



**RSF**

Russian Science  
Foundation

Russian Science Foundation **2020** Performance Highlights

Laying  
Groundwork  
For future





#### Electronic version

The electronic version is available here:



#### Want to know more?

Detailed information about the RSF is presented here:



## From the Director

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to present to you the report on the Russian Science Foundation's performance results for 2020.

Last year, we experienced coronavirus pandemic, which brought many challenges. Regrettably, we have lost the lives of several outstanding scientists who stood at the origins of the Foundation and contributed to our activities. Despite all the difficulties, the work of the Foundation has not been suspended for a single day. Thanks to our advanced information system and digital infrastructure we had built earlier, we were able to adapt quickly to the new conditions. In 2020, we launched 11 calls for proposals, providing funding to 5 000 research teams. Thanks to RSF funding, more than 37 000 outstanding researchers in Russia are generating new knowledge in every field of basic research. Realizing how difficult it was in the context of ubiquitous lockdowns and restrictions to carry out research, the Russian Science Foundation introduced a number of measures to support our grantees, treating with understanding the problems they faced during the implementation of projects. The reporting campaign was carried out on time, and the funding was provided smoothly without any cuts or delays.

As a result, our grant holders were able to publish more than 12 000 publications in leading international journals, based on a strict international peer-review procedure, many of those excellent works were related to personalized medicine and improving the quality of life. Our grantees have appeared repeatedly in media, providing an expert assessment for the corona-situation, helping prevent panic and the spread of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemics allowed us to transform some of the crucial processes. Firstly, we digitalized the process of submission of proposals and reports through the use of electronic signature. Secondly, together with our expert councils, we developed and implemented a computer-assisted toolkit for finding reviewers. It provides a quicker, more efficient and more fair review process with less human-related involvement and without any quality losses. We will continue to work with the digital profiles of our reviewers to enhance the excellence of the review process even further.

Despite the international restrictions associated with the pandemic, we have noted an increase in the level of internationalization of the RSF-funded projects. In 2020, through the bilateral partnership programs RSF provided funding for 122 international collaborative projects in the total amount of US\$ 10,3 million.

The Russian Science Foundation will face 2021 financial year with a budget of 22,9 billion Russian rubles, which means a year-to-year increase of about 3%. The current pandemic did not affect the number of applications and our grant awards, our review or funding cycle. We are proud of that, and we are committed to keep the position of the funder of choice for the talents in science.

In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who have expressed an interest in the Russia Science Foundation's programs, to our 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 Khulunov, Director General, Russian Science Foundation



## 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 2020 total funding

\$ 300 million

### Publications

23,9 K

### Projects funded

5 K

### Share of Q1 publications (WOS Core Collection)

35%

### Researchers funded

> 37 K

### Publications in Wos CC

11,8 K

### Research organizations funded

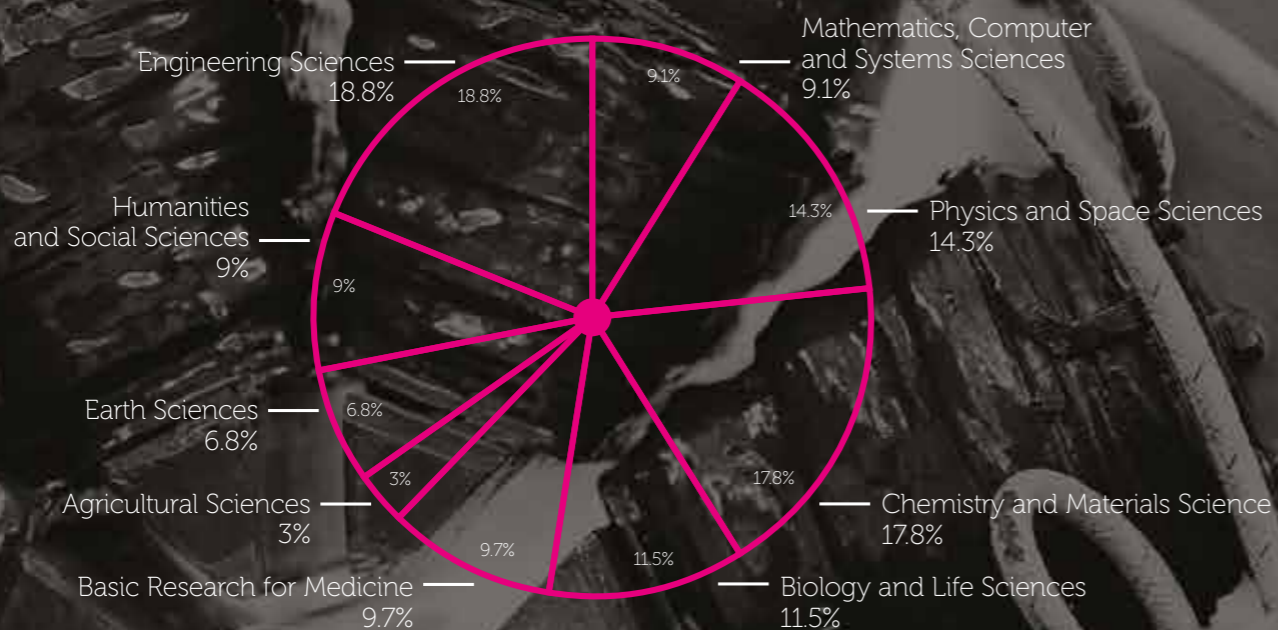
581

### RSF-related publications in media in FY 2020

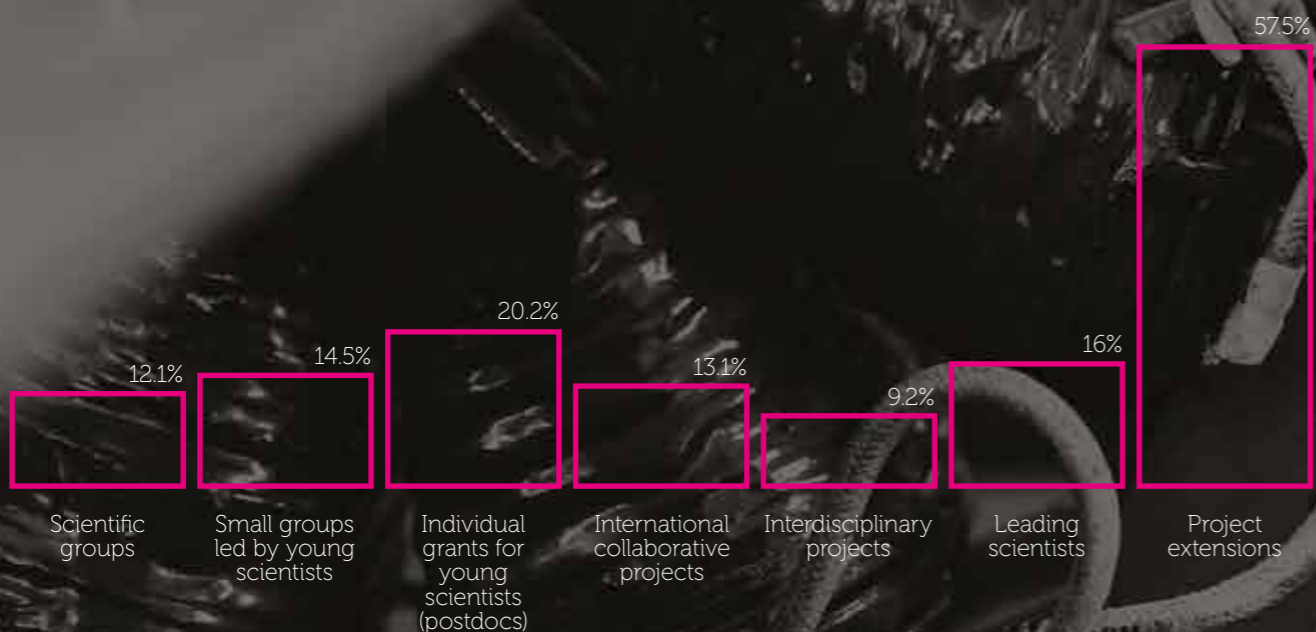
16,4 K

# Funding and Performance Highlights

Funding by Research Areas



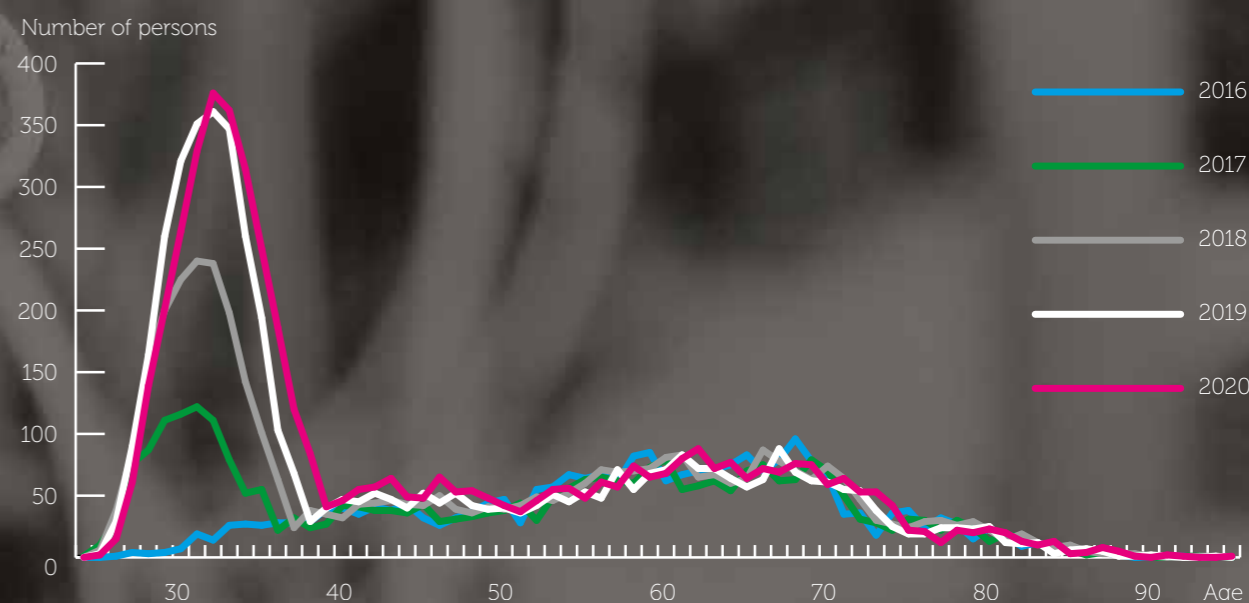
Success rates by Funding Programs



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



Age distribution of the RSF-funded PI







 mfpape

 mfpape

 mfpape

 russian science foundation

 russian\_science\_foundation

109992, Russian Federation,  
Moscow, Solyanka str., 14/3

+7 499 606 0202

info@rscf.ru

rscf.ru