



Earth and Life Sciences

Call for proposals

**China – Netherlands
Joint Scientific Thematic Research Programme**

**JSTP – Joint Research Projects:
Agriculture & Food: How to Feed the World?**

2011-2012



The Hague, December 2011
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Netherlands and China are long-term partners in international research co-operation. The bilateral scientific co-operation between The Netherlands and China is facilitated via a number of funding instruments. The Joint Scientific Thematic Research Programme (JSTP) offers funding opportunities for bilateral research co-operation between Dutch and Chinese research groups. JSTP is one of several instruments in the bilateral co-operation between The Netherlands and China.

JSTP is jointly facilitated by seven stakeholders, three in The Netherlands and four in China. Through this co-operation, broad access to the scientific research community in both The Netherlands and China can be realised.

A Call for Proposals is published annually, calling both for research proposals in thematic areas, and for joint seminars in all fields of science. The Call for joint research proposals features a different thematic priority every year. The thematic priorities are selected by the JSTP Programme Committee, and will be sufficiently comprehensive to cover proposals that may focus on a variety of research questions pertaining to specific scientific disciplines, while fitting into the overall thematic area as defined in the annual Call (e.g., comprising research questions from the natural sciences as well as the social sciences and humanities).

Stakeholders

The stakeholders are, in The Netherlands:

- the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW);
- the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW);
- the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO);

and in China:

- the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China (MoST);
- the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MoE);
- the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS);
- the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

This Call for Proposals sets out information about the possibilities for submitting applications for Joint Research Projects, the conditions that applications must meet and the procedure for assessing the applications. It also includes a brief description of the programme.

The Call for Proposals for JSTP Dialogue Seminars can be found in a separate document.

1.2 Available budget

For the 2011-2012 JSTP Call a budget up to a maximum of M€ 1,6 on the Dutch side is available. This budget covers funding for up to five Joint Research Projects and two Dialogue Seminars. This contribution will be matched by the Chinese counterparts.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

This Call for Proposals pertains solely to the fourth round in the grant process of JSTP 2011-2012 for Joint Research Projects in the theme 'Agriculture & Food: How to Feed the World?'.

2 Aim

2.1 General

The China – Netherlands Joint Scientific Thematic Research Programme (JSTP) aims at stimulating sustainable research collaboration by funding Joint Research Projects. JSTP aims at a high level of visibility of the projects and their output.

Joint Research Projects

JSTP aims at fostering research collaborations of Sino-Dutch research teams that share high ambitions to work together in sustainable Joint Research Projects by providing multi-annual research funding, and by calling for proposals demonstrating complementary expertise between Dutch and Chinese research teams in areas, in which both The Netherlands and China excel. Thematic Calls for Proposals are published annually, featuring different thematic priorities each year. The 2011-2012 Call for Proposals addresses the research topic 'Agriculture & Food: How to Feed the World?'.

2.2 Thematic focus 2011-2012 for Joint Research Projects: 'Agriculture & Food: How to Feed the World?'

Challenges

A sustainable production of healthy and safe food, as well as ensuring food security, has become an important issue globally. The increasing demand for high-quality food which comes with a raised living standard in China as well as in The Netherlands however, asks for a change in agricultural production. To this end development of innovative food production systems and research initiatives focusing on sustainable production, improvement of crops, product technology, and food safety are vital.

Sustainable and safe food production

Rising demand for high-quality food implies a higher requirement of increasingly scarce resources like animal proteins, water, energy, etc, resulting in environmental degradation, conflicts in land use, and decreasing biodiversity. To satisfy this growing demand and to face up to these threats research should focus on:

- Sustainability of agriculture, including agricultural biotechnology, in balance
- with the living environment for people, plants and animals;
- Development of robust crops with higher yields and improved resistance for pests, diseases and non-optimal growing conditions;
- Development of robust and efficient livestock farming with higher yields, focussing on innovative processes, better management of pests and diseases and improved housing;
- Efficient production of high-quality and healthy food, taking into account consumer desires;
- Ensuring food safety, including safety regulations and quality control.

Innovative food systems and rural development

To gain maximal benefits from improved food production, it is essential to adjust the food chain from production to consumption, taking into account different aspects of the food system such as land use, livelihoods of producers, rural development, organisation of trade and distribution systems, consumer interests, and the socio-cultural factors that influence food consumption and production. Innovative food systems, adapted to the local situation, should furthermore encourage farmers to

produce high quality products demanded by the market and encouraging them to seek new renewable environmentally friendly development opportunities.

Towards solutions

Research projects should contribute towards solutions for the above-mentioned themes. An integrated approach would be preferable to tackle the agricultural and social science aspects of some research questions.

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Eligible research teams are composed of Dutch and Chinese researchers, with active involvement in the project of a senior Principal Investigator (PI) on both the Dutch and the Chinese side.

For Dutch scientists the NWO / KNAW eligibility criteria are applied, i.e., the Dutch Principal Investigator should be affiliated to:

- a Dutch university or University Medical Centre; or
- an institute affiliated to NWO; or
- an institute affiliated to KNAW; or
- the Netherlands Cancer Institute NKI; or
- Max Planck Institute Nijmegen;

AND

have an employment contract for at least the duration of the application procedure and the duration of the research the grant is applied for;

AND

have at least a PhD or an equivalent qualification.

For Chinese scientists, the different Chinese counterparts will enable participation of the scientists resorting under their organisation. There are three contact points for JSTP in China: (1) MoST / MoE, (2) CAS, and (3) CASS. The Chinese Principal Investigator needs to meet the eligibility criteria of one of these contact points, including:

(1) MoST / MoE:

- The Chinese research group should be a key player in the research field described in the Call 'Agriculture & Food: How to Feed the World?';
- The Chinese PI should demonstrate that the research group in China is or has been involved in research collaboration with The Netherlands;
- The Chinese PI is affiliated to a non-CAS / CASS institution under MoST.

(2) CAS: The Chinese PI should be affiliated to a CAS research institute.

(3) CASS: The Chinese PI should be affiliated to a CASS research institute.

3.2 What can be applied for

Joint Research Projects with a duration of three to four years. Funding can be applied by:

Dutch Principal Investigator:

- employment costs of 1 Postdoc researcher (for maximum three years) or 1 PhD researcher (for four years);
- travel expenses and accommodation costs for researchers involved in the project (including travel and accommodation costs for project meetings);
- contribution to material and equipment costs (including acquisition of data sets).

The maximum budget that can be applied for on the Dutch side for an individual project will comprise up to € 280,000, covering funding for 1 Postdoc or PhD position (fixed rates) and a maximum of € 60,000 for research costs (including travel and equipment).

MoST / MoE Principal Investigator:

- travel expenses and accommodation costs for researchers involved in the project (including travel and accommodation costs for project meetings);
- contribution to material costs (including acquisition of data sets);
- contribution to field work costs.

CAS Principal Investigator:

- travel expenses and accommodation costs for researchers involved in the project (including travel and accommodation costs for project meetings);
- contribution to lab costs;
- contribution to material costs (including acquisition of data sets).

CASS Principal Investigator:

- travel expenses and accommodation costs for researchers involved in the project (including travel and accommodation costs for project meetings);
- contribution to research costs.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

3.3.1 Expressions of interest

The deadline for submitting expressions of interest is **16 January 2012, 11.00am CET**. Researchers who do not submit an expression of interest are still eligible to submit a joint research proposal.

3.3.2 Joint research proposals

The deadline for submitting applications for Joint Research Projects is **10 April 2012, 11.00am CET**. Applications received after the deadline are not eligible for further assessment. After the deadline, improvements of or additions to applications are not permitted.

3.4 Drawing up an application

An application consists of two parts: a completed Iris fact sheet and a core proposal in pdf format. In addition, information on the Chinese Principal Investigator in the Chinese language might need to be submitted to the Chinese funding agencies (please check with your Chinese contact point). The basic information listed in § 3.4.1 should be entered in the Iris fact sheet. The descriptions in § 3.4.2 form the core proposal. Information on how to structure the core proposal is provided in the description below. A Word template will be downloadable.

Please note that all applications are to be written in **English**, unless indicated otherwise.

3.4.1 Iris fact sheet

Please note that you will be asked to select an organisation if you want to register in Iris. Because the Chinese organisations are not in the Iris system, applicants from China should select the Organisation NWO-JSTP, Location 'S-GRAVENHAGE.

The basic information listed below should be entered in the Iris fact sheet:

- Title of the proposal
A short and specific title of the proposal.

- Concise summary
Give a short summary of the proposal, maximum of 300 words.
- Applicants
Enter the personal information for one of the two Principal Investigators. There is no need to give suggestions for reviewers.
- The Chinese contact point
Enter the contact point in China: (1) MoST / MoE, (2) CAS, or (3) CASS.
Contact point in China depends on the eligibility criteria for the Chinese PI.

3.4.2 Core proposal

The descriptions stated below make up the core proposal. An application form will be available at the website (<www.nwo.nl/jstp>).

Composition of the research team

List the names of the researchers involved in the project, both in The Netherlands and in China.

Institutional environment

Please indicate the host institution in The Netherlands and in China.

List of key publications

Please list five key publications by the applicants related to the proposed research. The publications should give evidence of the qualifications of the applicants in this field.

For Expressions of interest: Abstract of research proposal

For Joint Research Projects: Description of proposed research

- Relevance to the theme of the Call (maximum of 500 words)
 - Fit of the proposal into the thematic focus
- Research Programme (maximum 3,000 words)
 - Overall aim, key objectives, scientific background;
 - Originality and/or innovative elements of the topic;
 - Research plan including practical timetable over the grant period;
 - Experimental techniques and/or methodology;
 - Originality and/or innovative elements of the approach.

Description of the research programme should take into account the criteria specified under 'scientific quality of the research proposal' in § 4.2.
- Sino-Dutch co-operation (maximum of 500 words)
 - Added value of Sino-Dutch co-operation to the research project, including the complementary of the Dutch and Chinese research teams;
 - The degree of inter-institutional co-operation between the project partners, and the prospects for long term scientific collaboration beyond the duration of the research project.
- Expected results (milestones / deliverables / timetable)

Budget

Provide a clear budget for the costs of the proposed activities. Please consider § 3.2 when preparing your budget.

Curriculum vitae of the Dutch Principal Investigator and Chinese Principal Investigator

3.4.3 Additional information on Chinese PI

Additionally, the proposal requires information on the Chinese Principal Investigator, in the Chinese language. Please contact your Chinese contact point at (1) MoST / MoE, (2) CAS, or (3) CASS for more information. The information on the Chinese Principal Investigator is to be submitted in pdf format, according to the format provided for a PI resorting under (1) MoST / MoE, (2) CAS or (3) CASS.

3.5 Specific conditions

For Dutch researchers, this 'Call for Proposals' is subject to NWO's general grant conditions.

For Chinese researchers that apply for MoST funds, this 'Call for Proposals' is subject to the general grant conditions for 'International Science and Technology Co-operation Program'.

For Chinese researchers that apply for CASS funds, this 'Call for Proposals' is subject to CASS's general grant conditions for international exchange co-operation.

3.6 Submitting an application

An application can only be submitted to NWO via the electronic application system Iris. Applications not submitted via Iris will not be admitted to the selection procedure. A main applicant is obliged to submit his/her application via his/her own Iris account.

If the main applicant does not have an Iris account yet then this should be created at least one day before the submission. Then any possible registration problems can still be solved on time. If the main applicant already has an Iris account then he/she does not need to create a new account to submit a new application.

On the application form, applicants need to select one of the three Chinese contact points: (1) MoST / MoE, (2) CAS, or (3) CASS, according to the eligibility criteria for the Chinese Principal Investigator.

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

Selection of the proposals is performed according to a joint Sino-Dutch assessment and selection procedure.

1. After the deadline of the Call, the technical eligibility of the proposals is checked. The eligibility is checked in The Netherlands and in China.
2. The quality of the proposals will be assessed by (international) referees, according to the criteria specified in § 4.2. Each proposal is sent to preferably two-four scientific experts, who will review the proposal.
3. The anonymised written reviews are sent to the applicants. The applicants are given the opportunity to write a single reply to the referees comments. This reply should not exceed three pages.
4. The Assessment Committee is appointed by the JSTP Programme Committee, and comprises independent scientific experts from The Netherlands and China.
The Assessment Committee convenes once to moderate, rank and recommend proposals for funding on the basis of the criteria specified in § 4.2. The ranking of the Assessment Committee is sent as an advice to the JSTP Programme Committee.
5. The JSTP Programme Committee decides on the projects to be funded.

The NWO Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interest applies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process.

December 2011	Publishing of Call for Proposals 2011-2012
16 January 2012, 11.00am CET	Deadline expressions of interest
1 – 2 March 2012	Workshop in Beijing, China
10 April 2012, 11.00am CET	Deadline for submitting JSTP proposals for Joint Research Projects
11 April – 16 April 2012	Eligibility check
May – June 2012	Consult with referees
July 2012	Possibility for rebuttal by applicants
September 2012	Assessment by Assessment Committee
Mid-September 2012	Decision on proposals by Programme Committee
January 2013	Start Joint Research Projects

4.2 Criteria

In assessing and ranking the proposals, the Assessment Committee will consider the following criteria:

- **Relevance to the theme of the Call**
 - Fit of the proposal into the thematic focus (as specified in § 2.2)

- **Scientific quality of the research proposal**
 - challenging content;
 - originality of the topic;
 - innovative elements;
 - potential to make an important contribution to the advancement of science or technology;
 - suitability of proposed method.
- **Quality of the research groups**
- **Sino-Dutch co-operation**
 - Added value of Sino-Dutch co-operation to the research project, including the complementary of the Dutch and Chinese research teams;
 - The degree of inter-institutional co-operation between the project partners, and the prospects for long-term scientific collaboration beyond the duration of the research project.
- **Expected results**

4.3 Composition of the Assessment Committee

The Assessment Committee is composed of scientific experts from The Netherlands and China, and will be established as soon as the Call for Proposals has been published. The Assessment Committee reports to the JSTP Programme Committee (comprised of representatives of the JSTP stakeholders).

5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about JSTP and this Call for Proposals for Joint Research Projects please contact:

The Netherlands

NWO

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China

MoST / MoE

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+86 10 6859 7273
<qfang@cashq.ac.cn>

CASS

Ms Zhang Lihua
+86 10 8519 5149
<zhanglh@cass.org.cn>

5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system Iris

For technical questions about the use of Iris please contact the Iris helpdesk. Please read the Iris manual before consulting the helpdesk.

The Iris helpdesk is available from Monday to Friday from 11.00 to 17.00 hours on +31 900 696 4747. Unfortunately not all foreign phone companies allow you to phone to a 0900 number in The Netherlands. You can also send your question by e-mail to <iris@nwo.nl>.

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