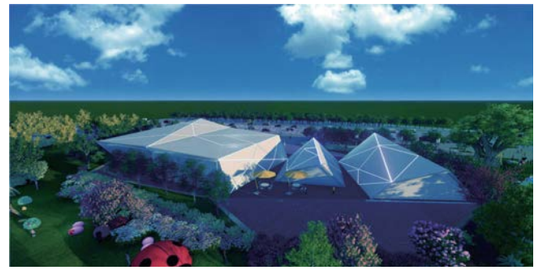
# An innovative dream becomes reality

In China's ancient city of Xi'an, an emerging smart town is providing a demonstration site for CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES AND NOVEL IDEAS to drive science and technology innovation.



**Imagine a town built for self-driving vehicles**, with drones and robots patrolling traffic, and monitoring public security. It is a futuristic scene taking place in the Chang'an University Town, in the southern suburb of Xi'an, in China's Shaanxi province.

With joint support from foreign and domestic experts, the 'dream town', aims to establish a joint laboratory for web-controlled autonomous driving, and a road for testing driverless cars. It is designed as a pilot site for applying self-driving technology, along with other emerging technologies for smart living.

**A science and technology innovation platform**

In line with China's strategy of innovation-led development, Shaanxi Jintai Hengye Tianlang Company Limited, a joint venture between TITAN Group and Shaanxi Investment Group, two Xi'an-based enterprises specializing in industrial investment, has partnered with local government and universities to build a science and technology platform for an innovation ecosystem in Chang'an University Town. Embracing the ideals of 'intelligence, ecology, open-resource and sharing', the experimental town aims to promote the translation of research results, support innovation and entrepreneurship, and realise sustainable living.

The dream town spans 3.6 square kilometres in the heart of Chang'an University Town, linking Xi'an's high-tech zone, aerospace base, a new commercial district and neighbouring research institution. Capitalizing on Xi'an's research specialisms, the dream town focuses on developing emerging technologies that drive global economic innovation, including new-generation information technology, biotechnology, new energy, new materials and environmental protection industries. By applying novel technologies and building up these new industries, architects of the project expect to integrate industrial growth with culture, tourism and community development, creating an ideal place for living, producing, and ensuring longevity of a healthy environment.

"We believe innovation is the key to driving industrial development, and open-source is essential for promoting technological innovation," said Sun Yin, the chairwoman of TITAN. In line with this, the dream town makes the most of research resources from Xidian University and other neighbouring universities or research institutes to create an open-source information platform for sharing research results. To enhance the university-research-industry partnerships and bridge local enterprises with global innovation resources, the dream town is also to build infrastructure to support the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data technologies, facilitating the use of research results. It is to become a world-class cluster area integrating universities, research institutes and industry.

The clustering effect promotes links between research results, funding, enterprises, products and market, generating a supportive cycle. Eventually, the dream town is to house incubators that support entrepreneurship, platforms that serve sci-tech start-ups in research translation and R&D, as well as multi-sector R&D teams that accelerate science and technology innovation.

With a global outlook, the dream town is also active in international collaboration. It has attracted high-tech R&D collaborations with more than 10 countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, Sweden and Ukraine. These projects will promote translation of research results from around the world.

**Promoting research translation, innovation and entrepreneurship**

An essential feature of the dream town is the creation of platforms that incorporate cloud platforms, IoT, block chain, artificial intelligence and building information modelling technologies, will form the 'brain' of the town. With real-time sharing between enterprises and continuous updates of platform technologies, sustainable growth of the platforms is possible. The 'brain' of the town makes systematic, visual, digital and intelligent technologies more accessible, promoting rapid development of enterprises in the town.

The town has four open-source platforms that facilitate entrepreneurship and innovation.

The university-research-industry collaboration platform is designed to integrate resources for innovation-driven enterprises around the world. As a university cluster area, the dream town will pool research result resources, and via the channels of commercial, industrial or university alumni associations, establish collaborative research institutes, R&D centres or university spin-offs with domestic or foreign enterprises. The platform will help enterprises find promising research projects, help define the market for potential products, and help seek market channels, contributing to efficient research translation and optimising company investment.

Focusing on attracting global capital and financial enterprises, the platform for science and technology finance aims to build investor pools for research and corporate institutions in the dream town. Along with other platforms, it will promote the development of industrial corporations and the commercialization of research results.

The dream town will also create a science and technology service platform. With third-party professional teams, it provides enterprises with policy analysis, legal advice, tax guidance, consulting, talent recruitment, product promotion and packaging, as well as estate management services. These comprehensive services facilitate building a supportive ecosystem for innovation.

Finally, the platform for trading research results creates online and offline markets, enabling their easy integration with the market. By channelling research results, enterprise needs and capital flows, an internet-based trading ecosystem is formed.

To hasten the application of novel technologies, the dream town is integrating infrastructure building with science and technology industries. Apart from the autonomous driving facilities under construction, localised computer network systems, building automation systems and mobile office management systems are also being set up, which will facilitate client solutions online.

The dream town is also keen to establish a solid credit system to guard personal and enterprise credibility, ensuring a supportive environment for open-source innovation and research results sharing.

By applying IoT and big data technologies in education, healthcare, environmental and industrial sectors, the dream town also has infrastructures set up to make healthy choices accessible for its residents. "We will integrate green building and information systems to create a model for smart living, embracing ecology, science and technology, and novel ideas," said Ma Yapeng, general manager of Shaanxi Jintai Hengye Real Estate Company Limited. "Our dream is to change the world with intelligence and make the world better with science and technology." ■

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