



Officials in Shanxi explain the 40 measures released by the provincial government on Dec 14. HE GUANGHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hopes to increase investment from private sector via reform

Businesses to get favorable treatment once enjoyed exclusively by State-owned enterprises

By YUAN SHENGGAO

North China's Shanxi province recently released 40 measures to encourage investment from the private sector, hoping to boost economic growth and enhance investors' confidence in the post-pandemic era.

The provincial government of Shanxi announced the measures on Dec 14, when it issued the implementation guidelines on encouraging investment from the private sector. Officials from the Shanxi Development and Reform Commission, Shanxi Department of Industry and Information Technology and other governmental institutions gave their interpretations of the guidelines at a news conference on that day.

Yan Zhongli, deputy chief and spokesman of the Shanxi Development and Reform Commission, said private investment is an important part of social investment in Shanxi and a parameter for market confidence.

"Over recent years, private investment had kept a steady pace of growth, accounting for almost a half of the total fixed asset investment in Shanxi," Yan said. "But this year, private investment is facing a pressure of slowdown or even a downward trend due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the sluggish real estate market."

He said the measures aim to create a favorable business environment for private investors by identifying their difficulties and problems and offering solutions



based on the principles of market orientation and reform.

Yan said the most important part of the guidelines are five measures regarding the equal treatment of private businesses in market access.

"Private businesses will enjoy the same treatment as State-owned enterprises in the fields of investment incentives, like the reduction of taxes and charges," Yan said.

Private businesses will be encouraged to invest in affordable housing projects initiated by governments. They are also allowed to enter the infrastructure construction market, like energy and public facilities.

"We are making a list of 102 key infrastructure projects for the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) to encourage the participation of private investment," Yan said. "And their investment can be made in the forms like public-private partnership."

The official said that private businesses are especially welcome in forming 10 industrial chains, which include manufacturing, agriculture, cultural tourism and the digital economy.

"In traditional industries like agriculture and manufacturing, private businesses can enjoy gov-

ernment subsidies for upgrading," Yan said. "And this is also the case with private digital tech companies, if they use their technologies to upgrade traditional sectors and help to develop the digital economy in Shanxi."

The official said private businesses will benefit from another 19 measures regarding incentives in project appraisal and approval; land leasing; energy consumption; environmental assessment; and financing.

Ma Yunxia, deputy chief of the Shanxi Department of Industry and Information Technology, said his department is considering further incentives so private businesses can invest in the development of industrial chains, the digital economy and technological upgrades.

"We will give a special emphasis to engaging private businesses in developing the digital economy and upgrading their operations with digital technologies," Ma said. "Our department will set aside 120 million yuan (\$17.44 million) to subsidize private enterprises in these two fields."

To give further support to the development of the digital economy, the department will invest 250 million yuan in building new 5G base stations. The number of such stations in Shanxi is expected to reach 92,100 by the end of 2023, according to Ma.

The official added that the department will allocate another 108 million yuan to promote the best practices of intelligent manufacturing, big data and other related

industries among private businesses.

Ma said the department will give incentives to encourage private businesses to upgrade their technologies. These companies can enjoy the same treatment as SOEs when accessing the government's special fund that supports technological upgrades.

In a new regulation governing the special fund, the government promises to cover 15 percent of the enterprises' investment in technological upgrades, a rise of 6.3 percentage points from the original 8.7 percent.

"In 2022, we used 1.15 billion yuan from the fund to support 279 technological upgrade projects launched by private businesses," Ma said. "That led to a total investment of 21.4 billion yuan from private companies in technological upgrades."

Other officials at the news conference said their departments will issue detailed measures to assist the implementation of the guidelines.

They hope the new incentives can help to expand private investment scale, optimize investment structure and improve operational efficiency.

Shanxi aims for private investment to account for 58 percent of its total fixed asset investment by the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan. Officials said they are optimistic about the target with the policy incentives in place.

Jin Shuaini contributed to this story.

Liquor brand broadcast to New Zealand audience



Reggie Li, executive chef at the New Zealand embassy in China, pours Fenjiu liquor on a dish to give it a unique flavor.

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By YUAN SHENGGAO

Xinghuacun Fenjiu Group, a renowned white liquor producer from Shanxi, recently joined hands with the embassy of New Zealand in China to host a televised exchange event in Beijing that aimed to promote exchanges in the food and beverage industries in both countries. It also aimed to make the unique products and culture of the famed Shanxi distillery brand known to New Zealand's people.

That show was a combination of New Zealand's farming industry and its Maori culture with Xinghuacun Fenjiu's white liquor — or *baijiu* — culture.

During the show, people from New Zealand performed songs and dances with Maori ethnic characteristics. Clare Fearnley, New Zealand's ambassador to China, also sang a Maori song on-site together with

other diplomats at the embassy.

New Zealand is a country known for its animal farming industry, making the grilled lamb chops a highlight at the show.

Adding to the pleasant flavor of the dish was the Fenjiu liquor used to sear the lamb before it was put on the grill.

Reggie Li, the executive chef at the embassy, said Fenjiu liquor helps to remove the gamey odor of lamb while making it taste better.

After the grilled lamb chops were done, the chef again poured some liquor on the dish, giving it a unique flavor.

According to an executive from Xinghuacun Fenjiu, the Fenjiu liquor has a long association with lamb. It was called "lamb liquor" in the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties as the lamb mince was used as an additive in the liquor-making process.

The executive said the use of Fenjiu

liquor is a favored match with authentic New Zealand food because the brand is innovating to adapt to the taste of international consumers.

Over the past decades, the brand has become a representative in globalization in China's liquor industry, bringing new varieties to suit the international markets.

Xinghuacun Fenjiu began attracting the attention of international buyers in 1915 after it won first prize at the Panama Pacific International Expo, which was held in San Francisco. It began large-scale overseas sales in the years to follow.

To date, Xinghuacun Fenjiu's products have been sold to more than 60 countries and regions, through its 50-plus overseas dealers across more than 9,000 outlets that include 180 duty-free stores.

Zhao Qingyuan contributed to this story.



Congresswoman Judy Chu (right) presents an award to Shanshan Zhang. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Documentary focuses on special needs of people with autism

By YUAN SHENGGAO

A documentary film recently produced by two directors from China has caused public concern about the conditions of autism patients and how society should care for and help this special group of people.

On Dec 4, the film titled *Music Calling*, produced by American-Chinese director John Qu and Chinese director Shanshan Zhang, both natives of Shanxi province, made its premiere in Los Angeles, California. Nearly 200 audience members in the United States, including movie industry insiders, philanthropists and politicians, attended the premiere.

Congresswoman Judy Chu, who is also American-Chinese, presented awards to the two directors at the premiere for their care of autistic children.

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication.

According to some experts in the area, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. The ways in which people with autism learn, think and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged.

As the film reveals, Bowen Duan, the protagonist, is a typical case of an autistic child with both marked talents and challenges.

Born to an American-Chinese family, Duan is a gifted pianist. He faced great difficulties and challenges when he studied in university. But he succeeded thanks to the love and care from his family, the school and the community.

At the news conference following the premiere, Qu said the film was sponsored by Franklin Foundation, a nonprofit organization in the US. Production of the film began in August but planning started a year ago in 2021. It was completed in November.

Qu and Zhang said the story of Duan is only a part of a movie series focusing on autistic children. More productions on this topic will

be made in the years to come.

Qu graduated from the Beijing Film Academy based in the Chinese capital. Before he moved to the United States, he had been a professor at the Communication University of China, which is also based in Beijing. He was also a productive documentary film director during that time. The movie *Families in Phari*, featuring the lives in a village in Tibet's Ngari prefecture, won an award of the best documentary at the Shanghai International Film Festival in 2002. He continued his career as a director in the US, with a special focus on American-Chinese families.

Zhang graduated from the Maryland Institute College of Art in the US, with a master's degree in filmmaking. She was the director of a number of award-winning films including *Paradise Program*, *The Foam*, *Fish in the Tank* and *Tutti*. Some of the films, like *Fish in the Tank*, were shot in her home province of Shanxi, with a focus on children with autism and their families.

Duan and his mother Sarah Cheng were present at the premiere of *Music Calling*.

Duan said he likes the film very much. Cheng said she expects the film to invoke public concern about autistic children and hopes the special group of people can get more assistance from society in their growth and career development.

Zhang said the film is a show of strength, mutual love and care of a family with an autistic child. She added that she has been deeply touched by the stories of the family and will continue to focus on this theme in the future.

Jimmy Wu, an official from the county government of Los Angeles, praised the efforts of Franklin Foundation and the crew for making the film.

He said the local government will closely attend to the needs of autistic children and other special groups in hopes that they can have better lives with added care and love from society.

Jane He contributed to this story.



Top: Jimmy Wu (right), an official from the county government of Los Angeles, praises the efforts of the crew for making the film. Above: John Qu (right), Shanshan Zhang (second from right) and the family of Bowen Duan at the film's premiere.