

Call for proposals for the Agriculture Green Development (AGD) PhD program (2nd 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. The AGD PhD program welcomes projects from a wide range of disciplines. Interdisciplinary projects are particularly appreciated.

2. Call for proposals

In 2025, ten PhD candidates will start in AGD Phase 2:

- 2 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.

- 8 PhD candidates will start with the aim to graduate at CAU and spend their third year at WUR as visiting candidates (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). Within one year in Wageningen, these 2+1+1 PhD candidates are offered an opportunity to improve their academic skills via, for example, a jointly developed training program with courses relevant to agricultural green development and academic skills, and focus on their research and its collaboration with a hosting WUR chair group.

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

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 or IND), and a bench fee for each month when PhD candidates are in Wageningen (WUR receives 1,000 per month for each PhD candidate when they are in Wageningen).

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) Plant-microbes interaction enhancing nutrient use;
- 2) Plant signaling for smart fertilizer innovation;
- 3) Innovative precision nutrient management;
- 4) AI (Big Data) for next-generation agricultural development;
- 5) Strategies and pathways of optimizing agricultural development in the main agricultural regions.

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 **25 March 2025** to agd-csc@cau.edu.cn with the email title 'Third 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

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| 25 March 2025 | Deadline for submission of proposals |
| 30 March 2025 | Proposals selected & final decision |
| 31 March 2025 | Publication of call for candidates for 1+3 positions |
| 25 May 2025 | Deadline for candidate applications |
| 14 June 2025 | Final decision of candidate selection by supervisors |

Note: Selected 1+3 PhD candidates have to submit their documents to CSC for approval by 1st Sept 2025. The AGD program will assist in this.

7. Contact Information

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