

Second 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

Global challenges in rural poverty, food security, climate change call for international research collaboration in sustainable agriculture and rural transformation. In the contexts of successful “Targeted Poverty Alleviation” and ongoing rural revitalisation in China, this UK and Chinese early career researcher (ECR) Links Workshop is jointly funded by the Newton Fund and Natural Science Foundation of China (Newton-NSFC) with aims to establish a network for researchers from both countries to develop interdisciplinary and stakeholder-engaged research collaboration to address challenges and opportunities related to, but not be limited to, following **subthemes**:

- Ecological agriculture, food security and policy intervention
- Digital technology and rural transformation
- Financial inclusion and 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 academic links through **pre-event meetings** (online), and to attend the **workshop** (online and offline) on 8-9 December 2021 (to be confirmed), as well as **field visits** thereafter (subject to the resumption of international travel and British Council approval). This project offers good opportunities not only for ECR researchers, but also for relevant institutions and stakeholders (government agencies, agribusiness companies, farmers’ organisers, etc.) from both countries to develop long term collaboration in research, experimentation and demonstration, investment and trade, technology transfer, and entrepreneurship training.

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. Building on a GCRF project last year (see [report](#)) and the endorsements of multiple stakeholders, they will have opportunities to learn and practise systematic innovation approaches through one of following perspectives:

- Technological innovation system: interconnecting industries, technologies,

biodiversity protection for health and nutrition food supply.

- Social innovation system: facilitating farmers' participation and community development for better use of external resources and investment opportunities.
- Innovation ecosystem: a 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 four or five groups by **subthemes**. Led by mentors (see **Profiles of mentors**), the 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 uncertainties caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic, the two day Workshop will be organised by combining Online and Offline sessions in Beijing on 8-9 December 2021 (to be confirmed).

Day One: Systematic innovation methodology

Session 1: Keynote Speeches:

- Global food system in transition: challenges and research opportunities (Shenggen Fan)
- Food security and urbanisation in China: theory and policy (Houkai Wei)
- Future food beacon via multidisciplinary participation at UoN (David Salt)

Session 2: Case Studies:

- Digital technology, female empowerment and poverty alleviation (CAAS)
- Social innovation for rural sustainability: case study of Riverside Village (CAU)
- University-community partnership for industrial development in Sichuan (SAU)

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

Day Two: International/UK-China collaboration

Session 4: Opening ceremony and VIP address

Session 5: Showcases of global-local partnerships for food security and rural sustainability

Session 6: Action plan for institutional/stakeholders' collaboration

Outcomes of the Workshop:

This project offers opportunities for ECR researchers to develop their academic career through, but not limited to, the following channels:

- ❖ Partnerships between ECR researchers and their institutions from both countries for long-term research collaboration in their interested fields
- ❖ High-quality publications via special issues of high ranked journals (e.g. World Development, Food Policy, Journal of Rural Studies), monographs or edited volumes at top international publishers (e.g. Cambridge University Press, Routledge)
- ❖ Post-doctoral fellowship opportunities in the UK (e.g. MSCA, British Academy, UoN, Newton Fund), China (e.g. NSFC, CASS, CAAS and CAU) and other sources
- ❖ Jointly funded applications to suitable Foundations (e.g. ERC, UKRI, NSFC, Newton Fund) or suitable schemes (e.g. climate change, food security, poverty alleviation)
- ❖ Access to and engagement with local stakeholders for field research, experiment and demonstration, or entrepreneurship training in China/UK
- ❖ For UK ECR researchers, Newton Fund sponsorship to visit China and local sites (subject to matching funding identified)
- ❖ Social impact cases for next REF (in the UK) or other purposes

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 have 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 the four 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 17 ECR Researchers** from each country will be selected and applicants will be informed of the outcome by **30 September 2021**.

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