

Qingdao West Coast New Area, one of the major urban areas of the city, focuses on the maritime economy.

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By WANG JINHUI
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Shandong provincial government recently released the Development Plan for Qingdao Metropolitan Area, aiming to transform the urban development mode of megacities, seek the common growth of surrounding regions and enhance the high-quality development of the metropolis.

The plan proposes to accelerate infrastructure interconnection; promote collaborative development in modern industries; enhance open cooperation; improve ecological environment governance and facilitate convenient and shared public services; achieve the integrated development of Qingdao, Weifang, Yantai and Rizhao and lead the development of the Jiaodong Economic Circle.

Specific measures include constructing key industry chains; upgrading infrastructure, such as rail transit and buses, to create a one-hour commuting circle; contributing to the transformation of new and old driving forces in the city cluster on Shandong Peninsula; and boosting ecological protection and high-quality development in the Yellow River Basin.

"The metropolitan area is an important platform for participating in international competition and supporting economic growth," said Pan Zhaoyu, director of the land and transport department at the China Center for Urban Development.

"The world is experiencing unprecedented changes and the global economic landscape is adjusting rapidly. Qingdao should

New blueprint to enact modernization across Qingdao

Development plan aims to connect and spread out prosperity to surrounding areas



From left: The modern face of a coastal area in Qingdao and the bustling Qingdao Port reflect the charm and vigor of the multifaceted city.

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seize the historic opportunity of building a coordinated development pattern among large, medium and small cities between urban clusters and metropolitan areas, and lead the metropolitan area to connect with the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta, and important urban clusters in the Yellow River Basin and North-east Asia," Pan said.

"It should also integrate with the

Jinan metropolitan area and develop the Shandong Peninsula city cluster by seeking openness and innovation," he added.

The plan emphasizes the transformation of Qingdao's urban development mode and the strengthening of its core functions. "We will concentrate on enhancing economic growth, population density, innovation and radiating intensity to create a world-class bay area," Pan said.

Tu Qiyu, deputy director of the Institute of Urban and Demographic Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said that the metropolitan area is an important strategy for driving regional development and an exploration of regional development mechanisms.

He believes that just as Qingdao is an important member of the Shandong Peninsula city cluster and the Jiaodong Economic Circle, the

Qingdao Metropolitan Area is a synergy group and an innovative exploration of regional development.

Leng Jing, deputy director of the Urban Development Research Institute at the Qingdao Academy of Social Sciences, said: "The division of the metropolitan area highlights its economic value and significance. By crossing administrative boundaries and optimizing spatial structure, the metropolitan area will

realize the free flow of resources and elements between the central city and surrounding areas on a larger scale."

"This is the first time that a regional coordinated development plan has been implemented based on a single central city," Leng said.

One major highlight of the plan is the emphasis on urban integration, especially promoting the development of integrated cities within Qingdao's proximity. It aims to deepen cooperation and innovation in planning layout; transportation connection; industrial collaboration and administrative services, thereby creating several supports for integrated development, Leng added.

Issued in 2022, the Opinions on Supporting Shandong in Deepening the Transformation of New and Old Driving Forces and Promoting Green, Low-carbon and High-quality Development and the recently released Spatial Planning of Shandong Province (2021-35) by the State Council both mentioned the Qingdao Metropolitan Area, highlighting its core functions in regional development.

"Constructing the metropolitan area is an effective path to enhance the development level of urban clusters and create active growth poles," said Xia Ji, director of the Yangtze Delta Region Research Institute at Hualue Think Tank.

Qingdao should leverage its basic advantages in scientific and technological innovation; the marine industry; openness and the digital economy; and strengthen industrial innovation, trade ports and digital infrastructure to better serve the development of the entire metropolitan area, it said.

Fiscal policies to help digital economy grow

By WANG JINHUI

The Implementation Plan for Accelerating the High-quality Development of the Digital Economy in Qingdao was recently released, highlighting emerging areas such as digital industrialization and data elements to advance the digital economy.

The plan proposes 22 fiscal support policies, with the goal of increasing the added value of the city's core digital economy industry by an average of 13 percent per year by 2025, accounting for more than 12 percent of local GDP.

Since the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the country has bolstered the integration of digital technology and the real economy; empowered the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries; and fostered new industries, new business forms and new models.

As a new form of the economy driven by new-generation information technology, the digital economy not only refers to the development of digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence and big data, but covers the value achieved by indus-

tries, such as textiles and automobiles, which rely on IT.

Data show that between 2012-22, the scale of China's digital economy grew from 11 trillion yuan (\$1.5 trillion) to 50.2 trillion yuan. The proportion of the digital economy to the national GDP has increased from 21.6 percent to 41.5 percent.

In recent years, Qingdao has made efforts to vitalize and develop the real economy, building 24 key industry chains. Of them, industries directly related to digital technology — such as smart home appliances, integrated circuits, AI, virtual reality, software and information services — have been approved as national manufacturing innovation centers.

Qingdao is revving up efforts to boost the development of the industrial internet and iterative evolution of digital transformation. Remarkable achievements have been made in such aspects as industrial internet platforms and the cultivation of new models and formats for the manufacturing sector.

By 2022, the growth rate of the core added value of Qingdao's digital economy reached 25.3 percent. The scale of core industries accounted for nearly 30 percent of the prov-



An autonomous tire production line at an information technology-backed manufacturing demonstration base at Qingdao Doublestar Tire Industrial Co Ltd. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ince's total. In the first half of this year, the added value of the city's core digital economy industries surged by more than 20 percent year-on-year.

To strengthen the digital economy in Qingdao means to achieve breakthroughs in industrial scale, industrial structure and new models and formats.

Regarding digital industrialization, Qingdao focuses on electronics and information manufacturing; software and information services; and industrial internet platforms. This covers sectors such as integrated circuits, new displays, smart terminals, industrial software and cloud services.

Qingdao will promote the digital

transformation of the manufacturing industry while accelerating the digital transformation of key service industries such as modern finance, modern logistics, trade services, cultural tourism and agriculture.

The city is also improving the capacity of data resource supply and cultivating the ecosystem of data elements. For example, it applies data in fields such as finance, healthcare, transportation, industry, maritime, trade and agriculture.

Qingdao will construct digital economic infrastructure such as 5G networks, computing power centers, internet of things sensing facilities, and unblock the development arteries of the digital economy.

Corporate service platform set to get business booming

By HAO NAN

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The Qingdao city government recently gave a briefing about the construction of an integrated corporate service platform, which serves as a new initiative to optimize the city's business environment.

The platform is comprised of three subplatforms pertaining to the release and implementation of preferential policies for enterprises, corporate financing services and the handling of enterprises' appeals.

The policy-based subplatform provides enterprises with inquiry, application, inspection, publicity and other services related to preferential policies. After applying for policies online, enterprises can view all the processes ranging from the application to the issue of funds at the subplatform in real time.

It now has more than 3,000 policy documents at national, provincial, city and district levels, as well as nearly 2,000 policy projects and more than 26,000 pieces of policy information, covering all departments in the city.

The financial subplatform, linking with 57 financial institutions and 524 outlets across the city, offers one-stop and comprehensive finan-

cial services. Enterprises can not only see the information of 300-plus financial products and services, but publish financial applications on it.

After receiving the financial needs of an enterprise, the subplatform will intelligently match and accurately recommend the most suitable products, based on the applicant's data.

The third subplatform provides enterprises with full-cycle services from appeals to handling, feedback and evaluation. After receiving an appeal, for example, officials from related departments and units should arrive on-site or contact the enterprise within two hours.

The integrated platform that connects government departments, enterprises and financial institutions is an innovative practice for Qingdao to improve the city's long-term corporate service mechanism, and enhances the quality and efficiency of local government services, local officials said.

Moreover, the platform is expected to create a market-oriented, law-based and first-class international business environment in the city. It will also stimulate the vitality of business entities and help to attract more investors from across the world to Qingdao, they added.

City boosting economic performance to attract investors

By HAO NAN

Qingdao in East China's Shandong province has been making greater efforts in promoting breakthroughs in the real economy and boosting investment attraction, in a bid to pursue a higher-quality development of the city's economy.

The city government, for example, launched a policy on Oct 23 to advance the attractiveness of project investment.

Based on the policy issued in 2020, the revised policy is more in line with Qingdao's

demands in boosting the development of the real economy in terms of support objects, categories and the convenience of implementation.

Also, it is expected to inject more confidence and vitality into the city's social and economic performance in the fourth quarter and help realize high-quality economic growth throughout the year, local officials said.

Qingdao has designated 24 industry chains to boost the development of the real economy. And, the newly released policy considers

the introduction of supporting projects of these 24 industry chains as a highlight, striving to realize the transformation of investment resources to the real economy.

For a qualified investment project related to the 24 industrial chains, for instance, project sponsors can receive funds amounting to 0.6 percent of the project's fixed asset investment.

Moreover, the new policy no longer limits the total investment scale to better assist the implementation. It also expands the coverage of industries and provides support

to various kinds of enterprises and social organizations in attracting investment.

Taking the new project's implementation and investment periods into account, the new policy prolongs the application time and offers flexible application methods.

This year, major officials of the city's Party committee and government have visited 178 enterprises at home and abroad, during which they have promoted and witnessed the signing of cooperation agreements on 85 projects,

with a total investment reaching 129.8 billion yuan (\$17.78 billion).

Also, leading departments of industrial chains and the main Party leaders of district-level governments in Qingdao have made 894 visits to enterprises at home and abroad, introducing a number of key projects.

Official statistics showed that from January to September, Qingdao signed 131 new projects each with an investment exceeding 500 million yuan, of which total investment is scheduled to hit 394.21 billion yuan.

Among them, 59 were manufacturing projects, accounting for 45 percent; 124 projects were in rela-

tion to the 24 key industry chains, accounting for 94.7 percent.

Also, 53 projects are under construction or being operated, accounting for 40.5 percent. They include 32 projects each with an investment totaling more than 5 billion yuan.

During the fourth quarter, Qingdao plans to sort out three lists of projects, which are under negotiation, signed agreements or under construction.

It will also issue detailed rules for the use of foreign investment in manufacturing and encourage foreign investors to focus more on the manufacturing and high-tech industries.