

# China to further reform to drive innovation

China will step up reform to support innovation by removing barriers to entrepreneurship and innovation.

The decision was made at a State Council executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday.

The meeting decided that the government will roll out a host of reform measures that have been piloted in eight areas, including the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, Shanghai and the Pearl River Delta, since June 2016.

Eligible foreign students with academic background equal to or above master's degree could apply for work permit or work-related residence permit. The one-stop application and issuance of work permits for foreign experts will also be made available nationwide.

The meeting also decided to pilot a program in the aforementioned eight areas that allows the foreign experts to apply for permanent residence if their income, tax payment and duration of work in China meet a certain standard.

Chinese leaders have stressed the importance of the innovation-driven development strategy on multiple occasions.

President Xi Jinping said a systematic, comprehensive and coordinated reform should be piloted with innovation-driven development as the target, innovation in science and technology at the core and the removal of systematic and institutional barriers as the main focus of efforts.

Premier Li Keqiang called for major progress in systematic and institutional innovation, with focus on breaking the fragmentation in innovation resources allocation.

"We must give full play to the role of innovation in spurring entrepreneurship and employment, and speed up the transformation of innovation into real productivity," he said.

The meeting on Wednesday decided to enhance the support to the innovation of SMEs and micro enterprises with more targeted measures. One-stop investment and financing information service for SMEs and the pledge for patent right associated with loans, insurance and risk compensation from the finance will be made available nationwide.

The protection of intellectual property rights will be taken to further heights, with measures to better safeguard legitimate rights of innovators and safeguard their legitimate earnings set to be promoted nationwide.

Such measures include the one-stop service for patent examination, rights protection and verification, the innovation-oriented evaluation and incentive

scheme within state-owned enterprises, and flexible remuneration regimes in colleges and research institutes to attract high-calibre talents or talents in urgent need.

“We need to create a good environment for the innovation, which can also provide lasting support to the buoyant momentum of the economy. Innovation-driven development relies on the adjustment in industry and product structure and the transformation in model of development,” Li said.

The meeting on Wednesday has also called for local offices of the State Administration of Taxation and local taxation bureaus to further integrate their resources and provide one-stop services.

“We need to create a fair and unprejudiced environment for market competition and enable social creativity to blossom in full,” he said.

“Efforts in cutting red tape, streamlining government function and enhancing compliance oversight over the years have paid off. We need to keep pushing it forward without any complacency, and foster market development with the help of innovation,” he said.

The premier asked government departments to build on their own expertise and render more enabling service to innovation.