

# Foreword

The year 2010 is the last year of implementing the Eleventh Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Natural Science Fund. Following the development trend of basic research and the overall layout in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan Period for the Development of the National Natural Science Fund, and the funding mode of “emphasizing on stimulating innovation, giving steady support and fostering research talents”, we set up the Research Program, Talent-Training Program and Environment Construction Program. With respective preferential focuses, the three major programs are complementary to each other, forming the integrated funding system of the National Natural Science Fund. Research Program is aimed at achieving creative research results, and, through research, fosters research talents, promote a balanced, coordinated and sustainable development of disciplines, and raise the level of basic research. Taking the future competitiveness and long-term development into consideration, Talent-Training Program focuses on fostering a talent reserve in basic research, supporting young researchers in their early academic carrier, stabilizing the research teams in less developed regions, and fostering academic leaders and their research groups. Environment Construction Program is mainly intended to support the improvement of research environment, and to promote public understanding of science and basic research.

After the establishment of the Department of Health Sciences, the Department of Life Sciences has made adjustment accordingly.

In order to help scientists better understand its funding policies, NSFC, following the principle of openness, fairness and justness, released the *Guide to Programs of the National Natural Science Found: 2010* (hereinafter abbreviated as the *Guide to Programs*), which would extend guidance to all applicants in their selection of the proper categories of programs, research areas and orientations of investigation when applying for the Science Fund with research topics proposed on their own initiative.

Applications for projects of most program categories are accepted by NSFC during the concentrated application period every year. By an increase rate of 22.41%, a total of 97,794 applications of various types were received during the concentrated application period in 2009, which means an increase of 17,896 applications in comparison with that in the same period in 2008. The rate of increase is much larger than the 11.12% in 2007 and 13.48% in 2008. 39 applications were declined for various reasons such as applications submitted by non-registered units, late submission or without electronic form or paper form of the applications. So, a total of 97,775 applications were accepted.

Applications for Young Scientists Fund grew by 34.98%, exhibiting continued surge. Applications for General Program were increased by 16.67%. Applications for the Fund for Less Developed Regions had a large increase of 44.46%. Applications for the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars was about the same as that in the previous year. Applications to other programs also had large increase, such as the Tianyuan Fund for Mathematics, Major International (Regional) Cooperative Projects, etc.

After preliminary evaluation, NSFC notified in public that 3,935 applications were declined, accounting for 4.0% of the total. Within the time limit, NSFC received 395 appeals for re-evaluation. After the check by scientific departments, it accepted 377 appeals, and declined 58 appeals for reasons of incomplete procedures. The result of re-evaluation is that the previous decisions of rejecting 318 applications were in agreement with facts and were valid accordingly, and the previous decisions for rejecting 19 applications were corrected, accounting for 5.6%. Therefore, the total number of applications accepted was 93,839.

After going through specified procedures, NSFC approved 10,061 General Program projects, 6,079 Young Scientists Fund projects, 922 projects for the Fund for Less Developed Regions, 391 Key Program projects, 11 Major Program projects, 289 Major Research Plan projects, 179 projects for the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars, 28 Creative Research Groups, 77 projects under the category of Joint Research Fund for Overseas Chinese Scholars and Scholars in Hong Kong and Macao, 35 projects of the National Science Fund for Talent Training in Basic Science, 10 Public Understanding of Science projects, 47 Major International (Regional) Joint Research projects, 40 projects of Research Fund for International Young Scholars, and 281 jointly funded projects in 2009. For statistics and analysis of the applications and approval, please see relevant sections in this guide.

The *Guide to Programs* presents an introduction of various types of programs, of which applications will be accepted during the concentrated application period in 2010. Notes on application and regulations on the limits on the total number of applications one applicant is allowed to submit are listed in great detail after Foreword and are worth due attention by applicants. The overall funding facts and priority areas of the General Program, Key Program, Young Scientists Fund and the Fund for Less Developed Regions in each scientific department are introduced. For General Program projects, in addition to introducing overall funding statistics of the department, overall funding principles and requirement, as well as notes on applications will be introduced. Then, the disciplinary development trend and funding scopes and requirement in diverse disciplines are introduced by respective divisions of scientific departments. Other types of projects are introduced in general terms. Special requirements for certain types of projects for

applicants are introduced seriatim in the main text of the *Guide to Programs*.

Applications for projects that are not listed in the *Guide to Programs* will not be accepted during the concentrated application period, and calls for applications for these projects and related guiding information will be announced at NSFC's website (<http://www.nsf.gov.cn>) or by other media. Applicants are advised to pay due attention to the updating of related information.

In the consecutive procedures of application acceptance, assessment and program management, NSFC will, strictly abiding by the Regulations and the principle of "relying on experts, developing democracy, selecting the best to fund and being fair and reasonable", strongly encourage fountainhead innovation, emphasize research merits, support disciplinary intercrossing and tolerance of different academic ideas, strictly observe pertinent regulations on the conflict of interests and confidentiality, and sincerely cherish the supervision from the scientific community and the general public. All scientists are welcome to submit high-caliber applications for the National Natural Science Fund.

Editorial Board of the *Guide to Programs of the National Natural Science Fund: 2010*

November 28, 2009