

PROGRAMME PHD BOOT CAMP VIỆT NAM

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

To further improve their career prospects, doctoral candidates require valuable professional work experience. The international PhD boot camp, facilitated by the Ghent University Doctoral Schools and the ASEANplus platform, is geared towards enabling doctoral candidates to offer their strongest set of skills and expertise to non-academic partners coming from an array of sectors including **public policy, private and not-for-profit businesses, industry**, etc. To efficiently and purposefully deploy the PhD boot camp for the purposes of, for example, **international consulting, business prospecting, market research and business development**, non-academic partners will be able to commission doctoral candidates to carry out **short-term** (2 to 3 weeks) **intensive international assignments** that have a **well-defined scope** with **clearly formulated objectives and expectations**.

The PhD boot camp enhances the potential and thus also the employability of Ghent University's high potentials and ensures the greatest possible **benefits for all parties** involved.

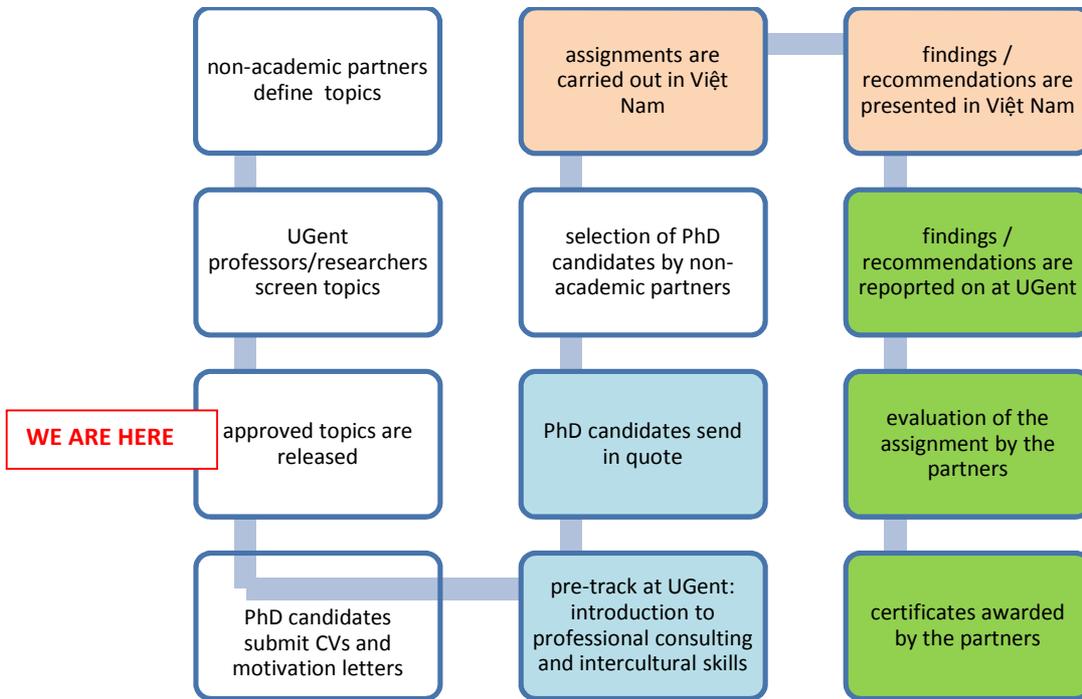
The 5th edition of the PhD boot camp again targets **Việt Nam**. Việt Nam is a **strategic partner** of Ghent University.

The PhD boot camp is developed to deliver tailored solutions to clearly defined problems or needs of non-academic stakeholders. The **feasibility** of the assignments is assessed in close consultation with Ghent University professors, whose area of expertise is closely related to the core of the assignment. The boot camp is **exclusive** in so far (1) that the partners themselves **select** the candidates from a diverse pool of highly talented applicants and (2) that the consultancy assignments are carried out **abroad – in casu Việt Nam**. The Việt Nam experience not only increases the **international mobility** of the candidates but also encourages them to step **out of their comfort zone** and learn to cope with environmental variables. To overcome the Vietnamese language barrier, the candidates will team up with either local Vietnamese PhD candidates coming from Vietnamese partner universities or with government or company employees.

The boot camps are **fully facilitated** by the Ghent University Doctoral Schools and the ASEANplus platform, who also offer the candidates a **(compulsory!) introduction to professional consultancy skills and cross-cultural communication skills**.

The PhD boot camp Việt Nam is **beneficial to all parties involved**. It is especially useful for conducting non-academic irregular specialized tasks that need to be performed by knowledge experts. Apart from the increased cost effectiveness, these short-term assignments also require less bureaucratic effort and can be executed in a more flexible and timely manner. Not in the least, the boot camp will also allow doctoral candidates to put the skills and competencies they acquired through their research as well as the transferable skills training offered as part of the Ghent University doctoral training programme, into **real-world practice**. Participation in the boot camps will give them a confidence boost and a means of getting their CV noticed.

PROCEDURE



1/2 week: integrated introduction to professional consultancy skills and cross-cultural communication skills (1 day) and further preparatory work in order to be able to put together a formalised bid **equals 1 seminar in transferable skills in the cluster career management**. This is open to all doctoral candidates expressing an interest the boot camp.



2 weeks: **equals 1 seminar in transferable skills in the cluster leadership and personal efficiency**



1/2 week: finalising report to be presented to the partners and elaborate on the findings / recommendations in a seminar **equals 1 seminar in transferable skills in the cluster communication skills**

PhD candidates participating in the boot camp from start to finish (equalling **3 seminars in transferable skills**) are exempt from further transferable skills training.

ASSIGNMENTS

2 Vietnamese companies ([Animaid](#) and [Lasuco](#)), a Belgian company active in Việt Nam ([Inve Aquaculture](#)) and an Australian non-profit organisation active in Việt Nam ([Blue Dragon's Children Foundation](#)) act as patrons of the 5th **PhD boot camp**.

The PhD boot camp includes assignments for **4 PhD candidates**:

1. INVESTIGATION OF FARMERS' VIEWS ON AN ALTERNATIVE TO ANTIBIOTICS (commissioned by Animaid)

The aim of this consultancy assignment is to understand how Vietnamese farmers react to, and prepare for, a ban on all kinds of antibiotics in livestock farming. The Vietnamese ministry of agriculture decided to ban the use of antibiotics in animal and fish feed as of 2018. By 2020, the use of antibiotics for the prevention of animal diseases will also be banned. The findings of the PhD consultant will have a major impact on Animaid's marketing strategies and product directions.

During the 2 weeks working for Animaid the PhD expert will have to interview several groups of farmers to understand their current use of antibiotics and give advice on how to reduce the improper use of antibiotics which results in antibiotic resistance and residues in food that causes potential risks for consumers' health and livelihood.

Animaid expects the PhD expert to organise at the end of his/her sojourn in Việt Nam a seminar presenting alternatives to antibiotics and how they can be applied on Vietnamese farms.

2. DEVISING A MARKETING AND BRANDING STRATEGY FOR LASUCO GROUP (commissioned by Lasuco)

Lasuco Group which has nearly 40 years of experience in the development of the sugar industry in Vietnam has, since 5 years, diversified its products towards hi-tech agriculture such as vegetables, fruits, organic rice, bamboo and ecotourism. As its business model has been mainly B2B for many years, Lasuco did not yet focus on branding and marketing.

Recently, while implementing a new development strategy, Lasuco set out to establish its own distribution channel, B2C, and to focus more on retail. About a year ago, it established a trading company to promote trading (import and export) and different retail channels. Although some of Lasuco's products such as sugar, melon... are currently sold in big supermarkets in North Vietnam under Lasuco's brand, Lasuco is still unknown to most Vietnamese consumers. In fact, among many products, only melon has a good reputation in Thanh Hoa province, but not yet on a national scale. However, Lasuco has a vision to become the top company in Việt Nam in the field of agriculture and promote its brand at a national and international level. Therefore, it is vital for Lasuco to have a good marketing and branding strategy. The assignment for the PhD consultant involves:

- assessing the branding and marketing strategy of Lasuco Group: current situation, strengths and weaknesses;
- building a brand story;
- developing a marketing strategy: marketing channels, effective implementation of its strategy for Lasuco's products such as sugar, vegetables, organic rice, ecotourism, etc.

- training staff of Lasuco to put this strategy into practice.

3. INNOVATIVE WAYS OF RUNNING SHELTERS FOR HIGHLY TRAUMATISED STREET KIDS (commissioned by Blue Dragon Children's Foundation)

Blue Dragon Children's Foundation is a Hanoi-based charity dedicated to rescuing kids in crisis in Việt Nam. Its programmes provide education for kids at risk, rescue kids from slavery and the sex trade, and offer long term care for growth and development. Statistics on the number of street children in Hanoi vary. The Vietnamese Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs of Vietnam (MOLISA) estimates that there are 1,500 street children in Hanoi. Some independent NGOs, however, suggest much higher figures. While some street children resort to scavenging, begging or stealing, others fall prey to drug syndicates or child sex rings. The government does not have the resources to help these children who come from different provinces in Việt Nam. This is where an organisation like Blue Dragon plays a crucial role as they have the social workers and the expertise. They moreover work in liaison with the authorities and get children either back home or to a safe shelter organised by Blue Dragon. Blue Dragon is currently investing in – amongst others – training its staff and trying to get more involvement of the children in running the shelters. Blue Dragon needs the help of a PhD consultant to work with the children and staff in order to come up with innovative systems for organising shelters for highly traumatised teenage boys.

4. SURVEY ON THE VALUE CHAIN OF MUD CRAB AND GIANT RIVER PRAWN IN THE MEKONG DELTA (commissioned by INVE Aquaculture)

Since several years now Việt Nam has established a reputation as a major global aquaculture producer. Although the name and the bulk of this production comes from Basa fish (*Pangasius* sp) and the marine White Shrimp (*L. vannamei*) and Black Tiger (*P. monodon*), there is also a significant business in the production of Mud Crab (*Scylla paramamosain*) and Freshwater Prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*). Most, if not all, of these operations are small scale, often family run companies in the Mekong Delta. Little information is available to aquaculture stakeholders, especially on the fry production phase, in which Vietnam has been one of the pioneers in the region. As the success in the downstream shackles of the supply chain largely depend on the quality of the fry, this phase is a major focus point in the overall appreciation of the sustainability and profitability of this industry. In order to properly assess the business value of the fry production for stakeholders and the potential and requirements for further optimization, it is essential to have an in depth understanding on the culture processes and the associated value chain. This can be accomplished by a local study in a confined area in the Mekong Delta in which objective key data are collected and analysed.

Detailed information about each of these assignments will be given during the information session to be organised on **Tuesday 13 November at 13:00 hrs** in the **Raadzaal (campus UFO)**.

BUDGET

All travel and accommodation costs of the PhD candidates as well as the expenses of the Vietnamese buddy accompanying the PhD candidates in Vietnam are covered. General support in Việt Nam will be offered either in company or by Can Tho University or another partner university.