

## Supplementary data

# The isolated Cys<sub>2</sub>His<sub>2</sub> site in E<sub>C</sub> metallothionein mediates metal-specific protein folding

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- Supplementary Table S1: Observed and theoretical masses for Zn- and Cd-loaded wheat E<sub>C</sub> species
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- Supplementary Table S3: Chemical shift data for H32C
- Supplementary Table S4: NOE-derived distance restraints for MODELLER calculations of H32C mutant.
- Supplementary Figure S1: 2D <sup>1</sup>H NMR data for H32A and H40A in the presence of Zn<sup>2+</sup>
- Supplementary Figure S2: 1D <sup>1</sup>H comparison of Cd-loaded wild-type, H32A, H40A, and H32A/H40A.
- Supplementary Figure S3: Deconvoluted ESI mass spectra for H32C and H40C mutants in the presence of Zn<sup>2+</sup>
- Supplementary Figure S4: <sup>1</sup>H NMR data for H32C and H40C in the presence of Cd<sup>2+</sup>

Table S1: Theoretical and observed masses of neutral zinc- and cadmium-loaded recombinant wheat E<sub>C</sub> species. Errors of observed masses are <1.0 Da, except for low-abundance peaks, where the mass error may reach 1.5 Da.

| protein | Metalloform                | Observed Mass | Theoretical Mass |
|---------|----------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| WT-apo  | M <sub>0</sub> -Met        | 7735.5        | 7735.7           |
|         | M <sub>0</sub> +Met        | 7866.4        | 7866.9           |
|         | M <sub>0</sub> +DTT        | 8000.9        | 8002.7           |
| WT-Zn   | Zn <sub>5</sub> -Met       | 8051.5        | 8052.1           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> - Met      | 8116.1        | 8115.5           |
|         | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met       | 8182.6        | 8183.3           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met       | 8247.8        | 8246.7           |
|         | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met +Tris | 8287.1        | 8286.6           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met +Tris | 8350.7        | 8350.0           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met+DTT   | 8383.4        | 8383.0           |
|         |                            |               |                  |
| WT-Cd   | Cd <sub>5</sub> -Met       | 8287.0        | 8287.3           |
|         | Cd <sub>5</sub> +Met       | 8417.8        | 8418.5           |
|         | Cd <sub>5</sub> Zn +Met    | 8481.9        | 8481.8           |
|         | Cd <sub>6</sub> +Met       | 8528.8        | 8528.9           |
|         | Cd <sub>5</sub> +Met+DTT   | 8551.7        | 8554.8           |
|         | Cd <sub>5</sub> Zn +DTT    | 8617.4        | 8618.1           |
|         | Cd <sub>6</sub> +Met+DTT   | 8664.1        | 8665.2           |

Table S2: Theoretical and observed masses of neutral zinc-loaded mutant wheat E<sub>C</sub> species. Errors of observed masses are <1.0 Da, except for low-abundance peaks, where the mass error may reach 1.5 Da.

| protein | Metalloform                | Observed Mass        | Theoretical Mass |
|---------|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| H32A    | Zn <sub>5</sub> -Met       | 7986.5               | 7986.0           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> -Met       | 8051.0               | 8049.4           |
|         | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met       | 8120.7               | 8117.2           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met       | 8180.1               | 8180.6           |
|         | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met+DTT   | 8252.1               | 8253.5           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met +Tris | 8285.4               | 8283.9           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met+DTT   | 8318.6               | 8316.9           |
|         | Zn <sub>7</sub> +Met+DTT   | 8380.7               | 8380.3           |
|         |                            |                      |                  |
| H40A    | Zn <sub>4</sub> -Met       | 7920.0               | 7922.6           |
|         | Zn <sub>5</sub> -Met       | 7985.8               | 7986.0           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> -Met       | 8052.0 <sup>b)</sup> | 8049.4           |
|         | Zn <sub>4</sub> +Met       | 8052.0 <sup>b)</sup> | 8053.8           |
|         | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met       | 8120.3               | 8117.2           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met       | 8184.8               | 8180.6           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met +Tris | 8284.8               | 8283.9           |
|         | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met+DTT   | 8317.6               | 8316.9           |

|                    |                             |                      |         |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------|
|                    | Zn <sub>7</sub> +Met+DTT    | 8378.5               | 8380.3  |
|                    |                             |                      |         |
| H32A/H40A          | Zn <sub>4</sub> -Met        | 7854.7               | 7856.7  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> -Met        | 7921.2               | 7920.1  |
|                    | Zn <sub>4</sub> +Met        | 7986.8 <sup>b)</sup> | 7987.9  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> -Met        | 7986.8 <sup>b)</sup> | 7983.5  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met        | 8054.7               | 8051.3  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met        | 8120.3               | 8114.77 |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met+DTT    | 8186.8               | 8187.6  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met+DTT    | 8250.1               | 8251.0  |
|                    | Zn <sub>7</sub> +Met+DTT    | 8312.6               | 8314.4  |
|                    |                             |                      |         |
| H32C <sup>c)</sup> | Zn <sub>5</sub> -Met        | 8016.1               | 8018.4  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> -Met        | 8082.3               | 8081.8  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> Cd -Met     | 8128.7               | 8128.8  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met        | 8146.8               | 8149.6  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> Cd -Met     | 8192.8               | 8192.2  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met        | 8213.0               | 8213.0  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> Cd +Met     | 8260.6               | 8260.0  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> Cd +Met     | 8322.9               | 8323.4  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met+DTT    | 8347.7               | 8349.2  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> Cd +Met+DTT | 8394.9               | 8396.3  |
|                    |                             |                      |         |
| H40C <sup>c)</sup> | Zn <sub>4</sub> -Met        | 7953.0               | 7955.0  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> -Met        | 8017.6               | 8018.4  |
|                    | Zn <sub>4</sub> Cd -Met     | 8063.4               | 8065.4  |
|                    | Zn <sub>4</sub> +Met        | 8083.1 <sup>b)</sup> | 8086.2  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> -Met        | 8083.1 <sup>b)</sup> | 8081.8  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> Cd +Met     | 8128.1               | 8128.8  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met        | 8149.6               | 8149.6  |
|                    | Zn <sub>4</sub> Cd +Met     | 8192.7               | 8196.6  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met        | 8214.3               | 8213.0  |
|                    | Zn <sub>5</sub> +Met+DTT    | 8279.0               | 8285.8  |
|                    | Zn <sub>6</sub> +Met+DTT    | 8349.0               | 8349.2  |
|                    | Zn <sub>4</sub> Cd +Met+DTT | 8324.7               | 8332.9  |

Notes:

- The species -Met+DTT are not considered, as their abundance is expected to be minor, and their masses are similar to the species +Met.
- These peaks are composed of more than one species. The mass of a Methionine (131.2 Da) and the mass for the addition of  $2\text{Zn}^{2+}-4\text{H}^+ = 126.8$  Da are relatively close.
- Sample contaminated by small amounts of  $\text{Cd}^{2+}$ . This contamination does not affect conclusions reached in the manuscript.

Table S3. Chemical shifts for H32C mutant of wheat E<sub>C</sub> with bound Zn<sup>2+</sup>  
(700 MHz, 50 mM Tris-D<sub>11</sub>, 50 mM NaCl, 10% D<sub>2</sub>O, pH 7.3).

|       | NH   | H( $\alpha$ ) | H( $\beta$ ) | H( $\gamma$ ), H( $\delta$ ), H( $\epsilon$ ) |
|-------|------|---------------|--------------|---|
| GLY1  | -    | 3.72          | --           |   |
| CYS2  | 9.17 | 4.71          | 3.02<br>2.83 |   |
| CYS2' | 9.22 | 4.71          | 3.02<br>2.87 |   |
| ASP3  | n.d. | n.d.          | n.d.         |   |
| ASP4  | 8.77 | 4.40          | 2.90;2.61    |   |
| LYS5  | 8.63 | 4.59          | 1.79         | 1.34; 1.58                                    |
| CYS6  | 7.60 | 4.45          | 3.15         |   |
| GLY7  | 8.76 | 4.54; 3.55    |              |   |
| CYS8  | 8.83 | 4.40          | 3.68; 3.33   |   |
| ALA9  | 8.50 | 4.14          | 1.34         |   |
| VAL10 | 8.06 | 4.19          | 1.89         | 0.80  |
| PRO11 | -    | 4.72          | 2.27; 1.87   | 1.78; 3.47; 3.56                              |
| CYS12 | 8.40 | 4.53          | 3.27; 2.87   |   |
| PRO13 | -    | 4.20          | 2.20; 1.92   | 2.06; 3.81                                    |
| GLY14 | 8.51 | 4.17; 3.69    |              |   |
| GLY15 | 8.45 | 4.01; 3.80    |              |   |
| THR16 | 8.03 | 4.26          | 4.13         | 1.16  |
| GLY17 | 8.20 | 4.15; 3.59    |              |   |
| CYS18 | 7.18 | 4.47          | 2.98; 2.28   |   |
| ARG19 | 8.23 | 4.34          | 2.10; 2.00   | 1.79; 1.72                                    |
| CYS20 | 8.46 | 4.32          | 2.97; 2.60   |   |
| THR21 | 7.71 | 4.24          | 4.14         | 1.19  |
| ARG24 | 8.07 | 4.32          | 1.75; 1.61   |   |
| GLY26 | 8.40 | 3.90          |              |   |
| ALA27 | 8.08 | 4.27          | 1.34         |   |
| GLY30 | 8.24 | 3.93          |              |   |
| GLU31 | 8.13 | 4.39          | 2.06; 1.89   | 2.24  |
| CYS32 | 8.38 | 4.46          | 2.66         |   |
| THR33 | 9.54 | 4.36          | 3.86         | 1.04  |
| THR34 | 8.15 | 4.62          | 4.01         | 0.46; 4.23(OH)                                |
| CYS35 | 8.41 | 4.12          | 3.16; 2.95   |   |
| GLY36 | 9.39 | 4.04; 3.96    |              |   |
| CYS37 | 7.25 | 4.58          | 3.29; 3.00   |   |
| GLY38 | 8.27 | 4.53; 3.58    |              |   |
| GLU39 | 8.25 | 4.57          | 2.09; 1.99   | 2.46; 2.30                                    |
| HIS40 | 9.15 | 4.42          | 2.99; 2.85   | 7.10; 7.86                                    |
| CYS41 | 8.45 | 4.43          | 3.07; 2.87   |   |
| GLY42 | 8.49 | 3.89; 3.81    |              |   |
| CYS43 | 7.52 | 4.38          | 3.01         |   |
| ASN44 | 7.24 | 4.89          | 2.50         | 7.44; 6.81                                    |
| PRO45 | -    | 4.15          | 2.23; 2.02   | 1.92; 3.56; 3.45                              |
| CYS46 | 8.55 | 4.46          | 3.57; 3.08   |   |
| ALA47 | 8.91 | 4.29          | 1.48         |   |
| CYS48 | 9.38 | 4.45          | 3.21; 2.94   |   |
| GLY49 | 7.78 | 4.19; 3.75    |              |   |
| ARG50 | 8.48 | 4.09          | 1.52; 1.34   | 1.23; 2.65                                    |
| GLU51 | 8.41 | 4.36          | 2.05; 1.90   | 2.22  |
| GLY52 | 8.29 | 4.15; 3.92    |              |   |

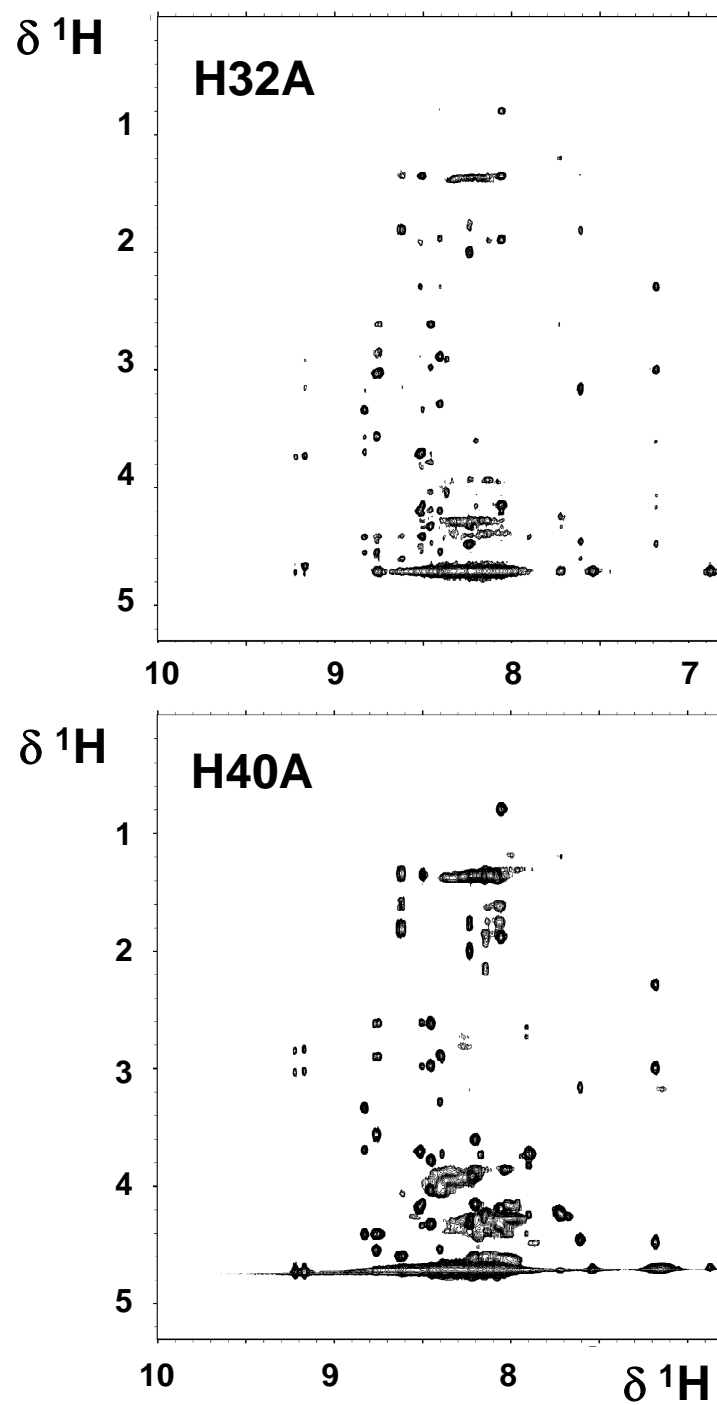
|       |      |            |            |            |
|-------|------|------------|------------|------------|
| THR53 | 8.46 | 4.59       | 3.98       | 1.20       |
| PRO54 | -    | 4.17       | 2.34       | 1.87; 3.65 |
| SER55 | 8.87 | 4.29       | 3.93; 3.85 |            |
| GLY56 | 8.92 | 3.94; 3.81 |            |            |
| ARG57 | 8.00 | 4.13       | 1.78; 1.63 | 1.54       |
| ALA58 | 8.52 | 3.82       | 1.37       |            |
| ASN59 | 8.51 | 4.47       | 2.99; 2.87 | 7.53; 6.86 |
| ARG60 | 7.35 | 4.89       | 1.94; 1.71 | 1.72; 1.41 |
| ARG61 | 8.26 | 4.10       | 1.86; 1.82 | 1.73; 1.69 |
| ALA62 | 8.58 | 4.07       | 1.38       |            |
| ASN63 | 8.07 | 4.55       | 3.03; 2.79 | 7.55; 6.79 |
| CYS64 | 7.76 | 4.69       | 3.07; 2.98 |            |
| SER65 | 9.48 | 4.82       | 4.20; 3.60 |            |
| CYS66 | 9.71 | 4.02       | 3.00; 2.86 |            |
| GLY67 | 9.05 | 4.29; 3.83 |            |            |
| ALA69 | n.d. | 4.27       | 1.31       |            |
| CYS70 | 7.02 | 3.96       | 2.83       |            |
| ASN71 | 8.65 | 4.95       | 2.76       | 7.44; 6.74 |
| CYS72 | 8.74 | 4.11       | 2.92; 2.83 |            |
| ALA73 | 9.21 | n.d.       | 1.48       |            |
| SER74 | 8.45 | 4.39       | 3.89       |            |
| CYS75 | 8.27 | 4.22       | 2.76       |            |
| GLY76 | 7.61 | 4.25; 3.81 |            |            |
| SER77 | 7.55 | 4.39       | 3.80; 3.71 |            |
| ALA80 | n.d. | n.d.       | n.d.       |            |
| PRO81 | n.d. | n.d.       | n.d.       |            |
| Gly82 | n.d. | n.d.       |            |            |

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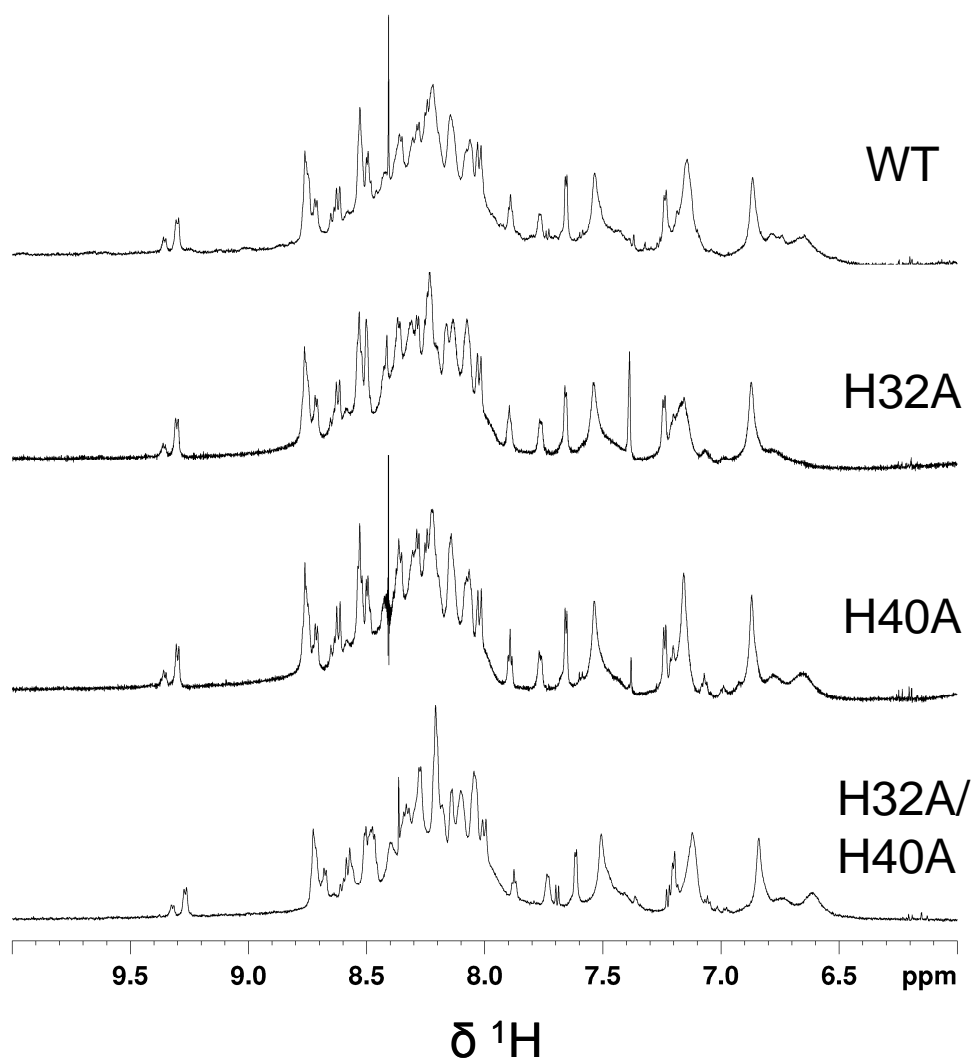
Table S4. Selected distance restraints derived from 2D

NOESY spectrum (120 ms mixing time) of Zn-H32C.

| Atom 1 |     |     | Atom 2 |     |     | Restraint (Å) |
|--------|-----|-----|--------|-----|-----|---------------|
| 34     | THR | HA  | 40     | HIS | HE1 | 6.04          |
| 50     | ARG | CG  | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 6.50          |
| 32     | CYS | H   | 40     | HIS | HE1 | 5.50          |
| 40     | HIS | HD2 | 50     | ARG | H   | 5.40          |
| 32     | CYS | HA  | 40     | HIS | HE1 | 5.05          |
| 39     | GLU | HG3 | 40     | HIS | H   | 4.80          |
| 32     | CYS | CB  | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 5.75          |
| 46     | CYS | HB2 | 48     | CYS | H   | 4.65          |
| 31     | GLU | H   | 32     | CYS | H   | 4.60          |
| 40     | HIS | HD2 | 46     | CYS | H   | 4.30          |
| 46     | CYS | H   | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 4.25          |
| 41     | CYS | H   | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 4.20          |
| 39     | GLU | HB3 | 40     | HIS | H   | 4.10          |
| 46     | CYS | HB3 | 33     | THR | H   | 4.04          |
| 48     | CYS | HA  | 49     | GLY | H   | 3.80          |
| 40     | HIS | HA  | 40     | HIS | H   | 3.80          |
| 46     | CYS | HB2 | 33     | THR | H   | 3.70          |
| 46     | CYS | HB3 | 48     | CYS | H   | 3.70          |
| 45     | PRO | HB2 | 46     | CYS | H   | 3.65          |
| 47     | ALA | CB  | 48     | CYS | H   | 4.60          |
| 39     | GLU | HG2 | 40     | HIS | H   | 3.55          |
| 40     | HIS | HB3 | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 3.45          |
| 40     | HIS | HB2 | 40     | HIS | H   | 3.40          |
| 32     | CYS | HA  | 32     | CYS | H   | 3.40          |
| 39     | GLU | HB2 | 40     | HIS | H   | 3.30          |
| 34     | THR | CG2 | 40     | HIS | HE1 | 4.30          |
| 46     | CYS | HA  | 46     | CYS | H   | 3.05          |
| 48     | CYS | HA  | 48     | CYS | H   | 3.05          |
| 50     | ARG | HB3 | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 3.05          |
| 46     | CYS | HB2 | 46     | CYS | H   | 3.00          |
| 32     | CYS | CB  | 33     | THR | H   | 4.00          |
| 46     | CYS | HB2 | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 2.85          |
| 46     | CYS | HB3 | 46     | CYS | H   | 2.80          |
| 31     | GLU | HB2 | 32     | CYS | H   | 2.65          |
| 46     | CYS | HA  | 47     | ALA | H   | 2.60          |
| 32     | CYS | CB  | 40     | HIS | HE1 | 3.55          |
| 39     | GLU | HA  | 40     | HIS | H   | 2.50          |
| 46     | CYS | HB3 | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 2.45          |
| 31     | GLU | HA  | 32     | CYS | H   | 2.17          |
| 32     | CYS | HA  | 33     | THR | H   | 2.16          |
| 45     | PRO | HA  | 46     | CYS | H   | 2.12          |
| 40     | HIS | HB2 | 40     | HIS | HD2 | 1.88          |

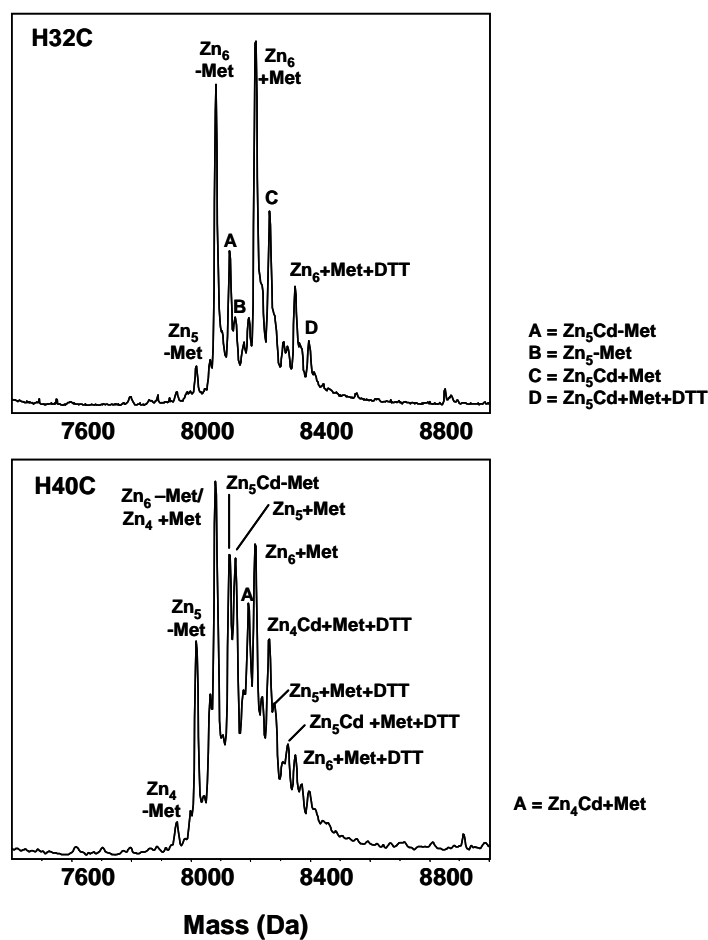


Supplementary Figure S1. Fingerprint regions of 2D TOCSY spectra of Zn-bound H32A and H40A mutants.

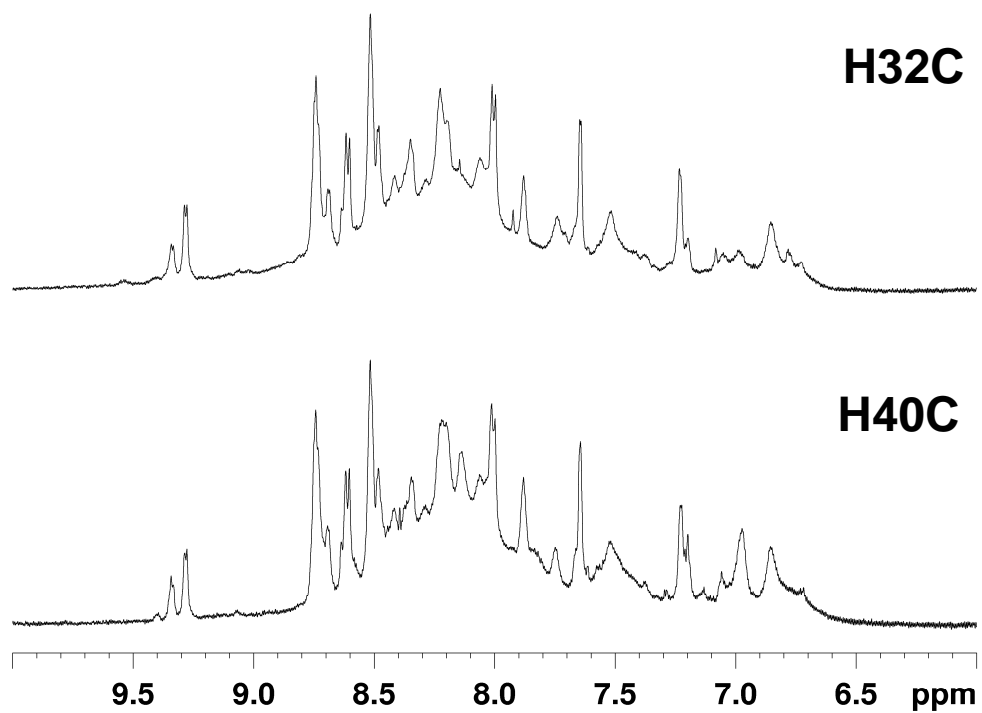


Supplementary Figure S2. 1D  $^1\text{H}$  spectra (fingerprint region) of Cd-bound His-to-Ala mutants, in comparison with the spectrum for Cd-bound wild-type  $E_C$ .





Supplementary Figure S3. Deconvoluted ESI-Mass spectra of His-to-Cys mutants expressed in the presence of Zn<sup>2+</sup>. The spectrum for H32C is dominated by M<sub>6</sub> species, whereas the increased presence of undermetallated species is evident from the spectrum for H40C. The presence of small amounts of Cd<sup>2+</sup> is due to sample contamination, but does not affect conclusions drawn.



Supplementary Figure 4. Fingerprint region of 1D  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra for Cd-bound His-to-Cys mutants.