

# Call for proposals for the Agriculture Green Development (AGD) PhD program (2<sup>nd</sup> Phase) of China Agricultural University and Wageningen University & Research

## 1. The AGD PhD Program

The Sino-Dutch **Agriculture Green Development** (AGD) Programme is a PhD program jointly conducted by Wageningen University & Research (WUR) and China Agricultural University (CAU). It aims for interdisciplinary research on AGD as well as training talented young scientists. The project has been officially approved by the China Scholarship Council (CSC) in 2019 for the 1st round implementation (totally 90 PhD candidates) and in 2023 for the 2nd round (totally 30 PhD candidates). This program makes it possible for outstanding students from China to pursue a PhD from Wageningen University or from China Agricultural University.

The overall objective of the AGD PhD program is to contribute to the transformation of agriculture towards sustainable development, from high resource consumption and high environmental cost to sustainable intensification with high productivity, high resource use efficiency and low environmental risk. The focus is on China, with lessons learnt for the wider community [<https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/AGD-PhD-program.htm>].

The AGD PhD program is open for proposals covering four broad areas: (i) Green plant production, (ii) Green animal production & coupling animal and plant production, (iii) Green and nutritious food provision & governance, and (iv) Green ecological environment. Within the program, Quzhou county in the North China Plain and the Erhai lake basin in South China are selected as demonstration sites, but the implementation of projects can extend to China as a whole. The AGD PhD program welcomes projects from a wide range of disciplines. Interdisciplinary projects are particularly appreciated.

## 2. Call for proposals

In 2024, ten PhD candidates will start in AGD Phase 2:

- Two PhD candidates will start with the aim to graduate at WUR (1+3 candidates, who will be the first year at CAU and the next three at WUR), to be supervised jointly by WUR and CAU.
- Eight PhD candidates will participate in AGD Phase 2 with the aim to graduate at CAU and spend their third year at WUR as visiting students (so-called 2+1+1 candidates, spending the first two years in China, then one year in Wageningen,

and the last year again in China). In Wageningen, these 2+1+1 PhD candidates spend six months on a jointly developed training program with courses relevant for agricultural green development and academic skills, and the other six months on a research collaboration with a hosting WUR chair group.

What can be asked: We can fund 3-5 projects this year. A project can consist of one to three PhD candidates: one 1+3 PhD candidate, with zero, one or two 2+1+1 PhD candidates. Priority will be given to projects with one or more 2+1+1 PhD candidate.

What the program offers: The selected projects will get the following funding: scholarships for the PhD candidates through CSC and CAU (meeting the minimum requirements of WUR), and a bench fee for each month when PhD students are in Wageningen (WUR receives 1,000 per month for each PhD candidate when they are in Wageningen, part of which will be transferred to hosting chairgroups and part will be used to facilitate the 2+1+1 PhD candidates).

Scope of the research: The call is open for all research projects within the scope of the AGD program, but in this call priority will be given to the following topics:

- 1) Rhizosphere interactions for smart fertilizer innovation;
- 2) Innovative nutrient management systems;
- 3) Green crop production and improved circularity through technological and landscape optimization;
- 4) Technology adoption on and beyond the scale of farms;
- 5) Strategies and pathways of optimizing agricultural development in the North China Plain and South China lake Basins.

### **3. Required documents at submission**

- a. Completed pre-proposal form (see separate file)
- b. Short CVs (2-3 pages) of all supervisors with a signature

### **4. Application Deadline**

Please submit all the documents required using the attached template before **18 April 2024** to [agd-csc@cau.edu.cn](mailto:agd-csc@cau.edu.cn) with the email title 'Second Call for the AGD Program'.

### **5. Selection Criteria and review procedure**

Proposals will be selected by the academic committee of AGD on the basis of the following criteria: fit with the scope of the AGD program and research priorities, interdisciplinarity, scientific quality, novelty, balance in the program and feasibility.

## **6. Timeline**

10-17 Sept 2023	Match-making meeting CAU & WU supervisors in Wageningen
18 April 2024	Deadline for submission of proposals
24 April 2024	Proposals selected & final decision
25 April 2024	Publication of call for students for 1+3 positions
5 June 2024	Deadline for student applications
20 June 2024	Final decision of students selection by supervisors

Note: Selected 1+3 PhD students have to submit their documents to CSC for approval by 1st Sept 2024. The AGD program will assist in this.

## **7. Contact Information**

At WUR: Saskia de Boer, Wageningen Research Office  
Email: [saskia.deboer@wur.nl](mailto:saskia.deboer@wur.nl)

At CAU (also for student call): Ms. Jingmeng Wang (CAU)  
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