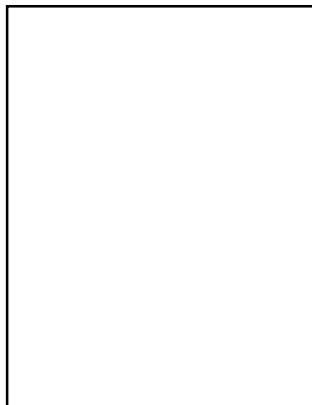


Technology transfer and diffusion for rural industries

China's Spark Programme

Dong Liu

China has taken ambitious steps in recent years to develop its rural economy. The Spark Programme is the first such effort and aims at developing rural industries by applying science and technology. The programme has concentrated on developing new products through technological inputs, and applying new technologies in rural industry. The programme has been considered largely successful and is regarded as a model for future programmes. This article discusses the implementation, achievements and experience of the Spark Programme.



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Introduction

The Spark programme, the first strategic programme of science and technology for rural economic development was formally launched in 1986, after ratification by the government. The proverb, "A single spark can start a prairie fire", was quoted, hence the origin of the name of the Spark Programme. It was hoped that the spark of science and technology would extend over the vast rural areas of China. The Programme was responsible for fulfilling the requirements for science and technology, which widely emerged in the rural areas at the beginning of the 1980s.

The Spark Programme is an important model for the vigorous

development of China's rural economy and rural industries by the application of science and technology.

The aims of the Programme are as follows:

- To enhance the quality of labour through the spread of science and technology in rural areas;
- To guide farmers to the vigorous development of rural economy and rural industries with the progress of science and technology;
- To lead village and township enterprises and rural small and medium size enterprises to healthy development;
- To promote the development of a market economy in rural areas;
- To speed up the progress of modernization and industrialization in rural areas; and finally