

# Partners in innovation

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**WAN GANG** holds a PhD in engineering. He is Vice Chairman of the 12th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Chairman of China Zhi Gong Party, and Minister of Science and Technology. Over the course of his career, Professor Wan also worked for the German automotive company Audi (1991-2001), and as President of Tongji University in China. He was appointed as Minister of Science and Technology in April 2007.

China President Xi Jinping will pay a State Visit to the UK in the beautiful autumn season of 2015, opening a golden age in the bilateral relationship and a new chapter of cooperation in science, technology and innovation (STI).

Both China and the UK highlight the importance of the cooperation. The Intergovernmental Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation was signed in 1978. Over the past 37 years, under the joint efforts of the science communities, including universities and research institutes, the two sides have expanded mechanisms and innovated modalities of collaboration, leading to fruitful outcomes for both.

The two sides have been continuously expanding cooperation mechanisms, forming multi-tiered STI platforms. Under the framework of China-UK High-Level People-to-People Dialogue, steady progress has been made in implementing the China-UK Research and Innovation Partnership Fund, promoting joint research and personnel exchanges. Another example is the China-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue, which has continuously strengthened

the collaboration in innovation and its application. Since 1998, the two sides have held regular joint commission meetings, pushing forward the STI cooperation. All these high-level mechanisms have not only driven the bilateral relationship in science and technology, but also facilitated interaction among scientists and engineers.

The two sides have been exploring new means of cooperation and implementing the China-UK Research and Innovation Partnership Fund. In December, 2013, Prime Minister David Cameron visited China, jointly announcing the establishment of the Fund with Premier Li Keqiang. The Fund is a new model and a milestone in bilateral STI collaboration. Over the past year and more, the Fund has played an active role in basic research, innovation cooperation, talent development and regional innovation. This September, when China's Vice Premier Liu Yandong visited the UK, the two sides signed an MoU on the UK-China Research and Innovation Bridges Programme. This Programme will give priority to strengthening ties among universities, research institutes and enterprises.



Blue sky thinking:  
China Museum  
of Science and

Technology in Beijing

In recent years, under the China-UK comprehensive strategic partnership, Chinese and British universities, research institutes, and hi-tech enterprises have been very keen on innovation cooperation and made outstanding achievements. For example, China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC) and its British partner will jointly set up a China-UK Rail Transit Technology R&D Centre. At the same time Huawei and the University of Surrey are collaborating in 5G technology development. All these have helped boost innovation cooperation in priority areas.

During President Xi's visit to the UK, the two sides will confirm cooperation items in antimicrobial resistance, rail transit technology, climate change and low-carbon technology, aeronautics, SKA, astronomy and high-performance computing, and agreed to strengthen cooperation among enterprises, universities and research institutes with a focus on technology application.

So far, win-win cooperation has become the major theme of China-UK STI development. In the future, China-UK STI cooperation is bound to enter a fast track of development.

At present, boosting science, technology and innovation has become an important approach to enhancing economic competitiveness. The two sides should seize opportunities to deepen STI cooperation and build innovation partnership, which encompasses the following aspects:

*1. Highlighting China-UK cooperation and dialogue in innovation areas.* The two sides will prepare for

the establishment of a regular high-level innovation cooperation dialogue on innovation strategy, translation of research findings, S&T policies, IPR, health, agriculture and aerospace, and strive to build it into an important platform for innovation cooperation.

*2. Establishing China-UK joint labs or joint research centers.* On the basis of fruitful STI cooperation in multiple areas, we can build a number of excellent joint labs and research centres, so as to conduct collaborative research in fundamental and strategic areas of common interest.

*3. Boosting China-UK technology and industrial capacity cooperation.* The United Kingdom is a science powerhouse with solid research strengths, while China is a big manufacturing country with an urgent need for stable growth, economic restructuring and a transformation of its development model. With high complementarity in technology industrialisation, the two countries should work together to explore more efficient mechanisms of cooperation, facilitate translation of research findings and boost industrial capacity through S&T cooperation.

*4. Strengthening exchanges and cooperation between China and UK science parks.* Having accumulated successful experience in science park development, the two sides have great potential to work together to facilitate S&T innovation and entrepreneurship activities.

I believe that President Xi's visit will inject new impetus in to China-UK innovation cooperation and open up new opportunities for STI development. **■**

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Here be dragons:  
Shanghai's Science and  
Technology Museum