

# Russian Science Diplomacy Policy:

## The path to global leadership

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### Abstract

Science diplomacy serves as both a catalyst for global cooperation, addressing shared challenges, and a reflection of national interests, expressing intentions to benefit from cooperation. Such duality is a subject of debate in academic community, especially when considering national policy implementation. Russia has always been a participant of international cooperation in science and technology, but interest in the study and comprehensive development of science diplomacy as an independent concept emerged later than in Western countries. The present paper examines the main features of Russian science diplomacy: its changes, related previous and actual policy documents, main actors and achievements in this field. Russian science diplomacy is integrated into the system of international scientific and technical cooperation (ISTC) and as it stands from review, heavily depends on the foreign policy environment. With the newly accepted ISTC Concept in 2019, Russia declares its intention to maintain global leadership in the world, including by the means of science diplomacy, which is understood as a direction of public diplomacy.

**Key words:** Russian foreign policy, international S&T cooperation, leadership, national interests

## 1. Introduction

Science diplomacy is profoundly relevant in our interconnected world as it provides a constructive and collaborative framework for addressing global challenges (Gluckman et. al, 2018). Along with this, current state of affairs is marked by heightened national competition and geopolitical complexities, and the concept of science diplomacy could be also regarded as a pivotal force shaping international relations (Ruffini, 2020).

Russia's science diplomacy has transformed significantly over the past two decades. The formation of the Russian model in this field is influenced by a number of external and internal factors: global foreign policy challenges, the state of the institute of Russian science and the scientific

community, inflows and outflows of researchers, etc. Russian science diplomacy practices were declared as driver in ensuring the national interests of the country in terms of access to know-how and resources, knowledge, implementation of "soft power", promotion of achievements of national science, economic, security interests, etc. (Krasnova et. al, 2021).

This article aims to overview of Russian policy, which introduces the science diplomacy concept. First, we examine the outdated documents, that are related to this concept to track the main features of policymaking in this field. The main limitation is the "international science and technology cooperation" paradigm, prevalent in previous Russian policymaking, so science diplomacy will be outlined by implicit understanding. Second,

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we will present the current policy, its implementation examples, and Russian main advancements in science diplomacy.

## 2. Previous experience of science diplomacy in Russia

Activities related to the establishment of international science and technology (S&T) connections have started in Russia since the middle of the 20th century since the formation of key Soviet diplomatic educational

organizations (Diplomatic Academy, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia - RUDN, Moscow State Institute of International Relations – MGIMO). As researchers note, the creation of regional studies institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences also played an important role in developing international S&T connections, since their establishment aimed increasing interaction between countries in multiple fields (Krasnova et. al, 2020).

Systematic practice of science diplomacy assigned by the policies has appeared relatively recently: researchers refer to the first half of the 2000s (Reinhardt, 2020). Such practices have been mentioned in documents regulating the science, technology and innovation (ST&I) policy,

**Table 1** Conceptual foundations for scientific diplomacy in Russia, review of expired policies

	Related to science diplomacy paragraphs	
	Macrolevel	Microlevel
The Doctrine of the Development of Russian Science, 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The need to create favorable conditions for attracting investments in science by international organizations</li> <li>▶ Priority of cooperative research aimed at solving global problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The need for Russian scientists to participate in international projects</li> </ul>
Federal Law No. 127-FZ "On Science and State Scientific and Technical Policy", 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Obligations of the State to create the necessary conditions for international scientific and scientific-technical cooperation in various forms (assistance, conclusion of international agreements, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The established right of scientific and scientific-technical organizations to cooperate with foreign organizations</li> </ul>
The concept of reforming Russian science for the period 1998–2000, 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Priority of joint competitive R&amp;D and promotion of Russian high-tech products to the world market</li> <li>▶ Establishment of scientific relations and cooperation in the field of high-tech technologies in order to ensure a common scientific and economic space of the CIS</li> <li>▶ To promote the creation of joint scientific organizations and at the same time to enhance Russia's presence in international organizations</li> <li>▶ Russia's integration into the global system of division of labor in the field of S&amp;T and its increasing role in solving the problems of modern civilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Freedom of choice of partners, directions and forms of cooperation, communication with foreign colleagues for S&amp;T organizations</li> </ul>
The concept of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of ISTC, 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Formation of "centers of international integration" of Russian fundamental science in Russia (joint research institutes, centers, laboratories, etc.)</li> <li>▶ International promotion of the achievements of Russian science</li> <li>▶ Development of contacts with innovative and technological structures, innovation networks and programs of highly developed countries</li> <li>▶ Development of attaché for science and technology institution and representative offices of the Russian Federation on trade and economic issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Strengthening cooperation with the Russian diaspora</li> </ul>
Strategy for the development of science and innovation in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2015, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Development of international academic associations, in particular within the CIS, creation of joint scientific and technological centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Positioning of Russian scientific organizations in international programs</li> <li>▶ Stimulating exchanges in the field of university science</li> <li>▶ Strengthening cooperation with the Russian diaspora engaged in R&amp;D</li> </ul>
Strategy of innovative development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ International S&amp;T cooperation as a factor of economic efficiency of measures</li> <li>▶ Expansion of the international integration of Russian university science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Attracting foreign qualified personnel for R&amp;D by trade missions</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the author

the contents of which included the section "International (interstate) scientific and technical cooperation" (ISTC) – a well-established term in Russian legislation. The relationship between science diplomacy and ISTC is a controversial topic in both the Russian and international research fields: there is no consensus in distinction of these two concepts (Kisilev & Nechaeva, 2017). Within the framework of this review, we will focus on science diplomacy as practices of interaction between national parties in the field of S&T in order to intensify contacts and improve relationships between countries.

Based on this approach, previous policies in this field suggest that science diplomacy is implicitly understood as one of the directions of the ISTC, the interweaving of scientific and diplomatic practices to achieve national goals for the development of S&T. For this reason, it is relevant to review the conceptual foundations of science diplomacy in the early ISTC documents (see Table 1). In general, the previous policies are characterized by the predominance of strategic documents (Concepts, strategies), which asserted the need to develop international S&T connections. The traditional problems of such documents in Russia are: (a) lack of conceptualization of terms significant for the policy implementation; (b) the underdevelopment of implementation mechanisms, the lack of legal acts on the implementation of the proposed measures. The most notable cases of the policy implementation in this field are exclusively related to specialized policy tools for the development of S&T: for example, the provisions on scientific cooperation outlined in the Strategy of Innovative Development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020 are reflected in the KPIs for attracting international companies to innovation centers for R&D as well as the annual referral of young Russian specialists to postgraduate and master's degrees at leading foreign universities. In addition, the 2020 Strategy is one of the few documents regulating scientific diplomacy, following the adoption of which the state program was introduced as an implementation mechanism.

### 3. Current agenda

The introduction into legislative practice in Russia of science diplomacy as a independent concept has occurred quite recently. The key document in this field

is the Concept of International Scientific and Technical Cooperation (ISTC Concept), approved in 2019, defines science diplomacy as a special form of ISTC – "related to public diplomacy, a system of interactions between scientists, research teams, organizations performing research and development, and the activities of the authorities related to it" (MSHE, 2019).

The concept is primarily a "methodological imperative" (Dezhina & Klyucharev, 2020), which defines a system of views on the subject under consideration and obliges to be guided by designated principles when managing the subject. Such a function of Concepts, in fact, is peculiar to a similar level of policy: given the lack of a systematic approach to the implementation of international S&T cooperation, which is pointed out by the researchers (Krasnova et al., 2020), the document offers a foundation for further development. In the context of the 2019 ISTC Concept, such a foundation, for example, is the definition of science diplomacy given for the first time in Russian legislative practice and prospects for its implementation. The document is also declarative in nature: it is establishing a new understanding and denote new meanings of S&T cooperation between Russia and other countries.

Nevertheless, as part of the current review, it should be noted that the concept of science diplomacy has significant specifics in Russia. Traditionally this concept includes cooperation activities in the technological and innovative fields, so academic discourse provides a "science and technology diplomacy" term. In Russia the focus is shifted specifically towards scientific activities due to geopolitical and macroeconomic conditions: in the last five years, there has been a decrease in the inflow of foreign investment into the country's innovation sector, while the policy of import substitution remains a priority, so the importance of technology and innovation diplomacy has decreased (Dezhina & Klyucharev, 2020). The proposals to empower Russian technology and innovation sectors by the means of cooperation are still provided in the actual policy, but comparing to the previous documents, they are less elaborated.

Secondly, the current policy in terms of the conceptualization blurs the boundaries of science diplomacy. The 2019 Concept offers both a broad (definition provided in the document) and a narrow (certain paragraphs devoted to science diplomacy) interpretation of science diplomacy. On the one hand, the Concept, based on the definition presented in the

document, provides an opportunity to interpret, for example, the creation of an international innovation and technological infrastructure as science diplomacy. At the same time, such activity is not indicated in the sections devoted to science diplomacy.

The 2019 ISTC Concept is the main and most elaborated policy in the field of science diplomacy, but not the only document regulating its meaning and de facto application (See Table 2):

Table 2

Current documents regulating science diplomacy

Policy document	Related to science diplomacy paragraphs
Strategy of S&T development of the Russian Federation, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Development of the mechanism of scientific diplomacy as a branch of public diplomacy (scientific diplomacy is mentioned for the first time in legislation)</li> <li>► International contacts and connections of the scientific community as a component of the strategy for the implementation of foreign policy and diplomacy</li> <li>► Participation of Russian scientists and research groups in international projects providing access to new competencies and (or) resources of the organization based on the national interests of the Russian Federation</li> </ul>
The Concept of technological development of the Russian Federation, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Strengthening multilateral sustainable ties with friendly countries in the field of joint creation and development of new technologies and markets for high-tech products</li> <li>► Formation of foreign branches and joint laboratories of higher education organizations and scientific organizations in friendly countries</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the author

A separate group of documents related to the science diplomacy are bilateral and multilateral S&T agreements with other states – framework or profile agreements designating key scientific areas of cooperation. Such documents, being first of all declarations, are a sign of the "common political will for «friendship in science»" (Reinhardt, 2021), and provide a conceptual framework for conducting science diplomacy activities. Russia has a large contractual base, which has been formed since the first half of the 1990s: since then, agreements with leading powers on all continents were concluded. At the same time, framework agreements are the most vulnerable to the geopolitics form of cooperation. Starting with the first package of sanctions in 2014 introduced by the Western powers, the development of international cooperation has slowed down in Russia. Some of agreements have been suspended for political reasons: both at the initiative of foreign countries (Great Britain, Germany) and at the initiative of Russia (with the United States, in the nuclear sphere).

## 4. The goal of Russian science diplomacy policy

In Russia science diplomacy serves as an implementation tool, a special form of ISTC. Its main goal is to contribute

to "the development of international relations taking into account the interests of the Russian Federation, the development of dialogue between the scientific and technical community and the improvement of mutual understanding between peoples" (MSHE, 2019). Nevertheless, within the framework of the discourse of science diplomacy models, its application and reflection take place at the level of programs and strategic documents of various levels (Krasnova et al., 2020), in the case of Russia – the ISTC Concept. Science diplomacy is aimed at achieving the goals of the ISTC, so considering the context (at least the goals of the main policy) is valuable for the overview.

The main objectives of the ISTC of Russia are: (a) the development of Russian science and globally competitive innovative sectors of the economy – with an emphasis on strengthening national intellectual potential; (b) solving problems related to "Big Challenges" (global challenges) – with special attention to their projection on the Russian Federation and its ISTC partners; (c) ensuring Russia's international leadership, including by increasing the contribution of the Russian Federation to the definition of the global scientific and technological agenda (MSHE, 2019). In many ways, the goals are comparable with previous main documents in the ISTC field (the component of the development of Russian ST&I has always been integral, the collective solution of "Big Challenges" was mentioned in various formulations in the

previous version of the Concept). However, significant additions were made in the 2019 version regarding benefits for Russia. The approval of such formulations in the context of tense international relations, imposed sanctions and the narrative of "detering Russia", can be considered as a process of metamorphosis of Russia's "national interests" component. ISTC's goals have made the transition from internal development of ST&I and equal cooperation, the use of consultative mechanisms with third countries, to a policy that puts the protection of the interests of Russia and Russian scientists equivalent or more important in relation to other goals, but the main component – global leadership.

Regarding the goal of world leadership of Russia, it is necessary to indicate that leadership also serves as a criterion for the success of international cooperation (MSHE, 2019). The Concept explains that leadership does not specially mean introduction of advanced S&T developments or "competitional meaning", as it was, for example, during the cold war, but rather significant contribution of Russia in the global S&T agenda, so Russia can define its essence. At the same time, the authors of the document interpret leadership as "creating favorable conditions for attracting the best talents", as well as intention to "localize the international research structure in Russia". This brings political meanings to the document, since the concept of "leadership" considering these facts can be compared to the concept of "soft power" (Nye, 1990). Such interpretation also can induce that Russian government is going to use science diplomacy as a foreign policy tool.

The 2019 Concept elaborates the application of science diplomacy more deeply in comparison with other policies in related fields – both previous and current, in which it is mentioned only in the sole context of achieving national S&T goals (see Tables 1 & 2). The 2019 Concept designates science diplomacy as a mean of strengthening mutual understanding and trust, building a dialogue with foreign partners. Of course, this refers to the Cold War, during which S&T cooperation, thanks to the agreements concluded, had some immunity from political tension: researchers cite the Vienna Conventions of 1961 and 1963, as well as examples of organized

scientific cooperation – the Soyuz–Apollo program, JINR–CERN cooperation (Krynzina, 2020). Russian policy makers declare their hope for science as a trust building tool when opportunities of public diplomacy are limited. Such understanding is supported by reputable researchers and experts in this field (Reinhardt, 2022; RIAC, 2022; RAS, 2023). The use of science diplomacy to collectively address "Global Challenges" is emphasized in the similar way.

Science diplomacy is listed as the main measure of the ISTC. The 2019 Concept proposes the use of this form in order to achieve the goals of developing international relations and world leadership in the field of S&T, in particular:

- Increasing the activity of the main actors (attachés for science and technology and foreign offices of Rosstrudnichestvo<sup>2</sup>) for the purpose of communication with foreign subjects of S&T, organization of joint activities. This refers to the search for opportunities for cooperation and the promotion of Russian achievements, instead of the traditional collection of information (Shakirov, 2021).
- The formation of the "Ambassadors of Russian Science" – the association of outstanding Russian and foreign scientists to promote Russian achievements and brands of Russian S&T. This measure operates at the micro level (ambassadors act among teams of scientists and researchers, promotion at international events), in contrast to the activities of the science attachés.
- Activation of youth science diplomacy through support for the participation of young scientists in relevant global associations.

Science diplomacy according to the ISTC Concept is also given as a guideline for the development of a system of training domestic and attracting the best world S&T personnel, as well as the development of new forms of international scientific cooperation.

The authors of the Concept also indicated the topic of the Russian "scientific diaspora" abroad<sup>3</sup>. The document suggests active cooperation with such scientists, using their opportunities to increase mutual understanding with the foreign scientific community. At the same time, the authors propose to carry out the process of

<sup>2</sup> The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rosstrudnichestvo) is a federal executive body of the Russian Federation responsible for providing public services and managing state property in the field of ensuring and developing international relations between the Russian Federation and foreign states.

<sup>3</sup> This definition refers to Russian-speaking scientists–compatriots (those, who have Russian citizenship) working abroad.

their reintegration in parallel by creating comfortable financial, infrastructural, and legal conditions for working in various positions in Russia.

Regarding policy implementation, the Concept has significant drawbacks: first, its indicative nature (Reinhardt, 2020). The Concept defines the views and approaches to the implementation of the policy; however, the document was only accepted by the Russian Government, but not approved at the level of the President or the Government, which brings its nature closer to a recommendation. This is associated with problems in the implementation of both ISTC and science diplomacy mechanisms – they are not prescribed by the Concept (it only designates responsible government bodies), in current practice there are difficulties at the level of practical implementation of such documents (Dezhina & Klyucharev, 2020). This does not specifically mean that proposed measures are not being implemented (see Paragraph 5), but the results of some activities are technically difficult to explore because of the character of interaction between parties – for example the agreements made by science attachés are often publicly unavailable.

## 5. Main actors of Russian science diplomacy

One of the key players is the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. This body is responsible for the activities of attachés for science and technology abroad: it oversees their activities and maintains objective setting. Its structure also includes the Department of International Cooperation, whose functions include interaction with government agencies of foreign states, international and foreign organizations in the S&T field. In addition, the Ministry is tasked with developing strategic, planning and program documents for the implementation of the ISTC Concept and science diplomacy.

Russian attachés for science and technology are diplomats of a specialized profile, directly involved in science diplomacy. They are selected among government officials, as well as representatives of the Russian Academy of Sciences and State higher educational institutions. The main factor determining the content of their activities is the common agenda of cooperation

with a particular country (the development of nuclear energy, space industry technologies, etc.). Regarding the forms of activity of attachés, they traditionally carry out: (a) collecting information and compiling reports on legislative changes, major events, and best practices in ST&I in the host country; (b) supporting cooperation in the field of intergovernmental projects or programs in the S&T field (Shakirov, 2021). The attaché for science and technology acts primarily as a representative of the Russian state, therefore, the focus of their activities is shifted to existing institutional forms of cooperation (bilateral or multilateral agreements between countries, international projects, and programs), rather than supporting horizontal and informal interaction with the scientific community or its representatives. However, the attaché is authorized to promote such relationships, new projects can be initiated from such contacts – in this case, the institution of scientific attaché performs the function of a communication channel for “bottom-up” policymaking. There are cases when specialized S&T groups were organized at the embassy under the leadership of attaché for science and technology (Russian embassies in Greece, Germany), the team may also include representatives of profile Russian organizations (Rosatom, Rostec, etc.). Information on the number of Russian scientific attachés is limited: the latest statement, dated 2019, refers to the activity of such attachés in 30 countries around the world (RAS, 2019).

Historically, the development of science diplomacy in Russia is linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Previously, this body oversaw the activities of the attachés for science and technology. Today, the Ministry occupies the role of coordinator: it is responsible for general political and diplomatic support. The ISTC Concept states that science diplomacy should be conducted “in accordance with the unified foreign policy line of the Russian Federation”, actors of science diplomacy must provide information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the past activities in this field (MSHE, 2019).

Rossotrudnichestvo – The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation – is also an actor of science diplomacy. Despite the tasks assigned to it to expand S&T connections, the Agency is mainly engaged in educational and cultural events, which, however, may correspond to the idea of promoting the brand of Russian science. Among the relevant to the Concept



activities, it is possible to identify the attraction of talents – work with foreign students. Foreign departments of *Rossotrudnichestvo* participate in the selection of foreign students to Russian universities. Many of these students remain in Russia, as they are bound by obligations based on the results of financial support received, some of them may start a scientific career. In general, researchers and practitioners tend to assess the Agency's activities as auxiliary, consisting in the support of scientific and diplomatic contacts (Krasnova et al., 2021).

As it follows from the definition given in the Concept, representatives of the scientific community are participants of science diplomacy (MSHE, 2019). This group has broad autonomy at the level of maintaining bilateral and multilateral relations, they are free to take their own initiatives to establish connections with foreign partners to maintain their own development. This is most often relevant for universities and research institutes (primarily institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences), which enter the international arena. Two types of such organizations can be distinguished: (a) organizations that specialize in diplomacy (Peoples' Friendship University of Russia - RUDN, Moscow State Institute of International Relations - MGIMO, National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences – IMEMO RAS); (b) leading Russian universities that strive for international recognition and, recently, active export of higher education (Higher School of Economics – HSE, Moscow State University – MSU, St. Petersburg State University – St. Petersburg State University).

## 6. The representative cases including the achievement to have done until now

A classic example of a successful science diplomacy is the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR), located in Dubna, Moscow Region. The Institute was founded in 1956 and was aimed at broad cooperation in the field of fundamental research of nuclear physics. Among the modern JINR projects, the NICA collider is being developed – a flagship mega-science project that unites more than 500 scientists. The number of participating countries in the project is 20, their number has not changed since the active phase of Russia-Ukraine crisis

in 2022.

Other, contemporary successful example of the institutionalization of science diplomacy in Russia is the case of Russian-German cooperation in S&T based on bilateral agreements (Reinhardt, 2021). The cooperation framework between the two parties began to form only in the XXI century but developing consistently and according to the bottom-up model: interdepartmental agreements on a number of scientific and high-tech areas laid the foundation for concluding a framework agreement on cooperation in 2011, and in 2018 - a roadmap to it, reflecting in detail the formats and mechanisms of interaction. The fact, that these actions were taken in the context of geopolitical tensions related to the events in Crimea in 2014, makes this case special. The implementation of the proposed in ISTC 2019 Concept science diplomacy measures can be also observed today:

- In order to develop the institution of "Ambassadors of Russian Science", a special departmental program of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education was created with the involvement of a consortium of universities and research organizations. In November 2023, the first titles of "ambassadors of Russian science" were awarded, which will promote Russian S&T achievements on international platforms. All the ambassadors are of foreign origin, most of them are graduates of Soviet and Russian universities (MSHE, 2023).

- There are signals of *Rossotrudnichestvo*'s activity in the field of scientific diplomacy, including youth diplomacy. This mainly concerns the organization of events – the III Congress of Young Scientists, which hosted more than 5,000 participants from 25 countries, as well as promotional activities in the countries of presence (at least Egypt, Senegal, Chile). The Agency's activation may also be related to a new agenda – the project to popularize the «Decade of Science and Technology in Russia».

At the level of "university science diplomacy", one can single out a successful example of the creation of a joint university MSU-BIT (Moscow State University – Beijing Institute of Technology) in Shenzhen, China. The main purpose of the joint university, of course, due to Russian HEI specifics, is training (Kuzminov & Yudkevich, 2021), but there are also research centers in its structure. In addition, it is also worth noting the activities of other Russian universities, especially the

HSE, in establishing academic and scientific ties with educational organizations in the Asia-Pacific region: representative offices were opened in India and Indonesia in 2023, framework agreements on cooperation and academic mobility were concluded with universities in Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia and other countries.

## 7. Conclusion

As can be seen from the presented review, Russia nowadays is making first steps in implementing conceptualized and systematic science diplomacy. In many ways, the current policy corresponds to the goals outlined by German researchers Flink and Schreiterer (2010): promoting national scientific achievements to foreign countries to strengthen the "soft power of the state" through the work of research infrastructure and attracting human capital from foreign countries. The emphasis on promoting Russian science to achieve the goals of leadership and contribution to defining the global agenda is a new feature of Russian policy in the field of science diplomacy and it is heavily influenced by the foreign policy discourse.

The current status of Russia's S&T relations with other states (including Russian research teams with foreign colleagues) is largely determined by the current crisis in Ukraine. There is some turbulence in the forms of non-indication of the Russian authors affiliation in foreign scientific journals, refusals to finance joint projects and other sanctions measures. Nevertheless, the active phase of the conflict could not disrupt the entire system of relations. Russian science is not isolated, most of the S&T partners did not break off relations. The current

status of the framework agreements is characterized as "on hold", accordingly, there are scenarios for resuming cooperation.

As for the development of Russian science diplomacy and international S&T cooperation in the future, there are several trajectories that may also overlap:

- New regional priorities of science diplomacy and international cooperation: during the one and a half decades of the BRICS existence, S&T cooperation was the most dynamic and fruitful area of the multilateral process within the framework of the association's activities. This development trajectory is the most probable since the priority of intensifying relations with "friendly countries" were described in the foreign and S&T policy documents (The Russian Government, 2023).

- The involvement of Russian scientists in international projects has not stopped: in fact, they continue their research activities – for example, at European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). Also, such signals from the foreign scientific community as an article in the journal Nature "Let's not abandon Russian scientists" (Holdren et al., 2022) suggest an increase of the importance of Russian scientists in science diplomacy at the microlevel.

- The current ISTC policy particularly emphasizes the importance of guaranteeing the benefits of cooperation for the Russian side. Therefore, the elaboration and subsequent approval of mechanisms to protect the interests of Russian scientists and the distribution of intellectual property results could improve Russia's interaction with other countries in the field of S&T cooperation.



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