



Call for Proposals 2018 "Southeast Asia"

[Ref. AF-SE Asia CfP 2018-03]

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. Background

Over the last three decades, Southeast Asian (SEA) nations experienced dramatic economic growth. Despite shrinking share of agricultural economy in the pie of their respective gross domestic product, agricultural economy which is closely linked to many manufacturing and services industries has its total significance far greater than its direct output would suggest.

Unfortunately, agriculture is the sector wherein sustainability issues tend to be most prevalent and persistent. This industry is fundamentally vulnerable to climate change, natural disasters, and environmental degradation. Conventional production practices are often associated with deforestation, water scarcity, soil degradation, biodiversity loss, pest resistance to pesticides, and poor waste management, among other environmental problems, in many agricultural systems. The wellbeing of the ecosystem is further intertwined with health, food security and poverty issues, especially in marginal rural areas of SEA economies.

Prevalent and persistent sustainability issues also spring from institutional, political, technological, socioeconomic, market, and economic forces. In particular, the livelihood of smallholders is driven by the degree of their ability to meet the new local and international food markets.

Revolution in food markets was triggered by changes in urbanization, food supply systems, and consumer demand.

As reported by United Nations (2016), SEA has experienced an urban population explosion, rising rapidly from 18.5% in 1960s to 44.1% in 2010. In the same report, latest urban population was estimated to be 88.7 million and is projected to reach 120.6 million in 2030. This will further lead to a change in human lifestyle.

In tandem with the increasing migration to cities, food supply systems have undergone a massive transformation. The rise of large-scale retail stores and restaurant chains has shifted the power from primary producers to these retailers. Consequently, food supply is consolidated, and this has necessitated the need for large-scale wholesalers, wholesale markets, and logistics companies.

The modernization of food supply systems is deemed essential in response to dietary change among consumers. With higher per capita income, consumers now enjoy greater purchasing power in diversifying their food basket. Departing from the base, staple food –rice is largely substituted by wheat- and protein-based food products. Such a modern diet is too often associated with health diseases and scars. This has led to increasing demand for assurance, through standards and certification, of quality, healthy, and safe food. Consumers' ability to acquire their desired food is in turn affected by food availability, food access, and food affordability.

In view of the above, there is a need to better understand the varying economic, social, environmental, and political contexts across Southeast Asian (SEA) countries in order to contribute meaningfully in addressing the sustainability of the region's agriculture, food system and rural development challenges. In so doing, collaboration with actors and institutions with expertise and experience on such issues is thus valuable.

II. Objectives and actions covered by the Call

- 1) In view of the above, this Call for Proposals (CfP) is being launched jointly by Agropolis Fondation, the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) in order to contribute in creating and strengthening a dynamic exchange between research and higher education institutions in France and Southeast Asia in the area of agriculture and sustainable development.
- 2) This will be carried out by providing PhD Fellowships to Southeast Asian students enrolled in any of the five¹ universities covered by this Call and jointly supervised by scientists, researchers and/or professors from his/her home university and from any of the research units that are part of the foundation's scientific network (See Eligibility and Conditions section).

III. Thematic coverage

- 3) This Call will fund Fellowships of Southeast Asian PhD students from any of the five Southeast Asian universities covered by this Call in any of the following thematic areas (or a combination thereof):
 - a) Preparing the crops of tomorrow;
 - b) Reinforcing the sustainability of food and agriculture systems, including agro-ecological transition;
 - c) Designing and optimizing integrated approaches towards bioeconomy and product quality;
 - d) Agriculture and climate change linkage (mitigation and adaptation);
 - e) Developing integrated approaches in agriculture, value chains, management of territories, and public policies.

IV. General conditions and eligibility

- 1) An application must meet the following general conditions and eligibility:
 - a) Research proposal (i.e., PhD research topic) developed and submitted either jointly by a French scientist/professor belonging to Agropolis Fondation's network and a Southeast Asian scientist/professor from any of the five SE Asian universities covered by the Call or by either of the two entities provided that partnership building process is completed before a selected project starts (cf: Section VI)
 - b) Research topic that clearly contributes to reinforcing French-Southeast Asian scientific cooperation;
 - c) Research topic that focuses on one or a combination of the thematic areas of the Call presented in section III above.
 - d) Should the research project involve any case studies, such must be carried out in Southeast Asia and must involve partners from concerned country (-ies).
 - e) Application must meet the specific eligibility conditions pertaining to a given category as outlined in Section VI, item 2.

¹ Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), University of the Philippines-Los Banos (UPLB); Kasetsart University (KU, Thailand); University of Gadjara Mada (UGM, Indonesia) and Bogor Agriculture University (BAU, Indonesia).

- 2) A French or SE Asian scientist/professor can co-coordinate/co-supervise only one project funded through this Call. He/she may, however, be involved as a partner in other projects funded through this Call.
- 3) Scientists, professors and research teams from outside of the foundation's scientific network and/or from outside SE Asia can participate as collaborators. For-profit-organizations may be involved as associated partners but are neither eligible to receive funding nor to share intellectual property rights related to any output of the projects funded under this Call. They are, however, encouraged to provide funding towards the implementation of the project.
- 4) When of equivalent scientific quality, preference will be given to a proposal that enables first time partnership between research teams.

V. Fellowship categories

- 1) This Call which will support a total of 8 PhD Fellowships (4 per cohort) under two Fellowship categories (by co-funding arrangement):
 - **Category A:** AF-SEARCA-UPM co-funded PhD Fellowship for Malaysians and Indonesians enrolled at the University of Putra Malaysia; 3 slots available per cohort (Total: 6)
 - **Category B:** AF-SEARCA co-funded PhD Fellowship for SE Asian nationals enrolled in KU, UPLB, UGM or IPB; 1 slot per cohort (Total 2; possibility to increase the number of slots available for Cohort 2)
- 2) The table below presents the details related to each Fellowship category.

Category	Category A: AF-SEARCA-UPM Co-funding	Category B: AF-SEARCA Co-funding
Eligible PhD students	PhD students from Malaysia and Indonesia enrolled at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	PhD students from other SE Asian countries enrolled in KU, UPLB, UGM or IPB
Duration	3 years, of which total of 18 months is spent in France	3 years, of which total of 18 months is spent in France
No. of slots available	Six (3 slots per Cohort)	Two (1 slot per Cohort)
Funding/ Grant inclusions	<p><u>UPM will cover the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University tuition and other fees worth RM11,000 for Malaysian students per year over three years (RM16,000 per year over three years if Indonesian students) • Monthly allowance*: RM 2,300 (roughly €480) x 12 months x 3 years • Book Allowance: RM 1,200 (roughly €250) x 3 years • Thesis Allowance: RM 1,200 (roughly €250) x 3 years <p><u>SEARCA will cover the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional monthly allowance*: €620/month x 18 months to complement the monthly allowance provided by UPM as per above for a combined monthly allowance of €1100/month for 18 months (amount required by <i>Ecole Doctorale GAIA</i>) • One return air ticket from SE Asia to France 	<p><u>SEARCA will cover the following</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University tuition and other fees worth USD 2,600 (roughly €2,180) per year over three years • Monthly allowance*: USD 665 (roughly €560) x 12 months x 3 years • Book Allowance: USD 280 (roughly €250) x 3 years • Thesis Allowance: USD 1,600 (roughly €1,440) x 3 years • One return airticket from SE Asia to France • Insurance while in SE Asia <p><u>Agropolis Fondation will cover the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €15,000 grant to host French unit to support the work of the PhD student; to fund travel (for scientific visit and thesis defense); and to cover tuition fees in French university • Additional monthly allowance while in Montpellier/France*: €540 x 18 months to complement the amount provided by

Category	Category A: AF-SEARCA-UPM Co-funding	Category B: AF-SEARCA Co-funding
	<p><u>AF will cover the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €15,000 grant to host French unit to support the work of the PhD student; to fund travel (for scientific visit and thesis defense); and to cover tuition fees in French university • Insurance while in France • One return airticket from SE Asia to France for PhD student (in case the stay in France is divided into two parts) • Up to €2,500 support for travel to and accommodation in France of the SE Asian co-supervisor • Applicable fees to research unit and Campus France (if necessary) <p><i>*The PhD student will continue to receive the same amount of monthly allowance that will be complemented by the Foundation for the duration of his/her stay in Montpellier/France. The amount is meant to cover housing, food and local transport throughout the duration of the PhD student's stay in France.</i></p>	<p>SEARCA for a combined monthly allowance of €1,100/month for 18 months (amount required by <i>Ecole Doctorale GAIA</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance while in France • One return airticket from SE Asia to France for PhD student (in case the stay in France is divided into two parts) • Up to €2,500 support for travel to and accommodation in France of the SE Asian co-supervisor • Applicable fees to research unit and Campus France (if necessary) <p><i>*The PhD student will continue to receive the same amount of monthly allowance that will be complemented by the Foundation for the duration of his/her stay in Montpellier/France. The amount is meant to cover housing, food and local transport throughout the duration of the PhD student's stay in France.</i></p>
<p>Specific Fellowship conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate must be enrolled in any of the 5 SE Asian universities and in a higher education institution from the foundation's network (e.g., University of Montpellier, SupAgro, ...) under Co-tutelle arrangement. The necessary agreements for this ("Accord de Co-tutelle") involving concerned PhD student and concerned higher education institutions shall be signed in view of the above, the soonest time possible. The process shall be launched once successful applications are notified and PhD student identified. • For PhD students under a program with coursework, candidate must have already completed all the required course work in his/her university by the time he/she moves to France • Candidate must spend at least 18 months of his/her research work in a Labex Agro research unit within the foundation's scientific network; This period can be spread over the duration PhD programme (e.g., 2x9 months; or 1x 18 months), depending on what is relevant and realistic in terms of schedule and budget, and without compromising the scientific integrity of the research project. The rest of the period is spent by the PhD student in the SE Asian university where he/she is also enrolled. • Candidate must demonstrate English language proficiency (TOEFL: At least 500 (paper-based); IELTS: at least 5.5.) • Candidate must be no more than 40 years old at the time of application • Candidate commits to deliver a lecture/seminar during his/her stay in France 	

Legend: KU = Kasetsart University (Thailand); UPLB = University of the Philippines-Los Banos, (The Philippines); IPB = Bogor Agricultural University (Indonesia); UGM = University of Gadjah Mada (Indonesia).

VI. Submission and partnership building modalities

An application may be submitted either for Cohort 1 (project start 2018 or early 2019) or for Cohort 2 (project start in late 2019 or early 2020) funding, depending on the "readiness" of the PhD research proposal and the degree of collaboration between co-supervisors from France and SE Asian universities as well as the identification of the appropriate PhD Fellow. The deadline for the submission of proposals under both cohorts are specified in Section VIII, item 1 of this TOR.

This Call entails the following submission and partnership building process (*See diagram*).

- 1) **Submission of PhD thesis topic** by a French scientist/professor belonging to Agropolis Fondation's network; or by a Southeast Asian scientist/professor from any of the five SE Asian universities covered by the Call; or jointly developed and submitted jointly by both entities.

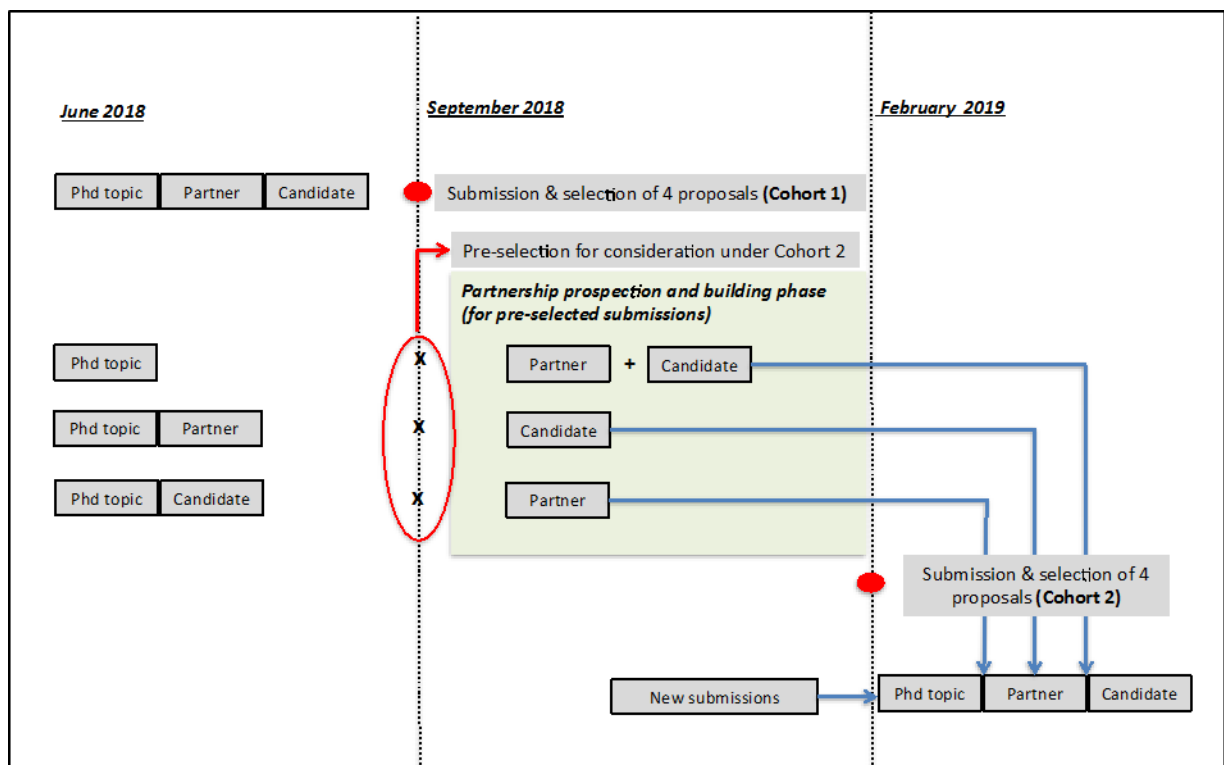
Important: Co-supervisors must both agree (or have agreed) to co-supervise a PhD research and must possess the required qualifications (e.g., HDR or an agreement by the relevant *Ecole Doctorale* in the case of French scientists/professors) to supervise a doctoral student.

- 2) **Partnership identification and establishment.** For proposals submitted without a French or SE Asian co-supervisor, the three co-funding institutions would, to the extent possible, facilitate establishing linkages with interested and suitable counterpart scientist/professor, research unit/laboratory in order to refine and finalize a research topic and/or agree on the PhD candidate.

- 3) **Identification and selection of proposals and Fellows:** Projects that led to a successful exchange and contact that resulted in the joint development and submission of PhD research proposals will be reviewed for funding consideration.

- **Cohort 1:** Up to 4 applications with PhD topics and candidates ready to start before the end of 2018 or early 2019 will be selected and launched; these may come (although not exclusively) from proposals based on already established partnerships.
- **Cohort 2:** Are projects proposed either in 2018 or early 2019 but which required the setting up of new partnerships. Under this category, up to 4 PhD theses which are ready to start no later than September 2019 will be selected and launched.

In both cases above, selected PhD candidates must be registered in both institutions (SE Asian and French universities).



VII. Selection process

- 1) Eligible proposals shall undergo a parallel peer review process set up, on one hand, by Agropolis Fondation, and on the other hand by UPM and by SEARCA for the PhD Fellowship they are co-funding respectively. The results of these parallel reviews will be compared under the authority

of the Joint Committee composed of equal representatives of the concerned institutions in order to reach a consensus on project selection and funding.

2) Submitted proposals shall be evaluated on the basis of the criteria below:

Criteria
Science
Scientific quality (i.e., state-of-the-art, clearly defined scientific issue, methodology, ...)
Exploratory character
Originality and innovativeness
Relevance of the research topic to the thematic focus of the Call (<i>i.e., extent in which scientific questions linked to the thematic focus of the Call are articulated and planned to be addressed</i>)
Profile of the PhD candidate
Partnership, structuring effect and visibility
Quality of partnership (e.g. shared interest to contribute to strengthening Franco-SEA collaboration; qualification and experience of teams involved and their complementarity)
Potential structuring effect of the project at the local (within the Labex Agro community; within the SE Asian university) and international level
International visibility
Overall feasibility
Proposed timetable, project leadership, budget adequacy
Project trajectory
Strategic positioning and ambition with regards to the collaborating units and the PhD student's career; planned follow-up actions after project completion

3) Projects selected for funding shall be subject to the signature of all necessary agreements (e.g., Grant Agreements, Consortium Agreements, etc.) between research teams and funding organizations prior to transfer of funds.

VIII. Timetable and submission process

1) Below is the timetable for this Call

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Opening of the Call	End of June 2018	
Submission deadline	13 September 2018	February 2019
Evaluation process	October 2018	March 2019
Announcement of results	Late Oct/mid-Nov 2018	April 2019

Note:

- Late and/or incomplete submissions and those exceeding the maximum number of pages allowed (application form and annexes) will not be accepted.
- Any amendment/s or additions to the Terms of Reference, including the provisional calendar, will be published in the websites of the co-funding institutions. Proponents are invited to consult these webpages regularly.

2) All applications must be written in English and must include all the annexes specified below in their specified formats:

- Full Proposal
- Annex 1: Financial Table (Excel and PDF Format)
- Annex 2: Letter of commitment from the institution of the Co-supervisors
- Annex 3: CV of the Co-supervisors, if already identified (see required format; Word and PDF Format) including agreement by the relevant *Ecole Doctorale*, in the case of French scientists/professors) to supervise a doctoral student.
- Annex 4: CV of the PhD candidate, if already identified (see required format; Word and PDF Format) together with TOEFL or IELTS test score; **OR** Profile of the ideal PhD candidate

- Annex 5: Gantt Chart (Excel and PDF Format)
 - Annex 6: Letters of commitment from co-funders, if applicable
- 3) All proposals must be submitted electronically, by the specified deadline, via the platform <https://agropolisfondation.optimytool.com/fr/>. Agropolis Fondation shall not be held responsible for submissions not received due to technical problems preventing the transfer of proposals electronically.
- 4) By submitting a proposal, the proponents assure that they have obtained the due approval of all the participants involved in the project.