

# **Expert Interview I:**

## **Professor Chuanglin Fang, Chinese Academy of Science**

### **Strategic transformation**

Urbanisation strategy was first conceived in the 1980s. Thanks to the efforts of geographers, it has been adopted as one of the national development strategies. Since the millennium, China has been implementing the urbanisation strategy consistently. In 2013, central government called on an urbanisation-themed meeting, in which the authority proposed to restructure China's urbanisation to create a development path that was highly efficiently, low-carbon, green, and environment-friendly. This goal is compatible with the themes of "eco-urbanisation" research. In 2015, central government called on another meeting on urban development to emphasise that urbanisation policies should recognise the gradual stages in urbanisation development. In the early stage of urbanisation, we might have given less attention to its ecological impacts; once urbanisation enters the later and mature stages, we have to emphasise the "green" restructuring of urbanisation. At the national level, Chinese government has placed urbanisation restructuring in a central position. The National New-type Urbanisation Plan has promoted the integration of rural migrants in cities and "city clusters" as the main spatial entities. All these activities have demonstrated that Chinese government has paid a lot of attentions to the restructuring of urbanisation.

### **The transformation of development modes**

The development model of China's urbanisation is changing from the pattern of "four-high-one-low" to "four-low-one-high". The "four-high-one-low" pattern refers to high resource consumption, high economic growth, high carbon emission, high environmental pollution, and low comprehensive efficiency. The traditional model of China's urbanisation had featured the "four-high-one-low" pattern and sacrificed huge loss of natural resources and ecological environment. The traditional model is not healthy, green, or ecological. The goal of China's urbanisation in the future is to achieve a "four-low-one-high" pattern, low resource consumption, low-speed economic growth, low carbon emission, low environmental pollution, and high comprehensive efficiency. Only through such a green urbanisation model, the ecological restructuring of urbanisation in metropolitan areas would be possible.

### **Policy guidelines for urban development**

The previous policy guidelines for urban development in China aimed to tightly control large cities, to rationally develop medium-sized cities, and actively promote small cities and towns. The current policy guidelines adopt "city cluster" as the spatial form to construct a balanced and coordinated development pattern of large-, medium-, and small-sized cities and towns. These new guidelines also emphasise that the population and urban land-use in mega and large cities should be tightly controlled; at the same time, small cities and towns are promoted as the main carriers of green and ecological urbanisation development. By such measures, many urban problems can be solved and the city can be green and ecological. Why does

Beijing aim to become an ecological, harmonious, and highly liveable city? The idea is that the ultimate goal of urban development is to be an ecological city. Other concepts, such as sponge city, green city, and low-carbon city are different aspects of achieving an ecological city. Many planning projects that I directed have adopted the principle of “ecological city”, such as ecological software park, clean-tech industrial park, and ecological urban master plan in Xianning. Ecological assets are the most important assets for a city. From the ecological assets of a city, we can create its productive assets and improve its living assets; we can achieve the integration of these three types of assets. Since the ecological elements of a city are becoming increasingly crucial, the ecological restructuring of China’s urbanisation has to be one of the key strategic directions. Nonetheless, it is a long-term strategy because such restructuring will take a long period of time.

## **Ecological and environmental transformation**

Ecological city is the only choice for future urban development. The ecological restructuring of urbanisation is the ultimate goal for urbanisation while other goals are all possible instruments to achieve the ultimate goal. “Green urbanisation” is a comprehensive concept, including green economy, green industry, and green national economic system. In the future, we will promote the ecological and green restructuring of socio-economic activities and construct green development experimental zone, which includes green energy system, green ecological system, green environment protection system, and green transport system. These aspects are all parts of green urbanisation.

## **Key principles of China’s urbanisation**

There are eight key principles for the new-type urbanisation in China, which are high-efficiency, the sustainable development of economy; low-carbon, the sustainable development of emission-reduction; ecological model, the sustainable development of ecology; environmental protection, the sustainable development of environment; resource-saving, the sustainable development of resource; innovation, the sustainable development of driving dynamics; and security, the sustainable development of the society.