**How successful was Mao’s first Five-Year Plan 1952 - 56?**

In order to evaluate the success of the first Five-Year Plan, it is necessary to consider a range of economic factors. It is also important to consider Mao’s aims for the Plan, and to use these as a benchmark for success. **Notably, there is no need to discuss agriculture as farming did not form part of the Plan.**

At the end of the essay, you must reach a judgement about how far the Plan was a success. It is important that this judgement considers the extent of success rather than concluding only that there was success.

One possible way of structuring an answer to this question would be:

• Introduction: list the factors you are going to discuss and provide a brief answer to the question

• The extent of success in heavy industry

• The extent of success in energy production

• The extent of success in transport

• The extent of success in terms of Sino-Soviet co-operation

• Conclusion

China’s first Five-Year Plan was undoubtedly a great success because it raised production in almost all areas. However, some areas were more successful than others and not all aspects of the economy met the targets set by Chinese State planners. In order to show this I will consider the Chinese heavy industry, energy, transport, and the impact of the Sino-Soviet Pact. Nonetheless, in the final analysis the Plan boosted the Chinese economy greatly and should be considered very successful.

China’s heavy industry was undoubtedly very successful during the first Five-Year Plan. Steel production increased from 1.3 million tonnes in 1952 to 5.35 million tonnes in 1957. What is more, steel production exceeded its Five-Year Plan target of 4.12 million tonnes by more than one million tonnes. Similarly, the production of iron increased dramatically. From 1949 to 1952 iron production never exceeded 1.9 million tonnes. However, by the end of the plan in 1957 production had increased to 5 million tonnes. Once again iron production had beaten its target of 3.7 million tonnes. Clearly, the first Five-Year Plan was successful in terms of heavy industry because it increased production of iron and steel dramatically and in both cases exceeded its targets.

China’s first Five-Year Plan was fairly successful in terms of energy. The production of oil, coal and electricity all increased. However, not all of these energy sources met their planned targets. Electricity production was highly successful as over 19 billion kilowatts were produced and this was more than the planned 15.9 billion kilowatts. However, the power generated by hydroelectric turbines did not meet its target of 79,000 kilowatts as it only generated 75,000 kilowatts during the plan. Equally, oil production did not meet its 2012 million tonnes target as only 1458 million tonnes were produced. Coal, however, was more successful as it exceeded its target of 113 million tonnes by 2 million tonnes. In this way, although the plan raised energy production from 1952 it was not wholly successful because not all of the energy targets were met.

Transport was a broadly successful part of the first Five- Year Plan. Major civil engineering works such as the Yangzi bridge were constructed as planned. Also the plan produced more than twice as many bicycles as planned and also produced more trucks than had been anticipated. However, only a third of the merchant ships that were planned were actually produced. Locomotives and freight cars also missed their target. Again, the plan did improve China’s transport but it was not a total success because in important areas such as locomotives production the plan was not fulfilled.

The Sino-Soviet Pact (1950) was of mixed economic benefit to China during the period of the plan. Only 5% of Russia’s aid was actually in capital goods, and China had to pay a high price in terms of gold reserves and high interest loans. Nonetheless, China did get 10,000 economic experts and was able to learn from the successes and failures of the Russian plans which had been going on since 1929. In this way the Pact helped but this help came at a high price and because of this it was only a limited success.

In conclusion the plan was a great success, but it was more successful in some ways rather than others. Heavy industry was highly successful because it raised output and exceeded all of its targets. Energy and transport were also successful, but less so because although they increased production they did not always meet their targets. Finally, the Sino-Soviet Pact had mixed results and was only of limited help because Russian aid came at such a high price. Therefore, it is clear that the plan was highly successful but there was room for improvement in some areas.