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‘Rocket street’ project launched in Beijing

Beijing has launched a “rocket street” project, aiming to establish a national-level scientific research and production hub to support China’s commercial space development.

The “Beijing Rocket Street” project will be located in Beijing E-town, an economic and technological development area in the southeast of the capital, with a total floor space of 140,000 square meters.

A common technological platform, a high-end manufacturing center and an innovation research and development center are some of the major facilities. It also plans to build an interactive exhibition hall for science and technology that will offer visitors immersive virtual reality experiences.

The local government anticipates that the project will assist rocket enterprises in exploring new technologies and expanding their application scenarios. Meanwhile, it has spearheaded a commercial space alliance, bringing together businesses, universities, institutions and cooperatives.

Beijing E-town hosts a cluster of over 70 aerospace companies including 75 percent of China’s private rocket makers, covering various fields such as launch vehicles, satellite development, satellite applications, ground equipment, and technology applications.

75 percent

of China’s private rocket makers are located in the E-town of Beijing.

Beijing E-town has gradually become one of the main battlegrounds for commercial space innovation, resource allocation, and collaborative efforts in China, according to its management committee.

The country’s private commercial rocket enterprises, all headquartered in Beijing, carried out 13 space launches last year.

Since this year’s Government Work Report highlighted the inclusion of the commercial space industry as a significant driver for new growth, many regions such as Shanghai, and the provinces of Hunan and Sichuan have also released development plans to boost the industry.

China’s commercial space market has experienced rapid growth since 2015, with an average annual increase of over 20 percent since 2017. This year, the country’s commercial space market is expected to be worth 2.34 trillion yuan (\$322 billion).

XINHUA

Beidou system set for large-scale applications

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The Beidou Navigation Satellite System developed by China is poised to enter a critical phase of large-scale application, with plans of pilot projects unveiled for its wider use in areas such as consumer electronics and industrial manufacturing, experts said.

The comments came after the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China’s top industry regulator, last week released a notice regarding the selection of pilot cities for the large-scale application of Beidou in the industrial and information technology sectors.

The goal is to foster new business forms, models and dynamics through innovative applications and research, creating exemplary pilot cities with advanced Beidou industries and significant application results that can influence nationwide development.

Stating that Beidou provides positioning, navigation and timing services, Hong Yong, an expert from the China Digital and Real Economy Integration 5.0 Forum, a Beijing-based think tank, emphasized the importance and timeliness of MITI’s move.

Government guidance and preferential policies can incentivize enterprise innovation, expedite the development of Beidou products and services, and enhance market competitiveness, Hong said.

According to MITI, the pilot projects will focus on three areas: consumer applications, industrial manufacturing and integrated innovation.

In the consumer sector, pilot cities will prioritize the use of Beidou in smart devices, wearable technology, tablets, shared mobility and low-altitude drone applications, encouraging enterprises to develop and produce Beidou products and continually improving product supply capabilities.



An autonomous-driving tractor pulls a wheat seeder in Zhangye, Gansu province, with the help of the Beidou Navigation Satellite System. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

In industrial manufacturing, the emphasis will be on promoting Beidou applications in automobiles, ships, aircraft and robots, leveraging regional characteristics and conditions to explore new industrial manufacturing scenarios powered by Beidou.

For integrated innovation, pilot cities will explore new industrial technology systems and application models, establishing innovative application platforms across various industries to foster “Beidou plus” integrated innovation applications.

Yuan Shuai, deputy secretary-general of the Z-Park Internet of Things Industry Alliance, highlighted the need for multiple measures to build a complete Beidou system industrial chain and promote high-quality, high-value development.

These include nurturing competitive enterprises, enhancing

product supply capabilities and technological levels, strengthening upstream and downstream industry chain collaboration, and driving technological and application innovations to create new economic forms and business models, Yuan said.

The total output value of China’s satellite navigation and positioning services industry reached 536.2 billion yuan (\$73.8 billion) in 2023, up 7.09 percent year-on-year, according to a white paper published by the Global Navigation Satellite System and Location-Based Services Association of China, which goes by the abbreviation GLAS.

According to the white paper, the digital transformation and intelligent upgrade of various industries released demand for satellite navigation equipment and data, injecting vitality into the development of the Beidou information application

and service market.

Industry experts said they view the selection of pilot cities for Beidou’s large-scale application as a significant milestone in China’s development of the satellite navigation system.

This initiative will broaden the application of the Beidou system across various fields, and better contribute to China’s economic and social development.

However, they also said there were challenges and opportunities ahead, and emphasized the need for collective and sustained efforts from all sections of society.

Greater efforts are needed to establish a comprehensive service support system for Beidou to demonstrate its value, said Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecommunications industry association in China.