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The Upgrade to Hybrid Incubators in China: A Case Study of Tuspark Incubator

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Abstract:

Chinese government now requires government-sponsored non-for-profit technology-based business incubators (TBIs) to be profitable self-sustainability with less dependent on direct public subsidies, aiming to motivate these TBIs to provide higher quality services for their tenant new technology-based firms (NTBFs). Simultaneously, these TBIs are required to remain social functions to satisfy government demands. Thus the conception "hybrid incubators" derived from hybrid organizations is introduced. A hybrid incubator means that a TBI can implement various distinct value creation processes with the integration of the advantages of non-for-profit and for-profit TBIs at same time. However, research on specific paths or key factors for integration of non-for- and for-profit TBIs to be one hybrid incubator are in sufficient. In addition, there are few relevant investigations about incubators in developing countries and emerging economics. Based on a single in-depth case-study of Tuspark Incubator, this study explores key factors and specific ways for the upgrade to hybrid incubators in the context of China. By using categorical analysis, three factors, i.e. incubation subdivision, intermediary platform, and proactive approach, are found to be essential for a formerly government-sponsored TBI's upgrading. The result of this study also provides new insights and several implications for incubator managers and policy makers in emerging economies. In addition, whether the key factors can be used in upgrade of other TBIs in

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China requires further study.