

Fund for Less Developed Regions

The Fund for Less Developed Regions supports scientists in specified regions of China to conduct creative research within the funding scope of NSFC, so as to foster and support researchers in these regions, to stabilize and gather outstanding talents to facilitate the construction of the regional innovation system as well as the social and economic development of the regions.

Applicants for the Fund for Less Developed Regions should be satisfied with following qualifications:

(1) Have the experience of undertaking basic research project or doing other basic research;

(2) With senior academic position (title) or doctoral degree, or recommendations by 2 researchers with senior academic position (title) in the same research area.

Researchers meeting above qualifications and working in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Qinghai Province, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Tibet Autonomous Region, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Hainan Province, Guizhou Province, Jiangxi Province, Yunnan Province, Gansu Province, Yanbian Korean Prefecture of Jilin Province, Enshi Tujia and Miao Prefecture in Hubei Province, Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Prefecture in Hunan Province, Liangshan Yi Prefecture in Sichuan Province, Ganzi Tibetan Prefecture in Sichuan Province, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Prefecture in Sichuan Province, Yanan City and Yulin City in Shaanxi Province may apply for the Fund for Less Developed Regions. Researchers seconded by the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the CPC to Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Tibet Autonomous Region as aid scientists for 3 or more years are also eligible to apply for this fund, on the condition that they provide certificate documents issued by the organization departments or personnel department of their host institutions to prove their identity of aid scientists when applying for this fund.

Researchers from other provinces and regions, and researchers from the affiliated institutions to the central government or the PLA in the above regions and provinces cannot apply, but may join the application as main participants. Graduate students can not apply, but on-job students may apply through their employer institutions at the consent of their supervisors. Researchers without an home institution or their home institutions have not been registered at NSFC cannot apply for the Fund for Less Developed Regions.

In order to provide preference for qualified applicants for the Fund for Less Developed Regions and encourage them to apply for projects of General

Program and other competitive programs of NSFC, researchers who have been granted 3 or more projects under the Fund for Less Developed Regions are not be allowed to apply for this fund again since the year 2016, and the Fund for Less Developed Regions grants approved in 2015 and earlier will not be counted in.

Applicants are advised to refer to the outlines of applications for the Fund for Less Developed Regions and make out their application form accordingly. The collaborative units cannot exceed 2, and the research period is 4 years. The funding period for applications submitted by post-doctors is decided in consideration with the letter of commitment from their host institutions.

In 2015, the Fund for Less Developed Regions supported 2,829 projects with a total funding of 1.096 billion yuan. The average funding was 387,400 yuan per project, and the funding rate was 21.48%, which is 0.37% higher than that in 2014 (please refer to the table below for the funding statistics).

In 2016, the average funding for direct costs will be 400,000 yuan per project. Please refer to the actual funding levels of relevant departments and make budget request in a practical manner.

Funding for projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

| Department | No. of applications | Awards | | | | Success rate (%) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| | | No. of awards | Funding for direct costs | Average funding for direct costs | Share of NSFC' total funding for direct costs (%) | |
| Mathematical and Physical Sciences | 588 | 176 | 7,000 | 39.77 | 6.39 | 29.93 |
| Chemical Sciences | 1,040 | 238 | 9,380 | 39.41 | 8.56 | 22.88 |
| Life Sciences | 2,994 | 729 | 29,230 | 40.10 | 26.67 | 24.35 |
| Earth Sciences | 742 | 169 | 7,110 | 42.07 | 6.49 | 22.78 |
| Engineering and Materials Sciences | 1,721 | 341 | 13,620 | 39.94 | 12.43 | 19.81 |
| Information Sciences | 1,076 | 231 | 8,690 | 37.62 | 7.93 | 21.47 |
| Management Sciences | 648 | 125 | 3,770 | 30.16 | 3.44 | 19.29 |
| Health Sciences | 4,361 | 820 | 30,800 | 37.56 | 28.10 | 18.80 |
| Total | 13,170 | 2,829 | 109,600 | 38.74 | 100 | 21.48 |

Please refer to sections of the General Program of various departments for the funding scope of the Fund for Less Developed Regions and funding statistics in recent years and relevant requirements.

Department of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

The Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Mathematical and Physical Sciences is aiming at creating a favourable research environment for these regions, fostering and stabilizing an appropriate amount of researchers, training talents in basic research for local scientific and technological development, and increasing the capability of solving urgent scientific problems in the development of national economy and society. In the evaluation of proposals for the Fund, special attention is paid to researches that have relative good research background with characteristics and advantage, so as to give full play to the role of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in talent fostering, and strengthen the support to researchers in the western regions of China.

Funding for projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Mathematical and Physical Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10 000 yuan

| Divisions | | Projects | Direct cost | Funding rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|--|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Mathematics | Mathematics I | 37 | 1,249 | 29.13 |
| | Mathematics II | 41 | 1,416 | 29.29 |
| Mechanics | Basic problems and methods in mechanics | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dynamics and control | 6 | 259 | 42.86 |
| | Solid mechanics | 9 | 390 | 29.03 |
| | Fluid mechanics | 6 | 276 | 30.00 |
| | Bio-mechanics | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Explosive and impact dynamics | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Astronomy | Astrophysics | 6 | 264 | 40.00 |
| | Astrometry and celestial mechanics | 3 | 146 | 25.00 |
| Physics I | Condensed matter physics | 22 | 981 | 28.95 |
| | Atomic and molecular physics | 7 | 310 | 31.82 |
| | Optics | 13 | 583 | 28.89 |
| | Acoustics | 3 | 126 | 42.86 |
| Physics II | Fundamental physics and particle physics | 14 | 601 | 35.90 |
| | Nuclear physics, nuclear technology and its application | 8 | 362 | 34.78 |
| | Particle physics and nuclear physics experimental facilities | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Plasma physics | 1 | 37 | 7.69 |
| Total | | 176 | 7,000 | 29.93 |
| Direct cost funding per project | | 39.77 | | |

Department of Chemical Sciences

On the basis of stabilizing the funding scale of the Fund for Less Developed Regions, the Department of Chemical Sciences will make efforts to further promote improvement of the research quality and efficiency of the Fund, stabilize a batch of research talents for basic research, and continuously bridge the gap with developed regions. Applicants are encouraged to carry out research by taking advantage of the local resources so as to promote the economic development of the regions in a coordinated way.

Funding for projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Chemical Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10 000 yuan

| Divisions | | Projects | Direct cost | Funding rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Division I | Inorganic chemistry | 33 | 1,303 | 23.08 |
| | Analytical chemistry | 33 | 1,303 | 23.40 |
| Division II | Organic chemistry | 54 | 2,123 | 23.18 |
| Division III | Physical chemistry | 32 | 1,263 | 23.02 |
| Division IV | Polymers | 18 | 702 | 22.78 |
| | Environmental chemistry | 30 | 1,183 | 22.73 |
| Division V | Chemical Engineering | 38 | 1,503 | 21.97 |
| Total | | 238 | 9,380 | 22.88 |
| Direct cost funding per project | | 39.41 | | |

Department of Life Sciences

In 2015, the Department of Life Sciences received 2,994 applications for the Fund for Less Developed Regions (accepted 2,906 as eligible applications), and funded 729 projects. The funding rate was 24.35% with the average direct cost of 401,000 yuan per project. The average funding for 2016 will be similar with that of 2015. In the future, the Department will continue to follow the principle of “fostering regional talents, supporting sustained exploration, gathering outstanding talents and promote regional development” for this Fund, provide steady support to local talents and support researches related to local resources and natural conditions. For details about funding scope, etc., please refer to the sections in the General Program of the Department in this Guide.

Funding for projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Life Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

| Divisions | | Projects | Direct cost | Funding rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|--|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Division I | Microbiology | 51 | 2,035 | 24.76 |
| | Botany | 57 | 2,277 | 24.57 |
| Division II | Ecology | 80 | 3,224 | 24.69 |
| | Forestry | 54 | 2,146 | 25.23 |
| Division III | Biophysics/Biochemistry/Molecular biology | 14 | 572 | 25.93 |
| | Immunology | 8 | 304 | 27.59 |
| | Biomechanics and tissue engineering | 4 | 162 | 16.00 |
| Division IV | Neurosciences | 12 | 463 | 26.09 |
| | Psychology | 6 | 222 | 26.09 |
| | Physiology & integrative biology | 9 | 373 | 24.32 |
| Division V | Genetics and bioinformatics | 23 | 937 | 23.96 |
| | Cell biology | 8 | 302 | 25.81 |
| | Developmental biology and reproductive biology | 9 | 363 | 23.68 |
| Division VI | Agriculture and crop sciences | 91 | 3,658 | 23.76 |
| | Food science | 60 | 2,398 | 24.00 |
| Division VII | Plant protection | 49 | 1,975 | 23.90 |
| | Horticulture and plant nutrition | 52 | 2,076 | 23.74 |
| Division VIII | Zoology | 27 | 1,088 | 24.32 |
| | Animal husbandry and grassland science | 63 | 2,549 | 24.42 |
| | Veterinary medicine | 38 | 1,532 | 23.75 |
| | Aquaculture | 14 | 574 | 24.14 |
| Total | | 644 | 32,190 | 24.35 |
| Direct cost funding per project | | 40.10 | | |

Department of Earth Sciences

In 2015, the Department of Earth Sciences received 742 applications for the Fund for Less Developed Regions from 128 research institutions. Among them, 624 were from universities, accounting for 84.1%, and 113 from research institutes, accounting for 15.2%. Totally, 169 projects were funded with a direct expense of 71.1 million yuan. The average fund was 421,000 yuan per project and the funding rate was 22.78%. Among the projects funded in 2015, 146 were obtained by universities, accounting for 86.4%, and 21 by research institutes, accounting for 12.4%.

In 2016, a standardized selection of “application code”, “research field” and “key words” will be tried out continuously in Division I (Geography). When filling out the application forms, applicants should visit the “special focus” under the item of “application acceptance” on the official home page of the NSFC (<http://www.nsf.gov.cn/>), and read carefully the “list of application code, research field and key words (D01 and subordinate codes)” in order to make sure their applications in accordance with the funding areas of Division I.

Funding for Projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Earth Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

| Divisions | | Projects | Direct cost | Funding rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|--|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Division I | Geography (including soil science and GIS) | 112 | 4,705 | 22.81 |
| Division II | Geology | 21 | 882 | 22.83 |
| | Geochemistry | 15 | 642 | 22.39 |
| Division III | Geophysics and space physics | 7 | 297 | 22.58 |
| Division IV | Marine science | 4 | 172 | 22.22 |
| Division V | Atmospheric science | 10 | 412 | 23.26 |
| Total | | 169 | 7,110 | 22.78 |
| Direct cost funding per project | | 42.07 | | |

Department of Engineering and Materials Sciences

According to NSFC policy on the Fund for Less Developed Regions, the Department of Engineering and Materials Sciences will provide steady support to foster researchers in these regions, and encourage applicants to do basic researches by taking advantage of local resources and for regional economic development. In 2015, the Department received 1,721 applications (43 rejected) for the Fund with an increase of 3.93%. 341 projects were funded with a total direct cost of 136.2 million yuan. The average funding was 399,400 yuan per project with a funding rate of 19.81% (20.41% in 2014).

Please refer to the General Program and other related parts of Guide to Programs for the funding scope of the Fund.

Funding for projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Engineering and Materials Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

| Divisions | | Projects | Direct cost | Funding rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|--|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Materials sciences I | Metallic materials | 33 | 1,330 | 19.19 |
| Materialssciences II | Inorganic and non-metallic materials | 38 | 1,527 | 18.72 |
| | Polymer materials | 23 | 900 | 20.54 |
| Engineering sciences I | Metallurgy and mining science | 45 | 1,807 | 20.00 |
| Engineering sciences II | Mechanical engineering | 60 | 2,394 | 20.20 |
| Engineering sciences III | Engineering thermo physics and energy utilization | 17 | 664 | 21.79 |
| Engineering sciences IV | Architecture, environmental and structural engineering | 68 | 2,731 | 19.60 |
| Engineering sciences V | Electrical science and engineering | 22 | 875 | 19.82 |
| | Hydrology and marine engineering | 35 | 1,392 | 19.89 |
| Total | | 341 | 13,620 | 19.81 |
| Direct cost funding per project | | 39.94 | | |

Department of Information Sciences

In 2015, the Department of Information Sciences received 1,076 applications for the Fund and funded 231 projects with a total direct cost of 86.9 million yuan (of which 4 million yuan came from the Major Program). The funding rate was 21.47% and the average direct cost was 376,200 yuan per project. In 2016, the Department will continue to give preferential support to the Fund for Less Developed Regions, and properly increase the funding rate. The average direct cost will be 400,000 yuan per project.

Funding for projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Information Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10 000 yuan

| Divisions | | Projects | Direct cost | Funding rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|---|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Division I | Electronic science and technology | 16 | 575 | 22.22 |
| | Information and communication system | 19 | 694 | 22.35 |
| | Information acquisition and processing | 20 | 741 | 19.80 |
| Division II | Theoretical computer science and computer software and hardware | 24 | 885 | 22.02 |
| | Computer application | 47 | 1,789 | 22.17 |
| | Network and information security | 23 | 866 | 22.33 |
| Division III | Control theory and control engineering | 19 | 715 | 21.84 |
| | Systems science and system engineering | 13 | 498 | 21.31 |
| | AI and intelligent systems | 24 | 909 | 21.54 |
| Division IV | Semiconductor science and information devices | 10 | 391 | 20.83 |
| | Information optics and photoelectric devices | 8 | 313 | 21.05 |
| | Laser technology and technical optics | 8 | 314 | 21.05 |
| Total | | 231 | 8,690 | 21.47 |
| Direct cost funding per project | | 37.62 | | |

In 2016, a standardized selection of "application code", "research field" and "key words" will be tried out continuously in Division 1. When filling out the application forms, applicants should choose "application code 1 (F01 and subordinate codes)" and relevant research field" and "key words" precisely according to the "list of application code research field and key words for trial disciplines" and make sure their applications in accordance with the funding area of Division 1. The list of the application code, research field and key words are available in the "Special focus" under the item of "Application acceptance" on the official home page of the NSFC (<http://www.nsf.gov.cn/>).

Department of Management Sciences

In 2015, the Department of Management Sciences received 648 applications for the Fund for Less Developed Regions, fewer than those in 2014. 125 projects were funded with a funding rate of 19.29%, and the average funding for direct expenses was 301,600 yuan per project.

In 2016, the average funding for direct expenses will be 320,000 yuan per project, and the executive period will be 4 years.

Please note that the requirements described in the general description section of the General Program of the Department of Management Sciences in this Guideline are also applied to the Fund for Less Developed Regions, so please read carefully before submitting proposals.

Funded projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Management Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

| Divisions | | Projects | Direct cost | Funding rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Division I | Management science and engineering | 27 | 814 | 20.15 |
| Division II | Business administration | 36 | 1,086 | 19.78 |
| Division III | Macro management and policy | 62 | 1,870 | 18.67 |
| Total | | 125 | 3,770 | 19.29 |
| Direct cost funding per project | | 30.16 | | |

Department of Health Sciences

The Department of Health Sciences mainly supports basic research and clinical basic research on the occurrence, development, outcome, diagnosis, therapy and prevention of diseases.

Applicants are encouraged to propose creative research ideas, conducting basic research on local diseases by using modern medical research concepts and methods. Joint research by applicants with researchers in developed regions is also encouraged in order to fully utilize the various advanced research facilities in developed regions.

The PDF copies of no more than five representative papers relevant to the application should be attached to the proposal. More detailed information is to be referred to sections in the Fund for Less Developed Regions and General Program in this guide.

In 2016, the direct cost for the Fund for Less Developed Regions will be 400,000 yuan per project. The budget form inside application should be prepared in a practice and objective way.

An overview of the award number, funding, and success rate of the Fund for Less Developed Regions in 2015 by the Department is listed in the table below.

Funding for the Fund for Less Developed Regions in the Department of Health Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

| | Divisions | Projects | Direct cost | Funding rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|--|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Division I | Respiratory system, circulatory system, blood system | 86 | 3,221 | 18.57 |
| Division II | Digestive system, urinary system, endocrine system/ Metabolism and nutrition support, ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology head and neck science, oral and craniomaxillo-facial science | 105 | 3,934 | 19.55 |
| Division III | Neurological and psychiatric diseases, gerontology | 51 | 1,907 | 16.45 |
| Division IV | Reproductive system/ Perinatology/Neonatology, medical immunology | 34 | 1,289 | 16.43 |
| Division V | Medical imaging and biomedical engineering, special medicine, forensic sciences | 28 | 1,057 | 17.18 |
| Division VI | Medical pathogenic microorganisms and infection, orthopedics and sports medicine, emergency and intensive care medicine/Trauma/Burns/Laboratory medicine/Plastic surgery/Rehabilitation medicine | 74 | 2,761 | 18.50 |
| Division VII | Oncology (leukemia not included) | 123 | 4,610 | 14.52 |
| Division VIII | Skin and appendages, preventive medicine, endemiology, occupational medicine, radiology | 55 | 2,105 | 23.81 |
| Division IX | Materia medica and pharmacology | 53 | 2,007 | 21.99 |
| Division X | Chinese medicine, Chinese materia medica, integrated Chinese and Western medicine | 211 | 7,909 | 21.93 |
| Total | | 820 | 30,800 | 18.80 |
| Direct cost funding per project | | | 37.56 | |