

Rural poor to receive scientists

China will dispatch 18,000 scientific and technical workers annually to help poor villagers become technology-savvy in the battle against poverty.

According to a plan drafted by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, under privileged residents in remote areas or regions inhabited by minority nationalities will mainly benefit from the arrangement.

The personnel will train about 2,300 people every year and assist in the application of new technologies, so that farmers could increase their incomes and be lifted out of poverty, according to the ministry.

About 100 scientific and technological parks will be set up in poor areas to the poverty relief effort, the ministry said.

It added entities in the eastern part of the nation, which is more developed, including institutes of higher education, scientific research units, and science and technology parks in agriculture, will be encouraged to cooperate with counterparts in the west on precision poverty relief.

Xu Nanping, vice minister of science and technology, said the move aimed to mobilize the science and technology field to play its part in the fight to eliminate poverty.

Scientists striving to save rare pangolins



Police check a pangolin seized in a smuggling case in Jiangmen, Guangdong province. [Cai Yanhong/For China Daily]

When social media posts about endangered pangolin being eaten at banquets triggered public fury in China last week, a wildlife protection specialist saw a ray of hope.

“I hope the scandal will become a turning point in our search and rescue of the critically endangered animal,” said Zhou Canying, head of the Wildlife Protection Association in Changsha, Hunan province.

Zhou and her team have trekked the mountains of Hunan for more than a year, but not spotted a single pangolin.

Earlier this month, a screen-shot of a micro blog post went viral that allegedly showed officials in southern China’s Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region inviting investors from Hong Kong to eat pangolin at a banquet.

“The public rarely pays so much attention to pangolins, and I hope the incident will lead to new breakthroughs in its protection,” Zhou said on Saturday, which was World Pangolin Day.

The species, which has evolved over 80 million years, was once abundant in tropical and subtropical areas of Asia, including Hunan.

But things changed drastically in the past two decades: People used excessive pesticides; trees were replaced with different varieties that produced more profitable lumber; and the remaining pangolins were caught and sold to dealers.

A survey by the provincial forestry department in 2001 confirmed that the

wild pangolin population in Hunan was zero.

Pangolins are the most illegally traded mammal worldwide, with about 1 million being sold over the past decade.

In China, the animal's scaly skin is used as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine, and is believed to ease swelling and promote lactation. Their meat is also considered a delicacy by many.

Wu Shibao, a wildlife conservation specialist and professor at South China Normal University, said that about 300,000 pangolins are consumed in China each year.

Zhou said she has seen only one living pangolin outside a lab.

"It was at the end of 2015. Someone had saved the animal from illegal dealers and left it at a temple in Changsha. It was dying and had blood-stains on its mouth," she said.

Despite Zhou's efforts to save it, the animal died in less than two weeks. When researchers dissected it, they found gypsum in its stomach, a material used by dealers to make it heavier so it can be sold for more money.

"It was pregnant, too," Zhou said.

"I hope more people will join us to protect pangolins from such a miserable fate," she said.

[News story: Welsh company wins £82M contract on global stage](#)

The deal with Qioptiq in St Asaph, North Wales, will see battle-winning handheld equipment – including night-vision goggles and day and night weapon sights – maintained over the next six years, to ensure they are available to our personnel around the globe.

This good news for Wales, as the UK prepares to celebrate St David's Day, follows the recent announcement that North Wales will be a global repair hub providing maintenance services for F-35 components, in a move worth millions for the region.

Speaking at the IDEX trade show, Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

It's a pleasure to announce this £82 million contract here at IDEX. This deal will provide our troops with the equipment they need to

stay safe, while also delivering £47 million of savings.

This contract is made possible by our £178 billion equipment plan, supported by a Defence budget that will rise every year until the end of the decade.

Work under the new Surveillance Target and Acquisition Support (STAS) contract will create eight new positions at the company, which employs around 560 at its St Asaph and Bodelwyddan sites. By merging 20 individual support contracts into one deal, the MOD will save £47 million for the tax payer over the next six years.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This massive contract for Qioptiq underlines Wales' reputation as a world leader in the defence technology sector, coming hot on the heels of the choice of DECA Sealand as the global repair hub for the F35 aircraft.

This enormous vote on confidence in the Welsh economy demonstrates that we offer the highly skilled workforce and facilities that investors need. It is also clearly great news for employment in the region.

The contract covers equipment used right across the Armed Forces, from frontline infantry and Royal Marine soldiers, to military specialists such as bomb disposal experts, including infantry periscopes, laser aimers and target locating equipment.

Chief Executive Officer of the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support organisation, Tony Douglas said:

This new deal with Qioptiq has reduced costs by a third, demonstrating how we are constantly striving to build innovation and value into Defence procurement and support. Crucially, the STAS contract, will deliver improved support to Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

IDEX is a biannual international defence exhibition and conference dedicated to unmanned systems held in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. The United Kingdom has supported IDEX since its inception and this year a Royal Navy Mine Counter Measure Vessel, HMS Penzance, will be attending.

Mrs Baldwin and the UK team will be working to develop closer links with a range of Governments and industrial partners in the Gulf. British companies are promoting a range of innovative world leading technologies, many suitable for armed forces in the region.

They are keen to share technology, offer value for money solutions supported by training and logistical support, and build joint venture partnerships on land and maritime border security; maritime mine detection and countermeasures; and chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear and biological and chemical defence.

Press release: Search engines and creative industries sign anti-piracy agreement

The UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has helped broker a landmark agreement which will see search engines and the creative industries work together to stop consumers being led to copyright infringing websites.

Representatives from the creative industries, leading UK search engines, and the IPO developed a Voluntary Code of Practice dedicated to the removal of links to infringing content from the first page of search results.

The Code agreed on 9 February 2017 will come into force immediately, and sets targets for reducing the visibility of infringing content in search results by 1 June 2017.

Minister of State Jo Johnson MP will oversee the implementation of this Code of Practice, and the IPO will work with all parties to evaluate progress.

Jo Johnson, Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, said:

Search engines play a vital role in helping consumers discover content online. Their relationship with our world leading creative industries needs to be collaborative. Consumers are increasingly heading online for music, films, e-books, and a wide variety of other content. It is essential that they are presented with links to legitimate websites and services, not provided with links to pirate sites.

I am very pleased that the search engines and representatives of the creative industries have agreed this Code. I look forward to this valuable collaboration benefiting both the UK's digital and creative sectors.

Minister of State for Digital and Culture, Matt Hancock, added:

We are one of the world's leading digital nations, and we have a responsibility to make sure that consumers have easy access to legal content online. Pirate sites deprive artists and rights holders of hard-earned income and I'm delighted to see industry led solutions like this landmark agreement which will be instrumental in driving change.

As we build a more global Britain we want the UK to be the most innovative country to do business, and initiatives like this will ensure our creative and digital economies continue to thrive.

Notes to editors

1. The UK Intellectual Property Office is responsible for Intellectual Property (IP) rights in the United Kingdom, including patents, designs, trade marks and copyright

2. Signatories of the Voluntary Code of Practice are:

- Google
- Bing
- BPI
- Motion Picture Association

Under the Alliance for IP umbrella, the following members have indicated agreement:

- ACG
- Association of Authors Agents
- BASE
- British Brands Group,
- BSA
- FDA
- PPA
- Premier League
- Publishers Association
- PLS
- UKIE
- Entertainment Retailers Association
- Educational Recording Agency

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