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## Building a New-Type Think Tank System: Practice and Reflections from Suzhou (Postprint)

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] Addressing the issues of homogenization and low efficiency in local new-type think tank construction, this study focuses on Suzhou to explore the construction path of new-type think tank systems at the prefecture-level city level. [Method/Process] Through methods such as field research, expert symposiums, and literature review, it analyzes the fundamental perspectives of strategic planning for Suzhou's think tank construction, reveals the vivid landscape of grassroots practices in Suzhou, grasps cutting-edge theories in the think tank industry, and conducts rational reflection. [Results/Conclusion] Suzhou adheres to comprehensive efforts, breakthroughs at multiple points, and in-depth advancement in constructing its new-type think tank system, demonstrating strong pertinence and effectiveness. It is essential to innovate mechanisms for resource integration, multi-dimensional docking, and support services to optimize the new-type think tank system.

### Full Text

## Building a System of New-Type Think Tanks: Practice and Reflections from Suzhou

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] Focusing on the problems of homogenization and inefficiency in the construction of local new-type think tanks, this paper takes Suzhou as a case study to explore pathways for building a new-type think tank system at the prefecture-level city level. [Method/Process] Through field investigations, expert symposiums, and literature reviews, this paper analyzes

the fundamental dimensions of Suzhou's strategic planning for think tank construction, reveals a vivid picture of grassroots practices in Suzhou, grasps the cutting-edge trends in the think tank industry, and conducts rational reflections. **[Result/Conclusion]** Suzhou has adhered to comprehensive efforts, multiple breakthroughs, and in-depth advancement in building its new-type think tank system, demonstrating strong pertinence and effectiveness. The city must innovate its mechanisms for resource integration, multi-dimensional docking, and support services to optimize its new-type think tank system.

**Keywords:** new-type think tanks; system; Suzhou

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Intellectual resources constitute the most precious and valuable social resources for any region. Building a local new-type think tank system represents a major initiative for promoting the modernization of local governance systems and capabilities. Suzhou has grasped the inherent logic and objective laws of new-type think tank construction, strengthened strategic planning, grassroots practice, and deep exploration, and achieved comprehensive efforts, multiple breakthroughs, and in-depth advancement. The city has worked to consolidate spontaneously existing policy consulting forces, integrate fragmented regional think tanks, amplify the integrated effects of regional think tanks, and build a new-type think tank system that enables effective connection and positive interaction between scientific consultation and scientific decision-making, thereby promoting mutual advancement between scientific decision-making and scientific development.

## **1 Strategic Thinking: Planning the Construction of Suzhou's New-Type Think Tank System from a Macro Perspective**

President Xi Jinping has pointed out that comprehensively deepening reform is a complex systematic project requiring strengthened top-level design and overall planning, as well as enhanced research on the relevance, systematic nature, and feasibility of various reforms. New-type think tanks represent a reform and sublation of traditional think tanks, and building a new-type think tank system requires the transformation and upgrading of past think tank construction, with strengthened top-level design, highlighted overall planning, and enhanced relevance, systematic nature, and feasibility of new-type think tank construction measures. Suzhou has strengthened its strategic, systematic, and innovative thinking capabilities, formulated implementation plans through in-depth reflection on the combination of history and reality, theory and practice, and domestic and international perspectives, and provided unified guidance and coordinated advancement for new-type think tank system construction.

### **1.1 Adopting a High Standpoint and Broad Vision to Grasp the Importance of Building Local New-Type Think Tank Systems**

Since the 18th Party Congress, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has attached great importance to building new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics. President Xi Jinping has repeatedly made important statements, instructions, and directives on new-type think tank construction, pointing out the fundamental direction and putting forward overall requirements for local construction of new-type think tank systems. Suzhou is a nationally famous historical and cultural city as well as a national civilized city, with a developed economy, enlightened politics, prosperous culture, harmonious society, and beautiful ecology, enjoying the reputation of “paradise on earth.” Decoding the deep mysteries behind Suzhou’s pioneering development reveals that innovation is the soul of Suzhou’s progress, the inexhaustible driving force for its prosperity, and its deepest regional endowment, as vividly illustrated and convincingly demonstrated by Suzhou’s nearly 40 years of reform and opening-up development. In the 1980s, seizing opportunities from rural reforms, Suzhou created the “Southern Jiangsu Model” of transitioning from agriculture to industry; in the 1990s, seizing opportunities from Pudong’s development and opening-up, it built an “open model” of shifting from internal to external orientation. Both the creation of the “Southern Jiangsu Model” and the building of the “open model” relied on scientific decision-making, rational governance, and efficient administration by Suzhou’s party committees and governments at all levels. Currently, Suzhou has entered a new normal of economic development and reached a critical juncture for achieving “phoenix nirvana.” To become a pioneer and pacesetter in building a new Jiangsu, it must concentrate on innovation, focus on enriching the people, and comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society at a high level. Whether concentrating on innovation, focusing on enriching the people, or comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society at a high level, the first step should be to gather intelligence for decision-making. This requires giving fuller play to the unique role of new-type think tanks and more closely relying on scientific decision-making to promote a new wave of breakthroughs, composing a harmonious symphony of think tank highlands and development highlands advancing together.

### **1.2 Establishing Accurate Positioning and Deep Thinking for Building Local New-Type Think Tank Systems**

The new wave of “think tank fever” in China reflects the great value of think tanks in promoting development. Building local new-type think tank systems requires cool-headed reflection on this “think tank fever,” gaining new understanding of “what are new-type think tanks and how to build them,” forming concepts and ideas that suit local realities, acting prudently and planning before acting, avoiding “old wine in new bottles,” preventing “new shoes walking the old path,” and circumventing “form without spirit.” First, we must grasp the characteristics of new-type think tanks. Building a local new-type think tank

system must first understand where its “newness” lies. Chinese and foreign practices demonstrate that building local new-type think tank systems and striving to create “newness” in think tanks should focus on organizational power for ideological innovation, influence on public opinion, driving force for reform and development, absorptive capacity for policy consulting talent, and supportive power for the policy consulting ecosystem. Second, we must grasp the essence of new-type think tank systems. A new-type think tank system is not a fragmented existence of various think tanks, nor a simple sum of isolated think tanks. Its essence lies in its internal structure, presented in the form of “think tank plus,” with the substance being the benign interaction and organic integration of new-type think tanks with distinctive features, respective strengths, and proper positioning. Third, we must grasp the laws of building new-type think tank systems. Building a new-type think tank system covers both strengthening think tanks and optimizing the system. Therefore, we must not only follow the universal laws of think tank construction, fully understand common practices in Chinese and foreign think tank construction, and draw on successful experiences from various regions, but also base ourselves on local realities, strive to find new ideas and explore new pathways, and outline the “Suzhou path” for system construction.

### **1.3 Drawing Extensively on Multiple References to Enhance the Relevance and Operability of Local New-Type Think Tank System Construction Plans**

New-type think tanks are new and good things. Suzhou’s construction of a new-type think tank system requires learning from various regions’ trial practices and innovative experiences. First, we must learn from new forms of research organization and new management methods to strengthen new-type think tanks. Various regions have conducted beneficial explorations and achieved positive results around establishing mechanisms for internal governance, supply-demand communication, information sharing, funding investment, and cooperation and exchange. The Shanghai Federation of Social Sciences holds “Academic Tea Parties” to build a “government-academia interaction” platform and establish a dialogue mechanism between municipal leaders and the social science community. Jinan invites think tank experts to attend relevant municipal party committee meetings to enhance the sense of policy consulting presence and information arrival rate. For major topics of the municipal party committee, either the municipal leader takes the lead with the municipal party committee’s policy research office conducting research and inviting think tank participation, or the think tank conducts research with the policy research office coordinating and the municipal leader participating. Xinyu builds think tank construction carriers by establishing demand databases, information databases, and achievement databases to promote chain-like docking of think tank products. Shanghai University of Finance and Economics incorporates performance evaluation of think tank achievements into its scientific research evaluation system, conducts hierarchical classification and certification, and applies it to professional

title promotion. Guizhou Province explores the establishment of a characteristic “revolving door” system, with universities reserving 3% of their establishment quotas specifically for teacher “rotation.” Second, we must learn from regional think tank integration and linkage practices to build regional think tank communities. Various regions continuously enhance think tank industry awareness, business identity, and practical confidence, focusing on specialization, characterization, and branding to build regional think tank communities, promote joint self-strengthening, and amplify integrated effects. Wenzhou increases the integration of various think tanks, forming a diversified think tank system of “one headquarters (municipal decision-making consultation committee and municipal party committee policy research office) and three networks (party and government think tank network, university think tank network, and social think tank network).” The social science federations, social science research institutes, and social organizations of Nanjing, Zhenjiang, and Yangzhou voluntarily form an open, loose, and joint “Ning-Zhen-Yang Think Tank Alliance,” building an innovative cooperation platform for think tanks in the three cities. Qingdao’s Shinan District implements a new-type think tank cluster action plan, builds the Qingdao Think Tank Alliance Building, and creates a new-type think tank cluster based in Shinan, serving Qingdao, radiating to North China, reaching domestic first-class standards, and gaining international reputation, forming a specialized high-end think tank system. Shenzhen’s Longgang District innovates its think tank carrier system by establishing think tank bases and creating new-type think tank clusters.

#### 1.4 Identifying Crucial Issues and Addressing Weaknesses

Generally speaking, Suzhou’s party and government think tanks, university think tanks, and social think tanks are “vertically and horizontally divided” in terms of affiliation, each maintaining its own order. However, in terms of business operations, they often correspondingly exist in a dispersed and self-contained state of “fighting alone” and “self-admiration.” Consulting achievements for the same decision-making matters often exhibit phenomena of “redundant construction” and “overcapacity.” Top-down vertical integration and horizontal integration are not strong enough, and some institutional and mechanism barriers need to be removed. Relatively speaking, the policy consulting capabilities of think tanks are not high enough. Some think tanks are accustomed to conducting academic deductions in “ivory towers” and are unwilling or unable to conduct in-depth and meticulous “field investigations” on the main battlefield of reform and opening-up and the front line of mass production and life, resulting in insufficiently close integration of “virtual” and “real” elements. Consequently, there are not enough high-quality masterpieces that “connect to the top antenna” and “reach the grassroots.” The radiating and driving role of landmark brand think tanks is not fully played, spillover effects are not obvious enough, and integrated effects need to be enhanced. Overall, the policy consulting ecosystem needs further optimization. The decision-making consultation system remains to be improved and perfected, and the mechanism for generat-

ing effective supply through effective demand is not strong enough. Information barriers exist between the supply and demand sides of decision-making consultation, with “planning” and “decision-making” each holding one end, and the “invisible wall” between them needs to be broken. The channels for transmitting and submitting think tank achievements and providing value feedback are not smooth enough, affecting the proactive and effective actions of think tanks. The evaluation mechanism for think tank achievements needs to be improved and perfected, and the policy orientation and institutional arrangements that give equal importance and value to theoretical research and applied countermeasure research, decision-making ideas and decision-making plans remain to be formed. The vivid practices from across the country can help Suzhou solve the above problems, thereby avoiding homogenization issues such as carrier duplication and achievement overlap, as well as inefficiency problems like “many tanks but little intelligence” and “tanks without intelligence” in new-type think tank system construction.

## **2 Grassroots Practice: The Vivid Picture of Suzhou’s Construction of a Local New-Type Think Tank System**

President Xi Jinping has pointed out that grasping key points to drive overall work is a requirement of materialist dialectics and a method our party has consistently advocated and adhered to in the processes of revolution, construction, and reform. A new-type think tank system is not an illusory castle in the air; it requires support from key think tank entities of a “four beams and eight columns” nature. Building a new-type think tank system begins with top-level design and reaches grassroots practice. Suzhou correctly handles the relationship between overall advancement and key breakthroughs, forming both a momentum of coordinated advancement and a force of key breakthroughs, transforming top-level design into extensive grassroots practice.

### **2.1 Establishing a Timeline and Roadmap for Building Local New-Type Think Tank Systems**

The national-level “Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics,” the “Pilot Work Plan for National High-End Think Tank Construction,” and Jiangsu Province’s “Implementation Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of Jiangsu New-Type Think Tanks” provide basic ideas for building local new-type think tanks and set the “background color,” determine the “tone,” and delineate the “path” for building local new-type think tank systems. Suzhou, focusing on the “construction, management, and service” of new-type think tanks, emphasizes grasping key points, addressing weaknesses, and strengthening deficient areas. It has issued implementation opinions on strengthening new-type think tank system construction, making planning arrangements for the overall requirements, key tasks, management mechanisms, and safeguard measures of new-type think tank construction, and coordinating the collaborative development of various new-type think tanks.

According to the basic standards for new-type think tanks and considering both regional domains and existing and incremental resources, Suzhou implements a key think tank construction plan, grasping key points and promoting demonstrations to form a new pattern of orderly, innovative, and collaborative development of various think tanks. It clearly defines a five-year cycle to build 10-15 municipal key think tanks into professional, landmark key think tanks that are urgently needed by the party and government, have distinctive features, institutional innovation, and leading development, thereby leading the clustered development of think tanks, forging a think tank matrix, and forming a Suzhou-characteristic new-type think tank system with clear positioning, distinctive features, moderate scale, rational layout, dynamic entry and exit, and effective utility by 2022.

## **2.2 Promoting the Leading Role of Local Party and Government Think Tanks**

Party and government think tanks occupy a very favorable and extremely important policy consulting position in local governance systems. Relatively speaking, they accurately and profoundly grasp decision-making intentions, authoritatively and comprehensively possess relevant information, employ professional and effective research methods, and have achievements that are easily transmitted and transformed. They are the “leading sheep” in local new-type think tank systems, playing a leading role in policy research consultation and evaluation interpretation. The Research Office of the Suzhou Municipal Party Committee and the Research Office of the Municipal Government conduct investigations and research on major issues in local development, propose policy-oriented opinions and suggestions, analyze and research domestic and international development situations, provide decision-making consultation opinions and suggestions, strengthen cooperation and sharing with various think tanks, and guide relevant think tanks in conducting countermeasure research. The Standing Committee of the Municipal People’s Congress adheres to the legislative expert advisory system, strengthens expert-type members in various working committees, leverages the professional advantages of expert-type people’s congress delegates, and brings into play the “external brain” role of the Municipal People’s Congress Theory Research Association, People’s Congress Work Research Association, and specially hired experts to provide intellectual support for the Standing Committee’s scientific decision-making and lawful performance of duties. The Municipal Party Committee School leverages its advantages in theoretical resources, teacher resources, and student resources, establishes a municipal situation research center, and builds a strong decision-making consultation base for the municipal party committee and government.

### 2.3 Promoting the Development and Improvement of Local University Think Tanks

University think tanks are the backbone of local new-type think tank systems. Suzhou implements a strategy of integrating famous cities with famous universities, leverages the advantages of local universities' comprehensive disciplines, dense talent concentration, and extensive external exchanges, and relies on collaborative innovation centers and humanities and social science research bases to promote local universities in establishing school-level think tanks with distinctive features and respective strengths. This forms a university think tank development model covering "one main think tank, one core team, one high-end activity, and a batch of high-quality achievements," building a local university think tank cluster. Soochow University is one of the earlier universities in China to carry out think tank construction and build think tank clusters. The "Dongwu Think Tank" of Soochow University adheres to the concept of "seeking development through service, seeking support through contribution, and promoting win-win through cooperation," builds a collaborative innovation center, constructs a research model of "chief professor + team members," refines main research directions, highlights professional characteristics, and creates a university think tank with international vision, 顺应国家战略, and rich local characteristics. Soochow University has cooperated with the Shanghai Municipal Government Development Research Center to build a decision-making consultation research base on "local government and urban governance," with the Jiangsu Provincial Federation of Social Sciences to build a decision-making consultation research base on "Southern Jiangsu government governance and social governance modernization," and with Singapore's Surbana Urban Planning Group to build the "Soochow University-Surbana Future City Research Center." It has also jointly held the high-end decision-making consultation activity "Dialogue with Suzhou Innovation" with the Suzhou Federation of Social Sciences, and cooperated with Suzhou municipal agencies to establish school-local cooperation think tanks such as the Suzhou Grassroots Party Building Research Institute, Suzhou Human Resources Research Institute, and Marxist Theory and Suzhou Practice Research Institute. Suzhou University of Science and Technology focuses on building a "high-level applied research base and high-level decision-making consultation base," constructs characteristic think tanks through school-local cooperation, and forms a think tank highland. The "Suzhou Urban-Rural Integration Reform and Development Research Institute" established in cooperation with the Suzhou Municipal Government and the "Suzhou National Historical and Cultural City Protection Research Institute" established in cooperation with the Gusu District Government have become off-campus research bases for humanities and social sciences in Jiangsu Province. The planned "Suzhou Social Governance Innovation Research Institute" will focus on the theme of social governance innovation and build a "Good Governance Suzhou" policy consulting brand with a global vision and strategic perspective. Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University is a leading Sino-foreign cooperative university located in Suzhou. Relying on its internationalized disciplinary characteristics, scientific research

strength, and platform advantages, the university integrates high-end talent resources at home and abroad and establishes a high-level, international, and comprehensive think tank—the Xipu Huihu Comprehensive Think Tank, striving to become a research highland for industrial transformation, upgrading, and integrated innovation, and a characteristic think tank serving Suzhou’s development.

#### **2.4 Promoting the Healthy Development of Local Social Think Tanks**

Social think tanks, organized by social forces in the forms of social organizations, social service agencies, and foundations, constitute an important component of local new-type think tank systems. Suzhou implements a dual-responsibility management system by civil affairs departments and business supervisory units, guides social think tanks to strengthen social responsibility, standardize business activities, enhance capabilities in information collection, resource integration, comprehensive judgment, and strategic planning, improve the professionalism, relevance, and reserve nature of policy research, and strengthen the forward-looking, constructive, and operational nature of policy recommendations. The Suzhou Federation of Social Sciences plays a bridging role, integrating resources with broad vision and bold moves, adopting an operational model of “municipal leader guidance, think tank expert research, practical department participation, and Federation of Social Sciences coordination” to research major topics designated by the main municipal leaders, continuously enhancing the Federation’s think tank platform role and its capacity to serve social science think tanks. Forty-six municipal-level social science social organizations, including the Municipal Wu Culture Research Association and Rural Economy Research Association, rely on “local experts” within their organizations who master both theoretical policies and local practices, focusing on researching issues that “the upper level has no time to attend to and the lower level does not know how to handle.” Through forms such as jointly undertaking topics and dividing research labor with local party committees, governments, and their research institutions, they have produced a large number of outstanding achievements. The Suzhou Association for Science and Technology advances the pilot work of building a national-level science and technology think tank, improves the policy consulting capabilities of science and technology social organizations, and builds a high-level science and technology think tank with innovative leading functions. Sixty-eight municipal-level science and technology social organizations, including the Municipal Expert Consultation Group, Doctoral Fellowship Association, and Senior Experts Association, have strengthened decision-making consultation work, with multiple suggestions being transformed into municipal decisions. The Suzhou Daily leverages its political advantages, channel advantages, and credibility advantages to create a new-type media think tank—the Suhu Think Tank—focusing on local issues, facing grassroots levels, and concentrating on development to conduct countermeasure research and release achievements. Relying on special columns such as “Social Science Circle” and “New Suzhou Commentary” and new media platforms like the news client “Gravity Wave”

and “Suhu Think Tank,” it has formed an integrated pattern where traditional media and new media advance side by side and research and communication interact positively.

### **3 Deep Exploration: Innovating the Generation and Development Mechanisms of Suzhou’ s New-Type Think Tank System**

Active exploration and commitment to innovation meet the necessary conditions for the survival and development of local new-type think tank systems, grasp the dialectical relationship between independent research and administrative affiliation, basic research and applied research, and public welfare services and self-organization, strengthen collaborative construction of regional think tanks, optimize think tank layout, achieve structural transformation, allow the vitality of new-type think tanks to burst forth competitively and the source of creating policy consulting products to flow abundantly, forming overall effects and achieving overall results.

#### **3.1 Innovating Resource Integration Mechanisms**

Relatively speaking, the quantity and quality of local policy consulting resources are difficult to compare with national think tanks. Suzhou should, in accordance with the principle of party management of think tanks, focus on treating think tanks well, using them well, and managing them well, strengthen organizational leadership over new-type think tank construction, and promote systematic integration at multiple levels and through multiple channels. First, strengthen macro-level integration. Improve the work system of unified party committee leadership and division of responsibilities among relevant departments, and strengthen the macro guidance responsibilities of competent departments in think tank development planning, policies and regulations, and overall coordination. Suzhou has clearly defined that the Municipal Leading Group for Philosophy and Social Sciences is responsible for the overall organizational leadership of new-type think tank construction, with the leading group office located in the Municipal Federation of Social Sciences, responsible for coordination, guidance, and management services. Second, strengthen meso-level integration. Relatively speaking, macro-level integration focuses on solving the problem of how to build new-type think tank systems, while meso-level integration focuses on solving what new-type think tank systems should do. Suzhou will establish a Municipal New-Type Think Tank Council as a deliberative and evaluation body to guide the work of new-type think tank systems, responsible for reviewing work plans and rules and regulations of think tank systems, proposing key research tasks urgently needed for decision-making, conducting comprehensive evaluations of key think tanks, and making recommendations on “establishment, reform, and abolition.” Third, strengthen micro-level integration. Relatively speaking, micro-level integration has the nature of industry self-organization, mainly improving the degree of think tank organization through industry self-discipline and horizontal

coordination, and forging a construction path that “starts with collaboration, reaches alliance, and achieves systematization.” We should improve mechanisms for strong alliances, complementary advantages, deep integration, and cooperative governance among various think tanks, promote think tanks to form “think tank plus” organizational carriers and structural forms through cross-boundary group formation, build flexible think tank alliances, and expand the “think tank circle” of harmonious coexistence. We should leverage the “snowball effect” of the “Suzhou Think Tank Alliance,” guiding regional comprehensive and thematic think tank alliances to expand and increase members based on voluntary, equal, and open principles, forming a new-type think tank system with close joint operation, superimposed advantages, and efficient operation.

### 3.2 Innovating Multi-Dimensional Docking Mechanisms

Local think tanks tend to be specialized rather than comprehensive, and interpretive rather than 攻坚型. For decision-making matters that are professionally and technically strong, involve wide areas, and have great influence, relying on a single think tank to “act unilaterally” often fails to achieve results. Therefore, we should guide think tanks to correctly handle the relationship between “division” and “integration,” actively step out of their “single courtyards,” strengthen collaborative thinking, and take topics as the bond to build professional, representative, and balanced research communities. Multi-dimensional docking amplifies collaborative effects. First, promote supply-demand docking. The way of “intelligence” for new-type think tanks lies in knowing both oneself and the other and exerting precise efforts. Therefore, we should open the information “revolving door” around policy consulting supply-demand docking to enhance both sides’ sense of information gain. To advise on policy, one must first understand policy. We should strengthen government information disclosure mechanisms and research guide mechanisms, focusing on the timeliness, intensity, and effectiveness of information transmission, authoritatively release decision-making demand information, and timely feedback to think tanks on the publication, instruction, and implementation of policy consulting achievements. The RAND Corporation in the United States allows researchers to regularly contact government policy responsible persons and policy planning groups to understand the specific decision-making process. Suzhou should learn from such practical experiences, improve the system of leaders contacting experts, and promote leaders to communicate with experts through visits, symposiums, and other channels to increase understanding, enhance services, and strengthen external brains. Experts should, in line with leaders’ work, provide advice for leaders’ decision-making through research, demonstration, and other forms. Local think tanks should be good at asking needs, symptoms, and effects from party committees and governments to “download” decision-making information, actively promote their own advantages, expertise, and research achievements to “upload” think tank information, and improve the relevance and effectiveness of topic setting, undertaking, and solving. Second, promote virtual-real docking. The era is the mother of thought, and practice is the source of theory. We

should strengthen the mechanism linking theory with practice for local think tanks, ensuring topic selection is close to reality and policy-seeking faces practice. We should learn from the research model of two-way participation and mutual integration between political and academic circles, promoting the complementary superposition of academic and theoretical advantages of experts and scholars with policy and practical advantages of practitioners to form diverse and efficient mixed research teams. Practice shows that Asian think tanks, influenced by traditional political culture, often 习惯于 “assigned homework” in topic research and frontier concerns. In fact, Chinese local think tanks are the same. Suzhou should improve the mechanism of leaders assigning topics and think tanks solving them, organically combining theory and practice through directional bidding and invitation, independent think tank research, and review group demonstration and improvement. Third, promote production-sales docking. Attaching importance to the social dissemination of research achievements is a distinctive feature of contemporary international think tank construction. If think tanks can efficiently promote their work and make it available to policymakers who may be interested, their influence will be greater. For think tanks intending to influence decision-making, political identity and communication capabilities with policymakers, media, and the public are equally important. However, many European think tanks lack resources for cooperation with the media. In the United States, increasing media visibility is also a channel for policy experts to enter policy formulation. The characteristics and behaviors that previously distinguished experts from promoters have disappeared, with experts assuming the responsibilities of promoters and promoters transferring their roles to experts. Therefore, we must guide think tanks to coordinate the “production” and “sales” of achievements, strengthen the mechanism of multi-dimensional integration and full-process coordination between think tanks and media, enhancing both the ideological depth and professional thickness of think tank research and leveraging media’s topic sensitivity and discourse affinity to form the optimal combination model of “production” and “sales” through deep cooperation and complementary advantages.

### 3.3 Innovating Support Service Mechanisms

From both historical and Chinese-foreign practical perspectives, any think tank exists within a specific policy consulting ecosystem. With a good policy consulting ecosystem, it is easy to function; with a poor ecosystem, it is difficult to be “intelligent.” Building a local new-type think tank system requires creating a favorable policy consulting ecosystem. First, improve the institutional environment. We should leverage the guiding, motivating, and normative constraints of institutions to form a systematic, well-governed, vibrant, and effectively supervised think tank institutional system. We should promote the institutionalization of government information disclosure, major decision-making opinion solicitation, policy evaluation, and government procurement of decision-making consultation services. We should explore new-type think tank management methods, improve internal corporate governance mechanisms within think

tanks, industry supervision mechanisms, and third-party evaluation and certification mechanisms. We should stipulate that municipal key think tanks must be substantive research institutions with clear legal person status, complete corporate governance structures, specialized researchers, the ability to undertake major research projects, and high decision-making influence. We should formulate a think tank construction performance evaluation system, improving evaluation methods based on academic quality, social impact, and actual effects. Taking the reform of Suzhou's local university scientific research evaluation system as a guide, we should promote the formation of a comprehensive evaluation system dominated by government, enterprise, and social users. Second, expand platform carriers. Without platform support, policy consulting research cannot produce high-quality products; without stages for display, policy consulting achievements cannot gain value recognition. We should build interconnected and effective information collection and analysis systems, academic discussion and exchange carriers, and achievement transformation and implementation channels around the deep integration of platform carriers. We should rely on "cloud" architecture to improve data collection, processing, storage, and sharing mechanisms, strengthen database construction for policy consulting research, and build local new-type think tanks into decision-making information databases. Relying on internal publications such as the Municipal Party Committee Research Office's "Decision Reference," "Research and Reference," "Suzhou Reform," and "Issues and Suggestions," the Municipal Party Committee School's "Suzhou Municipal Situation," and the Municipal Federation of Social Sciences' "Decision Reference," we should build platforms for timely submission of think tank achievements. We should establish a policy consulting report database and compile the "Suzhou Think Tank Report." We should leverage the leading role of decision-making consultation platforms such as "Dialogue with Suzhou Innovation" and "Good Governance Suzhou." Third, build a talent team. Adhering to an achievement-oriented approach, strengthening incentive mechanisms, and weaving a dense support network, we should cultivate a think tank talent team that adheres to the correct political direction, possesses both moral integrity and academic excellence, dares to innovate, and has a rational age structure, shaping think tank advantages through talent advantages. We should implement a policy consulting talent cultivation plan, incorporate it into the "Gusu Propaganda and Cultural Talent" strategy, and strengthen open, competitive, and mobile talent mechanisms. We should expand the content and forms of the "revolving door," opening different types and specifications of "revolving doors" between political and academic circles, between basic research and applied research, and among various think tanks. We should gather experts, scholars, and industry elites, select and employ specially hired researchers for Suzhou think tanks, strengthen expert teams in organizations such as the Expert Consultation Group and Doctoral Fellowship Association, focus on cultivating high-end think tank talents, independent research talents, and new-type comprehensive talents, and gather the "spirit and energy" of think tank personnel to do the "fine work" of serving decision-making.

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