

PhD CALL

One sandwich PhD position in Plant Pathology

Ghent University and Quy Nhon University

Ghent University employs more than 8,000 staffs, supporting education and research, management, and administration, as well as technical and social service provision on a daily basis. It is one of the largest, most exciting employers in the area and offers great career opportunities. With 11 faculties and more than 80 departments Ghent University offers state-of-the-art study programmes grounded in research in a wide range of academic fields. Ghent University is a logical choice for students.

Quy Nhon University currently has more than 500 academic staffs employed in 3 faculties and 9 academic departments providing 46 bachelor's, 22 master's and 3 doctoral programmes in the disciplines of pedagogy, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, engineering and technology, and economics, for nearly 14,000 students. Since QNU's establishment 40 years ago, the University has obtained major achievements, and holds the 26th place in Vietnam, according to the Ranking Web of Universities (webometrics.info, accessed on 1st October 2022).

1. ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Belgian government is funding in the frame of the IUC program an extended collaboration with Quy Nhon University. The main sustainable development goal of the project 3 in the program is promoting sustainable agricultural production at targeted regions that are linked intimately with enhancing research and educational capacities of the institutional level. The research domain in which the set of activities per domain are proposed plans to strengthen research capacity, an interdisciplinary research group is established to set out activities mainly focusing on integrated management of *Phytophthora* disease, appropriate applications of plant growth regulators and biostimulants, creation of adaptable scion/rootstock combinations and sustainable soil nutrient management in durian and avocado production.

2. WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

One PhD position in Plant Pathology

Increased demand for durians is driven by their popularity and consumer belief in their healthful properties. Like many crop species, durians are susceptible to oomycete disease. *Phytophthora* causes long term contamination of soil and solutions to control the disease using chemicals are considered ineffective and polluting. This means that there is an urgent need to find alternative and more sustainable solutions to produce these fruits. Some *Phytophthora* pathogens cause root rot, stem rot and fruit rot diseases which are strongly reducing durian production. This project aims to develop methods and strategies to increased disease tolerance and to investigate the *Phytophthora* species responsible for the crop damage. A suitable and sustainable method to manage the durian disease-will be developed.

The successful candidate will have the following profile:

- Hold a Master's degree in Biology, Agronomy, Biotechnology or closely related fields.
- Have a high GPA at the BSc level.
- Have a keen interest in both plant pathology and molecular biology.
- Be able to perform statistical analyses independently.
- Have a critical mindset and are eager to learn.
- Demonstrate English proficiency above level B2.

Based on our scientific progress and on the specific background/interests of the selected candidate, a detailed PhD research plan will be worked out.

Supervisor: Prof.dr. Monica Höfte.

Local co-advisor: dr. Tra T.T. Huynh.

3. WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOU

- An excellent opportunity to engage into an exciting PhD project that combines microbiology, plant pathology and bioinformatics, in the context of a dynamic, practical and international work environment.
- A sandwich PhD program for the selected PhD candidate with a 22 – month scholarship for 4 research stays at Ghent University (Belgium) including a monthly stipend of €1900 and 4 return tickets. The remaining 26 months of the PhD research will be performed in Vietnam. The PhD candidate will have a commitment to work for QNU after graduation.

4. HOW TO APPLY

Please send your application by email by **March 24, 2023**. Application package includes:

- Your detailed CV,
- a motivation letter,
- electronic versions of your academic records,
- proof of English proficiency,
- a recommendation letter from one referee.

Further information on the next phases will be sent on March 31, 2023 to the pre-selected PhD candidates. Feel free to contact us for any question.

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