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Guidelines for Financial Support for Sci-Tech Innovation Centres

To strengthen financial support for its three international science and technology innovation centres (Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei, the Yangtze River Delta and the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area), the People's Bank of China and ten other government departments jointly issued a guideline on 19 October.

The initiative aims to establish an integrated financial service system for technological innovation by 2030. Key measures include facilitating foreign investment, simplifying cross-border financing for multinational technology companies, and increasing financial support for research and development. While Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei will prioritise original innovation, the Yangtze River Delta will focus on industrial collaboration, and the Greater Bay Area will promote open financial cooperation and regulatory coordination. The guideline also emphasises preventing systemic financial risks.

Speaking at the 2026 Financial Street Forum in Beijing, People's Bank of China (PBOC) Governor Pan Gongsheng said developing the three international science and technology innovation centres is a key national strategic priority. He also highlighted the central bank's commitment to expanding pilot initiatives in these regions, particularly in re-lending facilities, the establishment of a dedicated science and technology bond market, and cross-border investment and financing.

Chinese Scientists and International Awards in 2026

In 2026, Chinese scientists continued to gain significant international recognition, receiving prestigious global awards in acknowledgement of their outstanding contributions to scientific research, technological innovation, environmental sustainability and global development.

Chinese scientist Fu Bojie, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), was awarded the 2026 Volvo Environment Prize in Stockholm, Sweden, for his pioneering research on ecological restoration and sustainability science. His decades-long research on China's Loess Plateau showed how scientifically informed ecological restoration can mitigate soil erosion, enhance biodiversity and carbon sequestration, and maintain a balance among vegetation recovery, water resources and local livelihoods. His research has also provided valuable insights for dry-land regions worldwide facing land degradation, water scarcity and food insecurity.

The Aerospace Information Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (AIRCAS) received the 2026 Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Achievement Award for developing CropWatch, a global cloud-based crop-monitoring platform led by researcher Wu Bingfang. The platform provides timely agricultural information to more than 40 countries and regions, supporting evidence-based policymaking on food security. The award recognised its contribution to strengthening global agricultural monitoring, advancing sustainable development and supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger.

Dr Ding Wang, Professor at the Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, received the 2026 Wolfgang Kiessling International Prize for Species

Conservation in recognition of his four decades of work in freshwater cetacean conservation. His sustained conservation efforts contributed to a 40 per cent increase in the wild population of the Yangtze finless porpoise, reaching 1,426 individuals by 2025. In addition to establishing a breeding programme and China's first multidisciplinary cetacean conservation team, he has helped extend conservation strategies to endangered river dolphin populations in Cambodia and Bangladesh. The award also includes an $80,000 grant to support further research, conservation and species recovery initiatives.

Meanwhile, Guo Huadong, a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, received the 2026 International Astronautical Federation (IAF) Hall of Fame Award for his lifelong contributions to space science and Earth observation. He played a leading role in developing SDGSAT-1, the world's first science satellite dedicated to monitoring progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By making satellite data freely accessible, the initiative has extended its reach to 121 UN member states, demonstrating how China's space-based technologies contribute to international cooperation and global sustainable development.

Scientific Research Collaboration

UK–China scientific cooperation remains an important avenue for bilateral engagement, promoting collaborative research, technological innovation, and knowledge exchange to address shared global challenges despite broader geopolitical differences. A notable example was the China–UK Symposium on Urban Climate Resilience and Green Transition, held from 29 September to 3 October at the Universities of Cambridge and Surrey under the auspices of the Sino-British Engineering Technology Cooperation Steering Committee. Jointly organised by the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE), the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) and six Chinese and British universities, the symposium brought together more than 110 participants from academic institutions, research organisations and industry. Discussions centred on strengthening bilateral cooperation in urban planning, climate resilience, flood management, pollution control, sustainable infrastructure and industrial decarbonisation. The symposium also witnessed the signing of the "China-Europe Joint Manifesto on Building Energy Efficiency and Decarbonization" and provided opportunities for exchanges among early-career researchers. Overall, the event reinforced bilateral scientific and technological cooperation to address climate change and promote sustainable urban development.

In parallel, the fourth meeting of the Sino-British Engineering Technology Cooperation Steering Committee took place on 1 October at the Royal Academy of Engineering in London, bringing together approximately 30 representatives from Chinese and British institutions. Established in 2022, the Committee continues to provide an institutional platform to sustain China–UK cooperation through policy dialogue, technical exchanges, and collaborative engineering research. The discussions focused on expanding cooperation in carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), offshore wind energy, and low-carbon building technologies, reflecting both countries' shared commitment to addressing climate change and advancing sustainable

development. The meeting reviewed previous academic exchanges and identified priorities for bilateral cooperation over the following three years, including a proposed academic exchange on CCUS in 2027. Both sides emphasised the importance of strengthening partnerships among academic institutions, industries and research organisations to address common technological and environmental challenges.

Scientific Research Breakthroughs and Discoveries

China's Third Comprehensive Scientific Expedition to Xinjiang, launched in 2021 with funding of 657 million yuan, concluded in October 2026 and delivered ten major scientific achievements across water resources, ecology, agriculture, biodiversity, mineral resources and energy. Covering 30 research projects, more than 6,400 fieldwork person-trips and 91,232 survey sites, the expedition established comprehensive resource and ecological baselines for the region.

Major findings included Xinjiang's warming and wetting trends, improvements in ecosystem restoration and carbon sequestration, discoveries of new plant and animal species and the development of water-efficient agricultural technologies. The expedition also contributed to significant mineral and energy resource discoveries, advanced desertification control along the Taklamakan Desert and strengthened ecological monitoring and early-warning systems.

Additionally, researchers developed cross-border biodiversity conservation initiatives and shared ecological research findings and technologies with Central Asian countries through Belt and Road cooperation. Overall, the expedition seeks to support Xinjiang's sustainable development, strengthen China's ecological security and resource management and promote Chinese scientific and environmental governance approaches internationally.

China Science Diplomacy

Despite broader geopolitical tensions, strengthening scientific engagement between China and the United States remains an important dimension of bilateral science diplomacy, providing opportunities to sustain research partnerships, facilitate scientific knowledge exchange, and foster mutual trust. In this context, on 28 October, Lan Yujie, Vice President of the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), met with Sudip Parikh, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), to explore avenues for enhancing bilateral scientific cooperation, promoting science communication and supporting young researchers. They also discussed the implications of artificial intelligence for research funding, academic publishing, open access and expanding scientific exchanges.

Earlier, on 26 October, Wu Lizhu, another Vice President of NSFC, met with Albert Horvath, CEO of the American Chemical Society (ACS), to discuss strengthening cooperation between the Chinese and American scientific communities. The meeting emphasised academic exchanges, particularly among early-career researchers, interdisciplinary collaboration in the chemical sciences and promoting mutual trust. Both sides also discussed applying artificial intelligence in chemistry, research integrity, open-access publishing and scientific talent development.