

**Two social science PhD positions (with scholarship) for Chilean nationals at Wageningen University (The Netherlands) within the research programme “*Horticultural food systems based on ecologically intensive production and socio-economically sustainable value chains in the transition economies Chile and Uruguay (HortEco)*”**

**Focus of the research programme Horteco**

The two social science PhD positions will contribute to the research programme HortEco.

The HortEco programme recognizes that development of ecologically and socio-economically sustainable food systems is highly important for balanced economic growth, but has remained understudied for transition countries when compared to developing or developed countries. Vegetable systems in Chile and Uruguay place high pressure on natural resources, while at the same time there is a noted lack of safe and affordable vegetables for urban populations.

Therefore the objective of the HortEco programme, funded by the Dutch Science Council (NWO-WOTRO), is to enhance the sustainability of vegetable food systems in transitioning countries by investigating and supporting organization working on the production and marketing of low-or-no-pesticide vegetables.

To achieve this objective, the programme will focus on

- i) ecologically intensive horticultural production<sup>1</sup>,
- ii) socio-economically sustainable horizontal and vertical value chain collaboration models, and
- iii) change agents in the innovation system to support the transition to sustainable horticultural farms and markets.

Knowledge development and innovation will be connected through a systemic learning-for-innovation approach, linked to nine ongoing innovation-oriented projects of private, public and academic partners in Chile and Uruguay.

As part of this programme, we are now seeking 2 qualified PhD candidates from Chile for 4-year research positions at Wageningen University, with scholarships. One PhD candidate will be at the chairgroup Knowledge, Technology and Innovation (in collaboration with the chairgroup Rural Sociology), the other PhD will be at the chairgroup Management Studies. Both PhDs will be locally supported by the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

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<sup>1</sup> A natural science PhD from Uruguay will work on this topic. Furthermore, a postdoc will integrate findings from the three PhD projects and facilitate the co-innovation process.

**1) PhD position in sociology of innovation and transitions “*Change agents facilitating ecologically intensive production and value chains*”**

Transitioning towards ecologically and socio-economically sustainable production and marketing require combined ecological, technological, social and institutional change. Current innovation systems in Latin American countries, including Chile and Uruguay, are oriented towards high external input agriculture, and see innovation as science-driven technological change.

Co-innovation, while successful at a small scale, requires work beyond the farm level. Public and private actors throughout the food system need to fulfil key change agency roles in the transition to ecologically intensive production and value chains providing knowledge and mobilizing resources.

**This PhD project will identify change agents** in ongoing and completed, successful agricultural projects and will answer questions related to: who is/was initiating, leading and supporting transitions within these projects. Another component of the research is to identify and analyse the **main systemic barriers to transitioning** towards ecologically and socio-economically sustainable production as well as structures to be changed. The research will largely take place in Chile, with some comparative work in Uruguay.

For this position we are looking for an enthusiastic and collaborative candidate with the following qualifications:

1. An excellent academic record in a relevant social science discipline such as sociology, innovation studies, political science (Masters completed), with proven analytical skills and relevant knowledge of the agri-food sector in Chile and/or Uruguay.
2. Strong knowledge and skills regarding research design, and qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis (e.g. observation, in-depth interviewing and social network analysis)
3. Knowledge of relevant theories of (agricultural) innovation and rural development, such as the agricultural innovation systems approach, inclusive innovation, socio-ecological systems, sustainability transition theories, institutional change theories.
4. Strong skills for both broad systemic analysis of innovation dynamics as well as in-depth analysis of specific issues (e.g. change agency).
5. Proven ability to work in scientific teams and collaborate with a range of societal stakeholders.

6. Strong oral and written communication skills in English<sup>2</sup>, especially regarding academic writing and presentation. Fluency in Spanish is assumed.
7. Possession of a valid driving license is a plus.
8. Candidates must have the Chilean nationality

**2) PhD position in management studies and supply chain economics “horizontal and vertical value chain collaboration models: arrangements to support ecological intensification”**

Value chains play a key role in determining food availability and affordability. Vegetable marketing in Chile and Uruguay is currently characterised by limited farmer collaboration, fragmented retail, heterogeneous quality and few opportunities for value-adding. As an answer to this challenge, vertical collaboration through contract farming (CF) between farmers and agribusiness, and horizontal collaboration of ecological producer organizations (POs) are emerging in both countries to market sustainably produced vegetables for urbanising consumer markets.

Horizontal and vertical collaboration in value chains can promote sustainable socio-economic development and improve food availability and access. However, there is limited understanding how these value chain networks establish and maintain sustained market relationships. In this PhD research the focus is on **how sustainably producing farmers and processors can be integrated in value chain networks** that (successfully) address urban markets. The research will largely take place in Chile, with comparative work in Uruguay.

For this position we are looking for an enthusiastic and collaborative candidate with the following qualifications:

1. An excellent academic record in a relevant social science discipline such as Management Studies, Supply Chain Management, Economics, Agribusiness Management (Masters completed), with proven analytical skills and relevant knowledge of the agri-food sector in Chile and/or Uruguay.

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<sup>2</sup> If you from a non-Anglophone country (such as Chile) and you have not completed your higher education with English as the language of instruction, you have to submit an internationally recognized Certificate of Proficiency in the English Language. Minimum required scores:

- TOEFL internet-based 90, with minimum sub-score 23 for speaking
- IELTS (academic version) 6.5, with minimum sub-score 6.0 for speaking
- Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE) with minimum grade B
- Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) any grade

All test results must be dated within 24 months prior to your application

2. Strong knowledge and skills regarding research design, and qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis (e.g in-depth interviewing, survey design, quantitative data analysis (statistics; econometrics))
3. Knowledge of relevant theories on horizontal and vertical collaboration in value chains, such as Transaction Cost Economics, Collective Action, Resource Based View and Social Network theory.
4. Strong skills for both broad systemic analysis of value chain dynamics as well as in-depth analysis of specific issues
5. Proven ability to work in scientific teams and collaborate with a range of societal stakeholders.
6. Strong oral and written communication skills in English<sup>2</sup>, especially regarding academic writing and presentation. Fluency in Spanish is assumed.
7. Possession of a valid driving license is a plus.
8. Candidates must have the Chilean nationality.

### **How to apply?**

Applications are submitted via email to [horteco.chile@wur.nl](mailto:horteco.chile@wur.nl) Please indicate clearly in the subject line of your application whether you are applying for either **PhD position 1** (change agents) or **PhD position 2** (value chain). Your application should be in English and include the following information:

1. An application letter explaining your motivation and aptitude for the position.
2. A detailed CV including personal details, academic training, work experience and a list of publications. Please also include language skills, computing and (academic) software skills.
3. Scanned copies of academic certificates (bachelors and masters) and associated lists of marks/qualifications for courses followed.
4. A writing sample of recent academic/scientific writing, which can be for example a thesis or a scientific publication
5. Names and contact details (email address) of three references.
6. A research proposal outline for of 1,000 words maximum in which you give an idea of how you would approach the research (see template in annex 1).

Applications must be received **by 14 august** via [horteco.chile@wur.nl](mailto:horteco.chile@wur.nl)

Any enquiries on PhD position 1 can be made to Dr. Laurens Klerkx ([Laurens.Klerkx@wur.nl](mailto:Laurens.Klerkx@wur.nl)), any enquiries on PhD position 2 can be made to Prof. Dr. Jacques Trienekens ([Jacques.Trienekens@wur.nl](mailto:Jacques.Trienekens@wur.nl)).

### **Further process and timeline**

Selected candidates will be invited for interviews by 1 september.

Candidates should be aware that in case of selection after the interviews, a check will be done by Wageningen PhD programme admission officers whether candidates meet all formal criteria to enter the Wageningen PhD programme. If these conditions are not met the candidate will not be admitted to the position.

For the first phase (basic PhD training and proposal development) and last phase (finalizing writing of the thesis) of the PhD trajectory, candidates will be required to stay in the Netherlands for a period of about 7 to 10 months. In the remainder of the 4 year period, candidates will be working in Chile and Uruguay, collecting data and liaising with partners.

**Annex 1: Format for proposed research outline**

*Please explain in 1000 words maximum (excluding references) how you would approach a PhD research for the topic for which you apply. Your outline will include the working title of your project, a brief sketch of the theoretical perspective, the research problem and research question; a short outline of the methodological approach; and a description of the expected scientific significance and development impact of the research you propose.*

1. YOUR NAME:

2. WORKING TITLE

3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE(S)

4. SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM DEFINITION AND KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

6. SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

7. EXPECTED DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

8. REFERENCES