



13th VLAG Open Round Call for project proposals for PhD and Postdoc projects

VLAG Graduate School announces a new Open Round for research proposals funded by Wageningen University and participating institutes. Within this round, we intend to support 5 projects. The Graduate School provides the salary costs for the appointment of a PhD or a PostDoc. The additional +/- 35% for the integral costs within Wageningen University is also provided. The lead applicant guarantees the financing of the research costs.

The deadline to submit pre-proposals is 5 PM on 30 November 2018.
The deadline to submit full proposals is 5 PM on 15 February 2019.

Requirements & Guidelines

The forms for both pre-proposal and full proposal can be found at the VLAG website https://www.vlaggraduateschool.nl/en/about_vlag/form_downloads.htm.

All applications must be submitted in English.

The proposal should meet a number of requirements:

- **Scientific quality** is the guiding criterion for selection.
- We are particularly looking for high-risk **innovative**, explorative, and original proposals that may be difficult to get funded elsewhere. Proposals should not be part of an existing research project / programme (e.g. Public Private Partnerships).
- Multidisciplinary **collaboration** is a strict requirement. The research must be carried out by at least two VLAG chair groups (WU), or by one chair group and one research institute, all active partners within VLAG. The expertise of all participating groups should be clearly visible in the proposal. (Annex I: List of VLAG partners)

The following guidelines hold for participation of chair groups in the 13th Open Round:

1. Each **chair group** can be involved in two project proposals of which in one as lead applicant. In other words, a group can be the lead applicant in one proposal and a co-applicant in a second proposal, or submit twice as a co-applicant. Each **institute** can be involved in three project proposals of which in one as lead applicant. In other words, an institute can be the lead applicant in one proposal and a co-applicant in two proposals, or submit three times as a co-applicant.
2. The **chair groups** that were granted a project in the 12th VLAG Open Round (as lead applicant) cannot submit a proposal as lead applicant in this round, but may participate once as a co-applicant. This guideline affects the following four chair groups: Biobased Chemistry & Technology, Microbiology, Physical Chemistry & Soft Matter, and Toxicology.

The composition of the research team cannot be changed between pre-proposal and full proposal phase.

Selection and review process

1. Pre-proposal phase
 - a. Prior to selection, the pre-proposals are screened for eligibility and completeness.
 - b. The VLAG Management Team (MT), if necessary supported by other senior scientists, selects the pre-proposals that may be developed into full proposals within 3 weeks following the deadline. Selection is based on Scientific Quality, Originality/Innovative character, and Collaboration. To decide on the number of pre-proposals for further development, we aim at a success rate for the full proposals of at least 50%.
2. Review of full proposals
 - a. The authors of the selected pre-proposals will be asked to provide names and contact details of 5 potential external reviewers.
 - b. The review of each full proposal is performed by 3 external experts. These are not necessarily the reviewers suggested by the applicants.
 - c. The following criteria are used in assessing the full proposals: Scientific Quality (proposal, originality, methodology, scientific perspectives) and Feasibility (work plan, use of existing knowledge, equipment/techniques, supervision, co-operation).
3. Rebuttal phase - After receiving anonymous assessments the applicants are asked to respond to the reviewers' comments (rebuttal).
4. Ranking of full proposals
 - a. The ranking of full proposals, based on the outcomes of the peer review and rebuttal, is done by the VLAG MT, if necessary supported by other senior scientists.
 - b. The VLAG MT members who are involved as applicants will be replaced by other senior scientists.
 - c. The final decision about the allocation of resources is the responsibility of the Scientific Director of VLAG and will take place in May 2019.

The PhD / Postdoc projects granted within this Open Round should start in 2019.

Co-financing

The research institutes can submit project proposals together with one or more university chair groups participating in VLAG and are expected to co-finance part of the salary and research costs. This contribution should be proportional to the extent of the involvement of the institute in the project. Each research institute can be involved in a maximum of 3 pre-proposals provided this involves collaboration with at least 3 different chair groups.

The rules are as follows:

1. If a research institute is the main applicant, the institute contributes at least 50% of the salary costs.
2. If a research institute is the co-applicant, the institute contributes at least 25% of the salary costs.

Considering the total amount of k€260 (integral cost structure within Wageningen UR) the salary costs for a PhD candidate amount to k€65 per year.

Wageningen, 29 September 2018

Annex I - Partners within VLAG Graduate School

Wageningen University

More information: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Research-Results/Chair-groups.htm>

Chemistry Cluster:

1. Biobased Chemistry and Technology (BCT), Prof. H. Bitter
2. Biophysics (BIP), Prof. H. van Amerongen
3. BioNano Technology (BNT), Prof. A. Velders
4. Physical Chemistry and Soft Matter (PCC), Prof. J. van der Gucht
5. Organic Chemistry (ORC), Prof. H. Zuilhof

Food Technology Cluster:

6. Food Chemistry (FCH), Prof. H. Gruppen
7. Food Microbiology (FHM), Prof. M. Zwietering
8. Food Process Engineering (FPE), Prof. R. Boom
9. Food Quality and Design (FQD), Prof. V. Fogliano
10. Physics and Physical Chemistry of Foods (FPH), Prof. E. van der Linden

Human Nutrition and Health Cluster:

11. Nutrition & Health over the Lifecourse (NHL), Prof. E. Feskens
12. Nutrition & Disease (ND), Prof. E. Kampman
13. Nutrition, Metabolism & Genomics (NMG), Prof. S. Kersten
14. Nutrition & Pharmacology (NP), Prof. R. Witkamp
15. Sensory Science & Eating Behaviour (SSEB), Prof. C. de Graaf

Molecular Life Sciences Cluster:

16. Bioprocess Engineering (BPE), Prof. R.H. Wijffels
17. Microbiology (MIB), Prof. W. de Vos
18. Systems and Synthetic Biology (SSB), Prof. V. Martins Dos Santos
19. Toxicology (TOX), Prof. I. Rietjens

20. [Biochemistry](#) (BIC), Prof. D. Weijers
21. [Host-Microbe Interactomics](#) (HMI), Prof. J. Wells
22. [Human & Animal Physiology](#) (HAP), Prof. J. Keijer

Wageningen Food & Biobased Research - Contact: [Prof. Harry Wichers](#) or [Dr Jacco van Haveren](#)

RIKILT- Institute of Food Safety - Contact: [Prof. Michel Nielen](#)

TNO Healthy Living - Contact: own network

NIZO food research - Contact: [Dr Maykel Verschueren](#)

RIVM - National Institute of Public Health and the Environment
Contact: [Dr Marga Ocké](#) or [Dr Wilma Jacobs-Reitsma](#)