

# Preface

The year 2009 saw the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. It was a very important year in the history of China in which China made new progress in social and economic development. We consolidated the results of studying and practicing the scientific outlook on development, made the overall planning for funding, carried out in-depth research on the strategy for the Twelve Five-Year Plan, took active measures to promote institutional innovation in an effort to create a good environment and to promote the healthy development of Chinese basic research.

The State Council approved NSFC to set up the Department of Health Sciences. According to the strategic plan of the central government to attract talents from overseas, we initiated the Research Fund for International Young Scientists and a number of outstanding young foreign scholars were funded to conduct basic research in China.

In 2009, NSFC launched the full-scale strategic research for the Twelve Five-Year Plan. Profound analysis of the situation and tasks was implemented and the strategic principle of "emphasizing more on basic research, more on frontier areas and more on talent training" was adopted, which has laid a good foundation for formulating the Twelve Five-Year Plan of NSFC.

In 2009, more than 102,000 proposals of various kinds were submitted from 1,674 universities and research institutions, which is an increase of more than 18,000 proposals, or 21.6% compared with that in the previous year. Based on the needs of basic research development, NSFC persisted in the democratic evaluation principles and rigorous procedures, and funded 20,343 projects of various types in 1,056 host institutions under the three categories of research promotion, talent training and research infrastructure establishment. The total amount of funding reaches 7.054 billion yuan. NSFC has played a very important role in supporting innovative research and talent fostering and promoting the construction of national innovative system.

Following the principle of encourage innovation and promoting disciplinary development, NSFC continued to control the number of projects and to increase the funding intensity for providing stable support to make free explorations and creative research. 10,061 projects of General Program were funded with a funding of 3.305 billion yuan. The average funding per project is 328,500 yuan and the average approval rate is 17.49%. To strengthen the support for non-consensus creative research, funding was provided to 388 one-year small grants for exploratory studies. According to the overall planning of disciplinary development and preferential support on frontier areas, 391 projects of Key Program were funded, with a total funding of 724 million yuan. Focusing on the national strategic needs and important frontier areas and coordinating research forces in different disciplines to conduct research, 11 projects of Major Program were approved with a funding of 110 million yuan. Emphasizing on the guidance of strategic goals and the role of expert steering group and strengthening top-down design and research integration, NSFC approved 325 projects for Major Research Plans, with a funding of 334 million yuan. Based on the implementation of 24 Major Research Plans already initiated, one more plan entitled "integrated research on eco-hydrological process in Heihe valley" was approved for solving major environmental problems in sustainable development.

In order to make effective use of NSFC's funding on young talents, 6,079 projects of the Young Scientists Fund were approved with a funding of 1.203 billion yuan, increasing 27.8% from that of the previous year according to the idea of stabilizing the funding for each project and increasing the number of projects. To promote steadily the funding of talents in remote regions, 922 projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions were approved with a funding of 222 million yuan, an increase of 36.8% compared with that of the previous year. To promote collaborative research, 77 projects of the Joint Research Fund for Overseas, Hong Kong and Macao Scholars were funded with a funding of 15.4 million yuan. To accumulate the reserve of talents, 15 projects of the National Science Fund for Talent Training in Basic Science were funded, with a funding of 13.7million yuan. In order to foster top-notch researchers, 179 scientists were funded by the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars (including those with foreign citizenship) with a funding of 350 million yuan. To strengthen the development of research teams and promote the

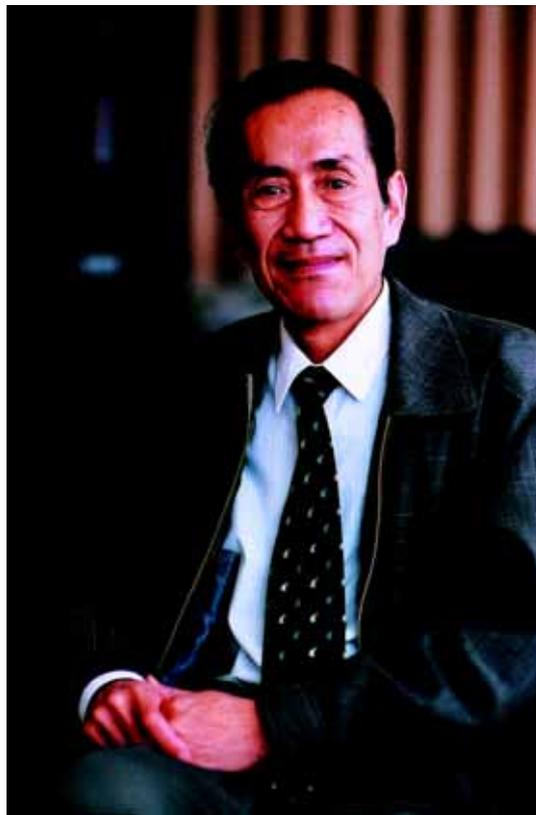
coordinated innovation, 28 creative research groups were funded with a funding of 137 million yuan, and 22 research groups, which had been implemented for 3 years and 6 years respectively, were funded after evaluation for one more term with an extensive funding of 128 million yuan in total.

To encourage scientists to conduct innovative research on instrumentation, 35 projects of the Special Fund for Basic Research on Scientific Instruments were approved with a funding of 50 million yuan, 66.7% more than that of the previous year. To promote the construction of national research experimental base, on the basis of making evaluations on 25 State and ministerial key labs in chemical sciences, 6 excellent labs were funded with a funding of 12 million yuan. To promote the popularization of science, 10 science popularization projects were funded with a funding of 2 million yuan, and funding for youth scientific activities reached 8 million yuan, 33.3% more than that in the previous year.

In 2009, NSFC continued to promote strategic cooperation to enhance the joint funding system and signed the agreement on jointly supporting research on large scientific facilities with the Chinese Academy of Sciences with a total funding of 40 million yuan. The Joint Fund of Astronomy provided 15 million yuan to promote the sharing of scientific facilities and cooperation between CAS and universities. The Joint Fund with CAEP provided 14.1 million yuan for supporting Chinese scientists to carry out basic research related to national security. NSFC extended the agreement of the Joint Fund of Iron and Steel Research with Baoshan Steel Complex, and continued to implement the Joint Fund of Civil Aviation Research with CAAC and joint funding with Microsoft Research Institute Asia. The budget of the above joint funds reached 25.5 million in total. The Joint Fund with Guangdong Province provided with 48 million yuan for promoting the structural adjustment and enhancement of innovative capabilities in economically developed regions, and the Joint Fund with Yunnan Province provided with 27.6 million yuan for supporting the innovation and development in less developed regions. In 2009, the international (regional) collaboration was continuously strengthened, and substantial joint research was boosted steadily.

Promoted jointly by the long-term support of NSFC and other national S&T programs, great progress has been made in Chinese basic research in terms of outstanding results and innovative talents. NSFC has made important contributions to enhance the overall national capabilities in basic research through continued support on innovative research. Among the national awards in science and technology of 2009, 27 out of the 28 awardees of the National Natural Science Awards (except 1 from Hong Kong) had obtained funding from NSFC to some extent (18 NSFC projects per awardee on average). All of the awardees of the first class prize of the National Technology Invention Award and most of the awardees of the first class prize of the National Science and Technology Progress Award had long been funded by NSFC.

In 2010, NSFC's budget will continue to increase by a big margin. NSFC will, as always, do its best to play an effective role in supporting basic research and talent training. By analyzing the current situation and the strategic needs for building an innovative country and well-off society in an all-round way, NSFC has proposed its strategic policy of "emphasizing more on basic research, more on frontier areas and more on talent training" in the future. We shall strengthen the scientific basis that is needed for building the innovative country, make breakthroughs in frontier areas of research which can drive forward the technological innovation and industrial growth, provide intellectual support to the building of the innovative country, promote the capability for indigenous innovation, and make contributions to the sustainable development of China which is led by science and technology.



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