



Russian  
Science  
Foundation

# Research ethics in Russia: challenges for the Russian Science Foundation

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## RSF, 5 years already!

Funding

**80** bln RUB

Organizations funded

**>600**

Researchers funded

**50** K

Articles published in Wos CC

**>38** K

Projects and programs funded

**>5,5** K

Articles published

**>105** K

Young researchers

**65** %

Publications in the media

**35** K

## Background



НЕПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННЫЙ  
ЭКОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ ФОНД  
ИМЕНИ В.И. ВЕРНАДСКОГО



Foundation for Assistance to  
Small Innovative Enterprises



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE  
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Ministry of Telecom  
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МИНИСТЕРСТВО СЕЛЬСКОГО ХОЗЯЙСТВА  
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ  
MINISTRY  
OF AGRICULTURE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION



MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
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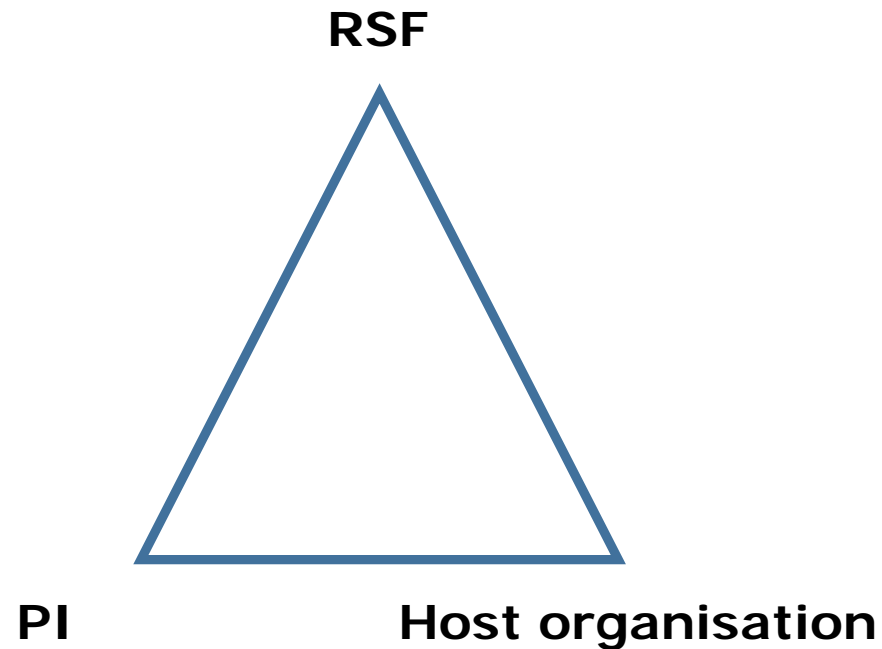
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT  
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
Mintrans Russia



MINISTRY OF ENERGY  
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

  
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE  
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## Method

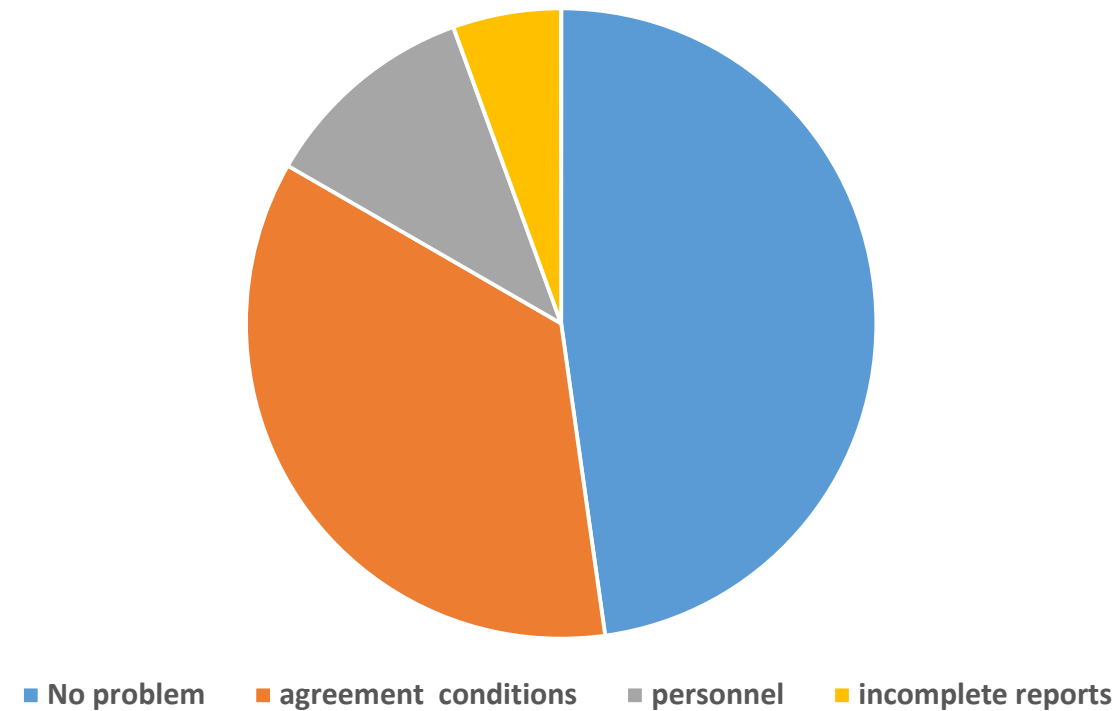


**We analysed the implementation of 2201 grant agreements concluded by RSF in 2017 and checked with other research funding agencies in Russia for duplication in funding.**

**The results were compared to the similar studies conducted in 2015, 2016 and 2017.**

## Grant Agreements Monitoring

**956 grants (43%) had no problems identified, which is better than 2015 results (35%)**





## Grant Agreements Monitoring

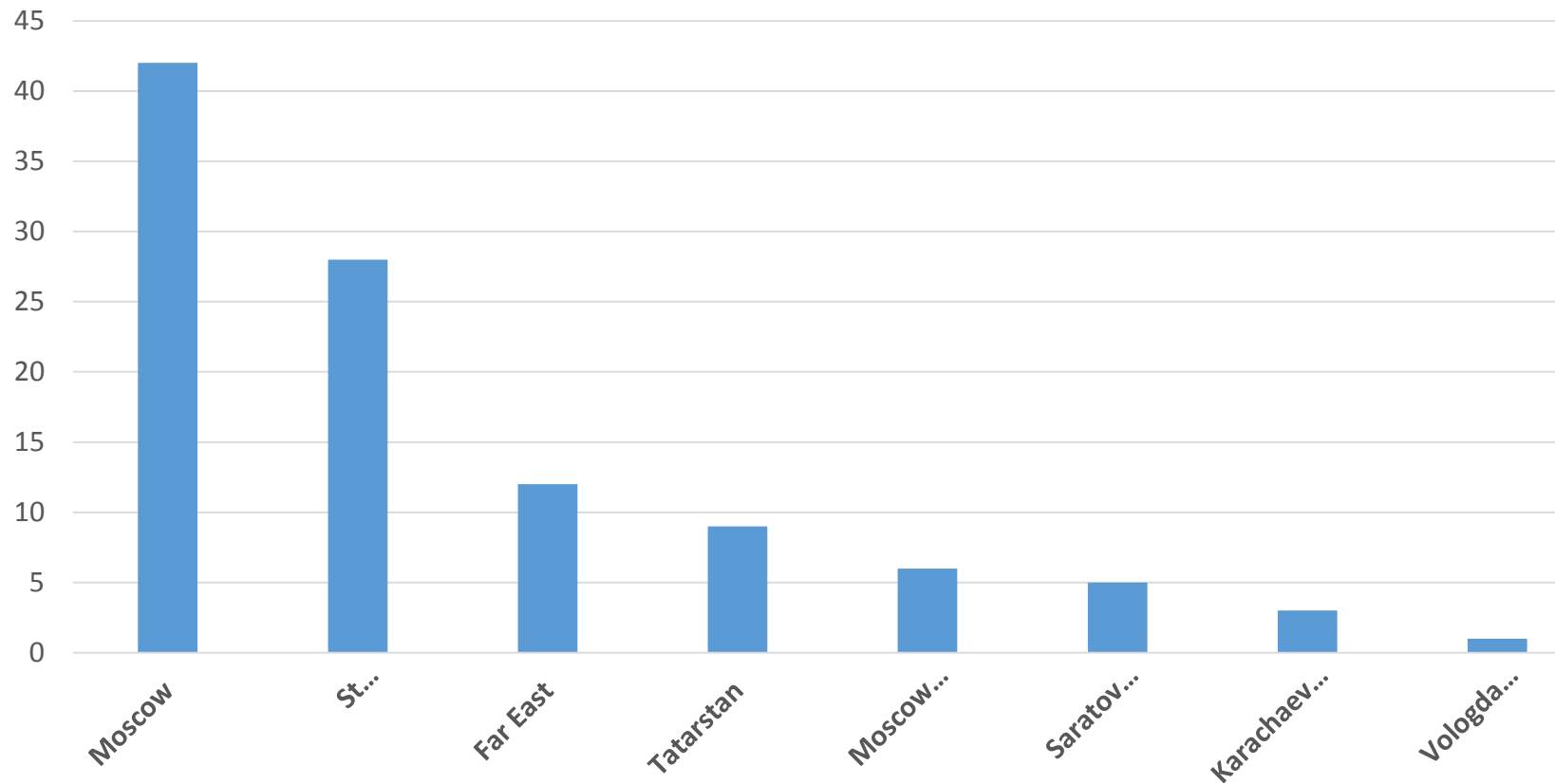
|                            | 2015       | 2016      | 2017      | 2018      | 2019      |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Terminated Projects</b> | <b>4</b>   | <b>13</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Early Warnings</b>      | <b>135</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>24</b> |

**2099 violations of the essential terms of 1245 grant agreements**

**46 cases of manipulations when research funds were used for non-research purposes**

**Based on the assessment of grant reports, in 2015-2019 RSF suspended funding of 48 projects, 382 projects received warnings from the RSF Expert Council**

## On-Site Audits

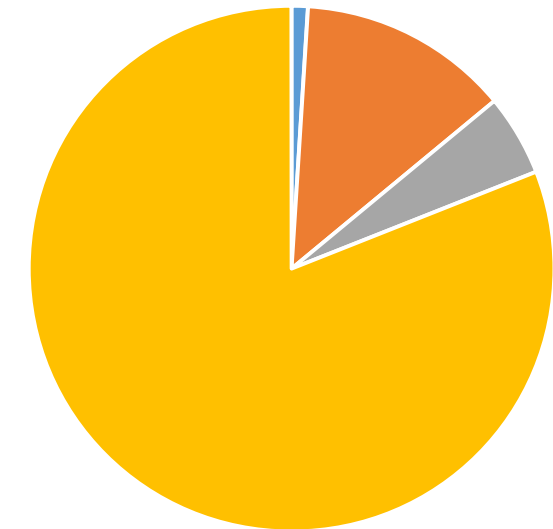


| Common Issues                          | %   |
|--|-----|
| Accounting issues                      | 30% |
| Ineligible costs (Other costs)         | 15% |
| Ineligible costs (Travel costs)        | 15% |
| Ineligible costs (Equipment purchases) | 5%  |
| Ineligible costs (Materials purchases) | 4%  |

**In 2018, RSF completed 49 on-site audits to check 104 projects**

## Publications Audit

FO=(“RUSSIAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION” OR “RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION” OR “RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC FUND” OR “RSF” OR “RSCF” OR “RUSSIAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION RSF” OR “RUSSIAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION RSCF” OR “RUSSIAN SCIENCE FUND” OR “RNF” OR “RSF GRANT” OR “RSCF GRANT” OR “RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION RUSSIAN FEDERATION” OR “RSF RUSSIA” OR “RSF GRANT” OR “RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC FUND RSF” NOT “RSF RAFAEL SCIENCE FUND” NOT “RSF RAFAEL SCIENCE FUND GRANT” NOT “RUSSIAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION RFBR RUSSIA” NOT “RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION RFBR”)



- Missing RSF acknowledgement
- Incorrect RSF acknowledgement
- Not indexed in WoS/Scopus
- No problem

**In 2018, RSF checked 9764 publications reported by RSF grantees in 2017**

**19% of them did not meet quality conditions**



## Duplicate Funding

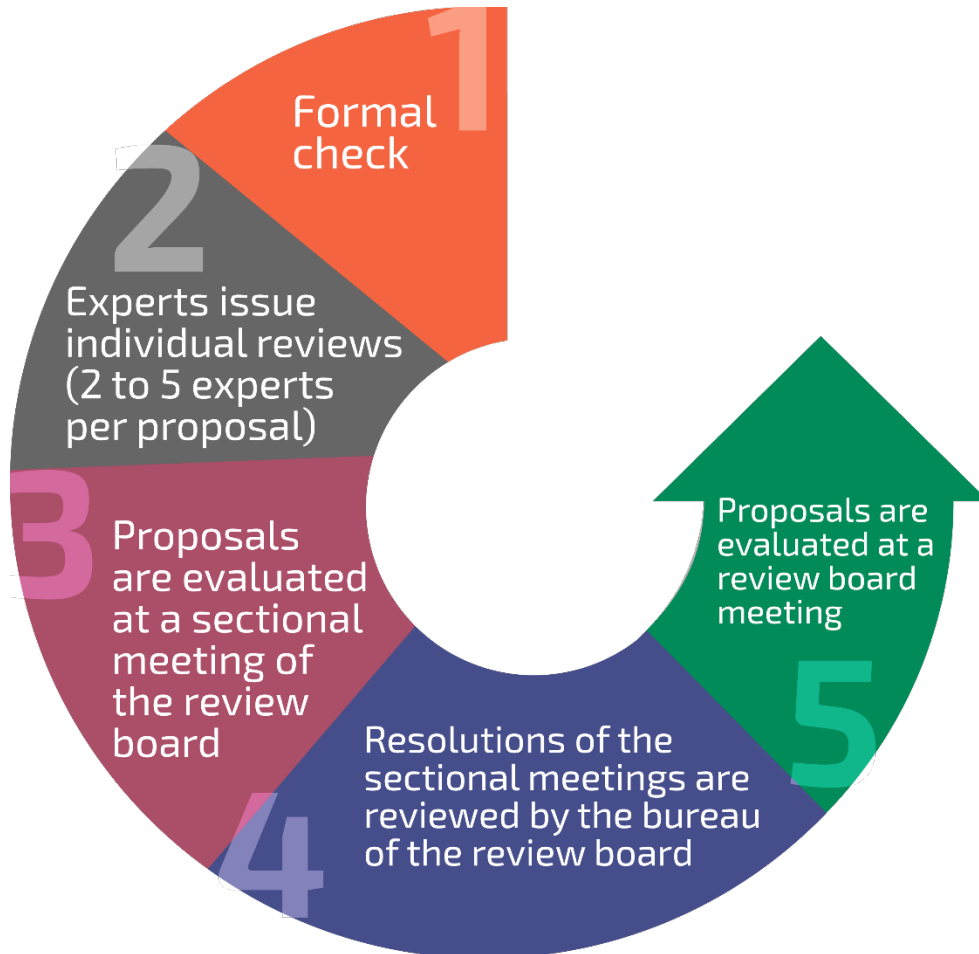
**RSF rule: no third party funding of the same work is allowed.**

**As a results of cross-checking and screening applications with other research funders, in 2018 RSF identified 45 suspicious pairs of duplicate funding.**

**After manual investigation, one project was closed and 12 projects received warnings.**

**This calls for funding agencies in Russia and abroad to take further steps to nip duplicate awards.**

## Ethics in Review



**Ethics in review is another concern for the RSF with 1000 honorary foreign reviewers complementing 4000+ Russian reviewers.**

**Annually dozens of reviewers found violating the review guidelines, get expelled from the reviewers pool and banned for new review assignments.**

**In 2018, RSF implemented AI-enabled reviewer assignment solution but Col remains the potential issue.**

**Confidentiality issues:**

- “Hello! I’ve got your proposal for review!”**
- The winners are known before official public announcements**

## Webinars

| Statistics                            | 2018 webinars |        |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| Date                                  | 7 May         | 31 May |
| Duration (min)                        | 68            | 44     |
| Number of participants                | 441           | 494    |
| Number of participating countries     | 71            | 84     |
| Number of participating cities        | 278           | 418    |
| Number of participating organisations | 14            | 8      |
| Number of pre-registered questions    | 28            | 8      |
| Number of questions in chat           | 119           | 77     |

**Each year RSF organises 2-3 webinars for grantees,  
2-3 webinars and meetings with reviewers**

## Conclusions

1. Lack of information of research misconduct and fraud in Russia, which may be on rise in recent years due to increased competition for research funds.
2. RSF builds a nation-wide infrastructure to ensure research funds are used ethically. This involves webinars, audit visits and routine training work with grant recipients and peer-reviewers as well as the regular monitoring of grant agreements implementation.
3. Integrity issues call for funding agencies in Russia and abroad to take further steps to nip duplicate awards.

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