

**CHINA'S SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
SYSTEM: NEW INITIATIVES**

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## **Executive Summary**

1. China's rapidly growing spending on science and technology (S&T) has yielded remarkable progress in the number of publications, patents and high-tech exports. The issue of quality of research has now moved to the fore.
2. China's quest to become a global innovation powerhouse has seen new impetus. In 2014, the State Council issued a document to improve the management of central government-funded S&T programmes.
3. To be completed in 2017, the reform seeks to strengthen coordination among different ministries and make funding agencies more professionally operated rather than bureaucratically managed.
4. Drafted by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Finance, the reform aims to set up "one decision-making platform" with "three operational pillars" and "one information management system".
5. The joint meeting coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Technology makes S&T decisions/policies. It reports to the Leading Group of National S&T System Reform and Innovation, currently headed by Vice Premier Liu Yandong.
6. Three operational pillars include an advisory committee appointed by the joint meeting, professional funding agencies, and a system for evaluating and supervising S&T programmes.
7. There will be a national S&T information management system to cover the full funding cycle of research projects. Certain information will be made publically available.
8. About 100 S&T programmes overseen by over 40 ministries and agencies will also be reorganised into five categories to be managed by the unified S&T management platform.

9. The reform is in the right direction. By design, it strengthens the coordination among different ministries and models new funding agencies after the National Natural Science Foundation, which is widely seen as a better performing funding agency than those under individual ministries.
10. In practice, the reform is hampered by the *guanxi* between funding agencies and individual ministries, the dense connections between S&T officials and their favoured experts and strategies developed by researchers to access research grants, which could circumscribe the most recent S&T reform.