China's Evaluation Practices and Significant Roles in Basic Research Policies

In the 1990s, China had already been learning from the evaluation practice experience and theoretical methods of international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank, and launched evaluation practice activities in science and technology programs management around China's scientific and technological development and related science and technology policies.

After nearly 30 years of evaluation practice, Ministry of Science and Technology of China (MOST) has preliminarily established a national evaluation system in the field of science and technology, established evaluation organizations and systems, improved the evaluation practice framework, and cultivated a large number of evaluators. More and more evaluation practices have been conducted around topics such as science and technology innovation policies., government funded research and development activities, science and technology talents, scientific research institutions, innovative enterprises, technology transfer, regional collaborative innovation, and international cooperation. The evaluation work has been embedded in the government's science and technology management process, and the use of evaluation results has been valued. These evaluations not only provide valuable insights and recommendations for improving the policies, but also ensure the effective allocation of resources and enhance the quality of basic research. By assessing the implementation, impact, and challenges of the policies, China can make informed decisions on how to optimize the policies to better support scientific research and innovation.

Taking basic research policies as an example, China established the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) in 1986. This measure is one of the main channels for the Chinese government to support researchers in conducting basic scientific research, and it has been widely welcomed by researchers. In order to continuously improve the performance of basic research funding policies, the Ministry of Finance of China initiated an evaluation of the implementation performance of the National Natural Science Foundation in 2011, and established an international evaluation expert group. The evaluation activities lasted for over one year, and the evaluation results played an important role in improving project management and significantly increasing basic research funding budget. Subsequently, conducting performance evaluation has become a necessary means of management for the NSFC. We have been conducting annual performance evaluations for 10 consecutive years. The evaluation results are fully utilized. Firstly, an annual evaluation report is submitted to the Ministry of Finance, demonstrating how the fiscal budget can more effectively fund basic research; The second is to disclose the main assessment conclusions to the scientific and technological community through the Internet, so that scientific researchers can fully understand the funding policies for basic research, and the public can timely understand the major scientific discoveries and technological achievements made in basic research, so as to promote the public's understanding of science and make science benefit the people.