

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION PROGRAMME NSFC – FWO

From March 5th to May 28th, 2020, the call is open for two-year joint collaboration projects between research groups from China and Flanders in the framework of the Cooperative Programme developed by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) and the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO).

I. Objectives

To strengthen collaboration in scientific research between China and Flanders, by funding scientific cooperation projects with a duration of two years.

II. Scientific Areas

The call is open for fundamental research in all fields of natural sciences and medical sciences. More precisely:

- Mathematical & physical sciences
- Chemical sciences
- Life sciences
- Earth sciences
- Engineering & material sciences
- Information sciences
- Management sciences
- Health sciences

Project proposals within humanities and/or social sciences are not eligible.

For more information please consult: <http://www.nsf.gov.cn/Portals/1/fj/pdf/03-01.pdf> and <http://www.nsf.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab434/module1146/more.htm> (please be aware that information will only be made available here after the 5th of March 2020).

III. Eligibility requirements

A scientific cooperation project means a program agreed between two or more research groups of both scientific communities (China and Flanders), with clearly defined objectives to be achieved within the established timeframe, implemented through the exchange of scientists and experts between both communities.

Projects must be endorsed by the Principal Investigators (PI's) (one Chinese and one Flemish) duly authorized to conduct research and providing the guarantees on the operational resources (financial resources).

- In Flanders: PI's are required to have a PhD degree and they must hold, throughout the entire period of the project, an appointment of at least 50% at:
 - a university in the Flemish Community (including the academic programmes within the corresponding association), or to
 - a federal or Flemish scientific institute as scientific staff of the Dutch-speaking community, or to
 - a university hospital in the Flemish Community as scientific staff, or to
 - a hospital with an academic character recognized as research center in the Flemish Community as scientific staff.
- In China:
 - Chinese PI's must have a senior academic rank (title) or a PhD degree, or a recommendation from two researchers who are in the same research field and have a senior academic rank (title).
 - Chinese applicants should already have an ongoing NSFC grant and there should be at least one year of overlap. For example: if the NSFC-FWO exchange project starts on the 1st of January 2021, the ongoing NSFC project should at least run until the 31st of December 2021.
 - All the members of the Chinese research team (including the Chinese PI) have to be already involved in the above-mentioned ongoing NSFC project.
 - NSFC will not fund the exchange of students (including PhD students) travelling from China to Flanders. At Chinese side, only postdoctoral researchers, 'on-the-job' postgraduate students (those who are already employed and study for a postgraduate degree while maintaining their employment) and/or senior researchers can use the fund for an exchange. **(Please note that this rule does not apply at Flemish side. Flemish PhD students travelling to China, in the framework of a granted NSFC-FWO project, will receive from FWO as well as from NSFC the funding to which they are entitled.)**
 - Please consult the [NSFC call document](#) (only available in Chinese) for more specific details. Further announcements like "eligible proposal announcement" and "funded proposal announcement" will be at <http://bic.nsf.gov.cn/Show.aspx?CI=41> .

IV. Submission procedure

Applications shall be submitted simultaneously to NSFC by the researcher(s) in China and to FWO by the researcher(s) in Flanders, following a joint call for submission. If a proposal is submitted only in one country and/or received after the deadline, it will be declared ineligible.

Each PI shall submit the duly completed form according to the regulations of each party:

- The Flemish research group should submit the form '*Application for international collaboration programmes*' (to be found on the FWO website) to interprog@fwo.be .
- The Chinese research group should submit the project proposal and the project members' CV through the [online NSFC system](#) as well as the form '*Exchange programme agreement*', signed between the Chinese and Flemish PI's.

- In addition, all members of the Chinese and Flemish research teams should have or create an account on the [FWO e-portal](#) and keep their publication list up to date.

The title, names of the Flemish and Chinese PI's, project description, methodology, work packages, etc. in the research proposal submitted by the Flemish and Chinese PI should be identical.

V. Exchange visits

In the framework of two-year NSFC-FWO projects, each Flemish PI can apply for an annual exchange quota of maximum 7 weeks for his/her entire research team (dully justified). The unused exchange quota cannot be carried forward to the following year. The exchange quota can be altered every year according to the financial possibilities of FWO.

In addition, according to the internal regulations of NSFC, each allocated project will receive a fixed total funding amount of 100,000 RMB for two years that can be used for international travel expenses of the Chinese researcher(s) and accommodation and living expenses of the Flemish researcher(s).

Since the individual missions need to obtain an approval from both Parties, in the course of the project, the PI's shall present appropriate exchange files to their respective institution (FWO or NSFC). In order to obtain such a separate approval for the requested missions:

- The Flemish PI needs to apply at FWO with the '*Notification for a stay abroad*' form (to be found [on the FWO website](#)) at least two months before the actual exchange will take place. This request should include an invitation letter of the host institution of the receiving country.
- The Chinese PI is not required to submit any files before the actual exchange will take place.

VI. Financial provisions

The funding within the frame of granted NSFC-FWO projects shall be used to cover the travel, accommodation and living expenses. Both Parties agree to immediately approve the funding for the complete two-year duration of the project. Missions shall be funded as follows:

- The sending Party covers the travel costs from the city of departure to the city of destination as well as the return travel costs.
- For the Chinese researcher(s) travelling to Flanders, FWO foresees a daily living allowance of € 50 (or max. € 1.300 per month) + reimbursement of accommodation expenses.
- NSFC provides a fixed total amount of funding per project for a fixed period of years, namely 100,000 RMB for 2 years. This funding can be used for the international travel costs of the Chinese researcher(s) and the accommodation and living expenses of the Flemish researcher(s). The amount of 100,000 RMB for 2 years is fixed and cannot be increased.

These amounts may be altered if necessary with the consent of both Parties. Daily allowances are provided to the researchers at the beginning of their stay in the host country.

<i>Type of support</i>	<i>For Flemish researchers travelling to China</i>	<i>For Chinese researchers travelling to Flanders</i>
Airfare tickets	In charge of FWO according to its internal regulations. Tickets are to be booked through a travel agency authorized by the FWO (Uniglobe South West Travel and Omnia Travel).	In charge of NSFC according to its internal regulations.
Accommodation and living expenses	In charge of NSFC according to its internal regulations.	In charge of FWO according to its internal regulations. A daily allowance of € 50 for domestic travel and other costs, with a maximum of € 1,300 per month. In addition, accommodation expenses will be reimbursed.

During their travel and stay abroad, all researchers (from the Flemish as well as from the Chinese research teams) involved in an allocated NSFC-FWO project and independent of nationality, can rely on a travel and assistance insurance ('reis- en bijstandsverzekering') and repatriation covered by FWO. This insurance is not a health insurance. Regardless of the aforementioned insurance, all researchers should have a valid health insurance entitling the holder to free emergency medical treatment in the host country.

The responsibility for the provision of adequate insurance against accidents that may occur during the stay in the host country ('arbeidsongevallenverzekering') rests with the research institution to which the researcher stays affiliated during the joint scientific cooperation project. The research institution to which the researcher is travelling, shall provide the visitor with all indispensable organisational assistance in situations requiring such steps.

VII. Timetable

- March 5th, 2020: launch of the call
- **May 28th, 2020: deadline for applications**
 - **At NSFC: submission possible until 4 pm Beijing time**
 - **At FWO: submission possible until 5 pm Belgian time**
- June-November 2020: evaluation procedure
- November-December 2020: final joint decision on the funded projects
- December 2020: communication of the results
- January 1st, 2021: start of the projects

VIII. Contact details

Contact information at the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC):

Division for European Affairs
Bureau of International Cooperation

Mr. Xu Jin

Program Manager
Tel: +86-10-6232-5351
xujin@nsfc.gov.cn

Contact information at the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO):

Department International Affairs

Tinne Jacobs

Advisor International Affairs
Tel: +32 2 550 15 44
Tinne.Jacobs@fwo.be

Account administrators international mobility

Tel: +32 (0)2 550 15 92
interprog@fwo.be