

## Team Building of Leading Talent in New-Type Think Tanks: Issues and Recommendations (Postprint)

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] Leading talent constitutes the soul of a think tank, and strengthening the team building of leading talent is of paramount significance to the development of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics. [Method/Process] This article identifies and analyzes the challenges in building leading talent teams for new-type think tanks through induction, summarization, and systematic examination, reviews best practices in this domain, and proposes recommendations for enhancing leading talent team building. [Results/Conclusion] The article argues that team building for leading talent should commence with establishing mechanisms for selecting and attracting such talent, and intensify reforms and innovations in incentive mechanisms, internal governance, evaluation mechanisms, and investment mechanisms that facilitate the cultivation of leading talent teams.

### Full Text

#### Challenges and Suggestions of the Leading Talents Construction in New-typed Thinktanks

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**Abstract:** [Purpose/significance] Academic leaders play an important role under the construction of Chinese characteristic and new-typed think-tank. [Method/process] The paper analyses the current problems in attracting the leading talents to the think-tank and succeed and failed experiences in this aspect. [Result/conclusion] The paper suggests that an excitation, effective

management system should be established in the new-typed think-tank to guaranty those leading talents academic innovation with their teams.

**Keywords:** Leading Talents; Talent Construction; Incentive Mechanism; New-typed Thinktanks; Think-tank Construction

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## 1 Analysis of Main Problems in Think Tank Construction and Their Relationship with Talent

In his speech on “Building a Batch of High-end Think Tanks with Significant Influence and International Impact,” General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out the problems of Chinese think tanks “not keeping up” and “not adapting” with the times. He stated: “With the development of the situation, the problems of think tank construction not keeping up and not adapting have become increasingly prominent, especially the lack of high-quality think tanks with significant influence and international reputation” [1]. In recent years, as domestic reforms have deepened and the international financial crisis has intensified, multiple contradictions have become entangled and problems have grown increasingly complex and variable, making these “not keeping up” and “not adapting” problems particularly conspicuous.

The problem of “not keeping up” manifests primarily in research that lags behind emerging problems, intensifying contradictions, and evolving situations. This is evident in two aspects: First, an inability to grasp the pulse of developments. Current think tank outputs lack long-term tracking studies and solid foundational research, resulting in untimely follow-up and an inability to demonstrate foresight, near-term predictability, or forward-looking vision. Second, a failure to identify the crux of issues. Think tank research lags behind policy, merely following and interpreting policy rather than proposing countermeasures. Academic discourse dominates while actionable suggestions are scarce; literature review is plentiful while field investigation is rare. Unable to keep pace with changing domestic reforms and international turmoil, such research fails to propose targeted solutions or produce substantial, well-founded, theoretically grounded, analytically rigorous, forward-looking, and actionable policy recommendations.

The problem of “not adapting” is equally pervasive in think tanks. Accustomed to academic research that excels in library-based data collection and qualitative/quantitative analysis, many researchers lack capacity in field investigation and awareness of real-world problems, becoming trapped in theory while ignoring reality. During the construction of new-type think tanks, many researchers cannot adapt to the new problem-oriented research approach. They neither understand policy nor are accustomed to policy research, and they are not skilled at identifying problems. Some lose direction in their research, while others separate academic research from policy research, believing the latter lacks value and sophistication compared to the former. Unwilling to conduct policy research

or write policy recommendations, they prefer academic research and writing academic papers. They remain oblivious to leadership intentions, national circumstances, and the relative importance of issues, unable to adapt to decision-making rhythms, engaging instead in self-centered, self-amusing activities that lack the capacity for problem research, decision-making consultation, and policy participation.

General Secretary Xi's critique of think tanks' failure to keep up and adapt stems from multiple causes, with a primary factor being the current lack of influential, internationally recognized leading talents who can keep pace with and adapt to changing circumstances. Due to various constraints, think tank research teams have long maintained weak reserves of talent skilled in real-world problem research. Among leading talents, renowned figures are mostly national scholars, philosophers, historians, and literary scholars, with few being Marxist theorists, economists, sociologists, political scientists, or legal experts. While current teams can provide century-long foresight and long-term planning, addressing today's complex situation requires short-term, rapid-response predictions and solutions. Think tanks urgently need leading talents capable of solving practical problems to reverse the passive situation of "not keeping up" and "not adapting."

In the construction of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics, leading talents serve as the primary driving force for enhancing think tank visibility and influence, forming the solid foundation for sustainable development of high-end think tanks. Over half a century ago, Comrade Mao Zedong noted in his essay "The Bankruptcy of the Idealist Conception of History": "Of all things in the world, people are the most precious. So long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed." Similarly, if think tanks can assemble a group of renowned academic leaders, they will be better positioned to solve problems of "not keeping up" and "not adapting" and enhance their international reputation and influence. Leading talents are the most valuable asset in think tanks; only with them can organizations adapt to changing circumstances and lead global intellectual trends. In building new-type and high-end think tanks, prioritizing and strengthening the cultivation and construction of leading talent teams is a fundamental issue concerning the survival and development of Chinese think tanks.

Therefore, constructing new-type think tanks must first address talent attraction and retention, selecting chief experts, building research teams, and forming an open, competitive, and mobile talent mechanism [2]. This requires cultivating a contingent of think tank leading talents—a group of thinkers and theorists with solid Marxist theoretical foundations who can grasp political direction and guide social development; a cohort of high-end academic talents well-versed in both Chinese and Western knowledge and ancient and modern learning; a team of grounded experts who understand Party conditions, national circumstances, military affairs, social conditions, public sentiment, and global trends and possess forward-looking analytical capabilities; and a pool of international talents with global vision who can engage in direct international dialogue.

## 2 Seven Types of Urgently Needed Leading Talents for Problem-oriented Research

Currently, China faces a significant shortage of leading talents who meet the requirements of new-type think tanks. As the construction of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics deepens and their domestic and international visibility gradually increases, think tanks have gained enhanced influence over the Party, the state, and the public. With think tanks now incorporated into the central Party and state major decision-making consultation system and serving as intellectual support for national development, problem-oriented research has become the primary task of new-type think tanks, creating urgent demand for seven categories of leading talents.

### 2.1 Leading Talents Familiar with National Conditions

China's reforms have entered deep waters, confronting difficult challenges that are more complex and variable than ever before, with an increasing number of pressing real-world problems requiring solutions. However, for a long period, due to China's limited understanding of the world, talent selection criteria in think tanks overemphasized Western theories and degrees while neglecting the screening of 本土 theorists who truly understand and believe in Marxism. Some leading talents understand foreign situations but not domestic conditions, are familiar with Western theories but strangers to Chinese society, and are even more unfamiliar with or resistant to Marxist theory. Consequently, they cannot identify key issues or grasp their essence in research, nor can they propose actionable theoretical innovations. This directly contributes to the "not keeping up" and "not adapting" problems.

Therefore, new-type think tanks urgently need leading talents with 本土 practical experience, deep understanding of China's national, global, Party, social, and public conditions, knowledge of the Party and state's major policies, and solid grounding in basic Marxist theory. Simultaneously, they must be able to draw upon Western economic, sociological, anthropological, and political theories to lead teams in conducting in-depth investigations, connecting with reality, applying Marxist theoretical guidance, identifying deep-seated social and economic problems, and proposing forward-looking theories and actionable policy recommendations.

China's first media-type think tank, Liaowang Think Tank, has achieved notable success in this area and offers valuable lessons. Established in 2015, Liaowang Think Tank leverages Xinhua News Agency's internal and external intellectual resources, connects with major global think tanks, serves central decision-making and Xinhua's investigative research, and builds upon public policy research teams and policy research committees. Committed to policy consultation, theoretical innovation, public opinion guidance, social services, and public diplomacy, it has gained widespread recognition and influence. Under its leaders' guidance, the think tank convenes nearly a hundred internal closed-door

meetings, seminars, and public forums annually, including initiatives such as the China Characteristic Town Cultivation and Development Alliance, China Characteristic Town Development Seminars, China's Macroeconomic Situation Analysis Closed-door Seminars, "New Energy Vehicle Policy and Market" closed-door meetings, and "Fuel Cell Special Topics" and "Autonomous Driving Technology Policy Promotion" closed-door seminars for China's automotive industry. All these activities are grounded in national conditions, aiming to identify and solve deep-seated social and economic problems with actionable policy recommendations. Nearly a hundred internal reports and research materials have been adopted by the General Office of the Central Committee, the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and the State Council.

## 2.2 Innovative Leading Talents

The construction of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics has just begun, with transformation only beginning to emerge. Facing new problems, some researchers lag in updating their knowledge, research methods, and thinking patterns, with few innovations in knowledge, particularly in theoretical knowledge with Chinese characteristics. In the past, knowledge innovation primarily meant introducing Western knowledge and methods. However, as Chinese problems become increasingly localized and Sino-Western interactions more integrated, theoretical innovation must highlight Chinese confidence and emphasize Chinese characteristics. Such confidence and characteristics must derive from deep understanding and practical experience of China's national conditions, while drawing upon Western experiences and lessons, discarding the dross and selecting the essential. Only such theoretical and knowledge innovation can help propose actionable policy recommendations to tackle the "hard bones" of reform.

Therefore, Chinese think tanks urgently need innovative leading talents with Chinese characteristics, theoretical confidence, and new concepts, thinking, methods, and knowledge.

## 2.3 Leading Talents with Team-building Capabilities

Problem research differs from academic research, as real-world problems are often more complex, involving various aspects of domestic society and international relations. Problem research requires multi-level, multi-angle thinking and the collection of interdisciplinary expertise, incorporating both theoretical analysis and empirical investigation, statistical measurement and qualitative assessment. This necessitates a leader to organize interdisciplinary personnel for team research. Such team leaders must not only possess outstanding expertise but also demonstrate team spirit, vision, inclusiveness, and personal charisma.

For example, Rob Bailey, Research Director at Chatham House, specializes in climate change, food security, and bioenergy while possessing extensive research and teamwork experience. Bailey has served as a Senior Research Fellow in

the Energy, Environment and Resources Department since 2011 and became Director in 2014. Previously, he led policy research on food security, trade, agriculture, and climate change at Oxfam GB, receiving multiple awards [3].

Currently, individual operation remains prominent in Chinese think tanks, creating urgent demand for leading talents with team-building capabilities to unite scholars from different disciplines and fields, forming collaborative academic synergy and leveraging the systematic advantages of new-type teams.

#### 2.4 Problem-conscious Leading Talents

The guidelines on strengthening the construction of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics emphasize that research must be problem-conscious and problem-oriented, addressing issues with targeted solutions. This represents both the distinction between traditional and new-type think tanks and the fundamental direction for future research. For a long time, traditional think tank research has tended toward fragmentation, randomness, repetition, textualism, and dogmatism, with weak targeting and insufficient “usefulness” [4]. Some scholars’ research has become divorced from real problems, merely reciting texts, prioritizing paper writing and professional title evaluation over addressing the importance and urgency of social issues. They treat paper writing as the ultimate goal of academic research, deviating from the main direction of think tank problem research and ignoring the integration of academic research with real-world problem studies. Under such circumstances, some think tanks are overstaffed with unfocused research that cannot solve practical problems.

Think tanks urgently need leading talents who can conduct targeted problem research—talents who are skilled at anticipating, identifying, addressing, solving, and preventing problems, and who can apply knowledge and theory to real-world issues.

#### 2.5 Revolving-door Leading Talents

Think tanks do not lack researchers but severely lack leading talents with revolving-door experience. Revolving-door leading talents are those who can conduct solid research while simultaneously holding important positions in government. They can earnestly conduct research, transform knowledge into policy through the revolving door, and even implement and execute policies, earning promotion and 重用 from relevant departments. They possess both solid research capabilities and rich political experience.

However, due to the administrative institutionalization of Chinese think tanks, the vast majority of researchers are recent university graduates, with recent restrictions limiting recruitment to doctoral and master’ s degree holders. Experienced professionals can only enter think tanks as part-time or external staff, creating institutional barriers to recruiting leading talents with revolving-door government experience.

The RAND Corporation, a world-class think tank, attaches great importance to cultivating revolving-door talent. RAND frequently sends researchers to government departments for training, and senior researchers regularly attend government activities or even assume key government positions (such as former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld). Due to national conditions, China cannot replicate the Western revolving-door mechanism of personnel rotation, but can implement one-way rotation based on existing conditions by providing preferential policies to introduce retired high-level decision-makers into think tanks or “send” high-end think tank researchers into decision-making departments [5].

As new-type think tanks increasingly become integral components of government decision-making consultation and participate more extensively in government decision-making processes, think tanks urgently need revolving-door talents with government experience to accumulate rich personal networks, better understand decision-making needs, and achieve the goal of influencing decisions.

## **2.6 Leading Talents with Comprehensive Knowledge of China and the West, Ancient and Modern**

The shift toward problem-oriented research in think tanks also necessitates employing great scholars with comprehensive knowledge of both Chinese and Western learning, ancient and modern, who possess international vision. The world financial crisis brought disaster to the world but also opportunities for China’s rise. Through reform and opening up and the hard work of several generations, China has transformed from a besieged third-world country into the world’s second-largest economy, standing at the center of the world stage and becoming the engine pulling global growth forward.

However, due to historical isolation and a relatively short period of reform and opening up, China has not yet fully integrated into the world community, with few participants in international organizations and limited influence in international rule-making. Think tanks have been powerless in major international affairs, as highlighted by the South China Sea arbitration case, which exposed talent deficiencies in international law. Chinese think tanks have yet to secure their rightful place in international organizations, society, and rule-making processes. Moreover, China’s external publicity and cultural communication are just beginning, with low international visibility and weak cultural penetration. Many countries neither understand nor trust China, and under the dominance of Western public opinion, voices slandering China are rampant. China needs outstanding performance on the international stage to tell China’s story effectively.

In today’s interconnected global economy with constantly changing dynamics, Chinese new-type think tanks must possess strong research capabilities, solid academic foundations, and outstanding research achievements to engage in dialogue with foreign think tanks and enhance international visibility and influence. There is urgent need for leading talents with international vision and comprehen-

sive knowledge of China and the West, ancient and modern. Such talents have extensive experience studying, living, and researching abroad, are familiar with domestic and foreign national, social, and global conditions, and can stand on both Chinese ground with Chinese thought and wisdom while looking globally with profound academic and international perspectives. They possess strong language skills for direct dialogue in international exchanges. Particularly as China's reforms deepen, they can give consideration to traditional Chinese culture and historical heritage when making long-term plans, leveraging the advantages of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Think tanks urgently need to identify and cultivate such leading talents, enabling them to quickly emerge as guides for public opinion, mentors showing the way forward, and leaders of social thought.

## 2.7 Leading Talents in Ethnic Minority Research

Governing a country begins with governing its borders. As a multi-ethnic nation, China can only prosper when its ethnic groups prosper, and can only stabilize when its frontiers are stable—this is China's characteristic. Therefore, think tanks need leading talents specializing in ethnic research to conduct dedicated studies on frontier ethnic issues, counter-terrorism, and border stability and defense.

China has tens of thousands of kilometers of land and maritime borders, offering vast potential for frontier research. “In recent years, new situations, problems, and changes have emerged in China's border regions, with security, stability, and development facing increasingly diverse and complex threats and challenges, continuously presenting new research questions that urgently need to be addressed” [6]. This also places higher demands on think tank researchers specializing in ethnic minority studies.

Some Chinese think tanks have recognized the importance of such leading figures. The article “Bibliometric Analysis of Chinese Frontier Research” uses the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI) database to conduct statistical analysis of papers on Chinese frontier research, examining annual output, source journals, funding, author teams, prolific authors, research institutions, research hotspots, and classic literature. The study concludes that “Mr. Zhou Ping and Mr. Ma Dazheng have significant academic influence in this field” [7]. On June 25, 2016, the National Strategy Institute hosted the founding conference of its Frontier Research Institute and the first Frontier Forum at the Beijing Xinjiang Mansion. The forum aimed to gather intellectual resources from all sectors of society through a new civilian think tank model to provide intellectual support for the stability and development of border regions. The National Strategy Institute Frontier Research Institute is headed by the renowned frontier research leader Mr. Ma Dazheng as its director.

While some civilian think tanks have clearly recognized the importance and necessity of ethnic research leading talents, there remains a significant gap between

this awareness and actual needs nationwide.

The Party and state attach great importance to border regions, placing new demands on frontier research from the strategic heights of maintaining national security and territorial integrity and promoting long-term stability and leapfrog development in border areas. This also creates urgent demand for leading talents in ethnic minority research for think tanks.

### **3 Prominent Problems in Building a Leading Talent Team**

Building a leading talent team is a complex systematic project involving both personnel system reform and research team construction. For various reasons, the construction of leading talent teams has long failed to receive adequate attention, leaving many problems, most notably the following two aspects:

#### **3.1 Lack of Evaluation Mechanisms for Selecting Leading Talents**

The evaluation system for leading talents serves as the incentive mechanism for team construction and the red line for screening and selecting the best while eliminating the worst. When well-designed, it can positively contribute to discovering, gathering, cultivating, motivating, and supervising talent. When poorly designed, it can have the opposite effect, dispersing talent, intensifying contradictions, and playing a negative role.

Currently, Chinese think tanks are still exploring evaluation systems for leading talents. In practice, some evaluation systems lack clear objectives without well-defined goals. Some lack scientific, systematic, comprehensive content, neglecting certain aspects such as horizontal research projects and assigned research projects. Some set excessively high, strict, or even harsh standards, such as requiring specific word counts, numbers of articles, or awards each year, while others are too lenient without proper differentiation, creating a “big pot meal” system that fails to motivate or supervise. Some evaluation systems exhibit prominent administrative orientation, using administrative standards as research standards, creating situations where laypeople evaluate experts and resulting in a “new model” of research administration. Others suffer from imprecise and unprofessional quantification. These flawed evaluation systems greatly damage the enthusiasm of leading talents, making them worse than having no system at all.

#### **3.2 Lack of Attraction Mechanisms for Hiring Foreign Leading Talents**

Chinese think tanks lag far behind foreign think tanks in absorbing and employing foreign leading talents. A survey comparing ten American think tanks reveals that U.S. think tanks employ foreign leading talents at very high proportions. The world’s top think tank, the Brookings Institution, employs foreign leading talents accounting for approximately one-third of its total staff. In its China branch, all leading talents are Chinese university professors, with only one

American serving as project coordinator for Brookings' cooperation with China. On March 3, 2014, Chinese-American scholar Cheng Li became director of the John L. Thornton China Center at Brookings. Li grew up in Shanghai during the Cultural Revolution, studied in the United States in 1985, earned a master's degree in Asian Studies from UC Berkeley and a Ph.D. in political science from Princeton. From 1993 to 1995, Li conducted field research on grassroots developments in China as a fellow at the Institute of Current World Affairs, publishing the well-received book "Rediscovering China: Dynamics and Dilemmas of Reform" in 1997 based on this experience. Li has long been dedicated to Chinese political research, generational studies, and technological development research, possessing deep understanding of China [8]. Other think tanks, such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, also employ Chinese staff in major research positions. The Cato Institute employs leading talents from the countries under study for its Russia and China research projects and establishes research teams abroad.

Employing foreign leading talents offers advantages in language, culture, ethnicity, and personal connections. Foreign researchers pay closer attention to the countries they study, understand national conditions more thoroughly, and can conduct both long-term tracking research and real-time studies with timely dialogue. They hold certain advantages in obtaining information and intelligence and are more competent in leadership positions.

By contrast, China remains backward in employing foreign leading talents, with neither foreign leading talents studying other countries nor many 本土 leading talents with long-term living, working, or studying experience in target countries, let alone personal networks in those countries. In dialogue and exchange, direct communication and ideological exchange remain impossible. This problem has historical reasons—China's long history as a closed country—as well as practical reasons: China's mechanism for attracting international talent remains imperfect, its material and spiritual conditions are not yet strong enough, and its appeal to foreign high-end talent has not been fully released. Additionally, there are conceptual problems among employing think tanks that are unwilling or afraid to use imported talent.

To attract foreign leading talents, China must establish an effective system of incentives, cultivation, and supervision, along with supporting living benefits. Some regions have experienced a "migratory bird" pattern of "able to attract but not retain, or retain but not for long." Others have seen reduced enthusiasm among leading talents due to unfair treatment between foreign and domestic imported talent. These issues require careful balancing.

#### **4 Safeguard Mechanisms for Building a Leading Talent Team**

Leading talents are the driving force and soul of think tanks. Attention must be paid to leading talent team construction by discovering and selecting a large

number of new-type leading talents suited to the development of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics. The construction of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics must attach great importance to this critical issue, requiring serious research and bold exploration. Establishing a systematic safeguard mechanism suited to China's national conditions will help discover, gather, cultivate, and bring forth leading talents.

#### **4.1 Establish Incentive Mechanisms for Cultivating and Introducing Leading Talents**

Establishing a scientific, effective, fair, and practical talent incentive mechanism is key to attracting and cultivating leading talents. For a long time, Chinese think tanks and universities have implemented talent introduction mechanisms and formulated policies and measures that have yielded certain experience in attracting and cultivating leading talents. For example, to recruit researchers with doctoral degrees and outstanding research achievements, they provide housing subsidies and assistance with children's schooling. While these practices have promoted the attraction and cultivation of leading talents to some extent, they mostly continue traditional Chinese welfare benefits and lack incentives for career innovation among leading talents.

A reward and punishment incentive mechanism should be established to provide spiritual and material rewards based on leading talents' task completion and research quality, with particular emphasis on publicizing outstanding achievements to enhance their visibility in society and the academic community.

#### **4.2 Establish Open and Mobile Competition Mechanisms for Leading Talents**

With the de-administrativization of new-type think tanks, think tanks need to establish an open system for screening and employing leading talents that enables talent mobility.

This mechanism should be problem-oriented, selecting and employing leading talents globally based on specific problems to form research teams. It should eliminate administrative structures, cancel administrative positions for leading talents, and abolish administrative staffing in think tanks, enabling team construction free from administrative staffing constraints and administrative management. Leading talents should be employed based on specific research topics and selected through position competition.

Foreign think tank talent selection mechanisms are open and competitive, generally using public recruitment to attract talent. Talent is drawn from: recent doctoral and master's graduates from prestigious universities; renowned university scholars and experts; corporate elites; former government officials; and talent from other prominent think tanks. This open competition mechanism ensures diversity. RAND Corporation employs over 1,600 staff, including approximately 950 researchers from 45 different countries and regions, represent-

ing diverse races, genders, research fields, political backgrounds, and ideologies. This diversity enhances the objectivity and creativity of RAND' s research and serves as an important guarantee for RAND' s status as a comprehensive strategic research think tank [9].

#### **4.3 Establish Effective Internal Governance Mechanisms**

Think tanks should establish board of directors and academic committee systems, eliminating administrative management. Academic research matters should be reviewed by academic committees, while major research topics, personnel arrangements, and work progress should be decided by boards of directors. Research assistants should be assigned to leading talents to handle non-research affairs. Administrative management systems should be abolished, with research topics, output formats, and research teams no longer subject to administrative arrangements, and administrative personnel prohibited from interfering in research or collecting management fees. Performance assessments should be conducted for leading talents, but professional title evaluations should be eliminated, replacing them with appointment-based evaluation.

Liaowang Think Tank has conducted certain practices and explorations in establishing committees. Its experience shows that think tanks should have their own research teams but maintaining a small core is more reasonable. More importantly, think tanks should integrate research resources and establish expert committees, with particular importance placed on their own research teams' ability to identify experts. For example, they must first be able to identify quality research, especially as expert committees grow to 200, 2,000, or even 20,000 members using internet thinking. They must then address questions such as "how to identify experts' strengths," "what is their value to me," and "how to transform their work into think tank products" [10].

#### **4.4 Establish Supervision Mechanisms for Survival of the Fittest**

For a long time, think tank research has basically involved free topic selection and independent research based on personal interests. Although evaluation committees have been introduced for academic assessment, they only evaluate excellence without assessing poor performance. For most researchers, doing research well or poorly yields the same results, and high-quality and low-quality outputs are treated equally. Additionally, think tank researchers enjoy great time freedom, originally intended to provide a relaxed research environment, but some researchers have taken advantage of this to moonlight externally. Under such a system, it is difficult to produce influential leading talents.

In constructing new-type think tanks, a supervision mechanism for survival of the fittest among leading talents should be established to reward those who complete tasks well and constrain or even eliminate those who fail to complete research tasks. Think tanks should explore establishing a scientific and fair evaluation mechanism for survival of the fittest that quantifies leading talents'

achievements and conducts fair, scientific evaluations through performance assessments, thereby mobilizing leading talents' research enthusiasm.

#### 4.5 Establish Sustainable Funding Mechanisms

A relatively stable and sustainable funding mechanism should be established, treating leading talents' research projects as systematic projects rather than intermittent efforts. Research and funding budgets should be well-planned to ensure leading talents have access to sufficient, long-term, and stable research funding, with funds allocated in phases and batches synchronized with research progress. This will eliminate worries about major projects and avoid the passive situation of major research projects facing funding shortages.

Leading talents are the main force in think tank construction and the elite backbone of the nation. Leading talent team construction is a systematic and comprehensive project that requires attention, coordination, and overall planning from all relevant parties, with gradual implementation and accelerated enforcement. It also requires constant attention from leaders at all levels as a major task in think tank construction to be managed and implemented effectively.

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