**Call for collaborative PhD projects**

**The Graduate Schools of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences**

**and Wageningen University**

**Joint PhD Programme**

**2024**

**Background Information**

Wageningen University and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) have a collaborative PhD programme that started in 2016 and is now in the second phase which runs to 2025. Both organisations are active in life sciences research in specific the areas of food, nutrition, environment and lifestyle. PhD candidates in the programme are registered at Wageningen University as a Sandwich PhD candidate. This entails that the PhD candidate performs the major part of their research at CAAS and spends an average of 18 months in Wageningen. Generally, the time in Wageningen are 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, given a minimum of 12 months, where the division can vary depending on the project and supervisor agreements.

The programme will start in September with a WU-Graduate School (GS) CAAS start-up training in Beijing, followed by a set of GSCAAS specific courses. From December onwards, PhD candidates can travel to Wageningen for the first phase of their PhD programme. The programme allows for an annual maximum of 20 PhD candidates to be enrolled.

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

Please note the following:

* The proposed project must be jointly submitted by the WU and CAAS academics.
* A cluster of PhD projects around a specific theme is possible. In this case 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, please contact the two programme coordinators:
  + CAAS: Mingjun Zhang ([zhangmingjun@caas.cn](mailto:zhangmingjun@caas.cn))
  + WU: Claudius van de Vijver ([claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl](mailto:claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl)).
* **Deadline for submission: 31 May 2024.** Your submission should be sent to both coordinators listed above.
* PhD candidates **cannot** submit an application 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 and accepted projects are listed.

The application should include:

* The following information of the WU and CAAS scientists involved in the project:
  1. Name
  2. Affiliation (CAAS Institute / WU Chair Group)
  3. Graduate school to scientist is affiliated to
  4. Email addresses
* 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 (i.e. WU and CAAS scientists/supervisors), 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.
* Information about the PhD candidate:

1. When a potential PhD candidate is known:
   * Name of candidate
   * His/her CV
   * Proof of the candidate’s proficiency in English (IELTS, TOEFL or Cambridge Test).
2. When a vacancy is available:

The WU and CAAS scientists email both programme coordinators listed above with a highlight of the proposal (max 100 words). GSCAAS will include this highlight in a call for PhD candidates on its website. Applicants for the position will be asked to apply to both WU and CAAS supervisors. Accordingly, the supervisors select the preferred candidate and inform the GSCAAS and WU coordinators. Deadline for informing the coordinators is 15 June 2024.

**Note:** For both abovementioned cases, candidates must apply to the programme at the GSCAAS. Registration at WU only occurs once the project and candidate have been accepted by the Wageningen supervisor and financial arrangements have been met.

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

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 allowance should at least be € 1,508.22 and can increase with inflation correction set by the Dutch government 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 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 € 2500,- for organisation of PhD training and education.

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 15 August 2024 when the start-up training starts in Beijing.
* Candidates must obtain their MSc degree before 31 August 2024 which is acknowledged by the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (NUFFIC) as an MSc comparable to the Dutch standards.