

Sci-tech Strategy Consulting Urgently Needed

Policy

By LI Linxu

As a new round of sci-tech revolution and industrial transformation gains momentum, the need for sci-tech strategy consulting is greater now than ever before.

In the report to the 20th CPC National Congress, China vowed to enhance strategic input from the sci-tech sector, so as to boost the overall performance of the country's innovation system.

This marks that sci-tech strategy consulting has become an integral part of China's sci-tech innovation undertakings, said Pan Jiaofeng, president of the Institutes of Science and Development under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Sci-tech strategy consulting is an important tool to improve sci-tech cognitive abilities, and properly assessing sci-tech development trends is a prerequisite for making relevant policies and strategies, added Pan, proposing to set up a national science advisor system.

With innovation at the heart of China's modernization drive, an unprecedented demand for innovation brings both opportunities and challenges for sci-tech strategy consulting.

Major national decisions and plans should be the starting point, as well as the anchoring point, for research subjects of sci-tech strategy consulting, said Liu Dongmei, secretary of the Leading Party Group at the Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development.

She believes that to better serve decision-making in sci-tech innovation,



Innovation is at the heart of China's modernization drive. The picture shows a Long March-2D carrier rocket blasting off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Jan. 13, 2023. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

great emphasis should be put on the improvement of research quality in major strategic issues.

Sci-tech strategy consulting should study and assess sci-tech development trends and breakthrough directions based on the laws of science and technology, conduct research on major economic and social development issues as well as national security issues in view of sci-tech impacts, and develop systematic capabilities with a keen eye on sci-tech innovation strategies and policies, said Liu Yunan, president of the State Information Center.

He added that more efforts should be made to cultivate sci-tech strategy

consulting personnel, and relevant fund investment and utilization mechanisms should be improved to establish an effective incentive system.

Of particular note is that high-level enterprise think tanks also play an indispensable role in elevating a country's sci-tech strategy consulting capabilities.

Enterprises have an important role to play in innovation decision-making, R&D investment and sci-tech achievements transformation, said Yu Guo, executive director of China National Petroleum Corporation's Economics & Technology Research Center (ETRI), adding that ETRI is focusing on energy strategic needs, sci-tech policy research, and digi-

tal intelligence empowerment projects to better serve enterprises' sci-tech innovation.

At present, momentous changes not seen in a century are accelerating across the world. To address global issues such as climate change, energy security, and pandemic control and prevention, international cooperation is urgently required, particularly in sci-tech sectors.

China is actively deepening international cooperation so as to create an open innovation environment, said Shen Jinseng, president of the National Academy of Innovation Strategy, calling for further expanding friends circle of international think tanks.

Plans Set to Boost Growth of Central SOEs

By CHEN Chunyou

The green transformation of the centrally administered state-owned enterprise (SOE) development model, where these enterprises should use energy-efficient technologies and develop green and low-carbon industries, is just one of many significant highlights that emerged from a meeting held by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC) in early January.

The meeting specified tasks for these SOEs regarding production and operation in 2023, focusing on boosting the country's economic momentum and getting economic growth back on track.

Key tasks were proposed at the meeting, including expanding domestic demand, building a modern industrial system, attracting and utilizing foreign capital, and preventing and defusing major economic and financial risks.

According to the meeting, China will cultivate a batch of innovative new-type SOEs in 2023, which conduct technological research centering on national strategic needs and industrial upgrading needs.

In addition, the government will offer the SOEs platforms to integrate into the national innovation system and participate in international big science plans and projects, while encouraging them to deepen cooperation with their counterparts from countries along the

Belt and Road Initiative.

Enterprises that undertake major research tasks and advance the application of basic frontier technologies will receive support, and these two aspects will be an important measurement for assessing the performance of central SOEs in the future.

In order to train more strategic scientists and teams, central SOEs will also take the lead to develop national centers and platforms for exchanges of high-level personnel.

Moreover, more investment will go to new infrastructure businesses in 5G technology, artificial intelligence, data centers, industrial Internet platforms, and Internet of Things platforms, said a statement released by SASAC after the meeting.

According to SASAC, the combined annual revenue of central SOEs is estimated to climb 8.3 percent year-on-year to 39.4 trillion RMB in 2022.

The government will continue optimizing the layout and restructuring of the state-owned capital to make it more competitive, and advance the building of world-class enterprises, said Zhang Yuzhuo, party secretary of SASAC.

Relying on the leading and strategic role of the state-owned economy, central SOEs are expected to play a crucial role in stabilizing economic growth, employment and goods prices, so as to help achieve overall improvement of economic operation this year, said Zhang.

Revamped Innovative Ecosystem Pays Off in Changzhou

Case Study

By Staff Reporters

Located in east China's Jiangsu province, Changzhou city has been keen to implement an innovation-driven strategy, to promote the development of a green, intelligent, specialized, and high-end manufacturing industry, and build a sustainable modern industry system.

To optimize the innovation ecosystem, the city has continuously improved its policy system, by proposing more policies to spur innovation and break through bottlenecks in development.

It has established the innovation committee and office at different levels, so as to effectively mobilize and stimulate the innovation vitality of the society as a whole. At the same time, fiscal funds go directly to enterprises. Currently, a total of 940 million RMB has been cashed out to support enterprises' innovation.

Seizing new opportunities for the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region, Changzhou has increased its investment in science and technology, striving to promote the building of a national independent innovation demonstration zone. The proportion of R&D expenditures in the regional GDP has increased from 2.77 percent in 2017 to 3.33 percent in 2022.

The Changzhou Science and Education Town has become one of the best innovative parks in the country. It has incubated nearly 3,000 high-tech companies and established 47 innovation and entrepreneurship platforms.

Changzhou has made efforts to enhance its industrial technology innovation capabilities and created a number of high-tech, specialized industries with core competitiveness in the fields of new energy, new materials, intelligent manufacturing, and biomedicine.

In addition, through the continuous cooperation between industries, universities and research institutions, Changzhou has launched more than 2,000 innovative projects. With its talent plan, the city has supported various kinds of professional individuals and teams to innovate.

The contribution rate of sci-tech progress to the city's economic development has increased from 62.8 percent in 2017 to 66.7 percent in 2022, while the number of patents owned by 10,000 people has increased from 28.6 in 2017 to 44.8 in 2022.

To promote international cooperation, the city has also partnered with cities from other countries. The China-Israel Changzhou Innovation Park has introduced a total of 163 Israeli or China-Israel cooperative enterprises, and facilitated 44 China-Israel scientific and technological cooperation projects.



An aerial view of the creative and high-tech industrial parks in Xinbei district, Changzhou. (PHOTO: VCG)

Demo Role of National Economic Development Areas Reinforced

By ZHONG Jianli

China has released a notice to support national economic and technological development (NETD) areas to better play their demonstration role in promoting economic development, in particular, in stabilizing and expanding the investment in the manufacturing sector.

Jointly issued by ten governmental departments including the Ministry of Commerce, National Development and Reform Commission, and Ministry of In-

dustry and Information Technology, the notice proposes 12 measures to attract foreign investment, advance efficiency of the manufacturing sector, and maintain stability of industrial and supply chains.

The notice also calls for streamlining the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process for major manufacturing projects in the NETD areas. If the EIA conclusion meets relevant requirements, the approval process is to be accelerated.

Manufacturing enterprises should

apply new technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and industrial cloud, to carry out intelligent manufacturing, the notice says. To upgrade industrial innovation capacity, the establishment of foreign-funded research and development centers will also be welcomed.

The notice supports the NETD areas in establishing eco-industrial parks. It will back the development of wind power, photovoltaic, geothermal and other clean energy, help enterprises to participate in green power trading, and

continue to increase the installed capacity of new energy and the proportion of renewable energy used.

In addition, efforts will be made to improve customs clearance efficiency to facilitate cross-border trade, according to the notice.

To provide convenience for international business travel, China will facilitate senior executives, technical personnel and their families in entering and exiting the country to negotiate major foreign-funded manufacturing projects.

Adjusted Tariffs Promote Opening up

By LI Linxu

In its latest move to promote higher-level opening up, China has adjusted its tariff plan for 2023.

Besides changes on the import and export tariffs of some commodities, the adjustments also involve addition of some new tariff items, such as surgical robots and vegetable seeds, so as to better adapt to industrial development and sci-tech advancement.

After the adjustment, there are a to-

tal of 8,948 tariff items, according to a statement released by the Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council.

Starting from January 1 this year, 1,020 items are granted provisional import tariff rates, which will be lower than the most-favored-nation tariff rate.

Zero tariffs will apply to some raw materials for anti-cancer drugs, anti-COVID-19 drugs, and anti-cancer pain relief drugs, so as to protect people's health and reduce the economic burden on patients.

Meanwhile, items such as potash fertilizer and unwrought cobalt will also have zero tariffs, in order to improve the resilience of industrial and supply chains.

In response to consumption upgrading trends, tariffs on items such as homogenized mixed food, frozen blue cod, and other food for infants, as well as small household appliances such as coffee machines, juicers, and hair dryers, will be lowered.

Tariffs on items, such as lithium niobate, electronic ink screens, and iridium

oxide for fuel cells, will also be lowered, so as to promote the innovative development of advanced manufacturing, and to accelerate industrial transformation.

Of particular note is that starting from July 1, China will implement the eighth step of the most-favored-nation tariff rates reduction on 62 IT products.

After the adjustment, China's overall tariff level will be reduced from 7.4 percent to 7.3 percent, demonstrating the country's commitment to higher-level opening up, said the statement.

China-Africa Pragmatic Cooperation Grows Stronger

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At the end of 2022, three new infrastructure projects were completed in Africa, including a port, hydropower plant and railway, which exemplify China-African pragmatic cooperation in the field of infrastructure construction.

With the help of China, Africa has seen growing inter-connection and more convenient inter-nation trade, facilitating rational flow and allocation of resources and production factors on the

continent, said Kagwanja.

More real results were yielded with the deepening of cooperation in multiple areas, including agriculture, finance and people-to-people exchanges. For example, China's agricultural technology has helped African countries improve crop yields and agricultural modernization.

China-Africa amity is reflected by African people's recognition of China. A recent YouGov survey showed that people in African countries have seen a signifi-

cant increase in their favorable opinion of China, with the overwhelming majority of respondents in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Egypt acknowledging that China has a positive impact on international affairs.

Raphael Tuju, former General Secretary of Kenya's Jubilee Party, said China has always been a reliable friend of African countries, and an important spokesperson for the interests of less developed countries.

The development of China and African countries is also of great significance for global sustainable development. They will jointly promote high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, and implement the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative. China is helping African countries realize the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with the AU 2063 Agenda, so as to benefit all people in the international community.