**Call Guidelines for International Collaboration Fund for Creative Research Teams in 2024**

The National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) is launching a call for proposals of the International Collaboration Fund for Creative Research Teams (ICFCRT). The fund aims to enhance international scientific collaborations and support pioneering scientists with foreign citizenship to construct and lead research teams in China’s mainland and carry out creative basic research and applied basic research on self-selected topics within the funding scope of NSFC.

The ICFCRT, upgraded from the predecessor Pilot Group Program of the Research Fund for International Senior Scientists (PGP RFIS-III), continues to cultivate research teams to conduct research in the forefront of global scientific advancements with increased funding intensity.

**I. Program Description**

**1. Funding Areas**

The funding areas include: Mathematical and Physical Sciences (A), Chemical Sciences (B), Life Sciences (C), Earth Sciences (D), Engineering and Material Sciences (E), Information Sciences (F), Management Sciences (G), Health Sciences (H), and Interdisciplinary Sciences (T).

(1) When selecting the application code, please choose the secondary application code (in 4 digits);

(2) When filling in the application form, please enter accurate keywords.

(3) For applicants of interdisciplinary sciences, please first choose from the division codes T01-T04, and then select at least two application codes from A-H according to the research content when filling in the proposal form. For detailed guidance on application codes, please refer to the *NSFC Guide to Programs 2024*.

**2. Project Duration**

Projects are expected to start on January 1, 2025 and end on December 31, 2027 with a duration of three years.

**3. Funding Amount**

The grant provides a total direct cost of 6 million RMB per project and a total indirect cost of 1.2 million RMB per project. For projects of Mathematical Sciences and Management Sciences, the direct cost is 4.8 million RMB per project and indirect cost is 1.2 million RMB per project.

**II. Application Requirements**

**1. Eligibility**

(1) The applicant, as the PI of the Collaborative Creative Research Team, shall meet the following requirements:

a. Foreign citizenship and a senior academic title;

b. Outstanding academic achievements and significant international influence, and ability to construct and lead a research team to conduct creative research in China’s mainland;

c. Commitment to work for no less than 6 months per year (calendar year) at the host institution during the implementation of the project;

d. The Agreement to Support the Application of ICFCRT shall be signed between the applicant and the host institution (If the applicant has a full-time position abroad at the application stage, the foreign employer institution should be informed).

(2) Participants as backbone researchers of the Collaborative Creative Research Team, regardless of nationalities, shall hold senior academic titles or doctoral degrees.

(3) No more than 4 backbone researchers and 2 participating institutions in each project.

(4) Compliance with Chinese laws and NSFC’s relevant rules and regulations while conducting research in China.

**2. Additional Requirements for Eligibility**

(1) For an individual with a senior academic title, the total number of application, no matter as PI or as participant, for *the ICFCRT*, *the Science Fund for Creative Research Groups (SFCRG)*，*the Continuing Grant of National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars (CGNSFDYS)* and *the Basic Science Center Program (BSCG)* shall not exceed 1 for each year.

(2) The PI of an on-going or completed project of *the Continuing Grant of National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars (CGNSFDYS)*, *the Science Fund for Creative Research Groups (SFCRG)* or *the Basic Science Center Program (BSCG)* shall not apply for or participate in this program.

(3) The individual with a senior academic title who is participating in an on-going project granted by *the ICFCRT*, *the Science Fund for Creative Research Groups (SFCRG)* or *the Basic Science Center Program (BSCG)*, shall not apply for or participate in this program.

(4) The PI of an on-going grant of*the Research Fund for International Scientists (RFIS)* cannot apply for*the ICFCRT*. The total number of application for *the RFIS* and *the ICFCRT* shall not exceed 1 for each year.

(5) This program does not count towards the maximum number of projects applied and undertaken at the same time from NSFC.

**III. Submission Instructions**

**1. Submission by the Applicant**

The proposal shall be submitted online in accordance with the following specific requirements:

(1) Before filling in the online application form, all applicants should read through this call for proposals as well as the relevant contents of the *NSFC Guide to Programs 2024* in detail. Proposals failing to meet the above-mentioned requirements will not be accepted.

(2) Submission path: Log in to the NSFC’s Internet-based Science Information System (https://grants.nsfc.gov.cn/), select “Application & Receipt”, and use the role of “Applicant for RFIS, ICFCRT”, then select “Application and Acceptance” - “Application” in the menu bar. Click on “New Proposal” to enter the page of Application(s) in Preparation, then select “Science Fund for Global Challenges and Sustainability” - “International Collaboration Fund for Creative Research Teams”, finally click on “Application codes A-H” or “Division code T” to enter the application page. The proposal language is **English**, **but the Title, Abstract and Keywords should be written in both English and Chinese**.

Ø  For budget preparation, the applicant shall carefully read the budget preparation requirements specified in the *Instructions on Application*of the *NSFC Guide to Programs 2024*, and *the Funds Management Measures for NSFC-Awarded Project* (https://www.nsfc.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab475/info81899.htm) and *Instruction of Budget Table Preparation 2024*, and prepare the budget table truthfully based on the actual needs.

Ø  For the Proposal Description, the applicant must fill in the detailed contents in compliance with the Research Proposal Outline for ICFCRT and relevant instructions and requirements.

(3) On completion of filling out the online application form, the applicant shall submit it along with the attachments through the NSFC’s Internet-based Science Information System. No hard copies are required by NSFC. After being awarded, the signed and sealed page of the application form should be attached to the Research Plan and submitted to NSFC together. Please ensure that the signed and sealed information should be consistent with the electronic application form.

**Attachments Required**

(1) The **Agreement** **to Support the Application of ICFCRT** (Please see the appendix for the template) signed by the applicant and the host institution. The agreement should be signed by the applicant in person and the legal representative of the host institution in person or with signature stamp, and affixed by the official seal of the host institution. (The seals of the scientific research management department or the second-level colleges are invalid).

(2) Please provide electronic copies of PI’s **5 representative research papers** that are related to the applied project.

(3) The**employment contract**signed between the applicant and the host organization. The contract shall include provisions that meet the eligibility requirement (1)-c in this call, *i.e.*, the applicant shall commit to work for no less than 6 months per year (calendar year) at the host institution during the implementation of the project. If an employment contract has not yet been signed or the submitted employment contract does not meet the above requirements during the application window, the applicant must provide the compliant employment contract when submitting the Research Plan if the proposal is approved by NSFC for funding; otherwise NSFC shall withhold allocating the approved funds or terminate the award.

(4) If the proposed research involves issues related to scientific research ethics and scientific and technological security (such as biosecurity, information security, etc.), the applicant shall strictly follow relevant national laws, regulations and codes of ethics, and upload corresponding supplementary review and certification documents.

**2. Submission by the Host Institution**

The authenticity, completeness and compliance of the application materials and the objective relevance, policy compliance and reasonability of the proposed budgets should be reviewed by the applicant’s host institution.

The host institution is required to upload the annual *Letter of Commitment for Research Integrity of Host Institution for National Natural Science Fund Projects 2024* via NSFC’s Internet-based Science Information System before submitting all the application materials, and confirm and submit all proposals and necessary attachments via the information system on a case-by-case basis before the specified deadline. Please be sure to submit **a list of all the applications**via the information system within 24 hours after the specified deadline, and no hard copies are required by NSFC.

Please refer to the *Notice on Application and Conclusion of National Natural Science Found Projects in 2024*for the above requirements for the host institutions.

**3. Deadline**

The application system of this program will open after February 3, 2024. The proposal online submission window opens on March 1, 2024 and closes on March 20, 2024 at 16:00 Beijing time.

**Note: Applicants are requested to prepare and submit the application materials in strict accordance with the requirements specified in this call for proposals. Applications failing to meet the above requirements will not be accepted. If you have any questions, please reach us via the following contacts.**

**Contacts:**

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[Appendix: Agreement to Support the Application of ICFCRT](https://www.nsfc.gov.cn/Portals/0/fj/fj20240126_01.docx)

Department of International Programs

National Natural Science Foundation of China

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