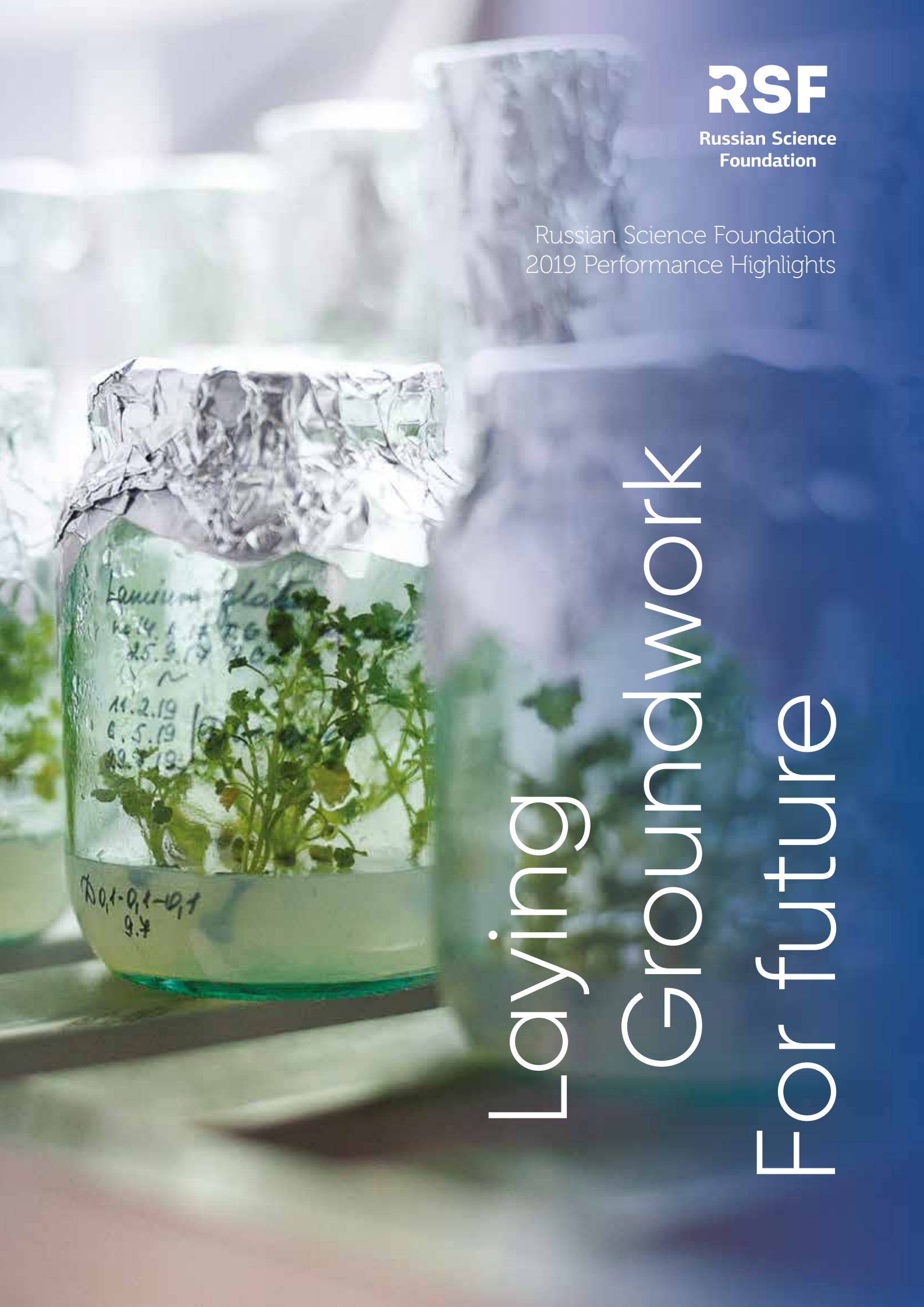


Laying Groundwork For future



From the Director

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to present to you the report on the Russian Science Foundation's performance results for 2019. Last year was productive and extremely busy. We launched 14 grant competitions and funded over 4700 projects involving more than 33,000 scientists. The results of their efforts can be found in leading international and Russian journals, heard at prestigious academic conferences, appeared in the newspapers headlines and on television.

What sets the Russian Science Foundation (RSF) apart is our openness and our willingness to improve competitive funding procedures – and we are ready to listen to what the academic community wants in order to make this happen. One of the Foundation's priorities in 2019 was to create the optimum conditions for applicants, grant recipients and reviewers to carry out their academic work. We now allow the use of e-signatures and have abandoned the practice of submitting hard copies of applications and grant reports. We also succeeded in making the procedure for selecting expert council members even more democratic.

The quality of the Russian Science Foundation's review processes is recognized in Russia and around the world. One example of this was the decision of the Government of the Russian Federation to engage RSF in assessing applications for the establishment of world-class genome research centres. The Russian Science Foundation was the only research funder in Russia that appeared in the global ranking of international reviewers based on their grant review contributions.

We take the matter of educating future generations and unlocking the full research potential of women in science. For the first time in Russia, we have created special gender-equality conditions for female researchers whose work is funded with our grants. RSF continues to promote and advance scientific knowledge. In addition to our activities to promote science to the general public, last year we spearheaded special events for scientists and journalists that aim to develop academic ties within Russia.

To sum up, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who have expressed an interest in the Foundation's programs, to our trustees, reviewers and, naturally, to our grant recipients. The RSF team will make every effort to ensure that your future work with us is even more comfortable and fruitful.

Alexander Khlunov, Director General, Russian Science Foundation



Electronic version

The electronic version is available here:



Want to know more?

Detailed information about the RSF is presented on:



About the Foundation

Special Status

The Russian Science Foundation was founded by the decree of the President of the Russian Federation in November 2013, and its activities are regulated by a special federal law. The RSF is not a budgetary organisation. The Supervisory board chaired by the Aide to the President Andrey Fursenko consists of 15 members represented by leading scientists, academicians of the Russian Academy of Science, representatives of legislative and executive bodies.

Large Grants for Basic and Exploratory Research

The core activity of the RSF is funding basic and exploratory (problem-oriented) research through a variety of programmes. The funding for programs and projects is based on a rigorous competitive selection process. The RSF research grant program provides sufficient financial support ranging from 2 to 150 million rubles, which creates a comfortable environment for scientists and allows to conduct research without seeking supplementary funds. The researcher awarded undertakes the responsibility to publish the research results in the peer-reviewed international journals with high scientific impact. The quantity of such publications is specified by each researcher in the grant application documents. According to the RSF rules, a researcher may lead no more than one active RSF project, which allows us to engage a greater number of researchers and increase competition for funding.

Wide spectrum of fields of science

RSF provides funding in 9 research fields: mathematics, computer science and systems science; physics and space science; chemistry and material science; biology and life science; basic research for medicine; agricultural science; geosciences; humanities and social sciences; engineering. Each of these general research fields is comprised of the more specific sub-fields. In total, more than 600 branches of knowledge are on our classification list.

Best research projects awards

The funding decisions are made by the independent and credible expert councils consisting of the leading scientists.

RSF sets high standards for the merit of the project leaders willing to apply for grants. The chief merit is a researcher's academic reputation supported by the publications in peer-reviewed journals with high scientific impact.

Young researchers support

RSF strengthens support of young researchers contributing to the formation of the excellent future workforce in science. By our rules not less than half of the research team should be composed of the young researchers aged under 39 years.

Competent review of the research projects

With the assistance of the research community we formed expert councils for research projects and for research programmes. We strive to constantly improve our review system through the regular rotation of the council members and through the collaboration with foreign reviewers. In a multi-layered review process, each proposal is evaluated by 2 to 5 external reviewers from Russia and abroad exclusively according to scientific merit; on the basis of these review reports, it is assessed by the members of an expert panel, and the final decision is made by an interdisciplinary expert council consisting of members that are regularly rotated by research community on the basis of the on-line voting process.

The rigorous review process involves AI-based toolkit that helps to find appropriate reviewers from internally developed database of 6000 highly qualified reviewers, including 1 519 honorary contributors from 55 countries.

Transparency for the research community and citizens

RSF developed an open database of the projects funded. Every internet user can access it to see the annotations of the projects supported and what research results are anticipated. We ensure copyright protection for the rights holders.



RSF by the Numbers

Estimate for FY 2019 total funding

\$ 370 million

Active projects funded in FY 2019

> 4,7 K

Research centers, universities, and other organizations receiving RSF funding in FY 2019

> 570

Proposals evaluated in FY 2019 through a competitive merit review process

> 9 K

Proposal reviews conducted in FY 2019

> 26 K

Reviewer rejection rate

40%

Average time to accept review

1.6 days

Time to complete review

13.1 days

Average % of completed reviews within the first month

70%

Review objections rate in FY 2019

0,85%

Average funding rate in FY 2019

25%

Estimated number of researchers RSF supported directly in FY 2019

> 33 K

Estimated number of young researchers (aged below 39) RSF supported directly in FY 2019

> 23.5 K

RSF-funded publications (Web of Science CC) reported by RSF grantees in FY 2019

> 11 K

RSF-related publications in media in FY 2019

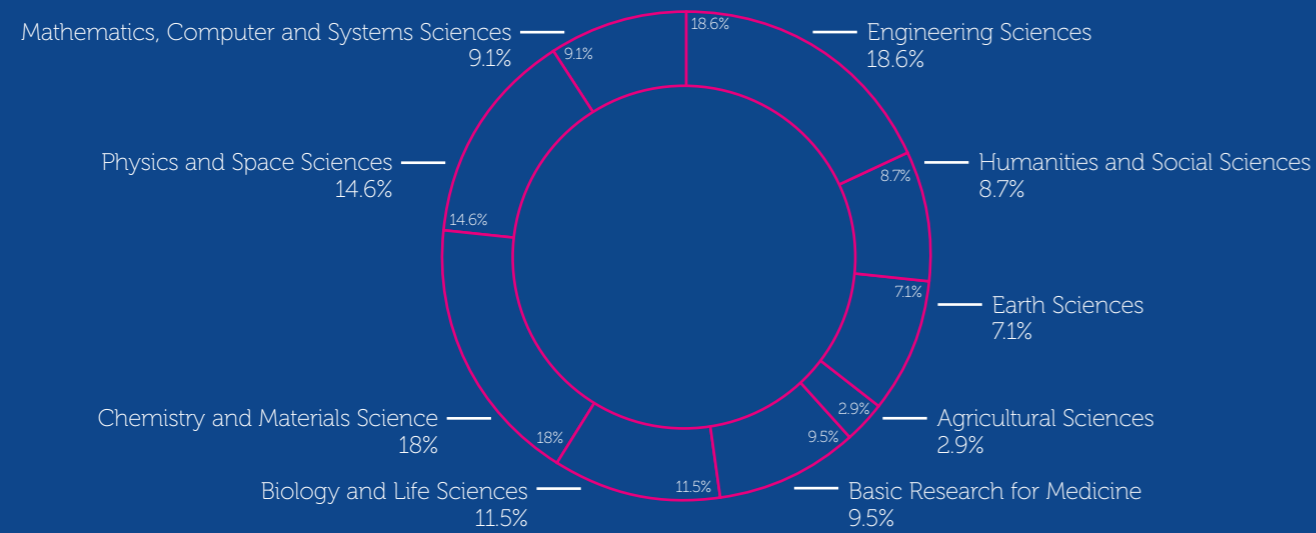
> 15 K

RSF Headcount, full-time employees

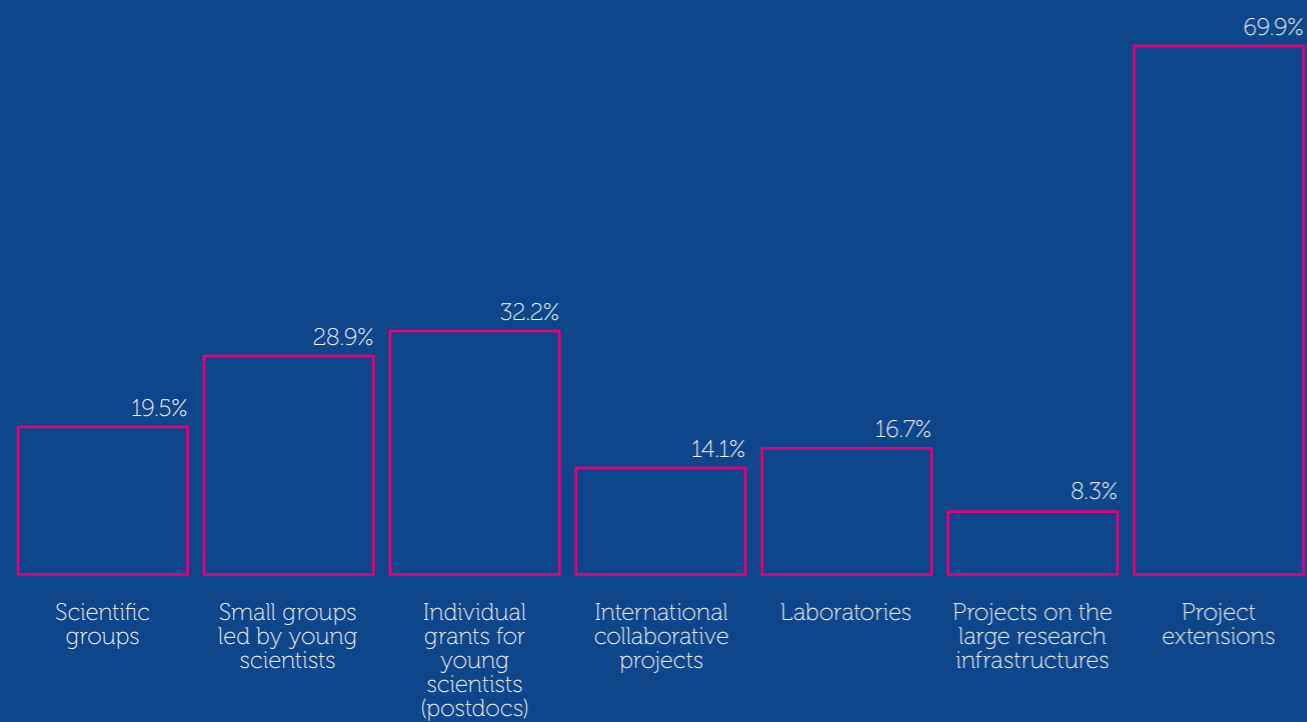
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Funding and Performance Highlights

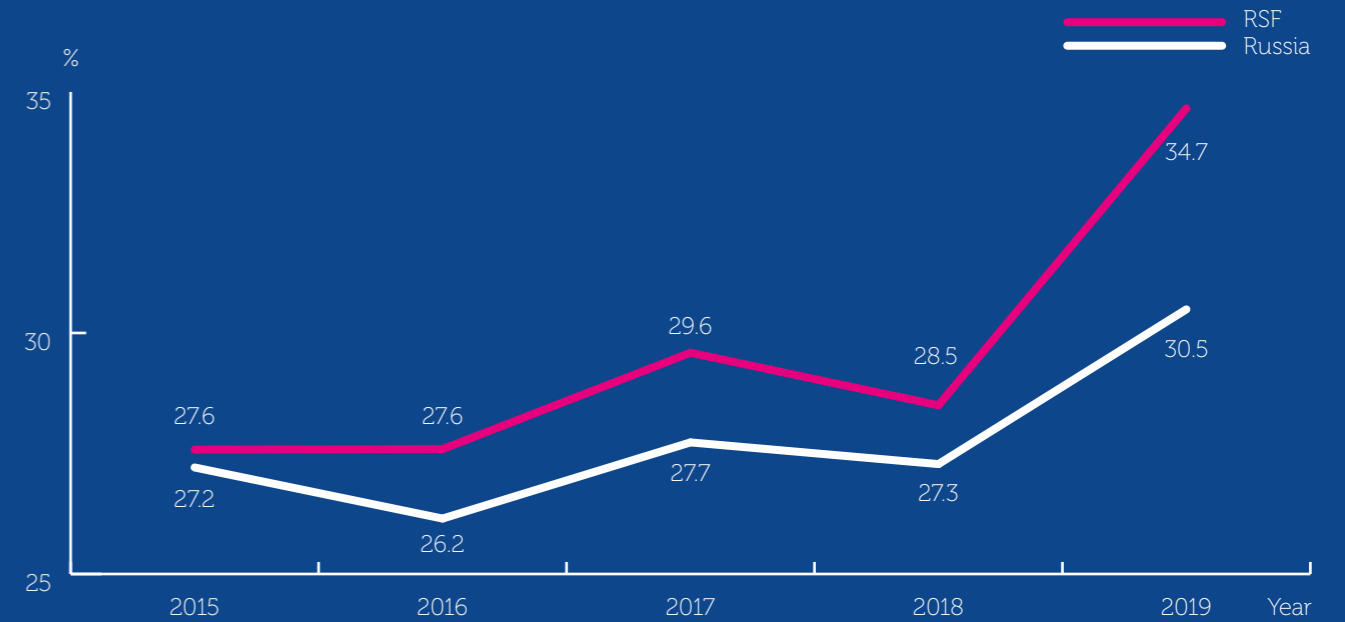
Funding by Research Areas



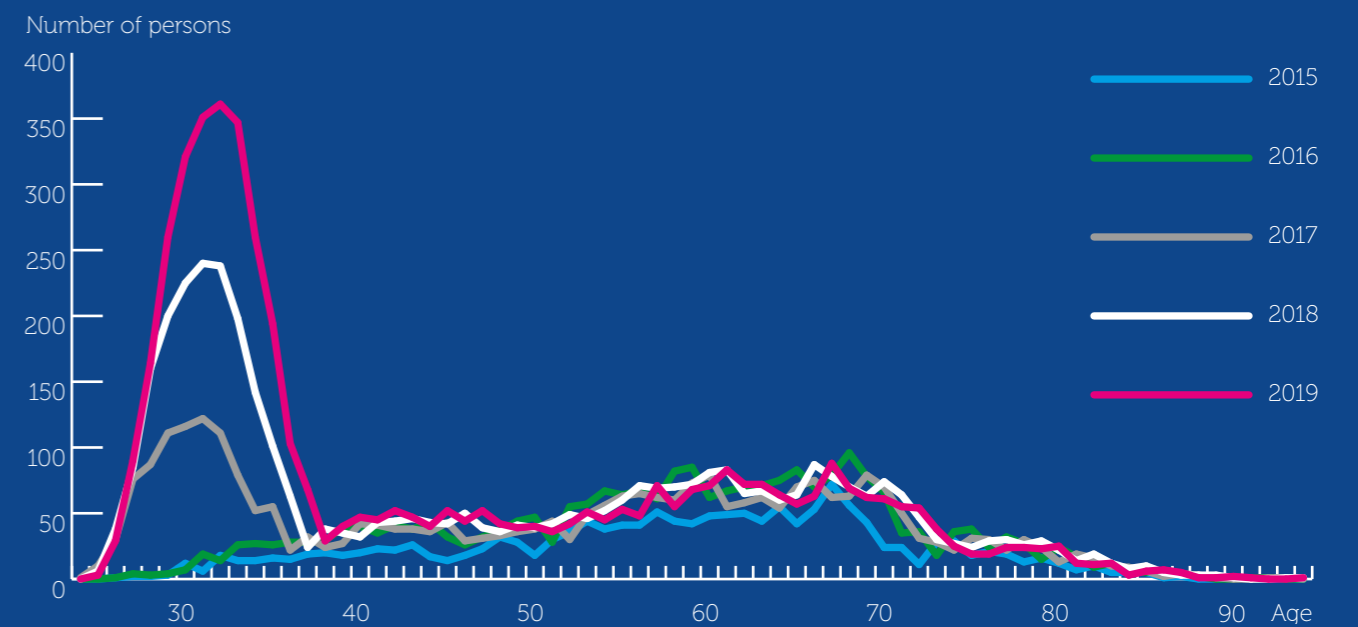
Success rates by Funding Programs



Share of Q1 publications (Web of Science CC), %



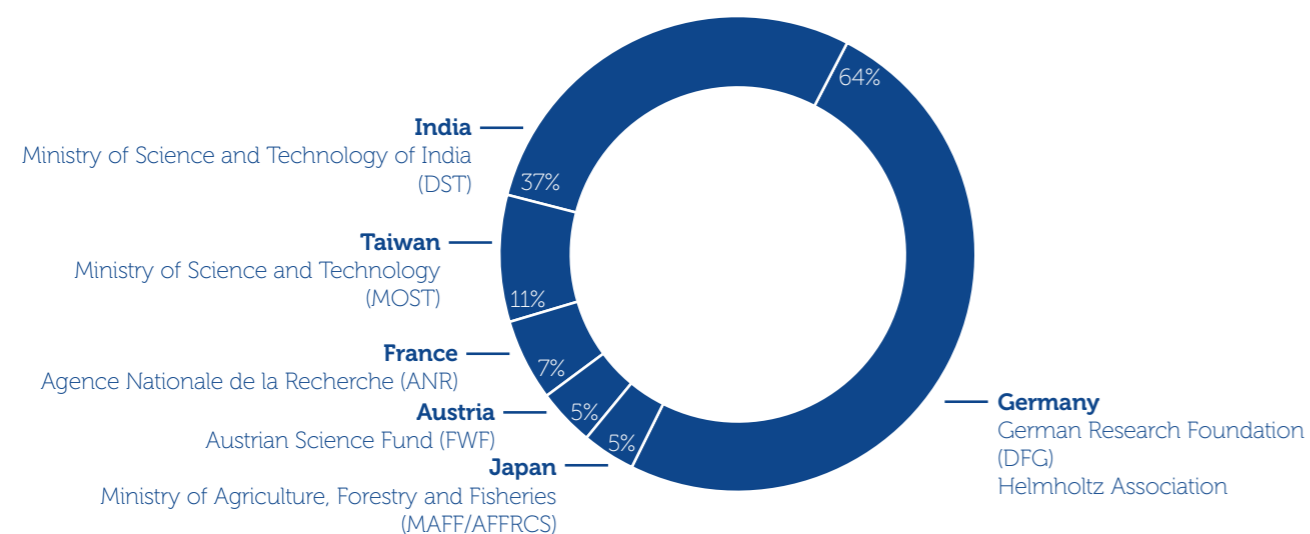
Age distribution of the RSF-funded PI



International cooperation

Global Partnerships

The RSF actively encourages international research cooperation. The Foundation participates in a number of bilateral funding schemes that provide assistance to the outstanding Russian researchers to participate in collaborative research projects with their top international peers based on the principles of excellence, parity funding, credible independent peer-review and mutual trust.



In 2019, the RSF together with its international partners provided funding for 83 international collaborative projects.

The total amount of funding for these projects exceeded US\$ 8 million. The results of this work are represented in over 280 articles in peer-reviewed journals indexed in Web of Science and/or Scopus, with 126 of them appearing in the most reputable Q1 journals.

In 2019, RSF launched the first joint calls for proposals in collaboration with its new strategic partners: the French National Research Agency (Agence Nationale de la Recherche, ANR) and the Research Foundation – Flanders (Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen, FWO).

On behalf of the Russian Federation, RSF actively participates in discussing and shaping the relevant global agenda for research funding agencies. In 2019, RSF representatives spoke as invited guests at the Symposium for Heads of Research Agencies and Foundations held as part of the OECD Global Science Forum (GSF) in Paris, at the 6th World Conference on Research Integrity in Hong Kong, at the Global Science and Technology Leaders Forum in Taipei, and at the World Science Forum in Budapest.

Integrating Russia's excellence in research with global talents


The Foundation's grant recipients are actively involved in international scientific collaborative work. In 2019, 33% of the publications came out of the RSF-funded projects are prepared jointly with foreign researchers, which is above Russia's average collaboration level of 30%. Today, RSF grant recipients are mostly involved in productive cooperation with researchers from Germany, United States, France, United Kingdom and China. Collaborations with scientists from India and China have grown the most over the past four years.



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