

Fujian focuses on high-quality development

Province's balanced efforts paying dividends economically and environmentally

By YUAN SHENGGAO

South China's Fujian province has devoted sustained effort to achieve high-quality economic development while preserving its natural environment for the benefit of the whole society, local officials said.

"Endowed with picturesque natural scenery, Fujian is a good place to live and travel. The province has advanced infrastructure, rich resources, a friendly business environment, and is a hotbed for innovation and entrepreneurship," said Tang Dengjie, governor of Fujian.

Fujian was approved as a national-level demonstration zone for ecological civilization in June 2016 and the government has placed green development as a key initiative in its agenda.

The province has guided local governments to shift from focusing solely on economic growth to paying equal attention to natural environment and high-quality development, canceling the GDP assessment indicators for 34 counties.

Changting county is a good example of how the government is controlling soil and water loss in southern Fujian by improving the quality of soil, water, air and the natural environment and establishing a systematic mechanism to restore forests in mountain areas.

Fujian is also revamping the living environment in rural areas. The province has built a full coverage of township waste transfer systems and treatment mechanism for domestic garbage. Some 90 percent of the villages have been equipped with domestic sewage treatment



A photovoltaic power station covers the hills in Songxi county, Fujian province. LIN WENQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

facilities. In 2018, forest coverage in Fujian reached 66.8 percent, ranking first in China for 40 consecutive years. Over 97 percent of days recorded good air quality, with the average concentration of fine particulates, also known as PM 2.5, recorded at 26 micrograms per cubic meter.

Fujian's GDP reached 3.58 trillion yuan (\$506.01 billion) in 2018, up 8.3 percent year-on-year, ranking fifth across the nation for growth rate. In the first half of this year, the GDP growth rate reached 8.1 percent.

Ecological construction has led to more sustainable development, which has laid a foundation for Fujian's high-quality growth.

The province is boosting its more environmentally friendly industries such as information technology, new energy, new materials, biomedicine and the digital economy which covers internet of things, big data and artificial intelligence.

In 2018, the province's digital economy reached 1.42 trillion yuan, an increase of 22.4 percent over the previous year.

The added value of industrial enterprises above designated size increased by 9.1 percent and the added value of high-tech industries soared 13.9 percent, of which the electronic information industry grew by 14.2 percent. Focusing on



Farmers pick tea leaves at a plantation in Fujian, a key production base for all kinds of tea. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

deepening cooperation and opening-up under China's Belt and Road Initiative, Fujian is showing good momentum in its high-quality development.

By the end of 2018, Fujian's foreign direct investment enterprises and overseas branches had reached 2,594, with an agreed investment of more than \$32.3 billion. In the first five months of this year, import and export trade between Fujian and countries and regions involved in the BRI increased by 10.6 percent year-on-year. The initiative as well as economic and trade cooperation have strengthened opening-up and stimulated regional economic development. The real economy has

grown considerably relying on the government's policies to support financing and reduce the burden for enterprises.

In 2018, the burden on real economy enterprises was reduced by more than 70 billion yuan. The number of market players increased by 807,000, an increase of 27.6 percent. A total of 20 private enterprises in Fujian were selected by the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce to be on the list of the top 500 Chinese private enterprises.

For traditional industries producing clothing, food and machinery, Fujian province has continuously reduced the intensity of land, energy and water consumption through

intelligent transformation and environmental protection reform.

At present, Fujian is cultivating industrial clusters for green development, promoting eco-industrialization and exploring new ways of high-quality development.

Data show that the current proportion of installed capacity of clean energy reached 55.5 percent, and the emerging industries have a good momentum. The service industry has contributed more to economic growth than the secondary industry.

Fujian attaches great importance to the promotion and application of new energy vehicles and regards it as an important starting point for accelerating the transformation of new and old kinetic energy in the province. Today, the two major development zones in northeastern Yunnan and southwestern Fujian are committed to synergistic development of the new energy automobile industry.

According to data from the Fujian Provincial Department of Industry and Information Technology, the total industrial chain value for new energy vehicles in the province exceeded 20 billion yuan in 2018.

Founded in 2011, battery maker CATL is the only Chinese power battery company that has entered the international first-class car supplier system with wider international cooperation covering mainstream brands of commercial vehicles such as BMW, Daimler, Volkswagen, Jaguar Land Rover, Chrysler and Peugeot Citroen.

In 2018, the global market share of CATL was about 23 percent, ranking first in the world for two consecutive years.



The Mulan River flood control system has become one of the successful ecological projects in Putian, Fujian.

Preserving Quxi pays off for town's local residents

By HAO NAN
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Residents in Quxi town, Liancheng county, Fujian province see a rise in their annual incomes, thanks to the local government's efforts to enhance conservation of rivers, farmlands and forests.

The conservation will leverage ecological advantages to boost environmentally friendly industries, an official said.

"Ecology is Liancheng's advantage to realize high-quality development," said Zhong Yongqiang, the county's Party secretary. "We stick to the conviction that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets."

Quxi is the largest production base of moso bamboo in Liancheng. In the past, farmers relied on chemical fertilizers and pesticides during planting, which caused environmental contamination.

"We have encouraged farmers to replace chemical fertilizers with organic fertilizers, and to resort to biological and physical means rather than pesticides to plant and manage moso bamboo," said Deng Xinyuan, head of the town.

All villages under the administration of Quxi signed a letter of commitment to forbid herbicides in hopes of better protecting water and the living environment. The town has

“Ecology is Liancheng's advantage to realize high-quality development.”

Zhong Yongqiang, Party secretary of Liancheng county in Fujian

ramped up its support of ecological agriculture and helped villagers to grow pears, horned melon, yacon and plums, which increased last year's per capita income by more than 5,000 yuan (\$702).

By participating in the construction of Meihua Mountain Scenic Area-related projects, Quxi also enjoyed rapid development in its rural tourism sector.

It has encouraged villagers to plant and sell organic agricultural products, and run *nongjiale*, or farm homestays, where tourists can eat locally produced food and experience a more rural lifestyle.

Puxi village, for example, is a popular rural tourist destination due to an ecological forest park covering an area of about 8,000 square meters. Although the park is not significantly large in area, it has various kinds of old trees and many wild

animals. The village's farm homestays become bustling at holidays.

In 2018, Quxi accepted 45,000 tourist visits and generated total tourism revenue of 5 million yuan, up 15 percent year-on-year.

Putian, a coastal city in central Fujian, also achieved remarkable progress in ecological protection. It has won many honorary titles such as a city of parks, a city of forests and an ecological civilization city in water systems.

The Mulan River is the "mother river" of Putian, but also made the city the site of devastating floods in the 1990s.

But now, Mulan has become China's first river to be managed by a comprehensive plan that covers its entire watersheds. The flood control system on the river has also become one of the successful ecological projects in Putian.

In 2012, a national Mulan River water source conservation area was built in Xianyou county, a mountainous region located in the upstream of the river. The 18,025-hectare area aims to mainly protect the forest ecosystems and rare and endangered species of wild fauna and flora.

To ensure water purity, Putian has become the first area in Fujian to prohibit building livestock and poultry farms near water sources. Authorities have drawn lines in the banks of the Mulan River's main stream and tributaries to reconstruct vacated land and develop the forest economy and other services.

As for livelihood projects, Putian now has more than 100 greenways along rivers, parks and mountains, offering residents great places to explore and relax.

Region's ecology benefits from forest growth

By LIANG KAIYAN
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Having planted trees for almost seven decades, East China's Fujian province has become one of China's biggest success stories in terms of its sheer number of forestry plantations.

After the War of Liberation (1946-49), the province had only two public forestry plantations, said Chen Liangchang, head of Fujian's administration bureau for State-owned forest.

In the early period of the founding of the People's Republic of China, policymakers proposed expanding tree planting in the province led by the cities of Fuzhou, Quanzhou, Nanping and Zhangzhou, as part of its efforts to promote the country's ecological development, Chen said.

Since 1957, the province has seen an upsurge in forestry plantations, he added.

Located in the northwest of Fujian province, Taining county was approved as a State-owned forestry plantation, and Sun Guixiang, 71, has worked there since the 1960s.

Sun has witnessed the great changes over the past decades. "Women and men did the same jobs no matter how physical," she said. "Each worker had to pull 500 seedlings per day."



Fudao skywalk in Fuzhou is the longest forest path in China. CHEN CHENGCAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

After years of development, the forestry plantation has upgraded its operations through cooperation with local villages. Meiqiao village of Taining county is a beneficiary of the cooperation.

Last year, with the Taining State-owned forestry plantation, the village began to plant trees with the aid of support funds, technology and operation management, said Li Qinglin, Party secretary of Meiqiao village.

"The land used to have no vegetation due to capital shortage," Li said. But now it is home to an area of 17.8 hectares of forest, he added.

To date, the forestry plantation has led to 80 hectares of forests in the county, with the size expected to top 1,000 hectares by 2020, local officials said.

Zhang Ying, 86, who used to work for another State-owned forestry plantation in Jiangle county of Sanming city, said that he and his colleagues had suffered from the poor environment in years past.

"Staff members (of the plantation) all lived in shabby houses and ate just bamboo, rice and assorted vegetables," Zhang said.

He said that from the 1950s to 1970s more than 100 people worked on forestry management and planted more than 3,000 hectares of new forest in that time.

The Yangkou forestry plantation in

1.8 million hectares

of trees have been planted in Fujian by now

Nanping city is home to Chinese fir trees.

"In the late 1950s, the province authority proposed to develop forestry plantations and built a base for fast-growing and high-yielding timber," said Huang Jinhua, deputy head of the forestry.

At that time, the then professor of Nanjing Forestry University Chen Yuewu led a team to conduct groundbreaking research in developing the first generation Chinese fir seeds.

With Chen's efforts, the forestry plantation planted the first to the third generation of Chinese firs.

The plantation is expected to plant the fourth generation first by 2020, according to Huang.

To date, the province has a total of 35 State-owned forestry plantations, conducting seed breeding and the farms contain 8,000 tree species, which have been used to produce 420,000 high-quality forest products.

Fujian has planted 1.8 million hectares of trees that are expected to generate an economic benefit of more than 11 billion yuan (\$1.55 billion).



Wuyi mountain is a famous tourist attraction with a picturesque view. CHEN QING / FOR CHINA DAILY