

Team TU Darmstadt

HYDROSYN - Where the Water Rises

The proposal for the international competition "*Designing Resilience Global 2025 (DRG)*" – "*A Tale of an Island on Pearl River*" presents an exemplary water-sensitive strategy for Changzhou Island in Guangzhou. Drawing on the site's unique local conditions, the project develops a holistic framework for regenerative urban development that convincingly addresses both the transformation of the northern settlement structures and the flood-prone southern areas of the island.

At the core of the concept lies the integration of ecological, social, infrastructural, and spatial strategies into a coherent urban vision. The reconnection of the island's fine-grained network of waterways reduces flood risk while simultaneously providing the basis for new settlement clusters. These resilient neighborhoods reinterpret traditional village structures, offering both flexibility and contemporary living standards. The revitalization and modernization of agricultural systems underpin the design of adaptive landscapes, with the southern part of the island becoming a showcase of flood resilience and coexistence with climatic extremes. Public squares and landscape-driven spaces strengthen local identity while opening themselves equally to residents and visitors.

A key element of the project is the Tower of Synergy (Vertical Farming Tower), which serves as a landmark and symbol of progress and safety. It embodies the integration of agriculture, education, research, and tourism, while guaranteeing food security even in times of flooding. As a vertical farming hub, the tower anchors the new urban identity of Changzhou Island and forms a striking face toward the city of Guangzhou.

The proposal demonstrates a high degree of social responsibility through its carefully placed architectural and infrastructural interventions, including new neighborhood spaces, the metro station at Longping Academician Port and Agricultural Institute, integrated farmland, and the adaptive tidal landscapes in the south. The open-space design relies on nature-based solutions and culturally informed spaces for the community. Particularly noteworthy are the "life lines" that link existing elevated structures with new adaptive landscapes, weaving together traditional and innovative elements. Water is guided along the natural topography, while solar energy is harnessed through the tower and neighborhood clusters. A central axis connects the metro station and visitor center with the nature park, food forest, new market, and southern harbor, establishing a strong spatial and social backbone for the island.

Tourism is addressed with sensitivity and care, offering amenities that benefit both visitors and residents alike. The tidal landscapes provide high recreational value, the food forest and new market become vibrant meeting points, the dragon boat canal offers a unique sporting attraction, and the campground at the island's southwest tip responds to the desire for direct contact with nature. Together with the Tower of Synergy and its adjacent public spaces, these elements create a powerful stage for communal life and cultural exchange.

The jury commend the project for its richness of detail and the synergies it establishes across scales and disciplines. The Tower of Synergy, in particular, together with its surrounding urban configuration, articulates a strong and distinctive identity for Changzhou Island. The newly conceived landscape provides ecological, cultural, and social value of lasting significance, and the project as a whole offers a compelling model for the future transformation of settlements within the Pearl River Delta.

We are delighted to announce that our team from Darmstadt has been recognized for their outstanding achievement. With their innovative project *Hydrosyn*, they impressed the jury and were honored with an *Honorable Mention* in the competition. This distinction reflects not only the high quality and creativity of their work, but also the dedication, expertise, and team spirit that went into the project. We are very proud of this accomplishment and extend our sincere thanks to the entire team for their excellent contribution and commitment.

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