

Implementing Arrangement between the European Commission and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) for Chinese Researchers hosted by the European Research Council grantees in Europe

In accordance with Article 4 of the Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and the Government of the People's Republic of China¹ signed on 22 December 1998, as renewed, hereinafter referred to as the "Agreement", an Implementing Arrangement to provide research opportunities in Europe for Chinese researchers is hereby established between the European Commission and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (hereinafter referred to as the "Sides").

Research opportunities are intended to be provided in accordance with the terms set out in the Arrangement. This Arrangement is not intended to create binding obligations under international law.

In the context of this Implementing Arrangement, both Sides intend to promote researchers' mobility between the European Union and the People's Republic of China. This will also be achieved through the timely and efficient information exchange and the dissemination of additional funding opportunities announced by either side.

1. AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

The two Sides intend to provide opportunities for Chinese researchers who are active holders of NSFC competitive grants² to pursue research collaboration with European colleagues already supported through the EU-funded European Research Council (ERC) grants.

The two Sides intend to facilitate the use of the ERC-funded projects to host Chinese researchers, holders of the NSFC grants. It is expected that collaborations will occur in similar areas of scientific pursuit or on topics of mutual interest.

2. COLLABORATIVE OBJECTIVES

This collaboration is intended to enable Chinese researchers to undertake single and long-term (6~12 months) or multiple short-term research visits (e.g. for joint experiments) with the ERC-supported European teams. Research visits should begin at least 12 months prior to the termination date of their NSFC-funded projects. Multiple short-term visits should aggregate to 6 months minimum.

The ERC grants already provide sufficient flexibility to allow, if necessary, reciprocating visits of the ERC supported Principal Investigator and/or members of his/her team to further enhance the cooperation with the Chinese counterpart. The two Sides will continue to explore the possibility of attracting and encouraging European researchers to visit Chinese research teams through a reciprocal funding scheme to be developed in the future pending available resources.

¹ ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=342.

² The actual target group of the NSFC grant holders can be determined in consultation with the ERC at the time of the call published by the NSFC.

3. PROCEDURE OF COOPERATION

The two Sides intend to use the following set of operational steps:

The European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA) would solicit expressions of interest from Principal Investigators (PIs) holding ERC grants in hosting China-based researchers as described in provision 2 to contribute to their teams for short or longer periods.

The ERCEA would send to the NSFC a listing of the interested PIs/teams, together with the publishable description of their respective ERC-funded projects.

The NSFC would inform Chinese researchers with an active NSFC grant of the collaborative opportunity through a call that describes the goals of the programme and the collaborative opportunities as defined by the European researchers and provides application procedures, eligibility considerations, and relevant policies and requirements, as appropriate.

4. PARTICIPATION OF OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The two Sides, if they so agree upon, would allow the participation of other public or private institutions, whose activities directly impact the areas of cooperation, with the aim of strengthening and expanding the mechanisms that support an effective implementation of this Arrangement.

5. STEERING GROUP

The two Sides intend to set up a Steering Group consisting of two representatives from each Side. As necessary, each Side may designate a limited number of additional participants to the meetings. It should be co-chaired by the Head of the Scientific Management Department of the ERCEA and a representative of the NSFC. Operational guidance and management plans consistent with the needs of the respective Sides in order to implement this Arrangement will be adopted by the Steering Group.

The Steering Group will review the activities under this Implementing Arrangement and decide if any adjustment will be necessary on a periodic basis. The Steering Group will meet at least once per year, and its meetings will be held virtually or alternately at the ERCEA headquarters and the NSFC.

6. FUNDING

Activities under this Implementing Arrangement should be subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to the applicable laws and regulations, policies and programmes of each Side, and to the terms in this Implementing Arrangement.

The NSFC

The Chinese researchers continue to receive research expenses during the period of the European visit according to their NSFC-supported projects' terms and conditions or the regulations of their organisation in China. Through this collaboration, the NSFC also supports the international travel expenses.

The ERC


Visiting Chinese researchers may be incorporated into the research teams of the ERC-funded Principal Investigators (at the Host Institution of the ERC projects) for the duration of the visit, so that any relevant expenses can be claimed under the ERC grants, supporting the team and the activity as noted below. Sufficient flexibility exists for the ERC grant to support the visiting researcher with no separate direct funding arrangement between the visiting researcher and the ERC being required. The costs which can be reimbursed under the ERC grant must be eligible within the terms of the grant agreement³ and the maximum amount of the ERC grant may not be increased for this purpose. Eligible cost categories include:

- (1) Subsistence costs on a per diem basis, or any other applicable modality of the Host institution, in accordance with the applicable national law and any other rules or regulations applicable on the Host Institution, commensurate to the level of experience of the individual visiting career researchers.
- (2) Any other eligible costs incurred during the visit of the Chinese researchers that are directly related to the ERC-funded project.

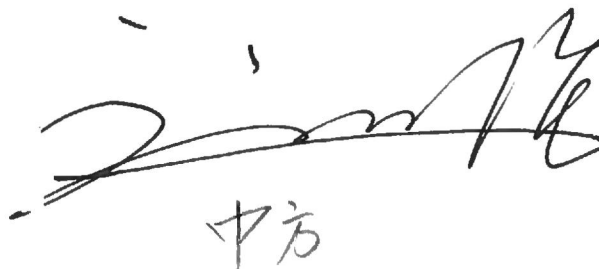
7. DURATION

Cooperation further to this Arrangement is intended to commence from signature and should continue for the remaining duration of the Agreement, unless otherwise terminated by either side upon ninety days written notice to the other side, or sooner by mutual written consent.

Signed in duplicate at Brussels on this 29th day of June 2015 in the English and Chinese languages.



For the European Commission



中方
For the National Natural Science
Foundation of China

³ Essentially, this means the costs must be (a) incurred for the sole purpose of meeting the grant's objectives, (b) be incurred during the duration of the project and (c) correspond to the usual management and accounting practices of the host institution of the Principal Investigator.