

China expert recruitment project nets first batch: report

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China has signed up more than 120 overseas experts for a new project aimed at spurring innovation by offering thousands of academics one million yuan (146,000 dollars) to move to China, state media reported Thursday.

The first batch of recruits for the programme comprises 96 scientists and 26 entrepreneurs -- 80 of whom hold foreign passports and all but four of whom are of Chinese origin, the China Daily reported.

The new government incentives come as research programmes overseas are being cut back and have had a massive impact on China's ability to recruit, said Miao Hong, a recruitment official at Beijing's Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"People used to say no to us but now that is changing," Miao was quoted as saying.

"The people we have targeted are those in the top five or top 10 in the world in their field," Miao said, adding that a major reason for most returning was a desire to give something back to China after reaching their career peak.

The paper did not specify the expertise of the people recruited from overseas so far.

The government programme launched in December aims to recruit 2,000

experts over five to ten years by offering a one million yuan relocation package in addition to salaries and funding from the institutions where they will work, the report said.

Ding Hong, 40, said his colleagues were shocked when he resigned as a physics professor at Boston College to return to China after 18 years in the US, the newspaper said.

"People thought staying in the US was good for my career. But I wanted to contribute to the physics research going on in China," he was quoted as saying.

"There is a difference between China and the US in the mindset over scientific development. China is accelerating, the US is slowing down," said Ding, who has already started work at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

[China](#) has more than 38 million research scientists, but only 10,000 are top-level experts and the government wants that to change, the newspaper said.

The programme is part of China's efforts to wean its economy off its dependency on manufacturing and move up the value chain by developing its capacity for design and innovation.

Entrepreneurs who join the program are expected to supply their own technology and set up businesses in science research parks, the report said.

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