 Topic suggestions for your mentoring relationship 3.2 The initial mentoring session 3.3 Checklist – The initial session 3.4 Mentoring agreement	<b>January–February 2023</b>
<p><b>In preparation</b> of the mentoring relationship, mentee and mentor meet for a first time. They get to know each other and their ideas and decide whether to start a mentoring cooperation. It is good practice to sign a mentoring agreement that defines the general course of the mentoring cooperation such as frequency and location as well as goals and content.</p>			
	<b>4 Cooperation</b> Planning and reviewing of mentoring sessions, goal-oriented collaboration	4.1 Preparation of the mentoring meeting 4.2 Review of mentoring meeting 4.3 Reviewing your development and adjusting your goals 4.4 Continuing the progress	<b>March 2023 April 2024</b>
<p>During the <b>mentoring cooperation</b> mentee and mentor meet to work towards achieving the mentee's goals. The mentee prepares the sessions, defines the objectives and gives feedback on the development. The mentor shares experiences and insights to support the mentee.</p>			
	<b>5 Formal end</b> Feedback, completion and outlook	5.1 Why and how to give thoughtful feedback 5.2 Completion of the mentoring cooperation and outlook	<b>May 2024</b>
<p>At the <b>formal end</b> of the mentoring cooperation, mentee and mentor exchange feedback on the relationship and discuss whether and how to keep in touch.</p>			

**1 Analysis**

**1.1 Personal situation analysis**

A mind map helps clarifying and explaining the different aspects of your personal situation to the mentor. Draw a map with your key factors and add further aspects important for you. You can highlight aspects that are particularly important for you.



## 1.2 General goal setting

Which three aims would you like to realize within the next three years?  
On a scale of 1 to 5: How close are you to reach these aims?

far away                      close

1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Are your aims in conflict with each other? If so, prioritize: Which is the most important aim?

Conflict(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Priority: \_\_\_\_\_

What are the positive aspects of reaching your aims?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How will you celebrate reaching your aims?  
\_\_\_\_\_

In a longer term: What does your dream life look like in 10 years?  
Which steps towards your dream can you take within the next three years?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 1.3 Mentoring goal setting

What would you like to reach with the help of mentoring?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which topics would you like to discuss with your mentor?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In which role(s) do you see your mentor (see guide p. 8)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the best possible development following the mentoring process?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1.4 Checklist:** Are your goals **SMART?**  
**S**pecific? **M**easurable? **A**chievable? **R**elevant? **T**ime-bound?

## 2 The successful mentoring match

### 2.1 Criteria to find a matching mentor

**Institution:** In which field should your mentor have experiences; for example, in academia, private sector, politics, or a different field?

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**Geography:** What spatial distances do you want?

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**Communication:** Which language(s) should your mentor speak?

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**Professional proximity:** How close should your mentor be to your own special area?

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**Social proximity:** Should the mentor be connected to you or your supervisor?

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**Career-specific aspects:**  
How renowned should the mentor be?

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**Personality/Attitude:** Which personal characteristics or which basic attitude would be important to you?

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Is the **gender** important for the mentor search?

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**Family tasks:** How important is it for you, that the mentor has an own family?

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### 2.2 Mentor search strategies

-  **Own contacts:** Through mentoring, former or loose contacts can be intensified.
-  **Personal networks:** You can ask colleagues or your supervisor for tips and a personal assessment.
-  **Publications:** Content interest or proximity to the research interests of a person can also be the basis for a mentoring relationship.
-  **Conferences:** You can check for interesting personalities on meetings.
-  **Internet,** for example research explorer of DFG, HRK and DAAD, or PLANT 2030 project database:  
[www.gerit.org/en](http://www.gerit.org/en) · [www.pflanzenforschung.de/qr/projektdatenbank](http://www.pflanzenforschung.de/qr/projektdatenbank)

If you have difficulties finding a suitable mentor, ask the PLANT 2030 managing office for help.

Notes on mentor search, e.g. people to ask, webpages, publications to check:

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## 2.3 The matching process

1. Clarify your individual desires for an ideal mentoring relationship as well as search strategies suitable for you.
2. Mentor search: Actively look for potential candidates. Use the search criteria and strategies as help.
3. Submission of mentoring requests: Hand in a list with your favorite mentor(s) until December 15th, 2022; see template list below.
4. Contacting the desired mentors: We send the acquisition email for you. If you wish, you can also make the request by yourself.
5. We will inform you whether the person contacted is generally interested in becoming your mentor.
6. Contact the prospective mentor to arrange an initial, noncommittal meeting.
7. At the first meeting, check whether you get along well and whether your wishes and concerns match the ideas of the potential mentor (see also worksheet 3.2).
- 8.1 If yes: You may fill out a mentoring agreement at the end of the meeting and plan further steps. Please give us a feedback as soon as possible, so that we can officially welcome the person.
- 8.2 If no or if you have doubts: Please inform us. We might be able to give advice or, if you want to, communicate the refusal for you.

To ensure a fruitful mentoring relationship, please inform us, the PLANT 2030 managing office, at important steps during the process! These are the first meeting, the agreement, the completion, and whenever there are special issues.

### Template list for mentor acquisition

The PLANT 2030 managing office will send the acquisition email to the mentor, unless agreed otherwise. This ensures a professional address and increases the chances for a successful match.

Therefore, hand in a list with your favorite mentor(s) including contact details and a short explanation of your choice by email to [PLANT2030@die-blattmacher.com](mailto:PLANT2030@die-blattmacher.com) until December 15th, 2022

Priority	name	Institution	Email address	Reason for choice (mentioned in the acquisition mail)
1				
2				
3				

## 3 Preparing a mentoring relationship

### 3.1 Topic suggestions for your mentoring relationship

In the mentoring relationship, you can bring up generally everything that is important to you. Here are some typical topics:

- 🌿 The mentor's career, such as steps, stations, obstacles, prioritization, decision-making
- 🌿 Tips and strategies, for example on publication of articles, acquisition of third-party funds, network construction, meetings, teaching
- 🌿 Time and project management
- 🌿 Writing and working strategies
- 🌿 Motivation, power sources, resources
- 🌿 Discussion of your own future plans and wishes and related questions, values, priorities
- 🌿 Compatibility of private life and scientific careers, currently and in future
- 🌿 Reflecting and discussing the characteristics of the science system such as job structures, role distributions, standards, career structures, and the own roles (of the mentee and mentor)
- 🌿 Role conflicts and the development of authentic and clever behaviors in the complex social system of science (in relation to the supervisor, colleagues, at meetings, etc.)
- 🌿 Typical characteristics of a promising portfolio in your field, for example in research, publications, talks, third-party funds, cooperation, networks, teaching experience, stays abroad, mobility, awards
- 🌿 Possible career scenarios
- 🌿 Application strategies
- 🌿 Scientific discussion
- 🌿 Discussion of specific conflicts and problems
- 🌿 Visit or talk in colloquium or similar
- 🌿 Helpful network contacts of the mentor

Notes for Topics

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### 3.2 The initial mentoring session

Here are some suggestions for the conversation during the first, noncommittal meeting:

- 🌱 Short presentation of your own person on the basis of the most important basic data of your career, your current situation, your research interests
- 🌱 Brief description of your motivation to participate in the mentoring program. Why do you want a mentor as a contact person? For what reasons did you select your mentor?
- 🌱 What questions and topics would you like to discuss in the context of the mentoring relationship?
- 🌱 Brief presentation of the role of the mentors and the framework:
  - The task of the mentor is primarily to make their experience and perspective available, and, if necessary, to convey further contacts.
  - There are no fixed commitments for the mentors except for the mentoring meetings. The mentor will be invited to the annual Status Seminar and is asked to participate in the evaluation process.
  - The mentee is responsible for the organization, preparation and follow-up of the meetings.
  - The official end of the cooperation in the mentoring tandem is May 2024. Together, you can decide whether and how to keep the contact afterwards.
  - The discussions in tandem are confidential; the contents may not reach third parties. This applies equally to the conversation content of the mentee and mentor.
- 🌱 How do you imagine the organization of the mentoring cooperation (frequency, location, organization, content etc.)? What kind of cooperation, support and feedback do you want?
- 🌱 What is the perspective of your counterpart, what proposals does the mentor make? Discuss how your mentoring relationship could look like.

Once you have made the decision to start a mentoring cooperation, you may use the mentoring agreement template on the following pages for specific arrangements.

#### Notes for the Initial Session

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### 3.3 Checklist - The initial session

Did you

- 🌱 analyze your personal situation?
- 🌱 set your general aims?
- 🌱 define your mentoring goals?
- 🌱 arrange the initial session?
- 🌱 prepare your wishes for the mentoring agreement?
- 🌱 prepare questions to ask or issues you want to bring up in the initial meeting?

# Mentoring agreement

between

and

Mentee

Mentor

Contact (Email / Phone number)

Contact (Email / Phone number)

## Contact and meetings

Mentee and mentor agree to meet regularly.

Beginning and end of the mentoring cooperation

General place, period, frequency,  
and organization of the meetings

Regular contacting/notification by the mentee

## Content: Goals and measures

Mentee and mentor aim to achieve the following goals

Mentee and mentor agree on the following measures to reach the goals

**Contributions by mentee and mentor**

The mentee is responsible for planning, preparation and reviewing the meetings. The mentee brings in questions, discussion topics, and specifically formulated needs for support and actively uses suggestions, opportunities and contacts offered.

The mentor is committed to support the mentee and responds to the respective wishes as far as possible.

**Confidentiality**

All information and data exchanged within the mentoring relationship must be treated with confidentiality and discretion. Mentee and mentor agree to maintain the confidentiality beyond the duration of the mentoring relationship.

**Exit clause**

For both parties, the mentoring cooperation can be terminated at any time. In this case, the PLANT 2030 managing office should be informed at an early stage. If problems or difficulties arise in the mentoring relationship, the PLANT 2030 managing office offers consultation.

**Further agreements**

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Place, Date

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Place, Date

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Signature Mentee

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Signature Mentor

**PLANT 2030 managing office**

c/o Die Blattmacher Kommunikation und Wissenschaft GmbH  
Försterweg 2, 14482 Potsdam, Germany  
Email: PLANT2030@die-blattmacher.com

## 4 The mentoring cooperation

Both the preparation and the follow-up work are essential for a successful mentoring process. It helps sharpening the meetings in a targeted way and to secure the results on the long term. The following questions may help you with the systematic preparation and review of the meetings.

### 4.1 Preparation of the mentoring meeting

What issues and concerns do I want to discuss?

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What specific questions do I ask?

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Which background thoughts and considerations have I made?

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What do I expect from the meeting?

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Which progress did I make since the last meeting?

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Which specific challenges arise, that I would like to discuss?

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## 4.2 Review of the mentoring meeting

What information and impulses did I get?

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How did I feel before, during and after the meeting?

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Do I know other people whom I can address in these matters?

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Which personal considerations, findings and conclusion do I have?

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What should I do next?

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Which topics should I bring up on the next meeting?

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Other thoughts in review of the mentoring meeting:

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### 4.3 Reviewing your development and adjusting your goals

Mentoring and goal setting are dynamic processes. Reviewing your aims helps keeping track of your own development and adjusting the mentoring relationship to your needs. The questions below lead you through your self-reflection. Repeat this revision regularly, for example before every mentoring meeting or every two months.

Look back at your aims of worksheet 1.2. Are these goals still relevant for you?  
On a scale of 1 to 5: How close are you now to reach these aims?

		far away		close
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reflect on whether or how the mentoring process helped you with coming closer.

Look back at your mentoring goals of worksheet 1.3.  
Which goals did you reach? Did your goals change during the process? Specify your thoughts:

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### 4.4 Continuing the progress

After a few meetings some mentees get to the point where they feel like all questions have been asked and there is nothing to discuss anymore. However, a few impulses might already help to live up the cooperation and open the door for new conversations. Below, you find some suggestions.

-  Review your progress made until now. What does your situation look like now (worksheet 1.1)?  
Did you get closer to some goals or did your goals change (worksheet 4.3)?
-  Look back at worksheet 3.1. Are there topics you might want to bring up now?
-  Analyze your profile in more details with the help of your mentor. Do for example a SWOT-analysis to identify your strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats. You can find many instructions online, e.g. here: [www.mindtools.com/personalswot](http://www.mindtools.com/personalswot).
-  Image different career scenarios for you together with your mentor. Talk about what your life could be like in a few months, a year, five years, ten years, and so on. Try to describe your fictional daily life as detailed as possible and with free imagination. Repeat your thought experiment with different scenarios. By describing the situation as if it was real, you will get a better feeling for which scenario would be the best fit for you.

## 5 Formal end of the mentoring relationship

### 5.1 Why and how to give thoughtful feedback

Feedback is important to continually improve your mentoring cooperation. By communicating the respective view, both mentee and mentor can learn from each other.

Some mentors are not aware which positive value their support has. Usually, they get feedback only rarely. Therefore, thoughtful feedback is also an opportunity for the mentee to give something in return for the support received.

As a mentee, you might want to give feedback after every meeting. You can sum up helpful aspects as well as parts that can be improved. If it is easier for you, you can also agree on giving feedback in a written form after the meeting.

### 5.2 Completion of the mentoring cooperation and outlook

After completion of the (official) mentoring phase, it is good practice to thank the mentor in one or the other way.

- 🌿 You can use your notes to review the content discussed and the resulting developments. This will show both you and your mentor what you have initiated during the mentoring phase.
- 🌿 You can give your mentor a detailed feedback on the performance – personally or in written form for example a thank-you card.
- 🌿 A symbolic present can also express your appreciation: pralines from your city, a bottle of wine, home-baked biscuits, a bouquet of flowers, or another small gift as gesture of thanks.
- 🌿 A possibility to keep in touch is to send the mentor a yearly postcard, for example on Christmas.

Finally, you can discuss whether and how you want to keep in touch.

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#### Imprint

PLANT 2030 ACADEMY – Mentoring Worksheets are part of the support program for doctoral students und postdocs involved in the plant research initiatives funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).  
[www.plant2030-academy.de](http://www.plant2030-academy.de)

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PLANT 2030 managing office  
c/o Die Blattmacher  
Kommunikation und  
Wissenschaft GmbH  
Försterweg 2  
14482 Potsdam  
Germany

#### Editors

Dr. Matthias Arlt (*V. i. S. d. P.*),  
Dr. Hanna Berger,  
Dr. Alexander Graf,  
Dr. Christiane Hilgardt  
PLANT 2030 managing office  
[PLANT2030@die-blattmacher.com](mailto:PLANT2030@die-blattmacher.com)

#### References

The guide and the accompanying material are based on Mentoring Leitfaden and Logbuch of the *movement* program at Bielefeld University, kindly provided by the *movement* program office ([www.uni-bielefeld.de/movement](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/movement)).

#### Further Literature:

Center for Health Leadership & Practice (2003) Mentoring Guide - A Guide for Protégés.  
([www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/more-mentoring-guide-for-protoges.pdf](http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/more-mentoring-guide-for-protoges.pdf))

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