

## GreenCity

## DRIVE TO CLEAN CITIES

13 CITIES AND PROVINCES SELECTED TO HELP NATION REACH CARBON INTENSITY TARGET

By LI JING  
CHINA DAILY

With its designer architecture, wide boulevards and manicured garden, the Qianjiang Economic Development Zone stands in stark contrast to the traditional image of dirty industrial parks spitting out smoke from tall chimneys.

The zone is the epitome of Hangzhou's ongoing quest to carve a new path to prosperity without putting too much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Embracing only clean and green businesses, Qianjiang provides favorable incentives, such as cheap land rental and tax relief, but sets stringent standards for pollution levels and energy consumption.

The project is one of just many now running nationwide as China strives to reduce its overall carbon emissions.

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) has listed 13 cities and provinces as pilot low-carbon areas, with a view to identifying practices and policies that can help the country reach its carbon intensity target.

Before last year's Copenhagen climate conference, the Chinese government announced it will cut carbon emissions for every unit of economic output by 40 to 45 percent from 2005 levels within the next 10 years.

Although ambitious plans were unveiled to use more clean energy and increase forestry coverage, no concrete guidelines were published in terms of how to go low-carbon, until now.

However, without any domestic experiences to draw on, pilot areas must start from scratch and strive for success by testing new development models that evaluate both growth rate and pollution.

Officials in these cities and



ZHU YINWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Young residents of Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province, use pedal power during a low-carbon campaign held in the city in March.

provinces have to work out independent emissions targets, integrate them into social and economic development programs, transform economic structures, encourage citizens to change their lifestyles and set up mechanisms to report and monitor emissions, as stipulated by NDRC.

### Early guess work

Several of the pilot zones have been brave enough to put their numbers on the table and, although some are sticking close to the national goal, others have shown rather more ambition.

Hangzhou, capital of East China's Zhejiang province, for example, aims to reduce carbon intensity by about 35 percent by 2015 and 50 percent by 2020, said Xu Dongmin, who is overseeing the low-carbon plan for the city's development and reform commission.

Baoding in North China's Hebei province, however, is chasing a 48 percent reduction

target by 2020, while Guiyang, a third-tier city in Southwest China, is keeping a modest pace at 45 percent.

A closer look at the numbers may help explain why some officials have been maintaining a low profile on their targets and plans.

As part of efforts to meet the energy efficiency target set in the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-2010), China's energy auditing system was greatly improved nationwide. Yet, little information is still available in regard to greenhouse gas emissions.

Without a detailed breakdown of how much carbon each industry emits, it is difficult to judge what measures are most effective. As a result, some officials and experts admitted to China Daily they have made only "preliminary calculations and rough estimates" when proposing their targets.

Wang Ke, executive director of the Energy and Climate



**I've met many Chinese officials who are really inspired by green practices, but when they sit down to consider their application it is impossible for them to ignore the pressures of GDP growth and carve out their own way."**

WU CHANGHUA  
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Economics Program at Renmin University of China, argued that estimations based on energy consumption statistics will not result in a fundamental change to the big picture and, therefore, provide a valid reference for policymakers.

But emissions from sectors such as construction and transportation, as well as household pollution, are often left out of these estimations, he said.

"We are working on a carbon-emissions inventory, which is expected to be finished next year," said Xu Dongmin in Hangzhou. "With that,

it will be easier to break down targets into different industries and sectors."

Wang said he believes what matters now is action, not details.

"It would be ideal if we had all the calculations done before setting the targets and taking action," he said, "but considering we're basically starting from nothing, keeping the ball rolling is equally important."

It is also interesting that different cities and provinces have assigned the task of car-

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