

## Call for proposals for the 2026 round of the Wageningen Graduate Schools Sandwich PhD programme

### The WGS Sandwich PhD programme

The aim of the Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS) Sandwich PhD Programme is capacity strengthening: a way for the university to reach out to scientific institutes to build international scientific networks, to facilitate exchange and to reinforce the knowledge basis of these institutes. The programme supports brain-gain for the home institute of the Sandwich PhD candidate, in partnership with Wageningen University (WU) via the PhD candidate's training. Sandwich PhD candidates therefore conduct most of their research at the institutes in their home countries.

The WGS Sandwich PhD programme is currently calling for proposals for its 2026 round. Number of grants available: **8**.

Awardees of the WGS sandwich PhD programme are classified as externally financed PhD candidates.

### Content of the programme

A sandwich PhD candidate spends the first part (around nine months) of the PhD project at Wageningen University. During this time, the research proposal is expanded, and a tailor-made education and training programme is started up. Where possible and applicable, research is also started.

The next thirty months are spent conducting research in the home country of the candidate under the supervision of a local supervisor who is also the copromotor. Sandwich PhD candidates have regular (online) contact with their supervisors at Wageningen University. Sandwich PhD candidates often return to Wageningen for short visits, and a Wageningen University supervisor will, during critical times of the research, visit the PhD candidate's home institute.

After the research in the home country is finished, the candidate returns to Wageningen University to finish the PhD thesis, which takes approximately nine months. The local supervisor will act as copromotor at the graduation ceremony.

### Conditions

- Applications can only be submitted by WU promotors.
- WU promotors can submit only one application.
- **Maximum of one application per chair group/chair holder.**
- WGS sandwich PhD candidate must graduate at WU.
- A local supervisor will act as copromotor.

- A budget of €85,000 is provided to cover living allowance for a total of 18 months in Wageningen, (partial) travel costs of candidate and WU/local supervisors, visa application costs, and overhead.
- The applicants should guarantee the additional (research) budget needed.
- The candidate should possess a master degree which is recognised by Wageningen University. In case of a non-Dutch master degree a **positive diploma validation by Nuffic** is needed. At the time of submission, the diploma validation by Nuffic of the candidate's master degree must at least be initiated.  
**Contact the relevant Wageningen Graduate School for starting the necessary procedure of the diploma validation by Nuffic in time!**
- The candidate should possess a proof of English proficiency required for the Wageningen University PhD programme at the time of submission (check [entry requirements](#) WU PhD programme!)
- The candidate should be a national of an eligible country. Check the list of eligible countries for the **2026 call**.
- The candidate should not be enrolled in another PhD program.
- The candidate must **start** the PhD project and **hence the stay at Wageningen University** in 2026.
- The candidate should be employed at the home institute during the entire PhD trajectory. It is a plus if the candidate remains employed at the home institute after completing the PhD programme.
- In case of exceptional circumstances or events (e.g., armed conflicts, natural disasters) that arise which require additional costs to be incurred in order to successfully complete the PhD project, the applicant, i.e., the chair group, must bear these costs.

## Awarding

- The grant will be awarded subject to the condition that the Nuffic outcome of the diploma validation will be positive. Applicants should be aware that taking a qualifying exam (QE) could be part of the diploma validation by Nuffic. In case a QE is needed, a proposal will be awarded **preliminary** under the condition of an approved QE or a granted exemption request.

## Selection criteria (all weigh equally)

- Linkage with home institute  
Including quality and infrastructure of supervising groups, institutional support, and quality of the relationship between home institute and WU.
- Quality of the candidate  
Including motivation and CV.
- Quality of the proposal  
Including originality, clarity, feasibility, and strategic contribution to the WU graduate school and chair group(s).

## Grant

- The WGS sandwich PhD grant is a personal grant awarded to the PhD.
- Funding of the programme includes €85,000 to cover:
  - PhD living allowance (salary costs fictitious employment) for a total of 18 months in the Netherlands
  - (partial) reimbursements for travel costs of candidate, WU supervisor and local supervisors
  - visa application costs
  - overhead (use of facilities, such as the WUR account, WUR library, ICT network, office space, access to the campus buildings)
- In case of withdrawal by the PhD, and/or preliminarily termination of the PhD project, the grant has to be repaid pro rata.

The budget will be transferred to a chair group in three phases.

- The first payment of €40,000 will be initiated when the candidate starts the first period of 9 months in Wageningen.
- On request of the chair group a second payment of €40,000 will be made after approximately 36 months at the beginning of the second period of 9 months stay in Wageningen
- The third and last payment of €5,000 will be made after the doctoral degree has been awarded by Wageningen University.

## Application procedure

The WU promotor submits the application form and all required documents in one compiled file (digital only) to [saskia.deboer@wur.nl](mailto:saskia.deboer@wur.nl).

Deadline: **Monday 11 May 2026, 23:59 hrs (CET)**.

### Timeline

Deadline for application: 11 May 2026

Communication jury decision: 15 June 2026

Start PhD project and hence stay in Wageningen: ***at the latest***, 31 December 2026