

China

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Arabidopsis research community in China received strong support from funding agencies in 2007. In addition to the continued funding from the National Science Foundation of China (NSFC) for basic research, NSFC initiated a new program on understanding the mode of plant hormone action with a 150 million RMB (1USD=7RMB) budget for eight years. Five million will be allocated to promote international collaboration in plant hormone research. The program is managed by NSFC and supervised by a group of eminent Chinese scientists coordinated by Dr. Jiayang Li at the Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). In 2007, NSFC funded 9 key projects and 21 smaller projects, aiming at deciphering novel mechanisms on hormonal control of plant development and environmental responses, and identifying new players in hormone signaling, as well as developing reliable and sensitive technologies for hormone detection.

Under the National Basic Research Initiative (973), the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) funded a five-year project on Molecular Mechanism of Sexual Plant Reproduction and Fertility Control and Its Application in Agriculture (30 million RMB) coordinated by Dr. Mengxiang Sun at Wuhan University. In addition, under the Reproduction & Development Program of the National Mid- and Long-term Science and Technology Initiative (2005-2020), the MOST funded two major projects in plant research: Molecular Mechanism of Stem Cell and Cell Differentiation in Plants (25 million RMB) coordinated by Dr. Yuxin Hu at the Institute of Botany, CAS, and Molecular Mechanism of Cell-Cell Recognition during Pollination in Plants (25 million RMB) coordinated by Dr. Xiansheng Zhang at Shandong Agricultural University. A large portion of these funds will go to Arabidopsis and rice research. Undoubtedly, with such strong financial support, Arabidopsis research in

China will continue to flourish in coming years.

In June, 2007, the 18th International Conference on Arabidopsis Research (ICAR) was successfully held in Beijing, China. It was the first time that ICAR was held in an Asian country. Over 800 Chinese participants (out of about 1500 total) attended the conference; this demonstrated the growing interest of Chinese scientists in the Arabidopsis model system.

Major funding sources for Arabidopsis functional genomics:

- National Science Foundation of China
83 Shuangqing Road, Haidian district, Beijing 100080, China
Website: www.nsfc.gov.cn/nsfc2008/index.htm
- Ministry of Science and Technology
15B, Fuxing Road, Beijing, 100862, China