

附件 6

项目指南英文版

Sustainable Development International Cooperation Science Program

2026 Calls for Proposals: Guideline One

I. Background

To implement a more open, inclusive, mutually beneficial, and shared international science and technology cooperation strategy, promote the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), and contribute to building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind, the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) is collaborating with international organizations and research funding agencies from various countries to launch the Sustainable Development International Cooperation Science Program (SDIC). This initiative aims to facilitate bilateral and multilateral international exchanges and cooperation, and to jointly conduct scientific research addressing global challenges.

In 2026, SDIC will release two batches of calls for proposals, including joint research on topics of mutual interest between NSFC and funding partners, as well as joint research in strategic areas. The first call involves the following international funding partners: the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), the Spanish State Research Agency (AEI), the Mongolian Foundation for Science and Technology (MFST), the Thailand Science Research and Innovation (TSRI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA).

II. Overall Scientific Objectives

The 17 SDGs of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are interconnected, mutually reinforcing, yet also create trade-offs. A systematic understanding of the synergies and conflicts among the SDGs is of great significance for achieving a balanced integration of the three core dimensions of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection.

Achieving sustainable development is the core mission of global governance and building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind, with global change posing one of the major challenges currently facing humanity's sustainable development. The SDIC program directly addresses the systemic challenges of global sustainable development, focuses on the key goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and conducts cross-border, interdisciplinary systematic research centered around two main themes: "addressing global common challenges" and "advancing strategic priority areas." The aim is to advance sustainable development from scientific understanding to practical pathways. The program will focus on conducting multi-level, multi-scenario integrated research to promote the development of replicable and scalable sustainable development models, thereby supporting the construction of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind and providing scientific decision-making foundations for relevant countries and regions to achieve sustainable development.

III. Priority Research Areas

The SDIC program will focus on key challenges in global sustainable development by integrating global common challenges with the frontiers of international science and technology. Joint funding will be provided in collaboration with international partners across areas including Life and Health, Green Development of Natural Resources, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Agricultural and Food Sciences, Marine Sciences, and others. Specific funding directions and requirements are detailed in the program descriptions of each funding agency and international organization.

IV. Criteria and Principles for Project Selection

i) Project applications should aim to achieve two or more UN SDGs, addressing practical challenges faced by relevant countries in sustainable development and identifying fundamental scientific questions for research.

ii) Exploratory research at the frontiers of science is encouraged, with priority given to original research involving new concepts, theories, methods, and technologies.

iii) Project applications should emphasize the training of young researchers and the development of international cooperation networks, especially multilateral cooperation.

iv) Joint applications from research teams from different disciplinary fields are encouraged to promote interdisciplinary research.

V. Funding Plan

(A) Project Types and Funding Scale

Approximately 20 Capacity-building Projects, 35 Key Projects, and 65 Exchange Projects and Seminar Projects are expected to be funded.

International Partner Organization	Capacity-Building Projects	Key Projects	Cooperation Exchange and Seminar Projects
FAPESP	Up to 10 projects, up to 600,000 RMB per project	Up to 10 projects, up to 2 million RMB per project	-
AEI	-	Up to 5 projects, up to 1.2 million RMB per project	-
MFST	-	Up to 6 projects, up to 1.5 million RMB per project	Up to 20 projects, up to 150,000 RMB per project
TSRI	Up to 12 projects, up to 500,000 RMB per project	-	Up to 20 projects, up to 150,000 RMB per project
UNEP	-	Up to 5 projects, up to 1.8 million RMB per project	Up to 10 projects, up to 150,000 RMB per project
CGIAR	-	Up to 11 projects, up to 1.8 million RMB per project	Up to 10 projects, up to 150,000 RMB per project
IIASA	1 project, up to 500,000 RMB per project	-	Up to 7 projects, up to 150,000 RMB per project

“Capacity-building Projects” aim to support Chinese and international researchers in cultivating collaborative relationships and may include various research activities such as joint

research and field investigations. “Key Projects” aim to support Chinese and international researchers in conducting collaborative research in selected fields, jointly cultivating outstanding scientific and technological talent, addressing regional scientific challenges, and enhancing regional research capacity and global impact. “Exchange Projects” aim to support Chinese and international researchers in capacity building and may include various exchange activities such as mutual visits, workshops, and training courses. “Seminar projects” aim to support Chinese and international researchers in organizing meetings in China or attending meetings abroad.

(B) Project Duration

i) For “Capacity-building Projects” and “Key Projects”, the project duration is 3 years, and the research period in the application should be filled in as January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2029.

ii) For “Cooperative Exchange Projects”, the project duration is 2 years, and the research period in the application should be filled in as January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2028.

iii) For “Seminar projects”, the project duration is 1 week, and the research period in the application should be filled in as January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2027.

VI. Application Guidance

(A) “Capacity-building Projects” and “Key Projects”

NSFC international (regional) cooperative research projects include joint research projects under organizational agreements and key international (regional) cooperative research projects. The “Capacity-building Projects” and “Key Projects” under the SDIC Program fall under the category of joint research projects under organizational agreements.

i) Eligibility Criteria

(1) The Chinese applicants should hold a senior professional technical position (or equivalent title) and, as principal investigator, be currently undertaking or have previously undertaken a NSFC research project with a duration of three years or longer.

(2) International research partners must meet the requirements of the relevant funding agency and international organization (for details, please refer to the program descriptions of each funding agency and international organization; the lead researcher among the international

partners is referred to as the “Oversea PI” and is, by default, the first person listed in the “Oversea Collaborators” section of the Chinese application).

(3) The number of Chinese cooperative institutions shall not exceed 2.

(4) For more detailed information on applicant eligibility, please refer to the 2026 NSFC Guide to Programs.

ii) Limits on Parallel Applications

(1) Applications to “Capacity-building Projects” and “Key Projects” are not counted toward the limit of “two projects in total that may be applied for or undertaken by individuals holding senior professional technical positions (or equivalent titles).”

(2) An applicant may apply for only one international (regional) cooperative research project in the same year.

(3) PIs currently undertaking an international (regional) cooperative research project are not eligible to apply for another international (regional) cooperative research project, except for projects whose funding period expires in the year of application.

(4) Other limits on the number of applications as stipulated in the 2026 NSFC Guide to Programs.

(B) “Cooperative Exchange Projects” and “Seminar Projects”

“Cooperative Exchange Projects” and “Seminar Projects” of the SDIC Program fall under the category of international (regional) exchange and cooperation projects.

i) Eligibility Criteria

(1) The Chinese applicant must be the PI or a key participant of an on-going NSFC research project (excluding exchange projects) with a duration of 3 years or longer that is scheduled to conclude on or after December 31, 2027.

(2) If the Chinese applicant is a key participant of an on-going project, the applicant must hold a senior academic title or a PhD degree, or have recommendations from two scientists or technologists with senior academic titles in the same research field, and must obtain consent from the PI of the on-going project.

(3) International research partners must meet the requirements of the relevant funding agency and international organization (for details, please refer to the program descriptions of each funding agency and international organization; the lead researcher among the international partners is referred to as the “Overseas PI” and is, by default, the first person listed in the “Overseas Collaborators” section of the Chinese application).

(4) For more detailed information on applicant eligibility, please refer to the 2026 NSFC Guide to Programs.

ii) Limits on Parallel Applications

(1) Applications to the “Cooperative Exchange Projects” and “Seminar Projects” are not counted toward the limit of “two projects in total that may be applied for or undertaken by individuals holding senior professional technical positions (or equivalent titles).”

(2) Applications to the “Cooperative Exchange Projects” and “Seminar Projects” are not subject to the restriction that “an applicant may apply for only one project of the same type in the same year”.

(3) The total number of SDIC projects applied for as an applicant and undertaken as a PI shall not exceed one, except for projects whose funding period expires in the year of application.

(4) Other limits on the number of applications as stipulated in the 2026 NSFC Guide to Programs.

(C) Notes for Applicant

i) Application Path

Applicants must log in to the NSFC Grants System (<https://grants.nsfc.gov.cn/>):

(1) Select the “Project PI” user group to log in, then click “Online Application” to enter the application interface; click the “New Application” button to enter the science department selection interface, then click “Apply for General Departmental Projects” to enter the project category selection interface.

(2) Click the “+” sign to the left of “International (Regional) Cooperation and Exchange Projects” or the “Expand” button on the right to expand the dropdown menu.

(3) To apply for “Capacity-building Projects” and “Key Projects”, click the “Fill in Application” button to the right of “Joint Research under Organizational Agreements”, then select “SDIC - Capacity-building Project” or “SDIC - Key Project” from the “Cooperation Agreement” dropdown menu.

(4) To apply for “Cooperative Exchange Projects”, click the “Fill in Application” button to the right of “Cooperative Exchange under Organizational Agreements”, then select “SDIC” from the “Cooperation Agreement” dropdown menu.

(5) To apply for “Seminar projects”, click the “Fill in Application” button to the right of “International (Regional) Academic Conference in China (under Organizational Agreements)” or “Attending Bilateral/Multilateral Academic Conference Abroad (under Organizational Agreements)”, then select “Sustainable Development International Cooperation Program (SDIC)” from the “Cooperation Agreement” dropdown menu.

(6) Enter the grant number of the on-going NSFC project undertaken by the applicant as required by the system. After passing the eligibility verification, you will enter the application form interface.

For specific application requirements, please refer to the cooperation program descriptions for each funding agency and international organization.

ii) Budget Preparation

Applicants should carefully review the budget preparation requirements in the Application Guidelines section of the 2026 NSFC Guide to Programs, and strictly follow the requirements of the Measures for the Management of NSFC Funded Projects (Finance and Education [2021] No. 177) and the Instructions for Preparing the NSFC Project Budget Table to prepare the project budget truthfully and diligently.

For Cooperative Exchange Projects and Seminar Projects, the budget is limited to “International Cooperation and Exchange Expenses” and should be entered under Item 4 in the budget table. These projects do not include indirect costs. In the “Budget Justification” section, a detailed budget should be prepared based on the needs of each exchange year, covering international travel expenses (economy class), accommodation, meals, inter-city travel expenses for outgoing or incoming visitors, as well as conference expenses for bilateral workshops.

iii) Attachments

Applicants for Capacity-building Projects and Key Projects must jointly prepare an English application (Appendix 1) with their international partners and upload it to the “Attachments” section of the Chinese application for submission. The overseas PI must sign the English application, or provide a signed confirmation letter in lieu of a signature.

iv) Collaborative Agreement

After the project is approved, the applicant must sign a collaborative agreement (Appendix 2) with the overseas PI, which should be bound at the end of the Research Plan for NSFC Awarded Projects and submitted together.

v) Applicants should carefully read the requirements of this call, its appendices, and the 2026 NSFC Guide to Programs, complete and submit the project application and supporting materials online. Submission of a hard copy of the application is not required. After the project is approved, the signed signature page of the application (with the host institution’s seal) should be bound at the end of the Research Plan for NSFC Awarded Projects and submitted together. The information on the signed page must be strictly consistent with that in the electronic application.

vi) To enhance academic exchange among projects and promote the formation of project clusters as well as multidisciplinary integration, the SDIC Program will regularly organize annual academic meetings for funded projects and may periodically hold academic workshops in relevant fields. The PIs of funded projects are obligated to attend and coordinate the participation of their international partners in these academic exchange activities organized by the SDIC Program’s Steering Committee and Management Team.

(D) Responsibilities of Host Institutions

Host institutions should verify the authenticity, completeness, and compliance of the application materials submitted by their applicants, as well as the relevance, policy compliance, and economic rationality of the proposed budget. This call falls under the paperless application process. Host institutions should submit the electronic applications and supporting documents for their applicants before the specified application deadline.

For matters concerning the submission of the Institutional Research Integrity Commitment Letter, please refer to the Announcement on Matters Related to 2026 NSFC Project Application and Finalization.

VII. Application Submission Period

The online application submission period is from March 31, 2026, to May 15, 2026, at 16:00 Beijing time.

VIII. Announcement of Funding Decisions

Funding decisions will be announced through the NSFC Science Information System by the end of 2026.

IX. Program Descriptions for Cooperation between NSFC and Each Funding Agency and International Organization

i) NSFC-FAPESP Cooperation Program

The São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) is a public research foundation in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, and an important basic research funding agency in the country. Within the framework of the SDIC Program, NSFC and FAPESP will support Chinese and Brazilian researchers in building collaborative networks and conducting joint research.

1. Priority Research Areas

Focusing on Life and Health, as well as Agricultural and Food Sciences, the program supports the following directions:

(1) Precision Medicine and Public Health

- 1) Multi-omics-driven clinical cohort development and precision medicine research.
- 2) Surveillance of infectious diseases and control of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) from a One Health perspective.
- 3) AI-assisted diagnostics in radiology and pathology, disease prediction, and risk stratification.
- 4) Chronic disease prevention strategies and the promotion of healthy aging.
- 5) Preclinical studies and optimization of translational pathways for novel drugs and diagnostic or therapeutic technologies.

Applicants should select a second-tier application code of G04 or H in the “Application Code 1” column. Applications that fail to select the required application code 1 will not be accepted.

(2) Smart & Low-Carbon Agriculture

- 1) Advanced breeding and molecular design breeding of major crops such as soybean, maize, wheat, rice, and sugarcane.
- 2) Mechanisms and technologies for synergistic improvement of crop stress tolerance, resource use efficiency, and nutritional quality, with a focus on heat/drought tolerance, water/nitrogen use efficiency, and nutritional quality enhancement.

- 3) Digital and precision agriculture enabled by multi-source sensing, high-throughput phenotyping, and intelligent decision-making.
- 4) Soil health and biological improvement (microbiomes, bio-inputs, etc.).
- 5) Bioenergy and biorefineries.

Applicants should select a second-tier application code of B08, B09, C13, C14, or C15 in the “Application Code 1” column. Applications that fail to select the required application code 1 will not be accepted.

2. Funding Scale

Up to 10 Capacity-building Projects and up to 10 Key Projects are to be funded.

3. Funding Intensity

For Capacity-building Projects, NSFC budget is up to 600,000 RMB per project (direct costs). For Key Projects, NSFC budget is up to 2 million RMB per project (direct costs), including research funds and international cooperation exchange funds, etc. FAPESP will provide corresponding funding to Brazilian scientists.

4. Eligibility Requirements for International Research Partners

Brazilian research partners should meet the eligibility requirements of FAPESP and submit an application to FAPESP as required. For more details, please refer to the program guidelines published on FAPESP’s official website.

5. Application Guidance

i) The project title must follow the format: “FAPESP+specific project title”. Applicants may formulate the specific project title based on the research direction.

ii) In the “Chinese Abstract” section of the application, the applicant should clearly state the the priority research area and sub-direction for which they are applying.

6. Contact

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Note: Applicants must strictly adhere to all requirements outlined in these guidelines when preparing their applications. Applications that do not meet the above requirements will not be considered. For inquiries, please contact the program contact person.

ii) NSFC-AEI Cooperation Program

The Agencia Estatal de Investigación (AEI) is one of the main public research funding agencies in Spain. Through the SDIC program, NSFC and AEI will support Chinese and Spanish researchers to establish collaborative networks and conduct cooperative research.

I. Funding Areas

- (1) Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry
- (2) Livestock and Aquaculture
- (3) Food Science and Technology

NSFC and AEI encourage the in-depth research that focuses on the sustainability, resilience, green and smart development of agricultural and food systems. **Applicants should select a second-tier application code of C13-C20 or C22 in the “Application Code 1” column.** Applications that fail to select the required application code 1 will not be accepted.

II. Funding Scale

It is expected that up to 5 projects will be funded.

III. Funding Amount

The funding for the Chinese team will be up to 1.2 million yuan per project in direct costs, including research funding and international exchange expenses. Spanish partners will be funded by AEI accordingly.

IV. Eligibility Requirements for Spanish Partners

Spanish partners must meet AEI’s eligibility requirements and submit applications to AEI in accordance with its guidelines. Detailed information is available in the Call for Proposals published on the AEI’s official website. AEI website: <https://www.aei.gob.es/>

V. Application Guidance

(1) Project titles should follow the format: “AEI + Specific Project Title”. Applicants may define the specific project title based on the focus of their proposed research.

(2) In the “Chinese Abstract” section of the application, the applicant shall clearly state the funding direction for which the application is submitted.

(3) If the research involves issues related to animal and plant resources, the national regulations on the protection of animal and plant resources must be strictly followed.

(4) Applicant is required to prepare the joint English proposal with Spanish partner, which should be submitted as one of the attachments.

VI. Contact Information

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Note: Applicants must ensure that their proposals fully comply with all requirements outlined in this call. Proposals that do not meet the specified requirements will not be considered. For further inquiries, please contact the program officers listed above.

iii) NSFC-MFST Cooperation Program

The Mongolian Foundation for Science and Technology (MFST) is a national research funding agency in Mongolia. Within the framework of the SDIC Program, NSFC and MFST will jointly support Chinese and Mongolian researchers to establish scientific cooperation networks and conduct collaborative research.

I. Funding Areas

- (1) Life and Health (Application Code 1: H)
- (2) Green Development of Mineral Resources (Application Code 1: E04)
- (3) Biodiversity (Application Code 1: C01-C04)
- (4) Climate Change (Application Code 1: C03, D01 or D05)
- (5) Agricultural and Food Sciences (Application Code 1: C13-C20 or C22)
- (6) Desertification Prevention and Control (Application Code 1: D01 or D07)

Applicants should select a second-tier application code of the relevant areas in the “Application Code 1” column. Applications that fail to select the required application code 1 will not be accepted.

II. Funding Scale

It is expected that up to 6 Key Projects and up to 20 Cooperation Exchange and Seminar Projects will be funded.

III. Funding Amount

For key projects, the funding for the Chinese team will be up to 1.5 million RMB per project in direct costs, including research funds and international cooperation exchange expenses. For personnel exchange and bilateral seminar projects, the funding is up to 150,000 RMB per project. Mongolian partners will be funded by MFST accordingly.

IV. Eligibility Requirements for Mongolian Partners

Mongolian research partners must meet the eligibility requirements of the MFST, and submit an application to MFST as required. The guidelines for Mongolian applicants can be found at <http://www.stf.gov.mn/>.

V. Application Guidance

(1) The project title must follow the format: “MFST+specific project title”. Applicants may formulate the specific project title based on the research direction.

ii) In the “Chinese Abstract” section of the application, the applicant should clearly state the priority research area for which they are applying.

6. Contact

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Note: Applicants must strictly adhere to all requirements outlined in these guidelines when preparing their applications. Applications that do not meet the above requirements will not be considered. For inquiries, please contact the program contact person.

iv) NSFC-TSRI Cooperation Program

The Thailand Science Research and Innovation (TSRI) is a national research funding agency in Thailand. Within the framework of the SDIC Program, NSFC and TSRI will jointly support substantive scientific exchanges and collaborative research between Chinese and Thai researchers.

1. Priority Research Areas

- i) Life and Health (Application Code 1: H).
- ii) Green Development of Mineral Resources (Application Code 1: E04).
- iii) Biodiversity (Application Code 1: C01-C04).
- iv) Climate Change (Application Code 1: C03, D01 or D05).
- v) Marine Sciences (Application Code 1: D06 or E11).

NSFC and TSRI encourage applications that integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) with the above research areas. Applicants should select a second-tier application code of the relevant areas in the “Application Code 1” column. Applications that fail to select the required application code 1 will not be accepted.

2. Funding Scale

Up to 12 Capacity-building Projects and up to 20 Cooperation Exchange and Seminar Projects are to be funded.

3. Funding Intensity

For capacity-building projects, NSFC budget is up to 500,000 RMB per project (direct costs), including research funds and international cooperation exchange funds, etc. For cooperation exchange and bilateral seminar projects, the funding intensity from the Chinese side is up to 150,000 RMB per project. TSRI will provide corresponding funding to Thai scientists.

4. Eligibility Requirements for International Research Partners

Thai research partners should meet the eligibility requirements of the TSRI and submit an application to TSRI as required. The guidelines for Thai applicants can be found at <http://www.tsri.or.th/>.

5. Application Guidance

- i) The project title must follow the format: “TSRI+specific project title”. Applicants may formulate the specific project title based on the research direction.
- ii) In the “Chinese Abstract” section of the application, the applicant should clearly state the priority research area for which they are applying.

6. Contact

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Note: Applicants must strictly adhere to all requirements outlined in these guidelines when preparing their applications. Applications that do not meet the above requirements will not be considered. For inquiries, please contact the program contact person.

v) NSFC-UNEP Cooperation Program

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority within the United Nations system, responsible for assisting governments in setting the global environmental agenda, promoting the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system, and serving as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. Within the framework of the SDIC Program, NSFC and UNEP will jointly support collaborative research between Chinese and international scientists.

1. Priority Research Areas

- i) Ecosystems (Application Code 1: C03 or D01).
- ii) Climate Change (Application Code 1: C03, D01 or D05).
- iii) Resource Efficiency (Application Code 1: G04).

Applications should focus on the three global challenges identified in UNEP's medium-term strategy (climate change, ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution) through in-depth research on ecosystems, climate change, and resource efficiency. The aim is to provide scientific decision-making support for developing countries and regions in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while jointly enhancing early warning capabilities for environmental risks and developing systemic solutions. Collaborative research should target the Global South, which may include but is not limited to China.

Applicants should select a second-tier application code of the relevant areas in the “Application Code 1” column. Applications that fail to select the required application code 1 will not be accepted.

2. Funding Scale

Up to 5 Key Projects and up to 10 Cooperative Exchange Projects are expected to be funded.

3. Funding Intensity

For key projects, NSFC budget is up to 1.8 million RMB per project (direct costs), including research funds and international cooperation exchange funds, etc. For Cooperative Exchange Projects, NSFC budget is up to 150,000 RMB per project.

4. Eligibility Requirements for International Research Partners

The overseas principal investigator should be researchers engaged in scientific research outside of China who hold a professional title equivalent to or above associate professor (or equivalent) in their home country (or region) and have experience independently leading a laboratory or major research projects. Collaborations with high-level researchers from developed countries are encouraged. Collaborations with UNEP staff member is encouraged.

5. Application Guidance

i) The project title must follow the format: “UNEP+specific project title”. Applicants may formulate the specific project title based on the research direction.

ii) In the “Chinese Abstract” section of the application, the applicant should clearly state the priority research area for the application is applying.

iii) Before the application submission deadline, applicants must submit the Chinese Application Information Sheet (Appendix 4) to the designated UNEP email address (unep-nsfc@unep-iemp.org). UNEP will review the qualifications of the overseas-based principal investigator, the alignment of the project with relevant UN sustainable development resolutions, UNEP's medium-term strategic priorities, and global environmental challenges. The key project shall be accompanied by a confirmation letter issued by the UNEP contact person, which should be uploaded in the "Attachment" section of the Chinese application for submission.

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Note: Applicants must strictly adhere to all requirements outlined in these guidelines when preparing their applications. Applications that do not meet the above requirements will not be considered. For inquiries, please contact the program contact person.

vi) NSFC-CGIAR Cooperation Program

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is a non-profit international agricultural research institution jointly established in 1971 by the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Within the framework of the SDIC Program, NSFC and CGIAR will promote strategic alignment between China's 15th Five-Year Plan for Agriculture and CGIAR's 2025–2030 Priority Research Directions, jointly supporting scientists in conducting collaborative research.

1. Priority Research Areas

Applications must align with both the CGIAR 2025–2030 Research Portfolio, which includes eight science programs (Food and Nutrition, Future Germplasm Resources and Breeding, Climate Action Plan, Food Frontiers and Safety, Agricultural Multifunctionality and Development, Policy Innovation, Sustainable Agriculture, Livestock and Aquatic Science Programs) and three accelerator programs (Capacity Building, Digital Transformation, Gender Balance and Inclusion), as well as China's key tasks outlined in the *Plan for Accelerating the Building of an Agricultural Powerhouse (2024–2035)*, including seed industry revitalization, grain production capacity enhancement, sustainable agricultural development, green transformation, and food system optimization. The program aims to leverage CGIAR's global resources and international networks to address key scientific questions in agriculture, while developing theoretical approaches and technological pathways that can be scaled up in both China and other developing countries, contributing Chinese solutions to global food security and sustainable development. Specific directions include:

(A) Introduction, Evaluation, and Innovative Utilization of High-Quality, High-Yield, Disease-Resistant, and Stress-Tolerant Germplasm Resources

- i) Introduction and evaluation of core high-quality, high-yield, disease-resistant, and stress-tolerant germplasm resources for major cereal crops, and the discovery and application of superior genes
- ii) Mechanisms for coordinated improvement of high yield, quality, and stress tolerance in major tropical crops and the development of new germplasm

iii) Efficient introgression of superior genes and germplasm innovation in major cereal crops

iv) Discovery of stress-tolerance genes in wild relatives of root and tuber crops (potato, cassava, sweet potato) and germplasm innovation

v) Introduction of edible legumes and specialty minor crop germplasm resources and in-depth evaluation of nutritional quality

vi) Improvement and application of important traits in dryland crops

vii) Introduction, identification, and discovery of superior genes in African specialty crop germplasm resources and their application in breeding

viii) Research on cross-border circulation mechanisms and governance strategies for Digital Sequence Information (DSI) of crops

(B) Biodiversity and Climate Change

i) Research on climate-resilient cropping systems and biodiversity functions in agroforestry systems

ii) Monitoring and decision-making assessment of agricultural biodiversity and resilience

iii) Diversity and functional exploration of soil microbial resources in Asian tropics

iv) Synergistic mechanisms between restoration of degraded terrestrial ecosystems and carbon sequestration and emission reduction

v) Carbon and nitrogen migration and mechanisms of emission reduction and carbon sequestration throughout the utilization of by-products in agricultural production systems

vi) Pathways and countermeasures for achieving comprehensive rural revitalization through ESG sustainable development

(C) Interdisciplinary Research on Digital Agriculture and Precision Management

i) Development and application of decision support systems for synergistic optimization of agrifood systems

ii) Development and application of digital decision support systems for dryland agriculture

(D) Efficient Utilization of Water Resources and Sustainable Development of Dryland Agriculture

- i) Mechanisms of efficient precipitation utilization and productivity enhancement regulation in dryland farmland
- ii) Synergistic efficient utilization and smart management of water and fertilizer in major cereal crops

(E) Agricultural Product Processing and Intelligent Food Systems

- i) AI-driven nutritional assessment and personalized dietary intervention research

(F) Livestock and Poultry Breeding Industry and Disease Prevention and Control

- i) Discovery of important genetic resources and germplasm innovation in livestock and poultry
- ii) Research on systematic monitoring and risk prevention mechanisms for transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses

(G) Fishery Resources and Sustainable Development

- i) Research on conservation and sustainable utilization of high seas fishery resources

Applicants should select a second-tier application code of C or G in the “Application Code 1” column. Applications that fail to select the required application code 1 will not be accepted.

2. Funding Scale

Up to 11 Key Projects and up to 10 Cooperative Exchange Projects are expected to be funded.

3. Funding Intensity

For Key Projects, NSFC budget is up to 1.8 million RMB per project (direct costs), including research funds and international cooperation exchange funds, etc. For Cooperative Exchange Projects, NSFC budget is up to 150,000 RMB per project.

4. Eligibility Requirements for International Research Partners

The overseas principal investigator should be a researcher from one of the 13 CGIAR research centers.

5. Application Guidance

i) The project title must follow the format: “CGIAR+specific project title”. Applicants may formulate the specific project title based on the research direction.

ii) In the “Chinese Abstract” section of the application, the applicant should clearly state the priority research area and sub-direction for which the application is applying.

iii) Applicants must submit the Bilateral Strategic Alignment Statement (Appendix 5) as an attachment at the time of application, outlining the basis for collaboration, and how the project simultaneously serves CGIAR’s 2025-2030 impact objectives (e.g., innovative technological outcomes, poverty reduction, improved nutrition, gender equality) and China’s *Plan for Accelerating the Building of an Agricultural Powerhouse* with deliverable specific indicators.

6. Contact

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Note: Applicants must strictly adhere to all requirements outlined in these guidelines when preparing their applications. Applications that do not meet the above requirements will not be considered. For inquiries, please contact the program contact person.

vii) NSFC-IIASA Cooperation Program

The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) is a world-renowned research center focused on global and North-South issues, primarily addressing interdisciplinary and complex problems such as energy, water, food, climate change, and population growth. These are issues that require international collaboration through systems analysis and modeling. Within the framework of the SDIC Program, NSFC and IIASA will support collaborative research between Chinese researchers and IIASA research programs.

1. Priority Research Areas

i) Life and Health: Health systems resilience; climate-health interactions; air pollution and co-benefits of mitigation (Application Code 1: D05 or G04).

ii) Resource systems for the energy transition; trade-off analysis, circular economy, and supply-chain risks in Mineral Resource Development (Application Code 1: G04).

iii) Integrated assessment of land-use change, biodiversity–climate feedbacks, and ecosystem services under alternative policy scenarios, supporting evidence-based strategies for conservation, mitigation, and sustainable development pathways (Application Code 1: D01).

iv) Climate Change: Global and regional mitigation and adaptation pathways; risk, resilience, and systemic impacts (Application Code 1: C03, D01, or G04).

Applicants should select a second-tier application code of the relevant areas in the “Application Code 1” column. Applications that fail to select the required application code 1 will not be accepted.

2. Funding Scale

1 Capacity-building Project and up to 7 Cooperative Exchange Projects and Seminar Projects (to be held in China) are to be funded.

3. Funding Intensity

For capacity-building projects, NSFC budget is up to 500,000 RMB per project (direct costs), including research funds and international cooperation exchange funds, etc. For cooperation exchange and meeting-in-China projects, NSFC budget is up to 150,000 RMB per project.

4. Eligibility Requirements for International Research Partners

The international research partners should be researchers from the corresponding IIASA research programs.

5. Application Guidance

i) The project title must follow the format: “IIASA+specific project title”. Applicants may formulate the specific project title based on the research direction.

ii) In the “Chinese Abstract” section of the application, the applicant should clearly state the priority research area and sub-direction for which the application is applying.

iii) The application should highlight visits and exchanges of young researchers (including postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students) to IIASA, and provide annual visit plans and proposed research activities.

iv) Applicants should organize and coordinate IIASA researchers to engage in broader exchanges and discussions with the Chinese research community, and provide annual exchange plans and proposed discussion topics in the main body of the application, with the aim of further expanding and deepening collaboration between Chinese scientists and IIASA.

6. Contact

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Note: Applicants must strictly adhere to all requirements outlined in these guidelines when preparing their applications. Applications that do not meet the above requirements will not be considered. For inquiries, please contact the program contact person.

X. Appendices

1. English Application Template
2. Collaborative Agreement Template
3. English Application Template for NSFC-AEI Program
4. Application Information Sheet for NSFC-UNEP Program
5. Bilateral Strategic Alignment Statement for NSFC-CGIAR Program

National Natural Science Foundation of China

Bureau of International Cooperation

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