

# Preface

In 2007, the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), under the leadership of the central government and the State Council, exerted itself in studying the spirit of the 17<sup>th</sup> CPC National Congress, made in-depth implementation of the scientific outlook on development, continuously carried out the *Guidelines on the National Medium and Long Term Program for Science and Technology Development*, accurately steered NSFC's strategic position, carried through the working principles for the new period, steadily implemented its Eleventh Five-Year Plan, fully implemented the *Regulations on the National Natural Science Fund*, and made unremitting efforts in strengthening ingenious innovative capabilities and constructing an innovative country.

The year 2007 was a milestone in the history of NSFC. The State Council promulgated the *Regulations on the National Natural Science Fund*, which came into force on April 1, 2007. This is a significant event for China's scientific and technological legal system construction and basic research in the country.

In 2007, NSFC received over 73,800 applications for various types of programs from 1,570 registered institutions, which is an increase of 8.9% (or 6,000 more applications) to that in 2006. NSFC approved 14,700 projects with a funding of approximately 5 billion yuan through its overall planning and based on scientific selection for the three-category funding structures: Research Program, Talent Fostering Program and Environment Construction Program, responding to the demand of the development of basic research. Among them, 3.2 billion yuan was arranged for Research Program. According to the funding principle of limiting the funding scale and enhancing the funding intensity, 7,713 General Program projects were granted with a total funding of 2.275 billion yuan, of which the average funding intensity is 295,000 yuan per project, which is an increase of 21,000 per project compared with that in 2006, and the average funding rate is 17.13%. With the view of focusing on priority areas while giving due attention to disciplinary development, integrating innovative resources and fostering key breakthroughs, 373 Key Program projects were granted with a total funding of 635 million yuan. In light of addressing the national major strategic demand, promoting disciplinary intercrossing and integrating innovative strength to tackle key scientific problems, the first batch of 8 Major Program projects for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period were granted with a funding of 48.53 million yuan based on scientific argumentation and evaluation. Aiming at the strategic needs of scientific forefront, environment and national security, NSFC made the overall planning for the Major Research Plan during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period, and 6 Major Research Plans with 203 projects were launched, with a total funding of 175 million yuan.

NSFC spent 1.45 billion yuan for the Talent Fostering Program with the focus on fostering innovative talents by adhering to the principle of accumulating talent reserve, stabilizing young talents, supporting regional talents, bringing up top-notch talents and training innovative groups. Sixty research bases from 30 universities were supported by the Fund for Talent Training in Basic Science with a funding of 99.30 million yuan. Actively accommodating the needs of rapid development of China's young scientific and technological teams, NSFC funded 3,336 projects of Young Scientists Fund, 907 projects more than that of last year, with a funding of 617 million yuan according to the principles of stabilizing the funding intensity and reasonably expanding the funding scale. Aiming at promoting regional scientific and technological coordination, boosting talent training in areas of weak scientific basis, 559 projects of the Fund for Less Developed Regions were granted with a funding of 102 million yuan. Committed in fostering and training outstanding talents, 180 scientists (including some with foreign citizenship) were granted the National Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars, with a funding of 353 million yuan. To strengthen the team cultivation and promote the coordinative innovation, 29 projects for the Fund for Creative Research Groups were launched with a funding of 142 million yuan. A total funding of 105 million yuan was allocated as renewal to 20 Creative Research Groups which had been supported for 3 years and 4 Creative Research Groups which had been supported for 6 years.

NSFC tried hard to keep strengthening supportive conditions, promote resource sharing, enhance public awareness on science, and optimize the environment for basic research development. A total of 46 million yuan was appropriated for projects aimed at environment construction, among which, 30 million yuan was for the Special Fund for Basic Research on Scientific Instruments, 7 million yuan for excellent state key laboratories, 2.25 million yuan for Tianyuan Fund for Mathematics, 2 million yuan for projects of public awareness of science and 4.50 million yuan for scientific activities for the youth.



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Through the joint funds and joint funding mechanism, extensive collaboration was set up between state departments, local governments, state owned enterprises and research institutions, and more resources were pooled into basic research, playing a positive role in integrating scientific and technological resources, promoting the integration of industry, education and research and building up the national innovation system. In 2007, 219 projects of various categories were funded under 8 Joint Funds with a total funding of 157 million yuan.

NSFC's stress on talent fostering and the implementation of scientific and technological talent strategy have accelerated the sound growth of the team building for China's basic research. 70% of the grantees of the 2007 General Program projects are middle-aged and young scholars under the age of 45 and this figure is 45% for Key Program projects grantees. A batch of middle-aged and young scholars in their prime time for innovation have become awardees of NSFC projects and the main force undertaking basic research in China. Under the continuous support of NSFC, many young scholars have grown into academic leaders and some of them have even taken up a prominent position in their respective fields.

Through persistent support to innovative research, NSFC is playing a key role in promoting China's integral basic research strength. Achievements of excellence have been coming forth under the combined endeavor of NSFC's long term commitment and the promotion of other national scientific and technological programs. Academician Wu Zhengyi, the recipient of 2007 National Supreme Science and Technology Award, has been receiving funding from NSFC since 1987. Academician Min Enze, the other recipient, was the principal investigator of NSFC's Major Program project in 1997. Out of the 39 prizes for the National Natural Science Award in 2007, mainland recipients of 38 prizes have all been supported by NSFC to some extent.

2008 is a transitional year for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period. NSFC will keep studying and carrying out the spirit of the 17th CPC National Congress, and implementing the scientific outlook on development in an all-round way under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the thought of "Three Represents". NSFC will consummate management regulation systems focusing on carrying through the NSFC Regulations, optimize the funding structure by stressing the fostering of ingenious innovative environment, enhance NSFC's credit among the general public with emphasis on improving its evaluation system, improve its funding efficiency by exploring a better performance management and assessment, and advance the administrative efficiency through reforming the institutional and personnel systems. All of the tasks are for nothing but the goal to boost the sound and rapid development of the National Natural Science Fund and make even greater contributions to China's ingenious innovative capability and the overall success of constructing a well-off society.