

# naturejobs

# CAREER GUIDE

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## ASIA-PACIFIC

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**M**aking a career decision can be like trying to solve an equation. Both tend to be easier when they involve fewer variables. Unfortunately, scientists who are thinking about where to work to achieve their goals must balance multiple priorities, often on the basis of poor quality data.

One thing that is clear is that as competition for research positions and funding grows in the West, opportunities are opening up in the East. China doubled the proportion of its gross domestic product that it spends on research and development (R&D) from 1% in 2002 to 2% in 2014 — and it plans to increase this to 2.5% by 2020. By then, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development predicts that China will have overtaken the United States as the country that spends the most on R&D.

South Korea's investment of 4.3% of its GDP on R&D in 2014 was the largest of any country in the world. In January, Singapore unveiled a five-year plan to boost government support for R&D by 18%. Japan, while also increasing funding, is stepping up its efforts to attract international students and researchers by making more tuition available in languages other than Japanese.

Money isn't everything, of course. Australia continues to be a magnet for

international researchers by focusing on established strengths such as nanoscience. New Zealand also concentrates on its specialities such as earth and environmental sciences. Both countries have the happiest people of the nations profiled in this supplement. New Zealand came eighth and Australia ninth in the United Nations *World Happiness Report 2016 Update*.

India is not yet a major player in science. Still, some of its leading institutions increasingly see international recruitment as key to the country achieving its scientific ambitions.

The 2016 *Naturejobs* Career Guide to the Asia-Pacific contains facts and figures on metrics such as research quality, the proportion of the workforce in research and development, salaries and cost of living. It also presents tips from employers and employees on how to get a job and how to deal with cultural differences in each of the seven featured countries.

The hope is that this information can help simplify the decision-making equations faced by those thinking about moving to the region, and in turn increase the chance of finding career solutions that meet their expectations.

**Nic Fleming**  
*Guest Editor*

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