

Weifang high-tech zone giving dynamic enterprises a chance to blossom

Shandong province now home to more than 1,000 innovative small and medium-sized companies



The Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone in Shandong province continues to optimize its innovation and entrepreneurial environment. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone in Shandong province is accelerating the transfer of scientific and technological achievements and creating world-renowned Chinese brands, said local officials.

The zone's technological innovation has shifted from being led by the government to enterprises, from building a community of industry-university-research to an ecosystem of mass entrepreneurship and innovation.

It is home to 56 innovation platforms above the provincial level, one key laboratory for the engineering company Weichai's diesel engines, and two national technology research centers.

To date, the zone has four provincial-level incubators, with a total area of 880,000 square meters containing 1,230 enterprises.

"We always keep in mind the responsibilities of promoting high-tech industries and realizing industrialization," said Song Chifeng, director of the management committee of the zone.

In 2012, Song Guanghui, an entrepreneur from Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, led his team to establish Shandong HOACO Automation Technology in Weifang high-tech zone.

It specializes in the production of high-precision multi-station round knife die-cutting machines. Their products cover industries in medicine and health, new energy electronics, LEDs, printing and packaging.

Since opening, the company has doubled its output value every year and maintained rapid growth.

The output value reached 240 million yuan (\$37.7 million) in



From top: Workers check facilities at Weichai Group's production plant in the zone. A technician examines a machine at a production line in the zone.

2020, and is expected to reach 1 billion yuan in 2025.

The company has obtained 172 national patents, including 18 invention patents and 24 software copyrights.

It has won the honorary titles of

National High-tech Enterprise, Shandong Province Invisible Champion Enterprise and Shandong Province High-end Brand Cultivation Enterprise.

The key to their successful growth lies in the firm support

will be introduced, and the annual output value will be 500 billion yuan.

Hu Jie, chairman of Gaochuang, said: "We carry out in-depth cooperation with top domestic fund managers, target global top 500 enterprises and industry-leading companies for targeted investment promotion."

Sun Wenfeng, director of the economic development bureau of the zone, said of the 36 companies in the park, there are nine foreign-invested companies, among which the global top 500 companies account for one-third.

"Next, we will lock in key regions such as Germany, the United States, Japan and South Korea, and accelerate the introduction of key projects."

"We have set up a government guidance fund of 2 billion yuan to offer support to eligible enterpris-

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innovation platforms in the zone

from the Weifang high-tech zone, said the company. The zone has cultivated two 100-billion-yuan industrial clusters of information technology; made breakthroughs in the four emerging industries of aerospace, hydrogen energy, energy storage, and magnetic technology; and striven to build a world-class industrial cluster with international competitiveness.

At the same time, the zone regards scientific and technological innovation as the "first driving force" and continues to optimize its innovation and entrepreneurial ecology.

"The specialized, new enterprise is a leader among small and medium-sized enterprises, and it is a vanguard enterprise focusing on market segmentation, strong innovation ability, high market share, and excellent quality and efficiency," said Nie Shaojun, director of the science and technology bureau of the zone.

A total of 115 enterprises in the zone have been selected as specialized and new enterprises.

The provincial-level small and medium-sized enterprises in the zone accounted for one-sixth of Weifang. High-tech enterprises accounted for one-fourth of the city, achieving a metamorphosis in innovative development.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), the Weifang zone will cultivate small and medium-sized enterprises, and enhance the innovation ability and core competitiveness of enterprises to promote the high-quality development of the district.

Innovation-driven policies rewarding many firms

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone in East China's Shandong province is striving to build itself into a demonstration zone for innovation-driven development and a pilot zone for high-quality development, local officials said.

The high-tech industrial zone has implemented policies for sci-tech project leaders to give them more autonomy when using research funds.

It has taken the lead in Weifang in establishing a comprehensive evaluation system for sci-tech projects, in a bid to ease researchers' burden of unnecessary affairs and allow them to concentrate on scientific research.

By bolstering the principal role of businesses in conducting innovation, the industrial zone has strengthened financial support for companies to make key technological breakthroughs and solve bottleneck problems.

So far, 10 projects in the zone have been approved to be State-level sci-tech projects, receiving total funds of 290 million yuan (\$45.5 million).

Since 2020, it has provided more than 32 million yuan in an innovation-driven incentive fund to 187 companies; offered nearly 26 million yuan as industrial development rewards to 91 companies; and awarded a total of 6 million yuan to gazelle enterprises. Gazelle companies are fast-growing and have base revenues of at least \$1 million and four years of sustained revenue growth.

The industrial zone has supported its companies to continuously increase their investment in research and development. Last year, the R&D investment of these companies accounted for 7.2 percent of the zone's GDP, the highest level in history.

As a result, the zone's technology reserves are becoming increasingly strong in such cutting-edge fields as high-end power equipment, hydrogen fuel and magnetic suspension.

For example, Weichai Group, one of the leading heavy truck and component manufacturers in China, launched the world's first commercial diesel engine with thermal efficiency surpassing 50 percent, last year.

The engine was listed as one of the top 10 scientific and technological achievements in Shandong province in 2020.

Shandong Tianrui Heavy Industry, a leading drilling machine maker in China, introduced its

innovative maglev blowers, which use synchronized magnet motors to compress air for industrial production, to the market in 2018.

The product can be used in fields such as industrial wastewater treatment, aquaculture and gas transmission, and has a reduced effect on the environment, a lower requirement for maintenance and a longer life cycle.

The industrial zone has encouraged companies to set up various high-end R&D platforms to attract resources and talents.

It is now home to 11 national-level innovation platforms including the National Fuel Cell Technology Innovation Center, and 63 provincial-level ones including the Shandong Photoresist Key Laboratory, the only one of its kind in the province.

These innovation platforms have played an important role in promoting technological transformation and industrialization in the zone.

Shengrui Transmission's front-engine, front-drive eight-gear automatic transmission project won first prize at the National Science and Technology Progress Awards in 2016, making it the first auto parts supplier to obtain the award since it was created in 1984.

Weichai Power is another company in the zone awarded first place at the National Science and Technology Progress Awards in 2018, for its project of key technologies and applications of heavy-duty commercial vehicle powertrains.

In addition to national prizes, the zone's companies have won 26 prizes at the Shandong provincial science and technology progress awards and 101 prizes at the Weifang science and technology progress awards, both ranking first in the city.

To better serve its high-tech companies, the zone has enhanced its service capacity pertaining to intellectual property rights. From January to May, companies in the zone were granted 2,298 patents, an increase of 36 percent year-on-year, accounting for 23 percent of the city's total.

And, as of May, the number of valid invention patents reached 4,838 in the zone, up 45 percent year-on-year, accounting for 44 percent of the city's total.

The zone has carried out patent pledge financing services to reduce companies' operating costs. This year, it has handled 14 patent-collateralized financing deals, with a combined value of over 81 million yuan.



Weichai Group launches the world's first commercial diesel engine with thermal efficiency surpassing 50 percent. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Weichai park seeks to bolster industrial chain

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Weichai International Supporting Industrial Park, located in Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone, is piloting industrial chain investment promotion and exploring a new way in achieving high-quality development in the market economy.

The park, in East China's Shandong province, has introduced 36 leading companies including Switzerland's Tyco and Japan's Iwatani, two listed companies on the A-share main board and nine foreign-invested enterprises.

"The park is being developed via the Shandong Gaochuang Construction Investment Group's self-raised funds. It provides enterprises with customized factory buildings through flexible methods such as long-term leases and lease-to-transfer," said Cheng

Hui, deputy director of the zone's management committee and Party secretary and chairman of the group.

The group focuses on incubating enterprises in the park and boosting research and development. The 300,000-square-meter workshops in the first phase of the park have been completed and are ready for enterprises to move in. Juyuan Electronic is one of those enterprises that have settled in the park, which will enter full operation before the end of the year.

The output value is expected to reach 50 million yuan (\$7.8 million) this year and will exceed 200 million yuan next year.

A large number of high-end supporting enterprises have gathered to build a global power equipment industrial chain. After the park is fully completed, it is estimated that more than 500 enterprises

will be introduced, and the annual output value will be 500 billion yuan.

Hu Jie, chairman of Gaochuang, said: "We carry out in-depth cooperation with top domestic fund managers, target global top 500 enterprises and industry-leading companies for targeted investment promotion."

Sun Wenfeng, director of the economic development bureau of the zone, said of the 36 companies in the park, there are nine foreign-invested companies, among which the global top 500 companies account for one-third.

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The Weichai International Supporting Industrial Park is located in the Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

more than 30 percent.

"Now there is a 'circle of friends' between Weichai and upstream and downstream companies. Together, everyone can concentrate on doing big things," said Wang Zhaoyu, chairman of the company.

To date, the park is home to five national-level laboratories, 24 provincial-level enterprise R&D institu-

tions, nine public technology platforms and seven post-doctoral research workstations, as well as 18 technical demand projects with a total value of 44 million yuan.

The collaborative R&D mechanism for automotive electronics, key components, powertrain and other sub-fields is accelerating the expansion.