

China Accomplishes International Evaluation on Science Funding and Management Performance

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), the International Evaluation on Science Funding and Management Performance, which is so far the largest comprehensive performance assessment on science funding and management of science and technology, is completed successfully.

"As an independent assessment on science funding and management performance by the third party with a global perspective, it is an overall review and appraisal on the 25-year service of the scientific fund on the development of China's scientific research and innovation system." NSFC President Chen Yiyu, academician of CAS made the remarks on July 4th, 2011.

The International Evaluation Committee (IEC) was formed by 13 senior scientists from 6 countries. Former Chairman of the National Science Board of USA, Prof. Richard N. Zare served as the chairman, with Prof. Han Qide, Vice President of the National People's Congress, Academician of CAS, together with Prof. Winnacker, former President of DFG as Vice Presidents.

It is considered as the first cost effective, comprehensive and systematic assessment of high quality on the performance on China's Fund management.

According to reports, adopting an organizational model of "international assessment with domestic readiness", the assessment adheres to the principle of independence. The National Center for Science & Technology Evaluation is responsible for the design and conduct of assessment activities as an independent evaluation agency, preparing the evidence and materials required with the collaboration from NSFC.

The International Evaluation Committee of experts independently concluded the evaluation findings based on the prepared evidence and materials, combined with investigations and international comparisons. NSFC, as the assessed party, provided sufficient genuine information without intervening the evaluation process and findings.

President Chen said, "The 10 evaluation topics, in close connection with the evaluation needs on public expenditure and the development requirements of science fund, cover four aspects: the strategic orientation of scientific fund, funding performance, management performance and social impact. In-depth studies are conducted on these topics by domestic prestigious research institutions. A rational evaluation framework and content is designed, reflecting the characteristics of basic research and the evaluation needs on public expenditure."

The evidence and materials required were collected through a comprehensive system in various ways. A questionnaire survey was carried out with 78,000 issued copies and more than 20,000 recalled. 55 seminars and interviews were conducted on 294 subjects. A large-scale bibliometric analysis was introduced.

Jointly commissioned by the Ministry of Finance and NSFC, the assessment commenced from early 2010, and lasted for about 1.5 years.

Panel Meeting of NSFC-NIH Joint Program in Beijing



Prof. Shen Yan, Vice President of NSFC joined the bilateral workshop on project management of NSFC and NIH



The panel meeting of joint program on biomedical research between NSFC and NIH and the bilateral workshop on project management were held in Beijing on August 18-19, 2011.

The panel meeting of joint program on biomedical research between the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the bilateral workshop on project management were successfully held in Beijing on August 18-19, 2011. Prof. Shen Yan, Vice President of NSFC

congratulated on the successful launch of the joint program and expressed his hope for a promising future of the program at the opening ceremony. 16 representatives from NIH, headed by Hugh Auchincloss, Deputy Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), and a 12-member Chinese panel, chaired by Prof. Zhan Qimin from the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and staff from the Department of Health Sciences, Bureau of International Cooperation attended the meetings.

Since the signing of MOU on cooperation in basic medical research by President Chen Yiyu of NSFC and Director Francis Collins of NIH on October 14, 2010, the two organizations have been working closely to carry out the funding of joint research programs.

34 projects were selected for joint funding over the meeting. The two sides also held discussions on topics such as priority areas for the next round and evaluation and funding mechanisms. Besides, a workshop on funding management was held following the evaluation session and staff member from both sides shared experience and ideas on issues ranging from peer review process to post-funding management.

The meeting has been highly recognized by both sides as a milestone in the collaboration between NSFC and NIH.

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NSFC and CAS's New Round Collaboration for Large Scientific Facilities

National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) signed an agreement with Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in Beijing on July 12, 2011 initiating the phase II collaboration for large scientific facilities. According to the agreement, during 2012-2014, the two sides will invest a total of \$180 million yuan RMB for the joint fund to support the use of large scientific facilities for scientific research. Prof. Shen Wenqing, Vice President of NSFC and Prof. Zhan Wenlong, Vice President of CAS signed the agreement on behalf of the two parties.

The phase II collaboration is a renewal on the basis of the smooth implementation of the phase I agreement of 2009-2011. The total joint fund for phase I is 120 million yuan RMB. Aiming to encourage for taking full use of Beijing Electron-Positron Collider, Lanzhou Heavy Ion Cooler-Storage-Ring Synchrotron, Hefei Synchrotron Radiation Facilities and Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Light Source, the fund will accept applications from all over the nation.

The joint fund aims at guiding researchers in the country to carry out their research work by using of these large scientific facilities and give a full play of these scientific supporting capabilities. On the one hand, a number of research teams could be fostered based on these large scientific facilities and their innovation ability could be improved. Experimental terminals of these large scientific facilities will be continuously updated and supplemented so as to enhance their sustainable ability for multi-disciplinary research. High magnetic field facilities are also included in the large scientific facilities in the phase II collaboration.

According to the phase II agreement, the following research areas will be included: scientific issues in frontiers of physical sciences (physics, chemistry, materials science); scientific issues in the field of information science; scientific issues in life sciences (biophysics and medical science); scientific issues in the areas of environment and resources; and interdisciplinary scientific issues, etc.

Vice President Shen Wenqing Meets with President of the Helmholtz Association



Vice President Shen Wenqing met with Prof. Juergen Mlynek, President of the Helmholtz Association on August 24, 2011. The two sides exchanged the latest development and funding activities of NSFC and Helmholtz Association and discussed the possibility of cooperation in areas of common interests. The Helmholtz delegation also included Dr. R. Zettl, Managing Director of the Helmholtz Association, Dr. S. Dittmer, Head Strategy, and Dr. He Hong, Helmholtz Chief Representative in China. After the meeting, they visited the Sino-German Center for Research Promotion.

The Helmholtz Association is the largest scientific research organization in Germany. Helmholtz Centers perform well-planned, clearly-identified and application-oriented forward-looking basic research in six research fields including energy, earth and environment, health, key technologies, structure of matter plus aeronautics, space and transport. The Helmholtz Association currently has 16 national research centers and 30,000 staff. Its annual budget amounts to more than 3 billion euro.

NSFC Supervision Delegation Visits to Japan and Korea



Prof. He Minghong (L), Vice president of NSFC and Prof. Motoyuki ONO(R), President of JSPS



NSFC delegation on funding supervision led by Prof. He Minghong, Vice President of NSFC meets with the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) September 23, 2011.

At the invitation of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF), an NSFC delegation on funding supervision led by Prof. He Minghong , Vice President of NSFC visited Japan and Korea from 19th-24th September, 2011.
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During the visit, the delegation met with Prof. Motoyuki ONO, President of JSPS, Prof. Takayoshi MAMINE, Executive Director of JST and Dr. Chung-Taek PARK, Inspector General of NRF. Prof. HE briefed them about NSFC's latest progress, with emphasis on NSFC's supervision work such as the integrity building of research and supervision of funding. Dr. Katsumi AIDA, JSPS Inspector General, Dr. Kimihiko SAITO, JST Inspector General and Dr. Chung-Taek PARK, NRF Inspector General introduced their practice of respective agencies. All the three parties agreed that, in view of a very good cooperation basis and potential in the field of basic research between China and Japan, China and Korea, collaboration could be expanded and exchanges on the integrity building of research and supervision of funding should be strengthened for exploring cooperation in the filed of common interest such as research integrity and financial supervision.

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NSFC Strengthens Ties with PIs of the Research Fund for International Young Scientists

A gathering for PIs and their host researchers of the "Research Fund for International Young Scientists (RFIYS)" was held on September. 23 at the headquarter of the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC). Prof. Wang Jie, Vice President of NSFC, attended the reception and delivered a welcome speech. More than 40 participants were present at the reception including PIs and host researchers from host institutions in Beijing, staff members from NSFC departments. The gathering intends to promote the communication between PIs of RFIYS and NSFC staff about the recent development of the on-going projects, and to enhance the awareness of the scientific fund among international young scientists.

In his speech, Prof. Wang Jie pointed out that extensive global collaboration is the pillar for basic research. Young scientists are the engine for basic research, and it is one of the primary missions for NSFC to facilitate the collaboration between Chinese and foreign young scientists. He encouraged the PIs of the Research Fund of International Young Scientists to interact more with Chinese scientists and to understand more about Chinese culture and society.

Launched in 2009, the Research Fund for International Young Scientists has sponsored 160 foreign young scientists with 31 million yuan RMB.

The 9th A-HORCs Meeting Held in Daejeon, Korea



The Ninth Meeting of Heads of Research Councils in Asia (A-HORCs) was held in Daejeon, Korea on September 26, 2011. Prof. He Minghong, Vice President of National Science Foundation of China (NSFC), Prof. Motoyuki ONO, President of Japan Society for the promotion of Science (JSPS) and Prof. Se-Jung Oh, President of the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) headed their delegations at the presence.

The theme of the meeting is "S&T Policy for Enhancing Green Innovation". The three parties presented S&T Policy of their respective countries and agencies for enhancing green innovation, and had a full exchange and discussion. They also discussed about collaborative area of 2012 Northeastern Symposium and A3 Foresight Program of 2013, as well as the theme, time and venue of next A-HORCs meeting and reached a tentative consensus.

The A-HORCs meeting, originally established jointly by NSFC, JSPS and KOSEF (Korea Science and Engineering Foundation, now named NRF) has become a regional meeting which takes place in China, Japan and Korea in turn once a year. The goal of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for the leaders of the three Research Councils to meet regularly and discuss on subjects of common interests with a view to strengthen high level exchanges and collaboration in the field of basic research.

To promote Asia as a research center with worldwide influence, culture prominent talents and solve scientific problems with regional significant, NSFC, JSPS and NRF jointly established A3 Foresight Program at the 2nd A-HORC meeting, through which to provide fund for the three countries' scientists to carry out collaborative research work in selected areas. Since the implementation of A3 Foresight Program started in 2005, the three Parties in succession co-funded 12 projects in the field of nanotechnology, biotechnology, climate change, advanced materials, epigenetic, renewable energy, next generation network and so on.

Jointly sponsored by NSFC, JSPS and NRF, undertaken by NRF, "2011 Northeast Asia Symposium on Plasma Physics" on September 25-28, 2011 was successfully held also in Daejeon, Korea in which nearly 50 excellent scientists from China, Japan and Korea participated.

NSFC Vice President Meets with ICTP Director



Prof. He Minghong, Vice president of NSFC met with a delegation of 3 members, headed by Dr. Fernando Quevedo, Director of ICTP.

Prof. He Minghong, Vice president of NSFC met with a delegation of 3 members, headed by Dr. Fernando Quevedo, Director of International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) on October. 19, 2011. Prof. He extended his welcome to Dr. Quevedo and briefed about NSFC to the delegates. Dr. Quevedo expressed his appreciation to the host and made an introduction to ICTP and the purpose of visit. Prof. Chang Qing, Director General of Bureau of International Cooperation briefed about NSFC's international cooperation, particularly about NSFC's cooperation with ICTP. The two sides exchanged ideas on issues of future cooperation and common interests.

The delegation also included Prof. Yu Lu, academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) who had ever worked in ICTP for many years. Staff from NSFC Department of Mathematical & Physical Sciences and Division of Asia, Africa and International Organization participated in the discussion.

First U.S.-China Women Chemists Workshop in Beijing

In memory of the 2011 International Chemistry Year and the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry awarded to Marie Curie, the first U.S.-China Women Chemists Workshop was held in the Institute of Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences on October 24-27, 2011. The workshop was sponsored by the National Natural Science Foundation of China, the U.S. National Science Foundation and the Beijing National Lab for Molecular Science. The organizing committee was made up of Dr. Geraldine Richmond from University of Oregon, Dr. Liu Yugang from UC Davis, Dr. He Lin from University of North Carolina, and Dr. Fang Xiaohong from Institute of Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences. The Key Laboratory for Molecular Nanostructure and Nanotechnology, Institute of Chemistry, CAS hosted the workshop.

20 women scientists who are active in the China and U.S. chemistry community were invited to give their presentations over the workshop. The topics ranged from chemical biology to advanced material and displayed the new achievements made by women chemists of the two countries. A poster session was also held during the workshop. Over 50 women scientists from universities and institutions in China participated in the workshop. Issues on promoting career development of women chemists, strengthening international cooperation, and enhancing international influence of women chemists were discussed over the workshop. The workshop served as an excellent platform for women chemists from China and U.S. to showcase research achievements and provided opportunities for them to exchange ideas, especially for the U.S. scientific community to better understand their Chinese counterpart. Moreover, the workshop set up a channel for promoting the long-term collaboration between them, stimulating the innovative capabilities of women scientists, strengthening their confidence, enthusiasm in research and attracting more women to engage in science career .

Prof. Liang Wenping, Executive Deputy Director-General, Department of Chemical Sciences, Prof. Chen Yongjun, Deputy Director-General, Department of Chemical Sciences, Prof. Gao Feixue, Program Director, Department of Chemical Sciences, Ms. Liu Xiuping, Program Manager, Bureau of International Cooperation from the National Natural Science Foundation of China and Prof. Yang Shuxia and Prof. Zhang Deqing from the Institute of Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences attended the workshop.

Vice President Attends 5th ASIAHORCs Meeting



The 5th Asian Heads of Research Councils (ASIAHORCs) Meeting was held in Bangalore, India on November 27th, 2011. Prof. Shen Wenqing, NSFC Vice President attended the meeting, which was sponsored by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), the Government of India. The participants include Dr. Makoto Asashima, the Executive Director of Japan Society for the Promotion of Sciences (JSPS); Prof. Kyuhan Bae, Director General of the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF), Dr. T. Ramasami, Secretary to the Government of India, DST); Prof. Soottiporn Chittmittrapap, Secretary General, National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT); Ms. Maria Lourdes P. Orijola, Assistant Secretary, Department of Science & Technology (DOST); Prof. Noorsaadah A Rahman, Director, Institute of Research Management & Monitoring, University of Malaya and Dr. Djusman Sajuti, Executive Secretary, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI).

The theme of the meeting is “Nurturing Centres of Excellence”. Dr. T. Ramasami, Secretary of DST delivered a special lecture on India’s S&T Policy. The delegates delivered presentations on the policies and practices of their respective countries in culturing high-level research institutes and innovative talents. The focus of the presentations differed a lot due to the varying characters of the countries that the delegates represent. The delegates from governmental departments elaborated mainly on national S&T macro-policies, while those from research institutions briefed about the practice to establish and improve innovative mechanism and those from funding agencies stressed on funding and evaluation policies and mechanism of innovation centres and laboratories based on their own characteristics. At the meeting NSFC representative made a presentation on the policy and practice of NSFC’ funding on Creative Group and State Key Lab.

The meeting was composed of discussion on policies and working group meeting, at which the NMO discussed about the hosting country, place, time and the theme of the 6th ASIAHORCs as well as issues like the identity of the participants, multilateral scientific cooperation in Asia, etc.

The aim of ASIAHORCs is to strengthen and promote multilateral cooperation among science funding agencies in the Asian region. ASIAHORCs have organized five meetings of this kind, which were respectively hosted by JSPS, NRF, Vice-Chancellors' Council of National Universities in Malaysia (VCC) and DST. The previous themes are: “Trends in S&T Policy and Issues of Research Funding and International Cooperation” for the 1st Meeting,

“Create a shared vision for advancing science and technology within Asia and establish a support framework for nurturing and sustaining collaboration among the member countries” for the 2nd Meeting, " Human resources development" for the 3rd Meeting, " International research collaboration " for the 4th Meeting and " Nurturing centres of excellence" for the 5th Meeting.

The 6th ASIAHORCs Meeting will be hosted and sponsored by NSFC in 2012.

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NSFC Vice President Attended IIASA Council Meeting



From November 6th to 10th, 2011, at the invitation of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Prof. Wang Jie, NSFC Vice President led a delegation to attend the IIASA Autumn Council Meeting. After the meeting, the delegation participated in the Mid-term Workshop of NSFC-IIASA Cooperation Project on “Assessing the Impact of Climate Change and Intensive Human Activities on China’s Agro-Ecosystem and its Supply Potentials”.

NSFC Vice President Meets With JST Guests



On December 13th, Prof. Shen Wenqing, Vice President of National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) met with Dr. Michiharu Nakamura, the newly appointed President of Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST). During the meeting, Prof. Shen briefed Dr. Nakamura about NSFC and the cooperation between NSFC and JST, and expressed NSFC's willingness to expand bilateral cooperation area with JST. Dr. Nakamura agreed that the area of cooperation could be expanded to life and health sciences. E-Asia Joint Research Program and Graduates Exchange Program initiated by JST were also discussed.

JST delegation includes Director Akira Nakanishi and Manager Tu Geng, from Department of International Affairs; Director Yasuji Watanabe and Deputy Director Kazuhiko Aoki from JST Beijing Representative Office. NSFC attendees are Dr. Ren Zhiguang from General Office; Prof. Chang Qing, Prof. Zhang Yinglan, Prof. Zhang Yongtao and Mr. Zhao Chuang from Bureau of International Cooperation, as well as Prof. Lu Qunyan from Department of Health Sciences.