

## **Call for collaborative PhD projects**

### **The Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Wageningen University**

### **Joint PhD Programme**

**2021**

#### **Background Information**

To strengthen the collaboration between Wageningen University (WU) and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), a 5-year collaborative PhD programme was initiated in 2016. The programme involved a 4-year sandwich PhD where the PhD candidates perform the major part of their research at CAAS and spend at least 18 months in Wageningen, generally divided over two main periods: 6-8 months at the start of the project and 8-12 months at the end of the 4 years but, given the minimum of 18 months the division of times the candidate is in The Netherlands and the duration of the stay can vary depending on the project and supervisor agreements. The programme allows a maximum of 20 PhD projects to start each year and starts in September with a WU-GSCAAS start-up training in Beijing, followed by a set of GSCAAS specific courses. From December onwards PhD candidates would start coming to Wageningen for the first phase of the PhD programme. The programme has strengthened the WU-CAAS collaboration given that in the first 5 years a total of some 90 projects started of which the first cohort will be defending their thesis by the end of this year.

Given that the programme has strengthened the collaboration between WU and CAAS, a second phase has been initiated again for a period of 5 years. This second programme is the same as the first programme except that the CAAS institute must also pay Wageningen University PhD bench fees in the months that the candidate is at Wageningen University.

#### **Call for collaborative projects**

We hereby invite academic staff of WU and CAAS to submit a joint PhD project in this second phase programme.

Please note the following:

- A cluster of PhD projects around specific theme is also possible. In this situation it is recommended that more than one WU chair group is involved.
- Conditions to apply can be found in the Annex 1 below.
- When WU or CAAS scientists would want to collaborate but do not have a point of entry with the other institute then please contact the two programme coordinators:
  - Mingjun Zhang ([zhangmingjun@caas.cn](mailto:zhangmingjun@caas.cn)) and
  - Claudius van de Vijver ([claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl](mailto:claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl))
- **Deadline for submission: 25 August 2021**
- Please send your submission to:
  - Mingjun Zhang ([zhangmingjun@caas.cn](mailto:zhangmingjun@caas.cn)) and
  - Claudius van de Vijver ([claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl](mailto:claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl))
- PhD candidates **cannot** submit an application for a PhD project or initiate the contact for collaboration. They are either listed in the application form as a potential candidate or apply via the website (<http://gs.caas.cn/>) on which the eligible projects are listed.

The application should include:

- Information of WU and CAAS scientists involved in the project including:
  1. Name
  2. Affiliation (CAAS Institute or WU Chair Group)
  3. Email addresses of involved WU and CAAS scientists
- Title of the proposed project
- A short proposal (max 500 words) of the intended research. This section should include objectives, background, scientific originality and/or innovative approach of the proposed research, methodology and possible societal application.
- A statement, signed by both parties, that describes the joint intent of collaboration in this PhD project between the WU chair group and the CAAS institute as well as the financial arrangements as stipulated in Annex 1.2.
- The PhD candidate:
  1. When a potential PhD candidate is known:
    - Name of candidate
    - His/her CV
    - Proof of the candidates proficiency in English (IELTS, TOEFL or Cambridge Test)
  2. When no potential candidate is known:

In this situation, the WU and CAAS scientists send an email to the programme coordinators (Mingjun Zhang - [zhangmingjun@caas.cn](mailto:zhangmingjun@caas.cn) and Claudius van de Vijver - [claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl](mailto:claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl)) with a highlight of the proposal (max 100 words). GSCAAS will include this highlight in a call for PhD applicants on its website. PhD applicants will be asked to apply to the supervisors. Accordingly the supervisors select the preferred candidate and inform the GSCAAS and WU coordinators. Deadline for informing the coordinators is 31 August 2021.

**Note:** For both abovementioned cases candidates must apply to the programme at the Graduate School of CAAS (GSCAAS). Registration at Wageningen University only occurs once the project and candidate have been accepted by the Wageningen supervisor and financial arrangements have been met. Formal registration of the candidate at Wageningen University occurs when the candidate has arrived for the first period in Wageningen or, in a situation where research activities have to be performed prior to going to The Netherlands, when the candidate starts these research activities.

## **Annex 1: Application criteria to participate in the Wageningen-GSCAAS PhD programme:**

### 1. The PhD candidate

*For PhD candidates to be eligible they must meet the following criteria:*

- English proficiency according to the demands of Wageningen University (see: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/English-language-requirements.htm>). Note: This requirement does not need to be fulfilled upon submission of the proposal but must be met upon the start of the programme on 31 August 2021 when the start-up training starts in Beijing
- Candidates must obtain their MSc degree before 31 August 2021.

### 2. Financial arrangements

- *The CAAS Institute will cover:*

- A basic allowance for living costs for the duration of the project, including the required living allowance of the PhD candidate in the time that (s)he is in Wageningen. According to Dutch Immigration law this allowance should at least be € 1275,-. Note that in the application it should formally be stated by the CAAS supervisor how this allowance will be paid.
- A bench fee of € 1000,- per month that the PhD candidate is in Wageningen to be paid to the chair group, of which € 900,- is covered by the CAAS institute and € 100,- by the Wageningen Central organisation
- All local research expenses
- Travel costs of candidates (2 return tickets)

- *The Wageningen University Chair Group will cover:*

- All local facilities required for the candidate at Wageningen University
- The candidate's visa costs
- At least one trip of the Wageningen supervisor to China (CAAS Institute)
- € 3 500,- Training and Education Backpack