**Call for collaborative PhD projects**

**The Graduate Schools of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Wageningen University PhD Programme**

**2025**

**Background Information**

In 2016 Wageningen University and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) set up a collaborative PhD programme to strengthen the collaboration between WUR and CAAS where joint PhD projects are the vehicle to strengthen the collaboration. The programme allows for an annual of 20 PhD candidates to be enrolled. The programme is now in the second phase which runs to 2025 and hence, this is the last call of the second phase.

PhD candidates of the programme are registered at Wageningen University as a sandwich PhD. This entails that the PhD candidates perform the major part of their research at CAAS and spend an average of 18 months in Wageningen, with a minimum of 14 months. Generally, the time in Wageningen is 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, where the division can vary depending on the project and supervisor agreements. The candidate is supervised by WUR and CAAS supervisors and a WUR promotor as the defence will be in Wageningen.

The programme starts in September with a WU start-up training in Beijing, followed by a set of CAAS specific courses. From December onwards, PhD candidates can travel to Wageningen for the first phase of their PhD programme.

We hereby invite WU and CAAS scientists interested in setting up or strengthening collaboration to submit a proposal.

**Please note the following:**

1. The proposed project must be jointly submitted by the WU and CAAS supervisors.
2. Conditions to apply can be found in the Annex 1 below.
3. **Deadline for submission: 31 May 2025.** Send your submission to the CAAS and WU coordinators:
   * CAAS: Mingjun Zhang ([zhangmingjun@caas.cn](mailto:zhangmingjun@caas.cn))
   * WUR: Claudius van de Vijver ([claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl](mailto:claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl))
4. When WU or CAAS scientists would want to collaborate, but do not have a point of entry with the other institute, please contact the two programme coordinators mentioned above.
5. PhD candidates **cannot** submit an application or initiate the contact for collaboration. They are either listed in the application as a potential candidate or can apply via the CAAS website (<http://gs.caas.cn/>).

**Application criteria:**

For applications to be eligible the following criteria must be met:

1. 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 latter allowance must be equivalent to the IND budget threshold (€ 1613,- per month) and a guaranteed future adherence to the IND budget threshold. The IND budget threshold is adjusted twice yearly (1 January and 1 July). The financial admission policy for PhD candidates with a scholarship will be adjusted accordingly. Please check the [webpage regarding the entry requirements](https://www.wur.nl/en/education-programmes/phd-programme/practical-information/entry-requirements.htm) for PhD candidates when needed.

Note that a formal statement must be included in the application indicating:

* The monthly scholarship amount for living.
* Where the money comes from.
* That the amount will be adjusted, when needed, to meet the IND budget threshold
* 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 board of Wageningen University. Here too it should be formally stated by the CAAS supervisor how this allowance will be paid.
* 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).
* € 3500,- to cover training and education activities.

Note that, like all other PhD’s of Wageningen University, the Graduate School of Wageningen University that the PhD candidate will be part of, will cover an additional € 2600,- for organisation of PhD training and education.

1. The PhD candidate

* Must have met the Wageningen University requirement in English proficiency (see: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/English-language-requirements.htm>).
* Must have an MSc degree or will obtain it before 31 August 2025.

Note that when the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (NUFFIC) does not recognise the MSc degree as an MSc comparable to the Dutch standards (this is evaluated upon registration in the WU PhD Programme), the candidate will have to do an entry exam (generally a set of MS courses) in the first year of the PhD track.

**The application should include:**

1. Title of the proposed project
2. A short proposal (max 500 words) of the intended research including background, objectives, scientific originality / novelty, methodology and possible societal relevance.
3. The following information of the WU and CAAS scientists involved in the project:
   * Name
   * Email
   * Affiliation (CAAS Institute / WU Chair Group)
   * Position and role/ responsibility in the programme
   * Graduate school the scientist is affiliated to
   * Email addresses
4. A statement, signed by both WUR and CAAS scientists/supervisors that states:
   * The joint intent of collaboration in this PhD project between the WUR chair group and the CAAS institute.
   * The specifics of the financial arrangements as stipulated in the “ Application criteria”.
   * Note: When the WU chairholder is not involved an applicant, (s)he too must sign the agreement.
5. Information about the PhD candidate:
   * Name of candidate
   * Email
   * His/her CV
   * Proof that the candidates has met the Wageningen University requirement in English proficiency (see:<https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/English-language-requirements.htm>) (IELTS, TOEFL or Cambridge Test).
   * University where candidate has obtained an MSc degree.

**Note:**

* All potential candidates must apply to the programme at the Graduate School of CAAS (GSCAAS).
* Registration at WU occurs after the project, the candidate and financial arrangements have been approved and the WU course in Beijing has been given. The actual starting date of the candidate can vary and can be:
  + The first date that the candidates travels to the Netherlands for the first period of the stay in Wageningen
  + The date that the candidate starts with the research when they do not first go to Wageningen.