



CHINA

## Inventiveness key to China success

When it comes to inventing new ways to use cold-formed steel framing, the HZAESST\* company in Harbin is uniquely original, highly prolific and is growing at an extremely rapid rate.

In little more than two years, the company's steel frame manufacturing capacity has quadrupled and is set to expand further with a fifth FRAMECAD machine about to be commissioned.

As pioneers of light gauge steel framing technology in China, HZAESST is breaking new ground in fast-turn-around design and construction techniques for multi-storey buildings, special retrofit insulated walls, high-rise building facades, up-market spa resorts, and even floating villas.

Company CFO Zhao Mingjun is understandably very pleased with the great progress that has been made in such a short period and is highly optimistic about the future of LGS framing in China.

"Our senior management have recognised the importance of light steel framing. In the beginning we were worried about the fire proofing and the flexibility of the product.

"However, after nearly two and a half years of operation, we see great potential and the market is becoming very receptive."

### SUPERIOR TECHNOLOGY RECOGNISED

After seeing a demonstration of the FRAMECAD F300i at a trade show in Beijing, representatives of HZAESST decided to purchase one after only two days.

"We had considered other options prior to seeing the FRAMECAD machine, but the performance of the F300i was clearly vastly superior," says Zhao.

The company now has four F300i machines all running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, outputting framing at a rate of 40,000 metres a week.

Most of the framing is part assembled at the factory and shipped in "flat-pack" sections to be fully assembled on site.

HZAESST is working across a number of sectors in the building industry.

Zhao explains: "We are working in three major areas: Residential housing where we are building villas and resort style buildings; Secondly, we are providing external frames for cladding on multi-storey buildings.

"European style is popular in Harbin and we have found that light gauge steel systems are very suitable for such complex European designs.

"The third sector is renovations. Harbin is located in North China where the winters are very harsh, and there is a lot of work going on involving energy conservation and the provision of better insulation for older buildings.

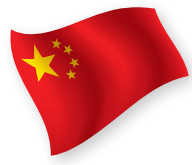
"The government is carrying out a 'face lift' programme for buildings by retrofitting insulated walls, and we have a government contract to do these renovations using light steel framework.

"We have developed a special combination fibreglass-concrete panel to use with the steel framing for this work."



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# FRAMECAD™

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## Speed and simplicity

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“FRAMECAD is all pre-cut offsite and assembled onsite. It makes the installation noticeably faster than traditional methods. Owners are very receptive to this form of construction and even contractors find it easier to work with light steel frames.”

A small division of a large construction company, HZAESST has two factories: One is in Harbin, a city of 9.9 million known as China’s “Ice Capital”, and the other is in Hainan Island, an upmarket resort known as the “Oriental Hawaii” because of its balmy weather and palm-fringed beaches.

HZAESST is currently in the process of building 500 two-storey villas on the island in a resort style setting.

## GROWING PLANS

While HZAESST is already very successful, Zhao has no plans to just stick with the status quo.

“The next step is to expand into building higher multi-storey structures up to six levels,” say Zhao.

“FRAMECAD designers and engineers are supporting us with this as there is no guidance or building bylaws in China for such high buildings using light gauge steel frames.

“Another sector we intend to focus on is building state-owned farms. The government intends to centralise small farms in the future and this will be a major opportunity to use light gauge steel framing.”

HZAESST is also actively seeking contracts across the border in Russia.

Zhao says that while timber framing is not mainstream in China, it is common in some places in Russia.

“We are negotiating a contract for more than 100 houses in Russia. Most of these houses would normally use timber frames but our plan is to use LGS framing instead. We think it will be much faster and more cost effective as well.

“Our company has been dealing with other traditional building products for many years, such as brick, pre-cast panel and steel structures.

“From our experience, we can see there is great potential for light gauge steel framing in China. Even our parent company’s senior management at the very highest level is also impressed with FRAMECAD technology.”



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