

INTERNATIONAL VIEW 'CATHEDRAL OF SEEDS' SUMS UP EXPO'S THEME

CBI BEIJING »
BY GUY DRU DRURY

The "dandelion", as the UK's pavilion at World Expo 2010 Shanghai has been nicknamed by China's online army of "netizens", is almost complete.

The final 10,000 or so transparent rods of the 60,000 that make up this extraordinary structure are being delicately positioned using GPS technology, and will be ready for the Expo's opening ceremony on 1 May.

In the end of each 7.5-metre-long rod has been inserted a solitary seed from the Millennium Seed Bank Collection held at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew.

During the day, these translucent rods will illuminate the pavilion's interior, creating a cathedral-like effect of shadow and light.

At night, light sources in the rods will allow the "dandelion" to sway and glow like nothing on earth. The six-storey-high structure is expected to be one of the five most-visited of the 200 national pavilions.

Located in the European section of the vast Expo site next to Shanghai's Huangpu River, the UK pavilion sits within a 6,000-square-metre urban park space, which will be used for public events and concerts. Its immediate surroundings will symbolise an unwrapped sheet of paper with the pavilion at its heart – a gift to China from the UK.

The pavilion's innovative design and representation of the importance of biodiversity to humankind exemplify the key messages of both the pavilion and the Expo's broader theme, "Better City, Better Life".

The pavilion is particularly apt because the UK – which invented the concept of green urban space with the creation of the world's first urban park in Derby in the mid-1850s – has in its capital, London, the greenest city for its size in the world.

As the UK's bold vision for the 21st century, the pavilion will be more than an attraction to the five to seven million domestic visitors set to visit it during the six months of the Expo (1 May – 31 October).



Light sources at the end of each rod will allow the UK pavilion to glow by night

“Links between China and countries such as the UK are becoming stronger by the day, particularly in the area of life sciences”

Beyond this, it will be a means to encourage Chinese investment and business to the UK.

CBI members lead the way

The five founder sponsors of the UK pavilion – AstraZeneca, Barclays, BP, Diageo and GKN – are all CBI members with extensive backgrounds in China. They will host events there to coincide with a series of themed months that highlight the best of the UK.

CBI member Rolls Royce will also sponsor the London Symphony Orchestra during UK week, which will run from 6-12 September at the Expo.

A crucial diary date is Wednesday 8 September, when the UK will host its National Expo Day. The UK's prime minister and other VIPs will attend a star-studded day at the pavilion, including visits from

China's most senior dignitaries.

UK companies can plan their own events or meetings at the Expo, as well as the more than 150 events already expected. They can reserve meeting venues at special rates at the JW Marriott and Renaissance hotel chains in Pudong and Puxi respectively.

There will also be a networking hub for UK businesses, "Club UK", at the JW Marriott hotel near People's Square in Shanghai.

From virtual to real

The "dandelion" taking shape has already won the hearts and minds of online visitors. More than one million people have made virtual visits through the cavernous interior of this "seed cathedral".

Soon real visitors will get their turn to walk through and experience an innovative building – one already gaining iconic status as a matchless example of the best of British on display to the world at Expo 2010.

» To get involved or learn more about business opportunities, view an interactive calendar updated daily at www.ukshanghaiexpo.com/en/news/events

» For information on bookings and business engagements at the Expo, please contact Rebecca Hickman at rebecca@ukshanghaiexpo.com

» Guy Dru Drury is the CBI's chief representative in China. guydd@cbi.org.uk

WHAT THEY SAY THE SPONSORS OF THE UK PAVILION

“It is with pride and pleasure that GKN is sponsoring the Shanghai Expo, which we hope will give us an opportunity to show our commitment to China and Shanghai”
Sir Kevin Smith, CEO, GKN

“Diageo is delighted to be one of the founder sponsors of the UK pavilion. The Expo’s theme of ‘Better City, Better Life’, perfectly aligns with our corporate purpose of celebrating life, every day, everywhere”

Lu Haiqing, corporate relations director for greater China, Diageo

“We hope the pavilion will be a platform to showcase the innovation, creativity and technology that exists in, and between, the UK and China, and to encourage global partnerships to address the sustainability challenges facing the world today”

Tony Hayward, CEO, BP

“The business and cultural links between China and countries such as the UK are becoming stronger by the day, particularly in life sciences, so the pavilion will provide a timely opportunity to highlight the advances being made in science and innovation”

David Brennan, CEO, AstraZeneca

“Barclays’ sponsorship of the pavilion underlines our long-term and growing commitment to China, and especially to our existing strong relationships there. It also enables us to support British business interests, as we work to build on the past and shape the future, particularly in the financial services sector”

Clare Williams, director of corporate communications, Barclays Capital (Asia)

CLEAR VISION NEEDED TO TACKLE ROAD CONGESTION

Smart changes to the road network and working practices could unclog bottlenecks and relieve the stress of rush hour.

BY LUKE JOUANIDES

Last month the CBI published a report outlining the steps that should be taken to ease congestion across the UK road network. Our research shows that 80 per cent of companies see roads as “vital” to their business and 96 per cent want to see fresh thinking from an incoming government and a willingness to tackle rush-hour congestion as a priority.

The report, *Tackling congestion, driving growth*, calls on politicians to focus more on roads policy. Nine out of ten passenger journeys, and three-quarters of all freight movements, take place on the road network, so it is clearly the most economically significant mode of transport.

In the run-up to the general election, public debate about transport has mainly revolved around investment in high-speed rail. The CBI wants politicians to apply the same energy to tackling road congestion.

While congestion has decreased slightly owing to the recent recession, this trend is likely to reverse as economic growth returns. But with public finances being constrained for the foreseeable future, politicians need a fresh approach to reducing congestion.

The report makes 14 recommendations across three broad areas: tackling daily congestion by changing working patterns; strengthening capital investment in roads; and reforming the management and funding of the strategic road network.

The CBI believes that government, local

authorities and employers could do much more to reduce congestion by adopting flexible working practices. Advances in telecommunications, pressure to cut carbon emissions and a growing willingness to accommodate flexible working all mean that commuting to work outside the usual nine-to-five is possible for many.

While transport expenditure will fall as the public finances are restored, the CBI calls on politicians not to repeat past mistakes by cutting spending disproportionately to other budgets. Instead, they should focus on attracting private capital to fund road improvements and ease congestion

96%

of firms want government to make tackling rush-hour congestion a priority

Source: *Tackling congestion, driving growth*, CBI, March 2010

bottlenecks, including promoting toll roads to provide extra motorway lanes and keeping the debate on national road pricing open.

The CBI also calls for an overhaul of the funding and management of the Highways Agency, which manages England’s strategic road network. This government agency has limited control over its investment strategy – we think it should have more independence.

We believe these measures can create a more affordable basis for investing in roads to remove bottlenecks and encourage more efficient road use.

» Luke Jouanides is the CBI’s senior policy adviser on transport. luke.jouanides@cbi.org.uk

» Download the report from www.cbi.org.uk/transport

