

Online Application Guide for General Program

The General Program is intended to support scientists engaged in basic and applied basic research in conducting innovative research in whatever fields they choose, to promote balanced, coordinated, and sustainable development of all disciplines.

I. Research Fields

There is no restriction on the research fields. Applicants can choose one field of study in natural sciences, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, life science, earth science, engineering materials, information, management science, and medical science.

II. Funding Amount and Duration

Each approved project will receive a lump-sum grant of **RMB 100,000** and have an implementation period of three years. On a pilot basis, the grant will be subject to the discretionary use of the project team for research purposes with no limits on the proportions of spending items. Funding is awarded through a competitive, merit-based selection process, and is proportionally allocated to applicants from East and Northwest Guangdong through a merit-based selection process.

III. Applicant Eligibility

Applicants should be the actual project leaders and full-time employees at an organization supported by the Guangdong Basic and Applied Basic Research Fund and located in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, and meet the following criteria:

- (I) Have relevant theoretical knowledge, be able to independently conduct research, and have enough time to complete the project;
- (II) Have experience in undertaking or participating in basic and applied basic research or other basic research projects;
- (III) Be working on and leading no more than two projects funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) which have been approved and have not yet been concluded before the start date of the application;
- (IV) Not working on and leading any R&D projects in provincial priority sectors, major basic and applied basic research projects at the provincial level, key projects funded by the Guangdong Basic and Applied Basic Research Fund, projects funded by the Distinguished Young Scholars Fund, team projects, and major basic research incubation projects;
- (V) Scientists who are engaged in research in a postdoctoral research station should set aside enough time for the research to ensure the smooth implementation of the project.

IV. Limit on the Number of Applications

The number of applications that an organization can submit for the General Program is subject to a limit based on the project funding of the Natural Science Fund for 2019-2021. **To support the development of key basic disciplines such as mathematics and physics, the projects in mathematics and physics do not count towards that limit.** For projects in other disciplines, the number of applications for the General Program that an organization can submit is calculated as follows:

$$N_{2022} = (N_{2019} + N_{2020} + N_{2021}) + 5 + X$$

Where,

- (I) N_{2022} is the maximum number of applications that an organization can submit for the General Program under the Natural Science Fund in 2022;
- (II) N_{2019} , N_{2020} , and N_{2021} are the numbers of an organization's projects approved for the General Program under the Natural Science Fund in 2019, 2020, and 2021, respectively (subject to the project approval notices);
- (III) "5" is the minimum guaranteed number of applications that an organization can submit;
- (IV) "X" is the additional number of applications. An organization is allowed to submit an additional number of applications under the following conditions: (1) an additional four applications are allowed for each National Key Laboratory under the organization

(the applicants must be the laboratory researchers); (2) an additional ten are allowed for each Guangdong Provincial Laboratory qualified as an independent organization, and an additional eight are allowed for each sub-center of such Guangdong Provincial Laboratory; (3) an additional three are allowed for each Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Joint Laboratory under the organization (the applicants must be laboratory researchers); (4) an additional two are allowed for each Guangdong Provincial Key Laboratory under the organization (the applicants must be laboratory researchers); (5) an additional one is allowed for a Guangdong-based organization for every 10 NSFC-funded projects it undertook in 2020. The numbers of additional applications allowed under the above conditions can be combined if an organization meets more than one condition.

V. Project Budget Requirements

Funding for General Program projects is subject to the discretionary use of the project team for research purposes with no limits on the proportions of spending items and, therefore, no need to fill in the budget for specific expenditure items. The specific budget requirements are as follows:

(I) There are no limits on the proportions of direct expenditure items, and research teams are allowed to decide how to use funds. The funds can only be used on research projects. The proportions

of indirect expenditures are subject to provincial regulations on fund management for scientific research projects.

(II) The funds should be used in accordance with Guangdong province's standards on funds for scientific research projects. Institutions in Hong Kong and Macao can refer to the local regulations on research fund administration.

(III) No disbursement for infrastructure is allowed.

(IV) A final accounting of total costs should be submitted at project acceptance.

VI. Expected Results

The project leader should publish at least one high-quality academic paper (subject to the funded projects purported) and is encouraged to publish papers in top academic journals in China. The project leader should be much more capable of conducting projects in his/her discipline sponsored by science and technology programs or funds at the provincial/ministerial-level or higher. Project results should be presented mainly in the form of theses, monographs, patents, personnel training programs, acquisition of national projects, international exchanges, academic contributions, and scientific and technical reports.

VII. Joint Research Requirements

(I) In addition to the organization that leads the application, each project may be carried out by no more than two research institutions jointly.

(II) If key participants include persons outside the applicants' organizations (including graduate students, but excluding overseas personnel), the organizations that such persons work for are deemed as partner organizations, and their relevant information should be provided in the application. Overseas personnel generally participate in the application in their personal capacity and must upload the electronic scanned copy of Overseas Personnel Informed Consent to the online application system (the template can be downloaded from the system). Personnel from Hong Kong and Macao may participate in the application in their personal capacity or as partner organizations.

(III) Applicants' organizations and partner organizations should sign the joint research agreement (or contract, the same below) before submitting the application and specify the allocation of funds in the budget. During the application, the joint research agreement shall be kept by the applicant's organization for future reference with no need to submit it. The joint research agreement is not required if no fund is allocated outside the applicant's organization as agreed by the participants.

VIII. Others

(I) To promote the balanced and coordinated development of innovation across regions, the General Program under the Natural Science Fund will allocate funding in proportion to applicants

from East and Northwest Guangdong through a merit-based selection process.

(II) To step up the support for and construction of key basic disciplines, the General Program under the Natural Science Fund sets no limit on the number of applications in mathematical and physics.

(III) For better support for and fostering of distinguished young researchers, priority is given to young scientists under the same conditions.

(IV) With a focus on the growth and fostering of female researchers, priority is given to female scientists under the same conditions.