

Stories of CPC: Innovation in Jiangsu Province

China's efforts to become a country of innovation through dedication to education, talent development, technological breakthroughs and structural reforms were shared to a wide circle of foreign guests in Beijing on Thursday.

Foreigners take photos of a robot made in Jiangsu writing Chinese calligraphy. [Photo by Guo Yiming/China.org.cn]

The story was told by the CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee, a front runner in innovation-driven transformation and development, during a thematic briefing at the International Department of the CPC Central Committee (IDCPC).

"With only 5.8 percent of the country's population and only 1.1 percent of the total land area, Jiangsu Province has created 10.2 percent of China's output," said Li Qiang, secretary of the CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee. He attributed much of Jiangsu's success, 7.6 trillion yuan (US\$1.16 trillion) of GDP in 2016, to its dedicated and sustained commitment to innovation.

Home to over 13,000 high-tech companies, the eastern coastal province boasts one of the country's strongest capacity for innovation with its high-tech industries accounting for over 40 percent of its industrial value, scientific advancements contributing to over 60 percent of its economic growth, while the expenditure on R&D accounts for 2.6 percent of the provincial GDP.

"Companies and talents are the main players of innovation," said Li.

"We should build a dynamic 'ecosystem' which can facilitate innovation."

He particularly emphasized the role of talented personnel as well as supportive platforms for technological breakthroughs.

Jiangsu Province is also home to 167 colleges and universities, over 1.9 million college students, 757 independent research institutes and 760,000 R&D personnel.

Song Tao, minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee (IDCPC), speaks at Jiangsu's thematic briefing on its innovation-driven transformation and development on Aug. 31. [Photo/IDCPC]

"We strive to provide all-round services to our most-coveted talents covering their work and life including household registration, medical care, education for their children," Li explained.

According to a local policy, in a bid to attract outstanding personnel,

world-class talent teams are eligible to apply for a maximum amount of 100 million yuan of financial support.

As a result, more talents are willing to stay and work in Jiangsu. The number of overseas top talents under the “Thousand Talents Plan” accounts for 11.5 percent of the country’s total, and the number of scholars under the Changjiang Scholars Program, the highest academic award issued to an individual in higher education by the Ministry of Education, tops all provincial-level regions.

Jan-Christer Janson, an academic from the Swedish Royal Society of Science in Uppsala, is one of the international outstanding talents who settled in Jiangsu.

He has been collaborating with Chinese experts for 37 years since 1980 in the field of protein purification and development of protein drugs.

Janson and his team in China has created several vaccines, cancer drugs, human plasma proteins and biomedical devices. He was awarded the 2015 China International Science and Technology Cooperation Award by President Xi Jinping for his contribution.

“I’ve received tremendous support at the very beginning from the government at all different levels in Jiangsu,” he said. “Without them, it would be very difficult to have this very successful development.”

Janson also helped bring on board the Swedish Nobel prize-winner Bengt Samuelsson who decided to use his experience and links all over the world in helping establish a biotech company in Jiangsu.

“This is an excellent example of how scientific ideas born in Sweden grow in Jiangsu by trans-regional research and innovation which contributes to industrial production in Jiangsu, a place where favorable circumstances are at hand.”

Over 380 Fortune 500 companies have invested in the region and many manufacturing companies have set up R&D centers there.

“We have been working closely with prestigious universities like MIT, UC Berkeley and Cambridge for technological research and applications, and meanwhile we encourage more local youngsters to study abroad as well as inviting international students to study here,” said Li.

Hun Many, member of the Central Committee of Cambodian People’s Party and President of the Union of Youth Federation of Cambodia, has just visited the province on a field trip.

He said: “In an ever-changing world, R&D in the technological innovation field could definitely allow a nation to have an edge in the increasingly fierce market competition...and contribute to the betterment of people’s livelihoods, help answer challenges of population growth, the scarcity of national resources, and climate change.”

And Jiangsu has become a role model in this front, he concluded.

Around 400 people including senior diplomats, scholars and representatives from multinational companies attended the briefing.