

# City lite



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Arup

Right now, Dongtan is covered with cabbage fields, reed beds and a bird sanctuary stretching out into the South China Sea. But in the background, as a hint of things to come, are three wind turbines.

Before the end of 2006, the authorities from the nearby megacity of Shanghai will start the first stage of building the world's first eco-city here. And by 2010, when Shanghai hosts a major world Expo on green living, this will be the showcase – the real thing, with tens of thousands of people actually living an environmentally friendly lifestyle.

The starting gun will be the construction of a new bridge from Shanghai to Chongming Island, a quiet farming community. It now takes a two-hour drive plus a one-hour ferry ride to reach it, but in two years' time, the bridge will bring it to just 20 minutes' drive from the centre of the world's fourth largest, fastest growing and most densely packed city.

Shanghai is bursting at the seams, with 18 million people and 4,000 buildings more than 30 storeys high. It's like a backdrop to a futurist film. The authorities want to move people out – to Dongtan, which will eventually be home to half a million people.

'It won't look anything like Shanghai,' says Dongtan's master planner Ma Cheng Liang, head of the Shanghai Industrial Investment Company. No high rise. No big freeways. No city

smogs. 'The first thing you'll notice when you go there is that it'll be quiet, because there will be so few cars.' It will have almost zero pollution, and electricity will come from wind turbines and solar panels. Water from sinks and baths will be recycled for flushing the lavatory.

Cars won't be banned, but all the neighbourhood schools, shops and workplaces will be within walking distance. Most Chinese don't have cars yet – and the idea is that they won't need them here.

Farms within the city limits will provide most of its food, and its sewage will fertilize the fields. It will be dotted with parks, lakes and pagodas. There will be a yachting marina, a golf course and an equestrian centre. So living green will be fun, too.

Ma says he expects Dongtan to become a tourist centre where millions of Chinese will go to see how a green city can work in practice – and, it is hoped, will go home demanding the same green lifestyle for themselves.

Peter Head, Sustainability Director of Arup, the master planners and designers of Dongtan, says: 'It's an incredibly audacious project. Nobody has done anything like it before. It could become a blueprint for other cities round the world. It's not just a showcase for green technology. It's a place where people will want to live.'