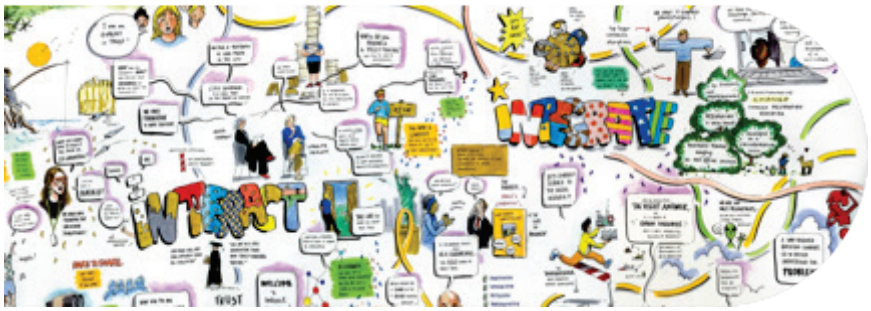
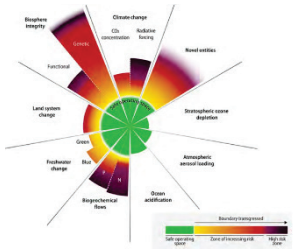
WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

GRADUATE SCHOOL WIMEK

WIMEK GRANT CALL NOMINATION PROCEDURE 2026-2027









For MSc students*

Opportunity for PhD candidates to get a research proposal you wrote yourself funded

Application via your thesis supervisors
Deadline: 11th December 2026, 12:00pm

*) Only for MSc students enrolled at Wageningen University, who have started on or have completed their MSc thesis; and plan to finalise their MSc degree before the end of 2027. No additional funds available for external candidates

WIMEK grant call nomination procedure

The WIMEK Graduate School (Wageningen Institute for Environment and Climate Research) offers a *maximum of 15* excellent MSc students *currently* enrolled at WIMEK related MSc programmes at Wageningen University the opportunity to write a full PhD research proposal on a self-selected subject within the field of 'Environmental and Sustainability Sciences', which can then be submitted to the WIMEK PhD grant call.

Being nominated by a WIMEK chair group and the writing of your own PhD proposal to the Research Master Cluster in period 5 *you* will be in an excellent position to pursue a career as PhD candidate at Wageningen, or anywhere else in the world.

A selection procedure decides to which participants it will offer **two available PhD position**. Only people nominated by a WIMEK chair group through this call are eligible for this WIMEK PhD grant. WIMEK does have the right to reduce the number of grants if the number of participants is lower than 8. Please check ask the chair group you are interested in doing a PhD with whether they are part of WIMEK.

Note that the starting date for the PhD position would likely be the second half of 2027; or 1 January 2028.

Participating MSc programmes

The WIMEK Graduate School is a cross-cutting network of 17 research groups in environmental and sustainability research at Wageningen University and Research. The participating MSc programmes are:

WUR	Participating MSc programmes
	Environmental Sciences (MES)
	Climate Studies (MCL)
	Earth and Environment (MEE)
	Urban Environmental Management (MUE)
	OTHER WIMEK related MSc programmes *

** If you follow a MSc programme which is linked to the WIMEK Graduate School, but not listed here, please contact us at wimek@wur.nl.*

How to get yourself nominated

MSc students who believe they are realising excellent results and who are highly motivated to experience how it is to write your own PhD proposal should **a)** make sure your chair group where you want to do your PhD will support your nomination. So, indicate your interest to your thesis supervisors early (advise is early October the latest) and discuss with them the best way to get accepted into the programme. Please note that they may decide to nominate some one else. So, indicating your interest is no guarantee. b) inform your **study advisor** of your MSc programme about your willingness to apply. **You need to discuss with your study advisor how the Research Master Course in period 5 fits into your program**. Also discuss it can replace some elements of your study or not. For instance, if the RMC course can be taken as an alternative to ACT. Note that for most studies, RMC does not replace ACT or other compulsory requirements (**such as the internship**). Planning the internship around RMC in period 5 may be hard! So, planning this well is of utmost importance. Hence, it is important to make an appointment with your study advisor prior to

applying to discuss your planning. Note that even if you do not get nominated, doing the RMC in any period can still be a good idea if you want to pursue a PhD degree.

Target Group and selection criteria

Only PhD candidates that have been nominated by a chair group, and that have done the RMC in period 5 are eligible for the grants.

The nomination can only be done in agreement with a WIMEK chair group; formally, the chair group nominates you. One candidate per chair can initially be nominated. The selection of the MSc students will be based on the following criteria:

(i) Letter of recommendation by a WIMEK staff member (assistant, associate or full professor) containing:
   a. motivating that you are a potential PhD student
   b. a statement that they will be your writing coach before and during Research Master Cluster (RMC) in period 5 and stating they have enough time available to discuss your proposal at least one hour per week; at minimum starting in March as preparation for RMC.* With this, you personally also state you will join the RMC In period 5 (register for RMC in period 5 when that becomes possible)

(ii) Letter by chair group holder confirming the nominee is seen has a high potential candidate by the chair group.

(iii) Letter of motivation for a research career a, also referring to WIMEK's Grand Challenges, written by you, the MSc student (max 500 words). Also indicate when you plan to finalise your MSc degree (Month, Year).

(iv) Your exam results (transcript of your BSc and MSc grades).

(v) Your CV

(vi) Confirmation by the study advisors that you have talked through your planning (WIMEK will ask this for you once you have applied; make sure that you have discussed your planning with them before you apply!). Note that planning the whole program is hard, certainly at this late notice. Planning the internship is not easy. Discuss all consequences well!

The student is responsible for making sure all the documents are in order. Send these to the staff member that will nominate you (and hence will be your writing coach). They then need to forward your email with all the documents attached to: wimek@wur.nl.

The WIMEK grant call is intended for talented MSc students, who are highly motivated to prepare for a scientific career. The Programme Committee will decide which students will be offered the chance to submit a proposal writing during RMC period 5 to the WIMEK grant call. MSc students should have an average grade average grade of ≥ 7.5, ideally have no delay (unless with good reason), and a strong motivation to do a PhD. If your grades do not meet these criteria, or you have a good reason for study delay, refer to this in your own motivation letter, and make sure the nominating WIMEK staff member very clearly explains the high potential of the nominee in the nomination letter. When you are in doubt whether you fit the criteria, please contact us at wimek@wur.nl.

Timeline WIMEK grant call

*Discussing your research plan as soon as you have been submitted to the program is highly encouraged

If accepted to the grant call, the grant writing procedure consists of the following three elements:

1. Half a day of explaining the call, what we want to see in the proposal and the final presentation. Usually in the last week of period 4 (to be determined).

2. Research Master Cluster (YEI-60312) – Proposal writing: Professional training sessions, including scientific writing, argumentation, presentation, review of proposals and writing a rebuttal, are strategically alternated with writing your PhD research grant proposal under supervision of a personal coach (period 5 2027; **full-time**; 12 EC).

   Please note, that it is strongly recommendable to have successfully completed your (major) MSc thesis before you start with the Research Master Cluster.

3. Submitting your proposal one week after RMC to WIMEK; and if invited to a presentation, present your proposal and personal motivation to an assessment committee; usually in the study period or exam week of period 6 (exact dates to be determined)

The deadline for submitting nominations: 11th December 2026; 12:00 pm.

To apply: please send the documents (i -v on page 3) in attachments to your nominating staff member; they will then need to forward this to wimek@wur.nl.

Contact: If you have any questions around this programme, also seen the FAQ document on our webpage. Also, please do not hesitate to contact us at wimek@wur.nl.

