

Call for Participation in UK-Chinese ECR Links Workshop

Systematic Innovation for Food Security & Rural Sustainability in China

8-9 December 2021 (online and offline)

About the workshop

For UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs), a common dilemma facing early career researchers (ECRs) is lacking of experience, opportunity, channel or mechanism to develop interdisciplinary communication and stakeholder-engaged research collaboration in order to deal with the complexity and offer local solutions in the developing world. To cope with the challenge, this project attempts to bring a perspective of *systematic innovation*, referring to a process of new approach, understanding, and competence development for communication and collaboration across disciplinary, industrial, social and cultural boundaries towards the interconnection and co-development of technological, social and institutional (or policy) innovations. Given the increasing complexity and uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, systematic innovation is particularly important to address global challenges such as climate change, poverty alleviation, food security, and other issues facing most vulnerable communities on the earth.

The value and feasibility of systematic innovation for ECRs can be illustrated from the analysis and presentation about challenges and good practices in rural China in the past decade. Jointly funded by the Newton Fund and Natural Science Foundation of China (Newton-NSFC), this project aims to create a platform for ECRs to develop research collaboration addressing challenges and opportunities related to, but not be limited to, following **subthemes**:

- Ecological agriculture, food security and policy intervention
- Digital technology for rural transformation
- Financial inclusion for cooperative development
- Rural tourism and entrepreneurship

With the support from internationally renowned scholars and industrial leaders (see list of mentors), successful applicants will have opportunities to develop their understanding and competences in systematic innovation and practice via joint research design, high quality publications, industrial partnerships. It will be delivered through a number of **pre-event meetings** (online) and to **workshop** (online and offline) in 8-9 December 2021.

Based upon successful experience of [GCRF pilot project](#) last year and established

partnerships, furthermore, this project offers good opportunities for ECR researchers to engage with multiple stakeholders (government agencies, agribusiness companies, farmers' organisers, etc.) from two countries for long term collaboration in research, experiment and demonstration, investment and trade, technology transfer, entrepreneurship training, etc.

This workshop is suitable for those who have a PhD degree (or equivalent experience) and publication experience in relevant fields, and interests in interdisciplinary and stakeholder engaged research methodology. With the endorsements of multiple stakeholders, they will develop their systematic approach and skills through one of following perspectives:

- Technological innovation system: interconnecting industries, technologies, biodiversity protection for health/nutrition food supply and sustainable livelihoods.
- Social innovation system: facilitating farmers' participation and community development for better use of external resources and investment opportunities.
- Innovation ecosystem: collaborative platform building for stakeholders (governments, companies, researchers, etc.) to foster technological and social innovation.

Pre-event meetings (online)

Successful applicants will have opportunities to meet academic and industrial mentors (online) in October and November before the Workshop. Dependent upon their interests expressed in the application form, they will be divided to a number of groups by **subthemes**. Led by mentors (see **Profiles of mentors**), online meetings allow ECR researchers to:

- Present their papers or project proposals;
- Identify common interests, approaches, and opportunities for research collaboration;
- Develop individual/group plan for publication, funding application, and social impact.

Preliminary programme of the Workshop

Given the constraints from international travel caused by Covid-19 Pandemic, two day Workshop will be organised by combining Online and Offline sessions in Beijing and Ningbo (subject to approval by CASS) in 8 to 9 December 2021.

Day One: Systematic innovation for food security and rural sustainability

Session 1: Keynote Speeches:

- Global food system in transition: Challenges and research opportunities, Professor Shenggen Fan from China Agricultural University, former Director of IFPRI;
- Food security and urbanisation in China: theory and policy, Professor Houkai Wei, Director of Rural Development Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences;
- Future food beacon via multidisciplinary collaboration at UoN, Professor David Salt, Director of Future Food Beacon, University of Nottingham (UoN)

Session 2: Case Studies:

- Digital technology, women empowerment and poverty alleviation (CAAS)
- Community support agriculture (CSA) in China (Shi Yan, Chair of China CSA Network)
- University-community partnership for industrialisation in poor areas of Sichuan (SAU)

Session 3: ECR Group Presentation (challenges, approaches, resources, collaboration)

Day Two: Ecosystem building for international/UK-China collaboration

Session 4: Global challenges and policy responses (VIP addresses)

Session 5: Showcases of UK-China collaboration in sustainable agri. and rural development

Session 6: Roadmap and action plan for research collaboration

Outcomes of the project:

This project offers opportunities for ECRs' career development through, but not be limited to, following items:

- ❖ ECR networking for research collaboration across disciplinary & national boundaries
- ❖ High-quality publications (articles, books) targeted at influential journals or publishers
- ❖ Industrial links for UK-China collaboration in sustainable agriculture/rural development
- ❖ Opportunities for social impact via social medias, blog series, exp. & demo, etc.

How to apply

We welcome applications from ECR researchers defined as those who have been awarded their PhD (or have equivalent experience) not more than ten years prior to December 2021, work in universities or research institutes in China or the UK with a relevant disciplinary background, and interests in interdisciplinary research.

Applicants are asked to prepare and submit two documents in English:

- **Application Form** (see separate document)
- **A one-page (A4) abstract** of academic paper (Or a project proposal reflecting your interested theme for research collaboration with other ECR researchers) to one of subthemes (ecological agriculture, digital technology, financial inclusion, tourism).

Abstract or proposal should contain following information:

- challenges in reality and research gaps
- approach/research questions
- methodology and empirical data
- expected contribution to theory and policy debates.

The completed application form and outline paper or proposal should be sent to **Wang Rui**

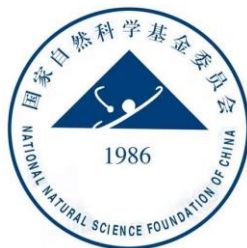
(wangrui@cass.org.cn) before the deadline of 15 September 2021. Informal queries regarding the nature of the project or application please contact **Dr. Bin Wu** (bin.wu@nottingham.ac.uk).

A screening committee will assess the applications against the criteria outlined in application pack. Gender balance will be emphasised. **Up to 20 ECR Researchers** from each country will be selected and applicants will be informed of the outcome by **30 September 2021**.

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Co-funded by:



Delivery partner:



In partnership with:

Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), James Hutton Institute (JHI), China Agricultural University, University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC), York University, Surrey University, Agricultural Engineering Precision Innovation (Agri-EPI) Centre, Just Rural Transition, International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in China (ICARDC) Network, China CSA (community-supported agriculture) Network, and China-Britain Regional Initiative (CBRI).