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Accessing global knowledge and technology in lagging areas

Innovation happens not only when **knowledge and technologies** that are "new to the world" are developed, but also when these are **adapted and used in new countries, regions, sectors or firms**. This form of innovation is more suitable for contexts with a relatively weak knowledge base, and it is less costly and less risky than creating new technology.

Policy instruments to facilitate the acquisition and use of existing knowledge and technology and its adaptation to new local contexts include:



Policy instruments

(1) Demonstration of new technologies and training provided by S&T specialists

In China, for example, agriculture in most lagging areas still depends on outdated technology. This hinders improvement of agricultural productivity and the well-being of rural populations. The <u>Spark Programme</u> [1] (1986-2015) was the first plan implemented to revitalise the Chinese rural economy through science and technology. It provided technology training to farmers, so as to change their traditional production methods for more technologically advanced ones. The <u>Envoy System</u> [2]has also been implemented in China since 2002 to promote innovation in rural areas by sending qualified science and technology specialists to those areas to provide farmers with S&T services, including demonstrations, training and advice. More recently, S&T envoys' tasks switched from agricultural technology services to helping farmers set up as S&T entrepreneurs.

(2) Financial support to projects that use STI solutions to address local challenges

For instance, <u>Colombia's Ideas for Change</u> [3] <u>programme</u> [3] is implemented to allow vulnerable communities to identify specific needs and challenges through a virtual platform. The STI community (i.e. individual researchers, firms, universities and research institutions) can then propose specific solutions to their problems, which should be creative and involve low-cost technologies. Grants are provided to implement the selected solutions.

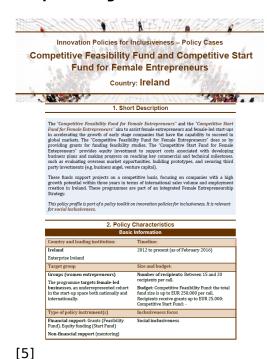
Chile's Prototypes of Social Innovation programme [4] issues calls for innovative solutions to local challenges on an online open innovation platform. Candidates present their ideas on the platform, where they interact with mentors and local communities in order to develop and improve their ideas. Final proposals are submitted for funding and the best solutions are selected. The innovative solution must, in addition to answering the specific social challenge and having potentially high social impact, be suitable for intellectual property protection, and be potentially replicable, sustainable and suitable for scaling up. The chosen solutions receive a non-repayablegrant covering up to 80% of the project development (up to approximately USD 60 000), while applicants are responsible for the remaining percentage. Funding is provided in two phases: the first one covers proof of concept and is limited to CLP 4 million (approximately USD 6 000), while the second supports the development of a prototype of the social innovation, including testing with the recipient community as well as a sustainable business model and a plan for scaling up. Both programmes involve the active participation of local communities in identifying local challenges as well as in implementing the selected solutions.



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Spark Programme - China



1986-present

Objective: Enhance the innovation performance of the rural economy through science and technology and popularise science and technology in rural areas.

Target: Rural areas.

Instrument: Technology and management training; support to projects

that use S&T and know-how from research institutes to solve local

technology programmes.

Envoy System - China

2002-present

Objective: Allow for more innovation among rural populations by dispatching S&T specialists to the countryside and promoting innovative entrepreneurship in the rural areas.

Target: Farmers in rural areas.

Instrument: Qualified S&T specialists provide farmers with S&T

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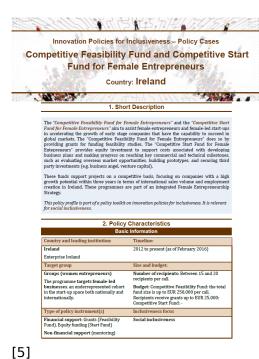


services, including demonstrations of new technologies, training and

personalised consulting.

[5]

Ideas for Change - Colombia



2012-2014

Objective: Find solutions to challenges faced by poor and vulnerable communities, particularly in the environment and energy fields.

Target: Poor and vulnerable local communities with unmet needs, particularly relating to the environment and energy fields.

Instrument: Grants provided to firms, universities and research institutions that can solve local challenges (identified in consultation with local communities) in the environment and energy fields.

Prototypes of Social Innovation programme - Chile

2014-present



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Objective: Develop proofs of concept and prototypes of innovative solutions to meet social/regional challenges through open innovation.

Target: Regions and communities facing specific social challenges.

Instrument: Grants to develop proofs of concept and prototypes of

new solutions to meet major regional challenges. An open call for

innovations is issued, encouraging individuals, companies, universities

and others to innovate.

[5]

ancial support: Grants (Feasibi nd), Equity funding (Start Fund)

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Links

- [1] https://innovationpolicyplatform.org/content/accessing-global-knowledge-and-technology-lagging-areas#China29
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- $[4] \ https://innovationpolicyplatform.org/content/accessing-global-knowledge-and-technology-lagging-areas \#Chile 30$
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