

## **NSFC set up Research Fellowship for International Young Scientists**

The provisional scheme of the Research Fellowship for International Young Scientists was recently approved by the Council Meeting of the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), which marks the official inauguration of this research fellowship.

The primary objective of this research fellowship is to attract outstanding international young scientists doing basic research in the field of natural sciences in mainland China, and establish academic linkage for younger generation of scientists in increasingly globalized environment of basic research.

The research fellowship will provide excellent opportunities for international young scientists to promote research, establish stable partnership with Chinese researchers and understand Chinese society and culture. This is also of strategic importance to fostering Chinese research talents with international experience.

According to the implementation scheme, the home institutions in China under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education or the Chinese Academy of Sciences will provide research and living conditions for international young scientists, and NSFC will provide the research fund for them to carry out 6 or 12 months research projects. The project selection will be based mainly on education background, the ability to do basic research in the field of natural sciences, and past academic achievements, etc. of the international young scientists. The topics of research should be in the frontier areas and hot spots in current research disciplines.

This research fellowship is now still in the experimental stage. In 2009, the implementation procedures will be as the following. First, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Ministry of Education recommend candidates and confirm their supports for research and living condition. Then candidates submit applications to NSFC, and NSFC reviews the application and makes funding decision. This research fellowship plans to support 50 international young scientists in 2009, and the total funding budget will be 10 million yuan RMB.

## NSFC-CAE Joint Fund Set Up



*Prof. Chen Yiyu, NSFC President, presided over the signing ceremony.*



*Prof. Sun Jianguang, Vice President of NSFC, and Prof. Pan Yunhe, Vice President of CAE, signed the agreement.*

Prof. Chen Yiyu, NSFC President, presided over the signing ceremony of the NSFC-CAE (Chinese Academy of Engineering) Joint Fund for Research on the Long-Term Development Strategy for China's Engineering Science and Technology in Beijing on March 23rd, 2009, with the attendance of Prof. Xu Kuangdi, President of CAE. Prof. Sun Jianguang, Vice President of NSFC, and Prof. Pan Yunhe, Vice President of CAE, signed the agreement of the joint fund on behalf of NSFC and CAE, respectively. Heads of the General Office, Bureau of Planning and Bureau of Policy of NSFC and relevant officials of CAE attended the signing ceremony.

## The Second Plenary Session of the 6th NSFC General Assembly held in Beijing



The Second Plenary Session of the 6th NSFC General Assembly was held in Beijing on March 24, 2009. During the opening ceremony, NSFC President Prof. Chen Yiyu delivered a work report titled "Strive to Create a New Prospect for the Scientific Development of the National Science Fund" and Prof. Zhu Daoben, Chairman of NSFC Supervision Committee introduced the work of the Committee. Mr. Xu Qin from the State Commission of Reform and Development and Mr. Zhao Lu from the Ministry of Finance also attended the meeting and delivered speeches.

Twenty-three members of the NSFC General Assembly attended the meeting and 16 members of the Supervision Committee were present. The meeting provided the 2008 NSFC Working Report on the Planning and Finance for the representatives to deliberate. The opening ceremony was presided over by Vice President Wang Jie. The members discussed the working reports and approved them through voting. NSFC president and vice presidents attended the meeting and took part in the group discussions. Finally, Prof. Chen summed up the meeting and Prof. Shen Wenqing presided over the summary session.

The main purpose of the meeting is to summarize the agency's funding performance in the previous year in light of NSFC's mission and goal and to figure out the main tasks in 2009 and prospect for the near future as well. In his summary of NSFC's work in 2008, Prof. Chen pointed out that the year 2008 was the one in which NSFC experienced rapid and sound development. It received 83,877 proposals from 1,594 institutions and the number of applications increased by 17.6% over the previous year. It adjusted its three funding pillars, namely, research, talent training and environment building, and selectively funded 17,283 projects in 982 Chinese institutions, with a total funding of 6.309 billion yuan RMB.

In 2008, NSFC made progress in the following aspects: 1) carried out steadily studies and implementation of the scientific outlook for development to further clarify the ideas for scientific development; 2) promoted a balanced and sustainable development of scientific disciplines to optimize the funding structure; 3) played actively the guiding role to strengthen the planning of strategic areas; 4) implemented energetically the scientific talent strategy to improve constantly the talent funding structure; 5) improved the joint funding mechanism to enhance the capability of serving the national innovation system; 6) implemented NSFC's regulations and upgraded gradually the managerial quality; 7) strengthened the establishment of expert system to improve the evaluation and consultation system; 8) expanded and deepened international cooperation to promote steadily substantial cooperation and research; 9) consolidated the inspection and audit to promote scientific integrity; and 10) strengthened internal management and organizational buildup to improve constantly the service capability.

As the driving force of self-innovation, NSFC has helped produce a large number of innovative results. Academician Wang Zhoucheng and Academician Xu Guangxian and their teams, who won the 2008 National Science and Technology Awards, have been granted NSFC fund for many times. All the 34 grantees of the National Natural Science Award have been strongly supported by NSFC. All the winners of the first class prizes of the National Technology Invention Award, and all the grantees of special prizes and most grantees of the first class prizes of the National Science and Technology Progress Award have been supported by NSFC for a long time. When illustrating the plan for NSFC's work in 2009, Prof. Chen pointed out that it is essential to realize seriously the importance and necessity to enhance basic research, to implement substantially the scientific outlook for development and promote continuously the strategic and forward-looking funding plan.

The priority of NSFC in 2009 will be to coordinate and formulate the funding plan to enhance the effectiveness of science funding. The central government has allocated an investment of 6.4 billion yuan RMB and NSFC plans to arrange a total funding of 7.0 billion yuan RMB according to the systematic reform of the national financial budget and the needs of basic research development in China. Priority will be given to the followings:

1. Promote balanced, coordinated and sustainable development of scientific disciplines, increase steadily the funding level of general projects and strengthen funding for key projects in priority areas;
2. Strengthen the strategic planning of key areas related to the national welfare and the people's live and scale up timely supports to research in agriculture, health, new energy, new materials, information science, public security, etc.;
3. Improve the upper-level design of major and key research plans and play actively a strategic guiding role so as to provide a knowledge pool and science and technology support for the transformation of the model for national economic development and the upgrading of industrial structure;

4. Improve the joint funding system to give full play to the strategic guiding role of NSFC and enhance joint funding for the implementation of major scientific equipment programs;

5. Strengthen the funding for innovative talents, continue to expand the funding scale for young scientists, increase the regional science funding, give full play to the exemplary role of the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars to foster high-level scientific and technological talents, and provide steady support to innovative research groups;

6. Carry out energetically international cooperation to further promote strategic cooperation; implement the Research Fund for International Young Scientists to build friendship and bridge for young scientists at home and abroad; continue to promote substantial cooperation with the US, Japan, South Korea, UK, France, Russia and EU, and to explore, expand and extend cooperative relations with foreign science funding organizations and international organizations.

Meanwhile, NSFC shall launch the strategic study for the 12th Five-Year Plan to promote the future development scientifically, and strengthen the management of funding results and performance evaluation for a better way to carry out performance evaluation. It will also promote the formulation of regulations and rules to improve consistently the funding management, strengthen and improve the inspection and auditing to enhance scientific ethics, and to strengthen the agency's internal personnel training to improve the service quality.

Prof. Chen finally emphasized that it is the key task and glorious mission for NSFC to prosper basic research and promote self-innovation to lay a solid foundation for rapid and sound economic and social development of China. We shall stick to NSFC's goal and mission, intensify the interactions with science communities both at home and abroad to create continuously a new situation for the Science Fund and make greater contributions to the enhancement of self-innovation capability and establishment of an innovative nation.

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## **New Progress in Cell Biology Research**

A Chinese research group has achieved new breakthroughs in cell biology research. A new finding from the collaborative research by Prof. Zhu Xueliang, Institute of Biochemistry and Cell Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Prof. Zheng Yixian, Carnegie Institution for Science, was published in the internationally famous online academic journal *Nature Cell Biology*. The finding indicates that both Nudel and cytoplasmic dynein play key roles in the assembly of spindle matrix, regulating the proper formation of mitotic spindle.

The research work has been supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology, National Natural Science Foundation of China, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Carnegie Institution for Science, respectively.



# NSFC and CAS Join Hands in Strategic Research of Disciplinary Development



*Prof. Sun Jianguang, NSFC Vice President, and Prof. Li Jinghai, CAS Vice President, signed the agreement.*



*Prof. Lu Yongxiang, CAS President and Vice Chairman of the standing Committee of NPC, attended the ceremony and delivered a speech.*



*Prof. Chen Yiyu, NSFC President, attended the ceremony and delivered a speech.*

The signing ceremony for NSFC/CAS Agreement on the Strategic Research of Disciplinary Development in China (2011-2020) was held in Beijing on April 16, 2009. Prof. Lu Yongxiang, CAS President and Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, and Prof. Chen Yiyu, NSFC President, attended the ceremony and delivered speeches. Prof. Sun Jiaguang, NSFC Vice President, and Prof. Li Jinghai, CAS Vice President, signed the agreement on behalf of NSFC and CAS respectively. Officials and relevant staff from both organizations attended the ceremony.

The joint strategic research between NSFC and CAS aims to give full play to the key role of CAS academicians as the highest academic consultative body, to make comprehensive plan for the future and to promote the coordinated and sustainable development of scientific disciplines in China. Both organizations set up joint leading groups and working groups to strengthen top-level design, assign strategic research tasks according to scientific disciplines and organize teams with strategic scientists as the core to carry out research. It is the major task of this research to analyze the laws of disciplinary development, basic research and talent training, as well as the demands of research environment buildup. The research is expected to bring forward disciplinary development plans and priority areas for the period from 2011 to 2020, so as to provide the basis for policy making in basic research related strategic planning and policy advices for basic research in China.

NSFC stands in a strategic position in the national innovation system of supporting basic research, upholding free exploration and playing a guiding role, while CAS is the highest governmental academic institution in science and technology and the comprehensive national R&D center for natural sciences and high technology. Both organizations have long-term and close ties in strategic cooperation and have formed strategic partnerships in many perspectives through joint efforts, such as the establishment of joint funding, etc. The joint strategic research carried out this time is a further step on the existing cooperation.

Scientific discipline is the stem for scientific research and talent training, and its balanced, coordinated layout and sustainable development are fundamental to making major breakthroughs and leapfrog development, and the promotion of S&T progress and innovation. During the key period of S&T development in China, in-depth research of disciplinary development, forward thinking of S&T development and coordinated design of disciplinary plans are of far-reaching significance to the implementation of scientific outlook on development and the National Program for Medium-to-Long-Term Scientific and Technological Development, as well as the promotion of the Knowledge Innovation Program in CAS and project funding in NSFC.



## NSFC Receives CERN's New Director General



On April 23, 2009, Prof. Shen Wenqing, Vice President of NSFC, met with Prof. Rolf-Dieter Heuer, new Director General of the European Council for Nuclear Research (CERN) and Prof. Felicitas Pauss, Coordinator for External Relations of CERN. After Shen's extending warm welcome to the guests, both sides reviewed and expressed their satisfaction with the cooperation since the MOU was signed. Prof. Heuer thanked NSFC for the warm reception and hoped China to participate increasingly in LHC data collection and physical analysis in the future.

Prof. Chen Hesheng, Director of the Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Prof. Ji Peiwen, Executive Deputy Director General of the Department of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, and relevant NSFC staff attended the meeting.



## NSFC Delegation Visits ARC and FRST



A NSFC delegation, led by Prof. Sun Jianguang, Vice President of the foundation, paid a visit to Australian Research Council (ARC) and New Zealand Foundation for Research Science and Technology (FRST) during May 10-19, 2009, aiming at exchanging ideas and holding detailed discussions on topics such as the background, organization, procedure and methods of strategic planning for science funding agencies and performance evaluation.

During the visit to ARC, the delegation was cordially received by Prof. Margaret Sheil, CEO of ARC, Prof. Phyllis Tharenou, director of the Department of Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences, and officers in charge of program coordination and evaluation. Topics such as the key role played by ARC, ARC's strategic planning, project evaluation mechanisms, the management of funded projects and the organization's performance evaluation were thoroughly addressed during the meeting.

While visiting FRST, the delegation held discussions on S&T planning, project management and performance evaluation etc. with officials and professors from the strategic planning and policymaking departments of FRST.

The delegation also visited the University of New South Wales, the University of Queensland, Waikato University, some overseas Chinese scholars, and their laboratories, aiming at hearing their views on further development of the National Natural Science Fund.

The success of the visit was ensured by the unfailing support and assistance from the Chinese embassies and consulates in the Australia and New Zealand. Members of the delegation came from the Bureau of Planning, the Bureau of Policy and the Bureau of International Cooperation of NSFC.

## Seminar on biodiversity of both sides of the Strait held in Kunming



In order to prepare for funding cooperative research in biodiversity between researchers on both side of the Strait in 2010, the Seminar on Biodiversity of Both Sides of the Strait was held in Kunming from May 19 to 20. This seminar was sponsored by NSFC and K. T. Li Foundation for S&T Development of Taiwan. The Department of Life Sciences of NSFC recommended about 20 experts in mainland China and K. T. Li Foundation sent 22 experts to attend the seminar.

During the meeting, 40 experts from both sides of the Strait reported their research work and the latest progress. They conducted in-depth exchanges and proposed future cooperation. Through heated discussions and based on principles of seeking truth and mutual respect, they formulated specific scientific topics for cooperation in biodiversity in 2010, which will be the basis of the guide to applications for cooperative research jointly funded by the two funding agencies.

Vice president of NSFC Academician Shen Yan, executive deputy director of the Department of Life Sciences Du Shengming, Director General of the Bureau of International Cooperation Han Jianguo, and Director of the Office for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Affairs Bai Ge of NSFC attended the meeting. Former Vice President of NSFC Academician Zhu Zuoyan and director of Kunming Institute of Zoology Academician Zhang Yaping also attended the meeting as experts.

Experts from Taiwan visited Kunming Institute of Zoology of CAS, Kunming Institute of Botany, Chengjiang Station of Paleontology during the meeting.

# 13th Meeting of China-Korea Joint Committee for Basic Scientific Research Held in Korea

The 13th Meeting of the China-Korea Joint Committee for Basic Scientific Research was successfully held in Seorak, Korea from May 20 to 23, 2009. Through evaluation, the Joint Committee selected 38 bilateral cooperative projects to grant in FY 2009, including 13 joint seminars and 25 joint research projects. The Committee members also made in-depth discussions on issues of strengthening future cooperation and the topics for the Northeastern Asian Symposium.

Chinese and Korean delegations were headed by Prof. Shen Yan, Vice President of NSFC, and Prof. Seong Jong Lee, Director General of KOSEF, respectively. Total of 22 participants including members of China-Korea Joint Committee presented in the meeting. The Chinese attendees include Prof. Lin Guoqiang, Director General of NSFC Department of Chemical Sciences and Co-Chairman of China-Korea Joint Committee, and other deputy directors from NSFC departments.

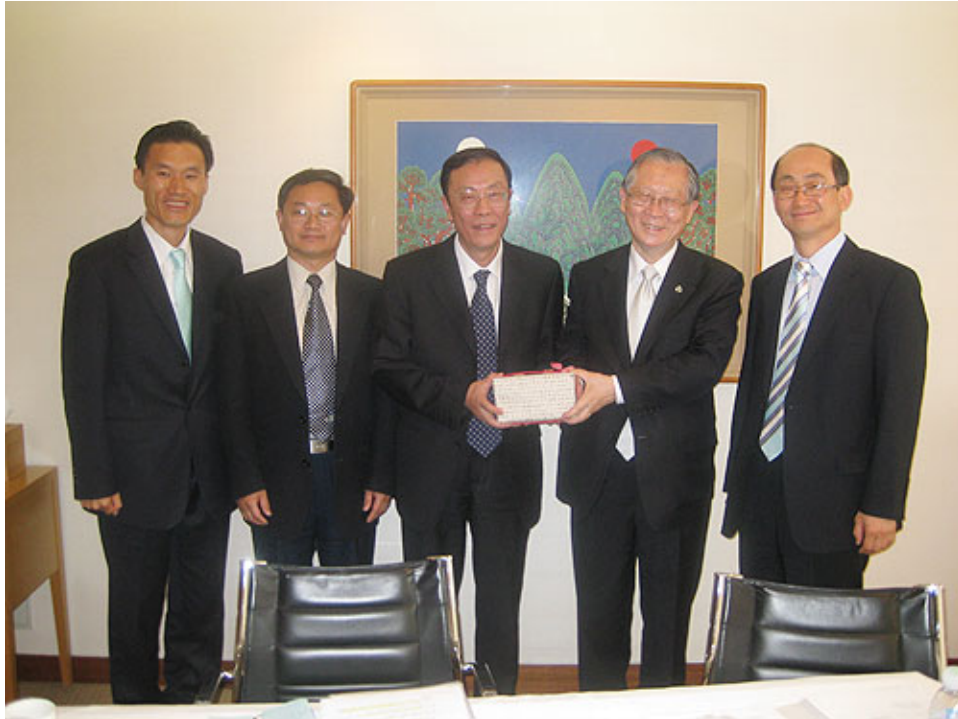
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## Prof. Shen Wenqing Attends the NRF International Symposium



*Group of the delegates to the Symposium.*





***Prof. Shen Wenqing Exchanging gifts with NRF of Korea.***

Invited by Korea Science and Engineering Foundation (KOSEF), Prof. Shen Wenqing, Vice President of the National Natural Science Foundation of China, attended the International Symposium, which was held from June 24 to 27, 2009 in Seoul, Korea, in commemoration of the establishment of the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF). Prof. Shen delivered a speech at the symposium, and had a bilateral meeting with Prof. Chan-Mo Park, Chairman of NRF.

Dr. Cora Marrett, Deputy Director of US National Science Foundation (NSF), Prof. Motoyuki Ono, President of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Prof. Dorothea Wagner, Vice President of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), Prof. Par Omling, Director General of Swedish Research Council (VR), and Prof. Detlof von Winterfeldt, Director of International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis also attended the symposium and delivered speeches.

NRF is the combination of KOSEF, Korea Research Foundation (KRF) and Korea Foundation for International Cooperation of Science and Technology (KICOS). Prof. Chan-Mo Park, the first President of NRF, is a Special Adviser to Korean President for Science and Technology. With the budget of 2.6 billion USD for the fiscal year of 2009, NRF will play a significant role in the promotion of science and technology in Korea.

# **First Panel Meeting for the Research Fellowship for International Young Scientist Held in Beijing**



The first panel meeting for the Research Fellowship for International Young Scientist was held in Beijing on July 15, 2009. Prof. Shen Wenqing, vice president of NSFC, attended the meeting and delivered a speech, in which he briefed the profile of the Fellowship and introduced the criteria for evaluation. Total of 29 participants presented in the meeting, including 15 panelists from research institutions and universities and some staff from NSFC.

## Vice president Shen Wenqing met with director of ANR of France



On July 16, NSFC's vice president Shen Wenqing met with visiting ANR's director Madam Jacqueline Lecourtier. Both parties reviewed the past cooperation since the beginning of 2008 when they set up formal cooperative relations. They expressed satisfactions on bilateral cooperation, and expressed intent of further developing future cooperative relations.

Director general of NSFC's Bureau of International Cooperation Han Jianguo and Deputy director general of NSFC's Department of Information Sciences Zhang Zhaotian and ANR's director of engineering department Jean-Pierre Chevalier and head of international office of ANR Nakita Vodjdani attended the meeting.

According to the cooperative agreement between NSFC and ANR, they solicit and fund jointly proposals of collaborative research projects in areas they mutually agree. In 2009, after reviews by experts of both parties, they plan to fund 12 projects from 60 applications.